

A Pragmatic Analysis of Annang Proverbs in the Lyrics of Uko Akpa's Songs

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Abstract

This paper undertakes a pragmatic analysis of Annang proverbs in the lyrics of selected songs of Uko Akpan. The theoretical framework for the study is May's Pragmatic Acts and Sperber and Wilson's Relevance theory. The findings show that Annang proverbs are used to speak against oppression, religious bigotry, hypocrisy, immorality, politics, socio-cultural and other matters of human concern. The proverbs selected perform pragmatic acts of cautioning, advising, reprimanding and pretending. Other functions of Annang proverbs studied are social control, resolution of conflicts, justice, respect for rights and obligations, filial piety and respect for one's own parents and the common good of the society. The paper concludes that human expressions navigate varied forms of art and cultural activities, and that Nigerian proverbs draw inspiration from the traditional heritage of the different regions that makes up the country.

Keywords: Annang, Proverbs, Pragmatic Acts, Relevance Theory

Introduction

Language is a set of acceptable symbols and sounds uttered to perform specific functions in the society. In its forms, either as written or spoken, or sometimes through gestures, it has helped human beings to meet different needs at all time. Very often, language is used to educate, inform, entertain, rebuke or pass down social values from one generation to another. Communicative utterances indicate what functions they are to perform, either by the ordering of words, which make up the sentences therein, or by the mood and tonal markers used in situations where utterances are made. Austin (1962) opines that the characteristics of utterances suggest the functions a language is meant to perform. He further sees utterances as action, some of which can be performed only through language while others can be performed either verbally or non-verbally. In other words, communication is effected through use of language, verbal or non-verbal cues. However, whatever form or signals that is employed by the speaker must be common, acceptable or shared by speakers and hearers (interlocutors) of that environment.

However, because of our competence and performance in language use as postulated by Chomsky (1965), we often know the kind of language to expect in different situations. The language of sermon is quite different from the "sweet nothing whispers" of lovers, from the haggling language of market women, to that of a nagging wife. Situation can be influenced or created to form a mini world or universe of discourse depending on the speech events that occur there. Lyons (2017, p. 249) avers

Every language system is determined by the peculiar function it has to perform and that function of a language tends to be reflected in its grammatical and lexical structure which interrelates sentences with the feature of situation of the utterance.

From the above excerpt, the function and situation of language use provide better means of interpreting it and not just its structural make up. The structural display of formal features possessed by a text might not be rewarding in pragmatic analysis, rather language should be studied in relation to the purpose it serves in its environment. It is, therefore, the intention of this research to study the proverbial use of language in the music of the renowned legendary artist, Uko Akpan who hails from the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria, taking cognizance of the message being communicated. The researcher, as an ardent listener of this artist, examines what is by what is said and the impact of these proverbs in negotiating meanings. As evident in the Nigerian context, when using language to communicate, some expressions are not considered rich except such expressions are buttressed with proverbs. These proverbs are rich with words of wisdom and they are passed across from generation to generation. Proverbs can be said to be succinct and pithy sayings in general use, expressing commonly held ideas and beliefs (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2010).

However, Uko Akpan is a name of a person who is known for his music, arts and crafts that represent indigenous communication that accompany people from the cradle to the grave. In Nigeria, indigenous music is often under threat from the modernization of the society but Uko Akpan impelled creativity among young and upcoming creators. He was also an iconic bard who was elevated to Èkêrê Akwa Ibom by the Akwa Ibom Traditional Rulers Council. As a matter of fact, his music is dominantly characterised by the use of proverbs.

Furthermore, proverbs can be described as a traditional system of communication, which refers to modes of meaning exchange that are rooted in a people's culture, and which began from the era of pre-literate and pre-modern times (Ukonu & Wogu, 2008). Edeogu and Nnaji (2012, p.92) noted that "it is a means by which indigenous people communicate with one another and which survive to the present, despite the passage of time and the smothering influence of the modernity". "Proverbs, otherwise known in Annang as 'Ufied' were drawn from the wide gamut of Annang cultural experience such as: attitudes, values, emotions, perceptions, natural elements, thoughts and feelings" (Umanah, 2014, p.114). Therefore, proverbs, apart from being short wise sayings are also written in its elaborate form. They were preserved by elders, women and children in the traditional society which is still very relevant in the Nigerian contemporary society. Uko Akpan exemplifies these in his musical rendition. Thus, this study shall undergo a pragmatic analysis of these proverbs.

The problem of correct interpretation of proverbs has been identified as a major challenge in the sociolinguistic landscapes. Many researches from Akwa Ibom State where Annang language is resident have established that there is little attention on

Annang proverbs by scholars from that region and even beyond. However, an examination of the scholarly materials available so far on Annang proverbs indicate that there is still need for an in-depth study on Annang proverbs in relation to categorization, contextualization and the role of context and cultural knowledge in interpreting Annang proverbs. This however forms the gap in literature, which this study intends to fill. The aim of this research is to carry out a pragmatic analysis of Annang proverbs in selected songs of Uko Akpan. However, the specific objectives of this study are: to categorise and identify the contexts of the Annang proverbs in selected songs of Uko Akpan according to their various functions in the society, to examine the pragmatic acts performed by each of the identified Annang proverbs in selected songs of Uko Akpan, to analyse the functions of the selected Annang proverbs in songs of Uko Akpan and to examine the sociocultural and religious implications of the selected Annang proverbs in the songs of Uko Akpan.

Literature Review

Encarta English Dictionary (2009) defines a proverb as a short popular saying that expresses the truth and offers advice, and Adedimeji (2013:55) opines that in the review of several definitions “the central idea in the definitions is that a proverb is an adage, saying, maxim, precept or any synonym of such that expresses conventional truth”, .According to Trench cited in Messenger (2019:515), proverbs are “condensed quintessential wisdom,” which are employed as an art or as a tool of communication in most world cultures and languages. According to Krikmann, see (Messenger 2019, p. 515), with the aid of a proverb, one can aim to promote an endorsement to... statements and opinions, forecast something, express doubt, reproach someone..., accuse something, advise against something, or interdict somebody from doing something, and so on, and so forth.

The origin of proverbs can be said to date back to the earlier centuries. Its origin can be traced back to when men and women of the olden days who spoke little and used more of proverbs. Proverbs are usually witty sayings whose meanings are only interpreted through a careful assimilation of the words and understanding of the context of use. In languages, where proverbs are used, the hearer/reader or the participant requires a good knowledge and understanding of the language and culture to carry out a significant pragmatic analysis of the meaning portrayed in proverbs.

Pragmatics and Proverbs

The use of proverbs is one of the few universal facts that are related in many languages across the world, and they continue to be relevant in modern times, across cultures including the developed cultures (Mieder, 2017; Rumide, 2013). Proverbs are a rich manifestation of a society's values, beliefs, and worldview. They serve valuable didactic and communicative purposes. On the other hand, they also project stereotypical ideologies which often go unnoticed. They are easy to remember, concise and formulaic language which could be used instantly as effective rhetoric in oral or written

communication” (Mieder, 2017, p. xi) and which are “passed as expressions of wisdom and truth from generation to generation” (Osisanwo 2013, p. 1).

Language and society are good area of research and theory development in which proverbs have received much attention. For decades, they have been researched from different perspectives: at the levels of Sociolinguistics (Lomotey and Chachu 2020), Anthropological Linguistics (Mansyur and Suherman, 2020), Critical Discourse Analysis (Lomotey, 2017; Rasul, 2015), Psychology (Whaley, 2013), Politics (Mieder, 2017) and Communication Studies (Richmond, 2017). Importantly, giving the multifunctional value of proverbs, they are highly context dependent because they have different meanings in varied contexts. Additionally, they are often used to initiate actions, that is, they can have an influence on language users' attitudes and behaviours. Other studies have thus emerged that highlight the socio-pragmatic dimension of proverbs (Briggs, 2015; Lawal et al., 2017; Lomotey, 2019; Odebunmi, 2008). These studies place emphasis on the inter-connection between proverbs, thought and behaviour. Lomotey's (2019b) article, for example, draws on insights from Austin's (1965) Speech Act Theory to examine the role of proverbs in (unconsciously) shaping speakers' perceptions and actions. She shows that proverbs function as Assertives or Representatives, Directives, Commissive, Expressives, and/or Declaratives (Austin, 1965), and consequently, promote, and enable the sustenance of gender violence.

Proverbs are perceived as the traditional voice of the people. It is the collective wisdom and truth that is hardly-questioned by members of the society. According to research, they are in many cases, perspectives given by a particular section of a given society. Considering their propensity for generalisation and stereotyping and especially, due to the fact that most studies on proverbs gather their data from secondary sources (Dzahene-Quarshie & Omari, 2021; Lomotey & Chachu, 2020), attention must be given to the possibility of bias when using, studying and researching this genre. While taking into account the possibility of bias and inaccuracy, it is worthy to note that research on proverbs within the field of pragmatics provides valuable highlights on the links between linguistic theories and social practice and suggests ways of identifying and eliminating negative discourses that affect the wellbeing of members of society (e.g., women, and blacks).

Moreover, such studies largely provide education on global citizenship and hope to promote world peace given that they deepen our awareness of and respect for cultural diversity, teach strategies for conflict resolution through effective (inter-cultural) communication, and enable us to ascertain the positive confluences between different worldviews in a respectful way.

Proverbs in Annang Culture

Proverbs have certain social roles they perform in Annang community. They are used in all manner of situations such as: social control, resolution of conflicts, judicial decisions, respect for rights and obligations, law and order, filial piety and respect for one's own parents/the common good of the society, etc. Social proverbs had a strong

significance on the lives of the Annang people, as they were elements of unity among them. Accordingly, of all the various forms of folklore employed today, Annang proverbs (*known as Ufied* in Anang language) stand out with its distinctive features. They are often used to foster social values that are pragmatic and communalistic in nature. In a bid to solving the problems of life. As it has been rightly put, social proverbs are characterized by communality and values. Aspects of these proverbs (*Ufied*) include: proverbs about human relationships, marriage, family and communal lives.

Annang proverbs are used to perform certain functions. Identity: “*Amana mme ewa, ademe mme nnan*” (When one sleeps with a dog, one wakes up with lice) reminds people to always try to identify and know the people that live close to them in the same environment or community as neighbours. This is because associating with people of questionable character could cause someone to be roped in a crime that he/she knows nothing about. Cautionary: “*Nkosiosio mbiara ered, inua ata mkpo k’ukpeme*” (Until the rotten tooth is pull off, the mouth must chew with caution) for instance, portray the fact that until an armed robber is fished out in a particular society, members of that society continues to live in fear.

In other situations, proverbs teach what is right, fair, and honest. They makes the immature wise and gives knowledge and sense to the young. They allude to values and norms accepted by society without offending the beliefs of others. Ability to apply proverbs properly in a given situation is a skill that is developed through time and experience. For example, the proverb, “*Agwo isikamake mkpo iba idok anyong*” (One cannot hold two things in one’s hand to climb up) teaches that trying to climb a tree top with things in both hands is difficult. It further shows that one cannot learn a trade in two different locations or place at the same time. This proverb calls for focus and concentration on particular endeavour for better productivity and result. “*Inuen ked k’ubok afon akan iba ke ikot*” (A bird at hand is worth two in the bush) tells people that whatever they have succeeded in having or holding on to like a job is preferred than having an expectation of so many things without being sure of them. For instance, people are told to give up on their jobs through resignation to contest elections that they are not sure of being elected or selected and when they fail regrets come after. Further, the importance of proverbs could be felt in its elaborate form thus: Proverbs have a didactic function, used for ethical instruction and for traditional preservation to expand philosophical ideals (Essien, 2020, p.198).

In support of the above facts, Montapert (2014, p.vii) opines that “the proverbs of wise men are of great value like the dust of gold or the sparkle of the diamond”. Ifiok ikeme agwo. (The knowledge and wisdom people possess is always inadequate). *Akpan mmafiok mma, afid asejire ke erem afong*. (When people claim to know everything, they are bound to make mistakes). In view of this Idowo (2013) affirms that: A certain man (Akpan Mmafiok Mma) lived in a far country of Cameroun and was very rich. He returned home to invest in business and was advised to buy the male bicycle that he could display his products on the front and back carriers. He refused and bought the female bicycle which made him unable to advertise his products. Also, when

he was to marry in the next village, he wore his new and expensive clothes. On his way, he was pressed and went into the bush to use it as his convenience. On his return from the bush, people noticed remnants of the stool on him and told him but he refused to believe them just the same way he refused their advice of removing his clothes before going into the bush. On account of the smell from him and shame, his friends left him and never followed him to his marriage anymore (Personal Communication). This proverb tells everyone to always have a listening ear to what others may have to say or contribute towards their welfare. Claiming to know all things keep one in a disadvantage position which may bring disgrace and show the level of ignorance in a person.

Theoretical Framework

In this study, Relevance Theory of pragmatic that was developed in 1980s by Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson and Pragmatic Acts theory developed by Jacob May will be theoretical perspectives to this paper. Dan Sperber and Deirdre Wilson developed Relevance theory communication and describe it as an inferential approach to pragmatics. Relevance theorists argue that for communication to take place, the communicated information should attract the hearer's attention in an attempt to process it. Allot (2011) describes Relevance Theory as a framework for the study of cognition, proposed primarily in order to provide a psychologically realistic account of communication. The theory is based on two principles; the cognitive Principle which states that human cognition is geared towards the maximization of relevance and the Communication Principle which also states that, an utterance creates expectations of relevance.

Relevance theory is postulated as an attempt to work out in details one of Grice's central views that, human communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is the expression and recognition of intentions, (Grice 1975, p. 67). In the process of developing this claim, Grice laid the foundation for an inferential model of communication as an alternative for the classical code model. The inferential model of communication gives evidence that a communicator encodes their intended message into a signal which is decoded by the audience by making use of an identical copy of the code. According to the inferential model, a communicator provides evidence of their intention to convey a certain meaning, which is inferred by the audience based on the available evidence. The goal of inferential pragmatics is to explain how the hearer infers the speaker's meaning on the basis of the evidence provided. (Wilson and Sperber 2004, p. 250)

Relevance theorists further share Grice's intuition that utterances raise expectations of relevance not because speakers are expected to obey co-operative principles and maxims of quality, (truthfulness), quantity (informativeness), relation (relevance) and manner (clarity), or some other specifically communicative convention, but because the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition, which communicators may exploit. According to him, the expectations of relevance raised by

an utterance are precise enough, and predictable enough, to guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning and how they contribute to an empirically plausible account of comprehension (Wilson and Sperber 2004, p. 250).

The cognitive principle states that, "human cognition is geared to the maximization of relevance" (Sperber, 2004, p. 24). This means that, the mind is set in such a way that it automatically attends to the most seemingly relevant information. Relevance, being a basic feature to human cognition, means that an input (a sight, a sound, an utterance, or a memory), is relevant to an individual when it connects with background information, he or she has available to yield conclusion that matters to them such as correcting a mistaken impression (Sperber & Wilson, 2004, p. 56). An input is relevant to an individual when its processing in a context of available assumption yields positive cognitive effects.

The inferential models of communication make the claim that communication contains not only the information that one wishes to transmit, but also the information of one's intention to inform the audience of an intention. Sperber and Wilson point out that communication involves the production of an ostensive stimulus (some intentional behaviour or the trace of it), which catches the audience's attention and which the audience cannot make sense of without assuming that the communicator intended to convey some information. An ostensive stimulus which can include; a simple gesture, a verbal (sentential or sub-sentential), or utterance etc. requires some processing effort from the audience. Considering the cognitive principle of relevance, the human cognition system will only attend to information which is relevant and optimal relevance which says that an ostensive stimulus is optimally relevant to an audience if:

- a) It is relevant enough to worth the audience's processing effort;
- b) It is the most relevant one compatible with communicator's abilities and preferences.

To achieve optimal relevance, the hearer should decode linguistic meaning; follow a path of least effort, enrich at the explicit level and complement it at implicit level until resulting interpretation meets her expectation of relevance. According to the Communicative Principle of relevance, every ostensive stimulus in effect conveys to the audience the claim that it is optimally relevant. A stimulus is optimally relevant to the audience if it finds an interpretation that is at least relevant enough, without having to waste any processing effort. This activates the comprehension procedures:

- a) Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects: Test interpretive hypotheses, i.e. consider interpretations in order of accessibility (disambiguation, reference resolution, implicatures, etc.) in order of accessibility.
- b) Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied (or abandoned) (Sperber and Wilson 2004, p.13)

Relevance Theory has been used as a theoretical framework for this study because of its significant roles in aiding the listener's understanding of proverbial meanings. Relevance theory may be seen as an attempt to work out in details one of Grice's central claims that an essential feature of most human communication, both verbal and nonverbal, is the expression and recognition of intentions (Grice, 1975). Relevance theory claims that what makes an input worth picking out from the mass of competing stimuli is not just that it is relevant, but that it is more relevant than any alternative input available to us at that time.

Relevance theory has been found suitable for this study because when a speaker says something, it is designed to attract a listener's attention which makes the listener to focus on the meaning intended by the speaker (speaker's meaning) and through this, the listener eventually draws certain conclusion which is the intention of the speaker. This is the tenet of Relevance Theory. The relevance-theoretic comprehension procedures help in resolving linguistic under-determinacies at both explicit and implicit levels. According to the above discussion, the tenets of the Relevance Theory; cognitive principle, the communicative principle and the comprehension procedures shows how listeners to Annang proverbs in the music of Uko Akpan arrive at the intended meaning. For an utterance, (in this case a proverb) to be relevant, it should achieve cognitive effects. For them to be understood, they should ignite the mind to start searching for possible interpretations. If they are not understood, the mind will reject them because there are no assumptions activated, meaning, no cognitive effects can be achieved. Again, if there is no appropriate context, they will not be understood, because utterances are context-based in Pragmatics.

Pragmatic Acts Theory

Pragmatic acts theory by Mey (2001) which is a critique and an amendment to Austin's (1962) speech acts theory is also used to complement Relevance Theory in this study. Both theories underscore the centrality of context in describing how language is used to communicate meaning (Odebunmi, Oloye & Adetunji, 2010, p. 3). As a result, Mey (2001, p. 218) calls the graphic representation of his pragmatic act theory "pragmeme" which adapts a communicative discourse to its socio-cultural context and adapting the concept to the discourse. It is situation that is derived and situation constrained. In the opinion of Mey (2001, p. 221) as quoted in Odebunmi (2008, p. 76), "the pragmatic act theory focuses on the environment in which both speaker and hearer find their affordances, such that the entire situation is brought to bear on what can be said in the situation, as well as what is actually being said".

A pragmatic act is instantiated through an *lpra* or a *Pract*, which realises a pragmeme. Every *pract* is at the same time an *allopract*: a concrete instantiation of a particular pragmeme. Factor that determines a *pract* is solely the participants' knowledge of interactional situation and the potential effect of a *pract* in a particular context. The figure below is a model of Pragmatic act theory propounded by Mey (2001, p. 223):

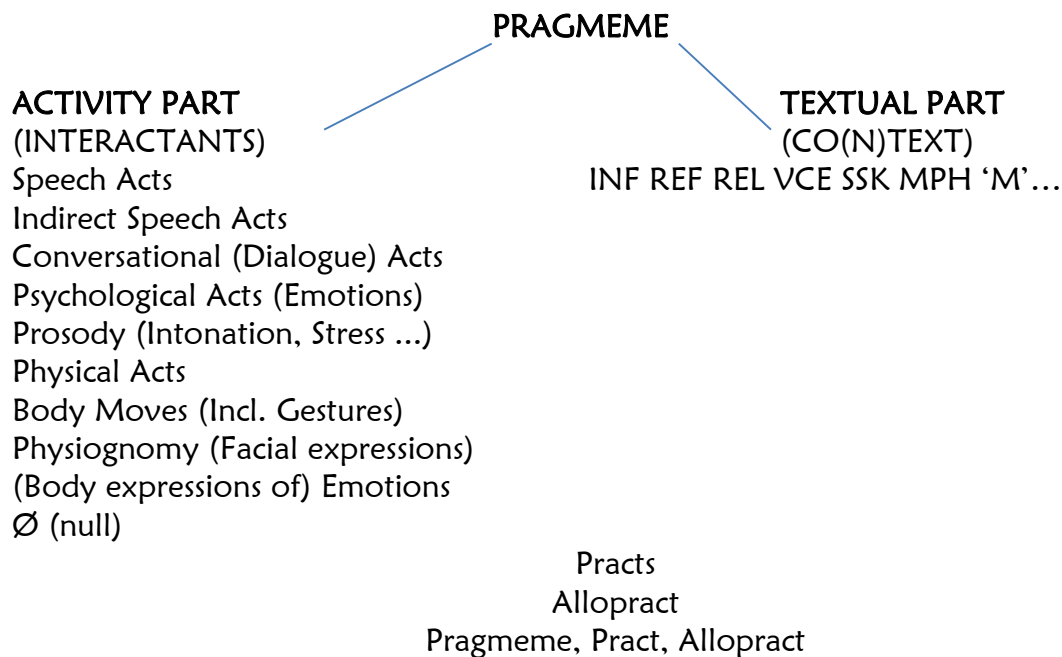


Figure 1: Mey's (2001:223) Scheme of Pragmeme adapted from Odebunmi (2008:76))

The figure shows that there are two parts to a pragmeme: activity part, meant for interactants and textual part, referring to the text without which the pragmeme operates. To communicate, the interactants draw on such speech act types as indirect speech acts, conversational (dialogue) act, psychological act, prosodic acts and physical acts. These are engaged in contexts, which include INF (inference), REF “relevance”, VCE ‘voice’, SSK shared situation knowledge; MPH “metaphor” and M ‘meta pragmatics jokers’. It should be noted that the interaction between activity part and textual part results in a pract or an allopract (Odebunmi, 2008, p. 77).

Methodology

Selected Annang proverbs in the music of Uko Akpan constitute the body of data for this study. Some of his songs include: *Usung Calabar-Itu* (Calabar- Itu Road); *K'Ijak Na Ekong Anwana Aba O* (Let War Not Break Out Again); *Atitia Akukpep* (It is the Teacher That Taught You); *Mmekoro Nsippe* (I sweat to eat); *Ngwed Afon* (Education is good). Purposive sampling technique was applied to select twenty (20) pieces of proverbs as samples for the pragmatic analysis. The study adopted *Close-Reading and Observation* as an instrument for data collection. This instrument is necessary as it aids the assessment of the selected proverbs in the music of Uko Akpan.

Data Analysis

This section deals with the presentation, analysis and discussion of the data. The original data are in the Annang language and translated to the English language. Therefore, the

data are analysed using the elements of pragmatic/speech acts, context, sociopolitical relevance and cultural/religious implications in order to answer the research questions.

(a) Social Contexts

The proverbs are analysed using the criterion of the social contexts. The Annang proverbs in selected songs of Uko Akpan are identified and explained according to their various functions in the society.

Proverb 1: *Uma-ebe akama ndisan itie ndidia* [A stingy husband carries a whip during meal time]

This ironic proverb is found in the track entitled “Ekpo Ebe”. The proverb antagonizes laziness, especially among the women folk. Many women feign sickness during planting season; hence, Uko Akpan employs this proverb to frown at such women’s laziness. This proverb applies mainly to lazy women who consider their husbands stingy for chastising them during meal time for not participating in the planting.

Proverb 2: *Una-ubok utom ade afun idap* [A lazy man is a slave to sleep]

Proverb 2 is extracted from the track entitled, “Nse Owo Anam”. Uko Akpan deploys this proverb to educate and caution the public about the fact that for one to succeed in life, one must encounter some level of suffering and hard work. The paradoxical and personified expression detests every form of laziness. In other words, this proverb, according to the songwriter, is used in a context that implies that sleep is a god to a lazy man; hence, the need to abolish laziness in order to make room for prosperity.

Proverb 3: *Owo anyene akpoho abo ufen idem* [The rich become slaves to their wealth]

Proverb 3 is extracted from the track entitled, “Nse Owo Anam”. Uko Akpan uses this proverb to adumbrate his conviction that slavery is inevitable in every human endeavour. Therefore, man is obliged to slavery in every of his action and engagement. In this light, Uko Akpan perceives wealth as a source of slavery to the rich. According to him, a rich man hardly sleeps comfortably without a thought of his riches and the fear that armed robbers might launch attacks.

Proverb 4: *Adejoro mkpo, agwo itoono mkpo kiidem amo no aka akeworo ada* [It is not easy to start a good thing and also sustain same]

Culled from the track, “Edibre Uko Akpan”, Proverb 4 has some level of socio-cultural undertone. Uko Akpan uses the proverb to remind his listeners of how tough and

daunting his hey day was in the industry, especially, with the magnitude of rejection and accusations he suffered from the public.

Proverb 5: *Akpede ajen-uka ade ntak nnana'yen afo, idod-enyen afo adeede ke anie?* [On what will you put your confidence, if the source of your misfortune is your relation?]

Extracted from the track “Tom Kere”, Proverb 5 is employed by Uko Akpan to challenge corrupt judges, traditional rulers and barristers who perpetrate the inhumane act of twisting judgments in favour of the rich to the detriment of the poor. It is a common assumption that the judiciary ought to be the last hope of the common man; hence, it becomes distressing when the reverse plays out. He uses this proverb to further attack the consciences of judges enjoining them to think twice before dashing the hopes of the common man. He also uses this proverb to remind the masses that in such situations, they should hold on to God and His judgment.

(b) Economic Contexts: In this section, Annang proverbs in the selected songs of Uko Akpan are identified and explained according to their various functions in the society especially in economic contexts.

Proverb 6: *Afonisin nne afonnukod isonno agwo aba kisin* [Wrappers and trousers no longer stay tight on our waists]

Proverb 6 has an undertone of economic instability. Drawn from the track, ‘Akwa Ibom State’, the songwriter intentionally employs the proverb to communicate and reflect the effect of hunger that ravishes the land. Sung at a time Akwa Ibom State was created, Uko Akpan not only celebrates this feat but seizes the opportunity to remind the leaders through this proverb that men and women still wallow in intense poverty, hence, the need for government to ensure progress, prosperity, sufficiency and development.

Proverb 7: *K'usin anyen k'ubok utom agwo; k'usuaan ubok-utom agwo* [We should not envy others or try to destroy the handwork of others]

Laced with a biblical analogy that is recorded in the book of James 4:11, which says, “Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another...” Proverb 7 is found in the track “Mbere K'esa”. Uko Akpan employs it to project an undertone of economic survival. The songwriter's survival feels threatened by his perceived relegation. Even as his inquiries from his people what might be his possible offence for the relegation, he also equally employs this proverb to remind them that such relegation can destroy his career and handwork. He also in a way perceives the relegation as envy; hence, the proverb serves to caution the public not to envy or attempt to destroy the work of others.

(c) Cultural context: In this section, Annang proverbs in the selected songs of Uko Akpan are identified and explained according to their various functions in the society especially within the cultural contexts.

Proverb 8: *Nko mkpa akpa ajen amkpono* [Only in death will my child honour me]

Proverb 8 is solely cultural in Annang. Drawn from the track, “Ukpono se ajen amkpono”, the ironic proverb is an indirect way of saying that children should take care of their parents when they are alive, and not in death. It is common for many Nigerians to organize grand funeral parties for the parents when they die rather than take good care of them while alive. Many Nigerians would even go to the extent of selling their property in order to accord their parents ‘befitting’ funeral, which ought not to be so. So, Uko Akpan being a cultural activist and ambassador kicks against this practice holding the opinion that it would be wise for children to take good care of their parents while alive.

Proverb 9: *Etok unen afaha atan* [Tiny hen that breaks through the fence]

Proverb 10: *Atikonkon ada unek* [The mantis is on a dance display]

Proverb 11: *Inua ikum aduoro ebod* [The grass has become slippery in the goat’s mouth]

Found in the track, “Sabong Sabong”, proverbs, 9 – 11 above, “Etok unen afaha atan”, “Atikonkon ada unek”, and “inua ikum aduoro ebod”, respectively signify mockery. They are commonly used as a reaction to disobedience to shame the victim. At a funeral where Uko Akpan is requested to perform, he adopts these proverbs in the course of narrating the story of Antekon and the daughter’s fornicating lifestyle. Antekon, a popular character in the track suffers disappointment as the daughter dies of abortion after several warnings and reprimands. Uko Akpan uses these proverbs to remind the public that it is only the stubborn fly that follows the corpse to the grave; hence, the need for the living to take caution.

(d) Religious Contexts: In this section, Annang proverbs in the selected songs of Uko Akpan are identified and explained according to their various functions in the society especially in the religious contexts.

Proverb 12: *Umaunamma nanna, k’udia mkpo* [Whoever does not work should not eat]

Proverb 12 is a biblical analogy evident in Proverbs 13:4, which says, “The soul of the lazy man desires, and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich”. This however, implies that the lazy man desires what hard working people want: house, food, vacations, money etc...but the lazy man’s desires remain unsatisfied. In his expression, Uko Akpan only confirms the analogy which has neither disputed nor defied the infallibility of God’s word. This proverb also reiterates the fact that one who does not labour does not deserve to eat, adding that only through much sweat and hard work will one make it in life.

Proverb 13: *Nko-okoro asipe ndien adad adia* [Only in sweat will man eat]

Proverb 13 is a direct biblical analogy found in the book of Genesis 3:19 which says “by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return”. This proverb re-echoes the God’s punishment to man as recorded in the biblical creation story. It was recorded that Adam must sweat to eat; and that a woman must pass through labour pangs to give birth. Therefore, in order not to controvert God’s word, every human must pass through hardship to succeed in life.

Pragmatic Analysis

Pragmatic analysis focuses on the ways in which people use language in social situations. It is concerned with how people use language to perform various acts such as making requests, giving orders, making promises, and so on. In this section, the pragmatic acts performed by each of the identified Annang proverbs in the selected songs of Uko Akpan are examined. Since pragmeme is a unit of meaning that is context-dependent and can be used to describe the meaning of proverbs; hence Uko Akpan’s proverbs are presented as pragmemes.

Table 1: Pragmatic acts analysis of Uko Akpan’s proverbs.

Proverb 6	<i>Afonisin nne afonnukod isonno agwo aba kisin</i> [Wrappers and trousers no longer stay tight on our waists]
Type of Pragmeme	Pragmeme of Caution
Inference (INF)	There is hunger and starvation in the Nigeria. People are no longer healthy in terms of their minds, finances, families, jobs, and even personal affairs.
Reference (REF)	(a) Recently people’s apparels seem too big for them (b) The people’s clothes have now become oversized
Relevance (REL)	The relevance of this proverb lies in its ability to cause the government to help improve the lives of its citizens by bringing about sustainable economic prosperity.

Proverb 7	<i>K'usin anyen k'ubok utom agwo; k'usuaan ubok-utom agwo</i> [We should not envy others or try to destroy the handiwork of others]
Type of Pragmeme	Pragmeme of Caution and Advice
Inference (INF)	Uko Akpan at some point, when he never enjoyed sufficient home-based patronage felt envied by his people; hence, the proverb.
Reference (REF)	(a) Being envious of another man is bad (b) Planning destruction against another fellow is not ideal. (c) There could be disaster as a result of envy
Relevance (REL)	Envy is a deadly trait and can breed evil. The use of this proverb serves as not just a caution but awareness to the society on the need to steer clear of envy.
Proverb 8	<i>Nko mkpa akpa ajen amkpono</i> [Only in death will my child honour me]
Type of Pragmeme	Pragmeme of Wisdom, Caution and Advice
Inference (INF)	Most Nigerians are in the habit doing things late, when the essence has been already defeated; even to their own parents, they only celebrate their parents in death, spending their all, and even borrowing to ensure a befitting funeral. It is rewarding and fulfilling to always do the right thing at the right time.
Reference (REF)	(a) Most children do not honour their parents (b) The death enjoy more honour than the living (c) A child should honour the parents at all times.
Relevance (REL)	It is absurd for things to be done when they are no longer relevant. This proverb serves to enlighten the public on the need to do the right thing at the right time, especially taking good care of one's parents while they are still alive and not running into debts to give them a 'befitting' funeral.
Proverb 10	<i>Atikonkon ada unek</i> [The mantis is on a dance display]
Type of Pragmeme	Pragmeme of Caution
Inference (INF)	The world is always waiting to mock every victim of disobedience when the repercussion strikes. This is why children should be obedient.
Reference (REF)	(a) The mantis must be in a happy mood (b) Something excited or otherwise must have propelled the mantis to dance
Relevance (REL)	This proverb serves to caution the public, especially the children against disobedience. The act of disobedience has

	grave consequences. One of them is mockery, especially from those parties who had earlier given out some sort of warning, reprimand or caution. Obedience will be about progress in our societies.
Proverb 11	<i>Inua ikum aduoro ebod</i> [The grass has become slippery in the goat's mouth]
Type of Pragmeme	Pragmeme of Mockery and Regret
Inference (INF)	The world is always waiting to mock every victim of disobedience when the repercussion strikes. This supports obedience.
Reference (REF)	(a) The goat is responsible for the munching of grasses (b) The munched grasses have suddenly become tasteless (c) When grasses are munched, they get crushed and end up slippery in the mouth.
Relevance (REL)	This proverb serves to caution the public, especially the children against disobedience. The act of disobedience has grave consequences. One of them is mockery, especially from those parties who had earlier given out some sort of warning, reprimand or caution. Obedience will bring about progress in our societies.
Proverb 12	<i>Umaunamma nanna, k'udia mkpo</i> [Whoever does not work should not eat]
Type of Pragmeme	Pragmeme of Reprimand
Inference (INF)	(a) Laziness does not bring progress, hence, all hands has to be on deck in order to bring progress and prosperity. (b) Building a viable and productive society is a collective task.
Reference (REF)	(a) Work is compulsory for anyone who wishes to eat (b) Anybody work deserves to eat
Relevance (REL)	This proverb serves to promote the spirit of collectiveness among the public. Progress is rapid when many hands are on deck.
Proverb 13	<i>Nko-okoro asipe ndien adad adia</i> [Only in sweat will man eat]
Type of Pragmeme	Pragmeme of Reprimand
Inference (INF)	(a) Laziness does not bring progress, hence, all hands has to be on deck in order to bring progress and prosperity. (b) Building a viable and productive society is a collective task. (c) Man was naturally meant to earn a living through struggles and hard work

Reference (REF)	(a) Everyone willing to eat has to work till they sweat (b) Those who do not sweat cannot be given food (c) Sweet is the only criteria for food.
Relevance (REL)	This proverb apart from serving to promote the spirit of collectivity among the public, also advocates for tenacity and hard-work in any society. Progress is rapid when many hands are on deck, and hard work is upheld.

Socio-Political Relevance of Anang Proverbs

It is imperative to mention certain unique roles of social proverbs in Annang community. Annang proverbs are frequently used in all manner of situations such as: social control, resolution of conflicts, judicial decisions, truth, justice, respect for rights and obligations, law and order, filial piety and respect for one's parents and the common good of the society, etc. Social proverbs have a strong significance on the lives of the Annang people, as the analysis reveal they are elements of unity among them. Accordingly, of all the various forms of folklore employed today, Annang proverbs (*ufied*) stand out with its distinctive features. In view of this, they are often used to foster social values that are pragmatic and communalistic in nature in a bid to solving the problems of life. As it has been rightly put, social proverbs are characterized by communality and values.

Annang proverb (*ufied*) has its specific function to perform. This means that they are noticed for the sake of nothing, rather to underscore a thing, condition, situation like: self-control, hard work, encouragement, children's upbringing and caution. Annang proverbs are concerned about creating knowledge for the common good of human existence; convey wisdom, truth and a discovery of ideas as well as life lessons. They are the distilled essence of many previous life situations, the lessons drawn from the experience of generations, and they look ahead to the many life experiences and stories yet to take place. In this way, Annang proverbs share with the world the practical wisdom the people have learnt in their ways of life. For instance, "Ukemekeijire edop iba akanked" (You cannot chase two antelopes at once) developed when Annang people found out that they could only capture one animal at a time because trying to focus on more than one could make the animals, they hunt for to all flee or run away. This practical wisdom of tackling one thing at a time applies to people all over the world not just that chasing after wildlife, thereby strengthening their social and political relevance.

Cultural and Religious Implications

In this section, the sociocultural and religious implications of the selected Annang proverbs in the songs of Uko Akpan are examined. In Annang traditional society, the origin of proverbs is said to have been bequeathed by known persons who were often quoted by their contemporaries. Consequently, with the passage of time, it became impossible for successive generations to recall such names. Given this fact, nearly all the

proverbs are used without reference to the original contributors. In other words, most of the proverbs have existed for so long that their authorship can no longer be ascertained and thus have become the property of the community. As analysed in the previous sections of this study, Uko Akpan's music has enormously reflected religious proverbs in Annang community. The implication, therefore, is to invigorate the belief in the Supreme Deity and his duty in the working of the universe. It also reminds the Annang of the role played by the Supreme Ordainer in creation and this is in the proverbs about man's origin and creation. These proverbs also comfort and direct the Annang on how they should strengthen their relationship with the supernatural through their religious beliefs and rituals. They were conscious of their moral rightness since man is a moral being. By this they avail themselves of the opportunity of being abreast of the fact that failure to live rightly would eventually affect their chances of coming back to this world through re-incarnation, one of the core beliefs of the Annang people. Again, the religious proverbs captured in the music of Uko Akpan have unfolded certain mysteries which defy their human sensibilities and consciousness as well as transcend human understanding.

Conclusion

Proverbs are used to perform socio-cultural functions as well as embellish conversation among Africans including Annang people. African utterances are full of proverbs which reveal a lot about African beliefs especially, their ideas about God, and their cultural and socio-political ideologies. A good number of Annang proverbs are statements of the truth that are drawn from the wide gamut of Annang day-to-day experience which express their attitudes, values, emotions, perceptions, natural elements, thoughts and feelings. Festivals, ceremonies, agriculture, religious and family life also provided many of the settings from which the proverbs were obtained. The use of some of these proverbs by members of the society indicates the pride of place the proverbs occupy in the daily life of the people. Every situation has a proverb that fits it. This study has provided through pragmatics an overview of the socio-religious and cultural lessons of indigenous music performance with reference to Uko Akpan's music and Anaañg arts and crafts.

The arts and culture of Nigeria represent the varied aspects of Nigerian lifestyle. Simply put, human expression finds its way through varied forms of art and cultural activities and draws inspiration from rural traditional heritage of each region that make up the country. Such art is usually demonstrated through artworks, dance, literature, folklores, music, architecture, etc. and Uko Akpan's music is not an exception to such exquisite demonstration and representation of the Anaañg cultural heritage. The study has been able to posit from its findings that Uko Akpan's music had socio-religious and cultural lessons embedded in them which may not have been known or understood by many. Uko Akpan's music is highly celebrated for upholding indigenous Annang music with great ease of composition and dance devoid of hibernation.

Finally, it is pertinent to observe that it is important to embrace new technologies to propagate the proverbs in order to reach as many people as possible especially the younger ones who either are not attracted to the oral traditions or have no opportunity of learning through it. It is also important not to deemphasize the importance of oral tradition in the name of modernity when it comes to transmission of proverbs.

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