



Article

Ecosophical affability of some Cameroonian proverbs

Julius Angwah

University of Yaoundé I, Cameroon

E-mail: angwahjulius@yahoo.com

Abstract

The current global ecological crisis is unequivocally one of the greatest unprecedented threats of the 21st century. Humans' interaction with the environment has informed global environmental fears which manifest in multiple inconceivable ways. While the severity of the threat has received a universal appeal — through such conventions as UNFCCC¹ and the IPCC² — it would seem the solution to our environmental problems is actually in the orientation and communication and less so in international conferences and scientific breakthroughs. In fact, any effort that does not dredge into the wealth of context-specific ecosophies in informing and orientating local communities on eco-friendly behaviours is drawing a blank. From a Faircloughian critical discourse analytic perspective and drawing from the analysis of 11 Cameroonian proverbs with ecosophical inferences, this article explored the extent to which eco-affable proverbs stimulate positive environmental awareness and agencies among Cameroonians. After a brief introduction, we proceeded to the socio-cognitive profundity of proverbs (Section 2). In the next section, we established the theoretical landscape of the study (Section 3). In Section 4, we presented the methodology, followed by the analyses of pre-identified proverbs (Section 5). In the last section, we discussed the findings, and presented the conclusion.

Keywords: ecosophy, affability, pedagogy, relevance, Cameroonian proverbs

1. Introduction

More than ever before, stakeholders in eco-conservation are unanimous on the dire need of a universal approach to environmental glitches (IPCC, 2014). From Sri Lanka to

¹ United Nation Framework Convention on Climate Change

² Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

Djibouti, Andorra to Denmark, Yaoundé to Washington, and Bolivia to Australia, discourses on eco-catastrophe have taken the central stage. In fact, the fifth assessment IPCC report warned the international community that an increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gasses emission would result in a global climate change (IPCC, *op. cit.*). Less than two decades later, even the richest persons in almost every corner of the planet Earth are affected by the crisis.

The gravity of the crisis has inspired different efforts to environmental solutions. Scientists have invested significant energy, brainstorming on different ways of cutting down greenhouse gasses emission as well as alternative science-oriented agencies should environmental degradation prove irreversible. Demeritt (2001, p. 307) asserts that “the speed with which scientific knowledge of climate change has been translated into an international diplomatic consensus is remarkable, if not unprecedented. It is testimony to the authority of science to provide legitimacy for political actions.” However, individuals and groups are often expected to be nature-friendly, since human activities are arguably the course of our environmental challenges (King, 2004; McMichael, 2006; Pittock, 2009; Dessler & Parson, 2010). While the importance of science cannot be overemphasised, the challenge is not an exclusive reserve for the sciences. Consequently, almost every academic discipline, especially those in the humanities, can contribute significantly to environmental solutions.

Ecolinguistics, for instance, presents a linguistic perspective to the issue, and, though a relatively new domain, the contributions speak for themselves. In fact, linguistic approaches to environmental degradation have analysed environmental discussions to test Down’s model of “issue-attention cycle” (Trumbo, 1996), assessed media biases on environmental issues (Boykoff & Boykoff, 2004; Munoh, 2012; Angwah, 2019), compared variations of media coverage among nations (Brossard *et al.*, 2004; Grundmann, 2007), framed national climate change and environmental patterns based on relative national policies (Grundmann & Krishnamurthy, 2010), interrogated the stories we live by in terms of the extent to which they dredge into the fundamentals of environmental conservation, and finally assessed stakeholders’ attitudes and degree of commitments to environmental mitigation (Ereaut & Segnit, 2006; Doulton & Brown, 2009; Jamison, 2010; Angwah, 2018). Even with such energy, there is still so much to be done, especially because the world is still grappling with efforts to mitigate such eco-catastrophes as pollution, drought, climate change and global warming. Since our environmental problems are largely caused by human actions and humans are rational beings whose actions can be carefully guided towards eco-friendly tendencies, it follows that effective context-specific communication and orientation could perhaps be a better starting point to heal our planet. This is so because there are analogous situations where the global focus on macro narratives silences micro practices in non-urbanised and non-global societies. Stibbe (2015) has argued that clearly the stories we live by are not good enough to mitigate environmental hazards, and that context-specific stories could inform better ways of protecting our planet. What he did not spell out, however, are the relative cultural specificities that could inspire such

positive energy. This study is designed to fill in this gap, through the identification and analyses of some Cameroonian proverbs with eco-friendly implications and an assertion of the extent to which they could better inspire bottom-up and top-down efforts to mitigate our environmental challenges.

2. Socio-cognitive profundity of proverbs

Linguistically, proverbs are short metaphoric phrases or sentences that express the collective experiences or beliefs of a people. Mieder (1993, p. 11) argues that,

by employing proverbs in our speech we wish to strengthen our arguments, express generalisations, influence or manipulate other people, rationalize our own shortcomings, question certain behavioural patterns, satirize social ills, poke fun at ridiculous situations.

While language facilitates communication (Crystal, 2003), proverbs spruce it up. They are markers of cultural uniqueness which allow persons with the same socio-political and linguistic community to identify with common beliefs using witty phrases, clauses or sentences in the appropriate way (Levinson, 1983). Proverbs also include allegory, imagery, didacticism, permanence and universality (Honeck, 1997). Adedimeji (2003) adds that conciseness, brilliance, incisiveness, and morals are also typical characteristics of proverbs. In fact, they are well-crafted timeless expressions that recuperate a people's knowledge or strength in dealing with their daily realities.

The wisdom, inherent in proverbs, is quite convincing to people who share the same cultures. The British consider proverbs as “expressions of wisdom” (Adedimeji, 2003, p. 54), and this could suggest that those who ignore them are foolish. Alabi (2009, p. 515) argues that in typical African communities, proverbs are even more revered because they are “condensed, quintessential wisdom”. Adedimeji (2003, p. 408) has also contended that while proverbs are “relatively short expressions, which are usually associated with wisdom and used to perform a variety of functions”, Africans hold it in high esteem and believe that they are ancestrally coined to guide human actions. These findings are shared by several authors (Monye, 1996; Finnegan, 1970; Penfield & Duru, 1988). The BBC reporter, Mark Peters, in November 2016, remarked that proverbs are unavoidable in societies because they are a reflection of who we are. People with similar cultures can therefore explore such conventional wisdoms in informing positive agencies to environmental solutions.

Proverbs cut across virtually all domains of life. Fergusson (2000) makes reference to different proverbs such as those that raise hopes — “while there is life, there is hope” and “hunger is the best sauce” — and those that encourage hard work and discipline — “first come, first serve” (*op. cit.*, p. 76). Observably, African proverbs tend to be more affective, considering the moral foundation on which African societies are constructed.

Consequently, one is likely to have proverbs related to such capital virtues as “respect”, “love”, “forgiveness”, “health”, “death”, and “environment”. Ultimately, all aspects of human life enjoy proverbial backing, and this is so because they are believed, especially in post-colonial Africa, to be references of truths and conventional wisdom (Adedimeji, 2003; Alabi, 2009).

The psychological impact of proverbs has preoccupied researchers in the past years. Gibbs and Beitel (1995) proposed a conceptual-based theory in which they argued that it is easier to process the denotative than the connotative meanings of proverbs. Temple and Honeck (1999, p. 66) attest that the challenges in deconstructing the connotative implications of proverbs cannot be overemphasised because they involve “problem-solving, entailing understanding and integration of the proverb topic, discourse context, figurative meaning and speakers’ pragmatic points”. Recent efforts (Katz & Ferretti, 2003) confirm earlier claims, with the conception of the literal-first model³ (*op. cit.*). With the difficulties in deconstructing the figurative meanings of proverbs, they could pose an even bigger problem across cultures. This is perhaps why most definitions of the term lay emphasis on culture. This has far-fetched implications on the proverbial and metaphoric preferences in environmental orientations which are observably more foreign than local in most communities of the world (Stibbe, 2015), especially in Post-colonial multilingual Africa. In this study, however, we argue that one of the easiest ways of combating environmental degradation is through the exploration of context-specific proverbs about the environment, since members of shared linguistic or discourse communities effectively decode the figurative implications of their uses and could observe eco-friendly behaviours as a communal obligation.

3. Theoretical basis

This study is built on the Faircloughian three-dimensional perspective to critical discourse analysis (CDA, hereafter). Fairclough (1995) explains that every instance of language use is a communicative event consisting of three dimensions:

³ Literal-first model is based on the conception that listeners are more likely to interpret the denotative than connotative implications of statements. Recanati (2004) defines it as a combination of sentence meaning and what is said. Katz and Ferretti (2003) remark that it is the first piece of evidence available to the interpreter at the time of speaking and the point where he/she forms his/her first assumption of the speaker’s meaning. They describe it as a combination of the coded utterance and the micro-context with three major characteristics:

- 1) Literal meaning comprises the coded utterance and the micro context. It is the first piece of evidence available to the interpreter at the time of speaking and the point where they form their first assumption about the speaker’s meaning.
- 2) The macro-context is a subsequent stage of meaning interpretation where the interpreter confirms his/her first assumption about the speaker’s meaning
- 3) The process of meaning interpretation when there is an utterance is necessarily bottom-up, that is, from the intuitive phase to the discursive one. It is only top-down when there is no coded utterance, as in non-strategic silence.

- 1) it is a *text* (speech, writing, visual image, or a combination of these)
- 2) it is a *discursive practice* which involves the production and consumption of texts; and
- 3) it is a *social practice*.

Fairclough's three-dimensional model presents a framework on empirical research on communication and society. The analysis should first of all focus on the text and then on the processes related to the production and consumption of the text (discursive practice) and finally the wider social practice where the communicative event belongs (social practice), as demonstrated in the following figure.

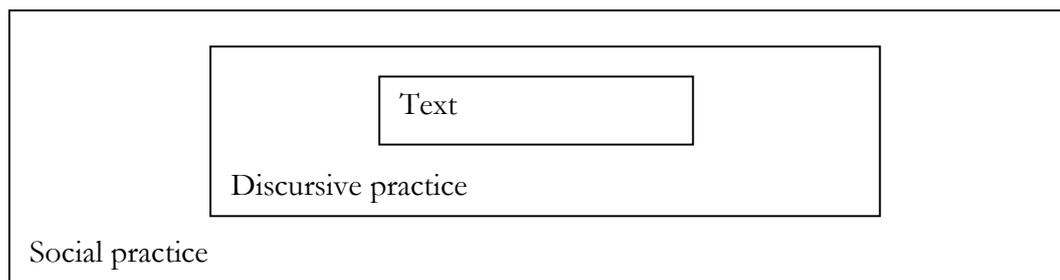


Figure 1: Fairclough's three-dimensional model for critical discourse analysis (1992, p. 73)

These three aspects and stages are inevitable in every discourse analytic process. Essentially, text analysis focuses on micro features, including such grammatical components as vocabulary, syntax and sentence coherence, which emphasise a linguistic discourse and genre realisation. The correlation between texts and social practices is arbitrated by discursive practice, and both texts and social practices influence each other. Consequently, societies design their proverbs based on their realities and the proverbs in turn inspire their actions across generation.

4. Methodology

The data for this study came from three carefully selected African websites⁴ which have all had a relatively lengthy record of documenting different elements of orature⁵ from different parts of the world. From these sites, eleven proverbs with environmental

⁴ First, there is *Inspirational Stories: The Power of Words*, which is a world class website of inspirational stories, poems, quotations and proverbs, from different continents and countries of the world (<https://www.inspirationalstories.com/about/>).

Second, we got some proverbs from *African Proverbs in African Literature* which is a critical resource base of proverbs and their interpretations from North, West, South, East and Central Africa. (<https://proverbsafricanliterature.wordpress.com/country-profile/central-africa/cameroon/>).

Finally, there is *Mama Lisa's Blog* which is website for poems, songs, rhymes, proverbs and traditions from around the world for both kids and grown-ups. (<https://www.mamalisa.com/blog/proverbs-wise-sayings-from-cameroon/>).

⁵ Orature: a body of poetry, proverbs, myths, songs, tales, legends, etc., of a particular culture, preserved through oral performances.

connotations were selected for this study. The following are the proverbs that were considered for analyses.

Table 1: A composition of proverbs

A blind person knows his environment more than a visitor with eyes.	What a man can be is born with him; what he becomes is a result of his environment.
Good food is not eaten on a dirty plate.	Large trees are envied by the wind.
He who sits in the shade won't take an axe to the tree.	An old man plants a tree to shade his children.
A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit.	If you harvest your fruits before they are ripe, you will never know the taste of good fruits.
During a storm you seek shelter under a tree and not the clouds.	If you want to lean on a tree, first make sure it can hold you.
The tree that is not taller than you cannot shade you.	

All the eleven proverbs were taken from the Cameroonian chapters of the three websites considered for the study. Only proverbs with literal affiliations to issues related to the environment passed for this study.

200 Cameroonians, in the city of Yaoundé⁶ served as informants for this study. In essence, two major sociolinguistic variables (gender and age) were considered in the selection of the informants. 100 of the informants were females and 50% of the female informants were above 30 while the rest were below 30. This was also the case with the male informants. Age variation was considered relevant because it permitted us to find out if there were any differences or similarities in the interpretations across generations. All the informants were English-speaking with variant competencies in French and they were randomly selected without any recourse to their backgrounds or levels of education. Competency in English was very important because the proverbs were all in English and the informants were expected to understand and react to them as such.

In the analyses of the data, we focused on both the literal and the figurative meanings. First the informants were asked to state all possible meanings they could make of the proverbs, and second, whether the superficial eco-friendliness of the proverbs reminds them of the importance of environmental conservation or not. Finally, they were asked to state their beliefs about environmental degradation and conservation.

5. Results

5.1. Informants' interpretations of proverbs

The informants were asked to provide varied meanings of the eleven proverbs. The primary

⁶ Yaoundé is the capital of Cameroon, and it is cosmopolitan in nature. All cultures in the country are represented there.

focus was on the literal and the figurative meanings. While 133 informants began with the literal meanings of the proverbs, before the figurative, 33 others started with the figurative and moved on to the literal. 30 other informants began by expressing uncertainties and then ended up stating both the literal and figurative meanings, taking first-literal interpretation to 163. Figure 1 shows the variation, with literal-figurative being the most likely followed by figurative-literal and then uncertainty-literal-figurative.

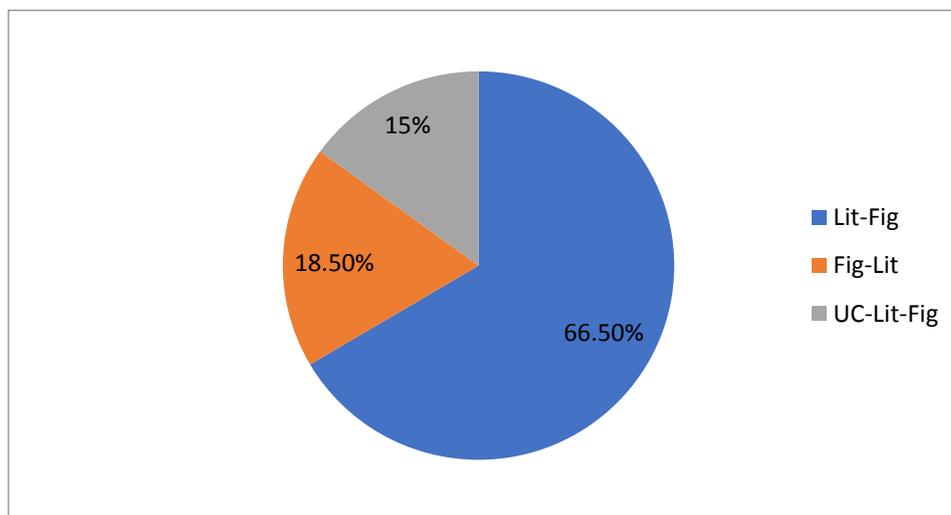


Figure 2: Interpretation of proverbs

This finding was accompanied by the informants' belief that proverbs are wise sayings with meanings far above the literal meanings (100%). This particular conviction asserts the original conjecture that Cameroonians — and indeed Africans — have an effective understanding of proverbs. Their identification of proverbs with wisdom shows the impact of proverbs on their perception and deconstruction of ideas.

5.2. Literal and figurative interpretations of proverbs

Besides the macro literal and non-literal interpretations, the informants had different micro figurative interpretations of the proverbs. In this section, we analyse their literal and figurative impressions about the proverbs we tested.

The informants expressed an affectionate correlation between humans and the environment. This was the case with the following two proverbs.

- (1) A blind person knows his environment more than a visitor with eyes
- (2) What a man can be is born with him; what he becomes is a result of his environment.

Superficially, the environment in these two proverbs complements human existence. In other words, humans are the fruits of the environment. This surface interpretation was

shared by 83% of the informants. Others argued that the environment is one of the most powerful forces that control the world. With reference to example (2), the informants were unanimous that everyone is a reflection of their environment. Connotatively, they had different interpretations of the proverbs, but the most remarkable interpretation accorded to proverb (1) was in line with personal possession and justice. In fact, some of the informants argued that one does not really need eyes to know whether something is theirs or not and that a thief even with both eyes cannot possess what does not belong to them. With regard to the second proverb, most of the informants attributed it to good deeds. Environment in this sense represents virtually everything around us, including a worthy bond with neighbours and loved ones. The stories⁷ embedded in these two proverbs, therefore, project the environment as a necessary part of human existence. Consequently, to be in a good and healthy state, society must take good care of the environment as expressed in example (3), a superficial proposition shared by all the informants.

(3) Good food is not eaten on a dirty plate.

There were, however, three interpretations of proverb (3). The first wave of figurative interpretations aligned with spirituality. 45% of the informants felt that no matter how talented one could be, they would not succeed if God does not abide in them, and that God does not live in dirty places. 37% tilted more towards personality and character. To them, the physical is only beautiful if it is backed up by positive character. The remaining 18% attributed it to character, morality and social association. In other words, they felt that a good person does not associate with persons who are of morally doubtful character. This proverb evokes the fundamental essentials of asepsis to moralise society.

The informants also saw the dire need for environmental sustenance, considering their superficial interpretations of the following proverbs.

- (4) He who sits in the shade won't take an axe to the tree.
- (5) An old man plants a tree to shade his children.
- (6) A society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit.

All the informants had the same superficial interpretations of the above three proverbs. They all associated them to environmental protection. In all three examples, the tree is metaphorically a shelter, and considering the incontrovertible importance of shelter to humans, the proverbs readily spell out the importance of a tree in human societies. The informants identified the technically suggested generational responsibilities which accord

⁷ Stibbe (2015, p. 3) remarks that by story, we do not mean the ones “told in novels, read to children at bedtime, shared around a fire, or conveyed through anecdotes in formal speeches. Instead they exist behind and between the lines of the texts that surround us.” In other words, stories are the embedded or deep intentions or truths, inherent in propositions.

every adult human the responsibility to plant trees to ensure a better environment for their children. Figuratively, a significant proportion of the informants also shared similar standpoints on the three proverbs. In fact, in relation to proverb (4), most (83%) of the figurative interpretations tilted more towards the protection of sources of livelihood. In other words, the informants felt that no one could fairly destroy things that sustain them. The remaining 17% of the informants associated the proverb to guidance and support, which technically reechoes the story inherent in the first proposition. Similarly, proverb (5) was interpreted in two ways. Even at that, there were informants who identified with both ways through multiple efforts and interpretations. 88% of the informants, besides other interpretations, associated this proverb to human and physical investments, through education which parents use to empower their children and properties they will to them, upon their death. 22% of the informants insisted more on discipline, which most of the other informants also identified with.

Environmental conservation was equally the most popular superficial interpretation of proverbs (7), (8), (9), (10) and (11). The surface messages were readily evident, giving their considerations of the messages word for word. Consequently, their surface interpretations, as expected, express the environmental concerns inherent in the respective proverbs.

- (7) Large trees are envied by the wind.
- (8) During a storm you seek shelter under a tree and not the clouds.
- (9) If you want to lean on a tree, first make sure it can hold you.
- (10) If you harvest your fruits before they are ripe, you will never know the taste of good fruits.
- (11) The tree that is not taller than you cannot shade you.

The figurative interpretations, however, were slightly different, but with analogous undertones. Proverb (7), for example, was largely interpreted in relation to envy. The informants who shared this proposition were of the opinion that “large trees” are successful or thriving people while “the wind” is the distraction, which is largely prominent in envious people. Logically, therefore, the proverb to them read as “successful or thriving persons are envied by jealous persons”. This belief was shared by all the informants. Indeed, it blends so well with its superficial meaning, since humans “envy” and cut down good trees in order to use their trunks for woodworks or wood.

Example (8) also enjoyed a unique interpretation. While all the informants interpreted it in terms of the supports they get from successful and concerned persons, 73% of them made specific references to human relations, and 27% made reference to God. Consequently, trees are significantly endowed with Godly features, and if they are cut off, a fairly considerable part of humanity is cut off. Such inferences enjoy a certain degree of environmental awareness.

There is, therefore, the dire need to ensure that trees grow enough to support humanity as expressed in proverb (9). All the informants interpreted proverb (9) in relation to sowing

before reaping. 56% of them, however, argued that one must work hard to expect a good pay. 33% interpreted it in relation to prayers and expectations from God — when you pray, you must give God time to answer at his own time. 11% of the informants made references to new opportunities or experiences. To them, one must make sure new experiences in different adventures such as business and careers are extremely worth the efforts before they get into them.

Proverbs (10) and (11) were superficially interpreted in terms of the dire need to give nature, especially trees, an opportunity to grow so they can serve such multiple human desires as shelter, clothing and food. Figuratively, 76% of the informants aligned it to patience in virtually everything. 19% attributed it to rational interpretation of and reaction to ideas. 5% ascribed it to doing things at the right age and time. This last group of persons felt that things that are done prematurely sometimes end up badly. These interpretations lay much emphasis on patience as indeed proverb (11) which, contrary to proverb (10), was interpreted in relation to dependence on bigger or stronger forces. A tree in this light is considered extremely important for sustainable development, since it is attributed spiritual powers.

6. Cognitive stimulation of eco-friendly proverbs

While the informants' literal interpretations of the proverbs largely slanted towards environmental conservation, the figurative implications significantly anchored on morality which, in a way, also encourages eco-friendly tendencies. Besides the interpretations, the informants were also asked to say why they thought nature or environmentally sensitive issues were used to communicate different moral messages. In all, there were three major thoughts, elicited from the informants' responses. While all the informants shared the conviction that nature is important, 79% of them were very specific, considering their belief that nature is unavoidable in human existence. 13% of the informants, while also acknowledging the importance of environment, appealed to typical Cameroonian cultures that project different aspects of culture such as trees, earth and rivers. The remaining 8% also acknowledged that nature is extremely important but were quite specific in the identification of environmental catastrophes as proof of nature's strength on planet Earth which has served as a major muss that inspires morality. These three opinions readily align with environmental conservative tendencies that could inspire more effective bottom-up agencies to environmental solutions.

Generally, the communicative contents of proverbs are embedded in the figurative sense, and it could be weird to interpret them solely in the literal sense. Consequently, it was necessary to find out from the informants' beliefs about environmental degradation and whether, even with the idiomatic pedestal of proverbs, their superficial sense reminds them of environmental conservation. The informants were asked how they felt about environmental degradation and they all decried such effects as flooding and climate change. 47% of the informants, however, acknowledge humans' contributions to the challenges

through poorly disposed waste and unplanned constructions. 53% blamed government, since, for the most part, government employs officials, who are normally supposed to take up such initiatives, and also issue building permits, after close inspection of building sites and projects. With regard to whether the eleven proverbs we tested could readily remind them of the dire need for environmental conservation even when their meanings are not superficial, the informants' responses are summarised in the following three-Likert-scale diagram.

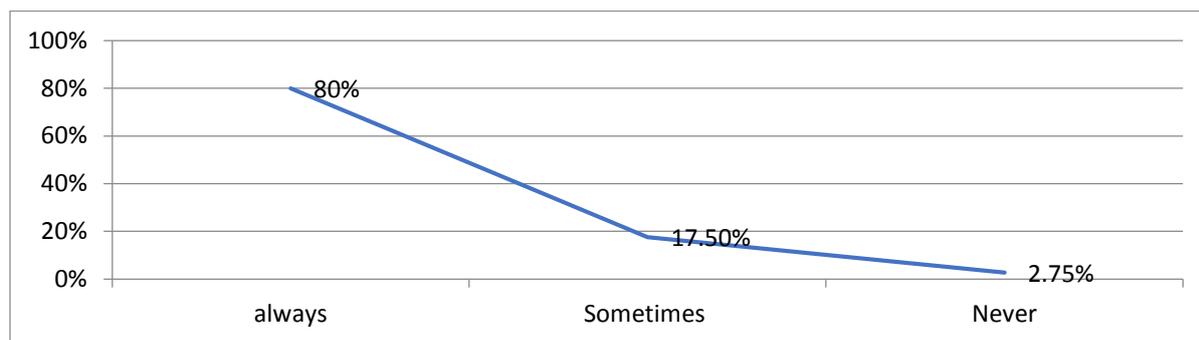


Figure 3: Cognitive stimulation of eco-friendly proverbs

Figure 3 is a descriptive presentation of the informants' rating of the kind of impact eco-friendly proverbs have on them. We, however, noticed that 55% (88) of those who were readily stimulated by the eco-friendly implications of the proverbs were males; more females (65.71% (23)) sometimes interpret the figurative and not the superficial meanings. The 2% (5) of the male informants who claimed they never see the literal but the figurative meanings argued that thinking about it may delay or hamper communication. While this argument is fair enough, especially because the superficial meanings are not the intended meanings, the informants' interpretations of the proverbs in Section 5.2 above show that their figurative interpretations, though largely affectionate, emphasise responsible behaviour which is extremely necessarily for eco-conservation. The following table shows a further categorisation in the cognitive stimulation of eco-friendly proverbs in relation to gender and age.

Table 2: Cognitive stimulation of eco-friendly proverbs in relation to gender and age

	Male		Female		R. Frq (%)
	Age (30)	(%)	Age (30)	(%)	
Always	>	53.26	>	46.74	160 (80)
	<	57.35	<	42.65	
Sometimes	>	40	>	60	35 (17.5)
	<	32	<	68	
Never	>	100	>	00	5 (2.75)
	<	00	<	00	
T. Frq (%)		105 (52.5)		95 (47.5)	200 (100)

Clearly, the older informants were more likely to interpret the eco-conservation in the proverbs than the younger informants, though the relative percentage tilted more towards the younger male informants. From the relative frequency and percentages (R. Frq (%)) above, we quickly notice that the majority (80%) are more likely to identify the eco-relevance of the proverbs, and this could be quite helpful in orientating environmentally friendly attitudes. All the informants identified their roles in environmental degradation, and also shared the belief for effective practical bottom-up agencies to our environmental problems.

7. Conclusion

With the life-threatening effects of environmental degradation in the 21st century, there is the dire need for more creative approaches in solving our environmental problems. In this paper, I explored the ecosophical inferences of some Cameroonian proverbs to find out the socio-cognitive implications they could have on Cameroonians of different ages and genders. The results revealed a relatively higher level of awareness of environmental dilapidation and the dire need for attainable solutions. From the feedback, elicited from the 200 informants we sampled, we noticed that eco-friendly proverbs readily remind Cameroonians of their roles in environmental challenges through the illogical felling of trees and the incivility in the management of waste. Consequently, orientating positive environmental agencies in Cameroon through context-specific stories can guide national and international policies on environmental conservation.

References

- Adedimeji, M. A. (2003). The semantics and pragmatics of Nigerian proverbs in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame*. *Journal of Alore*, 1(3), 54-79.
- Alabi, V. A. (2009). Syntactic and lexico-semantic structures of proverbs in Achebe's and Adimora-Ezeigbo's trilogies. In: A. Odeunmi, A. E. Arua, & S. Arimi (Eds.), *Language, gender and politics: A festschrift for Yisa Kehinde Yusuf* (pp. 515-530). Lagos: Concept Publications.
- Angwah, J. (2018). *Stances in West African and Asian climate change discourses: A corpus-based appraisal*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Yaoundé I.
- Angwah, J. (2019). Media discourses and communal stances on climate change in Cameroon. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 9(14), 17-22.
- Boykoff, M. T., & Boykoff, J. M. (2004). Balance as bias: Global warming and the US prestige press. *Global Environmental Change*, 14(2), 125-136.
- Brossard, D., Shanahan, J., & McComas, K. (2004). Are issue-cycles culturally constructed? A comparison of French and American coverage of global climate change. *Mass Communication and Society*, 7(3), 359-377.

- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a global language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Demeritt, D. (2001). The construction of global warming and the politics of science. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 91(2), 307-337.
- Dessler, A. E., & Parson, E. A. (2010). *The science and politics of global climate change: A guide to the debate* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Doulton, H., & Brown, K. (2009). Ten years to prevent catastrophe? Discourses of climate change and international development in the UK press. *Global Environmental Change*, 19(2), 191-202.
- Ereaut, G., & Segnit, N. (2006). Warm words: How are we telling the climate story and can we tell it better? *Institute of Public Policy Research*, 13(6), 6-18.
- Fairclough, N. (1992). *Discourse and social change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis*. London: Longman.
- Fergusson, R. (2000). *The Penguin dictionary of proverbs* (2nd ed.). London: Penguin Books.
- Finnegan, R. (1970). *Oral literature in Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Gibbs, R. W., & Beitel, D. (1995). What proverb understanding reveals about how people think. *Psychological Bulletin*, 118(1), 133-154.
- Grundmann, R. (2007). Climate change and knowledge politics. *Environmental Politics*, 16(3), 414-432.
- Grundmann, R., & Krishnamurthy, R. (2010). The discourse of climate change: A corpus-based approach. *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis across Disciplines*, 4(2), 113-133.
- Honeck, R. P. (1997). *A proverb in mind: The cognitive science of proverbial wit and wisdom*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- IPCC (2014). Climate change 2014 synthesis report. In: Core Writing Team, R. K. Pachauri, & L. A. Meyer (Eds.), *Climate change 2014: Synthesis report. Contribution of Working Groups I, II and III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (151 pp.). Geneva: IPCC.
- Jamison, A. (2010). Climate change knowledge and social movement theory. *WIREs Climate Change*, 1(6), 811-823.
- Katz, A. N., & Ferretti, T. R. (2003). Reading proverbs in context: The role of explicit markers. *Discourse Processes*, 36(1), 19-46.
- King, D. (2004). Climate change science: Adapt, mitigate, or ignore? *Science*, 303(5655), 176-177.
- Levinson, S. (1983). *Pragmatics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McMichael, A. J. (2006). Population health as the 'bottom line' of sustainability: A contemporary challenge for public health researchers. *The European Journal of Public Health*, 16(6), 579-581.
- Mieder, W. (1993). *Proverbs are never out of season: Popular wisdom in the modern age*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Monye, A. A. (1996). *Proverbs in African orature: The Aniocha-Igbo experience*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Munoh, A. (2012). *Media discourse on forest depletion and climate change in Cameroon: A case study*

- of Cameroon Tribune and The Post newspaper*. Unpublished Masters thesis, University of Yaoundé I.
- Penfield, J., & Duru, M. (1988). Proverbs: Metaphors that teach. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 61(3), 119-128.
- Pittock, A. B. (2009). *Climate change: The science, impacts and solutions* (2nd ed.). Clayton, VIC: CSIRO Publishing
- Recanati, F. (2004). *Literal meaning*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stibbe, A. (2015). *Ecolinguistics: Language, ecology and the stories we live by*. London: Routledge.
- Temple, J. G., & Honeck, R. P. (1999). Proverb comprehension: The primacy of literal meaning. *Journal of Psycholinguistic Research*, 28(1), 41-70.
- Trumbo, C. (1996). Constructing climate change: Claims and frames in US news coverage of an environmental issue. *Public Understanding of Science*, 5(3), 269-283.