

---

---

## AFRREV LALIGENS

An International Journal of Language, Literature and Gender Studies  
Bahir Dar, Ethiopia  
Vol. 1 (2) April-July, 2012:127-148

ISSN: 2225-8604(Print)

ISSN 2227-5460 (Online)

---

---

### **The Decline of Proverbs as a Creative Oral Expression: A Case Study of Proverb Usage among the Ondo in the South Western Part of Nigeria**

**Akinmade, C. Arinola, PhD**

Department of English

University of Jos, Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria

E-mail : [arinakinmade@yahoo.com](mailto:arinakinmade@yahoo.com)

#### **Abstract**

*It cannot be disputed that proverbs occupy a very central position in creative art. It is deployed in many societies to bring peace where there is hatred, particularly during the settlement of conflicts, disputes and misunderstandings; to facilitate pardon where there is injury, to engender faith where there is doubt, to bring hope where there is despair and light where there is darkness in human relationships, activities and interactions. That creativity is evident through the numerous ways in which proverbs are used, is not in doubt. The value of proverbs is encapsulated in this Yoruba proverb: 'Owe l'esin oro; bi oro ba s'onu, owe ni a fi nwa a' meaning 'A proverb is a horse which can carry you swiftly (just like creative reflective thinking) to the discovery of ideas sought'. Furthermore, the Ibo culture sees 'proverbs as the palm oil with which words are eaten'. However the question had been raised at several quarters whether the use of this very creative oral*

*art has been on the increase or on the decline in human societies. To provide a rational response to this important question, this paper presents a report of the findings of a study on the decline of the use of proverbs and subsequently suggests ways to strengthen and popularize the use of proverbs in the society.*

### **Introduction**

In traditional African societies, proverbs have been and will continue to be of immense advantage to man. It is the most powerful and potent vehicle for culture dissemination from one generation to the other. Proverbs express the nature of African wisdom as they perform diverse functions ranging from bringing peace where there is hatred, especially during conflict resolution and misunderstandings, giving hope where there is despair and light where there is darkness in human relationships, activities and interactions. The numerous ways in which proverbs are used are evidences of humanistic artistic creativity. Hence, proverbs are so valuable in African culture, including Ondo culture of the south-west of Nigeria that their preservation is of paramount importance. According to Dalfovo:

The preservation of proverbs is particularly crucial because the few words forming them can easily be forgotten, and with them, the abundant wisdom they contain. “Two thousand years ago Aristotle wrote of proverbs as fragments of ancient wisdom preserved amid wreck and ruin for their brevity and aptness”. The “fragmentary” nature of proverbs increases the likelihood of their being lost in the wreckage of change (7).

For creative purposes, African writers use proverbs profusely in their works. Bernth Lindfors points out that:

Achebe’s proverbs can serve as keys to an understanding of his novels because he uses them not merely to add touches of local colour but to sound and reiterate themes, to sharpen characterization, to clarify conflicts, and to focus on the values of the society he is portraying. Proverbs thus provide a “grammar of values by which the deeds of a hero can be measured and evaluated (50-51).

Many other writers deploy proverbs consciously or unconsciously to concretize their message to their readers as well as portray their culture. The

above shows how important proverbs are to creativity. Being a viable ingredient of creative use of language, proverbs serve as building blocks that writers deploy to send their message across to their audience in a clear and picturesque way. This also shows that proverbs are very significant ingredients of language dissemination. Hence their usage should be preserved.

For the avoidance of doubt, it is important to conceptualize what we mean by proverbs.

They are common characteristic of both formal and informal expressiveness in many African cultures, including Nigeria. In view of the fact that “kola nut matures in the mouth of the elder”, proverbs are used mainly by them because of the vintage position they occupy in the African society. However, there is the need for the younger generation to take advantage of this wisdom expressed by elders.

There are as many definitions to the concept of proverb as there are paremiographers. Nevertheless, the rudimentary belief is that a proverb is an adage, a saying in more or less fixed form marked by shortness, sense and salt and distinguished by popular acceptance of truth tersely expressed in it. Webster’s New Universal Unabridged Dictionary (1972) defines a proverb as a “short saying in common use expressing a well known truth or common fact ascertained by experience.” The Chambers Dictionary (1998) describes a proverb as “a short familiar saying expressing a supposed truth or moral lesson, a byword; a saying that requires explanation.... a book of maxims in the Old Testament; a dramatic composition in which a proverb gives a name and character to a plot. From the above definitions, it could be said that a proverb is any wise saying or epigram that converts the central idea in a given context, objectively and truthfully. Defining *owe* (proverb) of Ondo culture, Akinmade (2005) says a proverb is:

the metaphorical horse in popular and approved saying which carries one beyond the surface meaning of a saying, to discover the truth of ideas; it is an in-depth, carefully selected provocative thought which either commends, advises, rebukes or warns a person or thing to which it is applied (60).

For example an Ondo proverb that may be used for advising says.

A ko sig'onen "ato" e mu pa i

First firewood that one fetches it is used for foundation.

Literally, this means that the first firewood one fetches is usually used for the foundation on which other woods will be placed.

Similarly, another one that warns says:

Onen ye n'oogun adoado e e gb'ayiyan win.

Whoever does not have the antidote for "adoado" (a terrible disease) must not swallow a cockroach.

### **Functions of Proverbs**

Proverbs function in diverse ways as pointed out in the above definition. The significance of proverbs cannot be over-estimated. Nketia succinctly portrays the value of proverb when he commented on Ghanaian proverbs:

The value of the proverb to us in modern Ghana does not lie only in what it reveals of the thoughts of the past. For the poet today or indeed for the speaker who is some sort of an artist in the use of words, the proverb is a model of compressed or forceful language. In addition to drawing on it for its words of wisdom, therefore, he takes selection of words, its use of comparison as a method of statement, and so on. Familiarity with its techniques enables him to create, as it were, his own proverbs. This enables him to avoid hackneyed expressions and give a certain amount of freshness (Creativity) to his speech (21).

Proverbs are an essential part of the conversation in everyday life. They comprise the condensed experience of past generations expressed in flowery language and they perform diverse functions. Like other genres of folklore, they perform the functions of an impersonal medium for personal communication. They are used to guide and direct the behaviour or thought of a child or an individual. Proverbs are deployed in many African societies to sue for peace where hatred abides especially while settling conflicts and misunderstandings. Proverbs are deployed in court:

to smooth over disagreements or bring a dispute to a close.  
According to the Yoruba, "A counsellor who understands

proverbs soon sets matters right, and a difficult law case is often ended by public citation of an apt proverb which performs much the same generalizing function as citing legal precedents in other societies (Finnegan, 409).

Furthermore, proverbs are utilized to advise, rebuke, or praise. They can also be used as a comment or persuasion. Proverbs educate, warn, ridicule, console, encourage, resolve conflicts and perform legal functions. Judging from the diverse functions of proverbs and the fact that “there is no conceivable situation in life for which the proverbial wisdom of the Chinese (Ondo) cannot furnish some apposite citation (Kelso, 415), creative writers use them in a deliberate search for appropriate language for “their work”, a style that will not only suit “their” subject and evoke the right cultural milieu but will also help to define the moral issues with which the “work” is concerned (Bernth Lindfors, 50).

Amali (2000) remarked that:

Proverbial lore is therefore a mirror through which we can catch a glimpse and realities of the peoples past and present. Another important function of proverbs in oral and rural Nigeria which we are not to lose sight of is the ability of proverbs to entertain its audience and appropriately throw light on a complex matter. Thus, proverbs aptly employed are seen to resolve critical and vulnerable issues in great traditional debates in Africa... (vi).

The above functions of proverbs make them very viable tools in the hands of creative writers most especially as a basic ornament for their work.

### **Problem Statement**

From their origin, proverbs have experienced a lot of mutations. This is because at various times in the history of proverbs, they have been received at certain times and rejected at another, only to be accepted again. There are evidences that proverbs thrived in China, Egypt, Greece, Rome, and Sumeria. They were even considered the “seed-pot” of Greek philosophy. Writers cited proverbs incessantly during the medieval period. In fact, during the 16<sup>th</sup> and part of the 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, proverbs constituted the basic ornament in the equipment of any writer, speaker or orator of fashion. Wilson corroborated the above when he remarked: “The proverb was an important figure in

rhetorical training and the many collections of proverbs published in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries provided materials for dramatists and pamphleteers, politicians, orators and preachers”.

In fact during this period, almost everybody ranging from scholars, courtiers and writers to the Queen herself spoke and wrote in proverbs and some even tried to coin them. Proverbs were very common because writing was still under the influence of orators who used them on account of the “sweet relished phrases” which were fascinating to the eyes and ears of people of that time.

The early 16<sup>th</sup> century was a glorious period in the development of proverbs as this was when the *Adagia* of Erasmus (1500) was published. These publications really exemplified the views and beliefs of classical philosophers and were voraciously taken in by an audience which was eager for both knowledge and novelty. In France too, the eighteenth century witnessed the growth of proverbs *dramatique*, a genre which was started by Madame de Maintenon in the 17<sup>th</sup> century but was fully developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> by Alfred Musset.

Nevertheless, in spite of the popularity of proverbs and other aphoristic saying, proverbs began to decline in to “vulgar sayings”. According to Wilson, by 1707, derogatory remarks on proverbs began. By 1741, Lord Chesterfield (Philip Dormer Stanhope, an English statesman and writer), is reported to have written to his illegitimate son Philip Stanhope that “a man of fashion never had recourse to proverbs”. In a similar vein, in her *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), Jane Austen dismissed proverbs as “gross and liberal” while Richard D. Blackmore, in *Perlycross* described proverbs as “reckless maxims of worthy grand sires”.

However, despite the so many discouraging utterances about proverbs, this genre still survived and continued to play significant roles in the literature of the 18<sup>th</sup> century English and contemporary American Societies. By 1723, the American statesman, painter, scientist and writer, Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790), drew attention to himself by using proverbs freely. Hence, it would not be an overstatement to conclude that the 18<sup>th</sup> century had gone down history as a period of mixed blessings for proverbs as they were popularly accepted though at the same time suffered diminishing fame only to pick up again during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Despite the antagonistic attitudes of individuals to proverbs in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the following year witnessed writers such as

Walter Scott (1771-1832), Charles Dickens (1812-1928), James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1852) and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1830) using proverbs in their works. In addition, William Carew Haslitt in his desire to preserve English verbal art, published *English Proverbs and Proverbial Phrases* in 1882.

Similarly, Apperson (1929), Ronald Ridout and Clifford Witting (1967) and F.P. Wilson (1970) publications were worthy of note.

It is heart-warming to note that in both contemporary English and American cultures as well as elsewhere, proverbs are employed in day-to-day speeches, writings, conversations and debates. Commenting on the status of proverbs in villages in the westernized world, Dorson remarked that:

In spite of the accelerated pace of modern living which seems to strike at our roots and very identity, the folklorist marvels at the tenacity of tradition. Veer off the main highway for a little distance and civilization of socket ships and automation suddenly melts away... the old folklore still continues with undiminished vitality (278).

Buttressing the above, Kirk-Greene observed "... It is only among older or country fold can the remarkable wealth of English proverbial lore still be enjoyed" (1966: x)

In spite of the fact that country folks the world over are impermeable to change, technology has, in itself had a remarkable impact on not only the collection of oral literature but also on its preservation. This has been made possible by the use of tape-recorders and other electronic media. Apart from the above, proverbs are also kept alive because as some are branded old-fashioned and obsolete, "wholly new ones from modern democratic and industrial times are finding a place too" (Ridout & Witting 1967: 14).

In Africa and particularly in Nigeria, the problem facing the growth of proverbs is rather generic than individualistic. This is due to the fact that while old folds are making efforts to preserve and use proverbs, the young ones regard them as relic of the barbarism from which the continent is still emerging. As a matter of fact, experience shows that young natives in Ondo hardly employ proverbs. In fact, in a situation where by those young people know some proverbs; their application poses a big problem. Buttressing the above, Ojo Arewa & Dundes gave an account of a youth from the Eastern

part of the Nigeria, a student at the University of California who admitted. “I know proverbs but I don’t know how to apply them because “his western oriented education in Nigeria had cut him off from the use of proverbs” (70).

Culturally too, certain African societies have restrictions regarding the class of people who could use proverbs. Hence, a youth may be interested in proverbs but the societal restrictions may debar him from employing them as a means of communication especially with elders. A good example is the Yoruba culture; it is believed that proverbs are words of wisdom of the elders. Thus, a young person wishing to communicate in proverbs will first of all take permission from the elder by saying “Toto se bi owe” (i.e. with due respect).

Today, however, there is an increasing awareness that proverbs constitute a genre of oral literature worth studying. Indeed, African oral literature particularly, is fast gaining grounds as literature as ... There is the consensus that there is nowhere in the world where proverbs are more prevalent and play a more significant and active role than among the black Africans. This point is buttressed by Ida Ward: for all its urgent urbanization, in Africa, the blood of the proverbs still flows in the veins of man’s daily life” (Kirk-Greene 1966xi). The awareness that proverbs constitute a genre of oral literature worthy of scholarly research is gaining ground. As Andrzejewski rightly puts it, African oral literature is “taking its place alongside other literature of the world” (45). It is no wonder therefore that Nketia, Ojo Arewa, D.T Nwoga, Olowo Ojoade, O.O. Amali, Bello Bada, to mention just a few, have collected proverbs of various communities in Africa. Furthermore, native writers such Chinua Achebe, Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka, Efua Sutherland and many African writers strewn their works with proverbs of the various people of Africa in their creative writings. It must not be forgotten also that new proverbs are being coined every day. For example, with the invention and application of the computer in recent times, the proverb “gabbage in, gabbage out” had been coined.

The logical question that arises and which inspired this study is: Are owe Ondo declining or progressing? Bergsma once observed that “... many youngsters have not learned the use of proverbs because they have been to school or away from home for extended periods and have thus lost touch with archaic usages” (15). This study is carried out to partly test Bergsma’s hypothesis and also to verify the authenticity of his view and determine if his position is applicable to Ondo youngsters and other categories of people.

### **Purpose of Study**

It may be true that old proverbs are declining but it is equally true that new ones are being coined on a daily basis. The question is whether the use of proverbs is on the decline in Ondo culture. This study was undertaken to find an answer to this question and also determine the perceived importance of proverbs, the factors accounting for the decline of proverbs (if any) and what can be done to popularise their use.

### **Methodology**

This was a pilot study designed to explore the use or otherwise of proverbs among a cross section of indigenes of Ondo municipal community. A total of two hundred (200) subjects completed the Proverb Usage Questionnaire (PUQ). The Sample consists of NCE, HND and degree holders, different categories of Junior and Senior Secondary School teachers. The ages of the respondents range from 25 years to 60 years. Their occupations include teaching, marketing, banking, farming and business management. The PUQ is divided into two major sections. Section one requests demographic information of the respondents while the second section sought information on the significance of proverbs in Ondo culture, specific use of proverbs, factors that facilitate and hinder the usage of this creative art and suggestions for promoting the use of proverbs. The PUQ was validated by two experts in Oral Literature and found appropriate for use.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

- What is the perception of Ondo community on the importance of proverbs?
- To what extent are proverbs used for daily living?
- Is the use of proverbs on the decline during the last five years (or in recent times)?
- What can be done to promote the use of proverbs?

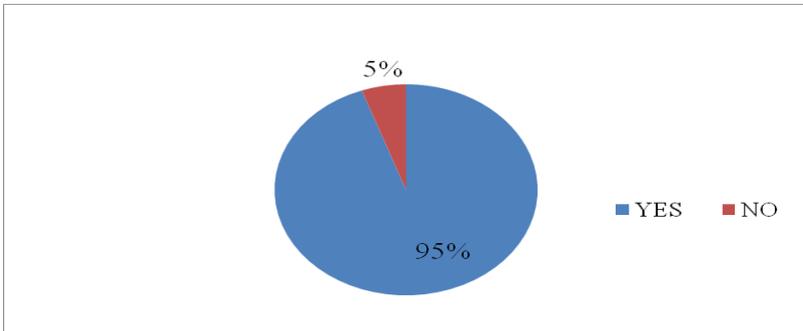
The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and other descriptive methods.

### The Findings

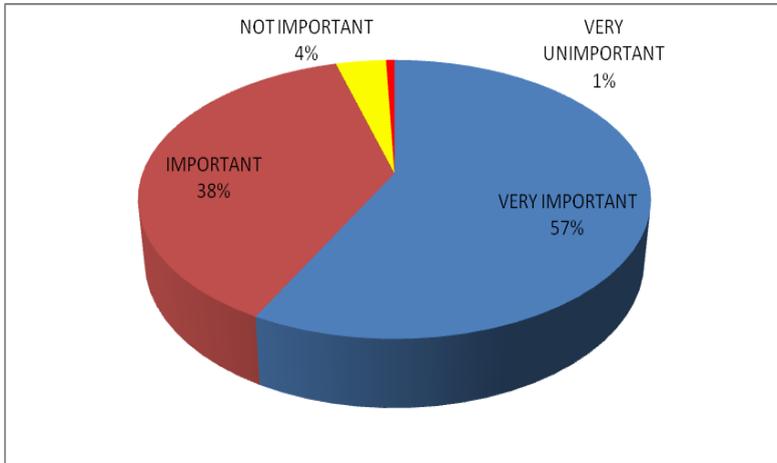
Research Question One: What is the perception of Ondo Community on the importance of Proverbs?

A total of one hundred and sixty four respondents provided data for answering this question. One hundred and fifty five of the sample considered proverbs as an important part of Ondo culture, while only nine of the respondents felt that proverbs were not important. The Pie Chart diagram in figure One illustrates the responses to this question.

Another item on the questionnaire requested the participants to rate the importance they attach to proverbs on a four-point scale. The result shows that 57% of the sample rated proverbs very important, 38% rated proverbs as important; 4% considered proverbs not important while only 1% adjudged proverbs very unimportant (see Figure 2). When considered together, the responses to these two questionnaire items showed that proverbs were considered as a significant aspect of Ondo culture.



**Figure 1: The Importance of Proverbs in Ondo Culture**

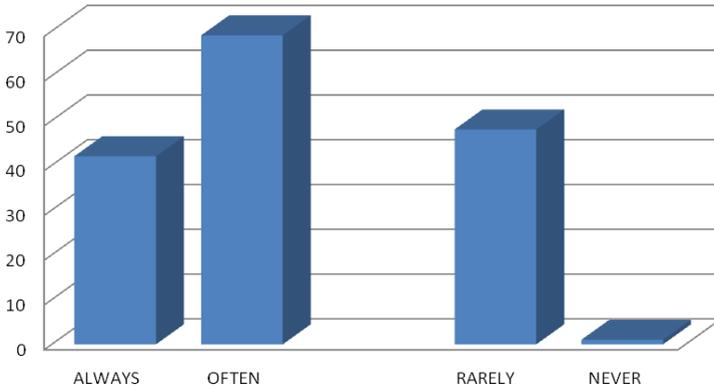


**Figure 2: The Relative Importance of Proverbs in Ondo Culture**

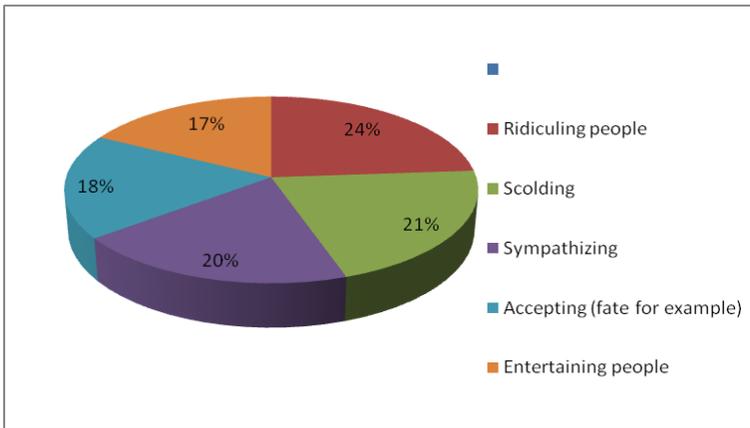
**Research Question Two:** To what extent are proverbs used for daily living in Ondo community?

The data collected from six different questionnaire items were used to respond to this research question. The data suggest that 42 respondents used proverbs **always**; 69 use proverbs **often**, 48 **rarely** use proverbs while 1 **never** uses proverbs (see Figure 3a). Those who reported that they use proverbs, employed these wise sayings most frequently for the following purposes: ridiculing, scolding, sympathizing, settling of quarrels, encouragement, providing advice, praising, rebuking, educating and commiserating (see Figure 3b). On the other hand, the respondents reported that they rarely use proverbs as bearers of philosophical insight, for entertainment and apologizing for wrong doing.

The data further revealed that proverbs are most commonly used by chiefs, illiterates, ward heads, church leaders, preachers and market women, most especially the aged. On the other hand, teachers **often** use proverbs while youths **rarely** use proverbs for daily living.



**Figure 3a: Frequency of the use of Proverb**



**Figure 4: The Most Common Uses of Proverbs**

**Research Question Three:** Is the use of proverbs on the decline during the last 5 years?

One hundred and thirty three respondents provided an answer to this question. One hundred and five of them (79%) answered in the affirmative while a negligible 21% said the use of proverbs was not on the decline.

Figure 4 illustrates the two distinct positions of the respondents on this issue. As to the reasons why proverbs are on the decline, the following quotes from the respondents' answers are quite revealing:

“Those who use proverbs are dying and the younger generation does not see any need in using proverbs.”

“Use of proverbs by parents today has declined (decreased) compared to their use in the distant past”

“the youths of today are not interested in the use of proverbs”

“they are commonly used at meetings, market places and other fora where youths are rarely present”

“young parents are not knowledgeable in the use of proverbs”

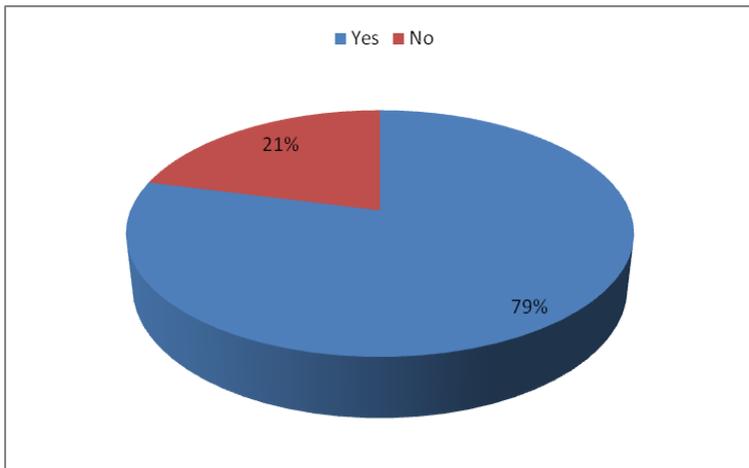
“children and youths have less time to interact with elders who mostly use Proverbs”

“parents pay no attention to training children in the use of proverbs”

“No deliberate attempt to educate the youths and children on the use of Proverbs”

“Exposure to Western education has reduced the emphasis on traditional education”

“The present day youths do not have a deep understanding of proverbs. They prefer to talk in plain language”.



**Figure 4: Decline in the Use of Proverbs**

**Research Question Four:** What can be done to promote the use of proverbs?

The analysis of the questionnaire items relevant to this question suggests that several strategies should be put in place to encourage and sustain the use of proverbs in Ondo community. Prominent among the suggested strategies are: organizing school competitions and reward on the use of proverbs, education i.e. enriching the Yoruba literature curriculum with proverbs, parents and elders in society should deliberately promote and educate the younger generation to use proverbs. Finally technology (radio and television) programmes should be deployed to promote and sustain the use of proverbs. Table 1 summarises the importance attached to the above strategies by the respondents.

**Table 1: Strategies for Promoting the Use of Proverbs**

Frequency	%	
Elders in society should teach and encourage youths to use proverbs	21	12.8
encourage inter school competitions on the use of proverbs and reward winners	42	25.6
Encourage schools and teachers to include proverbs in Yoruba literature Curriculum	42	25.6
Parents and elders in society should encourage the youths to use proverb	27	16.5
Authors of books in literature in English and Yoruba literature should be encouraged to use proverbs in their text	13	7.9
Teach proverbs using Radio and Television programmes	16	9.8
Teach proverbs using cultural activities	3	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>100%</b>

### **Discussion of Findings**

Proverbs are not only an integral but also a very important part of Ondo culture. This finding is supporting an old truth that has been consistently pointed out by previous researchers, for example, Kelso, Bernth Lindfors, Nketia, Ruth Finnegan, Amali, to mention just a few.

Another important finding is that Proverbs is ubiquitously/ universally used for a variety of purposes ranging from ridiculing, scolding, sympathising, settling quarrels and educating, most especially by people in leadership positions, for example chiefs, preachers, market women, especially the aged. However, it is disappointing to note that teachers, who are supposed (by their profession) to encourage the younger generations to transmit and sustain the culture of the community, use proverbs only once in a while. This finding may partly account for why many youths of Secondary school age rarely/ never use proverbs for daily living.

The third important finding is that proverbs are on the decline in Ondo culture. This finding is consistent with that of Bergsma who suggests that

proverbs are declining, particularly among the youths. As earlier explained, several reasons account for the decline. The older people who use them are dying and the younger generation is not inclined to use proverbs. The present day youths are not deliberately educated in the use of proverbs. In addition, western education appears to make them develop negative attitudes to the use of proverbs.

Based on the above discussion, it seems very important for pareomiographers and oral literary artists to fashion out and implement proven strategies that can promote and sustain the use of proverbs. To this effect, the use of information communication technology, school and societal based competitions on proverbs as well as the integration of proverbs into the Yoruba literature curriculum have been proposed as viable instruments for popularising and entrenching the use of proverbs in Ondo culture.

### **Conclusion**

Proverbs have always been and will continue to be a very important and powerful means for communicating in society. Proverbs function in diverse ways in every community to reflect the culture and value systems of the people and as an invaluable tool for creativity. They are the building blocks deployed by creative writers for the use of language. Proverbs from inception have experienced some vicissitudes historically as they were at one time accepted and at another time rejected while new proverbs replace old ones. Some authorities suggested that the use of proverbs is on the decline. Hence, we embarked on this study to determine and verify the authenticity of this view and determine its applicability to Ondo community and also to determine what can be done to promote and sustain the use of proverbs.

The key findings of this research suggest that:

1. Proverbs are considered as an important part of Ondo culture
2. Proverbs are used for ridiculing, scolding, settling quarrels, encouraging, providing advice, praising, rebuking and education.
3. Proverbs are commonly used by chiefs, illiterates, ward heads, market women especially the aged, preachers and church leaders.
4. The use of proverbs has declined tremendously in Ondo culture.

Finally, this research reveals that there are many strategies that can be put in place to encourage and sustain the use of proverbs in Ondo community. Pre-eminent among these suggested strategies are: organizing inter school competitions on the use of proverbs and rewarding winners; encourage schools and Teachers to include proverbs in the Yoruba Literature Curriculum; using radio and television programmes and parents as well as elders in society should encourage the youths to use proverbs through deliberate training and during cultural festivals.

It is recommended that the following strategies should be adopted to promote and sustain the use of proverbs: organize inter school competitions on the use of proverbs, include proverbs in the Yoruba literature curriculum in schools and finally parents and elders should use proverbs for communicating and interacting with youths in society. Language is an integral part of culture dissemination. Unfortunately, many of our so called elites do not see the need to teach their children their language; hence the children grow up using English as the only medium of communication. Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that parents should compulsorily speak their local languages to their children. This way, children will learn to use proverbs.

Furthermore, it is recommended that the Government should improve the standards of our public school so that the youth would receive quality education in the various Nigerian languages, particularly Yoruba language. Finally, it is also recommended that our various dialects should be impressed on our children. We should teach them when we sit at home and when we walk along the road, when we lie down and when we get up. They should be treated as decrees and commands that we have been bequeathed with, so that our creative arts may enjoy the usage of this valuable means of expressiveness.

### Works Cited

- Akinmade, Arinola C. "Yoruba/Ondo Proverbs: A Literary Study of Themes, Functions and Poetic Devices", Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Jos, 2005.
- Amali.Idris O. *Studies of Nigerian Proverbs A Bibliography*, Maiduguri: Kamel Prints, 2000.
- Andrzejewski, B. W. And Ernest, J. "Reflections on African Oral Literature", *African Languages*, Vol.1 1975.
- Arewa, Ojo, and Dundes, A. "Proverbs and the Ethnography of Speaking Folklore", *American Anthropologist*, Vol. Lxvi No. 6, 1964.
- Bergsma, H. M. And Bergsma, R. "Tiv Proverbs as a Means of Social Control", *Africa XI (2)*, April, 1970.
- Dalfovo, A. T. *Lugbara Proverbs*, Rome: Camboni Missionaries, (n.d).
- Dorson, R. M. *American Folklore*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.
- Finnegan, Ruth. *Oral Literature in Africa*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.
- Heseltine, J. E. Introduction in G. W. Smith (ed), *The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936.
- Kirk-Greene, A. H. M. *Hausa Ba Dabo Ne*, Ibadan: University Press Ltd, 1966.
- Lindfors, Bernth, "The Palm-oil with which Achebe's Words are Eaten", Critical Perspectives, on *Chinua Achebe*, London: Heinemann, 1979.
- Nketia, J. H. "Folklore in Ghana", *The Ghanaian*, I, 1958.
- Ridout, R. And Witting, C. *English Proverbs Explained*, London: Pan Books, 1977.
- Wilson, F. P. "The Proverbial Wisdom of Shakespeare", In M. Mieder and A. Dundes, (eds.), 1981.

**APPENDIX**  
**RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE**

This questionnaire is being used to gather information for research purposes only. All information supplied will be treated in confidence. Please answer all the questions below as fully as possible.

Thank you.

**PART A            PERSONAL DATA**

- (i).     Name (Optional): \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii).    Address: \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii).   Age in years: \_\_\_\_\_
- (iv).    Highest level of education attained (please tick one)
- (a). Illiterate (    )
- (b). Primary school leaver (    )
- (c). Junior Secondary School Graduate (    )
- (d). Senior Secondary School Graduate (    )
- (e). Grade II (    )
- (f). NCE/HND (    )
- (g). Degree holder (    )
- (h). Masters/Ph.D degree (    )
- (v).    Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

**PART B:**

1.    Would you consider proverbs as an important aspect of Ondo culture?            Yes (    )            No (    )
2.    Please rate the importance you attach to proverbs on the scale below:
- (a) Very important            (    )            (b) Important            (    )
- (c) Not important            (    )            (d) Very unimportant (    )

3. How frequently do you use proverbs in daily living?  
 (a) Always ( ) (b) Often ( ) (c) Rarely ( )  
 (d) Never

4. How frequently do you use proverb for doing each of the following?

S/NO	ITEMS	ALWAYS	OFTEN	RARELY	NEVER
1	Educating/training others				
2	Advising people				
3	Rebuking people				
4	Ridiculing people				
5	Praising people				
6	Settling quarrels/conflict between people				
7	Entertaining people				
8	Warning people				
9	Encouraging people				
10	Consoling people				
11	Bearing Philosophical insight				
12	Passing judgement				
13	Acknowledging				
14	Accepting (fate for example)				
15	Sympathizing				
16	Apologizing				
17	Blaming				
18	Scolding				
19	Conforming to social norm				

- (f) Others (please list them)

- (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please make a list of the factors that tend to facilitate the use of proverbs in the society today?

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (ii) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (iii) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (iv) \_\_\_\_\_

6. What factors are likely to militate against the use of proverbs in the society today?

- (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (b) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (c) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (d) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (e) \_\_\_\_\_

7. How frequently does each of the following groups of Ondo people use proverbs?

(Please put a tick (✓) in the column that reflects your opinion).

S/NO	ITEMS	ALWAYS	OFTEN	RARELY	NEVER
1	Chiefs				
2	Educated rural people				
3	Illiterates (those who have never gone to school)				
4	House wives				
5	Ward heads				
6	Adolescents (age12-19)				
7	Church leaders				
8	Preachers				
9	Teachers				
10	Market women				

11	The Aged				
12					

8 i. Would you say that proverbs are more commonly used today than in the last ten years?

(a) Yes ( ) (b). No ( )

ii. Please give reasons to support your answer

.....  
 .....

9. Who out of the following categories of people have you seen/heard using proverbs? (Please put a tick (√) as many as you have seen/heard)

- |                         |                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------|
| (a). Chiefs ( )         | (g). Illiterates ( ) |
| (b). Ward heads ( )     | (h). Mothers ( )     |
| (c). Teachers ( )       | (i). Students ( )    |
| (d). Church leaders ( ) | (j). Drivers ( )     |
| (e). Preachers ( )      |                      |
| (f). Market women ( )   |                      |

10 a. Would you say that proverbs are rarely used by Ondo people today?  
 Yes ( ) No ( )

b. Give reasons to support your answer:

.....  
 .....

11a. Do you think there is a decline in the use of proverbs? Yes ( )  
 No ( )

b. Please give reasons to support your answer

.....  
 .....

12. If you consider proverbs an important aspect of Ondo culture, what suggestions can you make to promote their use among the Ondo people?

.....  
 .....

THANK YOU.