SIMILAR THOUGHTS, DIFFERENT CODES: A COMPARATIVE PRAGMATIC STUDY OF SELECTED YORÙBÁ AND BÀSÀ PROVERBS

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ABSTRACT
The goal of linguistic communication is to facilitate mutual understanding at all levels of human interaction. However, this very important function of language often fails, leading to interpersonal, inter-communal or even international conflicts. Coming to terms with how people understand or misunderstand one another could help in reducing social conflicts. Nigeria, like most countries in the world, is a multilingual and multi-ethnic country. This has serious implications for inter-ethnic and inter-lingual understanding, co-operation and peaceful co-existence among its people. The fact that we speak different languages appears to have obliterated the point that as humans, we share in common quite a lot of basic thoughts and experiences which constitute our cultural essence, and which are sufficient to form the bases for mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence among us. One area of language use which demonstrates this pungently is proverbs. If we take the pain to study the proverbs in different languages, we would discover that they express the same or similar thoughts, feelings and experiences. To support this view, we randomly selected twenty Yorùbá and twenty Bàsà proverbs, arranged in pairs on the basis of the similarity of their literal meanings, and subjected them to a pragmatic analysis. Yorùbá and Bàsà are two Nigerian languages located in South-west and North-central Nigeria, respectively. Geographically, the two languages do not share common boundaries. The study revealed that the selected pairs of proverbs perform similar pragmatic functions. They have similar syntactic forms, perform similar speech acts and require similar sets of pragmatic principles to be fully decoded. The paper thus concluded that an understanding of the proverbs of different languages could open the gateway to the understanding of the speakers' culture and belief systems and pave the way for the understanding of the speakers themselves. This, the paper believed, would promote mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence among people of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and help to promote world peace.

***Keywords:** linguistic, communication, pragmatics, Yorùbá, Bàsà*

Introduction

The goal of linguistic communication is to foster mutual understanding at all levels of human interaction. As Herbamas (1979) points out, "human competition, conflict and strategic action are attempts to achieve understanding that have failed through modal confusions and coming to terms with how people understand or misunderstand one another could lead to a reduction of social conflict"(p.3).

Nigeria, like most countries in the world, is a multilingual and multi-ethnic country. This has serious implications for inter-ethnic and inter-lingual (mutual) understanding, co-operation and peaceful co-existence among its people. According to Herbamas (1979), coming to understanding is "when two or more social actors share the same meanings about certain words or phrases and at the very most, when these social actors are confident that these meanings fit relevant social expectations or a mutually recognized normative background" (p.3).

The fact that we speak different languages appears to have obliterated the point that as humans, we share in common quite a lot of basic thoughts and experiences which constitute our humanness and form our cultural backgrounds which are sufficient to be the bases for mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence among us. In spite of the fact that we speak different tongues, our thoughts, experiences and actions are similar enough to make our words and utterances fit relevant social expectations or mutually recognized normative backgrounds. As Ojoade (2004) rightly observes, certain experiences are common to humans, regardless of race, language or cultural differences. For example, we all experience sorrow, pain, joy, happiness, surprise, hopefulness, despair, etc, and generally believe in a super being, no matter whatever linguistic symbol we use to represent it. Human beings, therefore, have a lot in common that is sufficient to form the basis for mutual understanding among them, in spite of the fact that these common experiences may be expressed in different languages.

One area of language use which demonstrates that our thoughts, experiences and actions as human beings are similar and can therefore serve as a platform for inter-ethnic or inter-racial co-operation and mutual understanding is that of proverbs. Thus, if we take the pain to look at the proverbs in different languages, we would discover that they express the same or similar thoughts, feelings and experiences, in spite of the fact that these proverbs are couched in different languages.

Our goal in this paper, therefore, is to analyze selected proverbs in Yorùbá and Bàsà languages, using pragmatic tools, to show that in spite of the different languages in which these proverbs are coded, they express similar or the same experiences, thoughts and feelings that constitute the day-to-day lives and experiences of the members of the two linguistic/ethnic groups. Our objective is to show that the two ethnic groups have a lot in common that could serve as the basis for mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence between them. We believe, as Ojoade (2004), that a cross-linguistic study of proverbs can reveal a lot of similarities among the cultures of the various ethnic and racial groups in the world and help to reduce the communication gap created by different linguistic symbols and stem the tension there from.

This paper is in five sections. Section one, the introduction, gives a general background to the study. Some background information about Yorùbá and Bàsà languages are also

given in this section. Also in this section, the nature of proverbs in general is discussed. Section two will discuss the methodology used for this study. Some related works are briefly reviewed in section three, while section four presents our data for analysis. In all, twenty Yorùbá and twenty Bàsà proverbs, in twenty pairs, are presented for analysis. Section five summarizes and concludes the study.

Genetic Classification of Yorùbá and Bàsà Languages
The Yorùbá Language

The Yorùbá Language is a tone language spoken by the Yorùbá ethnic group, majority of who are found in South-west Nigeria in Ọ̀yọ́, Ògùn, Èkìtì, Òndó and Ọ̀sun states, as well as in parts of Kogi and Kwara States. The language is also spoken in parts of the Republics of Benin and Togo. It has many varieties, which include Ọ̀yọ́, Èkìtì, Ègbá, Ìjẹ̀bú, Ìbọ̀lọ̀, Ìgbómìnà, Òndó, among others. The Ọyọ dialect, which is regarded as the 'standard' variety of the language and from which the data for this study are sampled, has been widely studied and has a lot of works devoted to its formal structures as well as its literature and the culture of its speakers. The language is one of the three major languages in Nigeria, the others being Hausa and Igbo.

Genetically, Yorùbá belongs to the Kwa branch of Niger-Congo, a sub-division of the Niger-Kordofanian (Williamson, 1982).
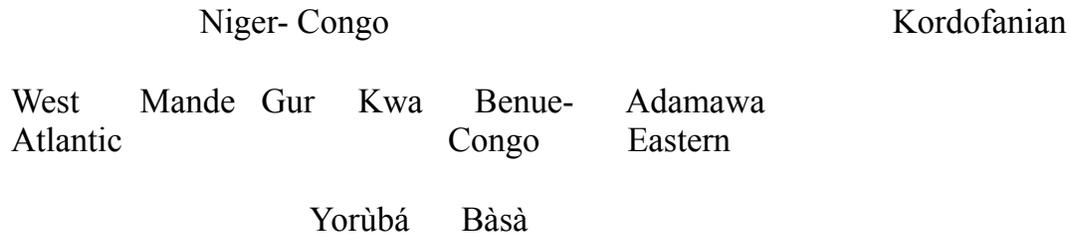
Bàsà Language

Bàsà is referred to as a cluster of Kainji languages which are scattered across Nigeria (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). This cluster of languages belongs to the Benue-Congo, a sub-division of the Atlantic-Congo, which itself is a sub-division of the Niger-Congo phylum of the Niger Kordofanian group of languages.

The language is spoken by the Bàsà ethnic group found majorly in parts of Kogi, Nasssarawa and Benue States, as well as in the Federal Capital Territory. It has seven varieties, namely, Bàsà-Kontagora, Bàsà-Gumna, Bàsà-Gurmana, Bàsà-Gurara, Bàsà-Kwali, Bàsà-Benue and Bàsà-Markurdi (Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia). Bàsà- Benue is regarded as the standard variety. However, Bàsà-Benue (Bàsà-Kwomu) and Bàsà-Makurdi are regarded as the same by the native speakers, while Bàsà-Gumna is said to be extinct. Native speakers of Bàsà-Kwali, spoken in the Federal Capital Territory area, prefer to be referred to as Bàsà-Gbajingala. Like Yorùbá, Bàsà is also a tone language. The population of Bàsà speakers is between 22,000 and 23,000, though these figures are being disputed by the native speakers.

Bàsà language does not have any standard orthography yet, as it generally has not enjoyed much literary and structural study, though both the Old and New Testaments of the Holy Bible have been translated into the language.

Yorùbá and Bàsà languages are not immediately genetically related and, geographically, they also do not share contiguous boundaries. Thus they are as genetically separated as they are geographically distanced from each other (see the genetic tree and the Nigerian Language Map below). The genetic affinity between Yorùbá and Bàsà is limited to their both being descended from the Niger-Congo phylum of the Niger-Kordofanian family of languages.

Fig I: Genetic Classification of Yorùbá and Bàsà

Niger-Kordofanian

Niger- Congo   Kordofanian

West   Mande Gur Kwa   Benue-   Adamawa
Atlantic   Congo   Eastern

Yorùbá   Bàsà

(Adapted from Greenberg's (1968) classification, in Williamson (1982, pp. 101-105)).

Fig 2: Language Map of Nigeria
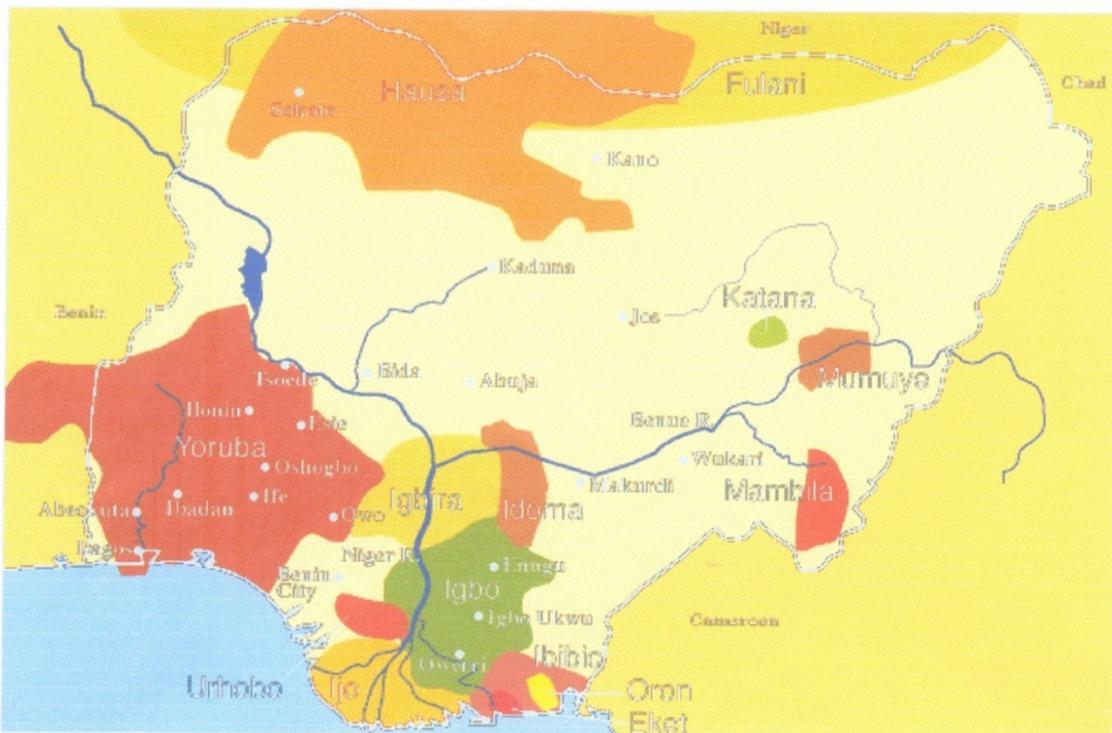
The nature of proverbs

Paremiologists generally seem to have agreed on the fact that a proverb is a summary of a people's collective wisdom, moral teachings, philosophies, history, social and sociological beliefs, as well as their psychological orientation and cosmological concepts. Mieder (1985,117), for instance, refers to a proverb as a phrase, saying, sentence, statement or experience of the folk, which contains above all, wisdom, truth, morals, experience, lessons and advice concerning life and which has been handed down from generation to generation. This view is also stressed by Permyakov (1988), cited in Petrova (2003) when he observes that in proverbs and sayings as well as in any other

folklore genres, everything a people encounters in the course of centuries is stored and preserved. Thus, according to him, we find in a people's proverbs.

> a complete set of ethnographic realities, starting with the tools and implements, and finishing with the dress, decorations and adornments; the general characteristics of natural environment, the landscape, the climate, the plants and animals they also keep, the memories of events that happened long ago, of eminent historical figures; in them we hear the echo of old religious beliefs, in them we see a detailed picture of the contemporary organization of society (p.333).

Permyakor further defines a proverb as a sign which denotes a situation or a relationship between things in the real world (Petrova, 2003, p334). This latter definition of a proverb supports the fact that generally, the cosmologies of proverbs are usually signs (objects or concepts) and the understanding of proverbs depends on the understanding of the relationship between these cosmologies and events in the cultural catalogue of the speech community where the proverbs feature. This is because proverbs are cultural artifacts that fully document "all the details of the everyday life of ordinary people, i.e their environment, the weather, the work in the field and in town, the domestic animals, the crafts, the family and social relations, the holidays, their joys and sorrows, the wise acceptance of the unavoidable, the suffering and the hope for a better life, the faith of the people in a supernatural power that will deliver them from pain and evil" (Petrova, 2003,p.337).

Stavreva (1989), cited in Petrova (2003), describes proverbs as a system of ethical views of an advisory and evaluative character, a view echoed by Adewoye (2010) when he asserts that proverbs are not rules of law, "but guiding principles, traditional expressions relating to law by which decisions are arrived at in all matters requiring adjudication"(p.446).

The foregoing outlines of proverbs make proverbs very important aspects of language use, and seem to have explained the reason why there is hardly any known natural language that does not have its own inventory of proverbs. This situation makes a comparative study of proverbs across languages possible and a veritable venture, not only because it is academically expedient, but largely for its latent socio-cultural value in the promotion of inter-ethnic understanding and consequential peace.

Methodology
Introduction
Explaining what we compare when we study proverbs in two (or more) languages, Petrova (2003) said that a comparative study of proverbs in different languages could be purely linguistic, concentrating on the choice of words and syntagms, the syntactic structures and the sound effects and intonation. Also, the comparison could be stylistic, focusing on the stylistically marked elements of the texts and the meanings and the message they signify. A comparative study of proverbs across languages could also be

devoted to the linguo-cultural aspect of the proverbs, that is, the study of proverbs as cultural texts. It could also be from the thematic point of view or it could be restricted to the axiological aspect of culture, thus examining the values and attitudes that the languages in focus attach to their cultural aspects.

While agreeing that proverbs in different languages can be compared in these areas mentioned by Petrova, we believe that a comparative study of proverbs between or among languages can also be done along a pragmatic dimension. Thus, this study is a comparative pragmatic study of selected Yorùbá and Bàsà proverbs. As a pragmatic study, we shall employ pragmatic tools like speech acts, presupposition, inference etc to compare and contrast how the native speakers of the two languages employ proverbs to uphold their value systems, philosophies, teach morals, highlight their historical antecedents, teach words of wisdom and display their spiritual beliefs, among other socio-cultural concepts that the individual communities believe in. We shall show how proverbs in the two languages are able to foreground the above cultural values-whether through warnings or admonitions, judgments or pieces of advice.

The forty randomly selected proverbs, twenty from each language, which constitute our data, are presented in twenty sets of comparable pairs and translated into English to show their literal meanings.They, are then subjected to a pragmatic analysis to show their indirect/pragmatic functions in the two languages. Through this analysis, we shall show the extent to which the proverbs in the two languages are similar or differ and be able to expose the cultural values from which the proverbs originate.

Review of some related literature
Grundy (2008, p.156) refers to pragmatics as "the study of what we do with words in the contexts in which we use them to accomplish acts and convey meanings beyond what is stated literally…" Pragmatics is, therefore, about non-literal or indirect meaning. According to him, pragmatics helps us to determine meaning that neither superficial syntax nor semantics alone can determine satisfactorily.

Our day-to-day experience with the use of language reveals to us that utterances are usually under-determined and this makes our speech to be capable of being interpreted in more than one way. Speakers often say less than they mean, or mean what their superficial speech does not express. Because our utterances are often under-determined, context plays a crucial role in the analysis of their pragmatic meanings. Pragmatics is therefore interested in the meanings of utterances as much as in the contexts in which utterances occur, since contexts help us to determine the meaning of what is said (Grundy, 2008).

The significance of context to an understanding of the pragmatic meaning of an utterance is underscored in Mey's (2001, p.6) reference to pragmatics as the study of "the use of language in human communication as determined by the conditions of society". These conditions of society include the cultural norms and practices of the speech community, as well as their assumptions and beliefs about fellow speech interactants. Such assumptions and beliefs include "the context of the utterance, any pre-existing knowledge about those involved, the inferred intent of the speaker and other factors" (Wikipedia, the

free encyclopedia). As Grundy (2008) points out, since utterances are usually under-determined, they are capable of having more than one meaning. It is therefore the inferences that listeners draw that determine which meaning, out of other possible meanings, is intended by the speaker. Drawing an appropriate inference is context-specific and is a function of the extent to which this context is relevant to the discourse at hand. As Sperber and Wilson (1995), cited in Grundy (2008) point out, relevance is the most important principle in accounting for the way we understand language. It is contextual relevance that enables the listener to be able to draw appropriate inference from implied meanings that propositions frequently convey in addition to its literal meaning. This implied meaning (implicature) is of crucial importance in arriving at indirect speech acts which Mey (2001) calls pragmatic acts.

The theory of speech acts, as proposed by Austin 1962, views speech as action. Thus, in performing a locutionary act, a speaker also performs varying illocutionary acts such as warning, asking questions, giving some information or an assurance, announcing a verdict, making a promise, appealing, directing and all such acts that we normally perform whenever we use language (Austin, 1962, in Jaworski and Coupland, 1999, pp. 69-70). Speech acts could be direct or indirect. A direct speech act refers to the literal meaning of the act as revealed by its propositional content, while an indirect speech act may, on the surface, be a question, but it may be indirectly serving as a directive to have somebody do something (Grundy, 2008).

The issue of how a listener arrives at the indirect or non-literal meaning of an utterance from its direct/literal meaning has been a major concern to pragmaticists. Searle (1979) proposes conditions or rules that must be followed for a given speech act to be effectively followed. These conditions or rules, subject to appropriate contexts, lead him to classify all possible speech acts into Assertives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives and Declarations (Leech and Thomas, 1990, p179).

In Grice's view, negotiating from a direct speech act to an indirect speech act is a matter of the level of co-operation existing between interlocutors. According to him (Jaworski and Coupland, 1999, p78),

> Our talk exchanges do not normally consist of a succession of disconnected remarks …. They are characteristically, to some degree at least, cooperative efforts….

In other words, participants in a speech event are able to make sense of what they say and hear through the process of co-operating with one another. This process of co-operation is captured in Grice's Co-operative Principle (Jaworski and Coupland, 1999, p78):

> Make your conversational contribution such as is required, at the stage at which it occurs, by the acceptable purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

The principle, with its four maxims (Quantity, Quality, Relation and Manner) and their sub-maxims are relied upon by language users to make sense of what is said. It is the

belief that a speaker will not flout this principle and its maxims that assists a listener in understanding the speaker and it is what helps communication to flow.

However, it is not all the time that language users observe the maxims to the letter, as quite often, expedience of communication leads language users to flout one or the other of the maxims. For example, a maxim may be flouted by a speaker to save the face of her/his listener, as is often the case with using proverbs in discourse. Proverbs present alternative ways of saying things indirectly. When this happens, it is usually to soften the impact of a message on the listener by allowing her/him to infer the intended message by her-/himself, rather than having the message "splashed" directly on her/him. We believe that flouting any maxim in conversation is part of the mutual contextual beliefs that language users share among themselves, which enable communication to progress. But, as Grundy (2008) points out, "whenever a maxim is flouted, there must be an implicature to save the utterance from simply appearing to be a faulty contribution to a conversation" as "flouting a maxim is a particularly salient way of getting an addressee to draw an inference and hence recover an implicature" (p.98). In fact, in deploying proverbs in discourse in Yorùbá and Bàsà, the speaker often alerts the addressee to prepare for the flouting of one or the other of the maxims by prefixing a proverb signalling hedge to the proverb (Omoloso, 2006). For example, a hedge like: *Àwọn Yorùbá/àgbà a máa pa òwe pé …..*"(The Yorùbá/elders have a proverb that says…..), usually precedes a proverb in Yorùbá. Bàsà also has a similar proverb signaling hedge like "*Àtwà 'wọtọ híẹ́n…*" (As the elders say …) preceding the use of a proverb in a discourse. The proverb signaling hedge prepares the listener to expect what is to follow as requiring more than only linguistic knowledge to decode.

In the next section, we shall present proverbs from Yorùbá and Bàsà languages, and analyze them pragmatically. Proverb meaning depends very much on context, as they are grounded in the culture of the people. Pragmatics is therefore appropriate for analyzing proverbs, as pragmatic meaning is context-sensitive and therefore culturally situated. It is of particular relevance in a comparative study of proverbs. This is more so because, as *The New Encyclopedia Britanica* (Vol. 9, 1992, p.749) points out, though the same proverb may be found in many variants across cultures and languages, they carry essentially similar messages to guide the people. Such messages are culturally packaged and can be understood only when the cultures that transmit them are properly understood.

Data presentation and analysis

This section is in two parts. In the first part, the proverbs will be presented in twenty sets of one Yorùbá and one Bàsà proverbs. Their literal meanings will be given, together with the type of sentence each proverb is. Also, the cosmology used in each of the proverbs will be given, as well as its direct speech act. In the second part which is 4.2, a pragmatic analysis of the proverbs will be carried out.

Understanding the pragmatic functions of the proverbs in each set requires a thorough grounding in the cultures of the Yorùbá and Bàsà people, as these cultural backgrounds constitute the wider situational contexts of the proverbs. They are the background knowledge that discourse participants rely upon for an appropriate launching and

decoding of proverbs in a discourse (Ọmọlọsọ, 2006). In addition to the common background knowledge and beliefs that interlocutors share about their cultural backgrounds, the deployment and interpretation of proverbs in a discourse are also aided by the topic of discourse, the social relationship between the interlocutors, their psychological disposition towards each other and what they are talking about, and their environment of discourse. These form the immediate contexts of the discourse which, when related to the mutual background knowledge of the interlocutors, help them to correctly infer the pragmatic functions of the proverbs.

Pragmatic functions of proverbs are therefore related to the inferential meanings derived from the proverbs in context. This shows pragmatic functions of proverbs to be context-sensitive. Consequently, a change in the context in which a proverb is used can trigger a corresponding change in the pragmatic function of the proverb. In Table 4.2, the pragmatic meanings and pragmatic functions of our selected pairs of Yorùbá and Bàsà proverbs will be presented, as inferred from the contexts in which the proverbs can be used. The pairs of proverbs will be referred to by their numbers as presented in section 4.1.

Literal meanings, syntactic structures and direct speech acts of the selected proverbs

Proverb No	Proverb	Literal meaning	Syntactic structure	Cosmology/ Imagery	Direct speech act
1a 1b	**Yorùbá proverb:** Okun inú ni àá fíí gbé ti ìta. **Bàsà equivalent:** Ù wẹnẹ̀ yà àmẹ yà shápá ìnẹ azuba	It is the power/strength within /inside that is used in carrying the one outside. It is the power/strength inside that is used in carrying the one outside.	Simple Simple	strength/power strength/power	Declarative/Assertive Declarative/Assertive
2a 2b	**Yorùbá proverb:** Ọbẹ̀ tí ó dùn owó ni ó pa á. **Bàsà equivalent:** Shipà shì bìye shaaya ukuribi.	The soup that is delicious costs money. Soup that is delicious costs money	Complex Complex	delicious soup delicious soup	Declarative/Assertive Declarative/Assertive

3a **3b**	**Yorùbá proverb:** Ẹni tí yóó fún ni láṣọ, ti ọrùn rẹ̀ là á wò. **Bàsà equivalent:** Bọ́tọ̀ híén bì zhẹ má bọ pànà ùfòro, yí laga ùnàá nà bèe huteni.	If someone promises to give one a dress, one should examine the dress they are wearing. If someone promises to give one a cap, one can determine the quality of the cap to expect from them by looking at the cap they are wearing.	Complex Complex	dress cap	Declarative/Assertive Declarative/Assertive
4a **4b**	**Yorùbá proverb:** Ìyà méjì kìí jẹ òkú ìgbé; bí kò bá rí aṣọ bora, yóó rí ilẹ̀ bora. **Bàsà equivalent:** Ùfù íyèbi njẹshẹ bìyìkwo; bàá zása mosùbo, ba yàga tukulu.	Double calamities do not befall a corpse in the bush, if it does not have cloth to cover it, there will be soil to cover it. Double calamities do not befall a lady; if she does not have breasts, she is certain to have pubic hair.	Complex Complex	corpse in the forest a lady	Declarative/Assertive Declarative/Assertive
5a **5b**	**Yorùbá proverb:** Ọmọ àjànàkú kìí ya aràrá. **Bàsà equivalent:** Bòjanà subẹshẹ ọ̀'ọndọ	An elephant's offspring is never dwarfish in stature. A fish does not resemble a crab.	Simple Simple	an elephant's offspring fish	Declarative/Assertive Declarative/Assertive

6a	**Yorùbá proverb:** Bí ògìiri kò bá lanu, aláǹgbá kò lè wọbẹ̀.	If there is no opening/crack in a wall, there would be no place for a lizard to creep into.	Complex	opening/crack (in a wall)	Declarative/Assertive
6b	**Bàsà equivalent:** Ù'wabà tà ìbwàsó, bishi bóò tonò.	Until there is an opening or a cut on the skin, house flies don't come to feed on it.	Complex	a cut/opening on the skin	Declarative/Assertive
7a	**Yorùbá proverb:** Àìlèsọ̀rọ̀ àpẹẹre ori burúkú ni.	Inability to talk when one should is a harbinger of ill-luck.	Complex	not talking when one should	Declarative/Assertive
7b	**Bàsà equivalent:** Bọ̀ganyẹ bẹ̀ èzùye bo wòto n'umwònò èshishi.	The guest that is shy (to talk) sleeps in a room full of maggots.	Complex	being shy to talk	Declarative/Assertive
8a	**Yorùbá proverb:** Jẹ kí n jẹ ni ayò fi ń dùn.	It is when victory is not monopolized by one player that a game becomes interesting.	Complex	monopoly	Declarative/Assertive
8b	**Bàsà equivalent:** Láyé má láyẹ ìbẹ cẹ̀hẹbà te zhẹme	Dancing becomes pleasant when dancers take turns on the dancing floor.	Complex	monopoly	Declarative/Assertive
9a	**Yorùbá proverb:** Igbá tí a bá fi wínkà là á fíí san án.	It is the same measure used in borrowing guinea-corn that should be used in paying it back.	Complex	measure	Declarative/Assertive
9b	**Bàsà equivalent:** À bọ 'nwọnẹ	If one borrows with a measure of a spoon, they should not pay with a	Complex	measure	Declarative/Assertive

	nijejè ba tọpà n'ikele.	measure of a bowl.			
10a **10b**	**Yorùbá proverb:** Ẹni tí ó bímọ ọ̀ràn níí pọ̀n ọ́n. **Bàsà equivalent:** Rishè rọ nà rò kwọbẹ́ ushikwo rò ba rà tarẹ ulwa.	It is a person who gives birth to a troublesome child that nurtures her/him. It is the eye that sees smoke that fetches fire/life charcoal.	Complex Complex	one that gives birth to a troubleso me child. the eye that sees smoke.	Declarati ve/Assert ive Declarati ve/Assert ive
11a **11b**	**Yorùbá proverb:** A kìí fi ọmọ ọrẹ̀ bọ ọrẹ̀. **Bàsà equivalent:** È séríshi mèni à nyashẹnjẹ meni-ò.	The child of the chief priest of the sacred grove is never used as a sacrifice to appease the chief priest. Water is not used to wash water.	Comple x Comple x	child of the chief priest of the sacred grove. water	Declarati ve/Asser tive Declarati ve/Asser tive
12a **12b**	**Yorùbá proverb:** A kìí rí ewú(sà) lóde ọsán. **Bàsà equivalent:** Ùgádàgá vwẹ́-shẹ ọshẹna n'wánaò.	The big rat is usually not sighted in the day time. A hare does not come out in the day time without a cause.	Simple Simple	big rat hare	Declarati ve/Asser tive Declarati ve/Asser tive

13a	**Yorùbá proverb:** Inú ni okó ẹyẹ ń gbé.	The penis of the bird normally stays inside the bird.	Simple	the bird's penis	Declarati ve/Asser tive
13b	**Bàsà equivalent:** Ìvunẹ ùhwaà namẹ n'àmẹ ùbwa.	The legs of the snake are inside the snake.	Simple	the legs of the snake	Declarati ve/Asser tive
14a	**Yorùbá proverb:** Ìkòkò tí yóó jẹ ata, ìdí rẹ̀ yóó gbóná.	If a pot wants to eat pepper its bottom will be hot.	Comple x	a pot that wants to eat pepper	Declarati ve/Asser tive
14b	**Bàsà equivalent:** Ìkwẹshẹ zhẹ ya iyi ìbìye, ìvwi ìbẹ zhẹ shonjòmò.	If a pot wants to eat delicious food, its bottom must become hot.	Comple x	a pot that wants to eat delicious food	Declarati ve/Asser tive
15a	**Yorùbá proverb:** Àgùntàn tí ń bá ajá rìn yóó jẹ ìgbẹ́.	The sheep that keeps the company of a dog will eat feces.	Comple x	the sheep that keeps the company of a dog	Declarati ve/Asser tive
15b	**Bàsà equivalent:**	If one shares a boundary with a thief, before long one would	Comple x	one that shares a	Declarati ve/Asser tive

	Ò bú to tùngúngù nò bùzundo, bà sha bùzundo	also be a thief.		boundary with a thief	
16a **16b**	**Yorùbá proverb:** Òfiífíi yá ju òkolombo lọ. **Bàsà equivalent:** Ngbàlà-ngàlà debeji huri òmwòdo.	Scantiness is better than nothing at all. Few and weak teeth are better than none.	Simple Simple	scantiness few and weak teeth.	Declarative/Assertive Declarative/Assertive
17a **17b**	**Yorùbá proverb:** Ẹni tí kò bá gba kàdárà yóó gba kodoro. **Bàsà equivalent:** Àbó lacẹ àbilwà, bó lònò opwo.	One who refuses to accept her/his lot will end up accepting something worse. If you refuse to accept a swollen scrotum, you will end up accepting hernia.	Complex Complex	one's lot the swollen scrotum	Declarative/Assertive Declarative/Assertive
18a **18b**	**Yorùbá proverb:** Àgbájọ ọwọ́ ni a fíí sọ àyà. **Bàsà equivalent:** Bùbwa bú-ko shépí-shi ìyiò.	It is a clenched fist that can be used in beating the chest. A finger cannot carry something from the ground.	Simple Simple	clenched fist a finger	Declarative/Assertive Declarative/Assertive

19a	**Yorùbá proverb:** Bí a bá fa gbùrù, gbùrù a fa igbó.	If one tugs at a creeper (in the bush) the creeper will drag the entire bush along with it.	Complex	creeper	Declarative/Assertive
19b	**Bàsà equivalent:** Òó kokùlò ulagbà, ùlagba mo kokùlò uswala.	If one drags a thorny branch of a tree, the branch will drag (dry) grass along with it.	Complex	thorny branch of a tree	Declarative/Assertive
20a	**Yorùbá proverb:** Bí a kò bá gbàgbé òrò àná, a kò níí rí ẹnìkan bá ṣeré.	If we do not allow by-gone to be by-gone, we would not see anyone to play with.	Complex	allowing by-gone to be by-gone.	Declarative/Assertive
20b	**Bàsà equivalent:** Bọtọ̀ bẹ̀ èléele nà gèngèni-shi binya ùbwa, bo hunzo akpada.	Anybody who does not learn to forgive another destroys a bridge.	Complex	learning to forgive another	Declarative/Assertive

Pragmatic meanings and pragmatic functions of the selected proverbs

S/N	Proverb Number	Context-based pragmatic meaning	Pragmatic functions/ Indirect Speech acts
1.	1(a)&(b)	It is the food inside a person that provides the energy they use in performing their duties.	Advice
2.	2(a)&(b)	Nothing that is good comes cheap.	Warning
3.	3(a)&(b)	The reliability of a promise should be measured against the personality of the person who promises.	Warning
4.	4(a)&(b)	There is always some hope left even in a situation of absolute hopelessness.	Comforting
5.	5(a)&(b)	An offspring must be genetically related to its progenitors	Admonition

6.	6(a)&(b)	The enemy without will not have access into one's territory if there is no enabling environment in place for them to do so.	Warning
7.	7(a)&(b)	If one does not speak when and where they ought to, they may have to live with unbearable conditions.	Warning
8.	8(a)&(b)	A spirit of communalism promotes peaceful co-existence.	Advice
9.	9(a)&(b)	Justice and equity should be our guiding principles in whatever we do.	Advice
10.	10(a)&(b)	Every person should suffer the consequences of their actions	Judgement
11.	11(a)&(b)	You cannot use my property/what is mine to settle your obligations to me.	Protesting/Resenting
12.	12(a)&(b)	Everything has its own characteristics, the deviation from which must have a reason/cause	Surprise / Justification
13.	13(a)&(b)	A person's thoughts and plans should remain his private property.	Advice
14.	14(a)&(b)	Whoever desires success must be prepared to sweat for it.	Advice
15.	15(a)&(b)	We should be mindful of the kind of people we associate with.	Advice
16.	16(a)&(b)	We should be contented with whatever we have, even if we do not have much.	Advice
17.	17(a)&(b)	People should accept whatever is their lot, as not doing so may land them in more grievous situations.	Advice
18.	18(a)&(b)	We can achieve a lot if we co-operate with one another.	Advice
19.	19(a)&(b)	We should be cautious in putting blames on others.	Advice
20.	20(a)&(b)	People should learn to overlook the wrongs done to them by others so that they will not end up not having associates/friends.	Advice

General Comments

It is observed that the proverbs in each pair of Yorùbá and Bàsà proverbs have either the same or similar literal meanings. In fact, the sets of proverbs in 1(a)&(b), 2(a)&(b), 3(a)&(b), 9(a)&(b), 12(a)&(b), 13(a)&(b) and 14(a)&(b) have the same literal meanings.

In the remaining thirteen sets, the meaning of each of the proverbs in a set is closely related to each other. It is also observed that the proverbs in each of the twenty pairs of proverbs are the same in structure. Proverbs 1(a)&(b), 5(a)&(b), 12(a)&(b), 13(a)&(b), 16(a)&(b) and 18(a)&(b) are simple sentences, while the remaining fourteen sets are complex sentences. Apart from being syntactically similar, the direct speech acts of all the proverb-sentences are Declaratives/Assertives.

The cosmologies (i.e. the imageries) of each of the proverbs in the sets are observed to be the same, similar or related. For example, the cosmology in each of the members of the pairs of proverbs 1(a)&(b), 2(a)&(b), 3(a)&(b), 6(a)&(b), 7(a)&(b), 9(a)&(b), 14(a)&(b) and 20(a)&(b) is the same. In the remaining twelve sets of proverbs, the cosmologies are either similar or related. For example, the cosmologies of the sets of proverbs 4(a)&(b), 10(a)&(b) and 17(a)&(b) relate to humans; those of 5(a)&(b), 12(a)&(b), 13(a)&(b) relate to animals, while those of 15(a)&(b) are animate objects. The cosmologies for the set of proverbs 8(a)&(b) are about actions; those for 11(a)&(b) are about cleansing or appeasement; those for 16(a)&(b) are about quantity, while those for 18(a)&(b) and 19(a)&(b) are about body parts and plants, respectively.

As can be observed from the pragmatic analysis done in Sub-section 4.2, the proverbs in a pair of data have the same pragmatic meanings and perform the same pragmatic functions. These show them to be products of the same thought processes and similar cultural values and belief systems.

Summary and Conclusion
This study subjected a pair of twenty Yorùbá and Bàsà proverbs to a pragmatic analysis with a view to identifying their pragmatic meanings and pragmatic functions to bring out the similarities or differences between Yorùbá and Bàsà proverbs. In all, twenty each of Yorùbá and Bàsà proverbs were arranged in pairs, based basically on the literal meanings of the members of each pair. The study discovered that the proverbs in each pair are similar syntactically. It was also found that the symbols (cosmologies) employed by the proverbs in each pair are either the same, similar or related in one way or the other. Not only this, the proverbs in each pair were also found to perform the same indirect speech acts or pragmatic functions and have the same pragmatic meanings.

Following from the above, we can infer that the pairs of proverbs studied are products of similar thought processes and philosophical beliefs, though they originate from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. This tends to show that the languages and cultures from which the proverbs originate are mere "artificial dressings" that give the impression that as humans, we have little or nothing in common that could form the basis for our mutual interaction and communal peace. It is therefore recommended that the proverbs of a people should be given careful study to give an insight into their thought processes and philosophical principles and pave the way for the understanding of the people themselves. It is our belief that such an understanding is desirable to foster peaceful interaction and co-existence, particularly in a multi-lingual and multicultural environment like Nigeria and the world at large.

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