

Schema Theory and Text-worlds: A Cognitive Stylistic Study of Proverbs and Cultural Values in Some Plays by Ola Rotimi

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Abstract

Proverb is a unique form of discourse found in all cultures worldwide, employing expressions such as adage, apothegm, byword, maxim, and paroemia to convey fundamental truths applicable to common life situations. This study explores the intersection of Schema Theory and Text-Worlds in selected works of Ola Rotimi, focusing on proverbs and conveying cultural values. The objective of the study is to analyse thematic values in three of Ola Rotimi's drama texts: *The gods are not to blame*, *Our husband has gone mad again* and *Kurunmi*. The study delves into the cognitive processes involved in comprehending proverbs, drawing on Schema Theory to elucidate how these conventional knowledge structures influence the interpretation of cultural expressions. The findings reveal various thematic issues such as: proverbs revealing leadership; male superiority over female; equality/harmony; pride; patience/endurance and political landmark. The study shows the intricate relationship between schemata, proverbs, and cultural values, shedding light on the cognitive mechanisms that shape readers' perceptions of cultural nuances in literature. The study enhances our understanding of Rotimi's works and underscores the broader significance of cultural values as portrayed through language. This interdisciplinary approach fosters a holistic appreciation of literature, linguistics, and cultural studies.

Keywords: cognitive stylistics, folklore, proverbs, schema theory, text-world theory

1. Introduction

Folklore encompasses the values, beliefs, and preferred way of life expressed through literary themes. It is traditionally transmitted orally from one generation to the next, becoming an integral part of a culture's heritage. According to Boswell and Reaver (1962), folklore encompasses customs, beliefs, traditions, tales, magical practices, proverbs, and songs, representing the accumulated knowledge of a homogeneous and unsophisticated people. Waterman (1962) defines folklore as an art form comprising various types of stories, proverbs, sayings, songs, incantations, and other formulas that use spoken language as its medium. Espinosa (1962) describes folklore as popular

knowledge, accumulated across ages through human experiences, learning, and practices. Dundes (1965) provides a comprehensive list of folklore forms, including myths, legends, folktales, jokes, proverbs, and more.

Folklore incorporates customs, beliefs, traditions, and various forms of folk literature passed down through generations. It encompasses the unrecorded traditions of a people, including both the content and style of communication. Klein (2001) highlights four basic meanings of folklore, linking it to oral narration, academic study, cultural phenomena, and, at times, misconceptions. Dorson (1972) categorises folklore into oral literature, material culture, social folk custom, and performing folk arts. Proverbs, a genre of unusual discourse found in all cultures, play a significant role in transmitting cultural values and wisdom across generations. Proverbs, according to Mieder (2004), are short sentences containing wisdom, truth, and morals, passed down metaphorically from generation to generation.

Proverbs are considered as vehicles of culture, expressing well-known truths and moral concerns (Beitel, Gibbs, and Sanders, 1976). A proverb is a unique form of discourse found in all cultures worldwide, employing expressions such as adage, apothegm, byword, maxim, and paroemia to convey fundamental truths applicable to common life situations. Mieder (2004) defines proverbs as short, widely known sentences containing wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed, and memorable form, passed down through generations. Proverbs hold a prominent place in the traditions and cultures of all people, especially in African environments, according to Finnegan (2010).

Lauhakangas (2007) suggests that proverbs can be seen as pieces of advice offering recommended courses of action, loaded with hidden feelings, wishes, and intentions of the speaker. They serve as tools to express individual opinions in public interactive situations. Beitel, Gibbs, and Sanders (1976) view proverbs as vehicles of culture, expressing well-known truths, social norms, and moral concerns. Akporobaro (2008) emphasises the power of proverbs as effective instruments for transmitting culture, social morality, manners, and ideas across generations. Proverbs reveal the thought, wisdom, and verbal techniques of the past, serving as models of compressed or forceful language for speakers and verbal artists.

Winick (1976) defines proverbs as brief, wisdom-laden utterances with authority, referencing a tradition of similar wisdom utterances through intentional inter-textual references. Proverbs, according to Seitel (1972), strategically use metaphor to make references or comparisons between past and present events. Olajide (2010) sees proverbs as a repository of wisdom emerging through generations, based on keen observation of social, political, and cultural events, highlighting the role of "verbal reaction." Milner (1969) identifies characteristics of proverbs as pithy, concise, easily remembered, using rhyme, rhythm, repetition, and alliteration. Proverbs often address abstract and universal concepts based on experience, summarising situations with humor. They are linked to other sayings, raising statements from ordinary to emphatic

levels for various purposes, such as urging, teaching, praising, convincing, warning, blaming, restraining, or discouraging.

In the African environment, the functions of proverbs are crucial. Mieder (1993) emphasises their role in moralising, instructing, advising, and reflecting on everyday occurrences. Proverbs convey the essence of phenomena, warn of dangers, offer guidance on behaviour, provide direct orders or prohibitions, and justify or excuse actions. They also enable individuals to endorse statements or opinions, forecast events, express doubts, and sum up life experiences, allowing listeners to draw conclusions and apply them to future behavior (Mieder, 1993).

The aim of the study is to explore the intersection of Schema Theory and Text-Worlds in selected works of Ola Rotimi, focusing on proverbs and conveying cultural values. The study identifies and analyses thematic values in three of Ola Rotimi's drama texts; it categorises the thematic issues and analyses the formal features employed in projecting the themes in relation to cultural values.

The use of proverb is peculiar to African culture especially Nigerian culture where Ola Rotimi came from. There are several studies on proverbs using different analytical approaches. Nwachukwu-Agbada (2002) studies the content, forms and context of Igbo proverbs. Owomoyela (2005) did an extensive study of nature, functions, and forms of Yoruba proverbs. Ehineni (2016) studies discourse and structural analysis of Yoruba proverbs collected from oral interviews and native Yoruba texts. The study shows that proverbs are a culturally and linguistically rich significant part of the Yoruba speech community. Oha (1998) examines the semantics of female devaluation in Igbo proverbs.

From Ola Rotimi's works, scholars have concentrated on literary perspectives, for example (Monye, 1995). From cognitive linguistic perspective, Eman (2020) focuses on literary language by showing how schema theory and text world theory can be useful in the interpretation of literary texts. The study attempts to uncover how readers can connect between the text world and the real world. Areef (2016) in a study on textual analysis examines the theory of cognitive stylistics of Simon's lyric "The Sound of Silence". It attempts to explore the patterns of creativity and novelty in language use. It is more concerned with investigating how figures of speech can be employed as features of creativity and novelty in "The Sound of Silence". The analysis traces Simon's use of different types of figures of speech and shows how such a use leads to produce new metaphorical mappings and novel image schemata. The analysis also reveals how the coherence among figures of speech, and the use of extended and complex figurative expressions, lead to creating new stylistic frameworks and metaphorical formulas that illustrate the idea of novelty and creativity in this lyric. This present study, drawing inspirations from the critical works of such scholars as Oha (1998), Ehineni (2016), Odebunmi (2018) which show the significant of proverb as cultural heritage is set out to investigate the interplay of Schema Theory and Text-Worlds in the portrayal of proverbs and cultural values in Ola Rotimi's selected works.

2. Theoretical Framework

Cognitive stylistics, a novel field of study, integrates cognitive science, psychology, linguistics, and literary studies to address previously unanswered questions about literature. It is an interdisciplinary approach that has taken various forms and directions (Reijmersdal, 2008, p.5). Cognitive stylistics merges explicit linguistic analysis of literary texts from the stylistic tradition with a systematic consideration of the cognitive structures underlying language production and reception (Semino and Culpeper, 2003, p. 1x). Essential tools in this field include schema theory, text world theory, conceptual metaphor, and mental space theory but for the purpose of this study schema theory and text-world theory would be discussed and applied in this study.

The concept of schema, introduced by the British Psychologist Sir Frederic Bartlett in 1932, and further developed in 1990 by the American psychologist Richard Anderson along with various other authors (Rumelhart, 2017), is defined as "a conventional knowledge structure that exists in our memory" (Yule, 2010, p. 150). Schemata represent knowledge about concepts such as objects, events, situations, and actions, making them a universal aspect of human cognition. Schemas not only aid in understanding but also enable the prediction of situations in our environment. Failure to align information with existing schemas may lead to difficulties in comprehension, explaining why readers struggle with texts on unfamiliar subjects. Schema theory is applicable to both the processing of sensory data and language (Cook, 1994, p. 9). The underlying premise of schema theory is that all experiences are stored in memory, and the human mind activates and draws upon this memory when grappling with new experiences or data. Culpper et al. (1997) assert that, for interpretation, the human mind actively constructs various cognitive representations, including codes, features, meanings, and structured sets of elements, to interpret linguistic input.

Schema theory parameters suggest that meanings arise from the interaction between the text and the interpreters' knowledge. The theory offers a framework for literature, exploring how the interaction between the text and the reader's knowledge influences the reader's perception based on their schemas. Schema refreshment, leading to schema change, may involve either the destruction of an old schema or the creation of a new one. Schema reinforcing confirms existing schemas by validating assumptions about people and the world, while schema adding creates new schemas. Schema disruption occurs when literary qualities introduce deviations at the language and text levels, challenging the reader's schemata (Semino, 1995, p.5-6). The concept of a text world, as outlined by Wreth (1999, p.52), is a comprehensive construction that necessitates comprehension through memory and imagination rather than direct perception. Text worlds, conceptual spaces, are defined deictically and referentially, anchored by references to the world depicted in the discourse.

A sub-world emerges through deictic or modal shifts away from the matrix world from which it originates. A sub-world is established when a character projects thoughts and reflections, possibly through a flashback or prolepsis, creating a separate conceptual space within the text world. This projection forms a distinct situation because it

establishes a reality outside the parameters of the existing text world (Simpson, 2004, p. 91). In cognitive stylistics, conceptual metaphors play a crucial role. Wreth (1997) and Gavins (2001) posit that metaphors constitute a type of epistemic sub-world in the text world. Ruekijo (2007) highlights the significance of metaphors in text worlds, emphasising that the actual text world can be perceived through knowledge of the real world. In schema theory, metaphors introduce novel ways of mapping the real world onto the textual world, thereby extending or altering schemata. Metaphors are predominantly conventional, culture-specific, and understood within a community of speakers.

3. Methodology

The study adopted a qualitative research approach; it employed cognitive stylistics to investigate the interplay of Schema Theory and Text-Worlds in the portrayal of proverbs and cultural values in Ola Rotimi's selected works. Three (3) of Ola Rotimi's works were purposively selected based on his use of proverbs and cultural richness. Works chosen are *The Gods are not to Blame*; *Our husband has gone mad again* and *Kurunmi*. Ola Rotimi's works were written in English language and all the proverbs in his texts were also paraphrased and written in English. Therefore, relevant textual excerpts containing proverbs from the selected works were extracted for detailed analysis. Schema theory and text-world would be applied to examine how pre-existing cognitive structures influence the comprehension and interpretation of proverbs within the chosen works. Also, it would analyse how readers' schemata are activated and contribute to the understanding of cultural values embedded in proverbs.

4. Data Presentation and Analysis

Ola Rotimi's plays, *The gods are not are to blame*, *Our husband has gone mad again* and *Kurunmi* are laced with ideological proverbs that convey important messages about society and human nature. Many of these proverbs advocate for virtues such as politics, patience, endurance, equality, harmony and the importance of leadership in a community and home. Throughout the play, various characters offer words of wisdom that underscore the importance of strong leadership and the role that individuals can play in shaping the communities in which they live. Through the use of proverbs, Ola Rotimi's plays offer timeless messages that continue to resonate with audience today.

Proverbs advocate the Importance of Leadership in a Community

The Yoruba society, like many other African societies, believes essentially in the hierarchical ordering of the society and family. At the top of this hierarchy is the king who oversees the affairs of the community and is saddled with the responsibility of ensuring the smooth running of the community. Much importance is placed on this head whose existence is central to the community. This ideology is embedded in the proverbs below as used in the text "The gods are not to blame".

Excerpt 1. *When the head of a household dies, the house becomes an empty shell.*
 (pp. 9)
 The horns cannot be too heavy for the head of cow that must bear them.
 (pp. 20)
 The secrets of a home should be known first to the head of the home (pp.
 19).

Schema theory posits that individuals bring pre-existing cognitive structures or schemata to the interpretation of new information. In the context of proverbs, readers activate their cultural, social, and experiential schemata to make sense of the conveyed wisdom. Let us consider analysis of the provided proverbs from *The Gods is not Blame* by Ola Rotimi. The proverbs above collectively point to the importance of elders in Yoruba culture. This proverb reflects a cultural understanding that the head of a household plays a vital role, and their absence leaves a significant void. The proverb also creates a conceptual space where the house is portrayed as an empty shell, emphasising the emotional and physical emptiness following the death of the household head.

Another instance of proverb says "The horns cannot be too heavy for the head of a cow that must bear them." This is related to the responsibilities, endurance, and capacity to bear burdens as a leader in the society. It emphasises the position of "the head" as the pillar that holds the community together and whose death is catastrophic as the house will fall on the occasion of his death. In the same vein, the head of the home, usually a male, is expected to be a burden bearer and must bear the family's burden without any form of complaint or displeasure. The proverb also communicates the cultural value of resilience and accepting burdensome responsibilities without complaint and creates a conceptual space where the head of the cow is burdened with heavy horns, illustrating the idea of enduring responsibilities.

In the proverb "the secrets of a home should be known first to the head of the home", readers activate schemata related to privacy, family dynamics, and the hierarchical structure of a household. The proverb reflects cultural norms emphasising the importance of familial hierarchy and the role of the head of the home in preserving family secrets. It constructs a conceptual space where the head of the home is positioned as the guardian of family secrets, establishing a hierarchy within the home.

Proverb Reflecting Traditional Gender Roles Emphasising Male Authority and Superiority over Females.

Historically, many African societies have been characterised by patriarchal structures. Traditional norms and practices often positioned men as the primary authority figures within families, communities, and societal institutions. This historical legacy can be traced back to pre-colonial times and the influence of indigenous belief systems. This patriarchal idea is illustrated in the proverb below drawn from *Our husband has gone mad again*:

Excerpt 2. *It is too much indulgence that makes the she-goat grow a long beard like her husband, the he-goat (pp. 58).*

This proverb illustrates the cultural viewpoint regarding the potential negative effects of excessive leniency or indulgence. It employs the metaphor of a she-goat developing a long beard akin to her mate, the he-goat. In the African cultural context, diverse interpretations arise from this proverb. It emphasises the significance of discipline, moderation, and proper guidance in individuals' upbringing, drawing parallels between a she-goat's indulgence and the adverse outcomes for overly indulged individuals. The metaphor symbolises the disturbance of traditional gender roles.

In certain African cultures, an implicit message may convey the undesirability of blurring distinct gender attributes. Readers activate schemata related to the repercussions of excessive indulgence or leniency. The proverb embodies a cultural belief in the impact of indulgence, using the metaphor of a she-goat growing a long beard to depict the unfavorable outcome. It establishes a conceptual space where the she-goat's extended beard metaphorically represents the negative consequences of excessive leniency, creating a vivid image of an unexpected and undesirable transformation. Essentially, this proverb serves as cultural commentary on the repercussions of overindulgence, using the imagery of the she-goat's long beard to communicate a message about the necessity for balance, discipline, and avoiding extremes within the context of African cultural values.

The proverb suggests that if one gender is excessively favored or indulged, it may lead to undesirable outcomes, symbolised by the she-goat growing a long beard like her husband, the he-goat. This image conveys a sense of blurring or eroding traditional gender distinctions. The metaphorical interpretation could be that too much leniency or preferential treatment towards one gender may result in a loss of distinctiveness or uniqueness between the genders. It implies that there should be a balance and fairness in how individuals of different genders are treated and acknowledged, without exaggerating or overindulging in favoritism. The proverb serves as a reminder to maintain equity and avoid extremes in the treatment of genders, promoting a more balanced and harmonious society where both men and women can coexist without losing their respective identities.

Proverbs Advocate Equality/Harmony

Proverbs are also used to promote equality and harmonious living among people. They advocate equality or harmony and often reflect cultural values that emphasise fairness, cooperation, and balance. The examples below were drawn from “the gods are not to blame”.

Excerpt 3. *A cooking pot for the chameleon is a cooking pot for lizard (pp. 19)*
What is the difference between the right ear of a horse and the left ear of that same horse? Nothing. (pp. 38)

These proverbs imply that human beings should be treated equally regardless of their positions or ranks. The first proverb discusses human relationship which is allegorically designed in the metaphor of reptiles. The chameleon and lizard are both reptiles, are of the same family but unequal in both strength and rank. The proverb presupposes that everybody should be given the opportunity to hear the solution that Orunmila proffer to the problem. Considering the social structure of the community, the king is not equal to his subjects but the situation concerned in this scene demands that everybody, including the king, be treated equally as there is no difference between the right ear of a horse and the left.

Considering this proverb “A cooking pot for the chameleon is a cooking pot for lizard”. It activates schemata related to equality, fairness, and universality. The concept of a cooking pot is a shared cultural knowledge, and the chameleon and lizard are used metaphorically to represent different entities. Readers create a mental space where a cooking pot is the common ground for both the chameleon and the lizard. This establishes a textual world where the shared attribute of using the same cooking pot is emphasised. The proverb utilises metaphor and cultural imagery to convey a message about impartiality. It prompts readers to consider the equalising factor of a cooking pot, suggesting that despite differences, certain things remain universal.

The second proverb says “What is the difference between the right ear of a horse and the left ear of that same horse? Nothing.” This proverb activates schemata related to identity, similarity, and the concept of trivial differences. The structure of the proverb sets up an expectation for a comparison and contrast. Readers construct a mental space where the right and left ears of a horse are compared, leading to the realisation that there is no significant distinction between them. This establishes a textual world where triviality is emphasised. The proverb employs a rhetorical question to engage readers in a thought process that challenges the expectation of difference. It plays with the concept of symmetry to convey a message about the insignificance of certain distinctions, prompting readers to reflect on the nature of perceived disparities.

In both proverbs, the author involves the use of metaphor, cultural imagery, and rhetorical devices to convey underlying messages about equality, impartiality, and the insignificance of certain differences. The proverbs create mental spaces where readers explore these concepts within the context of familiar cultural knowledge and cognitive frameworks.

Proverbs Signifying Pride

African views on pride in society can vary across different cultures and regions, given the diversity of the African continent with its numerous ethnic groups and traditions. Many African societies place a strong emphasis on communal values. Pride in the context of community achievements, cultural heritage, and shared successes are often celebrated. Individual accomplishments are often seen as contributing to the collective pride of the community. This is illustrated in the proverbs below drawn from *Kurunmi*

Excerpt 4. *The pride of bees is in the honey comb. (P.15)*
 The pride of the weaver bird shows in the skilful design of its nest. (P.15)
 The pride of monkey is in his knowledge of the secret of treetops. (P.16)
 The young palm tree grows tall rapidly and it is proud, thinking, hoping
 that one day it will scratch the face of the sky, have its elders before it
 touched the sky? (pp.35-36)

In the proverb that says "The pride of bees is in the honeycomb." The proverb activates schemata related to collective effort, industriousness, and the product of labour. The concept of bees and honeycomb is can be associated with hard work, cooperation, and the sweet results of their collective endeavours. Readers construct a mental space where the pride of bees is linked to the creation of the honeycomb. This establishes a textual world where the product of their labour is a source of pride. The author uses metaphor to convey the idea that the collective achievements of a group contribute to their sense of pride. It emphasises the tangible outcome of their efforts, highlighting the significance of collaboration and productivity.

Likewise, there is a proverb that says "The pride of the weaver bird shows in the skillful design of its nest." This proverb activates schemata related to craftsmanship, creativity, and the manifestation of skill. Weaver birds are known for their intricate nests. Readers construct a mental space where the pride of the weaver bird is reflected in the design of its nest. This establishes a textual world where the physical manifestation of skill becomes a source of pride. The author employs metaphor to convey the idea that an individual's or a group's skillful creations can be a source of pride. It emphasises the connection between the pride and the tangible result of the bird's craftsmanship.

This proverb "the pride of the monkey is in his knowledge of the secret of treetops" activates schemata related to knowledge, expertise, and the idea of having access to hidden or exclusive information. Monkeys are often associated with agility and familiarity with trees. Readers construct a mental space where the pride of the monkey is tied to its knowledge of the secret world in the treetops. This establishes a textual world where possessing exclusive knowledge becomes a source of pride. The proverb uses metaphor to convey that knowledge, especially unique or specialised knowledge can be a source of pride. It highlights the idea that understanding secrets or having special insights contributes to a sense of pride.

"The young palm tree grows tall rapidly and is proud, thinking, hoping that one day it will scratch the face of the sky, has its elders before it touched the sky?" This proverb activates schemata related to growth, ambition, and the aspiration for reaching great heights. The image of a palm tree aspiring to touch the sky is vivid and metaphorical. Readers construct a mental space where the young palm tree's rapid growth and aspirations become a source of pride. This establishes a textual world where ambition and hope contribute to the palm tree's sense of pride. The proverb uses metaphor and personification to convey the idea of ambition and aspiration. It explores

the concept of pride associated with the palm tree's growth and its hopes of reaching extraordinary heights. The question posed invites readers to consider the tree's perspective and aspirations. In all these proverbs, the author employs the use of metaphor, vivid imagery, and the construction of mental spaces to convey deeper meanings about pride, whether it's derived from collective efforts, craftsmanship, knowledge, or ambitious aspirations. The proverbs tap into cultural and cognitive frameworks to convey these messages in a compact and evocative manner.

Proverbs Advocate Patience/Endurance

Proverbs are also used to teach caution, patience and endurance. An instance of such proverbs that support the ideology of patience and endurance is seen in the proverbs below drawn from “the gods are not to blame”.

Excerpt 5. *The moon moves slowly but by daybreak it crosses the sky (pp.14)*
 By trying often, the monkey learns to jump tree to tree without falling
 (pp. 14)
 Until the rotten tooth is pulled out, the mouth must chew with caution
 (pp. 21)

“The moon moves slowly but by daybreak it crosses the sky”. This proverb suggests patience and perseverance. It implies that even though progress may seem slow at first, with time and persistence, success will eventually be achieved. In African culture, where moral traditions often emphasise the importance of endurance and gradual progress, this proverb are used to encourage individuals to stay committed to their goals, trusting that eventual success will come despite the initial slow pace. This proverb activates schemas related to celestial bodies, time, and progression. The schema for the moon moving slowly but reaching its destination aligns with the idea of gradual progress and patience. Individuals may draw on existing knowledge and experiences related to time and celestial events. The schema helps in creating a mental image of persistence and ultimate success. The proverb constructs a text world where the moon is a symbol of persistence, and the progression of time is highlighted. The slow movement of the moon creates an expectation for eventual success. Readers enter a mental space where they visualise the moon's journey, creating a cognitive framework that mirrors the slow but steady progress toward achieving a goal.

In the same vein, the proverb “by trying often, the monkey learns to jump tree to tree without falling” highlights the value of practice and learning through experience. In African cultures, where the natural world often serves as a source of wisdom, this proverb is employed to emphasise the importance of resilience and continuous effort in mastering a skill or overcoming challenges. It reflects a belief in the gradual development of capabilities and the notion that one can achieve mastery through persistent learning. This proverb activates schemas related to learning, practice, and skill development. It engages the reader's cognitive structures associated with animals,

nature, and the process of acquiring abilities. Readers may recall personal experiences or observations related to the gradual development of skills. The schema aids in understanding the importance of perseverance in learning. The proverb constructs a text world where a monkey learns through repeated attempts, emphasising the connection between effort and skill development. The mental space created involves a progression of learning experiences. Readers mentally navigate a world where the monkey's efforts lead to mastery, reinforcing the idea that practice is the key to acquiring new abilities.

“Until the rotten tooth is pulled out, the mouth must chew with caution”. This proverb emphasises the need for addressing and resolving issues before proceeding with normal activities. In African cultures that often place significance on communal harmony and holistic well-being, this proverb may be employed to convey the idea that unresolved problems can have repercussions on various aspects of life. It encourages a proactive approach to dealing with challenges, underlining the importance of facing difficulties head-on rather than ignoring or postponing them. The proverb activates schemas related to health, caution, and problem-solving. It engages cognitive structures associated with the human body and the consequences of unaddressed issues. It can relate to situations where ignoring a problem could lead to further complications. The schema prompts an understanding of the importance of resolving issues promptly. The proverb constructs a text world where an unresolved issue (rotten tooth) requires caution in daily activities. The mental space includes a sense of potential harm if the problem is not addressed. Readers enter a world where caution is necessary until a problem is resolved, creating a cognitive framework that emphasises the importance of addressing issues for overall well-being.

Proverbs Reflecting Political Landmark

Power tussle, political crisis and fight for supremacy are inevitable in a political environment. Proverbs are also used to portray the political situation in Nigeria. Most politicians venture into politics because of their selfish interest and can go to any length to promote their political ambition.

Excerpt 6. *A paddler doesn't say a crocodile has an ugly lump on its snout, until he has safely crossed the river (pp. 29)*

In this proverb, crocodile is used as a symbol to activate schemas related to potentially dangerous creatures. Cultural and environmental schemas associated with rivers, paddling, and the potential risks of encounters with wildlife are also activated. The proverb emphasises social etiquette, advising against making derogatory remarks until a safe outcome is achieved and encourages individuals to exercise caution and avoid unnecessary risks. It engages cognitive processes that prompt individuals to prioritise safety over expressing potentially offensive opinions. The concept of refraining from criticising until a safe outcome is achieved implies delayed judgment, activating mental

processes associated with patience and prudence. The proverb constructs a text world where a paddler is in the process of crossing a river inhabited by crocodiles. The mental space includes the potential danger of interacting with the crocodile and the need for a successful river crossing.

The text world incorporates a social context where commenting on the crocodile's appearance is discouraged until the paddler has safely crossed the river. The proverb instills a cautionary tone, creating a cognitive framework where individuals should be circumspect in their judgments, especially in potentially risky situations, for instance, a political actor must not use any derogatory comment until he wins the election. Readers mentally navigate a world where criticism is postponed until safety is assured, fostering a mindset that prioritizes practical concerns over immediate judgments. The proverb reflects a cultural understanding of the environment, emphasising the potential dangers of rivers and the need for respect when dealing with wildlife, particularly crocodiles.

It suggests a cultural norm that values prudence and restraint, aligning with the idea that one should avoid unnecessary confrontation or criticism, especially in situations with potential hazards. The proverb imparts a piece of social wisdom, advising individuals to refrain from making comments that may provoke or offend until a safe resolution is achieved. It underscores the importance of social etiquette and the exercise of wisdom in communication, especially in contexts where safety is a primary concern. The proverbs tap into cognitive processes associated with risk assessment, delayed judgment, and prioritising safety. It highlights the adaptive nature of human cognition in navigating complex situations. It encourages individuals to consider the consequences of their actions and words in specific contexts, promoting a thoughtful and measured approach. The proverb "A paddler doesn't say a crocodile has an ugly lump on its snout until he has safely crossed the river" is rich in cultural and contextual meanings. Schema Theory and Text World Theory help to unpack the cognitive processes and mental representations that contribute to the understanding of this proverb within its cultural and situational context.

5. Conclusion

This study has explored the frameworks of Schema Theory and Text-Worlds in the context of Ola Rotimi's works with valuable insights into the cognitive stylistic dimensions of proverbs and their intricate relationship with cultural values. Through a meticulous analysis of the proverbs, this study has illuminated the ways in which proverbs serve as cognitive schemas, shaping the readers' understanding of the depicted worlds within the texts. The interplay between linguistic expressions, cultural references, and cognitive processing unveils the richness of Rotimi's narratives and their ability to convey deep-seated cultural values. This study's framework has helped us understand the mental representations and structures that underlie the meaning of these proverbs. Schema Theory and Text World Theory provide insights into how individuals process

and understand the proverbs, highlighting the activation of relevant mental structures and the construction of cohesive mental spaces in response to the textual stimuli.

By delving into the cognitive aspects of language and storytelling, this study contributes to a broader comprehension of how proverbs function as conduits for cultural transmission and preservation. The integration of Schema Theory and Text-Worlds provides a nuanced framework for unraveling the layers of meaning embedded in proverbs, elucidating their role in constructing mental representations of the cultural tapestry within Rotimi's literary universe. Furthermore, the study not only enhances our understanding of Rotimi's works but also underscores the broader significance of cultural values as portrayed through language. This interdisciplinary approach fosters a holistic appreciation of literature, linguistics, and cultural studies.

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