

LANGUAGE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AMONG THE ANAANG PEOPLE

Silas, Peter. A.,
Department of General Studies
Havilla University, Nde, Ikom, Cross River State
p.silas@havillauniversity.edu.ng

&

Abru, John O.,
Havilla University, Nde, Ikom, Cross River State.
Department of Mass Communication
j.abru@havillauniversity.edu.ng

Abstract

The study sets out to investigate how the contextual or the speaker-intended interpretations assigned to utterances used in conflict situations in the Anaang society impact on parties in a conflict situation to resolve the conflict. Decoding the locally situated meanings and cultural relevance of utterances in conflict situation has been a problem because mediators often use words figuratively with contextual relevance. The data were collected through participant observations, unstructured interviews and secondary sources. The work employed ethnopragmatics and speech act theory. The study explicates the efficacy of Anaang proverbs in conflict management and enhances a better understanding of the Anaang pragmatic use of language with the intrinsic nature of the imbued cultural values. The study revealed that language for conflict management in Anaang expresses principles that govern life, ethical values and beliefs. It further illustrates the ability of the people to make statements of wisdom using locally sourced contents imbued with concepts and interpretations which convey social values to enhance social control and harmony. The study recommends incorporating teaching of proverbs into school curriculum at different levels of our educational system.

Key Words: Language, conflict management, Anaang, ethnopragmatics, speech act theory.

Introduction

It is a generally held view that there is no human community without pockets of conflicts. Conflict is a phenomenon and an unsubtle aspect of life and it has become impossible therefore, to avoid managing and resolving it if any society must experience relative peace. Herrity (2023) avers that it is important to understand how to ... resolve conflict across cultures. There are many approaches to managing conflict in different cultures. Silas (2018) stresses that language takes a key part in the way communications play out in all forms of conflict management between individuals and/or groups. Esiobu (2017) avers that Africa can use its traditional knowledge to make progress (in conflict resolution among others) because it has been argued that conflict management in Africa has culminated in the verdict that traditional approaches should take precedent over conventional approaches. Makamami (2013) avers that 'African proverbs have vast potentials to mitigate and possibly prevent conflict through discourse strategy ...if incorporated in the spheres of conflict resolution would provide answers to vices such as brutality, lack of ethical conduct and corruption as a vital component of African indigenous knowledge systems and can be used to resolve conflict at both the micro- and macro-levels of the society as well as persuade people to conform to established conventions. Silas (2018) sees the traditional approach to involve among other things the use of the language of the people which involve a range of metaphors, symbolism and argumentation to ensure thematization through discourse strategy.

Proverbs are products of the people's culture and intrinsically relate to the culture. As a form of language, it makes language indispensable in human activities particularly in realizing harmonious intra- and inter-communal relationship among members of any society given the fact that peace is a desirable condition. Silas (2018) avers that the use of proverbial expressions is an aspect of traditional approaches with some forms of conciliatory vocabularies that are self-evident, frank and emphasize the people's tradition direct to the parties. Umoh (2009) describes proverbs as traditional rubber stamps that put the seal of authenticity on a matter because of aptness to get to the core of matters. Besides, African proverbs can be used in all spheres of life to add value in the social systems.

Therefore, African proverbs have important roles in maintaining positive social relations with the rest of the world as demanded by modern diplomacy and the quest for dignified social existence. As long as conflict resolution remains restricted to the boundaries of a given tradition, irregularities and inconsistencies across languages should be ignored, but can only become pertinent when conflict resolution is attempted across paradigms in multi-cultural societies and contemporary international affairs.

Conflict has some negative consequences that should warrant avoidance. But despite the level of civilization, modernization and technological advancement that man has attained, and man's several attempts to make the society safe, there are always pockets of conflicts here and there. Considering the debilitating consequences of conflicts, human beings have always tried to utilize the exclusive and unique privilege of the gift of language and other strategies to manage crises and reconcile the parties concerned to give room for peaceful co-existence and to prevent a possible escalation or re-occurrence. Ukeagbu (2021) argues that flaming of conflicts and managing them are all dependent on language use, as language is used to build and reconcile, so can it also be used to destroy. This study looked at conflict management strategies in Anaang.

1.1 The concept "Anaang"

Anaang is an ethnic group in Akwa Ibom State in the South-south geopolitical Zone of Nigeria. The word "Anaang" refers to an ethnic group and the language spoken by the group in the North-western part of Akwa Ibom State. Anaang language is one of the Lower Cross languages under the Delta Cross in the New Benue Congo family, and one of the three major ethnic groups in Akwa Ibom State. The Anaang people are found in eight (08) of the thirty-one local government areas in Akwa Ibom State, thus making them the second largest ethnic group in the state. According to Udondata (2006), the Anaang speaking area occupies a total land mass of 2.37square kilometers. The Anaang language has a native speaker population of 2.9million (Anaang language Wikipedia). The Anaang area is bounded on the North by Ngwa (Igbo speaking group) in Abia State, Nigeria, on the West by Bonny people in Rivers State, Nigeria, and on the South and North-east by the Ibibio-speaking areas of Akwa Ibom state. The Anaang speaking Local Government Areas include Abak, Etim Ekpo, Ikot Ekpene, Oruk Anam, Essien Udim, Ika, Obot Akara and Ukanafun. Figure 1 below is the linguistic geography of Akwa Ibom showing the Anaang speaking areas (marked with yellow colour).

1.2 Conflict and Conflict Resolution Strategies

Herrity (2023) defines conflict as competitive and opposing actions of incompatibilities, antagonistic state of action (as of divergent ideas, interests or persons). In this instance, a party's interest suffers because of the activities of the opposite party. Aula and Siira (2010) see conflict as an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement or dissonance within or between social entities – individual or organization. Conflict can also relate to incompatible preferences, goals and not just activities and it is a part of human consciousness in all aspects of life. We infer that working in an organization is 'working in conflict'. As a corollary, live in a community is to dwell in the midst of conflicts. This confirms our earlier assertion that there is no human community without some forms of conflict. It can be inferred that conflict is absolutely unavoidable irrespective of where one stays.

Our focus in this study is interpersonal, family and communal conflicts that involve at least two persons whose ideas are opposing to each other. For example, a husband and wife may have opposing ideas on an issue. We look at the two as different individuals, but not as a family. So, the conflict at this instance is considered to be interpersonal. The conflict between members of two separate families is what we regard as family dispute. Communal dispute can involve the whole members of a given community or the members of two different communities. Communal dispute in most instances always results from ownership of land or boundary adjustment. There are also organizational/group, and international dispute. As the name goes, it involves the disagreement between members of an organization or different organizations. For example, if we look at the Christian religion and the Islamic religion as two different bodies, we can regard any religious dispute between them as organizational dispute. There is also the international dispute that involves two nations. One example of an international conflict is the recently fought Russia and Ukraine war.

1.2.1 Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution involves some cease-fire processes and activities that can bring about a peaceful ending to a conflict. In an attempt to resolve a conflict, members of the affected groups usually communicate information of their conflicting motives, ideologies, intentions, reasons for beliefs and other issues to the other party. Such engagements between the two parties are indications of the readiness of the parties for dialogue. In Anaang, the dialogue would take place in a native tribunal or any ad-hoc meeting place within the community and in the presence of the community elders who serve as mediators. The presence of the mediators helps to checkmate the excesses of the disputants whose conduct and/or utterances while stating their differences can cause the dispute to degenerate. The use of proverbs become relevant here because the elders who act as peace brokers often use some forms of Anaang proverbs to address the disputing parties with a view to resolving the differences between them.

1.2.2 Conflict Resolution Strategies

In Human Resource Management approach, about five conflict strategies have been recognized which includes collaboration, competition, avoiding, accommodating and compromise. Some other known methods are negotiation, mediation, diplomacy, litigation, conciliation, participation and consensus building, etc (cf www.partnersglobal.org). The method adopted in resolving any conflict may be dependent on the nature of the conflict and the people. For instance, the method used in resolving international conflict may not be applicable in resolving family or communal conflict. Considering the scope of this work, the types of conflict in focus are communal, family and interpersonal conflicts as earlier stated. The common approaches in resolving dispute of this nature in Anaang are negotiation or dialogue, and mediation. Our discussion, therefore, is built around negotiation and mediation types of conflict resolution. These methods allow the elders to play the role of arbitrators and the opportunity to use proverbs to appeal to the disputing parties to bury the hatchet.

1.2.1.1 Negotiation

Negotiation is a formal discussion carried out in a socially accepted way between two or more opposing parties. The intention is to reach a mutuality and resolve a point of difference for a common outcome. Negotiation can be distributive or integrative. Distributive negotiation is relevant in business and would not be discussed here. Integrative negotiation also known as interest-based negotiation can be adopted in conflict resolution. It focuses on the underlying interests of the parties rather than their arbitrary claims or stated positions. Integrative negotiation approaches negotiation as a shared problem rather than a personalized battle and insists on adherence to objective, principled criteria as the basis for agreement. It is called a 'win-win' game because it aims to achieve conjoint gains and keeping the relationship intact. In most cases it is always facilitated by elders or a third party. This is the usual practice in Anaang community in resolving conflicts. The others who join the disputants, as earlier stated are usually community leaders who mediate to ensure a peaceful resolution of the dispute. Comments by the elders are always couched in proverbs to evoke memories of the customs aimed at persuading the parties to embrace peace. In this discussion therefore, we look at negotiation and mediation as one and the same approach in conflict resolution.

Research Methodology

The study aimed at describing what the Anaang people do and how they interpret their world around them in conflict situations to achieve peace. These are realities that cannot be taken for granted because there are socially constructed meanings that exist with the owners of a language in social context. Moreover, the data represent a picture of the way of life of the Anaang people and we believe that any study on such a phenomenon would be a description of what already exist. Therefore, this study required a qualitative research approach. The data were collected through participant observations and unstructured interviews.

The target population of study was Anaang speakers. Some conflict resolution sessions that involved inter personal conflicts and group of persons in different locations of the Anaang speaking area were witnessed after consultations with chiefs and family heads for permission to attend some dispute resolution sessions in their domains strictly for research purposes. Membership of the arbitration panel was at the discretion of the community elders and the leader of each panel was the respondent during the different interview sessions. The adult disputants were competent/native

speakers of Anaang language. The data collection technique was homogeneous and purposive because people who have the same background and share the same experience in conflict situations in selected areas of Anaang were involved.

Theoretical Background

Ethnopragmatics and speech act theory were adopted for the analysis. Ethnopragmatics addresses the culturally traditional significations of utterances associated with the myth or culture. Goddard (1997) says that ethnopragmatics is necessarily intertwined with cross-linguistic semantics because the whole idea is to understand speech practices in terms which make sense to the people concerned; that is, in terms of indigenous values, beliefs, attitudes, social categories, emotions and so on. Ethnopragmatics refers to the explanation of speech practices which begins with culture-internal shared ideas, values, norms, and assumptions of the speakers, without imposing universal semantics and 'external' perspective on the interpretation of the speech practices of any particular local culture.

Speech act theory becomes handy because it holds that all linguistic units entail linguistic acts. In other words, every utterance is an action. Michael (2014) says that meaning and speech act are similar to each other given that every meaningful utterance can be used to perform a particular speech act and every possible speech act in principle can be given an exact formulation in sentence. The use of the Anaang language during conflict management is not inconsequential, it has some psychological consequences such as persuading or dissuading, resounding, or getting the parties in the conflict to do or realize something. From the Language action perspective, language is the primary dimension of human activity that applies not just in person-to-person direct interaction, but also influences the people's activities since it conveys emotions, attitudes, fears, prejudices and aspirations among a whole range of indices. Adedimeji (2005) says man is the only creature that uses words intentionally and habitually. The eclectic approach is appropriate because while ethnopragmatics interprets the social values expressed codedly, the speech act theory interprets the theme and the speakers' intended psychological consequences such as persuading or dissuading, encoded in the selected proverbs.

2. Presentation of data and analysis

The data presentation and analysis are preceded by the scenario which is followed by the data and the direct translation (DT), the English language translation (ET) and the contextual meaning (CM) of the proverbs used. Anaang proverbs used in conflict situations can either resolve or cause the conflict to escalate. The data analyzed here are Anaang proverbs for conflict resolution (See the appendix).

2.1 Mother-child conflict situation

A woman, Lucy Akpan, had a Nanny goat and a Billy goat. She left her home one morning to the church for morning prayers. When she returned, she could not find the Billy goat, her son was also not at home. When the boy eventually came around, he denied knowing what had happened to the goat. He rather pointed an accusing finger at a neighbour. The woman invited a juju priest to administer oath on her son whom she suspected had stolen the goat, but other family members frowned at the woman's action and drew the attention of the family head Chief Ndak who intervened. The following proverbs were used in settling the matter.

2.1a. *Kú dé òlìáń ákámà mkpàràń ntíbé ilíb*

DT: Do not be cricket it uses leg (its) burst belly

ET: Do not be a cricket that uses its leg to burst its belly.

CM: Do no create more problems for yourself because in hurting your son, you are also hurting yourself.

2.1b *Àbén ágwò ntọ́ átọ́ idem ámọ.*

DT: A person who carry person throw down he throw down himself

ET: He who throws another person down, also throws himself down.

CM: If you administer the juju oath on him, you are equally administering it to yourself

2.1c. *Àtù' nām ánám idém.*

DT: You want to do, you do body.

- ET: You want to do (another), you do to yourself.
 CM: Whatever you do to him, you are doing it to yourself.
- 2.1d. *Àjèm íkúm ifuuku!*
 DT: You want stab thigh.
 ET: You want to stab your thigh!
 CM: Do you want to harm yourself!
- 2.1e. *Étím ídèm éliàñà ké úbók*
 DT: Millipede body they remove with hand
 ET: The millipede on someone's body is removed with the hand
 CM: Because of the close (mother-child) relationship, be mild/careful how you react in this situation.
- 2.1f. *Úbàrà ínùà áchọñ íkọkọ*
 DT: Blood mouth it difficult to spit
 ET: The blood in the mouth is difficult to spit out.
 CM: Considering the closeness of the relationship, it is a difficult matter to deal with.
- 2.1g. *Àdè ùchìnè ájèm íkọk íbọk úwìnè nọ ídém.*
 DT: You be mouse you want prepare charm pursue give body.
 ET: Are you a mouse that prepares a charm against itself.
 CM: Why do you want to do what will affect you negatively or, scare your admirers/Relatives/acquaintances.

The central idea behind the proverbs in (2.1a – d) is caution. The proverbs are other ways of telling a person to be cautious. The users were familiar with the culture of Anaang people and the intimacy between the people from the same family who are always described as people from the same *ilib* 'womb'. The codes used in giving the message were common things in Anaang society. The speaker of the proverb in (2.1a) used the cricket and its belly to connote the aggrieved mother and her erring son respectively. The speaker further employed the use of a cricket and its legs to remind the aggrieved mother of the mother-child relationship and went on to caution her that any 'wrong' action taken against her son is bound to boomerang. The administration of oath by a juju priest is one of the traditional ways of settling disputes in Anaang community, but it always has some negative consequences which was the reason the aggrieved mother was being cautioned. The administration of juju oath on the boy at the instance of the mother was seen to be an indirect way of the woman administering the oath on herself taking into consideration the mother-child relationship.

Proverb (2.1b) said the same thing but used a traditional wrestling competition as an illustration. A wrestling contest involves two opponents; here the mother and the son were seen as the contenders. If the woman had "thrown the son down" by administering the oath, she would have been administering it on herself. In addition, the proverb also addressed the offender. If the son had stolen the mother's goat, he had invariably stolen his property. This proverb has more than one application because it has a dual connotation that can address both the mother and the erring son.

The proverbs in (2.1c) and (2.1d) said the same thing but (2.1d) is an exclamation. The 'thigh' represented the erring son while the stabber was the mother. The proverb reminded the aggrieved mother that the erring son remains a part and parcel of her.

The millipede in (2.1e) represented the son and the use of the hand to remove the millipede suggested leniency. The proverb in (2.1f) used blood in the mouth to capture the intertwining relationship between the two which made the matter dicey and calls for caution. Naturally, if one has a wound in the mouth and blood oozes out, it mixes with saliva and it is difficult to spit all out (completely) without swallowing a bit of it.

The proverb in (2.1g) outrightly condemned the mother's intended action. The intended action of the aggrieved mother was seen as what would bounce back and affect her negatively. This was captured in the stench the mouse has which scares people from it.

2.2 Conflict between cousins

This scenario was recorded in retrospection. It is a scenario one of these researchers witnessed in Obong clan during the local government chairmanship election in a Local Government Area in one of the States in Nigeria. The chairmanship seat was zoned to the disputants' community. Two cousins indicated interest and none accepted to step down for the other. When another contestant on the platform of another political party declared his intention, elders in the family of these two cousins sensed danger and summoned them for a reconciliation. The essence was for the two cousins to cooperate, pull their resources together and fight a common opponent. The two contending cousins were addressed with the following proverbs in (2.2) below.

2.2a *Ñtò ékà ibàà é má ènyìàñà úkód ébòd, àmòòm mmóóm ásèbèn átáá*

DT: Children mother two if they struggle leg goat, holder hold use carry chew.

ET: If two brothers fight over the leg of a goat, the mediator takes it and eats.

CM: Both of you should not oppose each other so that another person would not take advantage of the situation.

2.2b *Èdiá à má à màkà ké úlũ ñ mkpákwúk ísínéké.*

DT: Yam if friendly in mortar there is no (hard) lump.

ET: If there is love among pieces of yam in a mortar, all would blend without a lump.

CM: If there is no love among you, none of you will succeed.

The proverbs in (2.2a & b) above, are other ways of preaching unity and co-operation by the Anaang people. The speakers used different local items and practices to emphasize the need for love, unity and cooperation among them (the cousins). The leg of a goat here symbolized the local government council chairmanship seat. Goats are common domestic animals in Anaang. During traditional functions in Anaang, goat meat is often shared on family basis. Each family head in turn shares it to individual members of their respective families. The speaker's intent was to cause the two cousins to unite in order not to lose the seat to another interested party.

The pieces of yam in the mortar in proverb (2.2b) symbolized unity among the two rivals who were members of the same family. The *mkpákwúk* – 'lumps' in the yam foo-foo represented the schism between them and their possible failure. Traditionally in Anaang, the act of pounding foo-foo is done in a mortar. The proverb reminded them that with the schism between them, neither of them would succeed. It was the Anaang way of saying, 'United we stand, but divided we fall', in order to cause them to unite.

Proverbs (2.2c & d) below were used to emphasize the benefits of relatives being supportive of one another instead of opposing.

2.2c *À má ányíé ágwó ké itíé ntàñ, ntàñ ánèm íkwóó*

DT: If you have person at place riddle, riddle is sweet to sing.

ET: If you have somebody where riddles are said, the riddles are interesting to sing.

CM: If you have a supporter, the ambition is easy to achieve.

2.2d *É má ényíé àdàá élèm ésà élòk éjíd.*

DT: If they have person stand backyard, they dig rabbit

ET: If you have somebody who stands-by at the backyard, you can dig for the rabbit.

CM: You cannot succeed alone.

The proverb in (2.2c) reflected the traditional practice of story-telling with riddles at night during moonlight. The phrase *itíé ntàñ* 'where riddles are said', connoted the election or voting booth, while the clause, *ntàñ ánèm íkwóó* - 'riddle is sweet to sing', was used to indicate the ease with which the

task would be accomplished with the cooperation and support of other family members. The proverb advocated cooperation in order to handle the task with ease.

The proverb in (2.2d) is similar to (2.2c), but (2.2d) used *àdàá èlèm ésà* – ‘a person who stands at the background (a supporter)’, to symbolize another person who is cooperative, while *élòk éjíéd* – ‘they can dig for a rabbit’, represented the activity (the election). Rabbit hunt is a hobby for youth in Anaang society, but it requires the assistance of other persons. These proverbs were Anaang ways of advocating the need for cooperation among them, especially as members of the same family.

Other proverbs highlighted the danger of in-house fighting. They were rather challenged to show their might against the outsider/common enemy rather than fight among themselves. The examples are in proverbs (2.2e & f) below:

- 2.2e *Úfòk átóghó èsà ágwùlé ísíkbó èsím éjíéd.*
 DT: House it start backyard it fall, it hear not tail rabbit.
 ET: The house that starts to fall from the back walls does not hear the ‘rabbit tail’
 (a kind of medicinal herb).
 CM: If your opposition starts from within the family, it can be very destabilizing.
- 2.2f *Èdèñè ébód ètìmè èlòñò ké échìd úfòk ètùàk íbènè ènò èssíén.*
 DT: You be goat, instead stay in inside house hit wall give outside
 ET: You (both) are goats, staying inside to hit the walls (of the house) from inside.
 CM: You are stupid to oppose each other (to create room for another person to take
 advantage).

The house used in proverb (2.2e) stands for the ambition of the two rivals. The collapsing back wall is their glaring possibility of failure at the polls because of the internal disagreement and disunity among them. The *ágwùlé* – ‘collapse’, is a sign of their disintegration for lack of unity while the *ísíkbó èsím éjíéd* – ‘it does not respond to traditional medication’, stresses the glaring possibility of failure at the polls. The choice of this particular traditional medicine is to capture the internal nature of the conflict because the medicine cures stomachache. Anaang people prefer traditional medicine to English medicine in some instances. The message here was that with the internal opposition among them, none of them was likely to succeed.

In proverb 2.2f, the two opponents are described as goats that hit the walls of their house from inside to the advantage of another who is an outsider. The message here was that with the internal opposition among them neither was likely to succeed but the opponent would take the advantage.

The disputants were also reminded of the limitations and danger of being alone with the proverbs in (2.2g - i) below:

- 2.2g *Úbòk kèèd íbénéké ákpàn ìlòd ké iwùò*
 DT: Hand one carry not carrier put on head
 ET: One hand cannot carry a loaded basket on the head
 CM: You cannot do it all alone.
- 2.2h *Núon úbòk kèèd ísíóghó nnáñ ké iwùò.*
 DT: Finger hand one it remove not louse from head
 ET: One finger cannot remove louse from the head
 CM: You cannot do it all alone.
- 2.2i *Ágwó àsésín ágwó úbòk ké ísín nè álòk ànyoñ*
 DT: Person he put person hand in waist and he climb up.
 ET: Someone must support another by the waist for him to climb up.
 CM: You need another’s support to succeed.

The idea of acting alone was captured by *úbòk kèèd* – ‘one hand’ and *núon úbòk kèèd* – ‘one finger’, in (2.2g -i) respectively. The election processes and the predicted failure were captured by the clauses *íbénéké ákpàn ìlòd ké iwùò* – ‘cannot carry a loaded basket on the head’, and *ísíóghó nnáng ké iwùò* – ‘cannot remove a louse from the head’. The two proverbs are similar except for the differences in the choice of lexical items. (2.2g) uses *ákpàn* – ‘wooden container/carrier’

(presumably loaded with commodities), while (2.2h) uses *nnáñ* – ‘a louse’. Carrying load on the head is a common practice in Anaang like in most other African communities.

The proverb in (2.2i) has a similar message but used a climber who needs the support of another person. The proverb compared the contest for the local government chairmanship office to climbing a tree. The election contest is represented as *álòk ànyoñ* – ‘climbing up’, while the needed support of another person was represented as *ágwó ásín ágwó úbòk ké ísín* – ‘a person supports another by the waist’, to make the task easier. The essence was to cause one of them to step down and support the other.

2.3 Chieftaincy conflict situation

There was a leadership tussle between two members of a royal family – Udoudo Akang and Akaaka Uchoro both from Udeen family, that almost led to a divide-and-rule in the village. Udoudo was younger but richer compared to the other. The younger person wanted to use his financial status to hijack the throne. Kingmakers stepped in to settle the tussle and advised the parties (the younger in particular) using the expressions below which emphasized ethics and the laws that govern life (rulership). It is the Anaang way of advising somebody to be patient till the right time.

2.3a *Ákíkò únèn ibàà ísíkpòkò àkòm kèèd.*

DT: Male hen two they crow not on roof one.

ET: Two cocks do not crow on one roof.

CM: Two kings do not rule concurrently in a kingdom. Or, a kingdom does not allow two kings at the same time.

This speaker preached orderliness based on the law that governs rulership. The two cocks in (2.3a) depict the two rivals. The crowing depicts leadership role or the exercise of authority and the roof represents a village/domain. The cultural practice of domesticating chicken in Anaang is highlighted in this proverb. The cocks could easily fly to roof top when mud houses were common. The proverb was used in this context to advise the younger person to humbly step down because there cannot be two kings in a domain or else, there would be anarchy.

Other proverbs emphasize seniority in age. (2.3b) below, are some of the examples.

2.3b *Ágwó nnwààn ákpòn sé ákpòn, átiè nté únèn, íkpónó ikàn èkpàd ùbòk*

DT: Person female important how important is like hen bigger not than bag hand

ET: No matter how important a woman is, she is like a hen, she is not bigger than a handbag.

CM: You are not above your elders (no matter how rich you are).

2.3c *Ékpè àdè ábọọñ únàm ké íkọd íwóhó itòdó ké nták úbòm idem nè ékpé ájàk itié úbọọñ áno éniin.*

DT: Lion is king animal in bush, it would not because size body let lion leave seat kingship give elephant.

ET: The lion is the king of animal in the bush and cannot relinquish its position to the elephant because of body size.

CM: Your elder brother cannot concede his right to the throne to you because of your wealth.

The proverb in (2.3b) is a simile that uses marital relationship to dissuade the younger rival to be humble. It compares a woman to a hen to stress the principle of marital relationship. Traditionally in Anaang community, people do not carry a hen in a basket or any other form of container to go and sell in the market except in a bag, otherwise it would be construed that the hen is a stolen one. The proverb paints the picture of a woman who, irrespective of her social status, must necessarily stay under the man. This is impressed upon to preach to the rich young man that he must be subject to the authority of his elders in proverb. It is a general belief (in Anaang) that the husband is always older and more authoritative than the wife.

The idea in (2.3c) is similar to (2.3b) except that one is metaphorical in form and uses different lexical items. The size of the elephant depicts the younger man with his wealth. But the senior person who is symbolized by the lion must rule over him.

The other expressions of wisdom in (2.3d & e) conveyed ideas similar to those of (2.3b & c) but they emphasize the preference to birth order to advise the younger person to step down.

- 2.3d *Íyõñ áwìrè òtòó òtìé*
 DT: Oracle it play first to sit
 ET: The oracle attends to the first to sit down (consult it).
 CM: The senior in age must be given preference.

- 2.3e *Ásèdèdè ñkò úkòd ájòjòhò àtù, úkwòb ásimé áñwòñ.*
 DT: It be until wine fill fill jar, then cover reach drink.
 ET: Until wine fills the jar (to the brim), the cover does not drink
 CM: Your turn will come after your senior.

It is a common practice in the Anaang community to consult the oracle to find out the cause of any unusual happening or to ascertain the truth of a matter. The message in proverb in (2.3d) was that traditionally, seniority in birth order must be given preference in the matter. It advocated a first come, first served approach. In other words, the stool is, “The first to be born is the first to sit on the stool”. The proverb also showed that Anaang people also believe in traditional religion or paganism. The proverb in (2.3e) has the same conception but used a palm wine jar and its cover. The jar cover represents the younger person. He was advised to wait for his due time.

Other proverbs (2.3f – h) below, directly emphasized the need for humility and other values in order to create an atmosphere of peace.

- 2.3f *Újòkò mfád àfò àtè idè mbòñ*
 DT: You are not even rashes, you say you are dermatitis
 ET: You are not worth tiny rashes, you claim to be the dermatitis.
 CM: Do not claim what you are not.

- 2.3g *Súñ súñ ákpè úbóóñ ísó.*
 DT: Gentle gentle before kingship front.
 ET: Humility comes before exaltation.
 CM: Be humble in order to be exalted (at the right time).

- 2.3h *Àdè njén éjìèd, àtìbè èsìm áfá.*
 DT: You be child rabbit; you grow tail new
 ET: You are a kitten which has grown a new tail.
 CM: You are a novice.

Proverb (2.3f) taught an ethical lesson. It condemned pride and commended humility using rashes and dermatitis. *Mfád* – ‘rashes’, is a minor skin disease while *mbòñ* – ‘dermatitis’, is a more serious skin inflammation that covers a broader skin surface. They depicted the younger and the older persons respectively. The younger person was advised not to rate himself above what he actually was. Proverb 2.3g is also an ethical expression. It is an axiom and a general belief that “whoever humbles himself will be lifted up, and whoever lifts up himself, will be humbled”. This proverb also pointed to one of the core values of the Anaang people but, it can also be seen as a biblical injunction to the Christians. In (2.3g) the speaker saw the younger person as a novice without any experience. Therefore, he was unfit for the throne.

5.2 Conclusion

The work attempted to explicate the efficacy and the rich benefits in the use of Anaang ‘language’ in conflict management in the Anaang society. The study might not be exhaustive considering the plethora of proverbs and other forms of figurative expressions in Anaang that can be used for this purpose. But this study has enhanced a better understanding by both native and non-native speakers through the DT, ET, and CM of the language. It has also highlighted the intrinsic nature and the imbued cultural values of the people in the language to enable maintenance of the culture across generations of speakers. For the language to extend its range of relevance beyond the local domains and uses, a study of this nature is imperative. The work is foundational for other researchers especially in the area of conflict resolution procedures in Anaang society as it highlights the forms of language use that is pertinent, the efficacy of the form and the culture of the people. It will also be useful for researchers in other areas of Anaang like Anaang philosophy, history, anthropology, and

language, among others. Above all, it is our contribution to add to the existing literacy materials on the Anaang language.

5.3 Recommendations

This work is a study of the expressions of wisdom among the Anaang people. Therefore, we consider the educational benefits the varied interpretations ascribed to the lexical items and the sentences would have on the reasoning power of students and recommend that the teaching of the use of proverbs and other figurative forms of language should be incorporated in the school curriculum from the primary level. The materials should be designed with possible scenarios of conflict situations or any other situation and some relevant proverbs. A handbook with interpretations, cultural relatedness, applications and etymology of key concepts in the proverbs should also be provided to guide both the teachers and the learners for class and out of class discussions. We also recommend that teachers should be advised to adopt the continual questioning method of questions and answers among the learners. In this method, the learners should be divided into two groups such that while one group poses the proverbs over a scenario, the other group supplies the interpretation and the application to the scenario. The teacher can then elaborate more on the proverbs to ensure that the learners capture the underlying meaning. We further recommend that the traditional restriction on the use of proverbs to male adults in Anaang society and any other societies where such tradition applies should be abrogated to allow women and young persons to use them anywhere and at any time when necessary. This would enhance a mastery because people would be free to use them frequently without any fear of incurring the wrath of the elders in the community.

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APPENDIX

Anaang proverbs for conflict resolution

1. Kú dé èlíáng ákámà mkpàràng ntíbé ìlìb / Do not be a cricket it hold leg it burst belly /Do not be a cricket that uses its leg to burst its belly.
2. Èdìá àmá àmàkà ké úlùng mkpákúwúk ísínéké/ Yam (pieces) if love another in mortar there is no lump/ When there is love among pieces of pounded yam in the mortar, all will blend without any lump.
3. Àwìrè ísì kpónnó íkàn íkwà /Wateryam big not than knife/ The water-yam is not usually bigger than a knife.
4. Àkíkò únèn ìbàà ísìkpòkò àkòm kèèd/ Cock hen two crow not roof one /Two cocks cannot crow on one roof.
5. Dàb íkàñ ké ényóñ bára ké isòñ/ Remove fire from up, set on the ground/ Set the fire on the ground, do not raise it.
6. Ágwó ísìkèneké líe udúk-íkòt ànyíóñ ínùà íbára íkàñ/ Person he does follow not how snake long mouth set fire/You do not make a fire according to how long the snake is.
7. Ágwó ísì lééwéké mbòñ ké ìlè/ Person he/she scratch not (head) dermatitis violently/ You do not scratch dermatitis on (your) head violently.
8. Kú jàk élim ánám àfìrè ílím/ Not let rain it cause you forget stream/ Do not let the rain cause you to forget the stream.
9. Èsìdò ìtùrèkè ìtòrò ké úbìdòm/ Pot it stop not it collide in the storage/ Pots kept in the local bamboo shelve do not fail to collide.
10. Èkà úlùà ínánáké àlók/ Big market it lack not ugly/ A big market does not lack an ugly person.
11. Émá ényíé àdàá élèm esà élòk èkpú/ If have stand back yard dig rat/ If you have somebody who stands at the backyard, you can dig for a rat.
12. Nnyínyóñ ákébààk ìtíé íkpòdòñ ànyé ábén njén álíán idem / Plantain was it fear seat alone, it carry child add body / The plantain dreaded loneliness so it produced many suckers.
13. Íkòt Èkpené úngwàñáké fìrèn, àlìdòñdò àtùrè ke Ùlùà Àtô/ Ikot Ekpene clear not you, you know you stop at Ùlùà Àtô / You do not understand Ikot Ekpene except up to Ùlùà Àtô.
14. Ñsé ñtùñù ùdòñó ade nnàà ifed!/ What complication sickness is lying naked/ What type of sickness is lying naked?
15. Ágwó álíkpáhá, ñkòd ìtùrèkè/ Person he if die not, growth it stop not/ Growth does not stop until one dies.
16. Énañ itók, àkámá énañ itók/Handler cow race, cow race/The cow handler goes at the pace of the cow.
17. Ñkò ágwó ákpákpá ànyé ábòkó àtíbé ànyìn/ Until person he die die he he free burst eye/ Until one dies, he has not escaped blindness.
18. Ñkòb ùjò áfón ákàn úgwuà èmèm / Hear voice good than sacrifice peace/ Obedience is better than the sacrifice of peace.
19. Akàn ágwò íkàná Awàsi / Defeat person he defeat not God/ One who surpasses another does not beat God.
20. Ché ànyìn átíbé ágwó, ñkwà ke échìd / Look eye burst person seed is inside / Mind you, the blind (eye) has a pupil.

21. Únénámăwo kéidéghé nté àsìjùjùkú ké éjò àsèkùm / Chicken said is not that it satisfy sun use to dark / The chicken said that it is not that it is satisfied, but it is the sun that sets.
22. Sé ágwó átóó kpàà àdè ké àlòk / What person sow just that is dig / What a person sows is what he reaps.
23. Núón úbòk kèèd ísíóghó nnáng ké íwùdò / Finger hand one it remove not lice from head / One finger cannot remove a louse from the head.
24. Úbók kèèd íbénéké ákpàn ìlòd ké ìwùdò / Hand one carry not carrier put on head / One hand cannot carry a load on the head.
25. Àtìnâm ánám idem / You want to do do body / You want to undo (another), you undo yourself.