



Linguistics

# Metaphors of Human-Flora-Fauna Symbiosis: Eco-Critical Discourse Expositions in Yorùbá Proverbial Analysis

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## A B S T R A C T

It has been emphasized that metaphors in general are crucial for comprehending and interpreting ecological discourse. Numerous studies on Yorùbá proverbs have been conducted (Jelili et al., 2022; Akanbi, 2020; Anyachebelu, 2019; Olofinsao, 2018; Faleye, 2018; Ojo, 2015; Akanbi, 2015, etc.), but insufficient research has been done on human-flora-fauna symbiosis, particularly in Yorùbá proverbs. This study uses ecocritical metaphor analysis to look at the symbiosis of humans, plants, and fauna in Yorùbá proverbs. The study focuses on how, according to the Yorùbá worldview, particular plants and animals are used to symbolise various human experiences, actions, and traits in Yorùbá proverbs. We use the transitivity system from the Systemic Functional Linguistics approach to eco-critical discourse analysis, along with Lakoff and Johnson's Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to explore human experiences with nature through process types and illustrate the metaphorical "mapping" across the conceptual domain. Other human experiences are conceptualised as the target domain through the lens of flora and animals, which serve as the source domain. Both primary and secondary sources of information were carefully selected for this article. The study discovers that Yorùbá proverbs use metaphors of animals such as dogs, cows, chameleons, doves, and eagles as well as woods and trees like iróko and mahogany, to warn people against negative attitudes towards the ecosystem, like destruction, laziness, intolerance, and impatience among others. For harmonious coexistence in the ecosystem, the proverbs urge humans to behave well toward nature. According to the results of the transitivity analysis, the detected process choices in the data can be seen as a positive discourse that motivates people to conserve the environment.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A proverb is a short, folktale that summarizes a recognized reality derived from experience or common sense is a unique medium used by the Yoruba people to convey their intended ideas. According to Dash (2019, p. 380), Proverbs from Yorùbá about humans, vegetation, and fauna illustrate "the vital connection between plants and animals, and the world around them." Proverbs are sayings that advocate for or instruct moral behaviour in public life. These are clever proverbs that serve as a social "code" of behaviour (Nwachukwu-Agbada, 2002; Ohwovoriole, 1970). The Yorùbá are known for their clever sayings that contain commentary on human behaviours that are passed down from generation to generation. Language is especially important in "influencing the way human beings think about the world, or rather it inspires humans to protect or destroy the ecosystem that their life depends upon" (Stibbe, 2012, P. 418). Proverbs are either transmitted orally or in writing from one generation to the next. They are a part of the Odù corpora. A literary corpus called Ifá has 256 verses in it. According to

Finnegan (1970), a proverb is a set form that is distinguished by its content and shortness as well as by the general acceptance of the truth that it succinctly conveys. Proverbs not only improve social control in society but also provide insight into people's psychology by exposing their moral principles, worldview, ethics, and social values (Zakarriyah, 2013).

There are Yorùbá proverbs relating to the human-flora-and-fauna symbiosis (a kind of interaction, usually to the mutual benefit of two distinct animals or plants living in close physical proximity) that call for reciprocal relationships in terms of "beneficiary, enhancements, and destruction" in relation to anthropocentric discourse (i.e., a type of superordinate ideology that reflects or manifests the discrimination between homosapiens and other bio species) (Stibbe, 2014). The human-animal privilege is supported by anthropocentrism, which grants other animals and plants the right to reign over and use other species for their own survival.

Yorùbá proverbs are framed with animal and plant imagery that are thought to communicate ideas to people. The qualities of animals and plants that provide insight into human existence are a major source of inspiration for the human-flora-fauna proverbs. Themes in human-flora-fauna proverbs range from human personalities and flaws to ecosystem damage, social standards, and caution. Symbiosis also refers to cooperative connections between people, trees, and animals. Since no previous works on Yorùbá proverbs have addressed human-flora-fauna symbiosis, this study analyzed Yorùbá proverbs that use human-flora-fauna. To be more precise, the following research issues will be resolved by this study: 1) what and how many different methods are used to create proverbs? 2) How is each procedure distributed among the proverbs you chose? 3) What hidden values are revealed by the investigation of proverbs about humans, flora, and fauna? 4) What types of discourse (constructive discourse, ambivalent discourse, and advantageous discourse) are shown by the proverbs?

### Theoretical Framework

Synergies between the EcoCDA, metaphor, and transitivity system were employed in this study. 'Language-nature interactions' in discourse are what ecolinguistics is, according to Steffensen & Fill (2014). It illustrates how nature and civilization (language) are interdependent. Discourse about ecosystems includes subversive ideas that continue to benefit people. Fairclough (1989) employs a critical discourse technique to help understand latent ideologies of domination in environmental discourse. It calls into question the power disparity (oppressor-oppressed) that exists between genders and, subtly, between humans and the greater ecological systems that sustain life on Earth. According to Milstein (2008), EcoCDA is a "mediating force in human-nature power relation" because it is sensitive to power imbalances in discourse and resists exposing pragma-linguistic entities that resonate with various types of ecological power imbalances that are present in green (p.112). By recommending healthy beliefs and behaviors that are instructive of ecological inclusivity, equity, and sustainability, EcoCDA explores and questions the "Story we live by."

Ecological injustices are institutionalized through the harmful discourses found in human-flora-fauna proverbs. Wa (2014) chose EcoCDA because it is effective at identifying and combating covert hegemonic ideas in the environmental proverbs that are chosen. The selection of EcoCDA enables us to raise awareness of the hazardous relationship between language that is ecologically abusive and the gradual degradation of the biophysical environment shown in the proverbs. According to Stibbe (2014), EcoCDA examines linguistic patterns that are associated with specific worldviews or culturally ingrained ideologies, interprets explicit and implicit ecosophies in light of social significance (relationships between humans and nonhuman animals), exposes discourses that endanger the environment, and raises awareness among the general public about the need for a counterproductive ecologically aggressive discourse.

According to Lakoff & Johnson (2003), metaphors are frequently used in our daily lives. For them, experiences are objects or things that fit into specific categories and can be measured. Consequently, understanding one domain through the concept of another is what conceptual metaphor comprises. The conceptual metaphors that are described have two mappings: source domain and destination domain (Kovescs, 2010). The source domain forms the foundation for all of our mental representations, be they of a wall, a building, a journey, a fight, etc.

When we declare, “I am where I am supposed to be in life,” we immediately imagine a place; this is known as the “target domain,” the area we are attempting to grasp. According to this perspective, language use in social settings serves a variety of purposes, and our everyday struggles and experiences are like travelling down or along a long road (Morley, 2000; Mortensen, 1992; Taverniers, 2005).

According to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), transitivity has an ideational metafunction made up of logical and experiential connections. The three primary factors in experience relationships are the participant, the process, and the circumstance (Dalamu, 2017b). A participant is understood to be made up of living or inanimate elements that are involved in meaning formation, according to Thompson (2014).

Bloor & Bloor (2013) define goings-on as any action that a person engages in, regardless of whether it is exterior (happenings, acting, sensing, etc.) or interior (thoughts, beliefs, feelings, etc.). On occasion, the participant’s experience might occur in a particular setting, according to Halliday & Matthiessen (2014). Corresponding to this, the glossing over of circumstantial evidence augments the audience’s understanding of the participant and procedure (Rose, 2013; Fontaine, 2013) (Eggins, 2004).

### Literature Review

Scholars have studied many facets of Yorùbá proverbs. Agbaje (2017), for instance, looked at the role proverbial songs play in Yoruba culture. The emphasis of Ajibola’s (1947) effort was the alphabetical categorization of the examples of Yoruba proverbs. Ogunwale (1998) examined the mechanics and dynamics of metaphor in Yoruba proverbs as a means of enhancing human potential. Oladeji (1988) looked at Yoruba proverbs as language markers in Yoruba pragmatic ethics. Owomoyela (2005) examined an African philosophy of interpersonal communication through an analysis of Yoruba proverbs. This study intends to focus on these under-researched topics since Yusuf (1994) examined the ethical significance of Yoruba proverbs for women in the framework of Yoruba philosophy and education. Ojoade (1983) examined the subject of natural discipline and traditional ethical education in Africa using African proverbs as proof. African proverbs were used as evidence in Ojoade’s (1983) study to examine the topic of traditional ethical education and natural discipline in Africa. The research found that proverbs are unwritten ethical rules followed by Africans who truly believe in them and are propelled by a devil.

Anyachebelu (2019) found animal imagery that is frequently used in Hausa, Yoruba, and Igbo proverbs by elucidating their meanings and societal ramifications in Nigerian society. The results demonstrate how animals like goats, tortoises, and snakes are employed to reflect social events. Similar to this, Yusuf (1997) investigated how 46 proverbs from the Yoruba and English languages compare to things like flora, animals, food, property, and hardship. He added that women are often compared to monkeys in iconography, illustrating how destructive they can be. Further research revealed that although men like having sexual relations with women, they are viewed as “meat” in married homes. Ojo (2015) looked at the practical features of proverbs in some Yoruba literary works. The findings revealed that Yoruba proverbs are crucial for the growth of both interpersonal relationships and communities.

Akanbi (2015) examined Yoruba proverbs as well, using strong language. The study concluded that sexually explicit proverbs are seen as uncultured and dirty when used in their original context. Abiodun (2000) examined Yoruba proverbs that allude to the elderly within Yoruba society. According to his analysis, Yoruba elders in proverbs must possess knowledge, in-depth reflection, patience, endurance, experience, joy, and the ability to resolve conflicts. Faleye (2018) focuses on Yoruba proverbs that speak to the significance of dress codes, their creativity, and how important they were in the past for issues of identity, beauty, and dignity. Olofinsao (2018) looked into how proverbs were applied to manage daily community issues within the official structure of governance.

Yoruba proverbs are a body of knowledge that is utilised to handle community concerns in order to maintain harmony, according to the research. In a similar vein, Akanbi (2020) examined conflicts that seemed to arise in Yoruba proverbs and highlighted the implications. According to the study’s findings, men’s paradoxes and inconsistencies are reflected in the seemingly disparate Yoruba proverbs.

Additionally, it confirms that proverbs do not, on their own, present conflicting behavior but rather illustrate unpredictable human behavior. Fakoya (2007) looks at certain ‘offensive’ Yoruba proverbs to see if the use of obscene language may tip a conversation out of balance and if the conversational usefulness of such proverbs is enough to get people to overlook their ‘distastefulness.’

## II. METHOD

The research used a descriptive qualitative approach as its methodology. The researcher studied proverbs connected to Yorùbá people, vegetation, and fauna. Primary and secondary sources were also used to gather the data for this investigation. In-depth oral interviews with Yorùbá native speakers, including elderly men and women, were part of the primary source. Library materials, books, and journal articles made up the secondary source. The gathered information was recorded and examined. Eight informants who are native to Òşogbo, Ìkirè, Ìbàdàn, Òyọ, and Ògbómọşó provided the data for this study. The age range of the informants is 65–80. Since most elderly individuals are literate, they mostly use it for communication. Verifying the interpretations and observations made by the elderly that we obtained during our research, Yorùbá texts on proverbs were also reviewed in addition to native speakers. We also provide an English translation that takes the proverbs literally. We highlighted words pertaining to people, trees, and forests to make analysis easier.

### Data Presentation

1. Bi esin ba dání gúlè ã tun gun ni.

**English translation:** We climb the horse again if someone falls off it.

2. Àkùkọ tí yóò kọ lágba àşá ò ní be ní òròmọ.

**English translation:** A cock that crows will not be eaten by a hawk when it is young.

3. Ìyànjú gbígba ojoojúmọ ni òbọ fi í mọ igi í gùn.

**English translation:** The monkey learns how to climb perfectly through a series of daily trials.

4. Bù fún mi n bù fún ọ làkèrè í ké lódò.

**English translation:** The frogs in the river are a symbiotic relationship with life.

5. Ajá tí yóò sọnù kò ní í gbọ fèrè ọlọdẹ.

**English translation:** The dog that gets lost won’t pay attention to the hunter’s whistle.

6. Kàkà kí kiniún ó şe akápò ẹkùn oníkálukú yóò şe ọdẹ ti ẹlótòtòtò .

**English translation:** A lion and a tiger cannot go on the same hunting expedition if they hunt independently of one another.

7. Gbogbo iléí aláńgbá ò ju ìdòbàlẹ lọ .

**English translation:** The lizard’s bravados are all limited to prostration.

8. Alágẹmọ tó ní şe jẹjẹ, ikú ní pa á, ánbèlètè ọpọlọ tó ní jan ara rẹ mólẹ .

**English translation:** Death devours it despite the chameleon’s calm,” much less the toad that is slamming into the ground.

9. Àdàbà ò náání à ní kùn gbé pápá ní jó ẹyẹ oko ní fò lọ.

**English translation:** The bird flies off while the fire burns and the dove ignores someone burning the bush.

10. Àdàbà kò fi óúnjẹ sí ọfun òrófó, olúkùlùkù ní wá óúnjẹ sí ẹnu ara rẹ ni.

**English translation:** Every bird finds its own food; the dove does not place food in the mouth of the green bush pigeon.

11. Ajá kí í rorò kó şọ ojúlẹ mẹjí.

**English translation:** A dog isn’t ferocious enough to watch over two households at once.

12. Ajá mọ ọmọ ti ẹfún lómún ó mọ ti òdù ọyà kí mólẹ .

**English translation:** The dog understands how to hold on to the grass-cutters' hands while simultaneously knowing how to nurse her young.

13. Èsò pèlẹ́ lejò ní gun àgbọ̀n.

**English translation:** The snake climbs the coconut tree by being patient.

14. Igi tó tó erin lerin nífara rọ.

**English translation:** The tree that the elephant rests on is just as strong as the elephant itself.

15. Bí a bá ní ká be igi, a ó bee èyàn.

**English translation:** People will be cut if a tree is attempted to be cut.

16. Sàngó ò lè pa igi nílá.

**English translation:** Sango cannot destroy a huge tree.

17. Igi à bá fehintíi lẹ̀gùn-ún; ẹ̀ni à bá finú hàn ní kajo ẹ̀ni.

**English translation:** The person one would confide in is spreading evil stories about the confider; the tree one would lean on has thorns

18. A ẹ̀ àlapàlọ̀şọ̀ kòyẹ ẹ; a ẹ̀ ohun gbogbo fúngi, o yẹ igi.

**English translation:** We decorate a blank, freestanding wall; the outcome is unappealing, yet any ornamentation we give a tree becomes it.

19. Ẹ̀ni tó bá nje lábe-ẹ̀ Jẹ̀gẹ̀dẹ̀ ló nípè é nígi Àràbà.

**English translation:** A silk-cotton tree is only referred to by those who rely on Jẹ̀gẹ̀dẹ̀ for their livelihood.

20. Bí o bá ẹ̀ mí, mà ẹ̀ ọ̀nigi oko-ó fi ndádé.

**English translation:** If you hurt me, I'll hurt you back"; this is how forest trees develop crowns.

21. Ẹ̀rú gba ẹ̀dùn, ominú níko igi.

**English translation:** The axe is slipped onto the haft; the tree becomes anxious.

22. Ẹ̀rú ki í ẹ̀ ọ̀mọ igi; èyàn ló bí iyá-a rẹ.

**English translation:** A slave is not born of a tree; his or her mother was the offspring of a human being.

23. O kò sá igi loḡbe, o ò sọ ọ̀gùrọ loḡfà, o dédíi ọ̀pẹ o gbenu sókè ò nretí; ọ̀fẹ ní nro?

**English translation:** You did not slash the trunk with a cutlass; you did not shoot an arrow at the top of the palm-wine-producing palm tree; you come to the foot of the palm tree and raise your open mouth. Does it drip all by itself?

24. Bí a bá gé igi nígbó, gbohùn-gbohùn á gbà á.

**English translation:** If one fells a tree in the forest, the echo carries the sound.

25. Igi gbogbo ní nso owó, ọ̀to ni tobi.

**English translation:** All trees grow money, but the kola-nut tree surpasses all others.

26. Ẹ̀ni tí kò ní igi obi ki í léso.

**English translation:** Whoever does not have a kola-nut tree cannot have its fruits.

27. Bí ọ̀mọdẹ́ bá mbe igi, àgbàlagbà a máa wo ibi tí yó wòó sí.

**English translation:** If a youth is felling a tree, an elder will be considering where it will fall.

28. Tó'jú ba n pọ̀n ni, igbe là'n ró fún.

**English translation:** When one is afflicted with poverty, he speaks to the forest.

29. Okùnrin ki í ké, akọ igi ki í soje.

**English translation:** A man does not cry; hardwood does not ooze sap.

30. Ẹ̀nikan í pé kọ̀mọ o mọ dẹ̀tẹ, tó ba tile dágbógbé.

**English translation:** No one warns the child against being afflicted with leprosy as long as such child can live alone in the forest.

31. Bí a bá gé igi nígbó, gbohùn-gbohùn á gbà á.

**English translation:** If one fells a tree in the forest, the echo carries the sound.

32. Igi kan o le dágbose.

**English translation:** A tree does not make a forest.

33. Àfẹ̀rì kan ò ju ká rí igbó nílá bọ sí lọ; ẹ̀bọ kan ò ju ọ̀pọ̀ èyàn lọ; “Ọ̀rìsá gbé mi lé àtẹ̀tẹ̀” kan ò ju orí ẹ̀sin lọ.

**English translation:** There is no disappearing trick better than the availability of a dense forest to disappear into; there is no sacrifice more efficacious than having many people on one’s side; there is no „The gods have elevated me” that is higher than the back of a horse.

34. Igbà tí ikẹ̀tẹ̀ òì tíí dáyé, onígbo tí nje ikẹ̀tẹ̀.

**English translation:** Long before the thick sediment of the palm oil came to earth, the lord of the forest had been eating it.

35. Àáké wọ igbo, a gbo òkíkí.

**English translation:**The axe enters into a forest, and we hear reports of its doings.

36. Àgbàkà lèéfi nḡba igbó.

**English translation:** It is completely that smoke fills the forest.

37. Igbó nla ní mmu ẹni mu orí.

**English translation:** It is a huge forest that swallows a person, including the person’s head.

38. A ji wogbo o se were, owo lo n wa.

**English translation:** One that wakes up in the forest is not mad but searching for money.

39. Abínú ẹni foore ẹginígbo; ó níkeranko mu je.

**English translation:**He who wants no good for one does a favor for trees in the forest; he invites animals to share the favor.

40. Ọ̀yinbó ò fáriwo, ó kọ̀lé sígbó

**English translation:**The white man dislikes noise; therefore he built his house in the forest.

### III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis has used this section to reveal the results of the study based on the research questions at the introduction. Table 1 shows the metaphorical manifestation of Yorùbá proverbs that relate to animals, trees and forest, by providing the source domain, the target domain and the samples of proverbs they can be found or the context where they are used.

Source Domain	Target Domain	Context	Source Domain	Target Domain	Context	Source Domain	Target Domain	Context
Horse	Returning an opportunity/perseverance	1	Tree	strong mentorship	14	Forest	economy	29
Cook & hawk	focus/determination	2	Tree	patience	15	Forest	warning	30
Monkey	consistency/persistence	3	Tree	formidability	16	Forest	openness	31
Frog	give & take	4	Tree	evil	17	Forest	unity	32
Dog	warning	5	Tree	incorrigible person	18	Forest	refuge	33
Lion & Tiger	self-reliance	6	Silk cotton tree	benevolence/ generosity	19	Forest	diminishing favor	34

Lizard	avoiding pride	7	Tree	symbiosis/ character imitation	20	Forest	openness	35
Chameleon & toad	moderation and humility	8	Tree	empathy	21	Forest	advice	36
Dove	overlooking	9	Tree	inferiority	22	Forest	refuge	37
Dove & pigeon	self-pride and reliance	10	Tree	hardworking	23	Forest	economy	38
Dog	meddlesomeness	11	Tree	resourcefulness	24	Forest	favor	39
Dove & grass-cutter	equal treatment	12	Kolanut Tree	economy	25	Forest	calmness/ silence	40
Snake	Patience and perseverance	13	Kolanut Tree	economy	26			
			Tree	respect	27			
			Tree	strength	28			

**Table 1. Metaphorical Representation of Animals, Trees and Forests**

Process	Frequency	Parentage (%)
Material	68	80
Mental	3	3.5
Behavioral	5	5.9
Relational	7	8.2
Existential	2	2.4
Verbal	0	0
Total	85	100%

**Table 2. Transitivity Frequency and Percentage in the Selected Yorùbá Proverbs**

We present the transitivity analysis of selected proverbs in terms of frequency and percentage in Table 2. Table 3 shows the discourse types found in the proverbs. The discourse types are classified into beneficial, destructive, and destructive-beneficial. These are grouped to present the kind of ecological proverbs found in the selected proverbs.

	Ambivalent Discourse	Destructive Discourse	Beneficial	Destructive - Beneficial
<b>Discourse</b>	0	proverb 9 (1)	proverb 2 (1)	proverb 1 (1)
	0	proverb 12 (1)	proverb 3 (1)	proverb 5 (1)
	0	proverb 17 (1)	proverb 4 (1)	proverb 7 (1)
	0	proverb 21 (1)	proverb 6 (1)	proverb 8 (1)
	0	proverb 22 (1)	proverb 13 (1)	proverb 10 (1)
	0	proverb 24 (1)	proverb 18 (1)	proverb 11 (1)
	0	proverb 27 (1)	proverb 19 (1)	proverb 14 (1)
	0	proverb 29 (1)	proverb 25 (1)	proverb 15 (1)
	0	proverb 35 (1)	proverb 26 (1)	proverb 16 (1)
	0	0	28 proverb (1)	proverb 20 (1)
	0	0	30 proverb (1)	proverb 23 (1)

	0	0	31proverb(1)	0
	0	0	32 proverb (1)	0
	0	0	33 proverb (1)	0
	0	0	34 proverb (1)	0
	0	0	36 proverb (1)	0
	0	0	37proverb(1)	0
	0	0	38proverb(1)	0
	0	0	40 proverb (1)	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>11</b>

Table3. Ecological Discourse Types in Yoruba Proverbs

### Analysis and Discussion

In proverb 1, the horse is utilized as a metaphor for conveyance, particularly when discussing royalty. If a passenger falls off the horse while traveling, it is assumed that they will get back on the animal so that the voyage can continue. The Yorùbá use this saying to remind people that nothing is truly over until it is. The proverb advises people to keep going in the face of difficulties. The proverb's horse metaphor denotes difficulty and tenacity. A hawk poses a threat to a chick's early survival in proverbial verse two. Some women manage to overcome the obstacle. In the proverbs, the metaphors of the cock and hawk, respectively, stand in for death/extinction and a young person/woman who has reached their full potential. The goal domains for hawk and cock, respectively, are death/extinction and a young chick. The proverb's context indicates that, in order to fulfill his destiny, one would grow into a great warrior or notable individual and survive the peculiarity of premature extinction. According to the proverb, those who are destined for goodness won't pass away too soon. Therefore, it exhorts young people to be focused since their destiny will triumph no matter what obstacles they confront.

The concept of monkeys as animals with the ability to climb trees is used in Proverb 3. Monkeys are able to easily climb the branches of trees through a variety of exercises. The adage compares people to emphasize that perfection can be achieved through consistency and perseverance. The Yorùbá people use this adage to teach beginners and younger people that perfection is not something that can be acquired fast but rather via repeated, error-filled efforts. When applied to business, education, and vocation, the monkey metaphor, whose target domain is constancy and tenacity, is crucial to human accomplishment.

The source of Proverb 4 is the frog's melodic calls, which it uses to communicate with one another. Every time a frog croaks, the others respond in kind. The Yoruba land elders interpret the proverb's usage of the frog metaphor to explain that life is a symbiotic relationship, meaning that all one does for another will be returned to them. Thus, the frog serves as a metaphor for giving and receiving. It simply means that you will receive respect or help in return if you show it to others. The context in which the proverb is used will determine how it should be understood. The adage could be employed as a means of consent between two parties.

The image of a dog is used as a metaphor in Proverb 5. Dogs are known to accompany hunters on a hunting expedition in Yoruba slang. When dogs are beyond their owners' reach, the hunter will call them with their whistles, and if they don't respond, it means they are lost. In the proverb, the word "dog" refers to a person. The proverb is thus utilized in a situation where people are unable to accept criticism from others. For instance, elderly people may advise someone they believe is engaging in illicit behavior that could endanger their lives, but if the person ignores their warning, the proverb will be used to demonstrate that she is walking the right road.

As its source domain, Proverb 6 uses the metaphor of a lion and a tiger. As carnivorous creatures, lions and tigers eat only flesh. It is inconceivable to imagine those two creatures going on a hunting expedition together since they would get into a fight. The lion is stronger than the tiger, thus if this



happens between them, cheating might take place. As a result, they will all be more successful than when they hunt alone. Therefore, the two animals serve as a metaphor for independence. When there is conflict between two parties or individuals and one of the parties/individuals is unwilling to acquiesce to the demands of the other party, the Yorùbá will employ this proverb.

Similar imagery of a lizard appears in proverb 7. A lizard is a type of reptile well recognized for its ability to climb walls or move along them on its stomach. Due to its inability to stand up like other animals to defend themselves from threats, lizards do not display pride that exceeds their laying posture. The adage avoids bragging. This is clear from Table 1, position 7, where the lizard stands for pride. The Yorùbá used this adage to mock arrogant persons who insisted they had nothing to show for their arrogance.

As seen in Table 1, number 8, the metaphors of *alághemo* (chameleon) and *opoló* (toad) in Proverb 8 stand for moderation and humility. The chameleon is associated with calmness and fertility, whereas the toad is associated with hastiness due of the way it moves. The chameleon, according to the saying, is quiet, cautious, humble, and patient, but it cannot avoid death—let alone be compared to a toad, which is infamous for its impatience and haste. The adage is most effective when used to encourage moderation and humility while discouraging ostentation and a colorful existence that can provoke unwarranted suspicion and hatred. The proverb instructs those who boast about their fortune to consider others who are modest and reasonable yet nonetheless unhappy.

In proverb 9, the qualities of a dove (*àdàbà*) are mentioned. It is well known that doves go towards peaceful areas. Shrubs have a tendency to take off when set ablaze, regardless of whether their former habitat has been destroyed. The proverb cautions the community against trusting individuals who don't give a damn if other community members perish. The adage warns community members to be wary of people who don't care if other community members are destroyed. The Yorùbá, particularly the old, use this adage to warn their younger ones to stay away from troublemakers in their neighborhood and to flee for safety once they (the elderly) become aware of something negative happening there. It is apparent that some individuals only benefit from positive aspects of their community and leave when negative aspects occur. Therefore, overlooking is symbolized by the proverb's use of the dove as a metaphor.

Once more, proverb 10 uses the dove and pigeon as symbols for conceit and reliance. This happens when someone views their job as superior to others just because it provides for the owner's family, as do other jobs. People who work in jobs that are legal and pay well utilize this adage. As a result, it informs or teaches people to have the confidence to state that they are doing any lawful work they are doing as long as they are not pleading with others for food. We might also infer from the adage that those who work illegally are discouraged from quitting because they lack the guts to say it aloud.

Dogs are used as metaphors for other animals in Proverbs 11 and 12. Some canines are trained to serve as guard dogs, according to Proverb 11's context. The dogs are powerful enough to defend their owners' compound from outsiders or trespassers. Although dogs are skilled watchdogs, they are unable to watch over two homes at once. The adage offers guidance on how to avoid interfering or being meddlesome in other people's business. It encourages people to stay out of each other's business and refrain from interfering in other people's affairs. In Proverb 12, the metaphor of the dog stands for fair treatment. Dogs are renowned for watching over their young and being ready to defend them from humans and other animals when necessary. However, they murder the progeny of grass cutters when they go on a hunting expedition with their owners (hunters). The proverb illustrates the relationship between humans and animals and is used to criticise authority when it treats people who are entitled to the same treatment differently. The proverb also highlights the same treatment of sons and slaves born by the same procedure. Again, the proverb berates those who shield their own children at the expense of the needs of others.

Snakes are used as another animal metaphor in proverb 13 of the chosen proverb. A snake is a reptile that cautiously ascends a coconut tree that is very smooth but slick. The coconut tree represents the world in which people live. The Yorùbá consider life to be treacherous and advise caution. The snake metaphor stands for endurance and patience. It demonstrates how many individuals are eager to quickly

get fortune and disregard the fact that success in life is a lengthy process requiring persistence and patience. The elders used a snake's ability to climb a coconut tree as an example of patience and tenacity to teach younger people to be patient as they climb any ladder in life. It's not improbable that they will drop without reaching their goal. Therefore, the adage promotes restraint while discouraging excessive ambition.

### *Trees Related Proverbs*

Proverb 14 mentions trees, saying that an elephant would always rest on a sturdy tree. The adage highlights how crucial good mentoring is. To be chosen as a good mentor, one must possess a strong moral code and a record of accomplishments that make one worthy of being looked up to. In the context of Proverb 14, the tree stands for sound coaching.

The importance of virtues like patience is emphasized in proverbs 15. Innocent people would suffer harm when seeking to exact retribution, for example. In this instance, Yorùbá people give trees human characteristics. The proverb also emphasizes how destructive indiscriminate tree cutting is to human lives since when people cut trees; they often end up chopping down the forest's beneficial trees that may provide them with a haven. Therefore, the metaphor of the tree conveys the value of virtues like patience.

In proverbs 17, a thorny tree is compared to a person who spreads lies. The phrase refers to individuals who trust those who fight other people in war. Therefore, it serves as a metaphor for evil. In Yorùbá slang, elders caution community members to be wary of persons they believe to be trustworthy because they might pretend to care for them while actually harboring malice in their hearts.

Proverbs 18 makes a similar comparison between a wall and a tree. The proverb is being utilised lexically here to confirm that efforts or endeavours aimed at bettering some individuals would eventually be in vain. Once more, the proverb's use of àlàpà (wall) denotes an unchangeable individual. As seen in Table 1, the target domain for the source domain (tree) is an uncorrigible individual. The adage illustrates the symbiotic relationship that exists between humans, forests, and trees by stating that when people chop trees, the trees themselves benefit by displaying their beauty.

Jégédé and a silk-cotton tree are mentioned in Proverb 19. Jégédé refers to a patron whose generosity is valued by many people in the context of this proverb. A patron, known in Yoruba as bàbá-Isàlè, is someone who is regarded as having exemplary character and being charitable with others. The generous one, Jégédé, is contrasted to the enormous and protective tree, igi-àràbà. Therefore, the phrase stands for generosity and goodwill.

Proverb 20 also illustrates how forest trees imitate human behavior. It emphasizes that while human injury to trees may cause those trees to suffer injury in return, human injury to trees will mostly be beneficial. Therefore, the metaphor of the tree depicts a mutually beneficial connection or character imitation.

In order to transfer human characteristics onto trees, proverb 21 uses trees and an axe. It goes without saying that when an axe is slid into a haft, one would naturally assume that a tree is about to be felled. Humans are supposed to inherently experience the anxiousness that trees do. This means that whatever done to trees by people will be done back to them. For instance, if people cut down trees in a forest, they are indirectly damaging their homes since they can't get wood for their structures and furniture if there aren't any trees around. Therefore, empathy is represented by the metaphor of the tree in proverbs 21.

Proverbs 22 states that slaves are human beings, not the offspring of trees. The adage uses a tree as a metaphor to represent inferiority. This is unmistakably evidence that Yoruba society regards people as having a higher status than trees. Adage 23 similarly demonstrates the uses of trees, particularly the palm tree, in relation to food. The major purpose of the proverb is to emphasise the idea that one should not expect to get goods that were obtained unfairly. Proverbs 23 describes the figurative tree as toiling away with diligence. The line, "You did not slash the trunk with a cutlass...should come to the foot of the palm tree and raise your mouth open" demonstrates this.

Proverb 24, which forbids keeping secrets, establishes the notion that secrets are illusions. The use of a genuine tree implies that sounds made during tree cutting have an echo outside the forest. The

proverb highlights the inventiveness of the woods trees. This is evident when timber is removed from the forest. Proverbs 24 uses a tree image to symbolise innovation.

Projections from Proverbs 25 and 26 describe the role of the kola nut tree. While the kola nut tree in proverb 25 recognizes the unusual profitability of some trades or enterprising skills, proverb 26 confirms the idea that rights to certain advantages follow from ownership of specific means. Proverbs 25 and 26 metaphorically describe the kola nut tree's economic functions. In Proverbs 25 and 26, the kola nut tree is described as a desirable commodity that fulfills a practical need for humans. Anyone who owns kola nuts is wealthy.

A tree is portrayed as a metaphor for respect in Proverbs 27. In Yoruba culture, the elders are more qualified to predict the effects of any decision made by the younger people. The younger ones show respect for the elders whenever they caution them to refrain from engaging in any risky activities. The worth of experiences is emphasized by the adage.

In Yoruba country, Proverb 28 is addressed to the guys. It highlights power. It states that cutting hardwood demands strength. According to the saying, only women cry while chopping hardwood (akoigi), hence men are not expected to cry during the same job. Therefore, crying is only reserved for women and is associated with weakness. Because it is a method for developing a solid character, the proverb is a call to action for both men and women.

### **Forest Related Proverbs**

Proverb 29 describes the forest's practical use. For economic objectives, the forest is presented as a metaphor. In this instance, the adage advises those who are suffering from poverty to approach the forest—that is, to converse with it. This suggests that communicating with the forest through “talking” highlights its significance to human existence. The purpose of forests is to provide opportunities for human exploration and economic gain. The elders should apply the adage most effectively when they ascertain that a community member's laziness is a result of poverty. Therefore, the elders advise him/her to explore the forest for financial gain in order to “talk” to the forest.

Proverb 30 is used to intimidate people into abstaining from all socially unacceptable behaviour by hinting that those who do so will be left to deal with the fallout on their own. That's why the forest metaphor serves as a warning.

Proverb 31 is a warning against the indiscriminate felling of trees in the forest. It cautions people to avoid felling trees, and if they do, they should also be empathetic. If human beings just fall trees, they should consider the trees rather than felling the younger trees that will be useful to them in future. The forest's trees need to be cared for by people. Proverb 32 also underlines the harmony that exists among the forest's trees. Thus, the proverb uses the forest as a symbol for oneness. Another claim made by the proverb is that a tree cannot create a forest. The forest represents the possibility of an individual achieving some achievement on their own, but this cannot be compared to what many people could do. As a result, a person can succeed greatly by enlisting the assistance of other community members.

Proverbs 33 and 37 project the importance of forests for human beings. The metaphor of forest represents a refuge for human beings, as well as animals. Whenever there is a problem in the community, where people run helter-skelter for safety, the forest is an escape route through which people can hide until normalcy returns to the community.

Proverb 34 uses the symbol of kété (palm oil sediment) to describe the value of trees. Kété is a delicacy from the jungle made from the thick sediment of palm oil, which is extracted from the palm nuts of the palm tree. The palm trees in the bush yield ketelé. The palm tree nuts have been dropping and decaying in the forest prior to the fruit being picked, and the forest lord (Onigbó) has been observed eating them. The adage illustrates how a favour loses value when the one giving it doesn't appear to be having fun. Proverb 34 highlights the fact that certain people's deeds have well-known repercussions. This is evident when an axe is used to collect wood in the forest. According to the proverb, harm done to the forest will inevitably affect people as well. If all the trees in the forest are cut down, for example, where will the timber come from? As the phrase goes, forests provide humans the opportunity to get

something from them. The woodland in Proverbs 35 is a symbol for openness.

In proverbs 36, smoke is described as filling the entire woodland. The image of *èéfín* (smoke) inspires people to give their all in everything they do by igniting their desire for success. Additionally, it suggests that success in life requires people to overcome challenges before they may be successful. Proverb 36's metaphor of the forest is a bit of guidance.

The value of forests is emphasized in Proverbs 37. The forest used to be dense, and it now represents a place of safety for both humans and animals. One runs to the forest to find cover when seeking safety. The proverb repeats, "A big forest swallows (*mù*) a person (*èniyàn*) including the person's head (or)," which is why it does. Because there won't be a place for both people and animals to flee during calamity or conflict, it will be risky to destroy the forest through human activity.

The economic significance of the forest is again emphasized in proverb 38, as was the case in proverbs 25 and 26. According to the saying, everyone who rises too early to enter the forest is not crazy, but s/he is actually searching for money. As a result, it demonstrates how the forest is the foundation of all human commerce. Anyone who works hard is welcome to go into the forest and investigate it for financial gain. Therefore, the target domain of the forest's source domain is the economy.

The favor opponents (*abinueni*) bestow on a recipient (tree) deemed less deserving is highlighted in Proverb 39. The less deserving receiver, humans, are represented by a tree in the forest (*igi nigbó*). It suggests that plotting evil against other people is akin to favoring a tree. For instance, when people cut down trees in the forest, the trees will produce new leaves. This is the basis for the Yorùbá proverb "*eni bégi lójù, igi á rúwé*," which means "whatever harm done to the tree, adds to its beauty" in English.

In proverb 40, the terms "Whiteman" and "Forest" are mentioned. Everyone in this situation is aware that *Oyínbó* despises noise. The proverb's allusion to "*Oyínbó*" is clear evidence of the Yorùbá people's colonial experience. The contacts the colonialists had with the people in Nigeria demonstrate how much they yearned for peace and quiet. Therefore, the mention of the forest serves as a metaphor for serenity.

### Transitivity Analysis

Three metafunctions—ideational, interpersonal, and textual—are used by Systemic Functional Linguistics, or SFL, to express meaning through language use. In this study, we put a lot of emphasis on the ideational function, which uses language to convey people's diverse experiences in the outside world. The ideational function uses language to express people's diverse inner and outer experiences. The experiencing and logical functions make up the ideational function. Voice and transitivity both reflect the first. In order to categorize experiences through grammar and to identify the "participants" and "environmental elements" associated with various processes, transitivity (a semantic system) divides people's speech and behavior in the real world into several "processes" (Halliday, 2004). Halliday classifies processes into six categories: existential process, mental process, relational process, verbal process, and material process. The "doing" process is the material process. Participants are actors in the material process, and behavior is the goal. The elements describing the environmental elements are time, location, and technique. Perception, cognition, and response are the main focuses of the mental process. Participants in it include "sensor" and "phenomenon." Relational process, which is divided into modified types and identified types, reflects the relationships between various entities. The modified type depicts the link between an entity's attributes or belongings, and its participants are "carrier" and "attribute." One entity and another entity are identified via an identifiable relational process, and its participants are "identifier" and "identified." In other words, it recounts what someone or something says. Verbal process is concerned with the process of expressing information through speech. The "speaker," "receiver," and speech content are its participants. The "actor" is a participant in the behavioral process, which semantically separates the pure mental process from the process' external indicators. An entity's existence is determined via the existential process. It just has one participant, who serves as the being, and "there" as its subject.

The position of the object is heavily influenced by the material process (80%) in the chosen human-flora-fauna proverbs. Proverbs: The majority of them show themselves in the human actor's aim position of the material process, which frequently has the sense of being advantageous.

15. If one attempts to cut a tree, one will cut people.
17. The tree one would lean on has thorns; the person one would confide in is spreading evil stories about the confider.
18. We decorate a bare, freestanding wall; the result is not pleasing, but whatever decoration a tree receives becomes it.
20. If you injure me, I will injure you in return”; it is thus that trees in the forest sprout crowns.

Other examples are found in proverbs 2, 3, 4, 13, 18, 19, 25, 26, 28, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 36, 37, and 40.

In the above examples, the subjects or the agents are human. The animals, trees and forests are in the position of the object, and they are the recipients. In this language expression, animals, trees and forests are characterised as non-behavioral creatures, just receivers of human actions.

The transitivity process is frequently relational, mental, or behavioral if the animals, plants, and forests are in the subject position. According to the relational process clause, there should be ownership ties between animals, trees, and forests, but these rights are not exercised by the latter three. The majority of mental processes reflect the sensing of other people being subjected to suffering. The behavior of animals, plants, and forests is simply described by the behavioral process. As an illustration, a lost dog won't respond to the hunter's whistle.

The adages above explain how animals, trees, and forests feel after being chopped down, fallen, and destroyed. It demonstrates that even if they are the subject, animals, plants, and forests do not hold a privileged position. We can get the conclusion that animals, plants, and forests are always exploited or conquered and that anthropocentrism is still the prevailing ideology through the analysis of the transitivity process.

### Beneficial Discourse

The expression of benefit is reflected in positive descriptions of nature and humans' reflection of love towards animals, trees and forests. The metaphors associated with animals, trees, and forests serve as 'code' of conduct for humans to coexist with nature. These examples are found in proverbs 2, 4, 6, 18, 19, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30.

2. If a horse falls somebody, what we do is to climb it again
3. Series of daily trials make the monkey attain perfect climbing skills.
4. Life is symbiotic croak the frogs in the river.

### Destructive Discourse

The link between people, trees, and animals is where the damaging information expressed in the chosen proverbs is most clearly seen. Animals and trees are killed or destroyed by humans in the proverbs' metaphors, which do not accord them the same status as people. Proverbs 1, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, and 20 are a few instances.

7. All the bravados of the lizard do not transcend prostration.
8. Despite the calmness of chameleon death devours it, let alone toad that is hitting itself on the ground.
10. The dove does not put food into the mouth of the green bush pigeon; each bird finds its own food.

### Destructive-Beneficial

According to Proverbs 1, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, and 20, the Yorùbá's ecological state is accurately described. The ecological environment has finite resources, but life can reproduce indefinitely. This simply means that proverbs 1, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, and 20 are beneficial if people can understand through information that they should conserve resources and protect the environment where people, trees, and forests coexist; however, if people use these as justifications to indiscriminately kill animals,

cut down trees, and destroy forests, then the proverbs are destructive. Proverbs 1, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 20, 23 are objective descriptions of natural weather and natural environment, and do not involve ecological concepts, so they belong to ambivalent information.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Numerous Yorùbá proverbs make use of animal, tree, and woodland metaphors. Proverbs about horses, cocks, hawks, monkeys, frogs, dogs, lions, tigers, lizards, chameleons, toads, doves, pigeons, grasscutter, snakes, trees, and forests are among those chosen for investigation in this study. The behaviors, activities, words, belief systems, and values of Yorùbá communities are reflected in the animals, trees, and woods. The animals mentioned in the chosen proverbs are creatures that can be found throughout Nigeria. The human-flora-fauna proverbs express the sociocultural values, morality, and philosophical beliefs of the Yorùbá people. The proverbs exhibit didacticism that is similar to that found in Yorùbá societies; specifically, the proverbs teach what is good and what is harmful, how to tell the two apart, and how to know which one to adhere to at all times. Overall, the material process and relational process together account for more than 80% of the proverbs, followed by the behavioral process (5.9%), verbal process (0%), existential process (2.4%), and mental process (3.5%).

As a manner of instilling moral values in Yoruba culture, the primacy of material process (the act of doing) develops various human roles and humankind's beneficial effects on animals, trees, and forests. We discovered that the majority of the proverbs we chose had encouraging messages that should be used to promote and motivate people to preserve the environment. Last but not least, by combining the strengths of conceptual metaphor theory, EcoCDA, and transitivity process analysis, this research has enhanced and illuminated empirical studies in the field of ecological discourse analysis.

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