

## **A Study of Proverbs Categorization in Yorùbá and Chinese Cultures**

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### **Abstract**

This study examines proverbs in two different and unique cultures since proverbs, over ages, have been effective elements that people have employed to transmit cultural values. Data for this work was obtained through homogenous purposive sampling and typical case sampling. Proverbs that express a general attitude towards life and the laws that govern it were examined, likewise proverbs that express a system of values and ethical proverbs that recommend certain values were sampled in this research work.

Descriptive theories such as contextual, functional and polygenesis theories formed the theoretical framework for this study. This work found out that proverbs are woven around societal morality, accepted manners and historical narratives. It also discovered that proverbs are figurative expressions and statements which center on truth therefore cultures use them for communication and conflict resolution. This study therefore suggests that proverbs can be categorised across cultures despite group differences and preferences. These categorisations allow proverbs to be easily understood, recognised and differentiated. The paper concludes that proverbs encapsulate the core existence of human life.

**Keywords:** Proverbs, Categorisations, Human life, Yorùbá, and Chinese culture

## Introduction

What are Proverbs? How are they seen by scholars and what are their attributes? Proverbs have different connotations but one intrinsic fact is that every human civilization has designed appropriate ways and manners of conveying information either directly or indirectly. Most cultures adopt the use of proverbs to disseminate core messages about their societal cultural values and traditions. Proverbs therefore give advice or make sound statements about human life in quotes or in phrases (BBC English Dictionary, 1992:102). These phrases could be gathered through observations or ascertained facts (Webster, 1979:269). The facts used in proverbs are usually crafted through bold images that are compressed in folk wisdom and they are expressed in a manner to tinkle everlasting effects in one's memory (Watson, 1976:22). Proverbs are entrenched in people's origin and its connotation comes in form of locutions or terminologies (Whiting, 1932:33). The point is that for us to understand the meaning of proverbs, we must view them within the society it was made and the period of time with was designed because their words goes beyond the literal meanings used to composed it (Trench, 1905:45). Therefore, we can infer that proverbs are useful elements of intercultural communication that adopt verbal and nonverbal signs to facilitate communication across cultures (Abdallah-Pretceille, 1996:42).

Evidently, proverbs have been used and collected ever since ancient times and it can be traced as far back to the third millennium B.C. (Mieder, 2004:30). From a variety of scholarly works, the different aspects of proverbs and its functions can be traced back to the ancient works of great philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. Proverbs range from religious views to cognitive perspective and to comprehend them we must adopt, investigate and assess them from both modern and ancient platforms to really know its importance or value (Honeck, 1997:17). Despite all these inherent definitions of proverbs, there are salient characteristics proposed as the essential elements of proverbs. We would be examining the works of two scholars in this regard. Trench (1853:20) affirms that proverbs are characterized by three things, they must be short or brief statements, they must be filled with sense and they must have a pungent form in which it cannot be erased from memory. He further elaborates this by saying that as regards to shortness, they must be concise and people should be able to utter them in one breath. Likewise, he sees proverbs as monosyllabic words or statements that are filled with wisdom and resounding knowledge. Additionally, he says that proverbs are words that must not be easily forgotten, once

heard it sticks in the brain, they stir up our thoughts and offer deep insights that we cannot forget in a lifetime. The second scholar states that proverbs are the simple truths of life that contain the ethical, moral values of a society, (Taylor, 2003:13). The truth presented in the proverbs is not logical, a priori or intuitive truth: it is often an empirical fact based upon and derived from the people's experience of life, human relationship and interaction with the world of nature (Yusuf, 1997:120).

In Yorùbá context, a proverb is a horse used in tracing lost words, this definition embraces the use of a metaphor. A horse as we all know is a unswerving animal that can transport one to long and short distances. Therefore in essence, proverbs in the Yorùbá context infers a reliable medium of verbal communication. Most Yorùbá proverbs are distinguished by shortness, sense and salt. These tripartite qualities distinguish proverbs from verbal arts. The shortness in the connotation of brevity means the Yorùbá belief that half a word is spoken to a wise man, when it gets into his 'inside' it becomes a whole, which in English is said as 'a word is enough for the wise'. The sense in Yorùbá proverbs are derived from the total meaning, the allusive nature of proverbs give rise to the need for a sharp perception to understand and grasp the intended message. This is well illustrated in a Yorùbá proverb that says 'it is by proverb that 'agidigbo's drum is beaten, only the wise can dance to it and only the knowledgeable can understand it. The saltiness of Yoruba proverbs is enhanced by the elaborate use of figurative language which includes: metaphors, similies, personifications, symbols etc. The saltiness adds poetic flavor to statements thereby making its proverb an art of speech making (Osoba, 2014:48).

From these definitions, one can infer that proverbs are grammatically constructed sentences that are coated in wisdom or knowledge which have the ability to engrave deep meaning in our minds. This work attempts to fill the gap in cross-cultural studies in the area of metaphoric and formulaic languages. The aim of this study is to identify and discuss the cultural proverbs among two different societies and the values are embedded in them. In this regard, this work examines frequently used proverbs among these cultures and it categorizes them based on the cultural meaning and perception. To achieve the objective stated above, this study explores proverbs in both cultures that are seen to be symbolic and morally inclined. It also scrutinizes proverbs that offer criticism, warnings and encouragements.

## Literature Review

Nigerian and Chinese scholars have written extensively on the concept of proverbs in their cultures. They have assessed their cultural values, traditions and systems on how it has influenced the construction of proverbs. In African settings, it is generally believed that proverbs are coated with the wisdom of the ages and people must have a good command of it, this reflects their good usage of the language. Africans see proverbs as a reliable source of authority when they are trying to settle disputes, hold discussions or give practical illustrations (Usman, Mustafa, & Agu, 2013:50). It is based on this that Fáyemí (2009:16) proclaims that proverbs are important aspects of human communication and it is incontrovertible and culturally relative. Indeed, proverbs are core aspects of people's life in Africa. Oládélé (1976:22) affirms this when he opined that Africans engage proverbs for emphasis, warning and moral admonishments. Africans, especially the elderly ones, are seen to react to daily events as they come and face live challenges heads-on. They prefer to talk truthfully and objectively, they often hold their discourses with well-polished proverbs (Délànò, 1973:80). Furthermore, in Yorùbá settings, we can observe that proverbs are made from human observation of their natural environment, therefore proverbs in this culture can be empirical, affirmative, speculative and superstitious (Olúmúyìwá, 2012:110). Apart from these ways, proverbs in Yorùbá settings have religious origins and connotations. During the worship of Ifá and òrìsà, proverbs are formed in songs and drums. They are used to celebrate their divinities, settle disputes and reveal local histories or socio cultural occurrences (Lawal, et al. 1997:636).

Just like the Yorùbá tradition, Chinese proverbs are based on morality and virtues. They are used to instill ethics, moral wisdom and values which are drawn from the Chinese evolution and civilization which over the years have become the tradition of their culture. Likewise, some of them are drawn from the accumulated life experience of the people (Lauhakangas, 2014:50). Chinese proverbs are also crafted from folk experience and they are used to transfer knowledge from one generation to another. The fact is that just like the Yorùbá tradition, proverbs flourish in China tremendously because they are used in every ramification of human life (Hart, 1937: 22). The Chinese distinguish between literary idioms, which usually consist of four words and derive from ancient stories, five and seven word maxims, which are considered reasonably refined and often come in rhyming couplets, and popular sayings passed down by the common

people over many generations, which typically have no set length of form (Herzberg & Herzberg, 2012:42). The Chinese, just like the Yorùbá, also use proverbs in religious inferences. They give many proofs, as well in their conduct as in their proverbial sayings, of the faith in idols. Their faith is a superstitious phenomenon, and it is largely mixed with fear and strong vices which are enough to tinge life and conduct (Scarborough, 1875:11).

## **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework adopted in this study is heterogeneous due to the multivariate features in which proverbs are constructed. This study adopted a blend of a contextual theory, functional theory and a polygenesis theory.

The Contextual Theory as proposed by folklorist scholars such as Alan Dundes would suffice as an application in the study of this work. They observed that proverbs must be understood within the traditional, psychological, sociological and philological environment in which a particular text is produced. They also maintained that proverbs must be examined within its text and the culture in which it was performed (Dundes, 1965:138). The Functional Theory as propounded by William Bascom clearly states that proverbs serves the preservation of a culture within its social institution. He affirms that “proverbs help settle legal decisions, riddles, sharpen wits, myths validate conduct, and satirical songs release pent up hostilities” (Bascom, 1965:15). The Theory of Polygenesis (i.e. the independent invention of the same materials in different places), states that human beings over the world over have a habit of reacting in analogous ways to similar situations in their environment and that the basic psychological factors which governs man such as hatred, love, fear, hunger, birth, life, death; to mention just a few, are the same everywhere. Hence, people may differ in color but still share the same universal truth and hence formulate folktales, riddles, folksongs, proverbs, etc. that may be parallel to those of other communities. Thus, according to polygenesis theorists, proverbs and other folklore materials must have originated independently in diverse places primarily because of man’s natural creative impulse and his characteristic way of responding to similar factors (Propp & Propp, 1984:22).

These three theories are relevant to the current study. The contextual theory explains how proverbs should be understood within the cultural setting in which it was made, the functional theory elucidates the usages of proverbs in these local settings and the polygenesis theory argues

that indeed proverbs are similar across cultures because they are made based on the psychological (mental, emotional, spiritual) factors that affects humans in our societies.

## **Methodology**

Data were sourced from two databases that focused on the discourses of proverbs in Yoruba land in Nigeria and China. Data relevant to totems, morals, warnings, encouragements, criticisms and advice were extracted for use in this study. Data used were representative of the two different societies used as a case-study in this research work. The use of content analysis method would facilitate the systematic evaluation of texts and documents, therefore qualitative data would be converted into quantitative data.

## **Discussions**

This work intends to classify Yorùbá proverbs and Chinese proverbs under six distinct headings such as Totems, Morals, Warnings, Encouragements, Criticism and Advice proverbs. These classification was based on the polygenesis theory which claims that there are certain universal truths across cultures. These headings have been identified also from the functional theory approach because these specific proverbs are used to preserve the elements of both cultures. This work would intends to draw similarities and differences in meanings and concepts in the context of both proverbs. Our first categorisation is Totem-related Proverbs. What are totems? The Cambridge International Dictionary of English defines the word totem as “an object which is respected by a group of people, especially for religious reasons.” Totems are the things that define the tribe or societal group. They are the name or emblem that bind it and give it commonality (Zapotoczny, 2008:2). We would first scrutinise totem related proverbs in the Yorùbá culture before examining the totem related culture of the Chinese.

In Yorùbá culture, animals have an important position in the role they play in the life of the people. There are many symbolic animals in the Yorùbá traditional culture but this work would focus on one particular animal (the dog) which continues to serve as a ritual element, a companion, a guard and a hunting animal for most people. The Yorùbá have a proverb that says “Mo májá léyìn o jàn án nígi, èmi náà lo jàn nígi” which means that ‘A dog follows me you flog it with a rod, it is me that you flog with the rod. This discloses the Yorùbá world view and beliefs about their tamed animals and the roles they play. The Yorùbá are very religious and their deities

have their own dogs. For example, Lúbé is the name of Şàngó's dog, Mádìgbòlèsù is the name of Èşù's (the trickster god) dog, Omídùunsìn is the name of Erinlè's (a river deity) dog. In some places of Yorùbá community, specifically in Arà town which is located in the Osun State, dog worship is an event that is done annually. The locals of Arà town strongly believe that the dog was a key factor in the history of the town; this story is also seen as a creation myth. It was widely believed that in the past, a place called Mobo certain mysterious things happened. The Monarch at that time had many dogs and they disappeared and only reappeared to be talking like human beings. Since then the dog has become a divine symbol for the people of Arà. Live dogs are not allowed in the town at all. It is probably the only Yorùbá town where no dog is to be seen (Beier, 2001: 70).

In Chinese culture, the dragon has a long history and it is professed as a legend. It is also a holy or spiritual animal. The Chinese identify themselves as descendants of this animal which is seen as powerful and noble. Accordingly, in ancient China, emperors were alleged as dragons which were descendants from heaven. In Chinese conceptualization, we have proverbs such as - È lóng nán dòu dìtóushé “恶龙难斗地头蛇” literally meaning that even a fierce dragon would struggle when in combat with a local snake, powerful people are dragons. This proverb simply means that people have different statuses and power within their territories; it is difficult for a powerful person to deal with a local within his terrains. Another proverb is- Lóng shēng lóng, fèng shēng fèng, lǎoshǔ de érzi huì dǎ dòng “龙生龙，凤生凤，老鼠的儿子会打洞” which means that phoenixes beget phoenixes and dragons beget dragons, so the son of rats are capable of digging holes; people who are in high status are dragons. This proverb means that it is absolutely impossible to detach one from his parental status or behavior (Liu, 2013:10).

Our second categorization is Moral Proverbs. Morals are accepted standards within the society, passed down from generation to generation. Both these cultural societies have accepted standards and forms of behavior that reflect their way of life. It is richly embedded in their proverbs as well. The Yorùbá admit that morals are the fabrics that sew a society together, hence they have used moral proverbs to entwine their traditions and values together. They warn each other against not taking the right steps at the right time. Succinctly, as seen in the proverb “A kì í jẹ òkèlè l'órí òkèlè, a kì í finá s'órí òrùlé sùn” meaning no one eats after he has had enough; no one would leave fire on the roof to go to bed. Literally, this proverb means when there is an over

wrought state of affairs, it is better to deal with it at once rather than pretend it does not exist. Consequently, this is a culture that conceives that issues should be dealt with as they come with seriousness of mind rather than being lackadaisical. This is also seen in another proverb that says “Àbàtà ta kété bí ẹnì pé kò bá odò tan” meaning that the marsh stands aloof as if it were not related to the river. Literally, this is a comment about people who tend to be indifferent in matters they are deeply related or perhaps expected to take serious actions (Adébòwálé, 2005:11).

The Chinese are very much like the Yorùbá in tradition and values as such elements are carefully crafted in their proverbs. They also believe that things should be done conscientiously and meticulously. A famous Chinese proverb is seen as Hǔ tóu shé wěi “虎头蛇尾”; meaning a tiger's head and a snake's tail. This proverb means a good beginning with a lousy ending, thus it encourages and admonishes its people to have a good beginning and a good ending. The implication of this is that people must be serious-minded in all they do and engage in. They also presume that seriousness of mind comes with doing the right things at the right time, thus they have a proverb like àn xià hú lú fú qǐ piáo “按下葫芦起了瓢”; meaning when one gourd is pushed under the water, but another floats up. In essence, they believe that too many problems pop up one after another in our daily life and it might prove to be too much to cope with. One must not delay what one has to do and must not be half-hearted or laid-back (Lee, 2000:49).

The third categorisation is Warning Proverbs. Every human society postulates that human behavior has to be cautioned and regulated. They are statements used to serve as a cautionary example or guidance to others. In both cultures, we have proverbs that serve this purpose. The Yorùbá accept this fact just like every other society, laws and regulations exist to maintain order and prevent anarchy. This is obvious in the proverb “Agada kò mọ orí alágbèdẹ” meaning the sword does not recognise the head of the smith who made it. This therefore acts as a warning to people who try to get on the wrong side of the law because there will be repercussions. Hence, this people urge their members to be of esteem character and behavior as they affirm that the law of karma is very real. This is very evident in the proverb “Àgbà tí ó gbín èbù ikà, orí ọmọ rẹ nì yòò hù lé” meaning an elder who plants the seed of cruelty, it will sprout on the head of his children. This proverb comes as a warning as what you sow, you will reap or your children or relatives will reap the same. The traditional society of this tribe is deeply engraved with cautions

that would promote hardwork and diligence and relegates excessive dependence on the wealth or fortune of one's parents (Adébòwálé, 2005:12).

The Chinese have a lot in common with the Yorùbá because they firmly presume in the existence of rules in a traditional manner, such that their warnings are based on existing customs and their beliefs. They warn against distressing mistakes that have irrevocable repercussions such as “Huó yú shuāi sǐ mài” “活鱼摔死卖” meaning crushing live fish to death before selling them. This proverb intends to deride someone who tries to be clever only to end in blunder. In China, live fish are considered fresh and free from contamination that may cause illness when cooked and eaten. The Chinese warn their people on seeking the right ways and approach to problems and this is seen in the proverb Huà bǐng chōng jī “画饼充饥” meaning to draw a cake to satisfy one's hunger. This is seen as a warning that unrealistic solution to a problem serves no other purpose than self-deception (Mah, 2002:110).

The fourth categorisation is Encouragement Proverbs. These proverbs are used to give support, confidence or hope to one another in our society. Such statements act as motivation that can inspire people to do better or achieve greater heights. Yorùbá also use proverbs as a form of statement to reassure and offer glimmers of hope in times of conflicts or troubles. A typical one is found in how this culture sees proverbs itself, a popular Yorùbá proverb is “Òwè lẹ̀sin ọ̀rọ̀, Bí ọ̀rọ̀ bá sọ̀ nù, ọ̀wè là á fíí wá a”. This proverb states that they are statements seen as horse-footed to solve a problem, when the truth is elusive, it is proverbs that we use to discover it. Consequently, it means that great respect is given to anyone who can use proverbs frequently and appropriately. They also offer a form of encouragement for those who have shortcomings and those who are not perfect. The proverb “Ajá tí ó pa ikún l’óníí lè pa ọ̀yà lóla, nítorí náà kí á má pa ajá” perfectly encapsulates this. The literary meaning is that the dog that kills a squirrel today may kill a grass-cutter tomorrow, therefore we must not kill the dog. This proverb offers hope and encouragement by saying that he who has succeeded in a small way today should be encouraged; possibly he will achieve greater things in the future (Adamo, 2015:48).

The Chinese also have similar proverbs that offer inspiration and motivation to their people. They acknowledge that humans have different abilities and talents, therefore those who are weak in learning are encouraged not to give up but to put in more efforts. The proverb - Bèn niǎo xiān fēi zǎo rù lín “笨鸟先飞早入林”; meaning a clumsy bird that flies first will get to the

forest earlier. The Chinese use this as an expression of modesty and humbleness, it further means that one who is slow in learning should make extra efforts and never give up easily. They offer inspiration and stimulate their people to always take a step further and make an extra effort in their daily endeavors. The proverb -Hǎi kuò píng yú yuè, tiān gāo rèn niǎo fēi “海阔凭鱼跃，天高任鸟飞” meaning fishes swim in vast sea as freely as birds fly in boundless sky. This proverb is seen as imagination is your only limit and one should go for it. To the Chinese, imagination should not be constrained as the world is filled with opportunities and chances (Kulich, 2003:55).

The fifth categorisation are Criticism Proverbs. In every traditional society, approvals and disapprovals are obvious in statements uttered. People use proverbs as statements to show their expression of condemnation or denunciation from certain acts or deeds. The Yorùbá use proverbs to rebuke people who engage in immoral or unethical things in their societies. An example of such proverb is “À ní gba òròmọ̀dì l’òwọ̀ ikú, ó ní a ò jẹ́ kí òun lọ àtàn lọ jẹ́” plainly meaning we are preventing a chick from being victim of death, and it claims that we do not allow it to go to a dunghill to eat. This proverb is a rebuke to someone who grumbles because he is not allowed to do certain things which those who prevent him know to be dangerous for the person. Another proverb that guides against such action is seen in “A-fasẹ̀-gbe-òjò n’tan ara rè jẹ́” literally meaning he who receives rain-water with a sieve deceives himself. This proverb offers a mocking reproof to a person who is trying to do something which is obviously beyond his power or is aspiring to a position to which he can never attain. Yorùbá criticisms have ethical connotations that discloses their values, they posit that respect for elders is a necessity in their culture (Adamo, 2015:49).

The Chinese proverbs also have ethical notions, reprimanding, unacceptable attitudes and behaviors in their society. Proverbs are used against all forms of oppression or cruelty among the people. One proverb is - Héng xíng bà dào; “横行霸道” plainly meaning walk sideways and block the way. This proverb reproached all those that have selfish motives, aggressors and those who love to play the tyrant. Proverbs are systematically used to regulate human behavior in the Chinese society, the weak against the strong, the rich against the poor, and the leader against the follower, father against the son and friends against friends. A Chinese proverb says - Huà shé tiān zú; “画蛇添足” simply meaning add legs to the snake one has just painted. Do something that is totally unnecessary and spoil what you already have done (Mah, 2002:110).

The sixth categorisation are Advice Proverbs. Human decisions are guided through recommendations or wise counsel. Every civilisation has evolved through this process and proverbs exist within these frameworks. They are designed according to their traditional beliefs and values. The Yorùbá strongly conceive that idioms should be used to give counsels and instructions to people. Hence, it's not strange to find a lot of proverbs that give advice and guidance to the people. A Yorùbá proverb goes thus "a-rìn-gbèrè ni yóò mú oyè délé, a-sàré-tete kò ni royè jẹ" literally meaning he who walks slowly and calculatedly will bring a title home; he who acts recklessly misses the chance of enjoying the title. This advice reflects that making a hasty decision will not accomplish anything. One should think clearly before making a decision, even if it takes time. Another proverb goes thus, "fí ịjà fún Ọlórún jà fí ọwọ lérán máa wòran" plainly meaning that allow God to fight on your behalf and keep watching. This is recognition that God exists and defends, fights takes up cases for people. Therefore, one should not attempt to take revenge by oneself. This proverb reveals the religious connotations that are found in their tribe (Adamo, 2015:49).

The Chinese just like the Yorùbá also have such connotations that offer counsels, recommendations and guidance to their people. A proverb to reflect this is seen as in *hài rén zhī xīn bù kě yǒu, fáng rén zhī xīn bù kě wú*. "害人之心不可有，防人之心不可无" meaning we should never harbor the intent to victimise others; but never let your guard down against being victimised. Another proverb instructs people to avoid reckless talks without any form of action. The proverb that reflects this is seen as - *Huā xiāng bù yīdìng měilì, néng shuō bù yīdìng huì zuò* "花香不一定美丽，能说不一定会做" literally meaning a fragrant bloom is not necessarily a beautiful flower; an orator may not be a crackjack. This proverb is used to counsel that action is better than oration (Mah, 2002:111).

## **Findings**

This research work has identified some intrinsic similarities and differences in the connotative usage of proverbs among the Yorùbá and the China. As regards totems, one can affirm that both the Yorùbá and the Chinese have spiritual totems that represent their group distinctly, the dog totem is used in the Yoruba culture while the dragon is used in the Chinese

culture. Both totems have historical antecedents and have represented the values of these societies over the years. While dogs are carnivores and a widely abundant animal, dragons are not real animals but they were created around Chinese historical myths.

In the aspect of morals, it was discovered that both cultures invoke proverbs to enforce morality in their culture. Morals in Yorùbá culture is seen as *iwa* and it is a defining factor for this group. Gbádégèşin (1994:20) pored over how this culture see morals, he says they accept that character reflects our values, ethics and morals. To them *iwa* reflects the cultural values, ethics and morals which defines Yorùbá as a people. The wellbeing of a society is grossly dependent on the peace and unity maintained by every individual component of the community while engaging in social interaction. To the Chinese moral means *Dàodé* 道德, which Chinese philosophers have depicted as a virtue which exhibits empathy, compassion, benevolence and care for others (Xu, 2018:37). Yorùbá and Chinese proverbs are highly similar in the sense that they both guide against human action, however Yorùbá proverbs invoke seriousness of mind and character and ensure that hard work, perseverance and order exists in our society. On the other hand, Chinese proverbs evoke a lot of emotion and passion in their proverbs unlike the Yorùbá proverbs.

Both Yorùbá and Chinese proverbs promote the sustenance of order and peace in their proverbs, however the Yorùbá proverb invokes deep warnings on generational curses in their proverb while the Chinese do not. The action of one individual can affect his entire bloodline if he or she is not careful. For the Chinese, misfortune would befall the actor if he does not act properly and there is no transfer of such curses as in Yorùbá culture. Likewise, both Yorùbá and Chinese proverbs offer hope, wisdom and encouragement to their people respectively however in offering such statements, the Chinese promote their values in the statements. The Chinese promote collective work and action which is seen as a fundamental virtue of their culture unlike the Yorùbá that encourage one to persevere and be hopeful in their proverbs.

The Yorùbá and Chinese proverbs both offer criticisms and disapprove of certain actions in the society. While the Yorùbá proverbs are designed to ensure ethical behavior in their society, the Chinese proverbs are more centered around family life and actions. Yorùbá proverbs invoke the spiritual realm and figures in its proverb of advice, this is to show the importance this culture have for supernatural beings, so it is very common to find "*òlórún*" or "*òrìṣà*" involved in

their proverb construction that gives counsel and instruction to people. The Chinese do not have any use of spiritual concepts in their proverbs rather they focus more on advice to ensure a harmonious society that is void of careless behaviors. This segment of the work have identified the unique fact that Yorùbá and Chinese proverbs have similar inferred notions and they also have literal and inferred differences in their proverbs.

## **Conclusion**

The fact is that the Yorùbá and the Chinese are very similar in proverbs. Although the elements they used are different, their connotations and inferred meaning are actually the same. As regards totems, the Yorùbá use dogs and the Chinese use dragons amongst others in some of their proverbs categorization that strongly have religious beliefs. Both have proverbs that are centered on morals, warnings, encouragements, criticism and advice. One evident characteristic is that these proverbs are constructed according to their belief systems and traditions. They are age-long statements that are heavy and pregnant with words of wisdom. Another obvious fact is that these proverbs are usually used by elders of each community who adopt them to reveal the proper way of conduct in life and to guide their actions in every endeavor.

Evidently, one can see that they are predicated upon the past experiences of elders, friends, husbands, wives, parents and children. Some of the proverbs also reflect the deep influence of folktales that have high level of wisdom and intelligence. This is a major difference in their proverbs connotations and meanings. Their folktales are different and this is because they are expressions of the culture that is shared by a particular community. It's formed on the rich traditions that is peculiar to a particular culture, subculture or an ethnic group. Therefore, it's evident that as folktales are handed over from generation to generation, so also are the proverbs embedded in them transferred systematically.

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