

THE SUBJECT MATTER OF NUER
PROVERBS:LARE COMMUNITY OF GAMBELLA.

BY

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Puok Kawich entitled: The Subject Matter of Nuer proverbs: Lare Community of Gambella, and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the Degree master of arts (foreign literature) complies the regulation with the University and meets the accepted standard with respected to originality and quality.

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Definition of key words

.Animistic. A belief in super natural power that organizes and animates the material universe

.ECBT. Extended conceptual base theory

Optimistic .Is a person who is hopeful about the future or the success of some thing in particular.

Polygamous. Is a way in which people can be legally married to more than one person at the same time.

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to critically analyze the subject matter of Nuer proverbs, in association with their themes. It has five chapters

The first chapter begins by introducing the background of the study. That is, the Nuer's location in Ethiopia, their lifestyle, their culture, their traditional beliefs, their traditional administration system and their language and literature. These are shown to be important in Nuer community. In the same chapter, it is stated that the importance of the proverbs in Nuer community has not been studied.

In the second chapter the review is made based on the previous research studies which have been conducted on the same topics which are related to this study.

In the third chapter a conceptual frame work of the study is presented.

In the fourth chapter the critical analysis on Nuer proverbs is made based on the question on how they reflect the cultural norm in the Nuer community. These proverbs have been categorized into ten categories as follows:

Proverbs on poverty, proverbs on wisdom, proverbs on waging the war, proverbs on morality, proverbs on discouraging bad behavior, proverbs on discouraging cowardice, proverbs on the role of God, proverbs on the status of death, proverbs on capability and the proverbs on good future.

All of these proverbs are analyzed and the researcher finds that, the Nuer proverbs reflect their social, economical, political and cultural issues in a good manner.

Chapter One

1. Introduction

1.1. The Background of the Study

1.1.1. The Name and the Location of the research area

The Nuer people are one among the five tribes in Gambella region. They call themselves 'Naath' meaning "human beings" They are located in the western part of Gambella region.

1.1.2 The Lifestyle of the Nuer people

The Nuer traditional life depends on cattle. This is because cattle has historically been put to the highest religious, symbolic, and economic value among the Nuer. They play a great role in most places of the Nuer life. Cattle also are important as they are used as bride wealth. That is they are given to the bride's family by the bridegroom's family. In addition to this, their role in sacrifice is something important also. The Nuer people give more focus to the quantity and quality of the cattle owned. They take the name of their favorite oxen or cows in ritual honor. More over,they are greeted by their cattle's names or colors. They also engage in the agricultural pursuits, but they very much enjoy the care of cattle. The main crops are maize sorghum and tobacco

Nuer living status is based on the seasons of the year. For instance, in summer season, the people move to the higher ground. There the men herd their cattle, and the women cultivate maize and other crops. In winter or during the dry season they move to the place near by the receding rivers. There, they build houses that they could use temporarily.

1.1.3. The Nuer Culture

Like other tribes, culture is very important for Nuer people in Gambella region. Traditionally, marriage system is one of the ultimate goals in the life of Nuer. That is marriage among Nuer is brought about through payment of bride wealth. For instance, the girl's family is given twenty-five cows. Thus, a person who has no many cows, will find it difficult to have a wife. The Nuer people's marriage system is polygamous. That is, men often have several wives in different villages. However, if a woman is married, she is not expected to have sexual relation with another man. If she is seen with other men, it should be considered as adultery.

The marriage in Nuer areas is conducted in a series of complicated ceremonies. The first one involves the presentation of bride wealth (five cattle) to the bride's family. These five cattle are taken by these who are younger to the girl's family. They called this kind of ceremony "yoat".

The second is the one which is conducted after the fifty or seventy-five percent of the bride's wealth is presented or is going to be presented to the girl's family. This is called "puot Kuen" (wedding day). It is conducted in the home of the bride's family. This kind of ceremony is the main part of the marriage process. For instance, during that ceremony, (wedding day) the bridegroom's people and the bride's people can sit and discuss the issues of the bride wealth. On that day in the home of the bride's family wine and foods are prepared and an ox is killed for the people of bridegroom. At that time men and women play up to the night time.

The last one is conducted after the whole bride wealth is given to the bride's family. This is conducted in the home of the bride groom's family. In this ceremony only the relatives of the bride who are female are going to the bride groom's home. The bride groom can give full service to these females. This is called "muot".

Completing all of the above three stages does not mean that the man and his wife can have sexual intercourse. They should wait until the girl's mother permits them to do it. Doing this, marriage is not considered as it is completed until the first child has been born, at which point the marriage has produced a child that connects the two couples. When the second child is born, the marriage is considered as it is stable. Therefore, no bride wealth is needed to be returned if the two couples divorce.

In Nuer culture if a man dies before he married, his brother or his relatives can marry a girl on the behalf of him, and if he dies after he married, his brother or his relative can take the wife. Evans (1990) states it as follows:

A very common feature of Nuer social life is a union I have called ghost-marriage. If a man dies without legal male heirs, a kinsman of his or the succeeding generation—brother, natural son, parental nephew, or where a man has, in the absence of lineal heirs, inherited cattle from his mother's brother, sister's son—ought to take a wife to his name (p 109).

Another event which is found in Nuer culture is cutting of six tribal marks. They are called 'gaar'. This is done on each side of forehead as the rite passage. This kind of culture in Nuer society is a way in which one is changed from one position to another position in the society. This lets an individual describe his change easily as a passage to a new real way of living. The marks on the forehead also are considered as means to qualify a boy for manhood, and enable him to fight in the battles, because the traditional culture of Nuer does not allow a Nuer man who does not have marks on his forehead to participate in the battle. He could not be killed also for any kind of revenge as he is considered as a small boy even if he is mature enough to marry.

The burial system in Nuer is something which is very important in their culture. For instance when a person dies, a grave is unceremoniously dug and the person is buried as quickly as possible. The graves are dug on the left side of the person's hut. On certain days after the burial, the ritual appointed

leaders of the family start making a sacrifice by asking the dead person not to bother about the family members who are living or still a life. The mourning period continues until the members of the dead person family are convinced and start doing their works. However, Nuer people do not mourn much for a person who is murdered or killed in battle because they know that they will revenge it.

1.1.4. The Nuer Traditional Beliefs

The Nuer traditional belief is animistic in so many respects. However, they worship a creator which they called "kwoth". They believe that all life comes from and returns to the creator (kwoth). They pray and offer sacrifice of cattle to "kwoth" hoping for well-being and health. They do this also as part of ceremonies like marriage. Moreover, they use some proverbs based on their traditional beliefs.

In the spiritual beliefs of Nuer culture, cattle play an important role. For instance, they make contact with their ancestor spirit by rubbing ashes along the backs of oxen or cows dedicated to them. In every situation, most of the times cattle are sacrificed to God and spirits. They worship one God whom they call 'kwoth' and they say He is everywhere. According to Evans (1956) "Nuer say that God is everywhere, that he is 'like wind' and 'like air'(p.4). This is related to the traditional beliefs of Nuer people that God is in the air.

1.1.5. The Nuer Traditional Administration System

The traditional ruling system of Nuer is based on their traditional norms and societal system. The Nuer community is ruled by people who are selected based on their good behavior in the society. Their traditional culture allows them to share leadership among different clans or different sub-clan in a village. But the leaders are chosen after they show leadership qualities and when other people respect them. When conflict happens, elders are concerned bodies to resolve the conflict.

To sum up, the Nuer traditional administration system of villages is mainly in the hands of elders of the dominant clan. In fact, personal qualities including lineage, age, seniority in family, wealth in cattle, large number of wives and children, skill in debate and some spiritual powers are considered to create a social personality for being considered as a leader. They also select the war general who can initiate and stop the war based on the above qualities. However, he should always be elder.

1.1.6. The Nuer Language and Literature

The Nuer language is another aspect of their culture. They call it "thok nath". It is Nilotic language which is rich in its oral form of literature like other languages. This enables them to reflect their culture orally. It is spoken where ever Nuer are found.

Nuer literature like in most unwritten culture is orally transmitted over generations in stories, folktales and so on. One form of oral literature is proverbs. As Brhanu (2009) puts, "proverbs are short statements of wisdom or advice founded on keen observation and profound experience in different aspects of the life around"(P.111). This indicates that proverbs could be suitable form of communication and in the life of people in general. proverbs are also very important instrument for transmission of culture. Due to this condition, it encourages the idea that, there should be a need to see the function of proverbs in Nuer society.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The function of proverbs in Nuer society is seen to be considered as important. That is they are used to reflect their culture and in different kinds of situations.

Therefore, the point that initiated the researcher to conduct this study is that, it seems that no attempt has been made to collect and analyze the proverbs of

the Nuer community in Ethiopia. So, the researcher intends to explore the importance of proverbs in Nuer society, lare community.

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are presented as follows:

1.3.1 General Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study is to critically analyze the subject matter of the proverbs in the Nuer community.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

In order to fulfill the above mentioned objective the researcher focuses on the following specific objectives.

- To show the importance of proverbs in the community;
- To show how the proverb are useful in transmitting the moral values of the community;
- To reveal how proverbs enhance communication in the society; and
- To know the didactic function of proverbs.

By considering the above objectives, this study aims to answer the following research question.

.How do the proverbs reflect the traditional cultural norms of the Nuer community?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The Nuer community has a wealth of oral literature which has not yet been explored. Little do the people of the world know about the oral literature of the people of Gambella. There are also many Ethiopian scholars who are eager to study the verbal wealth of many Ethiopian communities. Therefore, this study

is important in a way that, it could initiate other kinds of researches concerning the various communities of Gambella.

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

This study is limited to analyzing the Subject matter of Nuer proverbs in Nuer community. It focuses on the oral form of the proverbs because there is no availability of texts regarding the function of proverbs in Nuer society. It also does not intend to make a thematic analysis of the selected proverbs. Such themes are dealt with only in so far as they help the researcher to highlight the moral and the social functions of the selected proverbs. The researcher faced lack of finance. This prevented him to get some materials that could help him in doing this study. The shortage of time also was a big challenge which made this study difficult to be carried out in a way that is needed. Finally, the distinction between sayings and proverbs was very difficult to identify when the researcher collected the data.

1.6 Methodology of the Study

This research focuses on the subject matter of the selected proverbs. To answer the research question, the researcher analyzed the themes reflected in the selected proverbs.

The sources of this data are elders in the society. This is because they are the people who could give relevant information about the function of the proverbs in the society.

The researcher discusses the issues by selecting fifty two proverbs based on their different functions in the society. That is, their wisdom function, morality function, and so on. This is because from these sides different ideas about the importance of the proverbs could be revealed.

The instrument which is used to gather data is interview. This instrument is used because it seems it is convenient for the collecting the data of this study as most of elders people in the community are illiterate.

The structured interview is used to gather data for elders. This is hoped it helps the researcher to gather actual information as it is carried out in the form of discussion because there is question and answer.

1.7 Method of Data Analysis

The data gathered through interview that is, the proverbs are categorized to the purposes for which the community uses them. The researcher categorized the selected proverbs as follows: proverbs on poverty, on wisdom, on waging war, on morality, on the status of death, on capability, on discouraging bad behavior, on discouraging cowardice, on role of God and on good fortune. The researcher collected fifty two proverbs and analyzed them based on the two theoretical framework presented in chapter three. That is, the ECBT and the conceptual metaphor view. The functions of the collected proverbs are analyzed by touching upon the themes in the proverbs and the purpose for which the proverbs are used.

1.8 The organization of the study

This study has five chapters. The first chapter deals with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, delimitation of the study, methodology of the study and organization of the study.

The second chapter deals with a review of some research studies related to proverbs and their significance in society.

The third chapter is the conceptual frame work of the study. This section discusses the meaning of proverbs, the role of proverb in the society, the

characteristics and types of proverb and the theories of interpreting the proverbs.

The fourth chapter deals with the analysis of the selected fifty two Nuer proverbs.

In the concluding chapter, the researcher presented the summary and highlight of the thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

A Review of Related Literature

2.1. The concept of folklore

Folklore is away in which people use some activities that show their traditional culture or traditional way of their culture. This could be traditional beliefs, stories, songs, proverbs, Jokes, riddles, tales, myth etc. These are handed down orally from generation to generation. Abrams (1957) puts it as follows:

Since the mid-nineteenth century, has been the collective name applied to traditional verbal materials and social rituals that have been handed down solely, or at least primarily, by a word of mouth and by example rather than in written form. Folklore developed and continues to flourish best in communities where few if any people can read or write. It includes, among other things, legends, superstitions, songs, tales, proverbs, riddles, spells, nursery rhymes, pseudo-scientific lore about the weather, plants, and animals customary activities at births, marriage, and death, and traditional dance and form of drama which are performed on holidays or at communal gatherings (p.66).

Under this condition the notion of folklore becomes an issue which is connected to the life of the people and their relation to the environment basically their way of life traditionally.

Melakneh (2008) puts it "The common idea inherent in folklore is that of traditions and oral treasures handed down from the past" (p.4). This kind of definition reveals that folklore relies on the traditions of a given culture which should be transmitted through the word of month.

Folklore is also seems to be considered as it is common to all people. This is because all people employ the same form of folklore. That is those who are in the towns, cities and those who are in the rural areas or primitive people have

the same proverbs, tales, riddles, myth etc. Because of this, it should be said that folklore is used as a means to connect literate and non literate societies.

2.2. The Function of folklore

Dorson (1972 p.21-23) discusses the function of folklore by showing that, the ethnographic examples could be the ways of showing the function of the folklore in certain cultures. For instance, he provides the situation which shows the importance of the proverbs. That is the proverbs should be used as a means or techniques to teach young and in terms of ritual activities. He also indicates the another function of folklore in the society as validation. He suggests that, folklore validates some aspects of culture. He clarified that, tribal myths may function as an ego-reassurances technique in dream. Dorson also points out another function of folklore as its, divination system. He shows that, the divination system should be regarded as it is associated with the gods. That means this kind of divination system which is associated with god can have some possibilities to provide solution to any situation which is inconvenient. Therefore, in these ways, the function of folklore can be seen as it is effective in the society.

In general, folklore can be carried out a long to instruct or to teach the previous life status of the people along together with their culture norms. The most thing that should be considered as fascinating are legends which try to show why things are found as they are. For instance, it may be possible to raise the question that, why elephant has long nose. This kind of question may be answered by try to find out the reason that makes the nose of Elephant long. In this situation, the function of folklore is seen as it teaches and provides fun and excitement.

2.3. Folklore in Ethiopia

Fekade Azeze is the first person who studied the folklore in Ethiopia. Fekade (1999) puts it that "folk lore is concerned with oral literature, material culture,

social folk customs and performing folk arts, and acts as a way of science to study these four things" (P.15). Here, it is to mean that, folklore is a way in which we can understand traditional way of life. For instance in oral literature we can understand the use fullness of tale, legend, myth, poetry, proverbs and so on in the society. That is the society benefits from folklore. Material culture is another issue that Fekade expressed as a kind of folklore which is very important. This is because it encourages the society to use and understand folk crafts, folk art, folk architecture, folk costume and folk cookery. Fekadu also indicates the function of folklore on its social folk customs which contain festivals and celebrations, recreation and games, and folk medicine and folk religion. These social customs enable the people to get change in their minds because they make people feel free psychologically. For instance, the folk medicine and the folk religion are traditionally used to cure people and they believe their functions. Moreover, during festival and celebration there may be reflection on some social, economical, political and cultural issues which could make people think positively towards their life. The recreation and games entertain the people. Therefore all these kinds of social folk customs are very useful for the life of people. Fekade also shows folklore in its being performing as folk arts as it seems to show the way of importance of music, dance and drama. These three elements are performed by showing some actions to entertain or teach people

2.4 A REVIEW OF MA THESES RELATED TO THE PRESENT STUDY

The study of folklore is acquiring importance at the level of graduate studies in Ethiopia. Graduate students go to various parts of Ethiopia to collect folk literature from different places and analysed it.

Among MA-theses which have been written on oral literature mainly those which focus on proverbs and their significance in society are considered. . For instance, Berhanu (1986) conducted his research on Kambata proverbs. His work is based on the analysis of contents, function occasion, form and style of kambata proverbs. The main point of the study or the finding of the study is that, kambata people are rich in proverbs which reflect the society's experience. Moreover, in his thesis he indicates that the contents and function of the proverbs reflect the economic, culture, and social issues which are related to the daily life of the people. In addition to this he discusses some functions of the kambata proverbs in a way that, they are historical, ethical and educational. He then points out that, kambata proverbs are not used on special time. Therefore, this thesis is very essential in providing the better way of understanding of the function of the proverbs for the first time in MA thesis.

Teferi (2000) also conducted a research on proverbs analysis at M.A level. He conducted his study on the analysis of Awgn proverbs. He mainly deals with their form and content. His study is based on the textual analysis of Awgn proverbs

In his finding he indicates that, the Awgn proverbs are rhetorical and instructive devices in the community.

Tadessa (2004) studied the function of the Guji-oromo proverbs with the context of their use. In his study, he found that Guji-Oromo proverbs play a

great role in the society. That is, they create public responses to social, and political problems. Further more they help people to understand that, folklore builds the community, establishes the culture and creates a responsible society. In this condition, the study at hand differs from the above mentioned study in a way that, it focuses on the subject matter of proverbs in Nuer society. This study is similar to the work of Berhanu in a way that, Berhanu has seen the content which is related to the meaning, and the function of Kambata proverbs that is related to the subject matter of the Nuer proverbs in association with their themes. However, they differ from the fact that, Berhanu has seen the content, function, form and the style. Because of this it seems that he did not give much focus to their functions as he studied it a long together with form and styles. But in this study, the researcher deals mainly with the subject matter of Nuer proverbs. In this case, the researcher goes deeper in seeing proverbs in relation to their function in Nuer community.

Teferi's work also is similar to this study because he studied the content which is related to theme of Awgn proverbs. In the same way the researcher of this study has seen the subject matter of Nuer proverbs along together with their themes. However, their difference is that it seems that he did not give much focus on their function because he studied it along together with their form. However, in this study the subject matter of Nuer proverbs is main concern.

Finally Tadesse's work is similar to this study because his work deals with the function of Guji-Oromo proverbs which is related to what the researcher has used in Nuer proverbs. But they differ in a way that Tadesse focuses on the use of Gugi-Orom proverb which seem to be mainly dealt with the use, where as this study is much focuses on the subject matter of the Nuer proverbs. In other word, this study is carried out to fill the gap that has not been seen regarding the importance of the Nuer proverbs in the society. This is because Brhanu studied only the kambata proverbs, Teferi focuses on the Awgn proverb and Tadesse study concerns with the Guji-Oromo proverbs.

Chapter Three

3. A Conceptual Frame Work of the Study

3.1. Proverbs

A proverb is most of the times a phrase or short saying that indicates a truth experience. It is also a way in which people use to express their real knowledge about the situations.

Kipury (1983) puts it that “proverbs could be generally summed up as the core of people’s culture, since they phrase their philosophy as well as poetry. This is of special significance in culture whose literature is oral” (P. 149). In this condition it is to mean that, proverb goes with the culture together. It is also with us every day. That is where ever people are found there is proverb. For instance, at work place during conversation with people, at school, at church etc. It is used orally most of the times because it is important for oral communication. A proverb always contains words of wisdom moral and so on which are based on practical experience.

Thus Proverb is always short easy to remember, and it is most of the time transmitted orally. It contains truth wisdom, traditional value and social morality among other things. Proverbs ensure smooth interaction in the society. This is because as they are ready made, and are known sentences of the folk, speakers use them without changing them.

3.2 The Role of Proverbs in the Society

Proverbs have a great role in the society. They educate people about what might happen. Coffin and Cohen (1966) say that “among primitive groups they may serve as the major ethnical, educational and legal guides, and even in a highly industrial nation they have a great deal to do with the maintenance of group attitudes” (p 141). Here it is pointed out that; proverbs have the capacity to provide guidance that shows what is good and bad in the primitive

society. It plays also important role among educated groups because it acts as it teach or instruct as an expert.

3.3. The Characteristics of Proverbs

Proverbs always share the same characteristics with other forms of verbal arts. As chimombo (1988) puts "proverbs are not always distinguished by a special term from other categories of verbal art" (p 13). This enables us to know that proverbs are not much different from the rest of the oral form of literature.

Proverbs have some basic characteristics which differentiate them from other forms of oral literature. Kipury (1983) puts it as the following:

The basic difference between the proverb and other forms of oral literature is that while some of them, like riddles, can be posed or listed in succession at a specific time, and in a specific context, and song are sung during various functions, proverbs cannot. They in fact sound odd when read out in succession. This is because proverbs enter in to all forms of communication (p.148).

Proverbs in this situation are not in a specific time to be performed. They are not found also in specific context like the other types of oral literature. There is also one thing that makes them have important meaning. This is their being traditional item of folklore which makes them contain very essential meaning that can be realized in a given context in the society.

3.4. Functions of Proverbs

3.4.1. Didactic Function Proverbs

Finnegan (1970) expresses that "proverbs then are sometimes used quite formally and consciously as a vehicle to achieve the ends, and in the same sort of contexts, that we associate with formal education". (P413) Here the function

of proverb is to teach as what the formal education does. This shows their didactic function.

Proverbs have a didactic function. They teach or warning about some situations in human life. For instance the proverb that says "live and let live". This stands for two things. On the one hand, it serves to teach how to live and let other live. On the other hand it seems that it warns us not to disturb the other people

Abi(2000) puts it that, "the didactic proverbs are proverbs that teach moral lesson" .This indicates the way in which proverbs show what is good and what is bad.

The didactic function of proverbs also services as a way in which we use the knowledge of pedagogy to teach people. For instance in literature the satirical way of writing Novel is one way in which we could associate with the function of proverbs as they teach the people.

3.4.2.The Aesthetic Function of Proverbs

The aesthetic function of proverbs is the ability of proverbs to be used in the form of verbal and written communication. This could be seen in a way that they facilitate the speech and make it attractive, understandable and sweet. In this condition, proverbs become essential in providing the communication.

3.4.3.The normative Function of Proverbs

The normative function of proverbs is away in which the proverbs are used to show some cultural norms. That is, using the proverbs to reflect the common way of life in a given culture. Fore instance, they could be used to show how some cultural elements are practiced. Proverbs may dictate behavior that's appropriate to a cultural group or present social norms("Wind from the west," n.d.).Here it is to mean that proverbs are associated with the cultural norms of the people. That is, they reflect the cultural norms in the society. They can also

tell us a lot about the people who say them. They also reflect the culture that they come from

3.4.4. The Corrective Function of proverbs

The corrective function of proverbs is away that proverbs are used as instrument to reorder anything in the society. This could be social, moral and cultural disorder. In this way, proverbs become very important in a way that they could be used to correct behavior which is not acceptable in the society.

3.4.5. The function of proverbs in relation to traditional culture

The function of the proverbs here is associated with their nature as they are parts of folklore. This is because when one says a proverb he says it a long together with the traditional folk of that community. This shows that proverbs communication most of the time occurs in primary culture because they are used orally and non literate society use to speak oral literature. In this way people can use them to reflect their culture.

Sumner (1995) puts it as follows:

Through the proverb, the communication established between the sender and the receiver becomes a continual movement to and fro between tradition and the actual situation. We are dealing with a particular mode of knowledge and of communication which calls for a certain type of education and provokes a cultural consciousness (p360).

This is to indicate that proverbs are used as way of communication about what and how the tradition was in association with the current situation. In this form the proverb becomes a means of reflecting the traditional culture

In general proverbs reflect the life of human beings. Proverbs are meaningful because they act as a mirror that enables man to know how problem should be

solved in his life. This shows that proverbs are practical guides in the life of people. For instance they can be used to learn patience to advise people or a person and so on. It is also used to encourage people to be aware of what is happening in their life and give a very quick reaction to the situation which could enables them to overcome the problem. This indicates their appropriateness to be used as a resource for appropriate human conduct especially for individual transition to adult stage. Here it goes with the idea that proverbs provide some lessons for people. They make the remembering of traditional culture practical because people use proverbs as they are. That is, one can say proverb among his community which is already made and reflect their traditional culture. In such a way, people among this culture can understand their culture based on that expression. Therefore, proverbs are very important for teaching moral lesson, and are mean to instill traditional values in the community.

3.4.6.Social Function of Proverbs

Proverbs also have social function in the society. They can be used to communicate important social functions. This is seen as something that shows the importance of proverbs besides their pedagogical role that they play in the society. Their nature that is, their being highly integrated in to every day conversation and speech making enable the children to understand them. Moreover, those who give care to children addressee them in proverbs most of the times.

This socializes the children and shapes them to behave in an acceptable way. The nature of proverbs also as they are metaphor leads the children to develop abstract thoughts and lets them learn appropriate behavior and understand the nature of social relation. The children can get the idea to appreciate the link between social and other activities like religion, ritual and so on.

3.7. The Moral Function of Proverbs

The function of proverbs regarding their moral is basically to find the best way for everyone to live. This is to provide as with the technique that people should learn to live purpose fully. They should also evaluate their activities in relation to what is in the norm of the culture that they are in.

Thomas (2008) puts it that, "These short sayings express things that are obviously true in a particular culture and often advise people how they should behave"(p.128). Under this condition, proverbs are used as a technique to advise people that they should know what is bad and what is good. This can be seen in a way that they should change bad behavior in to good behavior.

The moral value of the proverbs could be seen based on some kinds of its functions. There are proverbs that provide moral values in people. That is, they provide the capacity to deal with some dangers, carefulness, that is paying attention to the some possible dangers, disciplines, that is the way of creating obedience and so on. Therefore, the moral function of the proverbs is very essential for the life of the people.

3.8. Theories of Interpreting Proverbs

Interpreting the meaning of proverbs is based on some views or theories which gives much emphasize to the ways in which proverbs should be understood by the listeners. Some views are presented below.

3.8.1. Traditional Views on Understanding proverbs

The traditional approaches of interpreting proverbs is based on the point that literal meaning is a reflection of thought and external part of the world. However, figurative or non literal language distorts reality and gives special purpose. Traditional view of proverbs understanding is based on the point that the figurative language understanding necessitates the earlier literal analysis of

proverbial expression, these expressions can take additional effort to be processed compared with literal speech.

To sum up, the traditional view indicates that the derivation of literal meaning needs additional inferential work and special cognitive process by means of which the listener determines what might be the idea of the speaker.

3.8.2. The Extended Conceptual Base theory

This kind of theory is an important to use proverbs in solving problems. Domingue(2010) puts it as follows:

The ECBT proposes that once we hear the proverb, we formulate a literal understanding of it. The literal understanding almost invariably fails because the proverbs referents are usually not part <of the cognitive environment“(ie, either immediate relevance to the context is not apparent).This leads the hearers of the proverb to recognize a problem of relevance and to employ <a communication appraisal factor that involves setting criterion for deciding whether an utterance is worth of thought.

In this situation, the proverb is used to solve the problem which is related to its context

This enables the listener to process the meaning in order to solve some problems. Dorson (1972) explains it as follows:

Proverbs are descriptions that propose an attitude or a mode of action in relation to a recurrent social situation. They attempt to persuade by clarifying the situation, by giving it a name, thus indicating that the problem has arisen before and that past practice has come up with workable solution (P121).

This shows that proverbs can be used in solving problems. For instance the listener can identify the difference between the literary meaning and its context. Then after that the listener should elaborate that meaning by

interpreting the proverbs, and two ideas which are contrasting can appear. These kinds of contrasting ideas can lead to producing new idea. This new idea allows the proverbs to be used by the listener to solve problems in order to reach what the speaker intended as a meaning.

3.8.3.The Conceptual Metaphor View

Finnegan (1970) states that, "Most frequent of all, however, and the most adaptable are the proverbs where compression is evoked metaphorically". (P.396). in this view the proverb meaning seems to be understood in terms of another situation. This shows the importance of the proverbs because they describe things in terms of another thing and this lets the people develop critical thinking ability in giving their ideas on some issues which are needed to be discussed. For instance, the proverb like, "love is blind" makes us to understand that these two things are compared as they are identical and initiates people to think critically to find the meaning.

Wilson(2010) states that, the essential principle is that, the utterance could have been expressed literally, and basically, a metaphor is another way of delivering the same meaning".

This shows the various purposes of proverbs. The main concern of the concept of metaphor here is that, proverbs should not be used as a technique to solve a problem. But they should be understood by their specific conceptual knowledge which is structured in the form of metaphor. Here the point is that, the capacity of understanding what a proverb provides is based on the metaphorical scheme in relation to our daily thoughts or activities. This view stands contrary to what ECBT states about the understanding of the proverbs. The conceptual metaphor view regards the proverbs as they are deeply embedded in the culture of the people and they are understood based on their metaphorical mapping status. Therefore, proverbs are interpreted as the

mechanism to provide evidence in relation to our everyday activities in metaphor which are already experienced in the culture.

Therefore, the researcher has used the two theories that is the extended conceptual base theory and the conceptual metaphor views in analyzing the selected Nuer proverbs. These two theories are chosen because their concepts on proverbs understanding is related to what is found in the selected Nuer proverbs.

Chapter Four

The Analysis of the Nuer Proverbs

This chapter deals with the analysis of the selected fifty two Nuer proverbs. They are categorized in to ten based on their functions for which the Nuer community uses them like: poverty, wisdom, war, morality, status of the death, capability, discouraging bad behavior, discouraging cowardice, role of God and good fortune. They are also analyzed by using the concepts of the two theories which are mentioned in chapter three. That is, the extended conceptual base theory and the conceptual metaphor view on proverbs

I. Proverbs on Poverty

1. Cióók ε ηκκκ

A leg is a female

This proverbs is used to indicate that, when every there is poverty or whenever the people feel hungry for a certain period of time, they need to go to somewhere that they could get food or something they could eat. They use it because among them there might be some people who could not believe that going somewhere to find food without knowing whether food is available, is something important. However, when they use this kind of proverb it encourages them to go to the place and hoping that there will be something which will benefit them. In this proverb a female is compared to a leg because in Nuer culture female are seen as a source of getting income. This proverb has nature of metaphor in a way that it encourages thinking on the compared two things. In this case, this proverb has a very great role to encourage people to go and find what should be eaten instead of sitting without doing anything during poverty or hunger.

2. /ci cióók ε doth

A leg does not remain where people go.

This proverb is used to empower the people during poverty so that they could go somewhere to find food and even if they will not get food no one will die there. They use it as a technique to encourage themselves to go to where ever they could get food. That means, if they go to first place and no food is available, they could find other options. That is, they could go to other places until they find the amount of food they want. This kind of proverb is very important in the Nuer community. It encourages everyone in the society to hope that when every there is poverty or when everyone is hungry he could go to so many different places searching for food that he should eat. The another function of this proverb is that, it energizes people to understand that food could not be attained easily or at once. That is they can believe that when ever, there is no food, they have to face many challenges for searching food, which will not harm them much. Thus, this proverb is very useful because it can help people to be strong during the poverty or when there is no food.

3. Jic ε Jón kuɔth

Stomach is a God's box

This proverb is used to communicate the message that, only God can worry about what should be eaten. It is always used to advise children by the time that there is no food to be given to them. This indicates that it is used as a means to show that the problem can be solved by God. This kind of expression is used because Nuer believes that only God can feed human being. This proverb reflects their religious beliefs that nothing can happen without God's knowledge. It is used when people have no food or something to eat and they don't have any option. Because of this, they have no hope, and leave everything to God. It encourages people to know that there is God in times when they face serious problem.

4. /ci run dial ε bak kεɛl

All years do not manifest the same conditions

In this proverb the point that is conveyed is that, every year has its own condition. That is, if a person face economical problem this year, he will recover it next year. This is used to advise people who have shortage of food or economic problems. In general it makes people hope that they will improve their economics in the coming year. The importance of this expression is that, it enables the people to believe that, there will be a change that is, they may lose all the properties that they have for certain times and there will be a time that they could get all of these properties. This proverb is used by considering the past experience

It also discourages the people who consider themselves as rich and feel that they are important than those who have low economic because their properties might be lost due to unpredictable circumstances.

Most of the time, this kind of proverb is told to those who are the head of the family because they are the people who care for others.

5. Buɔ th thiεlεjε ciɔk

Poverty has no legs

This proverb is used to mean that there is a time for people to cope up with poverty or shortage of food. And this could be done by working hard. In other words, it is to indicate that if we work hard we will be able to solve problem. This kind of proverb is used because there may be some people who may feel that whenever there is poverty or shortage of food, there would be no thing that could stop it. Because of this, it is used to stop that belief, from the people and convey the idea that, poverty has no legs. That is, if we work hard it will not follow us because it has no legs.

Its positive implication is that, it initiates the whole community to develop self confidence to work hard and become independent because they understand that if a person works hard he/she becomes rich and he/she will not face economical problems again. It mainly influences those who are lazy to work hard and fight against the poverty. Because of this, it is very important techniques to be used in order to make the whole society rich by ordering the people to work hard.

This kind of proverb is used by elders most of the times in order to tackle the idea that may appear among the young people which discourage them to work hard during the poverty because they have no enough experience in facing problems. In this case, this expression is used as a guide which shows the ways of becoming a rich person by working hard.

6. Буџћ куиџе њџак

Poverty does not know any thing

The meaning of this proverb is that, when man feels hungry he/she acts as a person who does not know anything even though he is a mature person. Nuer community uses this kind of proverb to indicate that the respected person can do what is not expected from him/her because of hunger. However, if he/she is not hungry he /she cannot do it. Due to this, they understand that, it is the hunger or poverty that leads people to crime. They say that poverty or hunger does not know anything. This kind of proverb is always used by elders to show that the crime committed in this case, is not intentionally made. It is used as a means of persuading the bad thing that is done by the respected person as he/she is not doing it intentionally. In other words, it is to show that this is not the normal behavior of people.

In this proverb the poverty is personified. This shows the way in which this proverb make people reflect their ideas in searching for its meaning.

In general using this proverb is to indicate that poverty or hunger can let normal or respected person do what is not good. For instance, he/she may steal another person's property, he/she may also eat what is not usually eaten by people, and he/she may show the behavior which is not acceptable. What the society learns from this proverb is that poverty makes people eat what they do not usually eat. There may be change in their thoughts and physical appearance. Because of this, it is impossible to generally approve that it is their permanent behavior. Therefore, there will be a change after they overcome that problem. Thus this kind of proverb is used to make the society aware of the badness of poverty. On the other hand, they know that poverty is not always the cause of bad behavior.

7. Thiεε buθh wat

Hunger has no relative

This proverb which uses personification shows that a person who is hungry should be given something to eat. This is traditionally used to ensure that all human being are the same even though they are different in their language or color. Based on this, when you see any person suffering from hunger even though he/she is not your relative you should give him food. This kind of proverb has very great function in the society. It increases the cooperation with other people and can induce them to share what they have and eat together during poverty or hunger . That is, it initiates the point that when we face poverty, we have to love one another and forget conflicts among us. In other words, it encourages unity in the society during the poverty or hunger. That is, it ensures the forgiveness between those who have conflict. It is used to unite people to fight against the poverty or hunger. This type of proverb is always used by elders in Nuer community to address the young people that whenever there is poverty or hunger, we have to leave all conflict among us and see how we could overcome or defeat the major enemy which is poverty or hunger.

8. Tek puɔtɛ can

Being alive defeats poverty

This proverb is used to show that, if you are alive even if you do not have something in your hand, you can get some things that may let you defeat the poverty. Most of the times this proverb is used by elders to advise the young people who have nothing in their hands in order to let them understand that they are still young and they have so many opportunities to get a lot of things that help them in their life. It is also used in general in Nuer community as a whole to advise any person who face economical problem. The usefulness of this proverb is that it shows that being a live is more important than death even though you have nothing to eat. For instance, there may be some people who prefer to die when they have nothing to eat for a long time. Then, this proverb is used to advise them not to choose death as the only option by showing them the importance of being alive. Besides this, it also shows the value of life as it is something that makes you see or get something which you could not get if you die. More over it initiates the idea that, people should be happy that they are alive. Based on this situation, this proverb is used as a tool to make people feel free while they don't have something in their hands hoping that being a life is the only thing.

9. Nyal ɛmiäth

A girl is a source of food

The theme of this proverb is that, a girl is a means of getting income. The Nuer people associate this kind of proverb with their marriage system. That is, if a man wants to marry a girl he should prepare twenty-five cows to be given to the girl's family. Based on this, they say if you have girls you will be a rich man. This proverb opposes the traditional view of Nuer that females are not in the same stage with males. Using this proverb to indicate that people become rich because of a girl, everyone needs to have a girl or girls in the community. It is actually

seen that those who have girls and let them marry they don't suffer any more because they have enough cows in their home.

This proverb also extended its meaning in a way that not only the twenty five cows that are given to the girl's family, but also when there is poverty or any kind of problem, the girl or her husband or her husband's relatives can take something they think could solve the problem from her home to her parents. In this way, this proverb is useful way to show the girl's importance during the poverty or in any situation in general.

10. Buɔth laa dhóóce baŋ.

Hunger quarrels without reason

In this proverb personification is used to express that when a person feels hunger he becomes aggressive, but when a person eat enough food he becomes happy and laughs. This proverb is used by elders in order to empower the young people that, hunger does not last long after you eat some food. This expression is used as a means to make the young people aware of that condition. This serves as a mechanism which is used to avoid fighting with a person without knowing its roots. Most of the time it is applied on children. For instance, when a child does not eat anything early morning and if another child touches her or him he can be aggressive. If this child understands that, he is quarrelling because he did not eat anything he laughs at him and ask forgiveness.

In this case, Nuer community uses this proverb to avoid any conflict which is created because of this kind of condition. Because of this, this proverb is very important that it can help to avoid conflict when a person shows sign of aggression while he is hungry. Therefore, it let people to be aware of the bad consequences of poverty.

II. Proverbs on wisdom

11. Mi läti mi Jiääk läti Jε kä rɔ kä mi läti mi gɔaa läti jε kä rɔ

If you do bad thing it is for you and if you do good thing it is for you

This proverb which uses parallelism is used to show that, people always used to decide something bad against another person. Traditionally, in Nuer community there was a mad man. One day he came across one village while he was hungry. Then some people decided to kill him by giving him food which they poisoned. When they gave him this kind of food, he took it and tried to run away. While he was running, the children of those people followed him. Then he sat down and waited for them. When the children came to him he gave them the food which was poisoned by their fathers. The children ate the food, but the mad man did not eat that food. After some hours, the children died. Then the mad man said if you do a good thing it is for you and if you do a bad thing it is for you. In this situation, the people decided to kill the mad man while they don't have any conflict with him. But they were punished by their bad deed. The Nuer community uses this proverb to ensure themselves that if a person decides to create a problem on another person, he will face a problem. Based on this condition the significance of this proverb in the society is that it encourages the positive aspects of being honest. In other words, it enables the community of Nuer as a whole to be rational in doing things which may damage some people.

12. εthót muɔl yieer

It is pulling the donkey to the river.

This kind of proverb is used to mean that something is very difficult like taking the donkey in to the river. As it is known that donkey does not know how swimming, when you try to pull it to the river, and cross the river it could be difficult. Because of this in Nuer society when a person finds something which is beyond his capacity, he can say that it is pulling the donkey in to the river.

In this condition, the function of metaphor is seen in this proverb as there is something which is compared to the pulling the donkey to the river.

This proverb most of the time is used by elders. This kind of saying is important in a way that it encourages the people to know what is difficult for them to do and enables them to classify their jobs based on their capacity. In other words, it is useful in the society because it encourages people to balance their capacity with the work that they do. Therefore, this kind of saying is very essential as it provides the knowledge that everyone in the society could understand what he/she can do and avoid what is impossible for them to do.

13. ciJal kət jek

The guest gets wings

This proverb is used most of the time by elders especially females. Here the theme is that when the guest comes to live in one area for some time, and he tries to act as if he is a person who is born in that village, they use to say it. This kind of proverb is very important in a way that, it initiates the society to understand that whenever the guest comes to live in the village he can not be afraid of acting as those who were born in the village. It also initiates a person to be a member of that village. That is it encourages the society to know that, a guest could not be a guest forever in the village where he lives in. Therefore, this kind of proverb is very important in encouraging people to have confidence where ever they live as guest. In this condition, the wings are placed in terms of having confidence. This reveals that, this proverb is metaphorically expressed.

14. Nyaŋ ɛpiny kɛ bith

A crocodile is hidden with spear

This proverb is used to ensure that what is said as the fact, it is not the fact. But there is something behind. This proverb is used most of the time when there is discussion on issues relating to the conflicts resolution. For instance

when people discuss the issues on conflict resolution, one side may not tell the fact. That is, may cheat the other side by saying that I forgive all disputes caused by you or it may say, let leave out the conflict between us before while it does not mean it. If the another side understands that they don't actually mean it, they can use this proverb in the absences of those people. This is always used by the elders to show that let us be ready the conflict is not yet resolved. This kind of proverb is very helpful because it enhances the understanding of people who are supposed to resolve the conflict that, the conflict is not yet resolved. In other word, it initiates people to understand that what has been discussed did not reach the conclusion that we want without gather themselves and discuss it that, the conflict is not yet resolved. This proverb enables people to be wise and understand the issues quickly during discussion.

15. /Caa cuac kɛ kɛɛt kɛl

He/she cannot be driven with one stick

Nuer people use this proverb to mean that this person cannot keep his words. That means what he/she said will not be true tomorrow. He can change his/her ideas or his/her promise. Most of the time this proverb is used by the elders to ensure that this kind of a person is not good or to make awareness in a way that there are some people in the society who do not keep their words. That means they can change their mind quickly after they promise people to do something important for them. Because of this, people have to take care of this people and they cannot imitate the behavior of these people. In other words, this kind of proverb plays an important role in the society in a way that it shows the badness of the people who are not believed in what they said. Therefore, this proverb is more helpful in society because it enables the people to understand the badness of the dishonesty and makes them wise in judging people's speech.

16. Rót guεkε puule

Every frog is crying in its hole

The message that should be obtained from this proverb is that, everyone is respected at his home. That is everyone has power in his or her own position. This is most of the time used to ensure that every one has the ability. It is also used by individuals to show that everyone has the ability to rule or to lead or to fulfill the criteria which are needed for the leadership. Nuer people consider this expression as very important because it encourages everyone in the society to feel that he/she should be given some responsibilities in the communities. Due to this, everyone can develop some strategies which could help him in seeing some situation whenever he got a chance to be chosen as a head of a small group of people in the community. Based on this, a person can use his/her responsibility wisely. This type of proverb increases the interest of being a head of small group of people in the community. Because of this, it encourages active participation in the community as a whole. Therefore, this proverb is very useful in initiating people to learn how to take responsibility.

17./ci Jiók εguiiy ni baŋ

A dog does not bark without reason

This proverb is used to mean that everyone can quarrel based on what he or she sees as a problem. The meaning is that, in Nuer community there are dogs which are used to protect goats, sheep and cows from evening up to morning. In this way, if a dog barks at night or in the evening every one can understand that there is a hyena or other things or people who are walking around. Based on this, a person cannot interfere in to the quarrel which he/she does not know its roots cause, instead he/she should know the cause of it first. And then after that if there is a need for interference a person can interfere. This kind of proverb is very essential in Nuer community because it enables a person to be tolerant when there is anything which happens to him/her. This is because he/she can understand that the person who is quarreling with him

might have some reason. Because of this, this proverb acts as an advice to solve some problems. In this way, what people can learn from this proverb is that whenever something happens to them or when a person quarrels with them, they could not be hurry to take bad action before they see what causes the quarrel. Therefore, this proverb is very important because it makes people to take actions wisely, and makes them free from blame.

18. Cam Luth Juäle

A lung fish eats its tail

This kind of proverb is most of the time used when a person marries a girl and completes the paying of twenty-five cows, and after a while if a girl's family move to his own place or village to live together with him because of some problem happened to them. This could be the death of males people which could annoy females to leave their previous place. If this happens, the husband can control all the cows or cattle which are found in girl's family because there is no man who is mature to take responsibility for their cattle and other things. Therefore, while he is taking care for all things he can use to take some cattle for his own benefit. This could be the cattle that he has paid as dowry or other cattle from the girl's family. This shows that he is using his own property to solve his problem. This proverb is essential because it encourages everyone in the society to show honesty when his wife's family comes to live with him due to some problem happens to them because he may use some of their property for his own needs.

19. /caa yier döth gat

A child could not be stopped from breast feeding because of what is believed to be found in a river.

This kind of proverb is used to ensure that, in Nuer community when one gives birth to a child, the child can be breast fed until three years. Then when they want to let him stop feeding from his/her mothers' breast, it is because the wife

and husband need to have another child. Due to this, they prepare something like a cow that gives milk. That is the milk of this cow should be given to the child that is suspended from breast feeding. After that, they can have sex until the wife becomes pregnant with the second child. Thus, it is very difficult for a person who has no cow to stop his child from feeding on his/her mother's breast. Among Nuer community there are also some people who are good at fishing. Sometimes those people may not have enough cows. Because of this they may prefer to suspend their children from breast feeding because they believe in river that they use to fish fishes. However, sometimes they may not get any fish from the river. Due to this, it is thought that it could be a problem because if a person suspends his child from breast feeding because of the river, one day or some days he may not get fish from the river and the child can face some problems. Hence, the significance of this proverb is that, it encourages the society to understand that one cannot believe in something unknown or what is partially known, such as the river in this case. This proverb is used as away to be free from the problem.

20/ci yaŋ guaath dɛ apäl

A cow does not leave its position

This is used to indicate that, in the Nuer culture, cattle are considered as the main source of their life for so many reasons. In their traditional life there are some people who have more cattle and there are some who don't have more cows. Thus, there is a time when those who have more cows may face a problem that may destroy the cattle they have. Because of this, they say this proverb hoping that they will get more cattle a gain in the near future because they have a large number of cattle before. This kind of proverb is most of the time used by elders to ensure that if the cattle are lost for some reason there will be some possibilities to get that again. Therefore, this kind of proverb is very helpful in the Nuer society because they believe that if they lose their cows

they will get them again. The proverb induce the people to be optimistic. It is also an advice to solve the problem.

21. Yaŋ ε nhiäm wiäc

A cow is hair of the head

This metaphorical expression is normally used to indicate that, in Nuer traditional life people consider the cow as a thing which should face the problem that was about to happen to the people naturally. Because of this, whenever cow dies due to accident or other natural death or is killed by someone or taken away by an animal like the lion, they say the problem that happens to the cow was about to happen to the owner of the cow. Because of this, they say the cow is hair of head. Which means there will be another cow which may be found in the place of the cow that is lost. This kind of proverb most of the time is used by elders in the Nuer community. They use it in order to ensure that, everyone should not be worried when ever his or her cow dies of any kind of death. He/she should understand that this problem was about to happen to him/herself. Moreover he/she should know that getting a cow is not something difficult. It is like the hair on the head because the hair is not lost forever on the head. Thus, this kind of proverb is very essential because it provides the people with the idea that they are better than that cattle, and cattle is not lost forever because they may get the cattle from their relatives or by using other mechanism to get cattle.

22./caa lɔc wutä lak

A man's heart cannot be washed

The message of this proverb shows that in Nuer community man is considered as a one who is stronger and more powerful and is knowledgeable unlike the woman. Because of this, they said what man knows, he could not tell to other fully. There should be something which he should leave for himself a lone. In other word it is to mean that, man does not tell all things that he knows. There

should be some secrets that he should keep for himself alone. Most of the time this proverb is used by elders mainly females. This is because females believe that man is very important in the Nuer community. If he has no secret for himself, he may lose his confidence and he may act as a woman.

For instance, whenever there is a problem in the community, men can act to solve the problem as they know that it is not something serious. Based on their attitudes toward the problem that happens, the women can stop worrying about the problem and start their normal work. This is because they think that men know everything and may be they know the cause of the problem and its solution.

Thus, this proverb enhances mutual understanding whenever there is a problem which makes people act as they are dying. It is also to be used as an option for solving a problem.

23. Thiεε waŋ Jää

An eye is out of a guest

This kind of proverb is used to express that, traditionally, in Nuer culture if one goes to another place, in that place he should be considered as a guest. In this condition, what is expected from him/her is being patient even though he has not been patient before. In the same way, the members of that home can give him/her everything like food, alcohol, cigarette and so on freely without paying any thing. As he/she is getting all of these services he/she can feel happy. However, even though he/she is happy, he/she could not help seeing everything in that area including the physical appearance of those people. For instance he/she may see something which should not be seen by a guest. Based on this situation, Nuer people indicate that even though you don't want the guest in your house to see what is important, he/she can see it because his eyes are out of his/her control. Most of the time this proverb is used by elders because they are the concerned bodies who welcome guests and give them any

kind of services which are convenient for them. This proverb is very useful as it reminds people that they should keep their home neat, clean and attractive and be hospitable to guests who are coming to their home. This is because most of the time guests in Nuer society see the weakness and the strength of the home where they take rest on their Journeys, and they expose all these things to the rest of the society. If they find good things they can even decide to marry one girl from that home or their relatives. If the guests are female they can tell this to their male relative to marry a girl from that family. Therefore, this proverb is useful in Nuer society because it advices people that they should keep their house clean.

24. Gat ε Jεn mat naath

A child connects husband and wife (people)

This kind of expression is used to indicate that in Nuer culture, one person can marry a wife that he did not understand her behavior or characters before. In this situation, they may get their first child. Then after that the wife may show some bad activities which are not convenient for her husband and her husband's family. Due to this they can decide to divorce the woman. But after they decide this, they can see the child and the idea may come in to their minds that how can we divorce this lady while she gives us a child. So this is our child. He or she should connect us with her or his mother even though his or her mother is bad. Because of this, they can forgive all mistakes made by the lady. Whereas if the lady has not given birth to any child, there would be no any kind of forgiveness. In the same way, if the husband misbehaves while they have a child with his wife, the lady's family can forgive him. This kind of proverb most of the time is used by elders to advise the two couple whenever they see that there is a conflict which may reach the point that the two couple can divorce. It is important because it creates a new relation between the two couple and their families. It also shows that a child is very important in society. Therefore, this proverb initiates the couple to see the child as being more

important than them and they should not divorce. It also shows the wise way of letting the child lives with his parents.

25. Yaŋ ɛjɛn cak naathɔ

Cow creates a human being

This type of proverb is used to say that a cow is a means to get a wife and have children. This is because the Nuer marriage system is based on cattle. That is, if you have twenty- five cows you can marry a wife that can give birth to more children. In this way, the source of these children is cattle. That is why they say the cow is the source of human beings. This proverb is most of the times used by the elders in Nuer community to let their children keep the cattle in a very good way. The implication of this kind of saying is that, it initiates the concept that everyone in the society can decide to find out how the cow is useful in getting something that could benefit people. Based on this, everyone can develop some strategies to get cows in order to have wife or another thing else. Due to this condition, the community can develop life skills in a better way. This is mainly applicable among the young people in Nuer community. Its another great role is that, if everyone in society is exercising in the way that is mentioned above, the community as a whole can build capacity and everyone becomes rich. In fact this proverb is very important in Nuer culture because the life of Nuer is based on the cattle.

26. Jic /ciɛ wat

A man's/woman's stomach is not his/her relative

The Nuer people use this proverb to mean that, a person can give birth to a child that could not act as his/her behavior. In other words, it is used to indicate that, a person can give birth to a child that could not resemble his/her behavior while he want his/her child to behave like him or like her. Because of this, he/she may be disappointed when his or her child misbehaves. This kind of saying is most of the time used by elders that is

females and males. The value of this proverb is that, it ensures the point that a respected person can get a child who is not like him/her. Because of this, he/she cannot ignore other people who always display unacceptable behavior instead he/she should advise them as his/her child. This increases the positive aspects of the society in relation to the tolerance and empathy. However if that thing does not appear in the society the tolerance might not be manifested in the society. This is because the honest people cannot tolerate the behavior of those who are disturbers. This proverb is used to mean that people are different everywhere. No one can act as the way you can even your child acts in way that is not yours. Therefore, this proverb is very important because it acts as an advice and initiates the cooperation in the community as a whole.

27. ε miäth ḡpaari

It is a eating beans.

This proverb is used most of the time by elders. They use this proverb to mean that, in Nuer traditional culture there are things which are considered as are very easy when people engage themselves to do them. Among them one thing that they considered as a very easy when they do it, is when they eat beans. They say that when someone eats this kind of vegetable, there is nothing which he feels. Moreover, you do not take a time to chew the beans. Because of this whenever, Nuer people want to show something which is very easy to do, they say this proverb. This kind of proverb is very important as it indirectly instructs people that they should not worry about the difficulties that they may face when doing something in Nuer traditional way of life. So eating beans implies that people should take things easy. Therefore, it is used as a technique to deal with danger things.

III. Proverbs on waging war

28. Lawec ε מזר חטת חכט

A village is kept by younger

This proverb is used to mean that, young people in Nuer community have power. This should be physical and mental power. Traditionally, Nuer people do not believe in soldiers that could protect them. They believe only the power of their young people. Because of this, young people are considered as protectors who could protect their village from any enemy who comes to attack them in their village. In this condition, all young people in the community can develop some strategies that let them to be good fighter against their enemies. For instance, traditionally when Nuer fought with other tribes or when the fighting occurs among them, young people are always expected to be in the forefront of war. This is because they are the people who should be concerned with war. Elders are needed to follow them and direct them by showing them the way they should fight. In short, this proverb encourages the young people to fight so that no one can take their village or their areas by force. This type of proverb is most of the time used by elders to encourage young people. The implication of this proverb in the society is that, it encourages the younger people in Nuer community to stand strongly against their enemies. In other words, it makes the young people to fight against their enemies in order to protect their village. Thus this proverb is used as a means to the problem.

29. ε κέwi/caa wec päi rεw

Gazelle said, the village could not be left because of the lack of water to drink.

This proverb basically reflects the traditional system of Nuer living status. That is during dry season they move to where they could get enough water, but Gazelle cannot go to where people move to get water. It stays there until people return back in summer season. Based on this, the Nuer community takes this proverb knowing that the village could not be left because there is no water to drink. Most of the time, this proverb is used by elders especially females. This is because they want to energize all males in the community in a way that, they should act or fight in the war by considering the characters of that animal (Gazelle). In other words, this proverb encourages the idea that, even though the fighting is about to defeat the Nuer People they could not leave their land. It also encourages the people in Nuer community who are chased from their land by other people during the war, to return to their land. Therefore, this kind of proverb becomes important because it makes the whole community fight bravely for their land.

30./caa yaη naη baah εthiεl κερεδεw

A cow should not be taken without firing bullet

This proverb is used to mean that, the cow is very important for the life of Nuer people. Because of this, it should not be taken without full reason or fighting. This is because Nuer people traditionally invested their wealth on cattle. Thus, they believe that the cow is more important than human being some times. For instance, if one comes and wants to take their cow without any reason, they prefer to die. In this situation, they developed the idea that, anything which comes to take the cows, it should kill the man first and then after it should take it. Based on this situation, they believe that anything which need the cow to take it to some areas, either government or wild animal like lion or other

tribes that come and take cow away into the bush, we should fight with them. In this case, the importance of this proverb in Nuer society is that it encourages anyone in the community to protect their cows so that they will not be taken by the another person without fighting him. It also enriches the strategies of keeping the one's property. Therefore, this proverb makes people strong to stand against any kind of problem.

31. Wic tuɲɲ la jε a giik wääth

In the war the ends of the lines must be given to those who are braver

This kind of proverb is stand in the position that those who bravely fight in the war should be at the end of the lines in the war. This is because traditionally when Nuer people fought with others people or among themselves, first they divide the positions. In this division there should be some people who will be assigned in the middle of the war and some will be in the left and right side. In this condition, the ends of the left and the right side must be given to those who are braver and good fighters or who do not step backward without any information from their elders. This is because when these two sides are given to those who are cowards, when the war starts they can step back soon and this lets those who are in the middle to be afraid of fighting. It also makes them to be defeated. They let these two sides to be strong because they believe that if these two sides are not defeated, even if their middle is defeated the people who defeated their middle would be afraid to follow them because they think that the two sides will come after them and kill them. This kind of proverb is essential in a way that, it enables the whole community to be braver in order be appointed at the end of the two lines. Thus, this proverb is used to advise people to overcome the problem.

32.wut ɛley

Man is animal

This metaphorical expression is used to mean that man's activities are the same as the activities of an animal. In other words, it is used to mean that man is as strong as an animal. Traditionally Nuer people experienced that in fighting, if one person is wounded while his people have not known that he has been wounded, he could hide himself. When the fighting ends and the people return to their villages, it could be reported that he has been killed, but we did not get his body. On the next day his people can go back to find him in the place where the war took place the day before. They may get him alive. Based on this, they can say that man is an animal. This kind of proverb most of the times is said by females to show the strength and bravery of the males. Based on this condition, the usefulness of this expression is that, it encourages all people in the Nuer community to understand that even if they are wounded during the fighting they have to act as strong as an animal. Therefore, it is very important because it enhances bravery.

33.Wut ɛ cäth diæɛt

Man is the waste product of bird

This proverb which uses metaphor shows that man can die everywhere. The Nuer people traditionally believe that, man is born to die first, before woman. They also believe that there is no specific place for man to die. But most of the time they prefer man to die in the war. This is because their culture allows them to understand that man is the protector of all things that he owned. Based on this, they do not want man to be afraid of saying that he will fight with the enemy even if he is not in his home land or even if he knows that he will be defeated or be killed. This is because the nuer people believe that man can die everywhere at any time. This shows they are ready at any time to die. Based on this they associate this with the bird's waste product because the

bird can leave their waste products anywhere. This kind of proverb most of the times used by all males in the Nuer community. They used this proverb when they are about to fight with other people in the place which is not their land. They use this to be braver and to enable them avoid fear of being defeated. This expression is very important because it makes everyone in the society to fight bravely at any time in any place that the problem occurs. Therefore, it is very useful in a way that it encourages people not to be afraid.

IV. Proverbs on morality

34.Cε Juäl muɔlkäp

He touches the tail of the donkey

Here it indicates that, a person creates a very serious problem. In Nuer community it is commonly known that no one can touch the tail of the donkey. If one touches it, the donkey can kick him back ward, and he may die. Because of this, everyone in the society cannot do it. Hence, if one makes a very big crime in the society it is compared to touching the donkey's tail. This kind of proverb is most of the time used by the elders to let it be known by other people. For instance, this proverb is said when the person tries to fight with the leader, when he steals the property of another person, and so on. In short it is said that a person does something which is against the norm of the Nuer culture. Therefore, this proverb is important because it teaches people what is bad in the society More over, it gives the awareness to the Nuer people not to create a problem. That is it is an advice which makes everyone free from the problem.

35.Cε wum mök thuεy

He touches the nose of Buffalo

In this proverb the theme is that, the person creates a big problem on the person who is a well known fighter or braver. He may do this in the form of

killing his relative, taking his cow and the like. As Nuer people know that Buffalo is braver, when they go for hunting, they carefully attack them by hiding themselves in a place where they could not be seen by Buffalo. Thus, if one person tries to create problem on the person who is braver like buffalo, they expose the action of this person by expressing that 'he touches the Nose of the Buffalo' because they know that the nose of Buffalo could not be touched by any person while it is alive. This kind of proverb is most of the time used by the elders that is males and females to show that it is something difficult. On the other hand, it shows that the person creates a big problem as it is discussed in proverb 34. In this proverb the buffalo is placed in terms of problem or braver. This shows its metaphorical expression.

36./Ci raan dak wecdian etook

Man cannot create problem in his village

In this expression the point is that, the people can respect their own village. This is based on the Nuer traditional culture that, if you create some problem which could let people fight, and separate, the blood of all people who will die in that fighting will be upon you. This kind of saying is most of the time used by elders in the Nuer community. It is very important in a way that, it teaches the society not to do something that let some people die. In this condition this kind of proverb is more helpful because it is used to advice people that they should not do anything that is against the norm. Therefore, it increases the way of minimizing the problem because everyone can keep himself a way from actions which cause the problem in a village

37./Caa raan näk dueel ran

A person cannot be killed inside the house

This expression is used to mean that a person who is inside the house cannot be killed because the house is another land. But if you do this, it should be considered that you do something which is out of the norm of the culture and one day there will be a problem which happens upon you. This kind of action or culture is actually practical even in the war. That is in the war if you defeat people and some of them hide themselves inside the house they could not be killed. It is applicable also even if a person kills your brother or your relative in front of you and immediately hides himself inside your house you must not kill him. This saying most of the time is used by young people and elders both males and females to reveal the badness of this situation if it happens. This kind of expression is very important because it can minimize the condition in which people kill themselves.

V. Proverbs on the status of death

38. Ci guæk dæ tool

His/her spoon has broken

This proverb is said to mean that the person is about to die. For instance, traditionally when people see a person in a way that he or she is about to die either natural death or any kind of death, they say this proverb. Meaning, God permits him to die. This kind of proverb is most of the times used by elders. It is used to let the people have an awareness that, they should understand how the person who is about to die look like and in what situation he/she is going to die. It is stated metaphorically as the spoon is placed in terms of life.

39./caa bi lak tuɔk

A food container will not be washed for him/her

This expression is used to mean that the person is going to die. For instance, traditionally up to now in rural areas, Nuer people keep food in the container. That is everyone has his or her own food container. This food container is always washed when people finished eating food and when the food is about to be put in it. Because of this, when a person try to do what he/she knows is danger for him, people use this kind of proverb as an advice to him or her; however, if he/she refuses he can die. This kind of proverb is most of the time used to tell to the children as an advice and as a way in which they should know or understand what may harm them. For instance, when children practice swimming in the river, if one child tries to practice swimming by going to the deep part of the river without getting support from a person who is bigger than him and knows swimming, he/she should be told that proverb. Therefore, this kind of proverb is very useful in socializing children, to warning them about what could happen to them if they accept the advice. It is also in the form of metaphor because the food container is placed in terms of life.

40. Ci kuoth εkan

God took him/her

This kind of expression is used to refer to the death of a person who dies because of lightening when the rain is raining, or it is used to refer to the building which is destroyed by lightening during the rain. They use this because of the traditional thinking that when it rains, there are some small gods that guide, the rain. Because of this, those small gods may take some thing. This should be a person, building or animals which are found in the building. This kind of saying is most of the time used by elders to ensure that gods has power in the rain to kill any thing. They don't even bother much about the things which are destroyed or person who died in that situation.

Because of this, it is used as a technique to make the death simple. Therefore, it encourages the people to know that people's life is in the hand of God.

VI. Proverbs on capability

41. Ci ham nɛɛni del

Our thighs become strong.

This kind of expression is used to show that our body becomes strong and we could not care or afraid of anything that may attack us either physical power or oth things. This kind of saying is most of the time used by the youth in the Nuer culture to ensure that, they are mature enough. For instance, when they are still little boys or girls, their elders brothers or sisters treat them in such a way that they show their physical power to them. This could be by punishing them for small mistakes or for no reason. In this situation, the children keep this kind of treatment in their minds. When they reach the maturity stage, and they get physical power to fight with any person they take revenge. Therefore, this proverb is very important because it encourages the self defense.

42. Yiee ramɔ kɛ wumɔ

Everyone is breathing with his nose

This proverb is used to means that a person becomes independent. This is expressed in a way that traditionally some people are considered as they don't have power in their physical, economical, and thinking ability. Because of this, these people consider themselves as they are not independent. However, after a certain time these people may become self-reliant in all respects. In this way, when people who ignored them before try to treat them as before, they use to say this proverb. Therefore, this kind of proverb is very important as it enables the person to actually beliefs on his or her capacity.

VII. Proverbs on discouraging bad behavior

43. ε muul

He/she is a donkey

This kind of saying is metaphorically expressed. Here it is not considered as an insult. It is used when a person is acting as if he/she has no self confidence for himself/herself. This is seen in a way that when a person needs to work in another person's home in order to get food or another thing. They use this kind of expression because the Nuer considered donkey as an animal which needs to work for human beings so that it will be given something to eat. They always say "I am not your donkey" whenever somebody wants someone to work for him much. That is he/she should understand that he/she is a human being. Therefore, it is very important in teaching self confident.

44. ε g ɔ ɔ k

He/she is a monkey

This kind of metaphor expression here it is not considered as an insult, it is used to mean that, the person does not want to cooperate with others financially. For instance, in Nuer culture everyone should share or give food or anything which is considered to be eaten or anything that must be given to another person for help. In this way, if one person does not want to help another person, they use to say it. This kind of saying is most of the time used by young people to ensure that the person is given the characteristics of monkey. That is, they consider monkey as an animal which does not want to help another animal. In this case, this kind of expression is very important in the society in a way that it enables everyone in the society to help one another in order to be free from that saying. Therefore, it initiates thinking ability or awareness to help one another.

45. Ciwidε leth

His/her mind is burnt

This expression is most of the time used to mean that, when a person uses to do things wrongly and people understand that he/she is doing thing wrongly because he is disappointed, they say that his head is burnt. It is always used by young people to ensure that the person is not in the right way of doing things. In this condition, it is very important as it is used as advice to people who always behave in that way in order to improve their behavior

VIII. Proverbs on discouraging cowardice

46. ε yak

He/she is hyena

This kind of metaphorical expression is used to mean that the person is coward. This is because in the traditional life of Nuer culture, hyena is considered as it fears of people. That is, it does not want to fight with anything that it knows it could harm itself. Just it needs only coming to the village secretly and takes the sheep and goats while people are sleeping. Thus, when a person tries to behave in that manner, that is when a person is seen to behave as he/she is afraid of fighting or another thing which is danger, he/she should be considered as a hyena. Therefore, it is very important because it induce people to have a courage whenever there is a problem.

47. ε ciek

He is a woman

This saying is used metaphorically to point out, that this man is acting as a woman when people are fighting. In other words, it shows that the person is coward. This is because traditionally females are considered as they are

cowards because they don't participate in the war. In this condition, it plays a very important role in a way that it discourages being coward in the society.

X. Proverbs on the role of God

48. ε raan kuɔ th

He/she belongs to God.

This kind of expression is said to convey the meaning that the person is very honest. The Nuer people used this kind of saying because traditionally they consider God as one Who is above all things. They say He is very honest. This expression is always used to ensure the honesty, and tolerance of person. Therefore, when a person start to act in that way, they use to say it. They don't even want to quarrel with him/her. In this situation, it is very important as it encourages the idea that God is very kind and we need to be like him. Therefore, this kind of saying is very important in encouraging everyone in the society to develop tolerance and to be honest. This makes people avoid conflict among themselves.

49/cuu diæɾ kuoth εthin

Don't worry God is there

This kind of expression most of the time is used to convince the person who faces some problems. This problem could be economical problem, or any other thing which is considered to be a problem. It encourages people to continue their life and hope that God will compensate what they lost. In other words, it is essential because it shows that God is above all things which are in the world. It teaches people to love and respect God. This initiates people to value what God does. It also encourages patience in the society. Therefore, this kind of saying is very important because it emphasizes that there is ultimate God who should be loved and obeyed.

50. ε guan yieeni

He/she is the owner of the spirit

This kind of expression is used to mean that the person fore gives everything which made by people wrongly to him/her. In other words, this kind of saying shows the kindness of the person. Based on this, Nuer people consider the person who is in that manner as he/she has good sprite because of his/her forgiveness. They say he/she is nearest to God. Therefore, this kind of saying is very important to develop the forgiveness in the society and minimize the conflict among people.

XI. proverbs on good furtune

51. Ci kuothε liεc

God sees him/her

The meaning of this saying is that when a person suffering in searching for something which is needed for life, and after a while, he/she gets it, people use to say this proverb. This kind of expression is very important in a way that it encourages people to focus on what they need for their life. Therefore this proverb reveals that the eyes of God are on the poor individuals who hoped they will be better.

52. ε guan baɲ ni

His/her body is full of chance

Here the theme of this expression is that, the person gets a good thing without suffering when he/she searches for it. They used it to mean that a person get this thing by chance. Thus, it is very important because it enables the people in the society to wait for their turn in getting the things which they need. Because of this, it avoids worrying as everyone can think has a chance to get that thing

Chapter Five

5. Conclusion and Recommendation of the Study

The conclusion and recommendation of the study are made as follows:

5.1. Conclusion

The findings of this study reveals that, Nuer proverbs play an important role in the Nuer community. They can be used as a mean to solve problems. That is for instance, when there is shortage of food for a certain time, People use them as a mean to develop a positive attitude towards their life. This is because elders in the society who have experienced a lot in facing different kinds of condition can tell the proverbs which are concerned with the way in which people could solve the problems. Elders use these proverbs to improve the life of people during the shortage of food or poverty in general.

Proverbs can provide wisdom in Nuer community. This is also found to be an important point in this study. Here the researcher finds that, Nuer proverbs are very essential in such a way that, they enable the community to be wise in their way of life. In the findings of this study, it is clarified that Nuer proverbs are used as a means to tackle some situation which is inconvenient wisely. In this condition the Nuer proverbs play an important role in the community as they enable the people to take action wisely in their decisions.

In this study, the researcher also finds it that Nuer proverbs could be used in the Nuer community as a way of encouraging people to fight for their land or areas. In this case, everyone in the Nuer community can understand it and develop courage even though he is not a courageous. Based on this, the community becomes powerful to fight in protecting their land. Therefore, proverbs which are used to encourage people to fight are very useful as they let people not to leave their land or other properties.

Another important issue that Nuer proverbs reflect is their morality in the society. Thus, the researcher finds that Nuer proverbs serves the Nuer community by showing things which reflect the norm of the society and things which are not needed to be done in the society. In general, they show the goodness and the badness of different things or conditions in the society. Here the proverbs are used to teach the society what the person does by his good or bad deed.

Another issue in Nuer proverbs which is considered as important is their being used to show the status of death of a person. They are shown in a way that they provide the different ways in which people die, and it is important to make awareness in the society about the status of the death of people.

Proverbs among the Nuer also provide information on the capability of people. Here the researcher finds that Nuer proverbs make people develop awareness about their individual.

In this study the role of the Nuer proverbs as a technique of discouraging bad behavior is also pointed out. Thus, proverbs which discourage the bad behavior are seen enhancing a positive attitude towards the people who have got bad behavior because those people need to correct their behavior.

Discouraging cowardice in Nuer proverbs is an important issue also. This is seen in a way that, the man is given the characteristics of animal which is fear of people or other things. This makes the man to be courageous.

The importance of proverbs also is seen by showing the role of God. This is carried out by saying the proverb which shows the God's role. That is when they recite the proverbs which indicate God's performance to show some action, they say it a long together with their traditional belief. In this condition the importance of the proverbs which show the activities of God in this study is found as they provide the idea that, God is above all.

Proverbs on getting a good fortune are also expressed in this study as they encourage people to wait for what God should give them and their turns.

Generally, Nuer proverbs play a great role in the society. This is seen in their social, economical, political and cultural values in the society. In this case, the researcher concludes that, Nuer proverbs have values in their content in a way that they enable the community to produce skill full and honest people.

5.2. Recommendations

In this study, the researcher found the some points to be applied in order to make the Nuer proverbs more applicable, and let their importance be known in the society.

- There should be some training which should be given to the society that is, those who are in the rural areas to increase their understanding about the importance of proverbs.
- The Nuer community intellectuals should conduct some trainings among themselves on the importance of proverbs. This can let them write them down in the books. Due to this everyone who is able to read can read them at any time he needs .In this condition, the Nuer proverbs could be presented through writing.

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APPENDEX (A)

Interview questions

Dear interviewee, the purpose of this interview is to gather information about the significance of proverbs in the Nuer society. Your responses are of considerable importance for the success of the study so you are kindly requested to give genuine response to the question. Thank you very much for your cooperation.

1. Would you mind to tell me your name?
2. Could you tell me something about Nuer culture?
3. Can you tell me what you know about Nuer proverbs?
4. What is the importance of these proverbs in Nuer community?
5. What is the role of elders in your community?
6. Can you tell me in what situations and for what purposes the Nuer community uses proverbs?
7. Who recites proverbs in the Nuer community?
8. What is the role of young people in the Nuer community?

APPENDEX B

List of people who were interviewed

No	Name	Age	Occupation
1	Chibuok Gatwech	60	Farmer
2	Chuol Gatkuoth	57	Farmer
3	Tutlow Both	56	Farmer
4	Gatwech Kuoth	62	Farmer
5	Wuchan Chol	55	Farmer
6	Gok Wiw	62	Farmer
7	Lual Thuok	60	Farmer
8	Tol Wiw	63	Farmer
9	Wujul Chol	56	Farmer
10	Gatluak Zew	63	Farmer
11	Dobuol Duach	55	Farmer

DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original work, it has not been presented for degree in any university and that all sources of materials used for the thesis have been acknowledged.

Name _____

signature

date

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