About the Book

This book is in honour of Adeleke Adelekan Fakoya, a Professor of Applied Linguistics, Educational Sociolinguistics and Cyber Discourse and one of the first and foremost scholars in Nigeria to rigorously interrogate Classroom Discourse. Professor Fakoya is a two-time head of the Department of English and a former Dean of the Faculty of Arts Lagos State University. Lefak, as he is popularly called by his students and admirers, have taught and mentored numerous students and scholars for over thirty years many of whom are making great strides in diverse fields of endeavour. The book contains peer-reviewed theoretical and applied papers in Professor Fakoya’s areas of research interest including Applied linguistics, Classroom Discourse, Interactional Pragmatics, the Interface of Language, Culture and Pragmatics, Discourse Analysis, English for Special Purposes, Language and Ideology, Computer-Mediated Discourse, Semiotics, Psycholinguistics and Multi-modality etc.
Applied Linguistics, Classroom Discourse and Interactional Pragmatics

A Festschrift for Professor Adeleke Fakoya

Edited By

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A Festschrift for Professor Adeleke Fakoya
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A Linguo-Metaphorical Analysis of Selected Nigerian Pidgin English Proverbs

Idowu Olubunmi (Prof.), Olabode, Adeyinka Ayoola & Ezekiel, Bolaji

Introduction

The study of metaphors significantly took a progressive dimension in the field of linguistics with the publication of “Metaphors We Live By” by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The seminal work emphasized the significance of metaphors to the human thought process. Su (2002) opined that metaphor, as a conceptual and experiential process, shape our world. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphor entails “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another”. Significantly, metaphor is strongly influenced by culture. Basso (1976) considered metaphor as a significant form of symbolic expression that highlights the relationship between language and culture. Words that are used and laced with metaphor may be different significantly across languages (Kovecses, 2010). Since language and culture could be regarded as two sides of the same coin, the influence of culture on the metaphorical use of language cannot be underestimated. As opined by Su (2002), metaphors highlight the human processes of thinking. It digs into the concepts of thought and language. Metaphor is the major process through which we visualize our day-to-day activity and express it in language (Su, 2002). It is a vehicle through which language moves and develops.

Turner and Lakoff (1989) have defined proverbs as “metaphoric in nature”. The resourcefulness of proverbs especially in the use of metaphors make them a significant linguistic resource. As opined by Faycel (2012), a large number of figurative meaning in proverbial utterances can be relatively understood through metaphors. Suffice it is to say that metaphors are a major element in proverbs. This is why proverbs have different meanings and it is context and culturally dependent. Many proverbs employ the use metaphor to pass their message across. According to Barasa and Opande (2017), proverbs are part of a given society and culture as they reflect the traditions, habits, norms and
values of such culture. Finnegan (1970) opined that proverbs are like folkloric metaphors and are not limited to specific domains of usage.

**Overview of Metaphor and Culture**

According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), cited in Kovecses (2010), native speakers of all languages employ quite a number of metaphors when they talk about the world. Such number of metaphors vary significantly across different languages. As put by Eder (2009), metaphor constitute a crucial and inherent part of culture. It is the ornamental use of language within a speech group. Since language is the vehicle that conveys the culture of a people and sets them apart from other speech groups, Basso (1976, p.117) opined that it is in metaphor, probably more dramatically than in any other form of symbolic expression, that language and culture meet. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) further highlighted the importance of metaphor in culture when they observed that "the people who get to impose their metaphor on culture get to define what we consider to be true...." This attests to the fact that we cannot do without metaphor. Metaphors are used to make sense of any complex phenomena.

The cognitive metaphor theory is of great relevance to any inquiry into the concepts of metaphor and culture. Many of the terms that we employ when talking about culture are abstract phenomena. Values, norms, time, emotion and so on are not tangible concepts. Metaphors are used to conceptualise these abstract entities.

**Nigerian Pidgin English**

The growth and development of Nigerian Pidgin English (henceforth, NPE) has been phenomenal over the years. According to Agbeyisi (1983), in Okon (2010), the language has become widely spoken in Nigeria. Izenose (2018) considers it as the language of the educated and the uneducated irrespective of their linguistic background. To buttress the assertion that NPE is not a sub-language, Ifechelobi and Ifechelobi (2015), opined that "Nigerian Pidgin has a unique linguistic structure and identity. It is dynamic and has evolved over time". It is a creative language that has its own very rich lexicosemantics and syntax. This accounts for its rich proverbs laced with metaphorical concepts. Ofuani (1981) called for the use of Nigerian Pidgin English in urban primary schools at the lower levels. This call is based on the fact that the language has become the mother tongue for most urban children whose parents are from mixed first languages (Idegbekwe, 2020).

Elugbe and Omamor (1991) have carried out one of the most outstanding studies on NPE. They focused on the origin, theories, vocabulary, syntax and prospect of NPE. The study showed that proverbs in the indigenous languages have a lot of similarities with proverbs in NPE. Some other studies have been done on the NPE proverbs. Ekundayo and Adeoti's (2011) work only looked at humor in NPE proverbs. Idegbekwe's (2020) study focused on anthropomorphism in NPE proverbs. The studies did not look at context as it affects meaning.
This paper is concerned with the investigation and analyses of the characteristics and purpose of metaphors in NPE proverbs. It is specifically concerned with the cross-domain mapping that metaphor is noted for and the context of usage.

**Theoretical Framework**

The perspective of this paper is based on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (henceforth CMT) by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 2003). The theory builds on the belief that metaphor is not just a decorative device in language but a conceptual tool for creating reality. Embedded in the field of cognitive linguistics which is an approach to the study of language, mind and sociocultural experience, it relates to the reasoning of one idea in terms of another. Metaphors are mappings across domains. According to Ehineni (2018), metaphors are founded on the conception of connectedness and relatedness. This assertion has to do with relating an experience from one aspect of life to another aspect. Lakoff (1992) opines that metaphor is not solely about language, but how we conceptualise one mental domain in terms of another. It is a fixed set of correspondence between entities in a source domain and entities in a target domain. In cross domain mapping, there is the primary domain on one hand and a secondary domain on the other. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) suggested that the primary domain is the source domain while the secondary domain is the target domain. They allow us to clearly understand a relatively abstract or unstructured subject in terms of a more concrete or structured subject. This shows that conceptual metaphor is both a process and a product. According to Kovecses (2010), the cognitive process of understanding a domain is the process aspect, while the ensuing conceptual pattern is the product aspect.

As stated, conceptual metaphor is useful in gaining an insight into complex ideas in very simple terms. It is employed in understanding abstract theories. Suffice to say that metaphors are prevalent in communication and as opined by Diegnan (2005) cited in Ehineni (2017), they are not ‘decorative’ but instructive. The major tenet of CMT is that metaphor is not just an aspect of language but a major part of human thought. This theory is hinged on conceptual metaphors which are part of the common language and conceptual rules shared by members of a culture. These metaphors share a correlation between the structure of the source domain and the structure of the target domain. They are recognizable because of the shared understanding between participants in the culture. These metaphors have become linguistic conventions because they are drawn from a collective cultural milieu. This accounts for why the definitions of many words and idiomatic expressions are dependent on knowledge of accepted conceptual metaphors.

**Methodology**

The NPE proverbs are the primary data for this study. Fifteen (15) NPE proverbs were analysed. They were collected through a survey method by personal observation and interactions with speakers of the language. The speakers include L1 users of the language in Ajeromi Ifelodun Local Council Development Area in Lagos state. The data were analysed in terms of how metaphors are deployed and the functions they perform in context.
The paper employed the phrase structure rule to analyse each of the proverbs and also investigated the structure of each proverb and identified the source and target domains since the notion of mapping across domains is central to metaphorical decoding (Lakoff, 1993).

Data Analysis

1. *No matter how hot your temper be, e no fit boil beans.*

   **Loose Translation:** Notwithstanding the hotness of your anger, it cannot boil beans

   | N: temper     | N: hot            |
   | V: be         | Det. (Pron) – your |
   | N: e (it)     | N: temper         |
   | Aux: no fit   | V: be             |
   | V: boil       | VP: N aux V NP    |
   | N: beans      | N: e (It)         |
   |               | Aux: no fit       |
   |               | V: boil           |
   |               | NP: beans         |
CONTEXT: This proverb is used to calm down fray nerves in the heat of an argument. It is used to highlight the fact that it is good to take things easy. It is always wise to 'jaw-jaw' than 'war-war'.

DOMAIN: The source domain—'boil' is mapped to the target domain 'temper' 'Boil beans' is used to foreground the attitude of anger.

Structure: The proverb is built on one dependent clause and one main clause. So, it is a complex sentence. The first part 'no matter how your temper be', is dependent while 'e no fit boil beans' is the main clause.

2. *Chicken wey run from Borno go Ibadan go still end up inside pot of soup.*

Loose Translation: A chicken that runs from Borno to Ibadan will still end up inside a pot of soup.

VP: V NP NP aux V NP
V → Rel. P. V (wey run)
NP → Prep. N
NP → Prep. N
aux → 'will'
VP → V. Prep
NP → pot of soup
CONTEXT: This proverb is used to explain the futility in running away from what is destined to happen. It confirms the maxim that one’s destiny can never be changed. What will be will be. It is used to encourage people to accept their fate and face whatever life offers.

DOMAIN: The source domain of food is mapped into the domain of human to point out the futility of running away from destiny.

STRUCTURE: The proverb contains one dependent clause and one main clause. The dependent clause is ‘Chicken wey run from Borno go Ibadan’. It is a complex sentence.

3. Akara and moin moin get the same parent, na wetin dem pass through make them different.

**Loose Translation:** Akara and moin moin are from the same parents, it is the process they passed through that makes them different.

```
NP → N conj. N
VP → V det. NP N VP Adv
V → get
det → the
NP – det. N (same parent)
N → na (it)
VP → Rel. pronoun pron. VP
Adv → make dem diff.
```
CONTEXT: The proverb underscores the fact that the beginning is not what matters but the end. This comparison helps to convey the fact that it is the result of efforts one puts in an endeavour that matters. No matter how one begins, the end should be the focus.

DOMAIN: The source domain of food 'Akara and moin moin' is mapped into the target domain of result to emphasise that the end justifies the means.

STRUCTURE: The proverb has two independent clauses. So, it is a compound sentence joined by a comma. 'Akara and moin moin get the same parent' is the first main clause while the second part 'na wetin dem pass through make dem different' is the second.

4. *Awoof dey run belle.*

**Loose Translation:** Free things can disturb the stomach.

NP → Awoof

VP → aux v np

aux → dey

V → run

NP → belle

CONTEXT: The proverb is used to warn of dangerous consequences of not being contented. It is used to point to the fact that one should be satisfied with what one has. Contentment is a virtue that can save one from danger.

DOMAIN: The source domain of human body part is mapped into the target domain of human insatiable nature. The proverb is used to conceive human insatiable nature as dangerous and could pose a problem.

STRUCTURE: The proverb contains only one clause. It is a simple sentence. It has the subject-verb-object structure. ‘Awoof’ is the subject, ‘dey run’ is the verb while ‘belle’ is the object.
5. *Craze no hard to form, na the trekking be wahala.*

**Loose Translation:** To display madness is not hard to act out, it is the roaming about that is the problem.

NP – Craze
VP → VP  VP  np
VP → no hard to form
V → na
VP → det. V
det. → the
V → trekking
np → V  np
V → be
n → wahala

**CONTEXT:** The proverb is used to highlight the fact that things or issues should not always be taken at the surface level. It is always good to take a deeper look at issues before jumping into conclusions. Not all things are as easy or free as they look. It underscores the necessity of viewing issues critically before taking a decision.

**DOMAIN:** The source domain of human activity is mapped into the target domain of mental state to warn of the need to always take caution before taking decision.

**STRUCTURE:** The proverb has two independent clauses "Craze no hard to form" and "na the trekking be wahala". It is a compound sentence.
6. *Cow wey hurry to go America, go come back as corn beef.*

**Loose Translation:** A cow that rushes to America will return as corn beef.

- NP – cow
- Pron. – wey
- V – hurry
- Prep – to
- N – America
- VP – go come back as
- NP – corn beef

**CONTEXT:** The proverb is used to emphasise the virtue of patience. It admonishes the importance of keeping calm and not hastily rush to where one might regret going. It preaches patience as a worthwhile virtue that one needs to uphold.

**DOMAIN:** Mapping from the animal domain into another domain of food is philosophically conceived as the need to be patient and calm before taking decisions.

**STRUCTURE:** The proverb has one dependent clause and one main clause, so, it is a complex sentence. The dependent clause is ‘wey hurry to go America’.

7. *Pickin wey take agbada start guy go talk wetin e go wear wen e don old.*

**Loose Translation:** A child that starts wearing agbada early in life will tell us what he will wear when he grows old.

- NP → N
- N → pikin
- VP → pron. V.
- Pron. → wey
- V → take
- VP → np v n
- np → agbada
- V. → start
- aux → go (will)
- V → talk
- Rel. Pron. → wetin
- VP → n aux v
- n → e (he)
- aux → go (will)
- V → wear
- VP → Pron. n v np
Pikin wey take agbada start guy
guy talk wetin go
wen e don old

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CONTEXT: This proverb underscores the fact that one should not be in a hurry in one’s endeavours. It illuminates the need to always take a step at a time. Slow and steady wins the race.

DOMAIN: Mapping from the human domain (pickin) to another domain, the proverb stresses the need to take life easy. Things should not be rushed.

Structure: The proverb has the structure of a complex sentence as it has one dependent clause.

8. *Person wey borrow cloth go party no dey dance too much.*

Loose Translation: One who wears a borrowed cloth to a party do not dance too much.
CONTEXT: The highly philosophical and instructive proverb is used to underscore the need to be contented with what one has and not go borrowing. If one must borrow, then one must be careful. The proverb is instructive in the sense that one should be careful about other people's belonging put in one's care.

DOMAIN: The source domain of human action is mapped into the target domain which is abstract phenomena of dance to warn of consequences of not been contented.

Structure: The proverb contains one dependent clause 'person wey borrow cloth go party'. So, the proverb has a complex sentence structure.

9. *Na from clap dem dey take enter dance.*

**Loose Translation:** It is from clapping that a dance begins.

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<th>Prep.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Na</td>
<td>from</td>
<td>clap</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>aux</td>
<td>v</td>
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<td>n</td>
<td>dem</td>
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<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>enter</td>
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<tr>
<td>np</td>
<td>dance</td>
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CONTEXT: The proverb is used to admonish one of the needs to strive to achieve by taking a step towards a goal. It is said that a journey of a thousand miles begins with a step. Instead of procrastination, one should start. It is when a process begins that the chances of completion can be dreamed.

DOMAIN: The source domain of human activity is mapped into another domain of activity to stress the importance of not procrastinating.

STRUCTURE: The proverb has the structure of a simple sentence, SVO. 'Na from clap' is the subject, 'dem dey take' is the verb and 'enter dance' is the object.

10. Who get big teeth must get big lips.

**Loose Translation:** Somebody with big teeth must have big lips.

NP → Pron. V np  
V. → Who  
np → m np  
m → big  
np → teeth  

VP → aux v  
aux → must  
V → get  
np → m np  
m → big  
np → lips  

CONTEXT: The proverb is instructive to people, especially the young ones, of the consequences of their actions. It is always good to think through any course of action before embarking on it as the consequences might be dire. The proverb underscores the fact that one must be ready to face the effects of one's actions or inactions.
DOMAIN: Mapping the domain of one human part to another, the proverb points to the fact that one must be accountable for one's actions.

STRUCTURE: The structure of the proverb is a complex sentence as it has one dependent clause.

11. **Bring suya, bring suya, na nama (cow) body dey suffer am.**

**Loose Translation:** Bring suya, bring suya, it is the cow's body that suffers it.

```
NP → V np V np
   V → Bring
   np → suya
   V → bring
   np → suya

VP → np V np
np → na (It's)
np → nama
Adv. → body
Vp → np
np → aux V n
aux → dey
V → suffer
n → am
```
CONTEXT: This proverb also is instructive as it warns that for any action, there is always a consequence. Before one takes any decision, the effects of such decision must be thought through.

DOMAIN: The domain of food is mapped into the animal domain to instruct of the effects of human action.

STRUCTURE: There are two main clauses in the proverb with one dependent clause. The proverb therefore has the structure of the compound complex sentence. The two main clauses are 'Bring suya, bring suya'.

12. *If your neighbor bie bie (beard) catch fire, you go quick soak your own for water.*

**Loose Translation:** If your neighbour's beard catches fire, you will quickly soak yours in water.

```
NP → Con. Pron. Adj. np
Conj. → If
Pron. → your
Adj. → neighbour
np → bie bie
VP → v np
V → catch
np → fire

VP → np v adv
np → you
V → go
adv. → quick
VP → v np
V → soak
np → m np
m → your
np → own
vp → np
np → prep. np
prep. → for
np → water
```
CONTEXT: In the Nigerian culture, as in other cultures across the world, elders do advise youngsters of the need to learn from the experiences of others, especially
older siblings. Learning from other people’s mistakes helps to one to avoid such mistakes.

**DOMAIN:** Mapping the domain of human body to another (unpleasant situation), the proverb teaches one to learn from the fate of others, especially elders.

**Structure:** The proverb comprises one dependent clause which is in the first part of the proverb and one main clause. It has the complex sentence structure.

13. **Small pikin wey talk say e go shake iroko tree, na im head e go shake.**

**Loose Translation:** A small child that says he will shake iroko tree will eventually shakes his own head.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{NP} & \rightarrow m \ np \\
\text{m} & \rightarrow \text{small} \\
\text{np} & \rightarrow \text{pikin} \\
\text{VP} & \rightarrow \text{Pron. V} \\
\text{Pron.} & \rightarrow \text{wey (that)} \\
\text{V.} & \rightarrow \text{talk say (says)} \\
\text{VP} & \rightarrow n \ \text{aux \ v} \\
\text{n} & \rightarrow e \\
\text{aux} & \rightarrow \text{go} \\
\text{v} & \rightarrow \text{shake}
\end{align*}
\]
Iroko tree

na Im

wey talk say

m np Pron. v

e go shake

n aux v

m n

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CONTEXT: The proverb is a reminder of not biting more than one can chew. There is a limit for every individual and knowing this limit and keeping within that limit might be beneficial. While the proverb is not against aspiring for greater heights, it is good not to over stretch the limit and know one's boundary.

DOMAIN: The object domain is mapped into the human domain to emphasise the futility of some human actions.

STRUCTURE: The proverb has the structure of a complex sentence having one subordinate clause and one independent clause.

14. *I get am before no be property.*

**Loose Translation:** I used to have something, is not a property.

NP → n
n → I
VP → v n Prep.
V → get
n → am
Prep. → before
VP → np
np → n v np
n → no
v → be
np → property
CONTEXT: The proverb admonishes one not to relax on current successes. It is instructive on the need to always strive to achieve more and not rest on one’s oars.

DOMAIN: The domain of object is mapped into another to instruct on the need to always aim higher.

STRUCTURE: It has the structure of a compound sentence with two independent clauses. The first main clause is ‘I get am before’ while the second main clause is ‘no be property’.

15. Wetin you dey find go Sokoto, dey inside sokoto.

Loose Translation: What you seek in Sokoto (a state) is in your sokoto (trouers)

NP → Pron. n
Pron. → Wetin
n → you
VP → aux v
aux → dey
v → find
VP → np
np → Sokoto

Wetin you dey find go Sokoto, dey inside sokoto.
CONTEXT: The proverb alludes to the fact that what we seek, sometimes very far away, might be so close to us. It is instructive in that in our haste to get some things, we look farther than we should, normally. Sometimes, what we seek is right under our nose.

DOMAIN: Two different domains of place and object are mapped together to underscore the importance of looking inwards for probable solutions to some issues.

STRUCTURE: The proverb has the structure of a complex sentence. ‘Wetin you dey find go Sokoto’ is a dependent clause while ‘dey inside sokoto’ is the main clause.

Findings and Conclusion

This study has examined the nature of metaphors in Nigerian Pidgin English proverbs. Based on Lakoff and Johnson's (1980, 2003) theory of conceptual metaphor. The paper investigated fifteen (15) NPE proverbs by highlighting the context and different domains mapped together in the proverbs as well as the grammatical structures of the proverbs to ascertain if they have the same structures with other developed languages such as English.

Findings in the study show that most NPE proverbs are based on finding the connections between different conceptual domains. It further shows that metaphors in NPE proverbs draw most importantly, from the different Nigerian cultural context. This cultural milieu comprises the experiences, realities, values and norms of the Nigerian people. Suffice to say that the metaphors are informed by cultural practices and philosophy of the Nigerian peoples.

Findings also show that one aspect of the domains relate to areas of experience that are relatively abstract and complex. The other domain source, reflect concrete and simple experiences like physical objects or bodily phenomena.

The study also shows that NPE proverbs are grammatically structured as can be found in well-developed languages like English from where it draws its superstrate lexicon.

Finally, the study of metaphors in a cultural context requires a deep-seated understanding of the history and traditions within the social, cultural, religious and spiritual boundaries of the Nigerian peoples. Since metaphors reflect traditional beliefs and ideas of a people, a deep knowledge of the ways of life of the people is important. This is more so as metaphors cannot be comprehended outside the cultural milieu.
References


