

## Pragmatic Analysis of Some Kamue Proverbs

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### **Abstract**

*This study examines the pragmatic functions of selected proverbs from the Kamue culture, with a focus on their communicative purposes, contextual usage, and implied meanings. Using a pragmatic analytical framework, this research explores how Kamue proverbs convey meaning beyond their literal interpretation, revealing underlying cultural values, social norms, and worldview. The study reveals that Kamue proverbs employ various pragmatic strategies, such as implicature, inference, and presupposition, to convey complex social messages, negotiate relationships, and shape cultural identity. The findings highlight the significance of proverbs as a vital aspect of Kamue discourse, offering insights into the culture's values, beliefs, and communication practices. This research contributes to the understanding of the role of pragmatics in uncovering the deeper meanings and functions of proverbs in African cultures.*

**Key words:** Proverbs, Pragmatics, Kamue

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### **Introduction**

Proverbs are a vital part of human language and culture, offering insights into the values, beliefs, and experiences of a community (Gotor, 2017). They have been used for centuries to convey wisdom, advice, and cultural knowledge, and continue to play a significant role in many African cultures. Proverbs are often used to teach important life lessons, share cultural values, and provide guidance on how to live a good life. In many African languages, proverbs are used to convey complex ideas and emotions in a concise and meaningful way. For example, in Yoruba culture, proverbs are used to teach children important values such as respect, honesty, and hard work.

In many African languages, proverbs are used to teach important life lessons, share cultural values, and provide guidance on how to live a good life (Mkulu, 2019). One such language is Kamue, spoken in Nigeria, which has a rich collection of proverbs that reflect the culture and traditions of the community. Kamue proverbs are often used to convey complex ideas and emotions in a concise and meaningful way. For example, the proverb "A child who says his mother will not sleep will also not sleep" means that if you trouble others, you will also be troubled. This proverb teaches children the importance of respecting others and living in harmony with their community. Proverbs, a rich cultural heritage of the Kamue people, have long been used to convey wisdom, advice, and cultural values. These concise expressions have been passed down through generations, playing a significant role in shaping the community's beliefs, behaviors, and interactions. However, despite their importance, the pragmatic functions of Kamue proverbs remain understudied.

Existing research has explored the cultural significance of these proverbs, but there is a notable gap in understanding their pragmatic meanings and communication implications. This study aims

to address this gap by conducting a pragmatic analysis of select Kamue proverbs, examining their context, meaning, and usage, and shedding light on their role in human communication. Doing so, this research seeks to contribute to a deeper understanding of the Kamue language and culture, as well as the broader field of pragmatics.

Pragmatic analysis is a linguistic approach that examines language in use, considering the context, speaker's intention, and hearer's interpretation (Haugh, 2015). Applying pragmatic analysis to Kamue proverbs, this study hopes to uncover the nuances of meaning and communication in this language, shedding light on the cultural significance and rhetorical functions of these proverbs. Pragmatic analysis can reveal how language is used to achieve communicative goals, beyond the literal meaning of words. In the context of proverbs, pragmatic analysis can reveal the underlying cultural values, social norms, and communicative strategies embedded in these concise yet meaningful expressions.

This study aims to conduct a pragmatic analysis of some Kamue proverbs, exploring their meaning, context, and implications (Felix-Ortiz, 2020). The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of Kamue language and culture, as well as the role of proverbs in human communication. By examining the pragmatic functions of Kamue proverbs, this study hopes to provide insights into the ways in which language is used to achieve communicative goals in this community. The study will also highlight the importance of proverbs in African culture and their potential applications in language teaching, cultural education, and communication studies. Exploring the pragmatic functions of Kamue proverbs, this study hopes to demonstrate the value of proverbs in understanding human language and culture.

### **Pragmatic Analysis**

Pragmatic Analysis is a linguistic approach that examines language in use, considering the context, speaker's intention, and hearer's interpretation (Haugh, 2015). This approach focuses on how language is employed to achieve communicative goals, beyond the literal meaning of words. Pragmatic Analysis is crucial in understanding language as it reveals the underlying cultural values, social norms, and communicative strategies embedded in language use. By examining language in context, Pragmatic Analysis provides insights into how speakers negotiate meaning, construct relationships, and achieve their goals through language.

Applying Pragmatic Analysis to Kamue proverbs, this study hopes to uncover the nuances of meaning and communication in this language, shedding light on the cultural significance and rhetorical functions of these proverbs (Gotor, 2017). The findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of Kamue language and culture, as well as the role of proverbs in human communication. By examining the pragmatic functions of Kamue proverbs, this study hopes to provide insights into the ways in which language is used to achieve communicative goals in this community.

### **Historical Background of Kamue People**

The Kamwe people (also spelled Kamue) are a Chadic language-speaking group native to Adamawa State and Borno State in Nigeria and Northwest Cameroon. The Kamwe language is called Vecemwe in the native tongue. Kamwe is a compound word formed from 'Ka' and 'Mwe', meaning "people of the same consanguinity and affinity" (matrilineal brotherhood).

The Kamwe people are industrious and enterprising. They are often compared to the Igbos of South Eastern Nigeria. About 80 percent of the Kamwe people in Nigeria live in Michika Local Government Area of Adamawa. They are also found in Mubi North, Hong, Gombi, Song, and

Madagali local governments in Adamawa State. Additionally, Kamwe people are found in Borno State, particularly in Askira/Uba and Gwoza local government areas. Blench (2019) lists Mukta of Mukta village in Adamawa State as part of the Kamwe cluster.

The term "Kamwe" is derived from the words "Ka" and "Mwe", which means "people of". It originates from a special type of Kamwe ornament worn by close relatives of a deceased person as a mark of identity and empathy. According to Kamwe elders, "Mwe" is the mark of true identity of relatives in Kamweland. In the past, if a non-relative wore the Mwe, it could lead to conflict. Only close relatives are allowed to wear the Mwe, as it cements the bond between relatives. Those wearing the Mwe will hug each other, saying "tselie ra na" (you are my relative). The Kamwe people are passionate about their name and will say "Wesa Kamwe Ra" to compliment each other. Some elders believe that Kamwe means "people of the heavens", "people on the hills", "mountains", and even "the sky".

There are over 24 dialects of the Kamwe language, but Nkafa is the central dialect used in writing and literature. The Kamwe people and language were once called Higgi (Higi), but Kamwe elders consider this term derogatory and insulting, coined by their neighbors, the Margi. The Margi first called the Kamwe people "Higgi" in 1937. However, some in the Dakwa (Bazza) area, originally from Margi origin, still use the term. Kamwe people are natives of Michika local government. Kwada Kwakaa, a renowned lion and leopard hunter, is regarded as the founder of the settlement. The settlement was named after his method of hunting animals on the hill. In the Kamwe language, "Mwe" means "heaven" or "hills", while "Ci-ka" means "creep", which was later mispronounced by colonialists as Michika. The traditional ruler is called Mbege Kamwe, and the current ruler is Ngida Zakawa Kwache.

### **Proverbs**

Proverbs are short sayings that express a general truth or piece of advice. They are often used to convey wisdom, teach lessons, and offer guidance on how to live a good life (Mieder, 2015). Proverbs can be found in many cultures and languages, and they often reflect the values, beliefs, and experiences of a community.

Proverbs are often used to teach important life lessons, such as the importance of hard work, honesty, and respect for others. They can also be used to offer advice on how to deal with difficult situations, such as the proverb "When life gives you lemons, make lemonade" (Gotor, 2017). This proverb encourages people to make the best of a bad situation and to find opportunities in adversity. Proverbs can also be used to express cultural values and beliefs. For example, the proverb "It takes a village to raise a child" reflects the importance of community and family in many African cultures (Mkulu, 2019). This proverb emphasizes the role of the community in raising children and the importance of collective responsibility.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Proverbs have been a topic of interest by many scholars. This section reviews similar works of scholars on proverbs such as the works of Adegbite (2001) on Yoruba proverbs. He highlights the pragmatic functions of proverbs in communication. The study demonstrated the significance of proverbs in conveying meaning and achieving communicative goals. Adegbite's analysis revealed the importance of understanding the cultural context in which proverbs are used, and how they can be employed to facilitate effective communication. The study examined the role of proverbs in Yoruba culture, exploring their use in various social contexts. Adegbite's findings highlighted the versatility of proverbs and their ability to convey complex meanings.

Amadi (2007) examined Igbo proverbs, focusing on their cultural significance and pragmatic uses. This study emphasized the importance of proverbs in understanding cultural values and norms, and how they can be used to promote social harmony. Amadi's analysis highlighted the role of proverbs in Igbo culture and their relevance to everyday life. The study explored the use of proverbs in Igbo storytelling, examining their function in conveying moral lessons and promoting social cohesion. Amadi's findings demonstrated the significance of proverbs in Igbo culture and their continued relevance in modern times.

Babatunde (2011) investigated Yoruba proverbs, exploring their role in conflict resolution. This study revealed the potential of proverbs to resolve conflicts and promote social harmony. Babatunde's analysis demonstrated how proverbs can be used to mediate conflicts and promote peaceful resolution. The study examined the use of proverbs in Yoruba conflict resolution, highlighting their ability to address complex issues and promote understanding. Babatunde's findings emphasized the importance of proverbs in Yoruba culture and their continued relevance in modern conflict resolution.

Chiluwa (2013) studied Igbo proverbs, analyzing their pragmatic functions in political discourse. This study highlighted the use of proverbs in political communication and their impact on political outcomes. Chiluwa's analysis revealed how proverbs can be employed to persuade and influence others in political contexts. The study examined the use of proverbs in Igbo political discourse, exploring their function in promoting political ideologies and shaping public opinion. Chiluwa's findings demonstrated the significance of proverbs in Igbo political culture and their continued relevance in modern political communication.

Ekundayo (2015) analyzed Yoruba proverbs, highlighting their relevance to social norms and values. This study demonstrated how proverbs reflect and shape social norms and values. Ekundayo's analysis emphasized the importance of proverbs in understanding cultural values and norms. The study examined the role of proverbs in Yoruba culture, exploring their use in various social contexts. Ekundayo's findings highlighted the significance of proverbs in promoting social cohesion and understanding.

Igboanusi (2017) examined Igbo proverbs, focusing on their cultural significance and pragmatic uses. This study emphasized the importance of proverbs in understanding cultural values and norms, and how they can be used to promote social harmony. Igboanusi's analysis highlighted the role of proverbs in Igbo culture and their relevance to everyday life. The study explored the use of proverbs in Igbo storytelling, examining their function in conveying moral lessons and promoting social cohesion.

Nwachukwu (2019) investigated Igbo proverbs, exploring their role in social commentary. This study revealed the potential of proverbs to comment on social issues and promote social change. Nwachukwu's analysis demonstrated how proverbs can be used to critique social norms and promote positive change. The study examined the use of proverbs in Igbo social commentary, highlighting their ability to address complex social issues and promote understanding.

Odebunmi (2006) studied Yoruba proverbs, analyzing their pragmatic functions in education. This study highlighted the use of proverbs in educational settings and their impact on learning outcomes. Odebunmi's analysis revealed how proverbs can be employed to facilitate learning and promote educational goals. The study examined the role of proverbs in Yoruba education, exploring their use in various educational contexts.

Ogede (2011) analyzed Igbo proverbs, highlighting their relevance to social norms and values. This study demonstrated how proverbs reflect and shape social norms and values. Ogede's

analysis emphasized the importance of proverbs in understanding cultural values and norms. The study examined the role of proverbs in Igbo culture, exploring their use in various social contexts. Uche (2018) examined Kamue proverbs, focusing on their cultural significance and pragmatic uses. This study provided a foundation for the current research, highlighting the need for further exploration of Kamue proverbs. Uche's analysis emphasized the importance of proverbs in understanding cultural values and norms, and how they can be used to promote social harmony. The study explored the use of proverbs in Kamue culture, examining their function in conveying moral lessons and promoting social cohesion.

Ahmed (2012) analyzed Arabic proverbs, highlighting their role in conveying cultural values and social norms. This study demonstrated the significance of proverbs in understanding Arabic culture and their relevance to everyday life. Ahmed's analysis emphasized the importance of proverbs in promoting social cohesion and understanding. The study examined the use of proverbs in Arabic literature and their impact on social values. Ahmed's findings highlighted the potential of proverbs to shape cultural identity and promote social harmony.

Kumar (2015) examined Hindi proverbs, focusing on their use in educational settings. This study highlighted the potential of proverbs to facilitate learning and promote educational goals. Kumar's analysis revealed how proverbs can be employed to convey complex concepts and promote critical thinking. The study explored the use of proverbs in Hindi language classrooms and their impact on student learning outcomes. Kumar's findings demonstrated the effectiveness of proverbs in promoting language learning and cultural understanding.

Lee (2018) studied Korean proverbs, analyzing their role in social commentary. This study revealed the potential of proverbs to comment on social issues and promote social change. Lee's analysis demonstrated how proverbs can be used to critique social norms and promote positive change. The study examined the use of proverbs in Korean social media and their impact on public opinion. Lee's findings highlighted the significance of proverbs in shaping public discourse and promoting social justice.

Mwanga (2016) investigated Swahili proverbs, exploring their use in conflict resolution. This study highlighted the potential of proverbs to resolve conflicts and promote social harmony. Mwanga's analysis demonstrated how proverbs can be used to mediate conflicts and promote peaceful resolution. The study examined the use of proverbs in Swahili conflict resolution practices and their impact on community cohesion. Mwanga's findings emphasized the importance of proverbs in promoting peaceful coexistence and social harmony.

Nguyen (2019) examined Vietnamese proverbs, focusing on their cultural significance and pragmatic uses. This study emphasized the importance of proverbs in understanding Vietnamese culture and their relevance to everyday life. Nguyen's analysis highlighted the role of proverbs in conveying moral lessons and promoting social cohesion. The study explored the use of proverbs in Vietnamese family and community settings and their impact on social values. Nguyen's findings demonstrated the significance of proverbs in shaping cultural identity and promoting social harmony.

## **Methodology**

This chapter presents the research methodology adopted to conduct a pragmatic analysis of some Kamue proverbs. The aim is to provide a systematic approach for collecting and analyzing data related to the proverbs in order to draw meaningful conclusions. This section explains the areas of the study, sample selection process, and the data collection procedure implemented.



The study focuses on the pragmatic analysis of selected Kamue proverbs. These proverbs are derived from the cultural practices, beliefs, and values of the Kamue community. By analyzing the pragmatic aspects of these proverbs, the research aims to shed light on their communicative functions, social implications, and underlying meanings.

A purposive sampling technique is used to select suitable proverbs for analysis. The selection criteria include the relevance to the research objectives, availability of existing literature on the proverbs, and accessibility of native speakers who can provide valuable insights into their usage and interpretation. The sample size will be determined based on data saturation, where new ideas and themes cease to emerge from the analysis.

The data collection procedure involves two main stages: primary and secondary data collection.

Primary data collection:

1. Fieldwork: The data for this research will be collected via interviews, focus group discussions, and participant observations with native speakers of the Kamue community. These interactions aim to gather firsthand information on the interpretation, usage, and cultural significance of the selected proverbs.

2. Audio Recordings: Audio recordings will be made of the interviews and discussions to ensure accuracy during the analysis phase.

Secondary data collection:

1. Literature Review: Extensive literature search will be conducted to gather existing scholarly works on Kamue proverbs, focusing on their cultural, linguistic, and pragmatic aspects. This will provide a broader context and theoretical framework for the analysis.

2. Archival Research: Historical accounts, folklore, and written records related to the Kamue community will be explored to gain insights into the origins and evolution of the selected proverbs.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The analysis of Kamue proverbs will be conducted within the framework of pragmatics, specifically focusing on speech acts, implicature, and contexts. Pragmatics analyzes language use in actual social situations, taking into account the speaker's intentions, context, and the meaning conveyed beyond the literal interpretation. Additionally, the study will draw on relevant theories and concepts from sociolinguistics and cultural anthropology to provide a comprehensive understanding of the proverbs within their cultural and social contexts.

This chapter has outlined the methodology adopted for this research, including the areas of the study, sample selection process, data collection procedure, and the theoretical framework guiding the analysis. The next chapter will present the findings and analysis of the selected Kamue proverbs in light of the chosen method

### **Data Analysis**

**Data 1:** "*Kande ghwie ntavegwa le pela we*"

The proverb "Kande ghwie ntavegwa le pela we" translates to "You can't carry fire with your bare hands." On the surface, this proverb seems to be a straightforward warning against physically handling fire without protection. However, upon closer examination, it reveals a deeper meaning. The speaker is using this proverb to advise the listener to be cautious when dealing with sensitive or dangerous situations.

The speaker's intention is to warn the listener of potential harm or danger, and to encourage them to take necessary precautions. This implies that the speaker has experience or knowledge about

handling such situations and wants to prevent the listener from making a mistake. The context assumes that the listener is likely to encounter a situation that requires caution, and the speaker wants to prepare them for it.

The use of the proverb "Kande ghwie ntavegwa le pela we" is a pragmatic strategy to convey a message about caution and safety. By using a metaphor, the speaker makes the message more relatable and memorable. The listener is more likely to remember the proverb and apply its meaning to their life than if the speaker had simply given a straightforward warning. This proverbial expression also adds a layer of cultural and social significance, as it is a shared piece of knowledge and wisdom within the Kamwe community.

**Data 2:** *"Dzeme kwa fwe dzege na ne nteka?"*

The proverb "Dzeme kwa fwe dzege na ne nteka?" translates to "You will never taste a woman in your lifetime." At first glance, this proverb seems to be a statement about someone's inability to experience romantic or intimate relationships. However, upon closer examination, it reveals a deeper meaning. The speaker is using this proverb to convey that some things in life are impossible or out of reach.

The speaker's intention is to express resignation or acceptance of a situation. This implies that the speaker has come to terms with the fact that some things are not meant to be, and is advising the listener to do the same. The context assumes that the listener is facing a situation where they are trying to achieve something that is unlikely or impossible, and the speaker wants to caution them against wasting their time or effort.

The use of the proverb "Dzeme kwa fwe dzege na ne nteka?" is a pragmatic strategy to convey a message about acceptance and resignation. By using a metaphorical expression, the speaker makes the message more relatable and memorable. The listener is more likely to remember the proverb and apply its meaning to their life than if the speaker had simply given a straightforward advice. This proverbial expression also adds a layer of cultural and social significance, as it is a shared piece of knowledge and wisdom within the Kamwe community.

**Data 3:** *"Ma' deghweme kelemi na, deghweme lyensi na?"*

The proverb "Ma' deghweme kelemi na, deghweme lyensi na?" translates to "You better cut your coat according to your size." This proverb is advising the listener to be content with what they have and not try to exceed their limitations. The speaker is cautioning against being overly ambitious or trying to fit into a situation that is not suited for one's abilities or resources.

The speaker's intention is to encourage the listener to be realistic and humble. This implies that the speaker values modesty and practicality, and is advising the listener to do the same. The context assumes that the listener is facing a situation where they are tempted to overreach or pretend to be something they are not, and the speaker wants to warn them against it.

The use of the proverb "Ma' deghweme kelemi na, deghweme lyensi na?" is a pragmatic strategy to convey a message about humility and practicality. By using a metaphorical expression, the speaker makes the message more relatable and memorable. The listener is more likely to remember the proverb and apply its meaning to their life than if the speaker had simply given a straightforward advice. This proverbial expression also adds a layer of cultural and social significance, as it is a shared piece of knowledge and wisdom within the Kamwe community, emphasizing the importance of living within one's means.

**Data 4:** “*Tari mwe ran nda za kwe*”

The proverb "Tari mwe ran nda za kwe" translates to "I'm innocent of what happened." This proverb is a declaration of innocence or lack of involvement in a situation. The speaker is claiming that they had no role or responsibility in the events that transpired.

The speaker's intention is to defend themselves against accusations or suspicions. This implies that the speaker values their reputation and wants to clear their name. The context assumes that the speaker is facing a situation where their integrity or trustworthiness is being questioned, and they want to assert their innocence.

The use of the proverb "Tari mwe ran nda za kwe" is a pragmatic strategy to convey a message about defense and justification. By using a direct and assertive statement, the speaker makes their intentions clear and leaves no room for misinterpretation. The listener is more likely to believe the speaker's claim of innocence due to the emphatic nature of the proverb. This proverbial expression also adds a layer of cultural and social significance, as it is a shared piece of knowledge and wisdom within the Kamwe community, emphasizing the importance of honesty and integrity.

**Data 5:** “*Ma' nkwa ndza wci te na, ka ndza wdzi teba we.*”

The proverb "Ma' nkwa ndza wci te na, ka ndza wdzi teba we" translates to "Where find good husband, you rarely find good wife and vice versa." This proverb highlights the rarity of finding a compatible and harmonious relationship. The speaker is suggesting that good partners are hard to come by, and it's even more challenging to find two good individuals who complement each other.

The speaker's intention is to express a realistic view of relationships, cautioning against high expectations. The context assumes that the listener is seeking a romantic relationship or is currently in one, and the speaker wants to temper their optimism. The proverb's message encourages the listener to appreciate the value of a good partner and not take them for granted.

**Data 6:** “*Vwea tyetie wza ha*”

The proverb "Vwea tyetie wza ha" translates to "Far away farms bring more harvest." This proverb suggests that sometimes, opportunities or success come from unexpected or distant places. The speaker is encouraging the listener to explore new horizons and not limit themselves to familiar surroundings.

The speaker's intention is to motivate the listener to be open-minded and adventurous. The context assumes that the listener is facing a situation where they need to make a change or seek new opportunities, and the speaker wants to inspire them to take action. The proverb's message emphasizes the potential rewards of exploring beyond one's comfort zone.

**Data 7:** “*Ndere sheshi nda dante nje' mnyea nje'*”

The proverb "Ndere sheshi nda dante nje' mnyea nje'" translates to "Talk good things always." This proverb advises the listener to maintain a positive attitude and speech. The speaker is encouraging the listener to focus on uplifting and constructive communication.

The speaker's intention is to promote positivity and kindness in the listener's interactions. The context assumes that the listener is engaging with others, and the speaker wants to remind them of the impact of their words. The proverb's message encourages the listener to cultivate a supportive and encouraging environment.



**Data 8:** *“Wtsa kwelakwace le dara”*

The proverb "Wtsa kwelakwace le dara" translates to "Give out what you have, not because you have much." This proverb encourages generosity and sharing, regardless of one's resources. The speaker is advising the listener to be willing to give, even if they don't have an abundance.

The speaker's intention is to promote generosity and selflessness. The context assumes that the listener has the capacity to give, and the speaker wants to encourage them to do so without hesitation. The proverb's message emphasizes the value of sharing and kindness.

**Data 9:** *“Hwehwe me va”*

The proverb "Hwehwe me va" translates to "Work done is zero." This proverb suggests that effort or work without results is futile. The speaker is cautioning against investing time and energy into something that yields no outcome.

The speaker's intention is to advise the listener to re-evaluate their efforts and priorities. The context assumes that the listener is facing a situation where they are not seeing results, and the speaker wants to encourage them to reassess their approach. The proverb's message encourages the listener to focus on productive endeavors.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated the importance of pragmatic analysis in understanding the functions and meanings of Kamue proverbs. The research has shown that Kamue proverbs are not just mere sayings, but rather complex communicative tools that convey meaning beyond their literal interpretation. The study's findings highlight the need for further research into the pragmatics of African proverbs, exploring their role in shaping cultural identity, negotiating relationships, and conveying complex social messages.

The study's conclusions have implications for the study of pragmatics, anthropology, and African languages and cultures. The research highlights the significance of considering the cultural context and communicative purposes of proverbs in understanding their meanings and functions. The study's findings also underscore the importance of preserving and promoting African proverbs as a vital aspect of African cultural heritage.

In conclusion, this study has contributed to the understanding of the pragmatic functions of Kamue proverbs, highlighting their significance in Kamue discourse and culture. The research demonstrates the importance of pragmatic analysis in uncovering the deeper meanings and functions of proverbs in African cultures, and highlights the need for further research into this area.

- The study of pragmatics should be integrated into the study of African languages and cultures, highlighting the importance of understanding the communicative functions of language in cultural context.

- The findings of this study should be disseminated to a wider audience, highlighting the significance of Kamue proverbs in Ka

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