

京都大学大学院 アジア・アフリカ地域研究研究科
フィールドワーク・インターンシッププログラム 2011 年度 JASSO 派遣報告書

報告者氏名 Sande Ngalande

平成 22 年度 (編入)

Theme: A Linguistic, Ethnographic and Logical Analysis of Nsenga Proverbs

Background

Proverbs have long been the focus of various scholarly disciplines. Their uniqueness in nature generates great interest for various studies. Proverbs have a special place in the culture and moral fiber of a society or community. World over, hundreds of thousands of proverbs exist in various languages and cultures and have been studied by various scholars for ages. In Africa, studies have revealed that proverbs are a reflection of a people's culture and traditions and thereby entrusted with one of the most important functions of teaching and transmitting ethnic traditions and moral values across generations.

The study of the African proverb faces two significant challenges. First, proverbs are steadily losing their pivotal role and place in the life of the modern African person and thereby the modern scholar; and second, most studies have simply concentrated on documentation or paremiography, the discourse functions and conversational meanings of proverbs. In relation to the latter challenge, there is a feared oversimplification of the supposed meanings that proverbs have and communicate. In addition to several efforts pertaining to specifying meanings of proverbs, there appears to be little research into exploring the ways in which meaning is composed in proverbs.

Results of the Study

Four research areas were visited; Lusaka and three areas in Eastern Zambia; namely, Petauke, Mambwe and Chipata. A total of 220 Nsenga proverbs were collected. An additional 160 units of ethnographic information was also collected. The ethnographic information included background information to collected proverbs, short stories that helped explain the meanings of some proverbs, and some cultural information attached to certain nouns mentioned in the proverbs. While almost every speaker knew what proverbs were, remembering the proverbs one knew was always difficult. This was a more serious case for younger people. Most of the data was collected from old people who were also helpful with ethnographic information. The trend was also observed in urban areas as compared to rural areas. Many people in urban areas had difficulty in giving accurate information about proverbs.

The collected data was analyzed as part of the doctoral thesis which was still being developed. The analysis includes linguistic, ethnographic and logical approaches. The findings of the research will also be part of the doctoral thesis.

Objectives

The study was designed to carry out a linguistic study of proverbs by analyzing and describing some aspects of the grammar of proverbs such as morphology and syntax. The linguistic analysis was aimed at going beyond explaining meanings and functions of proverbs to dealing with how aspects of grammar affect the phraseology, meaning, nature and interpretation of proverbs. It was also aimed at focusing on the compositionality of the meaning of proverbs. In dealing with meaning, the study used ethnographic and logical approaches to rediscover the complex nature in which proverbs evolve and convey meaning. In general, the study was designed to be holistic but intensive by paying more attention to individual proverbs than extensively or superficially dealing with a large volume of proverbs.

Research Plan and Methodology

The primary goal of the field research was to collect both Nsenga proverbs and the related ethnographic information. The data was collected using participant observation and interviews with identified Nsenga language consultants. Interview schedules were also used as instruments of data collection with the help of research assistants in the four research areas.

The study used a qualitative approach whilst applying general linguistic, ethnographic, and logic theory. As Rudestam and Newton (Surviving your Dissertation. A Comprehensive Guide to Content and Process. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1992) observe, a qualitative approach facilitates access to the psychologically rich and in-depth understanding of the individual and his or her social context. Further, Mason (Qualitative Researching. London: Sage, 1996) stresses that qualitative research is concerned with how the world is interpreted, understood, experienced or produced.

Signature _____