

TIV PROVERBS AND THEIR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

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Abstract

The paper titled “Tiv Proverbs and their Cultural Significance” explores the role of proverbs and their importance in the Tiv language and culture. They are used to teach important life lessons and impart wisdom, to socialise, and to bring peace and peaceful coexistence. It employs a descriptive research design to help uncover instances of Tiv proverbial utterances and describe how proverbs are often used in Tiv literature, which can be found in stories, folktales, and other forms of literature. The study uses the descriptive research design. The primary sources include oral interviews from elderly Tiv speakers who are well-versed in Tiv proverbs. Random sampling was used to select twenty (20) respondents from different Tiv-speaking communities within four (4) Local Government Areas of Benue State. They are Vandeikya, Konshisa, Ushongo and Gboko. Also, the researcher’s intuition and personal observation served as a strong means for data collection. The paper uses Sapir and Whorf’s Whorfian theory (20th century). The theory is a principle suggesting that the structure of a language affects its speakers’ worldview or cognition, and thus, people’s perceptions are relative to their spoken languages. The paper finds that proverbs contribute to effective communication, convey cultural values, and enhance language proficiency. The paper concludes that preserving Tiv proverbs is essential for safeguarding Tiv culture.

Keywords: language, culture, proverbs, Tiv language

Introduction

Proverbs hold a profound significance in the Tiv language, serving as powerful linguistic tools that encapsulate the wisdom, values, and cultural heritage of the Tiv people. As an integral part of daily communication, proverbs play a vital role in Tiv society, conveying complex messages in concise and memorable ways. This paper explores the importance of proverbs in the Tiv

language, shedding light on their communicative, cultural, and educational value.

The Tiv language, spoken by the Tiv people in Nigeria, is rich in proverbs that reflect the collective knowledge and experiences of the community. Proverbs in the Tiv language are not mere linguistic expressions but serve as cultural artefacts that carry the essence of Tiv traditions, beliefs, and societal norms. They encapsulate the wisdom of the elders, embodying the deep-rooted values that guide Tiv individuals in their daily lives. Proverbs in the Tiv language act as communication tools, enabling individuals to convey profound meanings, emotions, and moral lessons concisely and vividly. With their figurative language and metaphoric expressions, Tiv proverbs evoke powerful imagery, making them effective in various interpersonal and social contexts. They facilitate effective communication by conveying complex ideas and emotions with brevity, enabling Tiv speakers to convey messages that resonate deeply with their intended audience.

Furthermore, proverbs are essential in Tiv culture as they serve as cultural markers, reflecting the beliefs, customs, and historical experiences of the Tiv people. They are passed down through generations, preserving and transmitting cultural heritage. Proverbs provide insights into the Tiv worldview and serve as a means of reinforcing shared values and promoting a sense of identity and belonging within the community. They are deeply intertwined with Tiv traditions, ceremonies, and rituals, enriching the cultural fabric of Tiv society.

Educationally, proverbs play a significant role in the Tiv language. They serve as pedagogical tools for imparting knowledge, wisdom, and moral values to younger generations. Tiv children and youth engage with proverbs in storytelling, oral narratives, and educational settings, learning important life lessons and gaining insights into their cultural heritage. By engaging with proverbs, Tiv individuals develop critical thinking skills, sharpen their language proficiency, and deepen their understanding of societal norms.

Understanding the importance of proverbs in the Tiv language provides a window into the richness and complexity of Tiv culture and communication. Exploring the multifaceted roles that proverbs play in Tiv society contributes to a deeper appreciation of the Tiv people and their unique cultural heritage. Moreover,

it sheds light on the broader significance of proverbs in language, culture, and communication, both within the Tiv community and in a cross-cultural context.

The paper is motivated by the fact that proverbs, as part of the Tiv culture which has largely been transmitted from one generation to another by oral means, have been relegated to the background due to the advent of globalisation and modernisation thus, there is a need to revisit the subject matter, as Tiv proverbs have relevance even in contemporary times as they are used to teach important life lessons and impart wisdom, to socialise, and to broker peace and foster peaceful coexistence among others.

Literature Review

Proverbs

Nordquist (2018:1) submits that a “proverb is a short pithy statement of a general truth, one that condenses common experience into memorable form”. Crowley & Hawhee (2004:85), a proverb is a “short sentence based on long experience”. They further added that “many proverbs rely on antithesis (a rhetorical term for juxtaposition of contrasting ideas in phrases). Ehondor (2017:4) brings to bear that “proverbs have been and will always be timeless. The variety of proverbs, number and proverbial phrases is boundless; no matter how old people are, what country they come from, proverbs are part of their heritage”. To Ehondor, proverbs from a linguistic perspective are “sources of figurative language and metaphor. It is also a core of verbal interaction in Africa; as they are sayings or stories intended to assist learning, either formal or informal, family or folk learning.

Proverbs as a component of culture

Proverbs are a significant component of culture, reflecting and contributing to the richness and depth of a society’s cultural identity. Proverbs are integrated into culture in the following ways;

1. **Preservation of Cultural Wisdom:** Proverbs encapsulate the accumulated wisdom, knowledge, and experiences of a culture. They serve as a repository of the culture’s core values and beliefs, offering guidance and insight to its members.
2. **Expression of Cultural Values:** Proverbs often express the

values and moral principles that are central to a culture. For example, proverbs can emphasise the importance of honesty, respect for elders, or the value of hard work, providing a framework for ethical behaviour within society.

3. **Cultural Communication:** Proverbs are a form of communication within a culture. They allow people to convey complex ideas, advice, and messages concisely and effectively. They are used in everyday conversation, storytelling, and even in art and literature.

Language

Within the circle of linguistics, one cannot say or do anything outside the concept of language. Language is the basis and foundational pillar of any linguistic exercises; thus, the importance of language within the domain of linguistics cannot be overemphasised. Language from one dimension can be regarded as a tool for communication, either by an individual or a collective group. Language refers to the medium through which humans express their thoughts, feelings, desires and fears. It is one of the greatest capacities and genetic endowments God gave to man. Language has a big role in life, as humans are social creatures. Inderwati and Hayati (2015) state, “It is believed that human beings and language are deeply embedded in the sense that people own a language and use it to interact with others”. Language is one of the fundamental aspects of culture.

Tiv as a language

To Sokpo (2016:24), the name Tiv has “multiple meanings; and in the words of Bohannan (1953:9), the word ‘Tiv’ is the name applied to the people by themselves; they consider it the name of the original ancestors from whom they all trace agnatic descent. Sokpo (2016: 19) opines that the Tiv language, which is under study, is tonal; tonal languages derive meaning using tones. The tones perform various functions in the realisation of meaning in such languages; for instance, lexical and grammatical tones in Tiv language are made explicit only when the pitch is properly placed. The Tiv language, according to Akese (2018:14), develops basically through oral literature, folktales, riddles, jokes, song, music, and dance. He opines

further that Tiv language has the following features: creativity, genetic, tonal, and dual.

Culture

The word “culture” is often used to mean the totality of the way of life of a particular people. This implies that no two communities have the same culture”. Njemanze (2007: 26), opines:

Culture is about the social behaviour, beliefs, and values of a society. Culture is associated with the language and customs of a particular group. Culture consists of the shared products of society, while society consists of people and their interaction within a community. A society could therefore not exist without culture, while culture needs to be maintained by the society. Language and culture are used concurrently everywhere.

Hudson (1980:78) holds in conjunction with the above that:

Culture is a socially acquired knowledge”. He further opines that “...a society’s culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believes to operate in a manner acceptable to its members. Culture, being what people have to learn as distinct from biological heritage, must consist of the end product of learning, knowledge, in the most general sense of the term.

Culture determines how members of a society think and feel. It directs their actions, outlook and language use.

Tiv as a cultural entity

The Tiv people have a rich cultural heritage. The Tiv people live on both sides of the River Benue in Nigeria. They speak a language of the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger- Congo family. The Tiv people are subsistence farmers whose main crops are yams, millets, and sorghum. The polygynous Tiv family occupies a cluster of round huts surrounding a reception hut; brothers usually live next to one another. The Tiv social organisation is based on patrilineages that are closely associated with particular geographic features. The common Tiv food is mostly solid, cooked, pounded yams; soups like *pocho*, *ager*, *genger*, *atyever*, *tur*, *vambe*, *igy*, *agbende* a *ashwe*, *atuur*, vegetables, etc.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts the Whorfian or Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The Whorfian theory is also known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis or whorfianism. The theory was developed in the 20th century by great thinkers such as Sapir and Whorf. Others are Wilhelm von Humboldt and Johann Gottfried, who saw language as the expression of the spirit of a nation. The theory is a principle suggesting that the structure of a language affects its speakers' worldview or cognition, and thus, people's perceptions are relative to their spoken language. However, the idea did not originate with Edward Sapir or Benjamin Lee Whorf but rather was imported from German humanist thinking of Henry Kahane Renee.

The Whorfian theory, also known as the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, is commonly presented in two forms: the strong and the weak hypotheses. The strong version, termed *linguistic determinism*, posits that language determines thought, suggesting that linguistic structures constrain and shape cognitive categories. In contrast, the weak version—favoured by many contemporary linguists—argues that language merely influences thought and decision-making without strictly determining them. This theory is relevant to the present study as it highlights the significant role of language in shaping a speaker's worldview. Given that Tiv proverbs are integral to the cultural worldview of the Tiv people, the Whorfian theory provides a useful framework for understanding how the Tiv perceive themselves, interpret events and phenomena in their environment, and articulate these perceptions through proverbial expressions.

Empirical Review

Benedict (2021) examined the didactic language in Yoruba Proverbs. The study aimed to find out and establish the didactic elements present in Yoruba proverbs. The study adopted the speech act theory in conjunction with the politeness theory as the theoretical framework, and the qualitative research approach was used as the research design. The study findings revealed that Yoruba proverbs serve certain didactic roles. The didactic relevance of Yoruba proverbs is reflected in the fact that they teach the natives of Yoruba moral lessons of instructing, cautioning, advising the younger ones, and settling

individual disputes. The study findings added that proverbs are always in all places, and because the Yoruba proverbs deal with real-life situations, they apply to everything existing in society. The study concluded that proverbs constitute one of the most valuable media of instruction in Africa and even in Nigeria.

In the same vein, Odebunmi (2008) examined the pragmatic function of crisis-motivated proverbs in Ola Rotimi's *The Gods are Not to Blame* by applying the pragmatic act theory of Mey (2001). He identified two types of crisis-motivated proverbs: social crisis-motivated proverbs and political crisis-motivated proverbs. To him, these are characterised by practices such as counselling, challenging, persuading, encouraging, threatening, and admitting, among others etc. He concluded that studying proverbs from a pragmatic perspective gives an insight into the paremiological tool and has a pedagogic function.

Mensah (2010) undertakes a morpho-syntactic description of Efik Proverbs. (Efik is a language spoken in Southern Cross River State). The major aim of this work, as he states, is to preserve a valuable part of Efik language, culture, and literary form. He observes that proverbs are a morpho-syntactic construction of different kinds, structures, and functions. His linguistic investigation of the internal structures of Efik proverbs highlights aspects of Efik language and culture that are on the verge of extinction. He argues further that proverbs do not only have stylistic and sociolinguistic relevance; they have structural relationships which they enter into in the lexicon.

Orndir (2021) investigated *Humour, Vulgarly and Meaning in Tiv Proverbs*. According to his study, African languages have a vast number of proverbs available to them for many uses in communication. One of the African languages rich in proverbs is Tiv, a language spoken by the Tiv people, mostly found in Benue State of Nigeria. Many functions of Tiv proverbs have been investigated, including the communication of ethical values, wisdom, for social control, inter alia. An important type of Tiv proverbs which has been neglected over time is Tiv humorous proverbs.

This study investigates humour, vulgarity and meaning in Tiv proverbs and the peculiarity of the choice of words used in achieving humour in Tiv Proverbs. Using the General Theory of Verbal Humour (GTVH), the study carries out a descriptive

analysis of 20 Tiv proverbs from Akôsu Adeioyongo's Tiv Anzaakaa: A Collection with English Translations and B. D. Iortyom's Mpase u Anzaakaa a Tiv. The word-for-word translation method is used in translating the proverbs from Tiv to English, and the descriptive method of analysis is used in describing the linguistic features in the proverbs. The study finds that Tiv proverbs achieve humour and meaning by making use of vulgar words, especially those that concern private parts of the body like tswar (anus), ijuwa (penis), and ikyul (vagina). The study concludes that Tiv humorous proverbs may have to undergo lexical modifications for them to be useful to the young ones, and for them to remain relevant in the face of the growing need to observe decorum and decency in public discourses

Udu and Shagba (2018) examined *The Efficacy and Relevance of Tiv Proverbs in Conflict Resolution*. The study aims to examine how Tiv proverbs (Anzaakaa) are a common feature of social discourse, especially among the elderly. The study observed that people pay more attention to proverbial expressions than plain language. The wisdom implanted in Tiv proverbs makes them relevant and efficacious in tackling conflict situations. This paper contains a vivid description of a wide array of conflict situations that call for the use of proverbial expressions as an instrument of conflict resolution. As theoretical frameworks, the authors drew significant insights from the just war theory and pacifism to explain the basis for conflict situations. In doing a pragmatic analysis of Tiv proverbs, the speech act theory guided our discussion. Primary and secondary sources of data collection were explored. Primary sources were by means through oral interviews and the authors' intuitive knowledge of Tiv proverbs, while secondary sources were by means through the reading of published proverbs. The paper concludes that, if used appropriately, proverbs can successfully achieve the intended effect of reconciliation of the parties in conflict. The paper finally recommends that proverbs should be studied carefully and used together with other means, such as legislation and court injunctions, to resolve conflicts.

Bergsma (1970), many years ago, researched a Tiv proverb that is still relevant to Tiv culture. His study empirically investigated the pervasive role of Tiv proverbs in daily social interactions as a mechanism for social and personal control within the Tiv community. Employing a qualitative methodology,

Bergsma analysed Tiv proverbs, primarily from the *Anzaakaa* collection, presenting them in Tiv with literal and idiomatic English translations, and incorporating commentary from Tiv informants to support his hypothesis. The core theory posited was that the consistent use of proverbs serves as a significant means of social control. Findings revealed that these proverbs are consistently used for various purposes, including controlling activities without force, shaming, navigating difficult situations without losing face, expressing praise, in prophetic utterances, and providing explanations for the inexplicable, such as illness. A key observation was that elders deliberately use proverbs to obscure meaning from younger generations, who often lack understanding due to modern schooling, highlighting a generational gap in traditional knowledge. The study concluded that Tiv proverbs are a vital verbal art form integral to maintaining social order and cultural identity, despite contemporary challenges to their intergenerational transmission.

Methodology

The study uses the descriptive research design. This design will help to uncover the instances of Tiv proverbial utterances and describe how proverbs operate within the language. The study also uses both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources include oral interviews from elderly Tiv speakers who are vast in Tiv proverbs.

Random sampling was used to select twenty (20) respondents from different Tiv-speaking communities within four (4) Local Government Areas of Benue State. Five respondents were interviewed in each of the local governments to gain knowledge on Tiv proverbs and their cultural significance. The communities selected were:

- a) Vandeikya: Ihugh, Vandeikya Urban, and Tse-Mker
- b) Konshisha: Korinya, Agbeede, and Wuese
- c) Gboko: Igyorov, Gboko-South and Tiv some members of Traditional council
- d) Ushongo: Lessel, Mbaaka, and Mbagwa

Notes were taken for proper coding and data analysis. Also, the researcher's intuition and personal observation served as a strong means for data collection. The secondary sources involve

the use of books, journals, and seminar papers related to the subject matter. Whorfianism was used as the analytical tool for data analysis.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

Table 1: *Tiv Proverbs of Conflict Resolution and Peaceful Co-existence*

S/N	Tiv Proverb	Tiv Interpretation	English Interpretation
1	Ka we a hii ihundugh u nande ya wou.	or ka nan hii kwaghbo shin u dedoo cii kpaa, ka nan hii hen ya u nan cii ve ior mba ken won ve fa ye.	Charity begins at home.
2	Iyuhe ka mtwem.	A lu u soo we or nan a za hemem ga yô, we kpa u za ken hemem ga.	Jealousy/envy hinders progress (both for the envied and the envious).
3	U ya gege u ya i hóón.	ka we a zer eren kwaghbo gbem iyange a va kur a we.	What goes around comes around.
4	Anngbyan doon ken ikyôngo	anngbyanev mba vihin ken ikyôngo ga.	Family bonds are resilient; minor flaws or disagreements among siblings do not destroy the core relationship.
5	Ka ityemmiôngo mbagbera ve fa iywa ye.	ka u teman imiôngo vea anngbyanev shin mbawannor henen kwagh imiôngo mzechemen a ve ye.	Collective wisdom/discussion leads to progress.
6	Kulekule hembra ayem.	hembra kan a inja u eren kwagh sha er agee ou a kom la.	Slow and steady wins the race.
7	Timtyô u or saan ishe ga.	ka we a nôngon kwagh yô, kwagh hembe'u ga.	Perseverance overcomes challenges.
8	Daar ka un a yôhól yô, ankpuukpu kpa a ya wua.	kwagh ka una dumbur yo, hanma or cii ka nan er gbayol a mi.	When there is abundance, everyone benefits.
9	Amar nga a due mba kera yeren imio ga.	ka kera ôron ken myer ga.	Important matters cannot be kept secret.
10	Ka we a lu a ibyume iywa u hembem amondo.	ka we a lu wanye u lanen kwagh yô, kwagh a tsule'u.	Diligence and perseverance lead to success/ease.

Source: fieldwork, 2025

Table 1 discusses Tiv proverbs focused on conflict resolution and fostering peaceful co-existence, emphasising individual accountability and the benefits of communal harmony. For instance, *Ka wea hii hundugh u nande ya wou* (Charity begins at home) highlights that actions, good or bad, originate from one's immediate environment. The collection also warns against negative traits like jealousy, as seen in *Iyuhe ka mtwem* (Jealousy/envy hinders progress), and stresses the importance of collective deliberation for progress, exemplified by *Ka ityemiongo mbagbera ve fa iwa ye* (Collective wisdom/discussion leads to progress). These proverbs collectively guide individuals towards responsible behaviour and collaborative approaches to maintain societal peace.

Table 2: *Tiv Proverbs of Socialisation*

S/N	Tiv Proverb	Tiv Interpretation	English Interpretation
1	Anngbyan ka nan a lu sha ipyungwa u ya i eregh.	or wou ka nan a lu sha kwagh yô, ka nan umbur we keng.	When a sibling is in power, they should remember their kin.
2	Ka kôôm kon u ombor ga.	or nan gande ave yô, nan taver u wan nan kwagh.	You cannot bend a dry stick. (A stubborn person is hard to advise.)
3	Ka ape igyo i vughur la, i ye ye.	ka hen ape or nan shilen la, nan zoo a kwaghyan u nan ye.	Where the goat grazes, there it eats. (You reap where you sow.)
4	Ambe ye ishuzwaa ga.	kwagh u a lu ikyua a we, hingir u wou.	What is close to you becomes yours.
5	Ka we a zende pepe, u kume amine.	ka we a ande sha zayol, u na iywasen.	If you start early, you will finish quickly.
6	Zer gbem hembra ikpyagher.	ka we a eren kwagh môm gbem, iyange ikyôr i laa'u.	Persistence/consistency is better than sporadic effort.
7	kpekpe karen ivyaan ga.	ape zaiyol alu la, a er nan-nan kpa ka a va due ken igbar.	A secret cannot be hidden forever.
8	Or kuman sha kwagh u nan.	kwagh u a lu u wou yô, or ngohol hen we ga.	A person is sufficient for their own affairs. (What is yours, no one can take from you.)
9	Kwagh wou iyol you hembra.	kwagh u a lu u wou yô, ka we a er a mi daang kpa, or nan we zwa ga.	Your own matter is best handled by yourself.
10	Ka we a har ikpya, u kighir wegh sha mi.	ka we a lu a kwagh yô, u wa iyol sha mi.	If you have a treasure, you must guard it.

Source: field, 2025

Table 2 discusses Tiv proverbs centred on socialisation, offering insights into proper social conduct, family relationships, and the values that strengthen community bonds. They underscore the importance of kin support and reciprocal duties, as conveyed by *Anngbyan ka nan a lu sha ipyungwa u ya i eregh* (When a sibling is in power, they should remember their kin). The proverbs also address personal traits that influence social interactions, such as the difficulty in advising a stubborn person (*Ka kôôm kon u ombor ga* - You cannot bend a dry stick), and reinforce the idea that effort yields reward (*Ka ape igyo i vughur la, i ye ye* - Where the goat grazes, there it eats). This table guides navigating social roles and contributing positively to the community.

Table 3: *Didactic Proverbs that impart wisdom and knowledge*

S/N	Tiv Proverb	Tiv Interpretation	English Interpretation
1	Bagu u fan kwagh ye agbo u nyian ga.	kwagh ka un a wanger we ka u lu sulaa sha er u gba ken kwaghbo ga yô.	Foresight prevents trouble.
2	Tinge bagu tse ku ka myenge.	Ka we a haa iyol inya ga yô u palegh kwaghtseren.	Humility/flexibility avoids trouble.
3	Ka ape igyo i vughur la, i ye ye.	ka hen ape or nan shilen la, nan zoo a kwaghyan u nan ye.	Where the goat grazes, there it eats. (You reap where you sow.)
4	Ambe ye ishuzwaa ga.	kwagh u a lu ikyua a we, hingir u wou.	What is close to you becomes yours.
5	Ka we a zende pepe, u kume amine.	ka wea ande sha zayol, u na iywasen.	If you start early, you will finish quickly.
6	Zer gbem hembra ikpyagher.	ka we a eren kwagh môm gbem, iyange ikyôr i laa'u.	Persistence/consistency is better than sporadic effort.
7	Kpekpe karen ivyaan ga	ape zayol a lu la, a er nan-nan kpa ka a va due ken igbyar.	A secret cannot be hidden forever.
8	Or kuman sha kwagh u nan.	kwagh u a lu u wou yô, or ngohol hen we ga.	A person is sufficient for their own affairs. (What is yours, no one can take from you.)
9	Kwagh wou iyol you hembra.	kwagh u al u u wou yo, ka we a er a mi daang kpa, or nan we zwa ga.	Your own matter is best handled by yourself.
10	Ka we a ta kpev iju u huma wegh.	u kpera i i a zaan a we.	If you throw a stone, you will hurt your hand. (Carelessness leads to harm.)

Source: field work, 2025

Table 3 discusses didactic Tiv proverbs that impart wisdom and knowledge, focusing on prudence, self-awareness, and avoiding common pitfalls. They highlight the crucial role of foresight in preventing problems, as illustrated by *Bagu u fan kwagh ye agbo u nyian ga* (Foresight prevents trouble). The proverbs also advocate for humility and adaptability, suggesting that *Tinge bagu tse ku ka myenge* (Humility/flexibility avoids trouble) is key to navigating life's challenges. Furthermore, they emphasise the power of consistent effort, seen in *Zer gbem hembra ikpaer* (Persistence/consistency is better than sporadic effort), and caution against the negative consequences of carelessness, as in *Ka wea ta kpev iju u huma wegh* (If you throw a stone, you will hurt your hand). This collection serves to guide individuals toward wise decisions and responsible living.

Discussion of Findings

The findings show that there are Tiv Proverbs of Conflict Resolution and Peaceful Co-existence. For instance, *Ka wea hii ihyundugh u nande ya wou* (Charity begins at home) highlights that actions, good or bad, originate from one's immediate

environment. This finding corroborates Udu and Shagba's (2018) work, which specifically examines the efficacy and relevance of Tiv proverbs in conflict resolution.

The findings also indicate the presence of Tiv Proverbs of Socialisation. For example, *Anngbyan ka nana lu sha ipyungwa u ya i eregh* (When a sibling is in power, they should remember their kin) underscores the importance of kinship support and reciprocal duties. This finding corroborates Bergsma's (1970) research, where he finds that most Tiv proverbs relate to questions of social approbation and the control of behaviour.

Furthermore, the findings reveal Didactic Tiv Proverbs that impart wisdom and knowledge. For instance, *Bagu u fan kwagh ye agbo u nyian ga* (Foresight prevents trouble) emphasises the crucial role of clear understanding in avoiding difficulties. This finding corroborates Bergsma's (1970) study, which identifies proverbs as tools for "controlling activities without the use of force" and providing "general explanations" for complex aspects of the Tiv environment, thereby imparting wisdom.

Conclusion

The Tiv proverbs are a fundamental reflection of Tiv culture, serving as vital tools for shaping attitudes and behaviours. They are instrumental in socialising individuals, resolving conflicts, and embodying moral lessons and wisdom within the community. As a linguistic heritage passed through generations, these proverbs constitute a valuable medium of instruction, epitomising moral lessons that guide members of African societies. Their diverse applications, including offering warnings, promoting dispute resolution, distinguishing good from evil, providing advice, and encouraging the young, underscore the indispensable role of proverbs within the Tiv language and culture.

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