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## Proverbial Representations of Children in Russian and Yorùbá Linguistic Worldviews

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### **Abstract**

*Proverb and sayings are metaphorical portrayals of social ideas. The social ideas, which are often built from individual or societal experiences, are also the conventional and fundamental ways through which races and clans conceptualize and see the world. This paper examines the representations and perceptions of children in Russian and Yorùbá proverbs, sayings and general linguistic worldviews. It attempts to show the socio-cultural, anthropological and linguistic imports of children and childbirth in the two civilizations. The worldview theory is used to explore the peculiarities, similarities and differences in the representation of children and childbirth Russia and Yoruba, and the position is advanced the representations in the two are not fundamentally different from what obtains in other countries of the world.*

**Key Words:** *Worldview, proverbs, sayings, children, Russia, Yoruba*

### **Résumé**

*Le proverbe et les dictons sont des représentations métaphoriques des idées sociales. Les idées sociales, qui sont souvent construites à partir d'expériences individuelles ou sociétales, sont également les moyens*

*conventionnels et fondamentaux par lesquels les races et les clans conceptualisent et voient le monde. Cet article examine les représentations et les perceptions des enfants dans les proverbes, les dictons et les visions linguistiques générales du monde en russe et en yorùbá. Il tente de montrer les implications socioculturelles, anthropologiques et linguistiques des enfants et de l'accouchement dans les deux civilisations. La théorie de la vision du monde est utilisée pour explorer les particularités, les similitudes et les différences dans la représentation des enfants et de l'accouchement en Russie et en Yoruba. L'article argue que les représentations proverbiales des enfants dans la vision du monde russe et yoruba sont les mêmes avec celles d'autres pays du monde.*

**Mots-clés:** *Vision du monde, proverbes, dictons, enfants, Russie, Yoruba*

## **Introduction**

Language is the mirror through which social perspectives, culture, and human behavioural patterns are observed and it is a veritable index of the world view of the people. Concepts such as food, love, children and many others are reflected through language. In the view of Martin (2015), nothing defines a culture as distinctly as its language, and the element of language that best encapsulates a society's values and beliefs is its proverbs. Since language mirrors the society, to a certain extent social concepts are reflected through proverbs and sayings. A Proverb has been described as an expression which, owing its birth to the people, testifies to its origin in form and phrase (Meider, 2004). Meider further defines proverb as a "short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorable form and which is handed down from generation to generation" (Meider 1985: 119). However, in the view of N.R Norrick (1985) a linguist, a proverb is a traditional, conversational, didactic genre with

general meaning, a potential free conversational turn, preferably with figurative meaning.

Aduradola and Oyetoro (2013) also describe proverbs as laconic and condensed sayings which express conventional ideas and beliefs. In line with this assertion, a proverb expresses a fundamental truth that is, a truism, in homely language, often adorned, however, with metaphor and sarcasm. In contemporary sense, proverbs are time-tested stepping stones that reveal the soul of oral cultures. In Africa, proverbs are seen as parts of African spoken language and folk literature which has its origin in oral tradition. Amongst Africans, especially the Yorùbá, wisdom and information are passed from the elders to the youth via proverbs and sayings. Даль, a Russian collector of proverbs who is considered as the father of Russian proverb collectors, opines that a proverb is: “это коротенькая притча; это «суждение, приговор, поучение, высказанное обиняком и пущенное в оборот под чеканом народности».” ». (Даль, 1993:14). A proverb is a short parable; it is the judgment, opinion, sentence and precepts expressed in plain outwardness and put in circulation under the people's stamp. Every culture and language has their own proverbs and sayings which belong to the popular culture and tradition of their language and they evolved throughout time.

Daramola (2013) further asserts that the existence of proverbs and sayings dates back to time immemorial and they remain a very powerful and effective instrument for the transmission of culture, philosophy, social morality and values and the sensibility of the people. The linguistic problem of description of the world view of a particular group of people has attracted considerable debate in contemporary research the world over. It is on this premise that we examine the representation of the children in Russian and Yorùbá proverbs and sayings in order to bring out the anthropological

linguistic peculiarities as well as the national and universal peculiarities. The paper has the following structure. Section 1 is introduction while section 2 is on anthropological linguistics, Russian and Yorùbá people with their different worldviews. Section 3 discusses the theoretical framework. Section 4 presents an anthropological linguistic analysis of the representation of children in Russian and Yorùbá proverbs and sayings. Section 5 discusses the research findings while section 6 concludes the work.

### **Anthropological Linguistics**

Anthropological linguistic is an integrative study that examines the worldview of a people in the light of their national language, which is seen as the exponent of a peculiar national or ethnic mentality (Махметова, 2015). It is a branch of linguistics that fuses linguistics and anthropology. Anthropological linguistic studies the manifestation of the culture of a people as reflected in language. Anthropological linguistic is an emerging field of research that explores the relationship between language, conceptualization and culture. Фархутдинова (2000) describes anthropological linguistics as: Лингвокультурология изучает язык как феномен культуры. Это определенное видение мира сквозь призму национального языка, когда язык выступает как выразитель особой национальной ментальности."A field of linguistics that studies language as a phenomenon of culture. It is a definite view of the world that is seen through the prism of a national language, when language acts as the exponent of a particular national mentality.

In addition to this, Sharifian (2011) opines that anthropological linguistic attempts to understand language as a subsystem of culture and examine how various language features reflect and embody culture (Sharifian, 2011). In a broad sense the aim of anthropological linguistic is the vivid description of the world picture that is presented in the colloquial speech of native speakers in diverse discourses and

the results of the personification of the material and spiritual culture of a living language (Токапев, 2009). Our world is understood, interpreted and expressed by the means of language. In order to know and comprehend language, it is necessary to pay attention to its native speaker, since language is directly related to life, human activities and human thought.

The development of anthropocentric paradigm was based on the consciousness that language is a human establishment and it cannot be understood and explained beyond its relationship with the creator of language and the user (humans) (Кубрякова, 1994). Anthropocentrism has been defined by Кубрякова (1994), as “the tendency to make man the focal point of all theoretical premise” Humans are not simply involved in the analysis of certain phenomena but also determine the prospects of this analysis and its ultimate goal (Кубрякова, 1994: 3).

### **The Russians and their Language**

The Russians (русские, russkiye) are an East Slavic ethnic group who are natives of Eastern Europe. The majority of Russians inhabit the nation state of Russia, while notable minorities exist in other former Soviet States. A large Russian diaspora also exists all over the world, with notable numbers in the United States, Canada, Israel and Germany. The Russian language is classified as a language that belongs to the Indo-European group of languages. It is an East Slavic language and the official language in Russia, Belarus and Kyrgyzstan. Russian is the largest native language in Europe with a population of 144 million native speakers in Russia, Belarus, parts of Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan (Арефьев, 2006). Russian is one of the working languages of the United Nations' Organization (UN), alongside Chinese, French, English, Arabic and Spanish. It is the unofficial but widely spoken language in Ukraine, Moldova, Estonia, Latvia and other 15 countries that constituted the former Soviet Union. The Russian language

consists of various dialects. However, the Russian literary language evolved from the Moscow dialect after Moscow became the official capital of the Russian State in the 14th century (Pulkina, 1984).

### **Yorùbá People and their Language**

The Yorùbá people are one of the largest ethno-linguistics groups of people in Sub Saharan Africa. They exist throughout West Africa extending to Benin, Ghana, Sierra Leone and Togo. The largest concentration of the Yorùbá can however, be found in the South western part of Nigeria. Yorùbá is one of the Kwa languages and is a subgroup of the Niger-Congo family. It is one of the three major languages in Nigeria, the others being Hausa and Igbo (Akintoye, 2010). The Yorùbá dialect variety is made up of several dialects that are mostly mutually intelligible. The usage of the standard variety of the language cuts across all the dialects and knits the Yorùbá people together. It is taught in schools, and used in the media and other administrative fields. It is also keenly studied in Europe and America not only for essential intrinsic linguistic purposes but also for social reasons among people of African-American heritage in the United States (Yusuf, 2011). Traces of the Yorùbá language also remain in the oral literature of Yorùbá descendants now domiciled in Brazil, Cuba, Trinidad and Tobago as well as parts of the West Indies (Yusuff, 2014). According to Oyebade (2011), the Yorùbá language is spoken by around thirty million (30,000,000) people in Nigeria as a first language. The number however, rises to thirty two million (32,000,000) if second language speakers are included.

### **Review of Relevant Studies on Yorùbá and Russian Literature**

Faloju & Akinlade (2018) assert that a people's language is a veritable index of their worldview. Proverbs and sayings in particular offer a vivid glimpse into the dominant thinking in any society (Faloju & Akinlade, 2018:182). A lot of works abound on Yorùbá proverbs and Russian proverbs and these literatures address different aspects of

proverbs and sayings. Omobowale, Omobawale & Falase 2019, provide a contextual approach to study of children in Yorùbá popular culture. The authors in their work probe the character formation of children through socialization; they explore the value of children and discuss the wellbeing and education of a child. Omobowale et al. (2019), citing Akinyemi 2003; Ogunnaike & Houser 2002, describe children as the heritage of the society, the harbinger of the future and the sustainer of the society, who must be cared for and adequately socialised to ensure societal continuity (Omobowale, Omobowale & Falase, 2019).

Omobowale et al further opine that the value of children is conveyed through popular culture, with roots in the past and still very relevant and used in contemporary times. Aduradola and Oyero 2013, examining the pragmatic import of children in Yorùbá proverbs, in their work grouped proverbs on children according to the following thematic headings: priority care for children, planning for the future of the children, emphasis on child's training /education, proverbs opposing child labour, proverbs on guidance for children and proverbs reflecting consciousness of present action on the future of children. Adeyemi 2013 also stressed the import of children in Yoruba culture. According to Adéy mi in Yoruba worldview, there exist three types of blessings which people always pray for: Ire owó (financial blessing), ire m (blessing of the fruit of the womb/children), ire àìkú baál` r` (long life and prosperity). Thus the apex of life fulfillment is to have children, one's own image who would transfer one's cultural values to the next generation and inherit the legacies of past generations (Adéy mi, 2013:10).

Russian researcher Рожина, (2011) presents an analysis of the representation of the concept "child" in paremiological fund of Russian and English in terms of finding correlates of compliance. In addition to this, Шайхуллин (2012), worked on the comprehensive

comparative study of the Russian and Arabic proverbs, which reflect the relations between parents and children in the conceptual semantic and ethnic cultural aspects. According to Шайхуллин (2012) the national and cultural specific peculiarities of the Russian and the Arabic linguistic culture are imbedded in their proverbs (Шайхуллин, 2012). In spite of the plethora of literature on Russian and Yoruba and proverbs and sayings on children, to the best of our knowledge, none of these works have adequately provided a worldview approach on the representation of children in Russian and Yoruba proverbs and sayings.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The term worldview (*Weltanschauung*) in German has a long and fascinating history going back to Kant (Kant, 1986). It has been and is used not only in philosophy, but also among others in theology, anthropology, or in education. The term worldview has been described as the culturally-dependent, generally subconscious, fundamental organization of the human mind. This organization appears as a set of presupposition or assumption that makes one to feel, think, or act in a predictable manner. In the view of Kearney, worldview is a culturally organized macro-thought, that is, those dynamically inter-related basic assumptions of a people that determine much of their behaviour and decision making, as well as organizing much of their body of symbolic creations and ethno philosophy in general (Kearney, 1984: 1). The world view theory is a theory that is applicable to culture, language, philosophy, religion, and even formal and informal learning using proverbs and sayings. This research paper makes use of the worldview theory, a theory in cultural anthropology to interpret the cultural linguistic representation of children in Russian and Yorùbá proverbs and sayings as well as the worldview of the Russians and the Yorùbá on children.



## Anthropological Linguistic Analysis of Russian and Yorùbá Proverbs and Sayings on Children and Child Birth

Russian proverbs and sayings reflect the concept of children, mentality and the worldview of the Russians about children and childbirth. Examples of such proverbs and sayings include:

- Дети- благодать Божья – Children are God's grace (blessing). Russians believe that for any family to be blessed with children, such a family must have found grace, favour and kindness. The worldview theory treats the basic assumption of Russian people that that children are given by God. Another variant of the proverb is-

- Дети - благодать наша - Children are our blessings. The worldview theory explains the worldview of Russians in this proverb which implies that children are given to as a blessing from above. The proverb further view children as a source of joy, hope, and happiness to their parents and loved ones. Indeed not every married couple experience such happiness and blessing.

Russian proverbs and sayings emphasise the need for proper upbringing and training of children in the family.-

- Дети наказывай стыдом, а не кнутом – Children are punished by shame not by whip. The worldview theory brings to light the image of children in the anthropological linguistics analysis of this proverb. In Russian traditional and contemporary society, moral pressure applied on a child is often viewed as much more effective and stronger wrong rather, he or she should be told why he or she is wrong.

Human beings in every society are practically the same by nature although some differences may exit in their behavioural traits. The sameness which exists in human nature can be seen in the Russian proverb below:

- Дети одной матери и те не разные бывают - Children of the same mother and they are not different.

The concept of the worldview theory reveals the inter– related basic assumptions about the Russians as a group of people who are resilient

and brave. Apart from this, the mention of God resounds through Russian proverbs and sayings. These proverbs and sayings depict the relationship between man and God.

In the olden days there is a belief among the Russians that any one who has many children is not forgotten by God. This is due to the belief that God always provides for such a person:

- У кого детей много, тот не забыт от Бога – He who has many children, will not be forgotten by God.

Another Russian proverb reinforces the belief in the supernatural provision of God and divine guidance

- Бабенка не без ребёнка. Не по- холосту живём : Бог велел.- A woman with a child. Is not living a single life God leads.

Russian sayings portray children as flowers and this is evident in the following sayings:

- Дети цветы жизни –children are the flowers of life.

The birth of a child into a family brings special meaning and joy to the life of its parents and the entire family members. The application of the worldview theory to the anthropological linguistics analysis of this proverb brings to light the worldview of the Russians to the birth of a child and the perception and behaviour of the Russians to children. Children in traditional and contemporary Russian societies are considered as ornaments of life.

- Дети цветы жизни но лучше когда они стоят на чужом подоконнике Children are the flowers of life but it is better if they stand on somebody's else windowsill.

- Без детей горе, а с детьми двое- Many children ,many cares; no children, no felicity-This implies that without children is grief and with them the grief becomes double.

This Russian saying depicts the emotional state of mind of couples who have no children in Russian traditional and contemporary societies and how the societies view them. It further shows the mentality of the Russians regarding children that turned out to be delinquents. The worldview theory brings to light the belief of the

Russians as regards such children. These children are believed to bring grief and sadness to their parents. In addition to this, the worldview theory reveals that lack of children in traditional and contemporary Russian society also causes sorrow. Another Russian proverb further expresses this view which existed in traditional and contemporary Russian society –

- У кого детки, у того и заботы (бедки) - He who has children has worry (misfortune)

In the application of the worldview theory to the proverb above one can infer that when couples have no children in Russian society, they grieve and long to have children, however when they have children and the children grew up and became, for example, murderers or drug addicts, the sorrow and pain of their parents doubles or increases.

In addition to the aforementioned, the truth about human nature is expressed through Russian proverbs and sayings –

- Все Адамовы детки. – Everyone is Adam's children.

Human beings are the same by nature and there is no much difference in them.

Russian proverbs reveal the truth that human beings produce after their kind. This truth is evident in Russian proverb –

- У Мирона детки Миронычи, у Ивана - Иванычи.- Miron have mironch's children, Ivan has children named Ivans. Все Иванычи Ивановы детки – all Ivans are children of Ivans.

Using the worldview theory to analyse this Russian proverb, the peculiarity of Russians and the behavioural pattern and resemblance which exist among them and their children are brought to light:

- Все одного отца дети.- И одной матки детки.да не равны- And children of the same womb. Yes not equal. Another variant of the proverb is –
- Все детки, да не одной матки. –All the children, yes not by the same mother

И одной матки детки, да не равны- And children of the same

mother yes they are not equal

- Из одной клетки, да не равны детки- From the same cage, yes not the equal children

In traditional Russian society the use of the lexemes жена, муж и родит (husband, wife and birth) occur in Russian proverbs to reflect the custom that was imposed on husbands to harrow sands during birth. Hence the proverb

- Жена родит- муж боронит (обычай) – a wife gives birth the - husband harrow sands (a tradition).

The above proverb reflects the custom and tradition of forcing a man (husband) to harrow sand in the throes of a woman in labour. In the analysis of this proverb the worldview theory reveals the culturally organized macro-thought that determines the behaviour, actions and the decisions of Russians during the birth of a child.

One of the signs used to discover the sex of a child in Russian culture can be seen in Russian proverbs.

- Если первые три месяца беременности легки – родится мальчик, тяжелы - девочка - If the first three months of pregnancy are easy-a boy will be born, and if it is hard (difficult) a girl will be born.

The worldview theory further portrays the dominant thought and worldview of Russians on the sex of a child during pregnancy. In traditional Russian society it was believed that if a mother moves forward with the left foot a male child will be born and if she moves forward with her right foot a female child will be given birth to. This belief is expressed through the Russian sayings:

- Мать левой ногой вперед выступает – мальчик родится, правой – девочка. – A mother moves with the left leg forward – a baby boy will be born, with the left leg forward – a baby girl will be born.

In Russian traditional society there exists the belief that when God gives a person a child God provides the means of taking care of the child. This is evident in the following Russian Proverbs:

- Дай, Бог, деток, дай и путыных- God, gives children, he gives also in the dessert.

- Дай Бог, кому детей родить, тому их и вскормить - God grant, to whomsoever, to give birth to children, to them and to feed. These Russian proverbs reflect the worldview of the Russian on the divine providence.

The socio-cultural and economical import of children is further illustrated in the following proverbs:

- Дом с детьми – базар; дом без детей могила – A house with children is a market, a house without children is a graveyard. A market in any village is a symbol of growth and development while a grave is a symbol of sadness, sorrow.

- Семья без детей – что часы без гирьки – A family without children –what a clock without weight. The denotative meaning of this proverb is –a family without children is likened to a watch without a weight.

In the Russian's worldview and mentality childhood is considered as a golden period in the life of children -Детство — время золотое, ест и пьет и спит в покое – childhood is a golden period, eat, drink and sleep in peace. This proverb brings to light the childhood period as a time devoid of worry for the child.

Many Yorùbá proverbs (òwe) are derived from traditions customs (àṣà) that constitute part of the worldview, cosmology and philosophy of the Yorùba. Using the worldview theory in the anthropological linguistic analysis of Yorùbá proverbs about children the worldview of the Yorùbá people on the priority care given to children is portrayed in the following proverbs:

- A gb ọmọ jó l'ọmọ n ọmọ ojú- He who carries a baby and dances with him/ her is the one the child will be familiar with.

The above proverb implies that it is the person who takes care of a child that will be recognized by the child. Apart from this, it also emphasis the importance of child care in traditional and contemporary Yorùbá society.

- Ojú merin ní bí mọ, igba ojú níí wo (tọọ)- Four eyes (husband and wife) gives birth to a child, two hundred eyes (many people ) train up a child.

The application of the worldview theory to the analysis of this proverb reveals the way of life of the Yorùbá people and their belief in training, caring and loving their children.

It is believed among the Yorùbá that one's gain in this life is a child .This belief is reaffirmed in the proverb

- ọmọ ni èrè ayé – The profit of one's life is a child.
- ọmọ ni kíí se ìdí bèbèrè ká f'ìlèkè sí ìdí ọmọ ẹlòmí- One cannot decide to decorate the bottom of another person's daughter when one's daughter has a well-rounded bottom.

This proverb emphasizes that one must not decorate another man's child with beads when one's child is in need of them. This yorùbá proverb shows the prevailing world view of the Yorùbá as regards children. They are considered as a group of people that must be given priority care in traditional and contemporary yorùbá societies.

The relevance of child training through formal and informal education cannot be over emphasised in yorùbá culture. Using the worldview theory to analyse proverbs on children, the belief of the Yoruba on a child that is not trained is revealed. The Yoruba believe that a child that is not trained will ultimately bring shame and dishonour not only to his parents or family but also to the entire society. This is evident in the proverb below:-

- ọmọ ti a kò kó ni yóò gbé ilé tí a kó ta. The Child we refuse to train (build up) will eventually sell off the house we have built.

In Yorùbá culture and tradition children are expected to be obedient not only to their parents but to the elders in the society. A child who disobeys his or her parent is considered as a mad child. Apart from this,

- Asiwèrè ọmọ l'on kọ ìbáwí baba rẹ - It is a mad child that reproves the correction of his father.

The birth of a child is often celebrated with fun fare in Yorùbá culture. In the worldview of the Yorùbá people even when a woman is barren, she is expected to celebrate with the family of a newly born child especially the mother. Such barren women buy gifts for the new mother and the baby. The linguistic world picture and the worldview of the of the Yorùbá people regarding childbirth, children and motherhood can further be seen in the following yorùbá proverbs and sayings:

Ayò abara kíún – A great joy.

This Yorùbá saying is used to explain or describe the birth of a child to a family Yorùbá culture. This saying portrays the joy experienced by people as a result of the birth of a newly born baby.

Èni ma bí mọ, a yọ fọlọmọ - He who is going to have a child will rejoice with woman who has children.

ọmọ yóò kú, ọmọ yóò yè, a òò kí ọlọmọ kú ewu –Whether a child will die or survive (after birth) we still congratulate the parents.

Children in traditional and contemporary yorùbá society are seen as ornaments, precious rare germs that bring pride and joy to their parents, family and the society. The Yorùbá also believe that a child is the product of wealth and if a man is wealthy it his children that inherit his wealth. These beliefs are portrayed in the proverbs and sayings below:

ọmọ l' èşó, ọmọ ni iyì ẹni - A child is an ornament, a child is one's honour.

ọmọ ni iyùn, ọmọ nide - A child is a precious coral and brass (precious gem).

ọmọ ni ìgbèyìn ọlà – A child is the end product of wealth

şòkòtò ní jogún idí, ọmọ ní jogún baba – It is the trouser that inherit the buttocks; it is the child that inherits the father's wealth (heritage).

The above proverbs reveal the philosophy of the yorùbá on a child. In the yorùbá tradition a child is also considered as one who bestows honour, prestige and glory on the parents

Another paradoxical view of the representation of a child in Yorùbá proverbs depicts a child as unreliable. Although in Yorùbá worldview, it is regarded as a thing of joy when children bury their aged parents. This paradox is expressed in the proverbs and sayings below:

- ọmọ, ẹni ni sini ló jọ ìkẹhìn – It is one child that bury one when one is dead
- ọmọ kò láyòlẹ́, ẹniọmọ sin ló bímọ -A child cannot be relied upon, only one buried (survived) by his or her children has really given birth.
- ọmọ ò wáyé ayò f' ẹnikan, ó di jọ ikú, kí a tó mẹnì tóbímọ - A child was not born to pass through trials and tribulation for anyone, it is the day of death that we know who has really given birth to a child.

In Yorùbá society it is generally believed that he who has at least one child is no longer considered as barren therefore such people are qualified to be called a parents.

- ọlomọ kan kúrò ní kí l'óbí –He or she who has a single child is qualified to be a parent.

Yorùbá culture through Yorùbá proverbs encourages proper planning for children and discourages having many children without the proper means of taken care of them and this is an integral part of the Yorùbá worldview, cosmology and philosophy:

- ọmọ bẹrẹẹ, òsì bẹrẹẹ- Plenty children, plenty poverty. Having a lot of children as earlier stated can lead to poverty.

The proverb is a caution for couples to avoid having many children because it maybe the difficult to take good care of them. In traditional Yorùbá society, in the olden days encourage parents having many children since many of them were farmers, the society supported the idea of many children for economic purposes. However, in contemporary Yorùbá society this proverb preaches having fewer children and making adequate plans for them shows a shift in the worldview of the Yorùbá people.

- Aya bẹrẹẹ, òsì bẹrẹẹ, bí a bí ọmọ t'o pỌ bi erùpẹ, ọmọ t'ógbọn ni olú ọmọ- Plenty of wives breed a lot of poverty; if one has children as



many as the sand, it is the wise ones among them that are proper children.

The above proverb is used to discourage having many children or amassing wives which will breed poverty, but having fewer but well trained children.

The care of children is very essential in Yorùbá worldview and a parents are expected to defend their children irrespective of their behaviour. This is portrayed in the proverbs below:

omọ ẹni kò ní burú tí tí ka lé e fún ẹkùn pajẹ - One's child cannot be so bad that one will drive him away to be devoured by the leopard.

In culture of the Yorùbá, children are expected to be guided by adults in the society since it is believed that children are limited in their wisdom, and understanding of issues when compared to adults. Hence, they must be guided, guarded and supervised by adults.

Àgbà ọjẹ l'ọjẹ wẹwẹ n tọ lẹyin – The younger masquerade follows the footsteps of the chief masquerade- The older (chief) masquerade is the model for younger masquerades. This proverb encourages guidance and provision of effective leadership to young adults and children in Yorùbá society.

Àgbà kii wà l'ọjà, k'orí omọ tuntun wọ –An elder cannot be in the market and watch the head of a newborn baby bend.

The connotative meaning of the proverb is that an elder's guidance and advice will help a child to act rightly in the society.

One of the obligations of a child is to greet his parents and anybody older than him or her in the community. The female child greets her parents by kneeling down while the male prostrates and it is considered rude and ill-mannered for any child not to greet his parents or any adult. This act features in Yorùbá saying:

ìdòbálẹ̀ ni omọ kí baba. –A child (boy) greets the father by prostrating.

## **Convergences and Divergences**

The Russians and the Yorùbá have similar proverbs and sayings on

children. The Russians for example, believe that children are beautiful gifts and they occupy an important position in the life of the parents. This belief is reflected in the Russian proverb - Дети цветы жизни – (children are the flowers of life). The Yorùbá like the Russians, have similar proverbs that depict children as precious gems. This proverb shows this depiction - ọmọ ni iyùn, ọmọ nide (a child is a precious coral and brass). Apart from this, the Russians perceive children as blessings from God and this is portrayed in their proverbs. The proverb - дети - благодать наша- (children are our blessings) corresponds to the Yorùbá proverb - ọmọ ni èrè ayé (the profit of one's life is a child) and the Yorùbá proverb ọmọ l' èşó, ọmọ ni iyì ẹnì (a child is an ornament, a child is one's honour).

The worldview of the Russians and the Yorùbá portrays children as blessings to the parents and also as the ones who will bring honour to the parents. The Russians through their proverbs and sayings compare a family without a child to a clock without weight. This comparison is reflected in the proverb - семья без детей – что часы без гирьки – (a family without children – is like a clock without weight). In Yorùbá proverbs and sayings this comparison does not exist. The Russian proverb - Дом с детьми – базар; дом без детей могила – A house with children is a market; a house without children is a graveyard. A market in any village is a symbol of growth and development while a grave is a symbol of sadness, sorrow. This Russian proverb emphasizes the importance of having children in Russian custom therefore, children are considered very important addition to the family and without them there is the likelihood of sorrow in such family. The Yorùbá on their own part also, often celebrate the arrival of a newborn baby with great joy and this is reflected in the Yorùbá proverb- Ayò abara kíún – a great joy.

The customs and traditions of the Russians and the Yorùbá are depicted in their proverbs and sayings. The lexises жена, муж и родит

(husband, wife and birth) are found in Russian proverbs to explain and describe the custom that was imposed on husbands to harrow sands during the birth of their children. Жена родит- муж бронит (обычай) – a wife gives birth the - the husband harrows sands. This tradition is peculiar to the Russians while the custom of the Yorùbá is also evident in the proverb - ìdòbálẹ̀ ni ọmọ kí baba. The indicators of determining the sex of a child can be seen in the Russian saying - мать левой ногой вперед выступает – мальчик родится, правой – девочка. A mother moves with the left leg forward – a baby boy will be born, with the left leg forward – a baby girl will be born. The Yorùbá have a proverb that shows the role of the elders in solving societal problems and in helping to guide and guard children (the young ones) -Àgbà kíí wà l ọjà, k orí ọmọ tuntun wọ – (an elder cannot be in the market and watch the head of a newborn baby bend). However, this sort of proverb does not exist among the Russians.

### Findings

The proverbs and sayings on children examined in this study reveal the dominant world views of both Russians and the Yorùbá. We found similarities, differences and peculiarities in the representation of children in Russian and Yorùbá proverbs. Russian proverbs reveal that children are gifts from God. Russian proverbs portray children as flowers of life while Yorùbá proverbs and sayings depict them as ivory or precious rare gem and having children is considered as dignifying. Russian proverbs and sayings further reveal the fundamental truth that all humans are equal having the same nature. The proverbs and sayings of the understudied cultures bring to light the importance of caring and training of children. In addition to this, Russian proverbs reaffirm the Russian worldview in the supernatural provision for women with children. The cultural etiquette of the Yorùbá as regards greeting is also revealed through Yorùbá proverbs and sayings however this does not exist in Russian proverbs and sayings. This study

further reaffirms the universality of the nature of proverbs and sayings and the peculiarity of the worldview of the Russians and the Yorùbá on children.

### **Recommendation and Conclusion**

It is clear that proverbs and sayings are symbolic expressions of people that describe their worldview and all activities of man. The relevance of proverbs and sayings and their role in any society cannot be overemphasized since they are flowers of popular wit and treasures of popular wisdom. In the teaching of Russian and Yorùbá there is need to emphasis cultural linguistic aspects of the two languages which are imbedded in their proverbs and sayings. This will promote understanding of the languages and give language learners a deeper understanding of the worldview of the Russian and Yorùbá.

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