

An Analytic Survey of the Roles of Animals in Siswati Proverbs

Jozi J. Thwala

MER Mathivha Centre for African Languages, Art and Culture, University of Venda,
P/Bag x5050 Thohoyandou 0950, South Africa
E-mail: Jozi.Thwala@univen.ac.za

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ABSTRACT This is an analytic survey of Siswati proverbs that employ animals to bring about their meanings. The characteristics and functions of the animals play a role in the formation of the proverbs. This is a qualitative study on thematic explications and stylistic observations. The analysis looks at the thematic classification, form and functionalistic perspective of proverbs. The theme considers humanness, good disposition, conceit, uncertainty, hardship, enmity, good fortune, misfortune, threats and obstinacy. The proverbs are singled out from other oral literature aspects such as riddles, idioms, folktales and praises. This is because of proverbs' unique characteristics of being rich in vocabulary, fixed, figurative, pithy and packed with wisdom of the ages. Proverbs are basic oral expressions of culture, social life, skills of verbal coercion effective means of communication and art of rational discourse. They enrich Siswati language because they are poetic in nature, loaded with symbols and metaphors. Their language is characterized by a wide use of figures of speech.

INTRODUCTION

Proverbs are statements intended to express a generally accepted truth. Very often when studying proverbs, the researchers do not pay so much attention to the words in which the thought is couched. They only think of implied meanings. By so doing, they miss out humour and light on the social life of the people which may otherwise be found in the proverbs.

Kasenene (1993: 30) contended that:

Siswati is extremely rich in proverbs which are used in everyday speech in different situations. Proverbs are short and condensed standardised statements intended to comment on situations and containing the beliefs and the commonly accepted values of the society. The form a very important part of oral tradition in Swazi culture because they reveal the wisdom and experiences of ancestors which are expressed in a witty and humorous way. Proverbs are commonly accepted as expressions of some truth.

Guma (1967: 65) defined proverbs as follows:

A pithy sentence with a general bearing on life. It serves to express "some homely truth" moral lesson in such an appropriate manner as to make one feel that no better words could have been used to describe the situation.

Mathumba (1988: 9) gave the following view on proverbs:

A concise stylised metaphorical sentence, usually displaying peculiar formal features, expressing a common truth familiar to and ac-

cepted by all the members of a particular language community.

Webster's New World Dictionary (1980: 144) defined proverb as:

A short saying in common used that strikingly express some supposed truth or familiar experience; adage; maxim; a person or thing that has become commonly recognized as a type of specified characteristics by word.

Most scholars regard proverbs as a summary of the experiences of the nation. However, these witty sayings chat and reflect the entire life and its dynamics. Thus, they display human behaviour through the use of animals. Some proverbs are derived from folktales, beliefs, attitudes, emotions and the entire system of thoughts.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative methodology is employed because the researcher seeks the perceptions, ideas and responses of individuals. Babbie (2007) stated that qualitative methodology, allows the researcher to analyse human behaviour in relation to his or her opinions, ideas and interaction with the surroundings. He further indicated that qualitative research seeks answers by examining various social and cultural settings. Consequently, a qualitative research is a feasible method to deeply understand unknown subjects through its selected source.

Data collection includes both primary and secondary sources. For primary sources, an

unstructured interview is used. An interviewee is requested to talk about a particular phenomenon on proverbs and the researcher records the responses. Secondary sources are based on published books, journals, magazines, articles, and other sources on the research topic at various levels.

Depiction of Themes in Siswati Proverbs, Using Various Animals

There are various themes that are depicted using animals' characteristics, and functions in Siswati proverbs. The specific themes that are highlighted are following: hardship, moral degeneration, conceit, uncertainty, misfortune, encouragement and fortune.

The themes and meanings of Siswati proverbs refer us to the central purpose and objectives of the study. The researcher refers to the semantic exploration, thematic and functional classification of the Siswati proverbs. Proverbs have a sole purpose which they serve; namely, to teach. Some modes of behavioural and conduct are embodied in folk sayings which serve the purpose of teaching the younger generations and the old in the society. Animals that are used in proverbs play a major role in teaching and learning. They cover a wide scope and range in language discourse. They extend over all areas of a nation. Their didactic nature is evident to both formal and informal education. The use of animals promotes symbolism connotative meanings and imagery.

The teaching and learning significances develops the intellect and interest in art, culture and rhetoric skills. They instil the valuable traditions, knowledge and skills which are essential for the development of the community. Ullman (1983: 215) commented about animal metaphors in addition to anthropomorphic and synesthetic metaphors when he said:

Another large group of animal images are transferred into the human sphere where they often acquire humorous, ironical, pejorative or even grotesque connotations. A human being can be likened to an inexhaustible variety of animals.

The Swazi nation relied much on social and cultural relevance of various animals. Consequently they developed definite ways of behaviour and interactions towards them. Mthethwa (2014: 192) gave this adage as an example on animal:

*Uyokomela elutsini njengentsetse.
(You will get dry on the sharp stick like a grasshopper)*

This is a dictum that is used as a threat that a wasteful person ends up starving and remains in critical situation. The word, *intsetse* (grasshopper) is used to qualify the saying. Makhan-ya (2006: 11) stated the following proverb:

*Imbuti iphekwe netimphondvo tayo.
(The goat has been cooked with its horns)*

This catchphrase depicts ill-advised and irresponsible act. When a goat is killed, it is skinned and the horns are removed before the commencement of cooking. Such imprudent venture depicts senselessness.

Animals Used for Depicting Hardship

Inja igugudza ematsambo lamadzala (The dog is chewing old bones). This describes a spatial setting of want especially a poor home. The people in the household cannot afford to slaughter a cow often. Therefore, their dogs must be satisfied with old bones. The saying may also be used to refer to someone who revives old feuds that are regarded as have long been settled.

Likati lilala etiko (The cat sleeps in the fireplace). Normally it is impossible for a cat to sleep on the hearth. When it does, it implies that the people have nothing to cook, and therefore, make no fire. The saying describes people who are starving.

Ufinya ngelulwimi njengenkomo (He or she cleans his nostrils with the tongue like a cow).

When a beast wants to clean its nostrils, it uses its tongue. A person referred to in this manner is one who has a great want, who lacks even a rag to clean his nose with. Not only that, but poverty seems to affect his mind as well, so that he sees nothing wrong with eating his own mucus. His action reflects an unbearable situation. The preceding characteristics of dogs, cats and cattle are used to depict hardships. Hardships are associated with misery, misfortune and austerity.

Animals Used to Delineate Moral Degeneracy

Ubophainja netinkhuni (He ties up the dog with firewood). This is an expression used of a very stingy person. The only reason why a person would tie up a dog with firewood would be so that the people may not go to the bush. This reflects selfishness and self-centredness on an individual.

Ukhwela etikwendlu njengenja (He climbs on top of the house like a dog). It is impossible for a dog to climb to the top of a hut. It may be used, for instance, when a young person behaves badly towards his elders. It is a person who lacks respect, humaneness and good moral nature.

Inyatsi iyaweya umutsi (The buffalo derides the tree). A buffalo is strong animal but will not go about trying to uproot trees. The saying is used of a lower rank person who despises those of higher rank. Usually it is used on people who lack discipline, moral values and good behaviour. This is used for a thoroughly bad and unscrupulous person, who has no respect for decency.

Luhlobo lolungabekelwe nja (It is a type from which a pup may not be taken). When a bitch is pregnant, the neighbours may request the owner to give them some pups when they are born. This reservation of pups is called *kubeka nja*. A person will not trouble himself to reserve the pups of a dog which does not look impressive. Some people have bad morals in such a way that one may not wish to be associated with them at all. This saying describes such people with deceptive character. The outside appearance looks attractive, appealing and glamorous, while inside is the opposite.

Likhiwa lelihle ligcwala timphetfu (A plum fig is full of worms). A fig may look very attractive on the outside, but when opened it may be found to be full of worms. This is an expression which is used of a person who is physically attractive, but whose character is bad. It is mainly used of women, although men are not excluded. A variant of this proverb employs the noun *tibungu*, instead of *timphetfu*, so that the proverb reads, *likhiwane lelihle ligcwala tibungu*. Both words, however, are synonymously used. A person who is described in this manner is a person with low morals. Moral degeneracy reflects unethical, unscrupulous and evil behaviour. The animals that are used are in proverbial expressions are the following: *inja* (dog), *inyatsi* (buffalo) and *timphetfu* (worms)

Animals Used to Depict Pride or Conceit

Pride goes with delight, self-esteem and satisfaction. It is a feeling of pleasure or satisfaction that you get when you or people connected with you have achieved something. There are many proverbs that depict pride, but our focus

is on those that use animals to portray pride in various contexts.

Timfene tihlekana tiphongo (The baboons laugh at each other's foreheads). Baboons have bulging and bloated foreheads. A baboon cannot see its own forehead. The meaning of the proverb is that people tend to see faults, errors and wrong doings to others and forget to concentrate on their own questionable actions, behaviours and characters.

Umzondvo awutiva kunuka (The garden bug is not aware of its own smell). The bug has a foul smell, but because that smell is part of it, it is not aware of it. This means that a person will not notice his own shortcomings, but will point out others. The variant of the above mentioned proverb is the following: *Licaca alitiva kunuka* (The polecat does not know its own smell). The polecat has an offensive smell. So strong is its smell that when anything comes into contact with it, it gets offensive stink too. The polecat, however, is not aware of its own smell, and does not seem to be inconvenienced by it. This proverb also means that nobody recognizes his own shortcomings and imperfections.

Udlela esitsebeni njengengwenyama (He stands on the eating mat like a lion). *Sitsebe* or eating mat is used for placing food such as meat. When a lion stands on the eating mat, with the meat under its huge paws, it is obviously challenging anyone to dare come near. This is an expression which is used of one who asserts his authority over others.

Nalapho kungekho lichudze khona liyasa (Even where there is no cock, the day dawns). There were no clocks in olden days. Even today many people still live without them. Clocks were, therefore, and still are, very useful for telling the time. The first crowing of the clocks announces the hours of the night. The second crowing ushers in the dawn. It is not the crowing of the cocks, however, which bring dawn. Thus even where there are no clocks, the day dawns. This expression is used when a person attempts to assert himself, as if without him nothing would happen. A person may be useful but he is not indispensable. It is the expression that is used of a person who is proud and obsessed with his own role and significance in the community. Animals that are used to portray conceit or pride are baboons, garden bug, polecat, lion and cock. The behavioural characteristics of the above-mentioned animals are evident.

Animals Used to Depict Uncertainty

Proverbs that are used to reflect uncertainty are the following:

Iyotala nkhomoni? (One wonders what sex the new-born calf will be). It is only when the calf is born that one is able to see whether it is male or female. However, it is not possible to tell that beforehand. The saying is an expression of doubt as to the outcome of something or a situation. The proverbial expression uses cattle as a significant animal to pronounce uncertainty.

Kayihlatjwa mvusi, ihlatjwa ngulabasembili (It [buck] is not killed by the one who rouses it, but by those ahead). The proverb is taken from the action of hunting. Usually a party may come upon a buck but fail to catch it, but it may run into another party of hunters and get caught. This proverb means that it is not the originator of an idea who usually reaps the rewards. Often, someone else takes the idea, works on it improves it, so that eventually the rewards go to him, and the originator is completely forgotten. The saying may also be used when many others have failed. The two animals that are used to portray uncertainty are cows and bucks. Their behavioural characteristics are symbolically employed to portray human life.

Umvundla tiwuncandza embili (They [dogs] will cut off the hare ahead). When out hunting, the hunting party divides itself in groups, and the groups are posted in such a way that escape for an animal is difficult. If a hare is roused, it would run away, only to be blocked by the dogs ahead. The expression is used of people who think that they can get away with the bad things they do, only to find themselves in a situation where they cannot extricate themselves.

Hamba tuba bayokuhlutsa embili (Go pigeon, they will pluck your feathers ahead). The feathers of a pigeon are a valuable possession because they protect it. A pigeon looks stupid and silly without them. A stubborn person will lose his valuable things because of obstinacy, like a pigeon that has lost its feathers. Therefore, one should heed advice. The animals that are used to portray obstinacy are the hare and the pigeon. This also means that stubborn people learn through bitter experience.

Animals Used to Depict Unfaithfulness

Udla mfundzambili njengemboma (He eats on both sides of the river like a water-snake). There is a diversity of opinion as to what the

imboma is. Some say that it is a large water-snake. The water-snake lives in pools of big rivers, and when it comes out, it may use either side of the river. There is nothing to confine it to one side. A hippo, too, coming out of a pool may come out on either side. The expression may be used of a person who wants everything for himself.

Wabika imbiba wabika libuti (He reports a field-mouse and subsequently a field-rat). Field-rats, though also killed, are not eaten. This is used of an unreliable individual whose word cannot be relied upon. Sometimes the boys cannot differentiate between a field-mouse and a field-rat. This proverb is used to describe a person who is a deceiver, fabricator and falsifier.

Unonele ngekhatshi njengendlati (He is fat internally like the mouse-bird). From the reference made to it, it would appear that the mouse-bird is a bird which, from outward appearance, may appear lean when, in fact, it is fat. This describes a person who will not show his true character.

Uluma aphotisa njengeligundwane (He bites and soothes like a mouse). It is alleged that mice do bite people at night. People with hairless patches on the head are asked if they were victims. It soothes as it bites. The verb, *photisa* (to soothe) is associated with calmness, restfulness and gentleness.

A person may whilst doing harm to another, deceive him through soft spoken words and enticing expression to allay his fears, is said to behave like a mouse. Therefore, the animals that are used to depict unfaithfulness are the water-snake, field-mouse, field-rat, mouse-bird and mouse. The actions are likened to that of a mouse-bird and a rat-mouse using the simile formative *njenga-* or 'like'.

Animals Used to Depict Enmity

Enmity is a feeling of hatred between two individuals, people or parties.

Yinkhukhu nemphaka (It is a fowl and a wild cat). There is no love between a wild cat and a fowl. The saying is used of people who are sworn enemies, who always want to get at each other's throats.

Likati neligundwane (It is a cat and mouse's relationship). A cat and a mouse are natural enemies, so that this saying is also used of bitter enemies.

Yinja nelikati (It is a dog and a cat). It means that they are bitter enemies.

The pair of enemies, *inkhukhu* (fowl) and *imphaka* (wild cat); *likati* (cat) and *ligundvwane* (mouse); *inja* (dog) and *likati* (cat) display antagonism. They are characterized by strife, hostility and animosity.

Animals Used to Depict Threats

This is a serious threat, and is used by someone who is prepared to take any small excuse for picking a fight with another person.

Sioze sihlangan' elukhalweni lwetimpfungushe (We shall ultimately meet in the plains of the jackals). This is a serious threat. The plains of the jackals are a wilderness where only wild beasts are found, and where humans can be consumed without getting help from anyone.

Ngiyokunika inyama yenyoka (I will give you a snake's flesh). The saying may be used in a good sense when one promises to give another something. This is not the most common meaning. Snakes being generally regarded as venomous and deadly, promising one its flesh is providing something unfavourable.

The jackal and the snake are used to depict threats. It is noted that the wild animals, *timphungushe* (jackals) and *inyoka* (snake) are in proverbs to pose threats to individuals. In this context, the proverbs appear to be menacing statements that are forbidding a person to pursue his goal.

Animals Used to Show Ingratitude

Ungayishayi ingedze ngeluju (Do not hit the honey bird with honey). The honey-guide will lead one to where a bees' nest is in the field; but because it is not able to get the honey itself, it has to get the help of someone else. Although the honey bird expects a share, it is an unkind act to strike it with the honey. The proverb denounces acts of ingratitude to one's benefactors.

Ingwe idla umnikati (The leopard devours its master). It repays an act of kindness with an evil one. The saying depicts a repayment of good with evil. People will only realise his service when he is gone. Therefore, a person should help selflessly. Sometimes people appear to be unpredictable and cruel to their helpers.

Animals Used to Portray Hospitality

Hospitality is one of the virtues which were, and still are, greatly prized in the Siswati culture. A study of Siswati proverbs reveals that there

are many proverbs dealing with hospitality. Furthermore, it will be observed that these proverbs are formulated on the background of experiences. People notice that doing well is appreciated, and often results in the good turn being reciprocated. However, a person, who has been treated unkindly, has nothing to motivate him to do well to those who have been unkind to him. If a stranger comes to a home hungry and is given no food, what will push him to offer these people, who have been unkind to him?

A strong source of danger in the ill-treatment of strangers is the fact that "feet have no nostrils" they cannot smell where they are going to. Moreover, they have no eyes with which to see. As a result, they carry their owner to a place where he is likely to find himself greatly embarrassed.

People differ in their nature: some are humble, whilst some move about with their noses stuck up high in the air. Conceit is not, and was never encouraged in Siswati culture, and they can tell quickly when a person is conceited. The Swazi do not have regard for such a person. Humility, on other hand, is highly commended.

Inkhomo lehambako kayicedzi tjani (A beast that is moving finishes no grass). Cattle may be driven from various settings. Whilst being driven they may pick up some grass as they go. They do not stop for long time as they are moving; the amount of grass which they consume is negligible. The same is true of strangers. A stranger is likely to ruin anybody who treats him well. He is there only for a short while. The proverb commends the kind treatment of strangers. Strangers should be treated with kindness and consideration, for one never knows where one will land in future.

Its' ingadla litsambo yetayele (Once it [dog] eats a bone, it frequents the place). Dogs are known to be fond of bones. Where a dog has picked up a bone, it will go again to see if its luck will still hold. This expression is used by a person seeking a second favour.

Kukanja yotsa umlilo (It is at the place where the dog sits around the fire). This expression conveys an ambiguous meaning. It may mean that the people of the home are so kind that they go to such an extent of allowing dogs to sit by the fireside. Ordinarily in Swazi society, dogs do not stay in the house. They must always be outside the house. The expression may also be used of people who show no hospitality whatsoever to others; people may be dying of cold.

Animals Used to Depict Misfortune

The following proverbs indicate a state of helplessness, hardships and tribulations.

Inhlanti ishelwe ngemanti (The water has dried up for the fish). The natural place for a fish is in the water, where it gets its food and air. When out of the water, the fish dies. If water should dry up where the fishes live, they will also die. The proverb describes a person who is stranded and has lost all hope. The following proverb is a variant of the above, it is structurally and semantic similar, but devoid of animal character.

Ligudvu selish' emanti (The smoking pipe is now dry). The smoking pipe called *ligudvu* is made up of horn and a wooden container. The two parts are joined together by a hollow reed of about eight inches long. Into the horn water is poured and dagga is put into the wooden bowl. To light the pipe, live coal is placed on the dagga and the smoker places the tip of the horn into the mouth and pulls. The smoke from the wooden bowl in which the dagga is, passes through the hollow reed, and through the water into the horn and finally into the mouth. The stuff which collects in the mouth is spat out through a long hollow tube called *umtjumo*. Water forms an essential part, for *ligudvu* is never smoked without it. The expression describes a state of being helpless.

Inkunzi incunywe emancidzi (The bull had its horns cut short). *Emancindzi* means the stumps from which the points have been cut off, as for instance, the stumps of cattle's horns. The proverb mentions a bull. The weapons of the bull are its horns. To be effective they must be sharp. When the horns of a bull are cut short, it can no longer harm others. The expression is used when one has been deprived of one's power.

Inkhomo iwe ngeluphondvo (The beast has fallen by its horn). A beast protects itself with its horns. Therefore, it is in a helpless position when it falls on them. The saying describes a person who is in a helpless condition. It may also describe a person whose illness is terminal.

Animals Used to Portray Encouragement

Inja iyawacedza emanti ngelulwimi (The dog will finish the water with its tongue). This is one of the proverbs describing people's observation of things around them. They watched a

dog lapping water, and they noticed that the water seems to drop out of the mouth back into the vessel. And yet after a short while, the water seemed to be decreasing. Unlike other animals which take big mouthfuls of water at a time, the dog has to lap it with its tongue. It may be a slow process but it is drinking all the same. This is an expression of encouragement. A person who feels discouraged because he is not making progress in some undertakings may be comforted by being reminded that even a dog will eventually finish a bowl of water by lapping it.

Inkhonjane yakhela ngeludzaka (A swallow builds with mud). Anyone who has watched a swallow builds its nest with mud will not fail to be impressed by its patience and perseverance. It is only able to bring a little bit of mud at a time but it keeps on until the nest is finished. The saying is also an expression of inspiration, reassurance and encouragement.

Insimba ibanjwa emagodza abolile (The genet is snared using rotten strings). The genet is a cunning animal and is not easy to catch. People have to wait a long time before catching one in a trap. The saying recommends perseverance in doing something which may appear elusive and unattainable. The saying is also a warning to people who indulge in evil practices. Eventually they will get their reward for their evil deeds. The animals that are noted for encouragement as a process are the dog, swallow and the genet.

Animals Used to Depict Fortune

Intsendele iwe enkhundleni (A partridge has dropped into the yard). People usually have to go out to hunt birds and other animals. Therefore when a partridge drops into the yard for the people to pick up, it is good luck indeed. The saying describes a fortunate occurrence.

Lingcina liphuma embiteni (The steenbok jumps out of the cooking pot). During hunting spree it happens that a buck is cornered by the hunters think that it is a sure kill, it finds an opening and escapes to freedom. Whilst still cornered, it is already thought of as meat. Its escape, therefore, is like coming out of the pot. The proverb means escaping by the skin of teeth.

RESULTS

The domestic animals that are mentioned in proverbs are the following: *Inja* (dog), *likati*

(cat), *inkhomo* (cattle/ beast) and *lichudze* (cock). The wild animals that are mentioned in the proverbs are the following: *inyatsi* (buffalo), *licaca* (polecat), *insimba* (genet) and *lingcina* (steenbok). The proverbs are classified according to their themes in this research work. It is apparent that theme is the central purpose of the entire context as it is presented to the reader by text. Everything that is in the proverbs; namely, vocabulary, imagery, diction and form is related to what is meant by theme. The theme may reflect a particular dimension, such as social, economic, ethical, aesthetic or religious cause.

For comprehensive analysis of a theme, it is advisable to look at it through all selected details. A clear distinction between a theme and the subject needs to be noted. The theme is the central idea, while the subject is implied in any literary discourse. The theme must be presented in such a way that it excites and stimulates the interest of the reader throughout the reading process. It is also noted that proverbs are the logic, rational and intellectual concepts that cover all aspects of life. Their figurative meaning serves as yardsticks for the development of Siswati language. Proverbs are viewed as complete simple or complex sentences that are characterized by emotive language, word choice and rhetorical strategies. They are the special artistic utterances that enrich and preserve the language. Their contents are directive, instructive, argumentative and interrogative. Their poetic and metaphoric nature elicit witticism in all languages and literary discourse.

DISCUSSION

The importance of animals in proverbs is evident throughout the sampled examples. The objectives of the study were achieved by providing more information about the classification of proverbs depicting animals according to their themes. They cover various themes namely: love, hate, despair, encouragement, protest and harmony. They cover all spheres of life at various levels. Animals are used as symbols or recurrent images to signify the specific ideas and ideals. Siswati language is rich in folk sayings, especially the proverbs, idioms and riddles. They are rich in figures of speech, imagery and symbolism. Their intellectual contents are displayed in a rhetoric manner. Their message, content and meaning are satiric, sarcastic, humour and metaphorical.

The origin, classification and importance of folk saying rekindle the beliefs, norms and values of the society. Various animals are used for linguistic competence according to their characteristics, behaviour and attitudes. Animals are used as subjects and objects in various proverbs. Most of them depict the rhetoric devices such as similes, metaphors and metonyms. The major focus of each animal used is the habit, structure, characteristics, behaviour or attitude. They are figurative and employ various structural forms such as contrast, parallelism, linking, rhythm and alliteration. Rhythm refers to a particular patterning of the sounds of words in proverbs. It imposes a pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables which create a strong effect and hold attention. Rhythm in a proverb suggests the meaning, the creation of certain mood and musical quality.

CONCLUSION

The message expressed in the proverbs are not always conveyed literally, but may be expressed figuratively, persuasively and rhetorically. In order to grasp the message of a proverb, therefore, it needs to be interpreted and this requires knowledge of the context in which it is used and the cultural background of the proverb. The Swazi regards proverbs as divine wisdom communicated by ancestors to promote social harmony, discourse, good ideals and ethics.

Speaking about social harmony, one needs to add that although they are used anytime and anywhere for certain form of behaviour, proverbs are more often used to guide, warn, rebuke and advise. The focus of this paper was to demonstrate how the Swazi culture, historical events and the figurative language can be employed together to shape up the Swazi proverbs. Of all forms of oral tradition, proverbs are the most thoughtful, logical, rational and analytic concepts of the language. In fact they could be regarded as the core of Swazi culture since they contain the wisdom of the nation. The general outlook of life of the entire nation is mirrored in proverbs as they contain the socio-cultural systems of the nation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is strongly recommended that more classifications of proverbs on themes, meaning and

figures of speech be made for effective means of communication. The significance of various animals is highlighted in language discourse and properly linked to real-life perspectives. The use of animals is not confined to proverbs only, but to various literary aspects such as idioms, riddles, lullabies, nursery rhymes, poetry and praises. Symbolic language is used to bring about the meaning, the central ideas of the concepts and the messages from the sender to the receiver.

The characteristics of various animals are significant to folk sayings because of their didactic implications. The behaviour, appearance and modes of operations of various animals depict social, cultural and educational values to the society.

NOTES

1. Siswati/ Swazi language is one of the languages spoken and read in Swaziland and South Africa. The language uses the same orthography and spelling rules in both countries. It is one of the Nguni languages that are predominantly used in the entire Swaziland, in all of four Regions: Manzini, Hhohho, Lubombo and Shiselweni, and in the Districts of Mpumalanga Province in South Africa; namely Kangala, Ehlanzeni, Gert Sibande

and Bohlabela. Emaswati nation pays allegiance to one king: Mswati III, irrespective of where they reside.

2. African languages are indigenous languages that originated and are spoken in Africa. For example, South Africa presently has ten indigenous languages that are enshrined in its constitution.

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