

Indirections as Verbal Mode of Communication in Gurene

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Abstract

The primary aim of this paper is to identify and assess the various types of indirections used by Gurene speakers for verbal communication and the roles that indirections play in the language. Indirections are generally used as verbal mode of communication in many languages. Speakers of various languages use indirections for distinct purposes; hence the conventions in which indirections are used vary across different languages. Figurative expressions are used in place of indirections in many languages including the English language for aesthetic value and other purposes. The most widely held view is that African languages use a lot of proverbs in speech. Conceivably, African languages rather use indirections. Ghanaian culture as in many African cultures obligates individuals and institutions to use indirections in speech in a manner that conforms to societal norms. The functional linguistics theory framework is adopted in the paper. The Discourse Research Design was used, and the Pragmatic Linguistics Method applied for gathering and analyzing both primary and secondary data. The findings revealed different types of indirections that play several distinct verbal communication roles comprising eschewing linguistic taboos, applying cultural communication norms, and for performing traditional, social, economic and political activities regarding verbal communication in the language. Though indirections are most cherished and valued because of their positive effects, the paper proved that some indirections exhibit negative impact. Hence, we recommend that the use of indirections that have adverse effects should be eschewed.

Keywords: Indirection; verbal communication; Functional Linguistics Theory; Discourse Research Design; Pragmatic Linguistics Method; linguistic taboos; societal norms.

1. Introduction

Indirections play a significant role in language use among speakers of various languages within different speech communities in some parts of the world. Speakers of some languages use indirection as a verbal form of communication, and its use vary from one speech community to the other [1]. The variations depend on cultural differences and the purpose of which it is used.

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Speakers of some languages use indirection as a strategy for avoiding conflict and crises, while speakers of other languages use it as a form of polite language [1]. It is conceivable that speakers of some languages use indirection as a strategy for adding beauty to the language. Many languages in the world such as English, Dutch, German and French use indirect speech which is not so distanced from indirection. Indirect speech constitutes part of indirection as the author in [2: 24] argues that “the reporting speaker might not always intend to provide a faithful copy of another person’s utterance but may prefer to entertain the listener.” Figurative expressions that are widely used in many languages constitute part of the strategies of indirection. African languages use proverbs, euphemism, folktales, riddles, oratory and circumlocution as strategies of indirection [1].

Though some research works have been carried out on this research domain in Akan by the authors [3, 4, 5], not much has been done with regards to the use of indirection in the Gurene language which belongs to a different language class. Hence, this paper aims at identifying and assessing the various types of indirections and their impact among Gurene speakers on the basis of verbal mode of communication in the language. The study is grounded on the Functional Linguistics Theory where the Discourse Research Design is used, and the main method applied for data collection and analysis is the Pragmatic Linguistics Method. The Gurene language is a major dialect of the Frafra language which constitutes part of the Gur languages class spoken in northern Ghana. The Gurene language is mutually intelligible with the other Gur languages spoken in northern Ghana such as Dagbani, Dagaare, Maunpuli, Kusaal, Buli and the Moore language spoken in Burkina Faso. These languages are classified as sister languages by author [6] and *Mabia* languages by author [7] which literally means kin’s languages because of their closed relations and their mutual intelligibility.

The Gurene language speakers, irrespective of political and geographical boundaries share a common language culture and ideologies. The speakers have a strong pragmatic value for using indirection as in some African languages such as the Wolof, Zulu, Javanese and ChiBemba that value honorific expressions, social expressions and cultural expressions [8]. Gurene speakers are guided by the principle of using indirection in every important speech in order to observe linguistic taboos. Any speaker who violates linguistic taboos may be sanctioned depending on the intensity of the violation [9]. A speaker’s ability to use indirection appropriately is a manifestation of his or her intelligence and language competence. This study will not only be beneficial to the study of the Gurene language but also to all the Gur languages, Ghanaian languages and African languages that are widely known to be using indirections as a form of verbal communication.

2. Literature

Indirect speech is a reported speech in which a speaker expresses statements that have been expressed by other people without making the statements verbatim. The author in [2] asserts that a reported speech involves all forms of explicit speech ascriptions that may have an original utterance or that may not have an original utterance. We argue that an indirect speech which is implicitly expressed without original utterance constitutes a form of indirection strategy. The Bambara speakers in Mali use both direct and indirect speeches in their traditional village meetings which involve the chief and his elders. The direct speech is often used to endorse the Chief’s decisions while indirect speech in the form of riddles, proverbs and parables is used to oppose some suggestions proposed by the chief in the meeting [9]. This indicates that indirection can be used as a strategy for

opposing other peoples' suggestions without offending them. According to the author [2], English, Dutch, German, Swedish and Turkish use both direct and indirect speeches. The authors in [10] contend that women use direct speech which is contemporary speech way, while men use indirect speech which is a traditional verbal communication norm. On the basis of this, an indirect speech that is associated with the socio-cultural context of the language is a form of indirection strategy.

Indirection constitutes an implicit language expressed in order to achieving the desire goal. It simply refers to a speech which is not straight forward, and may involve a speaker saying or describing something without mentioning its name. It involves a speaker coiling round something in speech without hitting the nail on the head, and expecting his or her listeners to comprehend the message implicitly. According to author [1], indirection refers to a speaker saying one thing and meaning another thing. This is a clear manifestation that figurative expressions constitute part of indirection. This is because indirections are used as a measure for controlling chaotic situations and for adding beauty and value to language use. It is clear that some speakers use indirection for the purpose of showing politeness [1]. Both the speaker and the listener's knowledge in the use of indirection strategies are crucial because the message put across is sometimes ambivalent to the listener's interpretation. According to the author [1], indirection includes the use of proverbs, metaphors, circumlocutions, euphemism, evasions, folktales /songs and oratory. Our paper examines some of these indirection strategies in order to ascertain whether they exist in the Gurene language or not, and how they are used by Gurene speakers.

Languages that use indirect speech in the form of figurative language, proverbs and parables cannot be exempted from using indirection. Aside the aesthetic function of figurative expressions, proverbs and parables, they constitute indirection strategies. Hence, languages that use figurative expressions and proverbs constitute part of the languages that use indirection [1, 2, 11, and 9]. According to author [9], Americans use a lot of metaphors and euphemism to describe unpleasant words which include the following; dead person (*the deceased, or the late*), a cemetery (*the marble city or memorial park*), a coffin (*a casket, or an eternal box*), a grave (*a long home, or a deep six*), and a funeral (*a planting, or a cold meat party*). These expressions constitute indirection strategies employed by the speakers. Also, the most widely held view that African languages are proverbial languages may not be far from the truth. A typical Yoruba or Igbo man does not speak without using proverbs just an indigenous Akan speaker, Gurene speaker and Ewe speaker in Ghana use proverbs [12, 5]. It is clear that languages in general use parables and figures of speech which are some forms of indirection strategies. The variation of other forms of indirections is language specific. Hence, speakers of the Gurene language use varied indirection strategies which may play different roles in verbal communication.

3. Methodology

3.1 Study Area, Research Design, Sampling and Data Analysis Techniques

Though all the dialects of the Frafra language such as the Nabt, Taln, Nankam, and Boone share common features in terms of language use, our study focused on how the speakers of the Gurene dialect use indirection as verbal communication. Even though the Gurene dialect is spoken across political and geographical demarcations, majority of the speakers are found within the Bolgatanga area of the Upper East Region of

Northern Ghana. Figurative expressions, proverbs and other language usage that clearly manifest indirection strategies in the Gurene language constituted part of the study. The Discourse Research Design is used in the study in which the main method employed is the Pragmatic Linguistics Method. This method focuses on the study of indirect spoken language which requires a speaker to imply and a listener to infer in order to comprehend a message. According to the author in [13], the best way to generate data through the Pragmatic Method is to allow the interviewees to speak freely without being aware that their speech is the focus of the study. Data were gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The primary data were derived from a field survey through the use of interview and observational strategies. Thirty native speakers and two co-researchers were purposefully sampled for the research.

The sampled population was the regular participants of traditional family meetings, participants of traditional courts where the Chiefs serve as presiding Judges and the participants of traditional funeral rites performance. Some Elders and Linguists of the Chiefs were among those interviewed. We also relied on two Co-researchers who interviewed two Soothsayers (Diviners) and six persons who often go to them for divination in order to provide us with some important data based on the language they use for divination. The Co-researchers were used because these participants seldom disclose information to non-members, especially Christians and Muslims. The interview was unstructured in which the interviewees talked freely without being aware that the data elicited focused on their language usage rather than the general culture of the people. All the interviewees were first interviewed based on their areas of specializations in the language usage, and then interviewed on other areas that they might have knowledge in as far as the use of indirection is concerned. Permission was sought and the interviewees' responses were recorded, and later played and transcribed as data for writing this paper. Besides, we sought permission and took part in witnessing the settlement of disputes at the chiefs' palaces and the high priest's (*Tindaana*) palace. We also witnessed some discussions and public speeches held at some communities within the Gurene speaking areas where we observed and listened to the language used by the speakers. Additionally, we read some literature written on the research domain in which we obtained some vital data used for writing this paper. Finally, as we are native speakers of the language who had participated and witnessed numerous occasions in which Gurene speakers used indirection, it was imperative to blend our intuitive knowledge that derived some data for writing the paper. The data analysis was exclusively descriptive in which substantive data derived from retrospective and introspective language used by the native speakers. The data were transcribed and categorized into the various taxonomies of language usages which constitute indirections. The transcribed data were literally translated from the Gurene language into the English language based on the phraseology of the metalanguage. The data were purely indirections which were literally translated based on the functionalism and the pragmatism of the language to indicate indirection meanings while their contextual meanings in the translations constitute the direct expressions of language usage. Both empirical and theoretical transcribed data were discussed vividly based on linguistics pragmatics and the functional language usage.

3.2 Theoretical framework

The functional linguistics theory's principles are applied in writing this paper. This theory is proposed by functional linguists who include the authors in [14, 15, 16, 17, and 18]. Linguistics functionalism combines the

formal grammar theoretical frameworks with the frameworks that advance to the study of sociolinguistics and the ethnography of communication. It is aimed at bridging the gap between the linguistic competence, and the communicative competence. The theory believes that language is basically meant for communication [18]. The author in [19] argues that the communicative competence in which the functional theory strongly advocates involves one's knowledge in the various socio-cultural contexts of language usage. Besides, the author [20] posits that communicative competence depends on cultural practices in which language use is involved. Indirection is a form of language usage which involves the cultural dimension aimed at achieving communicative competence [21, 22]. The authors in [23] are of the view that Functional Linguistics Theory must be based on the interplay between language form and socio-cultural meaning. Indirection constitutes functional language in which its use is grounded on one's knowledge in the socio-cultural context. Hence, the sampled data are presented and discussed on the basis of the Functional linguistics Theory framework.

3.3 Limitation

The study was not carried out without some constraints. The sampled participants were the indigenous traditional people who worship traditional religion. These people were against Christians and Islamic religions, and that posed a challenge for us as Christians interviewing them based on the language they used in performing their traditional activities. We had to engage the Chiefs, High Priests (*tindaanas*) and their Elders in a discussion for them to be convinced that the study is meant for language learning and development but not for religious purpose before we were allowed to observe some traditional activities that occurred in their palaces and interviewed their elders. Apart from the audio tape, we were not allowed to take pictures and videos. Besides, Christians interviewing the Soothsayers/oracles and the Diviners was against the faith of both religions; hence we had to use Co-researchers. Finally, having played the tape and listened to the interviewees' responses, transcribed into Gurene language and literally translated into the English language was not an easy task for us.

4. Results and Discussion

Every good speaker of the language employs the use of indirections for every important verbal communication rather than the direct expressions that lack cultural, moral, social, and linguistic values. Indirection strategies employed by the speakers in speech are presented and discussed with some examples from the sampled data elicited. These indirection strategies include some expressions used in proverbs, euphemisms, figurative language, circumlocutions, folksongs, and the language used by orators/mediators in soothsaying and other verbal communications. These expressions are often used indirectly to express offensive words, taboo words, words that people feel shy to mention in public and for performing certain traditional, social, economic and political activities regarding to verbal communication as shown below;

4.1 Proverbs as a Mode of Indirection

Proverbs simply refer to wise sayings that contain moral values, cultural values and linguistic values used by speakers of a particular language. The author in [5] defines proverbs as short concise or quoted expressions such as parables, fables, anecdotes, and folktales which could be drawn from moral source. Gurene speakers place

more value in the use of proverbs as forms of indirection in their important discussions and speeches, just as proverbs are considered important by many speakers of African languages. This assertion is backed by the author in [5] view that the Igbo and the Yoruba speakers in Nigeria, and the Akan speakers in Ghana use a lot of proverbs, and they believe that without proverbs, words become bitter and tasteless. Hence, proverbs are used as indirections in order to avoid the use of offensive and taboo words that the author [5] described as bitter and tasteless. It is offensive to directly oppose chiefs' decisions or to tell elderly people that they are telling lies or interfering into issues. However, proverbs in the form of indirections can be used without offending them.

It is important to note that every Gurene speaker is expected to have some basic knowledge in using proverbs appropriately because they are used as indirection strategies. A speaker's ability to use a lot of proverbs appropriately in speech shows the level of his or her linguistic competence, and the level of his or her intelligence. Speakers with this knowledge gain honour and respect from the people. Such speakers' opinions are always sought for in meetings, and they are always given the opportunity to speak first. It is believed that their speeches have value that may contribute in solving problems. Therefore, proverbs are used as a useful tool for effective verbal communication in Gurene because they are used as indirections. Indirection proverbs are used to solve all kinds of problems that are related to human life. They cool down people's tempers and make them change their decisions from bad to good. They make people forgive those who offend them. They encourage those who are dejected and make them gain self-confidence. Indirection proverbs are also used to convince and persuade people. Indirections are used to issue warning or give pieces of advice to people. Besides, indirection proverbs are used to request for pardon or ask for financial assistance. They can influence some people to offer various forms of assistance to others when they are properly articulated.

Indirection proverbs are also used as a strategy for drawing listeners or audience attentions to a speech, and making them to keep retentive memory of some important messages that the speaker intends to convey. Because proverbs are indirect language, audiences are always keenly listened to infer meaning. Many people remember the proverbs used in speeches than words used, and using a proverb articulates the entire message. People who are shy in using certain words to request for intimate love or gifts resort to the use of proverbs, while some proverbs are used for aesthetic values, though they are indirect. Proverbs that are used for solving all the above problems discussed are regarded as indirections in speech situations because no individual is personally affected when they are used. The language has different types of proverbs that are used as indirection strategies for verbal communication in order to avoid personal emotions that may affect the relationship between speakers and their listeners. Some of the proverbs contain objects as characters, human and animal characters while other proverbs talk about God. It is worth noting that some indirections have both affirmative and negative meanings. The samples of the types of indirection proverbs are presented and vividly discussed below:

4.1.1 Human Characters Used as Indirection Proverbs

- (1). *Fum mina n ko'ose naba, fum tu e.* **Indirection:** 'the person who reports to the chief that he has been insulted is the one who insulted him.' **Direct meaning:** don't be a rumormonger or you are a rumormonger.

- (2). *Ba ka tuni bia gee tɔla nɛɲa bɔ'ɔra sɔleɲa.* **Indirection:** 'they don't send a child to deliver a message and goes ahead to deliver it.' **Direct meaning:** one is interfering into his or her subordinates' work or one should not interfere into his or her subordinates' work.
- (3). *Ba tuni yameɲa mɛ gee ba ka doli ka.* **Indirection:** 'they can send a slave but his master will not follow him to deliver a message.' **Direct meaning:** don't blame the one who sent you for the consequences of the message you delivered. Thus be wise in delivering messages in order to avoid attacks.
- (4). *Atɔtɔ daana oberi la tea kasa.* **Indirection:** 'a person who is in haste/hurry eats half cooked beans.' **Direct meaning:** One is rushing over getting certain something done or don't be in haste because you want to get something done.
- (5). *Pɔgeyiɲa daana de dakɔɔrɛ.* **Indirection:** 'a person who has one wife is a bachelor.' **Direct meaning:** There is no harm in adding to what one already has.
- (6). *Fum mina n ɲmiberi n diti na-aare ilum.* **Indirection:** 'he who has patience eats the milk of a barren cow.' **Direct meaning:** Patience leads to success/ be patience in whatever you do.
- (7). *Puti'ira boe la sunɔ puan.* **Indirection:** 'ideas are in the mat.' **Direct meaning:** give me time to think about the problem before responding to it.
- (8). *Kɔma mi la zɔa gee ba ka mi zuka.* **Indirection:** 'children only know how to run but they do not know how to hide.' **Direct meaning:** The youth cannot be wiser than the elderly/ children cannot be wiser than adults.
- (9). *Saana nini karege mɛ gee e ka nyeti.* **Indirection:** 'a stranger or a visitor's eyes are only big but they can't see.' **Direct meaning:** one should not interfere or should stop interfering into issues that he or she is not privy to.
- (10). *Nɛra puse ninkɔberɔ la valum inya.* **Indirection:** 'people grow hair at their eye leads because of shyness.' **Direct meaning:** because of our closed relations, we must forgive. This indirection is used to settle disputes among people.

In a speech that is aimed at discouraging people from being rumormongers, the speaker may use the indirection proverb as in (1) that says that "he who reports an insult of a chief to him is the one who insulted the chief." This is an indirect way of telling someone that he is a rumormonger or he should not be a rumormonger without offending him or her. Also, in a situation where a chief or any superior tries to interfere into his subjects or subordinates' work, the speaker may use an indirection proverb in (2) that says "you don't send a child to do something and goes ahead to do it." This is an indirect way of telling a chief, a superior or a person in high authority to stop interfering into his or her subordinates' work. Conceivably, the chiefs or the superiors will be emotionally disturbed and feel offended if they are told directly to stop interfering into their subordinates' work. Besides, the indirection proverb in (3) is often used when a messenger tries to blame his master for the

consequences suffered as a result of a message delivered from his Master. It implies that messengers should be wiser in delivering messages. For instance, if a person is sent to go and insult another person, and he foolishly went and insulted him, the consequences of the insult should not be blamed on the sender. Also, those who always want “short cuts” and fast ways of having things done without following the proper procedures can be advised by using proverb (4). The speaker may tell them that “people who are in the haste or hurry eat half-cooked beans /meat.” It means things will not be done in a proper manner if one adopts short cuts. Apart from that, a speaker may use a proverb in (5) that says that “a man who has one wife is a bachelor” to mean that there is no harm in adding to what one already has in his or her possession. Married men often use this indirection proverb for proposing for ladies to be married as second or third wives. Once this proverb is used, the ladies that they proposed to marry cannot complain about their wives. Even if they complained, the proverb is used to provide answer. It means a man with many wives get more support from them than one wife. Also, when a Gurene speaker uses a proverb in (6) that says that “ideas are in the mat,” it means the speaker is indirectly requesting for permission to go home and decide on the issue before responding to it. A speaker may also use a proverb in (7) that says that “a person who has patience eats the milk of a barren cow” as an indirect way of encouraging people who are impatience to be patience. It requires much patient for one to wait for his or her barren cow give birth. An elderly person who uses the indirection proverb as in (8) that says “children only know how to run but they don’t know how to hide,” is an indirect way of telling children and the young ones who think they are wiser and smarter than the adults and the elderly people that they cannot be know better than them. Also, in a context where one interferes into a problem, a speaker may use an indirection proverb as in (9) that says that “a visitor’s / stranger’s eyes are only big, but they cannot see” to mean that one should stop interfering into issues that do not concern him or her. The final indirection in (10) is often used to settle disputes among people. The mediators of disputes use this indirection that says that “people grow hair at their eye leads because of avoiding shyness” to mean a form of request from those in dispute to forgive one another because of their closed relations. Though these indirections are used to express the same meanings as the direct expressions, they do not affect peoples’ emotions and they are not considered offensive as compared to using the direct expressions. It is also worth noting that some indirections add value to the message expressed which allows the listener to reflect deeply and respond or act accordingly than using the direct expressions.

4.1.2 Animal Characters Used as Indirection Proverbs

- (11). *Anɔa yeti ena wan si’ise bo la a gela, gee ena kan si’ise bo a kɔma.* **Indirection:** ‘a hen says that it will only deny for its eggs but not for its chicks.’ **Direct meaning:** Because one cannot be sure, do not deny any wrong doing for someone.
- (12). *Baa gi’iri a bia me gee a ka duni.* **Indirection:** ‘a dog only holds its child (puppy) with the teeth but it doesn’t bite it.’ **Direct meaning:** Because the person is your child or closed to you, you must forgive.’
- (13). *Baa ka zo malum gee tana yɔ’ɔsa.* **Indirection:** ‘as a dog is used to running, it cannot walk.’ **Direct meaning:** Forgive the victim for the first time, and when he or she repeats the offence, he or she deserves no forgiveness.

- (14). *Asagireka ka wa'ari Adeebia kolenjo*. **Indirection:** 'a mouse does not dance when a cat is playing its local guitar.' **Direct meaning:** One must be careful with his or her enemy.
- (15). *Adayuo nɔɔre n ku amiŋa*. **Indirection:** 'a rat's own mouth has killed it.' **Direct meaning:** A person's careless talk is the cause of his / her problems.
- (16). *Adayuo inya ti bugum taɛ dua*. **Indirection:** 'because of the rat that fire also burnt the dawadawa tree.' **Direct meaning:** One's problem has also affected another.
- (17). *Bua ka dike a zuure yi dibega*. **Indirection:** 'a goat doesn't take its tail as a stick.' **Direct meaning:** One must be content with what he/she has or cherish what you have.
- (18). *Yeefo n ye zia la buŋa paari la bilam*. **Indirection:** 'wherever the horse is going, the donkey will definitely get there.' **Direct meaning:** One should do things according to his or her ability.
- (19). *Bundɔɔ ka kaaseri ka zoti kinkura*. **Indirection:** 'a male donkey doesn't fear blows.' **Direct meaning:** Men should be ready to persevere in order to win the love of a lady.
- (20). *Buki'inja ka zoti sua*. **Indirection:** 'A dead goat doesn't fear the knife.' **Direct meaning:** Once someone has already suffered, he or she does not care what will happen.'

In Gurene, the proverb in (11) that says that "the hen says that it will only deny for its eggs, but not for its chicks" is indirectly warning people who want to defend others to be careful in order not to give false testimonies. Eggs are inanimate but the chicks can cause problems without the hen's knowledge. A speaker may also use it as an indirect way of refusing to testify whether a person has committed a crime or not. Also, in a context in which a speaker is proposing that a victim who commits a crime be pardoned for the first time, he may use the proverbs in (12) that says "a dog which is used to running cannot walk" to mean if a person offended another person for the first time, he should be forgiven and to wait for him to repeat his usual habit like the dog habit of running. When that happens, he deserves no forgiveness. However, if the person repeats the offence, the proverb in (13) which says "a dog only holds its babies (puppies) with the teeth, but it doesn't bite them." is used to mean that the victim can still be forgiven like dogs always play with their puppies without biting them. The use of these proverbs will make those who may not want to forgive their victims to think deeply, and may reconsider their decisions to punish their offenders. However, if a speaker proposes directly that the victim be pardoned, his/her proposal may be rejected outright. A speaker who also uses a proverb in (14) that says that "a mouse doesn't dance when a cat is playing its local guitar," he is indirectly admonishing people to be careful with how they relate with their enemies. The cat and mouse are enemies because cats always catch mouse to eat. Also, a speaker who tells someone in an indirection proverb as in (15) that says that "the rat's mouth has caused its death," he is indirectly telling the person that his careless talks are the cause of his own problems. It means if the rat does not make noise, the hunter will not see it kill. The proverb in (16) that says 'because of the rat that fire also burnt the *dawadawa* tree' is an indirect way of saying that someone's problem has also affected another person. A *dawadawa* tree can easily be burnt, and any time a rat runs into it, hunters set fire to propel it out for them to kill and that usually cause the death of the tree.

Besides, a speaker may use a proverb in (17) that says that “a goat does not take its tail as a stick” as an indirect way of advising people to cherish what they have. Though a goat has no better tail, it still cherishes it. A Gurene proverb in (18) that says that “wherever the horse is going to, the donkey will definitely get to that destination,” is always used to discourage people from unhealthy competition. The donkey is very slow as compared to the horse. Last but not the least, a Gurene proverb in (19) that says that “a male donkey doesn’t fear blows” is an indirect way of telling men to endure suffering and perseverance in order to win intimate love from ladies. It shows how the mating of a jack and a jenny always accompanied with naughty scene before success. Finally, the proverb in (20) that says ‘a dead goat doesn’t fear the knife’ indirectly means as one has already suffered, he or she cares the less.

4.1.3 Objects Characters Used as Indirection Proverbs

- (21). *Lia n boe goom ka ηmati mε.* **Indirection:** ‘the axe that is in the forest is cutting.’ **Direct meaning:** food should not be reserved for a person who is not around because he or she may be eating at the place he or she has gone.
- (22). *Sela boe yoko puan wan ba’ase yese mε.* **Indirection:** ‘whatever thing that is in a hole will definitely come out.’ **Direct meaning:** Any hidden secret will definitely be revealed.
- (23). *Saa ka ηmeri pεgeyiηa bia mε puan.* **Indirection:** ‘rain does not beat one woman’s child in the bush.’ **Direct meaning:** You are not the only person that has problems.’

The proverb in (21) that says that “the axe that is in the forest is cutting” means people who are not present should not be served or reserved food because they may get food wherever they are to eat. When a person who is denied food arrived home very hungry, he will not be disturbed if this indirection is used. However, the person will be angry if he is directly told that his food/meat has been eaten because they thought he would have gotten food at where he was to eat. This indirection is used when food is insufficient to serve all members of a household. Also, if a speaker tells a person in an indirection proverb in (22) that says that “whatever is in a hole will definitely come out,” means whatever secret that is hidden will be brought to light. Finally if a Gurene speaker uses a proverb in (23) that says that “the rain doesn’t beat only one woman’s child in the forest,” it is an indirect way of consoling a person in difficult situation that everybody have problems. When these indirections are used, listeners reflect deeply over their problems than using the direct expressions which lack value and substance.

4.1.4 Indirection Proverbs Related to God

- (24). *Yine ka baseri awantεlebe.* **Indirection:** ‘God does not neglect those who have nothing.’ **Direct meaning:** God provides for or takes care of the destitute.
- (25). *Yine n pebele ngaama nini.* **Indirection:** ‘God blows the dirt out from the eyes of an innocent person.’ **Direct meaning:** God saves or helps innocent people or the destitute.

(26). *Yine ka diti sanɛ gee a yɔɔri sanɛ mɛ.* **Indirection:** ‘God doesn’t take loans but He repays loans.’

Direct meaning: God will punish those who oppress and punish the weakly and powerless people.

(27). *Yine n biseri kiibeka.* **Indirection:** ‘God takes care of an orphan.’ **Direct meaning:** God takes care or provides for the needy/destitute.

(28). *Yine san ka base fu, tiɲa kan di.* **Indirection:** ‘If God doesn’t abandon you, the earth will not consume you.’ **Direct meaning:** Because of God, nothing will happen to you.

(29). *Yine san base fu, nambɔa kan to’e fu.* **Indirection:** ‘If God abandons you, the moon cannot safe you.’ **Direct meaning:** Only God can safe or help one in his or her predicaments.

Examples (24) and (25) above have the same interpretation which is indirectly saying that God takes care of the destitute, or God provides the destitute with their basic needs. Besides, the proverb in (26) that says that “God doesn’t take loans, but He repays loans” is an indirect way of telling those who use their power and authority to oppress, punish, molest and cheat the weakly, powerless and poor that God will punish them in revenge. This proverb is a curse that is normally used to scare people from punishing the powerless people. It is safer for powerless victims to use this indirection proverb when they are wrongly punished or about to be punished unlawfully than to say it directly that “God will punish you for me.” This will be interpreted as an insult and a curse which may attract tougher instant punishment and still be forced to disband it. In the proverb (27), (28) and (29) which literally means ‘God takes care of an orphan, if God doesn’t desert someone, the earth will not consume him or her, and if God abandoned someone, the moon cannot salvage the fellow’ are all indirectly telling us that nobody can help us better than God. These indirections are used to give hope to people who are facing very difficult problems in their lives. These indirections give them hope that with God all situations are possible.

4.2 Euphemism as a Mode of Indirection

Euphemism may be referred to a polite way of expressing something which may reduce the intensity of its unpleasant nature. Gurene speakers use it as one of the strategies of indirection. People who have good knowledge about the use of euphemisms are normally chosen to disclose sad events occurred to people who are directly affected, especially the untimely death of a closed relative such husband and wife or their biological children. Some of the euphemisms used in Gurene include the following:

(30). *Akolego n ka boe.* **Indirection:** ‘Akolgo (masculine) is no more with us.’ **Direct meaning:** Akolgo is dead’ (31) *Akolego n base tu.* **Indirection:** ‘Akolgo has left us.’ **Direct Meaning:** Akolgo is dead.

(32). *Akolego ba’a la sa’am mɛ.* **Indirection:** ‘Akolgo’s sickness has spoiled.’ **Direct Meaning:** Akolgo is dead.

(33). *Yine n toe Akolego.* **Indirection:** ‘God has received Akolgo’ **Direct Meaning:** Akolgo is dead.

- (34). *Akolepoka de la baa*. **Indirection:** ‘Akolpoka (feminine) is a dog.’ **Direct meaning:** Akolpoka is a prostitute.
- (35). *Akolepoka nuusi n woge*. **Indirection:** ‘Akolpoka’s hands are long.’ **Direct meaning:** Akolpoka is a thief.
- (36). *Budaa la zuo n loberi*. **Indirect:** ‘The man’s head is shaking.’ **Direct meaning:** The man is a lunatic.
- (37). *Akolepoka ka dɔge*. **Indirect** ‘Akolpoka hasn’t given birth or has no child.’ **Direct meaning:** Akolpoka is barren’
- (39). *Akolpoka ziim ka tɔke tiŋa*. **Indirection:** ‘Akolpoka’s blood hasn’t dropped.’ **Direct meaning:** Akolpoka is barren.’
- (40). *Fu nuo bola mam nɔɔrum*. **Indirection:** ‘Your hand (s) is in my mouth.’ **Direct meaning:** Be aware that you are the one who will need my help or I have the power to punish you (your hand in his mouth can be bitten).
- (41). *Budaa n sa’am mam*. **Indirection:** ‘a man spoiled me.’ **Direct meaning:** a man had sex intercourse with me.
- (42). *Atia n ga’are nera pɔga*. **Indirection:** ‘Atia slept with somebody’s wife.’ **Direct meaning:** Atia had sex with someone’s wife.
- (43). *Mam ne pokuure la suŋɔ*. **Indirection:** ‘I have stepped on widow’s mat.’ **Direct meaning:** I had sex with the widow,” hence I have won the contest to marry her as my widow.
- (44). *Mam sɔ ka tɔgeri yelemɛgere*. **Indirection:** ‘my father doesn’t speak the truth.’ **Direct meaning:** My father is liar or my father tells lies.

The death of a person in Gurene is indirectly expressed or announced in a mild way as in (30) to (33). A person who died is announced as “he has left us, he is no more with us, his sickness has been spoiled, and God has received him.” Also, “he has joined his ancestors, or he has gone home” are used for people who died at old ages. In Gurene, a prostitute as in (34) is referred to as *baa* “a dog,” while a thief in (35) is referred to as “a cat or a person who has long hands.” It is also offensive and sometimes regarded as an insult when someone, especially an elderly person is told directly that what he/she said is a lie. The speaker has to adopt indirection strategy as in (34) by telling the person that “he has not spoken the truth.” In this situation, the speaker defends himself that the person referred to is not a liar or did not tell lies, except that he /she has not spoken the truth. The addressee too will not be emotionally disturbed if this indirection is used as compared to using the words directly as “lied or a lair.”

4.3 Figurative Expressions as a Mode of Indirection

Figurative expressions denote indirect meanings rather than the literal meanings. They include metaphor, simile, personification irony and hyperbole. According to the author in [1: 153], “all figures of speech can be used as strategies in oratory and indirection.” This is because the literal meanings are not taken into account in all figurative expressions, thereby reducing emotions. Hence, the figurative expressions below constitute indirections which convey indirect meanings.

(45). *Pōka la ka paam ka miŋa.* **Indirection:** ‘the woman is not well.’ This means the woman is a lunatic / mad woman.

(46). *Asaala dela tintənō.* **Indirection:** ‘a human being is soil/sand.’ This means death is inevitable.

(47). *Fu nōrē dela seero.* **Indirection:** ‘your mouth is honey.’ This means you have convincing words/language.

(48). *Mam zuo dela kō’ōŋō zuo.* **Indirection;** ‘You have a guinea-fowl’s head.’ This means you have bad luck.

(49). *Aduko and Atia dela as sō’ōŋa la abaa.* **Indirection:** ‘Aduko and Atia are a rabbit and a dog.’ **Direct meaning:** Aduko and Atia are enemies.

(50). *Atanga puurē dela bugum.* **Indirection:** ‘Atanga’s stomach is fire.’ This means Atanga is wicked.

(51). *Anaba nu’usi ka paari nōrum.* **Indirection:** ‘Anaba’s hands cannot reach his mouth. ’This means Anaba is poor. Etc

The figurative expressions in Gurene are always ambivalent. Speakers often use these expressions indirectly based on the context of the thematic discourse. The addressee also predicts the meaning based on similar thematic discourse of the expressions. One example is the most popular figurative expression in which some mothers-in-law in Gurene speaking area use to describe their stingy sons-in-law who do not give them money or gifts. These sons-in-law are referred to as those who “look upwards” when they meet their mothers-in-law. This expression has both the surface and the deeper indirect meanings. The surface meaning refers to the normal respect not shown by the sons-in-laws, while the deeper meaning denotes the in-laws’ failure to give money, present gifts or buy drinks to their mothers in-law or fathers in-law, especially when they meet at certain occasions. This type of figurative expression can be described as “implied indirection” in which the addressee must imply in order to interpret the meaning. The speaker easily defends herself or himself with the surface meaning.

Besides, to tell someone that “your hand is in my mouth,” means the addressee will definitely need the speaker’s help or speaker has the power to punish the addressee.” It implies that your hands in ones mouth can be bitten as a punishment. It is sometimes used to admonish people from bad behaviors towards others. Also, to tell a person that “his stomach has fire” is an indirect way of saying that the person is very wicked. Besides, if a speaker tells two people that they are “a rabbit and a dog,” it is an indirect expression that says they are enemies.

This is because dogs and rabbits do not meet. Besides, someone being described as “a sheep” means a fool while “a rabbit” means the wisest person. The rabbit is considered the trickiest animal among all the animals. Finally, if a Gurene speaker says that “someone’s hands cannot reach his mouth” it means the person is poor. Thus poor people cannot get food to eat. It is a taboo to say someone is poor because of the fear that the speaker may also become poor. Also, to say that “someone’s mouth is honey,” means he has sweet words or convincing language. It is clear that the literal meanings of figurative expressions are generally not taken into account; hence all the languages in the world that use figurative expressions also use them as indirection strategies in order to reduce emotional effects in verbal communication.

4.4 Oratory/Mediation as a Mode of Indirection

In Gurene, every important discussion that involves two or more people requires a mediator who serves as a transmitter. He receives the message from the addresser, repackages it nicely and then passes it to the addressee, and then receives another message from the addressee back to the addresser. In some situations, there may be more than one mediator and the message has to travel through all of them in chain before it eventually delivered to the addressee. The mediators have the right to add or subtract by using indirection when repackaging the message. Sometimes the main mediator seeks the opinions of others for additions or subtractions before passing to the message to the addressee to respond. A speaker may use a proverb as a message and a good mediator changes appropriate proverb or adds another proverb in order to add more value to the message before passing it to the addressee. Good mediators are conversance of using proverbs, euphemisms, figurative expressions, and those with good voices are orators. Traditionally, people are not allowed to speak directly to the chiefs in public because they may use inappropriate indirection which will offend them. They speak through the mediators or orators who are called the Linguists to repackage the messages nicely by using appropriate indirections before passing the messages to the chiefs. These people are respected in society based on their knowledge in using indirection. People sometimes hire them to mediate in solving problems because of their in-depth knowledge in using indirection.

4.5 Circumlocutions as a Mode of Indirection

Circumlocution according to the author [1] is a form of speech which does not go straight to the point. He describes it as ‘spinning speech, winded speech, and roundabout talk’ which are adopted as a strategy of expressing some sensitive issues including marriage couples requesting for sex from their partners. It is immoral for even marriage couples to directly request for sex from their partners without using circumlocutions such as ‘let us play our game, let us play football, I need the thing, I want my property, I am hungry, let us do it etc.’ However, requesting for sex can also be non-verbal communication. Besides, circumlocution is used in the Gurene language to express certain linguistic taboos that are expected to be observed in speech. Linguistic taboos are words that should not be mentioned in public. They include some totems, unpleasant or offensive words and sensitive words. A speaker must find alternative ways of describing these words without mentioning them in public speech. For instance, speakers mentioning sex organs or certain diseases and physical deformities in public speech constitute linguistic taboos. Some animals are regarded as totems to some clans which are unmentionable in public. Hence, speakers often use indirections in the form of circumlocutions to

express these words.

In Gurene language, vagina is described as “womanhood” or “a woman’s under” while penis is described as “manhood, a man’s front or a man’s property.” However, speakers are free to mention other organs such as breasts and testicles. Besides, menstruation or faeces are sensitive human excretion that should not be mentioned in public. Hence, speakers who are going to release their faeces will have to use circumlocution by saying that ‘they are going to greet the chief or to squat.’ It means nobody has control over releasing faeces as we have no power over a chief. Also, speakers have to say that ‘a woman has seen her washing’ to mean that the woman had menstruation. Besides, suitors use circumlocutions to propose love to ladies they intend to marry in order to avoid shyness or embarrassment from ladies who may reject their love proposals. Ladies also use circumlocutions to either accept or reject the men’s love proposals without offending them. For instance, “I want you to be my companion, I want us to live together, I want us be chatting, I want us to be friends/ nice to each other or I want you be my helper?” are some of the circumlocutions that are used by men to propose intimate love to ladies. The lady may reject the proposal by saying that her hands /basket/ bus is already full. The man may insist that the lady allows him to perch or be a spare driver. The lady who totally rejects the man may say perching or being a spare driver is dangerous, hence he should have patience to wait for another opportunity. However, direct language usage for love proposal or acceptance constitutes immaturity language which often discourages both parties from falling in love. Even in the course of courtship, lovers use circumlocutions for love discussions. After marriage, couples rarely call each other by their names. Wives use words such as “my landlord, the man in my house, my boss, our house man” to refer to their husbands while husbands use words such as “the compound owner or the lady in my compound” to refer to their wives. The use of circumlocution builds stronger love than straight forward language that is regarded as childish talk or immoral language. However, modernization has gradually set in that allows some couples to now call each other by names.

Additionally, mentioning certain diseases and physical deformities in public is linguistically and culturally unaccepted because it is believed to be an insult, not only to people who are infected with those diseases and physical deformities but also to God, and that attracts punishment from the gods of the land or the Almighty God. Hence, speakers use circumlocution in order to describe these categories of people without mentioning the diseases and deformities. For instance, a speaker has to adopt a description technique such as ‘the person whose body spoiled’ to indirectly mean a leper, ‘the person who cannot see.’ to mean a blind person, ‘the person who has no legs or cannot walk’ to mean a cripple and ‘the person who cannot speak’ to mean a dumb.

Finally, married ladies who commit adultery must openly confess before purification rites can be performed to cleanse them from the sin in order to avoid death befallen on either them, their husbands or children. The confessions are usually done using circumlocution that are literally translated as, “I have not returned home in full, I have spoiled or someone has spoiled me, a man said he loves me, a man touched my buttocks or held my breast’ to mean that she has committed adultery. These indirection confessions are considerate than the direct confessions where their husbands will regard them as prostitutes and may not accept them back for the purification rites to be performed. These circumlocutions are indirection strategies that speakers employ as verbal mode of communication in the language.

4.6 Evasion as a Mode of Indirection

Evasion is generally prohibited in the language when a person is asked to provide some information. It is regarded as a disrespectful and an insult to authorities which is highly unacceptable by all standards. Hence, evasion sometimes attracts punishment including beating. It is better for one to express lack of knowledge in the information required or request for permission to go home and think about it than practicing muteness. However, it is appropriate for a speaker to practice evasion if the charges labeled against him or her seem to be true or so sensitive. Evasion in this context signifies that the speaker in question has indirectly admitted his/her guilt and has shown remorse. In a context where a person is accused of having slept with someone's wife is sent to the chief's palace to defend himself, he must use evasion as an indirect mode of verbal communication. If the victim admits his wrong act directly by saying that "he actually slept with the lady" or attempting to deny or justify his wrong act often attracts severe beatings or tougher punishment for showing no remorse. People who commit such sensitive crimes are normally commanded at the traditional court to shut up their mouths or else they will receive beatings and tougher punishments if they intend to speak. Though this often results to appropriate punishment meted out to the accused, evasion has negative effects in terms of injustice. The accused people are often forced not defend themselves during judgments.

4.7. Indirections Use for Divination, Performing Funeral Rites and Offering Sacrifices to gods

The traditional worshipers in Gurene speaking areas use indirections as verbal form of communication for performing funeral rites, divination and offering of sacrifices to their gods. It is believed that diviners are intercessors who receive signs from the spiritual world indirectly, use their knowledge of indirection to infer and interpret the meanings of those signs to people. The Soothsayer/Oracle and the Diviner usually hold a spiritual stick which is believed to contain the spirit being that is pulling the stick in their hands to point at different objects poured down by the Soothsayer. Each of the objects pointed at by the spiritual stick has an indirect meaning which is interpreted and questioned further for clarifications from the spiritual stick to confirm by pointing at other objects. The right interpretation of the message verbally depends on the diviner's knowledge in indirection. Hence, every diviner must possess adequate knowledge in using indirection. When performing traditional funeral rites, diviners use indirection strategies for the divination of oracles openly before congregations to find out who killed the deceased, or what caused the persons' death. However, only those who acquired knowledge in divination are comprehensible to the verbal interpretations in the form of indirection in order to explain to the congregation. For instance, if the spiritual stick held by two: the Soothsayer and the Diviner points at a red object, it means an impending death and the diviner must ask for clarification of whether the death will befall on male or female by putting two objects down for the spiritual stick to choose for him. He can ask for how to reverse the death, and when the stick points at a feather, it means they must offer a type of fowl to the gods depending on the type of feather that is pointed at by the stick. The diviner still have to ask for clarification of which of the gods to be sacrificed. All these required an in-depth knowledge in using indirection.

The war dance in funeral rites is often accompanied with speeches, dirges and appellation, war songs in the form of indirections where proverbs, personifications, metaphors and figures of speech are used to command the presumed evil spirit that is believed to have killed the person to face the war dancers in a war. The war dancers

normally speak to the assumed evil spirit, sing war songs and dance in a manner which indirectly indicates that they are in a war searching for the supposed evil spirit that killed the person to revenge. They often dance and command the presumed evil spirit to face them in war if the evil spirit is really a man like them. Indirections are also used to evoke the gods when offering sacrifices. The worshipers use personifications, proverbs and metaphors as indirection strategies to communicate to the gods when offering sacrifices. Some traditionalists address their gods as “*dogs that cannot bite*” or “*women that cannot fight*” and then issue threats to the gods that they will be thrown into water or burned into ashes should the gods failed to grant their requests. These indirections are used just to evoke the gods into action because the gods will never be thrown into water or burned as much as they continue to disappoint their worshipers.

5. Conclusion

The paper discussed indirection as verbal mode of communication in the Gurene language in which some indirection strategies that are employed by speakers are examined. Different types of proverbs, figurative expressions, circumlocutions and evasion are identified as some forms of indirections in the language. It was also revealed that indirections are effectively used in oratory/mediation, funeral rites, war dance, divination, offering of sacrifices to the gods, singing dirges and other traditional songs. The paper indicated that mediators are always required in every important discussion in the Gurene language. The mediators play the role as intercessors and transmitters of the message, and must be conversant in using indirection. Mediators often receive the messages in the form of indirections; repackage the messages nicely with other indirections before delivering to the addressees. Though the main mediator repackages the message, it can be passed to several mediators to either add or subtract if any before it finally gets to the addressee to respond. The paper also pointed out that, though evasion is offensive and unacceptable in the language, it is sometimes appropriate and the best indirection strategy for verbal communication in certain thematic discourse. A person who commits serious and sensitive crimes must practice evasion in order not to attract beatings and tougher punishments from the chief and his elders in a traditional court.

The paper also discovered that indirection strategies are used by the traditionalists for performing traditional funeral rites, divination and offering sacrifices to the gods. Also, the paper showed that the use of proverbs, metaphors and other figures of speech as indirections add value and power to the language. Speakers who use these indirection strategies effectively and appropriately are highly respected. A person's ability to use these indirections is manifestation of his or her intelligence and communicative competencies. It is believed that the use of indirections constitute a powerful language tool that can convince, solve problems, settle disputes, unite people, advise people, educate people and entertain people. Hence, it is a requirement for people aspiring to assume leadership positions as clan heads, chief priests and chiefs to be trained on how to use indirection strategies appropriately in their speeches.

Though indirections play significant roles in verbal communication in the language, the paper revealed some adverse impacts of indirections in verbal communication. It is clear that proverbs are sometimes misinterpreted that gives a wrong message to the listeners. Besides, some indirection strategies have several meanings which can sometimes confuse listeners' interpretations. Based on that speakers who used indirections may later deny

the meaning he or she conveyed by giving a different interpretation of the meaning. The use of indirection strategies for divinations during traditional funeral rites by Soothsayers (oracles) sometimes wrongly accused innocent people for being witches or wizards that killed the deceased resulting to hatred and punishment meted out to them. Finally, the use of evasion as an indirection strategy to denote acceptance of guilt or admittance of wrong doing without giving the accused the opportunity to open his or her defense constitutes an unfair judgment. Hence, some victims are often compelled to use evasion because of the fear of being beaten up or receiving tougher punishments even if they are innocent.

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