



## PROVERBS DEMONSTRATE THE UNIQUENESS OF CULTURES

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### ABSTRACT

*Through the analysis of property of culture and proverb, it can be known that proverb can help one to understand culture. The way it uncovers culture differing qualities can be associated with the designs of esteem measurement, which passes on the data of a culture's profound meaning. From the point of view of uncertainty-avoidance, it can be seen that in spite of the fact that most of the western countries and America are low-uncertainty-avoidance societies, they basically have distinctive life de meanors, since that Americans put more accentuation on competition. From the point of view of high-context and low-context, the content gives the concepts of non-verbal communication and two layers of meaning of quiet. And beneath this foundation, the paper analyzes a few culture designs, particularly America and Japan. From the viewpoint of power, distance, it uncovers the diverse sees on correspondence between Middle eastern and America, and analyzes the reasons of culture convention. In any case, in spite of the fact that culture differences basically uncover*

### INTRODUCTION

Proverbs have received a lot of attention in the study of intercultural communication. And among all the papers and books that have been written to explore the connections between proverbs and cultures, there have been relatively few studies on the general function of proverbs in illuminating cultural diversity. Instead, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the role of proverbs in the field of comparative study between two particular cultures or in the field of translation. Through an examination of proverbs from various cultures, this article aims to demonstrate the function of proverbs in illuminating cultural variation. That's why it offers a perspective on understanding the distinctive features of many cultures and may encourage the curiosity of those who are interested in learning more about cultural variety and finding a better means of intercultural communication.

### LITERATURE REVIEW



Culture can signify many different things. E.B.Tylor offered an early description, treating culture as a complex mixture of social customs and as a requirement for one to be a part of the society. Culture can be a set of essential beliefs, customs, and experiences that are passed down symbolically from one generation to the next through a process of learning.<sup>1</sup>

The term "culture" can also be used to describe the attitudes, ideas, and behaviors that are employed to solve problems in society. Additionally, one can understand culture as a system of expressive practices and mutual meanings connected to one's behaviors in order to view it from an interpretative and performance viewpoint.

Perhaps intercultural communication scholar Geert Hofstede's description of culture in "Cultures and organizations: the software of the mind" offers a greater understanding : "In most Western languages culture commonly means "civilization" or "refinement of the mind" and in particular the results of such refinement, such as education, art, and literature. This is culture in the narrow sense. Culture as mental software, however, corresponds to a much broader use of the word..."<sup>2</sup>

A proverb expresses a general truth. It deals with truth concisely and concretely and teaches its listeners a lesson. It helps us understand culture and determine whether it is group-oriented or individual-oriented. It also helps us understand what is desirable, what is undesirable, what is considered right and wrong in our culture.<sup>3</sup>

Proverbs provide a crucial set of guidelines for members to follow in almost every culture, communicating in vivid and colorful language. These "words of wisdom" continue so that future generations might understand what a society considers important. They say things that people consider essential in manners that people remember, as Seidensticker observes in 1987. They express typical worries. Proverbs are hence concise treatises on cultural ideals as he assumes. Therefore, we can consider proverb as a particular type of culture symbol if a culture symbol is a phrase or object that stands for anything in the culture.

We must somehow need to "accept the fact that there are many roads to truth and no culture has a corner on the path is better equipped than others to search for it"<sup>4</sup> in the words of Edward Hall. Because every culture is unique and each has its own hidden form. We can all agree to be unique and to respect diversity. We can appreciate our own culture based on how similar or dissimilar it is to others, and we can also enjoy other cultures based on how different or similar they are.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this article, we tried to show the extent to which proverbs differ in culture using the methods of comparison and systematization of proverbs from a cultural point of view.

## ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Our understanding of our own culture will increase as we learn more about other civilizations. And humankind seeks solace in the comfort of the known, especially when confronted with a different perspective on the universe. The range of cultures that exist then aids in our comprehension of both the outside world and ourselves.

<sup>1</sup> E.B.Tylor. Primitive culture. New York, 2016. –P.13.

<sup>2</sup> G.V.Hofstede. Cultures and organizations: software of the mind. 2010. –P.20.

<sup>3</sup> G.P.Ferraro. The cultural dimension of international business. 2002. –P.101.

<sup>4</sup> E.T.Hall. Beyond culture. 1977. –P.7.



Various proverbs from various nations explore some fundamental cultural principles. Similar to a mirror, proverbs will reflect specific cultural traits.

From the uncertainty-avoidance stance Irish proverb: "Life should be a dance, not a race." And an American saying "If at first you don't succeed, try, try, and try again" reveals that the degree to which people in a culture make an effort to avoid uncertainty is referred to as uncertainty-avoidance. High uncertainty avoidance cultures have a tendency to avoid ambiguity and uncertainty, which suggests that their levels of anxiety and energy release are higher. As opposed to high uncertainty avoidance cultures, low uncertainty avoidance cultures are significantly better at taking chances and experience lower levels of stress. According to G.Hofstede, cultures with a high degree of uncertainty avoidance think that "what is different is dangerous", while cultures with a low degree of uncertainty avoidance think that "what is different is curious".<sup>5</sup>

As a result, people who live in low uncertainty avoidance societies are more at ease. Not just for Irish people, the first proverb is unquestionably appropriate for societies with minimal uncertainty avoidance. Both fall under the category of low uncertainty avoidance cultures. But Americans don't seem to be as laid back as Irish folks. Despite their willingness to take chances and flexibility, Americans simply don't have the same amount of free time as Irish people to "dance." They may be better suited to "race" most of the time. The second two proverbs therefore appear more applicable to Americans, as leisure for them may be a significant reward for their labor.

According to the American poet and philosopher George Santayana, "To the art of working well a civilized race would add the art of playing well." Play is therefore something that Americans have earned. They may have a history, which could explain this. Ireland is a European nation and upholds the European tradition of being kind, refined, etc. America is a relatively young nation, and as a result, life there moves considerably more quickly.

"Silence is also speech" – an African proverb.

"In human intercourse the tragedy begins not when there is misunderstanding about words, but when silence is not understood" – Henry David Thoreau.

The aforementioned saying and statement bring up the subject of quiet. Actually, nonverbal communication includes silence. Without using words, nonverbal communication carries significance. According to researchers, nonverbal communication accounts for 85% of all communication, with cultural differences in the significance of this kind of communication being significant. In fact, studies show that when two messages conflict, we are more likely to believe the nonverbal one. Therefore, nonverbal communication is crucial. First, we infer information about others' affective or emotional states from their behavior. Second, it usually creates the initial messages, and those messages shape how the rest of the information is perceived. Many academics think that nonverbal cues are a part of a universally understood code.

"The squeaky wheel gets the grease" – U.S proverb.

"Still water runs deep" – Japan proverb.

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<sup>5</sup> G.Hofstede. Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. 2010. –P.201



According to the American saying, the individual who stands out and speaks out the loudest will be rewarded. Because Americans typically believe that being as forthright and aggressive as possible in expressing one's opinions is a commendable quality. The proverb from Japan obscures the fact that the Japanese value credibility above talkativeness and think that someone who is quiet and spends more time listening than speaking is more believable.

Sometimes silence, which would seem to be the antithesis of speech, conveys a strong message. The easiest way to compare how silence is used in high-context cultures and low-context cultures is to compare them. Low-context cultures depend more on explicit verbal signals and pay less attention to the context of a communication, such as inferred meaning or nonverbal messages. Low-context cultures rely heavily on verbal communication because they expect it to be precise, unambiguous and definitive. High-context cultures, on the other hand, place a strong emphasis on the context of communication and pay close attention to implicit and nonverbal cues.

In high-context cultures, information is conveyed not just via words but also through gestures, the use of space, and even silence. Low-context societies therefore interpret silence as flawed communication. They interpret it as evidence of a breakdown in communication. The interpretation of silence is more challenging than the interpretation of words since silence is ambiguous and must be understood. First, silence is negative and signals perplexity. Second, maintaining silence is admirable and shows respect. Asian, especially Uzbek people utilize quiet to show respect for the other person speaking, thought for the notion they have just spoken, and time to contemplate the advantages and disadvantages of the statement before responding thoughtfully.

In this sense, it is evident that Japan is a high-context culture, whereas America is a low-context culture. Japanese people think that keeping quiet is better than talking. The only way to uncover your inner truth is via stillness. Silence is necessary for both meditation and contemplation. In Japanese culture, there is a belief that language taints understanding. Only in quiet is it possible to read another person's innermost thoughts and feelings, a type of communication without words. In Japanese negotiations, the majority of the talking takes place in groups, and the Japanese team communicates a lot through body language, facial expressions, and silence. Over 60% of Japanese businesswomen indicated they preferred to marry silent men, according to a survey by Japanese academics who found that silence is a key to success for Japanese men. As a result, the Japanese consider silence to be an integral component of discourse, in contrast to how the West normally perceives it.

People in high-power-distance nations think that power and authority are necessary components of existence, according to Hofstede's value dimensions.<sup>6</sup> This can be taken to mean that individuals in these cultures believe that everyone has a place and that there is no such thing as an equal person in this world. Low-power-distance cultures, in contrast, believe that social inequity should be kept to a minimum. "Do not expect stranger to do for you what you can do for yourself", advised the Latin poet Quintus Ennius two hundred years before Christ. As a result, the independent personality of the person was amply demonstrated. Consider the strength of the adage. "Anyone who is any good is different than anybody else,"

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<sup>6</sup> G.Hofstede. Cultures and organizations: Software of the mind. 2010. –P.74.



coined by former Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter. Although the emphasis was on individualism, it also conveys the importance of equality. Individualism and equality are core American principles that go hand in hand.

Regarding individuality, many from other cultures view American values of individualism, self-reliance, and independence as being self-centered. While Americans view the Chinese, Malaysians, and Japanese obsession with adhering to family customs and accepting their parents' ideas as a show of weakness and indecision.

## CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Proverbs only convey a small portion of what is needed to comprehend a culture because cultures have multiple levels of significance. The plurality of cultures does provide a kind of window to the outside world, though. And in this sense, using proverbs to study what the other type of culture is and why it is the way it is might be helpful. Additionally, proverbs offer crucial details about cultural patterns or value orientations. Although the focus of this article is on using proverbs to analyze cultural variety, different civilizations do share some characteristics. Similar to this, proverbs from China and Germany both emphasize the value of sound reasoning. Additionally, due to the multiplicity of cultures, generalizations about them rather than absolutes can be made.

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