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TABLE OF CONTENTS

SECTION A: Language & Literature

A Conceptual Metaphor Analysis of Selected Proverbs in Aliyu Kamal's Silence and a Smile

Mustapha Ibrahim Garba, PhD & Sakina Wada **1-15**

Repositioning Reading through Multimodality in English Language Teaching

Suku Hyellamada Kenan, PhD, Aishatu Bello Umar & Hannatu Joseph Bega **16-30**

Dislocation and Renegotiation: Postcolonial Belonging in Cry, the Beloved Country, Paradise, Bird Summons, and Wahala

Musa Ahmad Sani & Abdullahi Dahiru Umar, PhD **31-41**

Reconfiguring Belief: Religion, Culture, and Displacement in Postcolonial and Diasporic Fiction

Abdullahi Dahiru Umar, PhD & AbdulAzeez Lawal, PhD **42-54**

An Exploration Of Stylistic and Literary Devices In Tess Onwueme's The Broken Calabash

Abdulrahman Idris Abdulwaheed, PhD & Sani Saidu **55-74**

Borrowing and Code-Switching among Hausa-English Speakers in the North Eastern Nigeria: A phonological analysis

Hamidou Bappa, PhD & Theodore Bebey, PhD **75-89**

Disillusionment and Commitment: a Reader – Reception Study of Elma Shaw's Redemption Road

Abdurrazak Abubakar & Sani Isma'il Abubakar **90-103**

Contextual Use of English in Nigerian Motivational Discourse: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Selected Speeches

Aishatu Bello Umar & Malata Andrew Zakayo, PhD **104-113**

English Language In Nigeria, Past, Present And The Future: a Concerned Issue

John O, Udeigwe Ph.D **114-124**

The Interface between Morphosyntax, Language Development and Its Sustainability: A Case Study of Bura Verbal Group

Mshelbwala Comfort Usman **125-143**



Digital Folklore And Nation-Building: Repurposing Indigenous Verbal Arts For
Cultivating Civic Realignment And Social Stability Among Nigerian Youths

Shehu Yahuza Abbas & Shema'u Abubakar Umar

144-159

Algorithmic Reclamation: Digital Resources As Structural Instruments For
Countering Linguistic Imperialism Among Indigenous Language Teachers

Shehu Yahuza Abbas & Ibrahim Muhammed Ogah

160-173

Bi-Implication and Negative Markers in Atiku Abubakar's 2023 Presidential
Declaration Speech

Sani Saidu & Umar Amos Hadiya

174-196

Comparative Analysis of English and Tangle Fricative Phonemes for Pedagogical
Implications to the Tangle English Speakers

Malata Andrew Zakayo, PhD & Angela Butack

197-224

Writing the Posthuman: Artificial Intelligence, Literature, and the Metaphysics of
Relation in the Digital Age

Tarr, Mathias & Fatima, Inuwa S. Gara, PhD

225-233

A Sociolinguistic Analysis of Code-Switching and Code-Mixing in Selected
Episodes of *Jenifa's Diary*

Apasi Marizukot Ahuoyiza & Adamu Idris, PhD

234-248

A Linguistic Analysis of Language Evolution in Digital Communication

Ibrahim Sofiyat Temitope & Adamu Idris, PhD

249-269

SECTION B:

Gudunmawar Turawa Da Manazarta 'Yan Kasa Ga Ayyukan Al'Adun Hausawa Daga
1965 Zuwa Yau

Ibrahim Garba Nayaya (Baba) & Danlami Bala Gwammaja, PhD

270-287

Ashe Kunya Ba a Ido Kadai Take Ba: Sake Bitar Fulaku Ga Fulanin Zamani Da Suka
Yi Kaka Gida a Kasar Hausa

**Abdullahi Usman Garko, Abubakar Mohammed Gombe, PhD &
Shamsuddeen Ismaila**

288-295



SECTION C: Creative Writing

Poems for *Gombe Savannah: Journal of Language, Literature and Communication Studies*

Ismail Bala

296-300

Under the Mango Tree

Fatima Ibrahim Usman

301-303



A Conceptual Metaphor Analysis of Selected Proverbs in Aliyu Kamal's *Silence and a Smile*

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Abstract

*This study investigates the cognitive and sociocultural functions of proverbs in Aliyu Kamal's *Silence and a Smile* through the analytical lens of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The primary objective is to explore how metaphorical thought structures moral reasoning, social interaction, and cultural identity within the novel's postcolonial northern Nigerian context. Ten proverbs were purposively selected from the text based on their thematic relevance and figurative richness. Each proverb was analysed to identify its underlying conceptual mappings between source and target domains, revealing how Kamal employs metaphor to mediate moral instruction, critique social norms, and express culturally grounded cognition. The findings demonstrate that the proverbs encapsulate conceptual metaphors such as WORDS ARE TOYS, WORK IS EXPLOITATION, MORALITY IS HEALTH, and RELATIONSHIPS ARE BONDS, among others—each serving as a cognitive framework through which characters and readers interpret social experience. The study concludes that Kamal's use of proverbial metaphors transforms ordinary speech into a vehicle of cognitive insight and moral reflection, positioning *Silence and a Smile* as a narrative that fuses linguistic artistry with cultural philosophy. By foregrounding the conceptual and cognitive dimensions of figurative language, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how Hausa-English fiction constructs meaning at the intersection of language, thought, and society.*

Keywords: , cognition, conceptual metaphor, Hausa-English fiction, proverbs, source and target domains



1. Introduction

Proverbs are widely recognised as potent repositories of collective wisdom, cultural values and cognitive schemata, often encoded in a metaphorical language. Scholars argue that proverbs not only reflect shared beliefs and worldview of speech communities, but also rely on metaphorical mappings in order to render abstract concepts more concrete and vivid (Lemghari, 2017; Sirait, 2023). From a cognitive semantics perspective, the theory of conceptual metaphor, developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), holds that people understand one conceptual domain in terms of another, a process that is richly observable in proverbial discourse. For example, proverbs may depict *life as a journey*, *time as money*, or *poverty as a container of emptiness*, thereby revealing underlying cultural logic (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kovecses, 2010).

In African linguistic and literary contexts, scholars have shown that proverbs often carry embedded metaphoric conceptualizations that mirror social norms, moral values and human-environment relations. For instance, Issa and Ali (2025) investigate conceptual metaphors in Balti and Burushaski proverbs and found that metaphors related to animals, fruits and vegetables

serve as conduits for cultural values. Similarly, studies in Hausa and Nigerian contexts underscore that proverbs, though seemingly fixed expressions, manifest multiple levels of meaning through metaphorical structure (Ajayi, Lanre-Atoyebi, & Oyewusi, 2024; Saleh, 2014).

Within the domain, the work of the novelist-scholar Aliyu Kamal has attracted academic attention for its cultural realism, narrative insight and linguistic richness. His novel, *Silence and a Smile* (2005) explores themes of cultural change, identity, social aspiration and marital dynamics in the northern Nigerian Hausa context (Saje & Mahmud, 2020). While previous investigations have focused on acculturation (Saje & Mahmud, 2020) and idiomatic/proverbial usage in Kamal's texts (Gumel, 2018), a dedicated conceptual-metaphor analysis of the proverbs embedded in *Silence and a Smile* remains under-explored.

This gap is significant for several reasons. First, proverbs in Kamal's novel are not merely decorative; they are integral to the discursive texture of the text, reflecting cultural cognition and ideological orientation of characters and community. Second, by applying the conceptual metaphor framework, the study can uncover how



metaphoric mappings in proverbs function cognitively and rhetorically to convey meaning in this socio-cultural environment. Third, such an analysis can contribute to broader scholarship on cognitive stylistics, deconstructing the ways Hausa proverbs in English-language narrative mediate culture and cognition.

Accordingly, the present study proposes to undertake a conceptual metaphor analysis of selected proverbs in *Silence and a Smile*, aiming to identify the source and target domains activated in the proverb-instances, and to show how those metaphoric structures encode cultural values, cognitive patterns and socio-ethical significance. The study thus attempts to bridge the domain of cognitive linguistics (specifically Conceptual Metaphor Theory) and African literary studies, enriching our understanding of how metaphors, proverbs and narratives interplay in an indigenous literary text.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Proverbs

Proverbs are among the most enduring and expressive forms of human communication, encapsulating communal wisdom, moral values, and sociocultural norms through concise and

memorable expressions. They function as vehicles of collective knowledge, passed down through oral tradition and often framed in metaphorical or symbolic language. The term *proverb* generally refers to a short, well-known saying that expresses a general truth, moral lesson, or practical observation about life (Mieder, 2004). Proverbs serve as repositories of shared experience and worldview, guiding human conduct and social interaction within specific cultural contexts (Finnegan, 2012; Obasola, 2019). From a linguistic and cognitive perspective, proverbs are more than mere rhetorical ornaments; they embody structured conceptualizations of reality. Scholars such as Norrick (2014) and Taylor (2015) argue that proverbs derive their communicative power from their figurative nature, particularly through metaphor and analogy. The metaphorical dimension of proverbs enables abstract human experiences (such as love, wisdom, power, and morality) to be represented through concrete and familiar images. For instance, the proverb “A rolling stone gathers no moss” conceptualizes human restlessness and lack of stability through the image of a stone in motion, translating an experiential truth into an accessible visual metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kovecses, 2010).



Anthropologically, proverbs perform crucial social and cultural functions. They encode moral, ethical, and philosophical systems of communities, serving as instruments of socialization and conflict resolution. As Finnegan (2012) observes, African societies, in particular, use proverbs as vehicles of pedagogy, persuasion, and diplomacy. They are deployed in conversation, oratory, and storytelling to sanction behavior, enforce communal norms, or express subtle criticism. Odebunmi (2008) similarly notes that proverbs operate as pragmatic tools of indirectness, allowing speakers to convey criticism or advice in socially acceptable ways. Thus, the communicative efficacy of proverbs lies not only in their semantic content but also in their pragmatic adaptability in context. In the domain of literary studies, proverbs contribute to characterization, thematic development, and stylistic coloration. Writers often integrate proverbs into literary texts to invoke cultural authority and authenticity. For instance, Achebe's (1958) use of proverbs in *Things Fall Apart* exemplifies how proverbial speech serves as "the palm oil with which words are eaten," signalling the cultural embeddedness of language in African oral traditions. Similarly, proverbs in Aliyu Kamal's works,

including *Silence and a Smile*, serve both aesthetic and cognitive purposes, embedding Hausa cultural values in English expression (Gumel, 2018).

Cognitively, the emergence of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) has provided a framework for understanding the mental structures underlying proverbial meaning. Proverbs frequently embody conceptual metaphors such as *LIFE IS A JOURNEY*, *KNOWLEDGE IS LIGHT*, or *TIME IS A MOVING OBJECT*, which reflect how humans map experiences from concrete source domains onto abstract target domains. This conceptual perspective demonstrates that proverbs are not isolated linguistic artifacts but cognitive manifestations of how speakers understand and frame their world (Kövecses, 2010; Kövecses & Benczes, 2010). In summary, proverbs constitute a vital intersection of language, culture, and cognition. They operate as linguistic condensations of thought, bridging individual experience and communal knowledge. Whether examined through the lenses of pragmatics, ethnography, or cognitive linguistics, proverbs reveal the profound interdependence between language and the human conceptual system. Hence, studying proverbs through frameworks such as Conceptual



Metaphor Theory deepens our understanding of cultural cognition and the metaphorical foundations of human thought.

2.2 Previous Studies on Proverbs

Odebunmi (2008) examines the communicative and functional significance of proverbs that emerge in crisis situations as portrayed in dramatic discourse in Ola Rotimi's *The Gods Are Not to Blame*. Anchored in Mey's (2001) theory of pragmatic acts, the study adopts a text-based qualitative approach to identify and analyse the pragmatic roles of selected proverbs in the play. Through contextual analysis, Odebunmi demonstrates that proverbs in crisis-laden dialogues are not merely decorative elements but are instrumental in achieving diverse psychological and social functions. These include offering counsel, veiling criticism, challenging authority, persuading opponents, and expressing threats in culturally acceptable ways. He further argues that the effectiveness of these proverbs depends largely on shared cultural knowledge between interlocutors, which enables meaning negotiation and pragmatic inference within the dramatic context. The study thus highlights the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and situational exigency, showing that

proverbs in African literary texts serve as strategic discourse tools for conflict management and social mediation.

Despite its rich pragmatic insights, Odebunmi's work is limited in its exploration of the cognitive structures underlying the figurative and conceptual basis of the proverbs analysed. The study focuses on external communicative functions and illocutionary force rather than the internal conceptual mappings that motivate proverbial meanings. In contrast, the present study extends beyond pragmatic functions to examine the conceptual metaphors that underpin the figurative construction of proverbs. The current research seeks to uncover the underlying cognitive mechanisms through which proverbs in Kamal's novel represent complex social realities, emotions, and moral values.

Rezaei (2012) investigates how proverbs operate as rhetorical devices across various literary genres such as epic, lyric, drama, and didactic texts. Using a genre-sensitive rhetorical and literary analytical approach, the study identifies how proverbs' lexical, phonetic, and semantic configurations shift according to the communicative expectations and stylistic norms of each genre. Rezaei's findings reveal that



proverbs in epic narratives tend to emphasize mnemonic and authoritative functions that reinforce collective wisdom and cultural memory, whereas those in lyrical compositions adopt more figurative and emotive forms to express personal sentiments or philosophical reflections. Similarly, dramatic and didactic genres were shown to deploy proverbs as strategic discourse tools for persuasion, moral instruction, and social commentary. The study ultimately positions proverbs as rhetorical instruments that, like similes and metaphors, enhance the stylistic depth and persuasive force of literary discourse. However, while Rezaei's research offers invaluable insights into the stylistic and functional adaptation of proverbs within literary contexts, it remains largely rhetorical in orientation, focusing on external textual features rather than on the internal conceptual structures that underlie proverb meaning. The study does not engage with the cognitive mechanisms or conceptual mappings that drive the figurative and metaphorical logic embedded in proverbs. In contrast, the present study analyses the conceptual structures and mental mappings that shape the figurative meanings of selected proverbs in Aliyu Kamal's *Silence and a Smile*. Whereas Rezaei's work

categorizes proverb functions across genres, the current study seeks to uncover how proverbs reflect deeper cognitive patterns and sociocultural conceptualizations in Kamal's narrative world.

Borgogni (2025) investigates the dynamic relationship between conceptual metaphors and proverbs as co-occurring cognitive and communicative devices in a seventeenth-century English ballad. The research, conducted at the University of Turin, adopts a close textual and discourse-analytical approach grounded in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Through meticulous identification and mapping of source and target domains, Borgogni analyses how proverbs encapsulate culturally salient metaphorical schemas and how these schemas interact with broader metaphorical patterns embedded in the text. The study reveals that proverbs often operate as condensed metaphors (linguistic units that crystallize shared cultural experiences and cognitive models) which, when interwoven with other metaphorical structures, produce heightened pragmatic and persuasive effects. Borgogni further demonstrates that the convergence of proverb and conceptual metaphor within



literary discourse contributes to the creation of implicature, emotional resonance, and rhetorical sophistication, thus reinforcing the ideological or moral undertones of the text.

While Borgogni's (2025) work is significant for establishing the cognitive interdependence between proverb and metaphor, its focus is historically and textually restricted to a single seventeenth-century literary piece. The study's scope, though methodologically rigorous, does not extend to contemporary literary contexts or to African narrative traditions, where the sociocultural grounding of proverbs differs substantially from early modern European literature. The present study draws methodological insight from Borgogni's framework but diverges in purpose and context. Whereas Borgogni's analysis situates proverbs within the metaphorical logic of an early modern ballad, the current research examines how proverbs in Kamal's modern African novel encode sociocultural cognition, moral worldview, and interpersonal ideology within the Nigerian cultural setting.

Inuwa and Rabi'u (2019) adopt a feminist framework to interrogate gender representation in northern Nigerian fiction, with a particular attention to Abubakar Gimba's

Sacred Apples. While their study focuses primarily on Gimba's narrative, it references Aliyu Kamal's *Silence and a Smile* as a supporting example of male-authored feminist consciousness within Hausa literature. The authors argue that Kamal's novel projects educated and assertive female protagonists who resist patriarchal structures, while it depicts male characters as corrupt, self-indulgent, or morally compromised. Through this portrayal, the text aligns with a broader literary movement in northern Nigeria that reconsiders gender power dynamics and critiques oppressive cultural practices such as forced marriage. However, the study's contribution remains largely thematic and comparative, emphasizing socio-literary implications rather than linguistic or conceptual dimensions of meaning construction. Unlike their work, the current study undertakes a conceptual metaphor analysis of *Silence and a Smile*, thereby shifting the analytical lens from feminist representation to the figurative and cognitive mechanisms through which Kamal constructs social realities, emotions, and ideological meanings in his narrative discourse.

In his critical essay, Aliyu Kamal (2020) contextualizes *Silence and a Smile* within the larger body of contemporary novels written in



English, offering both descriptive and evaluative reflections. Drawing on a survey of twelve novels, Kamal identifies recurring thematic preoccupations such as religiosity, communalism, and gender relations, asserting that the quotidian events portrayed in these texts (including *Silence and a Smile*) mirror urgent social realities like forced marriage, religious duplicity, and the struggle for women's autonomy. The essay's principal merit lies in its effort to situate *Silence and a Smile* within the trajectory of Hausa-English fiction, emphasizing English as a tool for socio-literary mediation and intercultural dialogue. Nonetheless, the study remains largely thematic and discursive in nature, offering general commentary rather than a systematic linguistic or cognitive exploration. In contrast, the present study advances beyond Kamal's broad literary contextualization by employing conceptual metaphor analysis to uncover the figurative and cognitive structures that underpin meaning-making in *Silence and a Smile*, thereby providing a more detailed understanding of how metaphor shapes the novel's representation of thought, emotion, and social ideology.

Saje and Mahmud (2020) present a critical reading of Aliyu Kamal's

Silence and a Smile as a narrative that dramatizes the complexities of cultural contact and acculturation in postcolonial northern Nigeria. Grounded in postcolonial theory and employing a close-textual, thematic approach, the authors examine how cultural frictions (manifested through practices such as forced kinship marriage, migration, and formal education) reshape gender relations and moral values within the depicted society. Their analysis reveals that Kamal portrays acculturation as an ambivalent process, one that facilitates social progress while simultaneously generating ethical and cultural dilemmas. Empirically, Saje and Mahmud (2020) demonstrate how modern education and urban exposure destabilize traditional kinship structures, whereas religion oscillates between being a moral anchor and an instrument of control. The study's strength lies in its linkage of narrative patterns to broader postcolonial realities of cultural transformation. Nonetheless, its interpretive emphasis and lack of systematic linguistic or cognitive analysis limit its methodological depth. Unlike their thematically driven interpretation, the current study adopts a conceptual metaphor approach to explore *Silence and a Smile* at the level of figurative cognition—investigating how metaphors structure perception,



ideology, and social meaning within Kamal's discourse rather than focusing solely on postcolonial thematic.

Baba (2025) investigates the metaphoric and figurative dimensions of *Silence and a Smile*, focusing on how metaphor functions as a socio-cognitive medium through which social norms are encoded and indirect critique is articulated within morally constrained contexts. Using a qualitative, library-based approach, Baba (2025) systematically identifies metaphorical and figurative expressions across narration and dialogue, linking them to social functions such as euphemizing taboo subjects, mediating gender relations, and representing hierarchies of power. The study persuasively argues that metaphors in Kamal's novel are not merely decorative linguistic features but central to meaning-making, enabling the author to navigate cultural sensitivities and engage in subtle moral commentary. By foregrounding the cognitive and rhetorical functions of metaphor, Baba extends the interpretive range of existing thematic analyses and draws attention to the interplay between language and ideology in Kamal's prose. However, the study's limited methodological precision (particularly its lack of clarity on data sampling and

coding reliability) weakens the empirical robustness of its findings. While Baba's research shares with the current study a focus on metaphor, the present analysis diverges by adopting a conceptual metaphor framework, systematically mapping underlying metaphorical structures (e.g., *LIFE IS A JOURNEY*, *POWER IS POSSESSION*) to uncover how cognitive patterns shape social and ideological meanings in *Silence and a Smile*, thereby offering a more theoretically grounded and linguistically systematic account.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) as proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) in their seminal work *Metaphors We Live By*. The theory posits that metaphor is not merely a linguistic ornament but a fundamental mechanism of human cognition through which individuals conceptualize abstract experiences in terms of more concrete and familiar domains. According to CMT, metaphors operate through systematic correspondences, or mappings, between a *source domain* (the conceptual area from which metaphorical expressions are drawn) and a *target domain* (the abstract concept being understood). These mappings reflect how people think, act, and



communicate within specific sociocultural contexts.

Applying this framework to Aliyu Kamal's *Silence and a Smile* enables an exploration of how metaphor functions as a cognitive and discursive tool for representing social realities, moral dilemmas, and cultural transformations in postcolonial northern Nigeria. Through conceptual metaphors, Kamal's characters negotiate complex experiences (such as gender relations, acculturation, power dynamics, and moral conflict) by drawing upon shared cultural schemas. For instance, metaphors of journey, war, and possession often reveal the underlying worldview and value orientations embedded in the narrative. The theoretical framework thus provides both a linguistic and cognitive lens for decoding how proverbs and figurative expressions in the novel embody deeper conceptual structures that organize thought and social perception. It allows the study to move beyond surface-level interpretation of figurative language toward uncovering the implicit cognitive models that shape meaning-making in Kamal's narrative world.

4. Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative, text-based research design rooted in the principles of conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff &

Johnson, 1980) to examine the figurative and cognitive dimensions of Aliyu Kamal's *Silence and a Smile*. Ten proverbs were purposively selected from the novel based on their thematic relevance, and capacity to reflect key sociocultural and ideological concerns in the narrative. The adoption of purposive sampling strategy ensures that the selected proverbs capture the range of conceptual mappings through which Kamal constructs meaning, negotiates moral values, and frames social relationships. Each proverb was analysed to identify its source and target domains, revealing the underlying conceptual metaphors and their contextual functions in character discourse and narrative commentary. The analysis further interprets how these metaphors embody sociocultural cognition, moral reasoning, and postcolonial identity negotiation within the northern Nigerian setting of the novel.

5. Analysis and Discussion

The ten proverbs selected from Aliyu Kamal's *Silence and a Smile* are examined through the lens of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) to uncover the cognitive mappings and sociocultural meanings they embody. Each proverb reveals how metaphor structures moral reasoning, social relationships, and communicative

practices within the novel's northern Nigerian context.

Proverb 1: "The word itself is mere playful amusement."

This expression, uttered by Malam Lawan, rests on the conceptual metaphor WORDS ARE TOYS/PLAYTHINGS, suggesting that speech can be trivial, manipulative, or insincere. Cognitively, the proverb frames language as an instrument of play rather than truth, highlighting the moral tension between idle talk and meaningful communication. Within the context of the novel, it critiques superficial or performative discourse, reflecting the cultural valuation of measured and responsible speech in Hausa moral philosophy.

Proverb 2: "Monkey do work, baboon de chop!"

Ashiru's use of this proverb exemplifies the metaphor WORK IS LABOUR BY ANIMALS and EXPLOITATION IS CONSUMPTION, mapping human social injustice onto the animal world. The proverb captures resentment over inequitable social structures where one group labours and another reaps the benefits. Its use conveys Ashiru's awareness of class and power imbalances, aligning with Kamal's broader commentary on corruption and unequal reward systems in postcolonial Nigerian society.

Proverb 3: "Let the doctor cure himself first before attending other patients."

Here, Ashiru invokes the metaphor MORAL AUTHORITY IS HEALTH, equating ethical integrity with physical wellness. The proverb underscores the importance of self-correction before judging others—a deeply moralistic insight prevalent in Hausa and broader African ethical discourse. Through this figurative mapping, Kamal foregrounds hypocrisy as a societal disease, reinforcing the novel's theme of moral accountability.

Proverb 4: "Making a mountain of a quarrel out of a molehill."

Spoken by Isah, this proverb operates through the metaphor INSIGNIFICANCE IS SMALL SIZE / EXAGGERATION IS MAGNIFICATION. The figurative enlargement of a molehill into a mountain conceptualizes emotional escalation as disproportionate spatial growth. It serves to admonish overreaction and to promote emotional restraint, a trait highly valued in communal conflict resolution. Kamal's inclusion of this proverb demonstrates his sensitivity to everyday discourse as a vehicle for social harmony.



Proverb 5: “You sieve the beautiful by marrying the beautiful.”

Hamidu’s proverb rests on the metaphor MARRIAGE IS A SELECTION PROCESS and BEAUTY IS PURITY/QUALITY, equating the act of choosing a spouse with sifting grains or filtering quality materials. The metaphor reflects cultural beliefs that marriage refines and reproduces beauty (both physical and moral), thereby linking aesthetics with social reproduction. Through this figurative lens, Kamal highlights how matrimonial choices mirror societal standards of value and virtue.

Proverb 6: “Don’t let me borrow your mouth, as people say, and eat onions with it!”

Ashiru’s humorous warning draws on the metaphor SPEECH IS EATING and MOUTH IS A VEHICLE OF ACTION, using the act of eating onions (a pungent, undesirable food) to symbolize saying unpleasant or offensive words. The proverb reinforces personal accountability in speech, suggesting that words, once spoken, bear consequences akin to ingesting something distasteful. It reflects the cultural emphasis on discretion and social tact in communication.

Proverb 7: “One doesn’t grow up and still eat sound like a child.”

This proverb embodies the metaphor MATURITY IS CONTROLLED BEHAVIOUR/CHILDISHNESS IS NOISE, mapping physical and social growth onto auditory imagery. It suggests that adulthood entails emotional restraint and decorum, contrasting childish impulsivity with mature composure. Kamal employs this metaphor to emphasize moral education as an essential component of adulthood, resonating with the novel’s broader theme of social refinement through learning and experience.

Proverb 8: “Cutting ties, as you know, attracts severe Divine consequences.”

Isah’s moral warning is grounded in the metaphor RELATIONSHIPS ARE BONDS/THREADS and SOCIAL BREACH IS SEVERANCE, portraying human connections as tangible cords whose rupture incurs divine displeasure. The proverb reveals a culturally embedded understanding of kinship as sacred and divinely sanctioned. It aligns with the communal ethos of northern Nigerian society, where social cohesion is both a moral and spiritual imperative.

Proverb 9: “Parents’ anger attracts the Divine kind.”

This proverb activates the metaphor PARENTAL AUTHORITY IS DIVINE AUTHORITY, situating parental displeasure within a sacred moral order. It emphasizes the continuity between human and divine justice, reinforcing filial obedience and respect as pathways to moral stability. Kamal’s deployment of this metaphor underscores the fusion of religious and cultural ethics in Hausa family life.

Proverb 10: “Certain faults... drop away after shaking hands.”

Malam Lawan’s conciliatory remark illustrates the metaphor FORGIVENESS IS RELEASE/RECONCILIATION IS PHYSICAL CONTACT. The gesture of shaking hands symbolizes the cognitive act of letting go—transforming abstract moral cleansing into a physical action. It captures the communal value of reconciliation, where forgiveness restores harmony and reaffirms collective morality.

Taken together, these proverbs exemplify how Kamal weaves conceptual metaphors into his narrative as cognitive and cultural instruments for moral instruction, social commentary, and character development. Through metaphorical mappings that link

the physical, social, and spiritual domains, *Silence and a Smile* constructs a moral universe where figurative speech not only reflects thought but also shapes ethical consciousness within postcolonial Hausa society.

6. Conclusion

This study examines ten selected proverbs from Aliyu Kamal’s *Silence and a Smile* through the lens of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), revealing the intricate ways in which figurative language functions as a cognitive, moral, and sociocultural instrument in the novel. The analysis demonstrates that Kamal’s deployment of proverbs transcends ornamental or stylistic purposes; rather, it encodes shared cultural schemas that shape how characters perceive and negotiate issues of morality, gender, social hierarchy, and interpersonal relations. Each proverb embodies a conceptual mapping that links abstract experiences (such as hypocrisy, conflict, maturity, or reconciliation) to concrete and familiar domains drawn from everyday Hausa life. Through these metaphors, Kamal constructs a narrative world where moral reasoning and cultural knowledge are transmitted not through didactic exposition, but through cognitively grounded figurative expressions. The study’s findings



further underscore the interplay between language, cognition, and culture, showing that Kamal's narrative art reflects a broader epistemology in which proverbs function as repositories of communal wisdom and as cognitive frameworks for interpreting social reality. By applying a conceptual metaphor approach, the study extends prior thematic and sociological analyses of Kamal's work, offering a linguistically and cognitively informed understanding of how meaning is structured and conveyed. In conclusion, *Silence and a Smile* exemplifies how contemporary Hausa-English fiction harnesses the metaphorical power of proverbs to articulate complex moral and social ideas, reinforcing the novel's role as both a site of cultural memory and a medium of cognitive reflection.

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