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A Pragmatic Analysis of *Maccaa* Oromo Marriage Proverbs: Horro Guduru in FocusTajuddin Hashim¹, Teshome Egere², Meheretu Adnew^{3*}

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Abstract

This study analyses marriage proverbs of the *Maccaa* Oromo in Horro Guduru using John R. Searle's (1979) Speech Act Theory to understand the speakers' intentions. The research aims to identify the illocutionary acts, their forces, and explore their effects on the audience. Data gathered through interviews and observations were analysed using a descriptive qualitative method. Sixteen proverbs were analysed and categorized into contextual themes like faith, omens, upbringing, morals, advice, wisdom, kinship, and status. The findings reveal five types of illocutionary acts—assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative—essential for grasping pragmatic functions and intentions. The study illustrates how these proverbs facilitate communication, strengthen social bonds, provide cultural insights, offer guidance, issue warnings, and explain Oromo societal values that affect marital relationships. As revealed by the study, with explicit and implied meanings, proverbs convey various illocutionary forces like asserting, informing, criticizing, advising, warning, hoping, marrying, praising, regretting, validating, and complimenting, each triggering various perlocutionary effects on the audience's emotions, thoughts, and behaviours. The effects include persuading, convincing, invoking, reminding, frightening, inspiring, pleasing, and humiliating. The fusion of implicatures with illocutionary forces and perlocutionary effects enriches communication, enhancing interpretive comprehension. The study underscores how these proverbs reflect and perpetuate the community's cultural values, beliefs, norms, and communication dynamics, emphasizing the importance of considering cultural context and pragmatic implications to reveal profound wisdom. It suggests further exploration of Oromo proverbs from diverse pragmatic lenses like politeness strategies, and philosophical, sociological, and anthropological perspectives to unveil additional knowledge systems.

Keywords: Contexts, Illocutionary acts, Perlocutionary effects, Pragmatics, Proverbs, Speech Act Theory

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Marriage is a significant cultural institution worldwide, governed by customs specific to a particular community. Needham (2015) identifies three main forms of marriage customs in Africa: marriage by capture, marriage by purchase, and marriage by choice. These African customs share similarities with practices in other parts of the world. For instance, Needham (2015) says, marriages by purchase vary from tribe to tribe in Africa. Similarly, marriage customs differ among ethnic groups in Ethiopia. In Oromo culture, established laws strictly forbid divorce according to Gadaa laws (Dejene & Jatani, 2023), while in Amhara tradition, only k'al k'īdan marriage type forbid divorce (Ullendorff, 1960). This study analyses Maccaa Oromo marriage proverbs, with a specific focus on Horro Guduru Oromo community.

The marriage customs of the Maccaa-Borana Oromo, based on Gadaa laws, reflect their rich cultural heritage (Dejene & Jatani, 2023). Specifically, their unique marriage practices reflect their cultural identity. The Maccaa Oromo in Horro Guduru, affiliated with the Jaawwii clan, is part of the Maccaa-Borana-Oromo (Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau, 2015). Maccaa Oromo traditional marriage ceremony, deeply rooted in history, highlights their distinct cultural identity (Dereje, 2019). Studies by Bonnie (1973) examined cultural practices, traditions, and ceremonies related to marriage among the Oromo in Wallagga, and Gemechu and Assefa (2006) explored marriage practices among Gidda Oromo in Wallagga, detailing marriage forms like betrothal, abduction, secret, choice, rush, and levirate. These studies shed light on traditional marriage customs and rituals. Furthermore, Assefa (1999) examined marriage practices among Horro Guduru Oromo, emphasizing their significance within the community (cited in Gemechu & Assefa, 2006).

Naqataa, a revered marriage practice among the Horro Guduru Oromo, involves a series of rituals and negotiations between the families of the bride and groom. This traditional system encompasses discussions on various aspects like family lineage, property, and the groom's ability to support a family (Dereje, 2019). Betrothal marriage, on the other hand, includes meticulous processes such as bride selection, marriage negotiations, dowry, naqachuu (engagement), fuudhuu (marriage), missiraachoo (virginity celebration), and miinjee deebii (returning of best men to the bride's home), all reflecting important cultural practices (Dereje, 2019). The intricate ceremonies show that betrothal marriage illustrates the Oromo people's dedication to their ancestral heritage and Gadaa laws.

Marriage ceremonies among the Oromo people are intricate processes requiring patience and careful communication at each stage. Language, particularly the use of proverbs during negotiations and ceremonies, plays a vital role in expressing cultural values and facilitating communication. In this regard, Ngugi (1986) highlights language's impact on negotiations in various life aspects. In Oromo culture, specific proverbs shape conversations during marriage ceremonies, carrying significant meanings in diverse contexts that maintain societal relationships and outcomes. Oromo proverbs contribute to maintaining societal relationships and outcomes within the community's marital traditions, blending everyday language with deep socio-cultural significance.

Proverbs reflect a society's culture, encompassing traditions, truths, social norms, and conventions. Eshete (2008) asserts that proverbs are a crucial part of the cultural legacy of the Oromo people, enabling them to attain true fulfilment within the Gadaa system. They serve as carriers of traditional wisdom and cultural artefacts within Oromo society. Consequently, Oromo people place significant emphasis on proverbs in their communication. Particularly, elders often preface and conclude their speeches with proverbs to emphasize their messages, viewing proverbs as, "A speech without a proverb is like a stew without salt." Sumner (1995) further emphasizes that proverbs serve as repositories of wisdom for the Oromo people.

Proverbs serve various pragmatic functions, including warning, criticism, threat, request, admonition, and other communicative functions across different contexts. Leech (1983) highlights the significant influence of context on understanding utterances, as it allows speakers and listeners to share a common background for interpretation. Bascom (1965) argues that proverbs lose their meaning without context, a sentiment echoed in the study of African oral literature, particularly proverbs, where contexts play a crucial role (Finnegan, 1976). This study supports Finnegan's assertion with an Oromo proverb that underscores the context-dependent nature of proverbs: "Jabbiin bifa kormaati, mammaaksi bifa dubbiiiti," translates to "As a calf resembles the bull, a proverb encapsulates the issue." Pragmatics, which examines how context shapes meaning, is vital for understanding the interpretations of Oromo marriage proverbs in various speech events during marriage rituals. Therefore, this study aims to analyse Oromo proverbs within the context of marriage rituals, exploring their role as communication tools in different speech events during marriage ceremonies.

1.2 Problem Statement

Marriage holds paramount importance within Oromo culture, being a significant ritual. Customarily, Maccaa Oromo marriage customs encompass diverse traditions and speech events, including negotiations, gift exchanges, ceremonies, and celebrations, all deeply rooted in their cultural practices and language. Researchers have observed rich cultural heritage within the Horro Guduru Oromo, intertwining marriage rituals with socio-cultural norms expressed through various speech events. The Waaqeffanna marriage rituals involve blessings, agreements, dowry exchanges, prayers, and more, where participants utilize speech acts to convey intentions. Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) emphasize the importance of convincing vows and actions in the act of marrying. Yule (1996) stresses the importance of vows as declarative speech acts encompassing locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts in a specific context. Similarly, Oromo elders often use proverbs in different marriage rituals to express different socio-pragmatic functions.

Some scholars have studied Oromo proverbs and their meanings. Sumner (1995) conducted a comprehensive study on Oromo proverbs, categorizing them based on themes through a descriptive approach. In contrast, this study focuses on the pragmatic analysis of Oromo marriage proverbs in actual contexts using speech act theory. Amensisa (2020) also explored Oromo proverbs in everyday conversations, highlighting their context, value, and structure. This study, however, concentrates on pragmatic analyses of Oromo marriage proverbs in Horro Guduru using speech act theory. Additionally, Rikitu (1992) and Cotter, (1996) concentrated on collecting and translating Oromo proverbs into English, somewhat similar to the current study. However, this study differs in its focus, emphasizing the pragmatic analysis of Horro Guduru-Oromo marriage proverbs. Furthermore, Tadesse (2004) investigated the contextual roles of Guji Oromo proverbs in cultural contexts in Eebbisaa and social contexts in Gumi Ganda, shedding light on their socio-cultural realities from a functional perspective. He approached the proverbs through a folkloristic lens, unlike the current study, which explores the pragmatic dimensions of Oromo proverbs in real-life contexts using speech act theory.

Various scholars have examined different aspects of Oromo proverbs, such as linguistic, social, cultural, philosophical, and functional dimensions, each with varying levels of depth and focus. However, none of these scholars has explored the pragmatic aspects of Oromo proverbs within the context of marriage rituals. Previous studies used various analysis methods, including philosophical analysis (Sumner, 1995), linguistic analysis (Amensisa, 2020), documentation and translation (Cotter, 1996; Rikitu, 1992) and functional analysis (Sumner, 1995; Tadesse, 2004). Despite these approaches, there has been a notable absence of analysis using Speech Act Theory, especially concerning marriage proverbs in the Oromo sociocultural setting. This research gap highlights the importance of this study, which aims to analyse the pragmatic aspects of Maccaa Oromo marriage proverbs, focusing on the Horro Guduru Oromo community. The study aims to identify illocutionary acts, describe illocutionary forces, and explore their perlocutionary effects. Therefore, the study seeks to address the following four research questions:

- 1) What types of illocutionary acts are present in these marriage proverbs?
- 2) What illocutionary forces are evident in these marriage proverbs?
- 3) What are the perlocutionary effects of using these marriage proverbs on the hearer?

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. The Oromo Cultural Tradition

The Oromo people speak Afan Oromo, which ranks the third most spoken language in Africa after Arabic and Hausa (Gadaa, 1988; Hordofa, 2001). They practice an indigenous traditional belief called Waaqa and follow the religion of Waaqeffanna. They also have an indigenous democratic governance system, which encompasses a homogenous culture, language, history, and descent, as well as a shared political, religious, and legal system (Gadaa, 1988; Dereje, 2019). The Gadaa system is an egalitarian structure based on generational and age-set divisions that exert temporal power (Asmarom, 1973; Asafa, 2007). This system regulates social order, resolves conflicts, and preserves the cultural identity of the Oromo people.

In the realm of marriage, the Oromo community adheres to rule-governed marriage practices that ensure the continuity of the nation and future generations. Women play a crucial role in the Gadaa system in that the community believes them to be essential conduits for blessings in procreation (Bartels, 1983) and are indispensable for the performance of required rituals by Abbaa Gadaa leaders (Asmarom, 1973; Dereje, 2019). This affirms the significance of marriage as a sacred rite and a legal social institution that has persisted since the early stages of human development among the Oromo nation.

Within the Oromo culture, the Gadaa system influences marriage practices, from spouse selection to bride wealth negotiations. The Gadaa assembly, such as in the Borana-Oromo culture, reviews marriage rules periodically, emphasizing parental supervision and societal norms that dictate marital conduct (Dejene & Jatani, 2023). This assembly dictates certain rules and norms regarding marriage, such as the importance of clan exogamy and the role of elders in the marriage process. The Borana Oromo practice exogamous marriage, in which the community consider any marriage within a moiety, is incest (Shongolo, 1994). Clan exogamy is a prevalent practice among the Oromo, reinforcing social ties and preventing incestuous relationships.

Virginity holds considerable importance in marriage traditions of Horro Guduru Oromo community. “Their marriage system revolves around maintaining premarital virginity for girls, upholding reputation and honour for the family and the community.”⁴ Mbaya (2002) asserts the bride is required to be virgin to maintain the reputations of herself and her parents. Additionally, “Horro Guduru Oromo community strictly prohibits divorce as it breaks the sociocultural norms, their religion and Gadaa marriage laws.”⁵ Clan leaders intervene in marital disputes to ensure that the woman can stay in her home with her fair share of the property (Dejene & Jatani, 2023). This shows that the Gadaa system plays a role in resolving disputes related to marriage and family matters, with elders and leaders through Gadaa principles to mediate conflicts in accordance with cultural norms.

Parents, especially mothers, play a significant role in instilling moral and cultural values in Oromo society, emphasizing the importance of chastity and discipline. The community uses different kinds of verbal arts like songs, blessings, and proverbs during wedding ceremonies to reinforce their cultural values and depict their philosophy and customs. Through these cultural practices and rituals, the Oromo community maintains its traditions, upholds its values, and strengthens social bonds within the framework of the Gadaa system.

⁴ Personal interview with Qumbii, Didibe Kistana, 27 April 2021, 2:30pm-3:30pm

⁵ Personal interview with Ayyaana, on April 25/2021, at the village of Odaa Bulluq, 10:00am-11:00am; Personal interview with Odaa, at Didibe Kistana, on April 23/2021, 3:00pm-5:00pm

2.2. Proverb, its Functions and Contexts

Proverbs, rich in multiple meanings derived from real-life experiences (Mieder, 1993), defy precise definitions due to their diverse functions and interpretations. Lutfi (2007) characterizes proverbs as speech acts deployed in communication to express doubt, promise, warning, advice, or influence actions. Norrick (1985) observes that proverbs contain both literal and implied meanings, requiring comprehension at dual levels. Mollanazar (2001) defines proverbs as tools for establishing shared meanings within specific contexts. This article defines proverbs as speech acts used in socio-cultural settings to serve varied pragmatic functions.

Across diverse social and communicative settings, proverbs play pivotal roles. Mieder (2004) notes their use in poetry, wise sayings, debates, and daily interactions, addressing a spectrum of scenarios. Finnegan (1976) emphasizes the aesthetic and advisory roles of proverbs, particularly in African contexts. Proverbs also serve to bolster arguments, express general truths, influence perspectives, and engage with societal issues according to Mieder (1994). Miruka (1994) identifies aesthetic, reflective, normative, and summative functions of proverbs, while Bascom (1965) lauds their contribution to enriched communication through colour and beauty.

In the realm of folklore studies, contextual understanding is paramount in deciphering proverbs' meanings and functions. Embedded within sociocultural contexts, proverbs thrive as important vehicles of societal communication. Understanding the contexts helps grasp their meanings and functions rooted in sociocultural backgrounds. Mieder (2007) highlights those proverbs' true functions and meanings are discerned in natural contexts reflecting social situations. Osisanwo (2003) categorizes contexts into situational, linguistic, psychological, and socio-cultural dimensions, underlining the need to examine the immediate environment, language use, emotional states, and societal backdrop of proverbial usage. Investigating the users and motives behind proverbial expressions significantly unveils their cultural relevance. Cultural context explores the interplay between proverbs and culture. Bascom (1965) stresses that without context proverbs remain unclear.

2.3. Theoretical Framework of the Study

Speech act theory, a branch of linguistics under pragmatics, examines the relationship between language and context (Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983). It focuses on how language conveys different meanings based on the situation. Pragmatics studies language communication within societal contexts, examining how language use affects participants (Mey, 2001). This article defines pragmatics as the study of language use and its effects on users in real sociocultural settings, particularly in expressing different meanings in diverse situations. Oromo proverbs serve different socio-pragmatic functions in various contexts.

In pragmatics, utterances perform speech acts, which are communication acts. Speech act theory, based on Austin (1962) work, analyses how utterances influence the behaviour of speakers and hearers in interpersonal communication. Speech acts convey cultural themes and communicate different meanings and social variations in culture-specific contexts.

Speech act theory, introduced by Austin (1962) and further developed by Searle (1979) posits that language serves not only to convey information but also to perform actions. Austin classified speech acts into locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. The locutionary act involves the literal meaning of an utterance, the illocutionary act pertains to the intended meaning, and the perlocutionary act refers to the effects of the speaker's utterance on the listener like persuading, amusing, embarrassing, and inspiring (Searle, 1979).

Austin (1962) distinguished between direct and indirect speech acts. Searle (1979) also categorized speech acts as direct or indirect, underscoring the importance of discerning the speaker's intention in interpreting an utterance. Direct speech acts exhibit a direct relationship between form and function, while indirect speech acts have an indirect relationship between form and function. This shows Searle associated sentence types with illocutionary forces: interrogative sentences align with questions, imperatives align with requests, and

declaratives correspond to assertions. The direct illocutionary force is assertive, while the indirect illocutionary force is primarily directive (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979).

Searle (1979) further expounds on speech acts, categorizing them into representatives, directives, commissives, expressives, and declarations, each with distinct communicative functions. Representatives involve conveying a belief in the truth of a statement, directives prompt action, commissives commit to a course of action, expressives convey attitudes, and declarations change the status of an object or situation. Each of the five-illocutionary acts has direct and indirect speech acts, differing in their directness of the relationship between form and function. Recognizing illocutionary acts is critical for understanding the speaker's intentions. The researchers used these categories of speech acts in the data analysis.

Thus, this study adopts Searle (1979) Speech Act Theory as a theoretical framework to analyse the communicative functions, intentions, and impacts of Maccaa Oromo marriage proverbs, recognizing their pragmatic functions relying on illocutionary acts. The researchers categorized proverbs based on the forms and functions of the proverbs into direct and indirect illocutionary acts. Contexts provide implied meanings and functions of proverbs, essential for comprehending illocutionary forces while perlocutionary acts signify the proverbs' effects on the audience.

3. Methodology

This article used a descriptive qualitative method to analyse the pragmatic aspects of Maccaa Oromoo marriage proverbs in Horro Guduru zone. Shambo, the capital of the zone, is located west of Oromiya regional state capital, Finfinne, at a distance of 314 km. The researchers purposefully selected the districts of Horro and Horro Bulluq for data collection due to their cultural significance in Oromo Gadaa rituals. Data collection tools included field observations during marriage rituals such as marriage contract ceremonies, the return of the best men to the bride's home, and the wedding day to observe the real contexts in which the proverbs were quoted. In-depth interviews were also conducted with nine key consultants chosen based on their deep knowledge of Oromo culture and oral traditions. Two methods were employed during interviews to aid the memories of the consultants and to elicit marriage proverbs related to various themes. Eighty-two marriage proverbs were collected using these methods, and 16 proverbs were purposively selected based similar themes for analysis, categorized into eight contextual themes such as faith, omens, and wisdom. The researchers described, interpreted, and explained each proverb within different contexts to reveal their implied meanings and effects on users. Analysing the syntactic form of the proverbs helped identify their illocutionary forces, which were further categorized into various illocutionary acts. The researchers translated the proverbs into English using the Communicative Translation Approach and Semantic Translation Approach to make them accessible to non-Oromo readers while prioritizing the meaning and form of the original words. Finally, the researchers considered different ethical issues. These are (1) *Confidentiality*: the participants were guaranteed that the collected information would remain confidential only for the research, (2) *Permission*: before carrying out the study, the researchers got formal written letter, from Jimma University, (3) *Informed consent*: the prospective research participants were fully informed about the procedures involved in the research and were asked to give their consent to participate, and (4) *Privacy*: the participants were remained anonymous throughout the study and even to the researcher and his advisors to guarantee privacy.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

This section focuses on analysing 16 Maccaa Oromo of Horro Guduru marriage proverbs. The researchers followed a specific format: initially presenting the data in Afan Oromo, then transcribing the data phonetically and translating it into English. Subsequently, the researchers categorized the proverbs into eight contextual themes: faith, omens, upbringing, morals, caution/advice, wisdom/foolishness, kinship, and status. The analysis included detailed descriptions, interpretations, and explanations of each proverb within their respective contexts.

4.1.1. Faith in Oromo Proverbs

Horro Guduru community gives high value in their faith to *Waaqa* to arrange marriage contract. The following proverb affirms this point:

1. Afan Oromo: Halkanii fi salgan yoo laate.

/halkani: fi salgan jo: la:te/.

English: If the omens of the night, assembly of the *salgan*/nine allows.

➤ Illocutionary Acts:

- a) Direct: Assertive (asserting);
- b) Indirect: Commisive (hoping)

In this proverb, the word "halkan" (literally meaning night) connotes omens, while "salgan," refers to ritual practices involving elders' mediation known as *jaarsumma* and symbolizes the nine assemblies of in the Gadaa system. Mediation and omens hold historical significance in the socio-cultural context of community. According to consultants in Horro Guduru community's culture, parents face challenges in deciding their children's marriage contracts. They interpret omens through traditional religious beliefs in *Waaqa*. The parents of the bride and groom observe omens by preparing "biqila garbuu" (a barley sprout) to brew "farsoo" (local beer). A healthy barley sprout signifies a successful marriage, while a lack of growth indicates a bad omen, leading to the cancellation of the marriage negotiation. The consultants also added the community should rely on the guidance of qaalluu (religious experts) to arrange marriage agreements. The researchers realized that parents pray to *Waaqa* for guidance through the message of qaalluu. The bride's father uses this proverb to hope *Waaqa* for their marriage inquiry and negotiations at his home, emphasizing the importance of seeking guidance from *Waaqa*. This proverb serves as a means of psychological communication for decision-making within the community. The researchers noted the community reveres *Waaqa* in arranging marriage contracts and expresses fear of *Waaqa*. Omens and elders significantly influence marriage contracts among parents in the community.

The bride's father realizes the importance of carefully considering omens, particularly positive ones, with the elders to ensure the success of the marriage contract. This proverb represents a speech act of hope. The form of this proverb is declarative and it belongs to the act of commissive.

2. Afan Oromo: Niitiin dhirsaaft kennaa Waaqi.

/ni:ti:n dhirsaaft kenna: wa:k'i/.

English: A wife is a gift from *Waaqa* to her husband.

➤ Illocutionary Acts:

- a) Direct: Assertive (asserting);
- b) Indirect: Expressive (praising)

This proverb implies that the Horro Guduru Oromo believes in the role of Waaqa in marriage. Waaqaa blesses marriage, unites husband and wife, and makes it a success. According to a consultant, in marriage practices, the community seeks signs from Waaqa, emphasizing the close connection between cultural marriage and Waaqa. In the community, the marriage agreement between the parents of the couple is valid only when Waaqa is involved. The blesser (*Jaarsa eebbaa*) quoted this proverb on the day of marriage contract after blessing time was over at the bride's home in a village called *Odaa Bulluq*, signifying the success of the engagement. The elder praises Waaqa for uniting the bride and groom and ensuring the success of their marriage. According to Oromo beliefs, Waaqa arranges and determines the success of marriages, with both sets of parents honouring Waaqa in their marriage decisions. Researchers have noted that cultural marriage in the Horro Guduru community is a religious tradition guided by Waaqa.

The blesser invokes the elders that a wife is a gift for her husband in Oromo religious customs. The blesser uses this proverb to praise how Waaqa influences marriages in the community. This proverb is declarative in form and falls under the expressive speech acts.

3. Afan Oromo: Haadha manaa fi abbaa manaa madda tokkoo waraabu.

/ha:da mana: fi ?abba: mana: madda tokko: wara:bu/.

English: The wife and husband draw from a source.

➤ Illocutionary Acts:

- a) Direct: assertive (asserting);
- b) Indirect: declaration (marrying)

This proverb implies that the source, known as *madda*, is crucial for various activities and plays an essential role in the life of the Oromo community. In Amharic, there is a proverb that says, "ባልና ማስት ከአንድ ባህር ይቀዳል," which describes the traits of the bride and groom with a slight modification, using 'sea' instead of 'spring'. In Oromo culture, the spring symbolizes life, fertility, and sacredness. Elders use this proverb to align their words with reality, emphasizing the unity of the bride and groom in marriage, believing that Waaqa (the Supreme Being) brings them together. During a marriage negotiation in Odaa Bulluq village, an old man used this proverb to illustrate the couple's similarities, suggesting that marrying them is like uniting two individuals from the same source. This proverb demonstrates how Waaqa brings a wife and husband together in the socio-cultural norms of Horro Guduru Oromo, indicating that a wife with good moral values marries a good husband, and vice versa. The researchers noted that this proverb indicates that a wife mirrors her husband and vice versa, linking personality traits to the community's spiritual growth. It also suggests that personality traits can influence the marital satisfaction of couples positively or negatively.

The elderly man wants to persuade the bride's father to approve the marriage contract by highlighting the similarities between the groom and the bride, sharing similar qualities and nature. This proverb is declarative in form, serves the function of marrying/marriage advice, and falls under the speech act of declaration.

4.1.2. Omens in Oromo Proverbs

Good omens encourage the success of marriage and bad omens do the opposite in the cultural marriage of the Horro Guduru Oromo. The following proverbs reflect the importance of observing omens:

4. Afan Oromo: Qalaamaa gaariin cidhoo gaarii dhalti.

/k`ala:ma: ga:ri:n f`ido: ga: ri: dal`ti/.

English: A good filly gives birth to a good colt.

➤ Illocutionary Acts:

- a) Direct: assertive (asserting);
- b) Indirect: commissive (hoping)

This proverb implies that *milkee* (omens) determine the traditional marriage system in the Horro Guduru community. According to consultants, omens⁶ have a direct influence on the traditional marriage practices of the Horro Guduru community. This means that the community pays attention to their omens from the beginning of the marriage contract until the wedding day. In the cultural and religious beliefs of the community, it is a good omen and a blessing to transport the bride on the back of a filly as she leaves her parents' home on the wedding day. The symbolism behind this act is that just as a filly never becomes sterile, the bride will also be fertile and not barren. Therefore, the elders in the community usually bless the bride's parents who provide a filly for transporting their daughter to the groom's home. An elderly man from Didibe Kistana village used this proverb to offer encouragement to the groom's companion who had arrived at the bride parent's home on the wedding day and saw a filly prepared for the bride's transport. The proverb signifies that in Horro Guduru culture, sending the bride on a filly to the groom on the wedding day symbolizes the fertility of the bride and the groom in the community's marriage ritual. Upon hearing the proverb, the groom, his best men, and companions felt delighted and proud of the bride's family. Consequently, the proverb influences the emotions of the parents, bringing them joy and satisfaction during the wedding ceremony.

The old man used the proverb to remind the listeners (the groom, his best men, companions, and others) to observe carefully their omens in the marriage process (good omens); it is a speech act of hope. The form of this proverb is declarative and it falls under acts of commissive.

5. Afan Oromo: Gaafa naa ta'uu didu saalli gabaatti na ka'e.

/ga:fa na: taʔu: didu sa:lli gaba:tti na kaʔe/

English: An unexpected erection in the market bears to failure.

➤ Illocutionary Acts:

- a) Direct: assertive (criticizing);
- b) Indirect: expressive (regretting)

The community in Horro Guduru uses a specific proverb to explain misfortune. In the Oromo socio-cultural setting, the act of placing a phallic symbol in the market place is something that is very odd and is viewed as a significant misfortune because of cultural beliefs. During a marriage inquiry, an elder representing the groom's family referenced this proverb to explain why they had to abandon their journey to the bride's home and return to the groom's residence in the small village of Didibe Kistana. Researchers found that the elder used the proverb to comment on behaviours that go against Oromo societal norms and values regarding omens. The proverb emphasizes the emotional impact of unexpected and undesirable situations that violated Oromo norms and expresses regret, making the bridegroom's parents feel morally bad as the elders they sent faced unpleasant situations during the marriage inquiry. In the traditional Oromo marriage system, interpreting omens is crucial.

The elder used the proverb to frighten the groom's parents about the importance of recognizing and adhering to omens during the marriage process, especially when they indicate bad omens. The proverb is declarative in form, expresses the speech act of regret, and the act is expressive.

4.1.3. Upbringing in Oromo Proverbs

Mothers' traits have direct influence on the behaviour of their daughters in the community's marriage practices. These proverbs reinforce the society to consider mothers' behaviour in traditional marriage practices. The following proverbs reveal this:

⁶Omens are folk beliefs that are signs of future events. They are inquiries of *Waaqa*. They are gifts and tether of *Waaqa* that relies on psychological concepts; the society observes omens starting from the morning (interviews with two consultants: Odaa and Malkaa).

6. Afan Oromo: Haadha ilaalii, intala fuudhi.

/ha:da ila:li: intala fu:di/.

English: Inquiry the mother; marry the daughter.

➤ Illocutionary Acts:

- a) Direct: directive (warning/advising);
- b) Indirect: expressive (commending)

In the marriage practices of Horro Guduru Oromo, a mother's personality is crucial in determining a marriage proposal. This expresses positive sentiments for the girl's mother in a marriage contract. Mothers are key figures in teaching children about socio-cultural norms and correcting their behaviour if they stray from these norms. The proverb emphasizes that good mothers uphold ethical and moral standards, as well as marriage rituals, in the community, indicating that a mother who maintains these norms raises a good daughter in Oromo culture. The proverb advises/warns individuals in indigenous marriage practices to consider the traits of the bride's mother before negotiating marriage. The groom's parents observe the behaviour and background of the bride's mother to determine the suitability of the marriage. This shows a mother's behaviour can affect positively or negatively her daughter's marriage prospects. If a mother has a bad reputation in the community, her daughter may not receive marriage proposals. This illustrates how a proverb reflects the influence of society's culture on people's perceptions, or cognition. A proverb has socio-cultural and cognitive values in shaping socialization and early training in the community.

The speaker prompts the listener to consider mother's traits during the marriage process. This proverb is imperative in form, serving the pragmatic functions of advising and warning, falling under the speech acts of directive.

4.1.4. Morals in Oromo Proverbs

The community in Horro Guduru praise and admire *Safuu* (moral codes) in every aspects of life. Violations of *safuu* express defiance to *Waaqa* and spiritual resentment against him, according to Oromo religion and worldviews. Therefore, Horro Guduru Oromo uses proverbs as tools to criticize deviant behaviour. The following proverbs address such instances:

7. Afan Oromo: Gara laafettiin obboleetti obboleessaaf ulfoofti.

/gara la:fetti:n ʔobbole:tti ʔobbole:ssa:f ʔulfo:fti/

English: A warm-hearted sister conceives from her brother.

➤ Illocutionary Acts:

- a) Direct: assertive (criticizing);
- b) Indirect: directive (advising, warning)

In Horro Guduru Oromo culture, this proverb emphasizes that a sister should never engage in sexual intercourse with her brother in advance, reflecting the Gadaa marriage laws that prohibit relatives from marrying. As stated by the consultants of the study area, it is disrespectful for girls to marry without being virgins in the community. Mothers often use this proverb to caution their daughters against premarital sex. The proverb serves as a warning against the risks of pregnancy and loss of dignity associated with engaging in premarital sex. Other consultants mentioned that the community upholds the tradition of *seera rakoo*⁷, requiring brides to be virgins in accordance with cultural norms and Gadaa marriage laws. To be married with virginity is

⁷ A form of marriage that the boy's parents send elders to the girl's parents for marriage consent and ask their daughter for marriage to be.

also a moral state guided by *Seera Safuu*⁸ (moral laws) and *Seera Waaqa* (laws of God). The proverb highlights the extreme consequences of disregarding societal norms, emphasizing the importance of preserving one's virginity until marriage. That means, engaging in premarital sex can damage girls' self-respect and bring shame to their families and community by defying the traditional values and norms of the community.

The mother, as the speaker, wants to invoke the hearer (a girl) to abstain from premarital sex, maintaining their virginity until marriage. The form of this proverb is declarative; it is a speech act of advising and warning, and falls under the category of directive speech acts.

8. Afan Oromo: Maqaan baduu manna mataan baduu wayya.

/mak`a:n badu: manna: mata:n badu: wajja/.

English: A person who has passed away is preferable to a person whose name is spoiled.

➤ Illocutionary Acts:

- a) Direct: assertive (criticizing)
- b) Indirect: directive (warning, advising)

In Oromo culture, the term "maqaa," which translates to "name," is given to an individual. Consultants emphasized that, "a name intertwines with historical, cultural, and familial traditions within Oromo society. It acts as a fundamental identifier, shaping an individual's personality within their family and community, while also categorizing them based on gender, Waaqeffataa⁹, and social status."¹⁰ This implies that a name symbolizes the sociocultural identity of the individual or community. These consultants added that a girl must maintain her "qarree" (virginity) until marriage to uphold her honour and affirm her bravery. Any behaviour that deviates from these norms is abnormal and can tarnish one's name. This proverb equates bad name to death, emphasizing the importance of preserving one's name. During a wedding ceremony in Didibe Kistana village, an elderly man cited this proverb upon witnessing the bride serving food and drinks without shaving her "qarree", or virginity. In this culture, a bride must stay in a secluded house for five days symbolizing her virginity. The man used the proverb to caution/advise girls to maintain their virginity until marriage, emphasizing moral values and community standards. This reveals that virginity is highly valued in the community as it brings respect and honour to the bride, her family, and relatives. Conversely, the loss of virginity before marriage is seen as a tragedy and disrespectful in Horro Guduru Oromo culture.

The elderly man used this proverb to humiliate the hearers against premarital sex, highlighting the importance of safeguarding the bride's dignity and advising parents to protect their daughters. The proverb's form is declarative and falls under directive speech act.

4.1.5. Caution/ Advice in Oromo Proverbs

Marriage reflects the linguistic and socio-cultural identity of the Horro Guduru Oromo. Proverbs advise individuals to respect the community's socio-cultural norms and criticize those who deviate from the norms. The following proverbs illustrate this.

⁸ A law that constitutes moral grounds and directs the community to differentiate bad from good under laws of *Waaqa*

⁹ They are followers of Waaqeffanna religion in Oromo culture.

¹⁰ Interview with Malkaa, on April 23/2021 in the village of Odaa Bulluq, 9:00 am-11:00 am; Interviews with Odaa, on April 23/2021, 3:00 pm-5:00 pm; Yuuba, at 8:00 am -9:30 am and Bosona, at 10:30am-11:30 am, at Didibe Kistana, on April 24/2021.

9. Afan Oromo: Gaa'ila Waaqni abaare osoo ininayyoo hin dhaammatiin heerumama.
/ga:'ila wa:k`ni ʔaba:re ʔoso: ʔininajjo: hin da:mmati:n he:rumama/.

English: A marriage cursed by Waaqa is arranged without performing the *ininayyoo* ritual.

- Illocutionary acts:
 - a) Direct: assertive (informing);
 - b) Indirect: directive (advising, warning)

This proverb highlights the significance of performing the *ininayyoo*¹¹ wedding song in Horro Guduru Oromo culture, elevating the status marriage within societal norms. The proverb, “A marriage cursed by Waaqa is made before performing the *hiroo*¹² ritual,” emphasizes the importance of the *hiroo* ritual for boys as well. The consultants stated that marriage is a sacred religious ceremony that follows Gadaa marriage laws and safuu Waaqa. This reveals that *ininayyoo* marks a crucial stage in the cultural marriage engagement practices of the community. It serves as a platform for the bride to express gratitude, respect, and acknowledgment to the family and community. A girl also conveys a mix of joy, sorrow, fears, and anxieties about the bride's future with her new family using the song. This proverb warns girls to honour their traditions in practising the song before marriage, discouraging informal unions, or without parental involvement that leads to societal disrespect. An elder man used this proverb to caution against bypassing formal marriage customs, emphasizing the importance of upholding societal morals and ethics through traditional song practices. Researchers found that *ininayyoo* is a revered wedding song practiced by girls only in legitimate marriages following *seeraa rakoo*.

The elder man employs the proverb to frighten young girls, highlighting the consequences of disregarding cultural norms. This proverb represents a speech act of advise/warn. The form of this proverb is declarative and serves as a directive speech act.

10. Afan Oromo: Durbi qarree fi warajoon tokko.
/durbi k`arre: fi waradʒo:n tokko/.

English: A virgin girl and a sacred animal are alike.

- Illocutionary acts:
 - a) Direct: assertive (asserting, informing)
 - b) Indirect: directive (advising)

In the proverb, an unmarried girl devoted to Waaqa, *durba qarree*¹³ is likened to a sacred animal, *warajoo*¹⁴. The analogy highlights the importance of a girl maintaining her virginity until marriage, as it upholds religious norms and dignity according to Gadaa marriage laws in the Oromo culture. Similarly, in Horro Guduru Oromo, the ritual of warajoo involves dedicating sacrificial animals to a forest deity, emphasizing the respect and dignity for Waaqa. The proverb depicts that a virgin girl and a sacred animal have safuu Waaqa that deserves high respect and dignity in the socio-cultural norms of the community that need a ritual of special day. The elder man used the proverb to advice girls to preserve their chastity until marriage. He cited the proverb the days of weddings at the bridegroom's home during *ansoosillee* (bridal song) to express the bride's strength and bravery, emphasizing the significance of a girl's virginity. The bridal praise signifies a psychological impact, indicating a positive outcome of the marriage. The proverb suggests that her new family values a bride's virginity, while its absence leads to disrespect and degradation. This highlights how the community's socio-cultural norms view the loss of virginity as indecent. This proverb reflects the community's socio-cultural, philosophical, and religious beliefs regarding virginity and sacred rituals.

¹¹ It refers to a traditional nuptial song ritual where girls perform to seek blessings from Waaqa for the couple's union. It also serves as a reflection of their identity and culture.

¹² It refers to a nuptial song ritual boys practice to invoke blessings from Waaqa. *Ininayyoo* plus *hiroo* equals “*Mararoo*” represents elegiac.

¹³ It refers to an unmarried virgin girl.

¹⁴ It refers to animals like bulls, hens, sheep, etc that the community uses for sacrificial dedication to Waaqa in their traditional beliefs.

The old man convinces the hearers to keep their virginity until parents arrange formal marriage. The form of the proverb is declarative, and represents the speech act of advice and serves as directive speech act.

4.1.6. Wisdom in Oromo Proverbs

Wisdom is a central theme of these proverbs, emphasizing that a wise person is perceptive and open to learning about societal norms, while a foolish one is unobservant and resistant to acquiring new knowledge, ultimately resulting in failure. The following proverbs illustrate this concept.

11. Afan Oromo: Duuti qoricha hin qabdu, yoo qabaatte fuudhanii dhalchuu qofa.

/du:ti k`oritfa hin k`abdu, jo: k`aba:tte fu:dani: dalfu: k`ofa/.

English: Death has no cure; the only salvation is to have a child through marriage.

➤ Illocutionary acts:

- a) Direct: assertive (asserting, criticizing);
- b) Indirect: directive (advising)

The Oromo proverb suggests that the community can overcome death by giving birth through marriage. In Amharic, somewhat a similar proverb, “የሞት መድኃኒት መውለድ ነው,” connects marriage with birth and death. The Oromo proverb emphasizes that childbirth should occur through marriage, while the Amharic proverb focuses more on death and birth rather than marriage. The Oromo proverb also suggests that marriage influences death, as descendants replace current generations through marriage. The proverb further values women who bear children due to their religious beliefs. Another Oromo proverb, “*Nama Waaqni ebbise ganamaan ilmoo godhata,*” which translates to “A child is fathered early by a person blessed by Waaqa,” stresses the importance of having children through marriage guided by Waaqa. This proverb emphasizes the significance of having children through marriage, guided by Waaqa. An elder man uses this proverb to criticize youths who delay marriage and encourages them to marry and respect societal norms. The proverb illustrates the psychological impact on youths who deviate from societal norms, leading to disrespect and dishonour.

The old man persuades the hearers (the youths) to have children through marriage to perpetuate generation. He uses this proverb to advise youths to marry at appropriate time. The form of this proverb is declarative, and the act is directive.

12. Afan Oromo: Mirgii fi dhalli ganama nama hafa.

/mirgi: fi dalli ganama nama hafa/.

English: The best time to hunt is in the morning; to marry when young.

➤ Illocutionary acts:

- a) Direct: assertive(informing, criticizing);
- b) Indirect: directive (advising, warning)

The proverb compares "mirga"(target hunter), which symbolizes bravery in hunting to "dhala" (child), the most cherished possession one gets through marriage. The word “ganama” (literally meaning morning) in the proverb suggests auspicious signs in the Oromo worldview regarding creation and fertility preceding other matters. This shows that bravery and marriage are deeply valued principles in Oromo culture intertwined with the Gadaa system and Waaqa. This proverb stresses the significance of honouring community norms to ensure parenthood and community vitality. An elderly man used the proverb to encourage/advise youths to marry early and start families, caution youths who do not marry. The community respects individuals who marry and have children early. Conversely, youths who delay marriage show a lack of regard for the socio-cultural norms and face the psychological repercussions of disrespect.

The elder man persuades youths to marry early for the benefit of having children. The form of this proverb is declarative; it has the pragmatic functions of advising or warning the youths to marry and bear children at the right time, which is a speech act of directive.

13. Afaan Oromo: Niitiin baate amalli lama.

/ni:ti:n ba:te ʔamalli lama/.

English: A divorced wife has two behaviours.

- Illocutionary acts
 - a) Direct: assertive (informing)
 - b) Indirect: directive (advising, warning)

The proverb emphasizes the importance of a wife's wisdom and knowledge to manage effectively her home according to the community's norms. Elders advise wives to be insightful and to manage their homes even if their husbands mistreat them. This proverb highlights the community's reluctance towards divorce and dissolution of households. As stated by some consultants of the study area, divorce is discouraged due to socio-cultural norms, religious beliefs, and the Gadaa marriage law within the community. Mothers caution their daughters against leaving their husbands using this proverb, upholding societal norms and avoiding divorce. The Oromo Gadaa system prohibits men who divorce from becoming Gadaa officials. The Oromo proverb that supports this consultants' idea is, "*Bakka Waaqni nama hidhe takaallaa malee dhaabbatu*," translates to, "A person stays in a place where Waaqa has tied him/her without a chain." The data analysis reveals that divorce contradicts with the community's culture, religion, and worldviews, as it goes against the will of Waaqa. The proverb suggests the community strictly prohibit divorce as it violates the norms of the community. Divorce may lead to psychological consequences like dishonour and disrespect, as community often stigmatizes divorced women.

The speaker, usually a mother or elder, persuades wives to be wise and maintain their homes within the marriage system, urging them to uphold societal norms by avoiding divorce. The form of this proverb is declarative; it is the speech act of advising, or warning, and serves as a directive speech act.

4.1.7. Kinship in Oromo Proverbs

One gets married to raise children and to maintain the continuity of one's lineage or kinship. The following proverbs deal with the value of kinship creation in Horro Guduru Oromo marriage system.

14. Afan Oromo: Soddaa fi surree wajjin kufu.

/sodda: fi surre: wadzin kufu/.

English: It is with our own in-laws and trousers we fail.

- Illocutionary acts:
 - a) Direct: assertive (asserting/informing)
 - b) Indirect: expressive (complimenting);

The proverb metaphorically compares "surree" (meaning 'trousers') to "soddaa" (meaning 'in-laws'). Obviously, humans design trousers to cover body parts, while in-laws symbolize the bond in the Oromo nation through marriage. This comparison highlights the strong association both have with something. In the Oromo cultural marriage system, in-laws are highly valued, respected, and praised, creating strong relationships between different biological groups. An old man used the proverb to praise brother-in-laws who reciprocated gifts to his in-laws during a marriage ceremony, or return of the best men to the bride's home. This act of complimenting strengthens bonds and fosters respect. The proverb serves to honour and respect in-laws,

emphasizing the cultural significance of this relationship in the Horro Guduru Oromo community. It has also psychological effects of creating social bonds among parents of the bridegroom and the bride, and expressing a feeling of sympathetic pleasure towards in-laws. This illustrates that in Horro Guduru Oromo, whenever one mentions in-law, admiration and respect come to mind in the community's culture.

The old man uses the proverb to please the hearers (the best men and other guests) to express a feeling of great respect and admiration for in-laws. The form of this proverb is declarative; it is a speech act of complimenting, and it belongs to the acts of expressive.

15. Afan Oromo: Soddaa fi dugdaan lafaa ol ka'u.

/sodda: fi dugda:n lafa: ol kaʔu/.

English: We rise from the ground with the help of our own in-laws.

➤ Illocutionary acts:

- a) Direct: assertive (informing)
- b) Indirect: expressive (validating);

In this proverb, an in-law symbolizes family members connected through marriage, while back represents the support provided by bones in our body. An in-law assists and engages with his mother-in-law, father-in-law, and relatives during various social occasions like harvests, weddings, and funerals. According to Oromo marriage customs, in-laws live harmoniously, respecting community norms. The proverb emphasizes the importance of honouring and respecting in-laws within the marriage system. An elderly man shared this proverb to highlight the value of an in-law who supported his father-in-law during a wedding in Didibe Kistana village. He used the proverb to validate the worthiness of an in-law for his mutual support of his in-laws during difficult times of a wedding ceremony. This proverb conveys admiration and respect for our in-laws, reflecting the community's moral values.

The speaker wants to inspire the listener to show respect and honour. The proverb's form is declarative, and it is the speech act of validating, and serves as a speech act of expressive.

4.1.8. Status in Oromo Proverbs

Status is crucial for a successful marriage in Horro Guduru Oromo. Parents use their status to arrange marriage contracts for their children. The following proverb deal with this:

16. Afan Oromo: Durbaa fi qullubbii abbaatu bakka gaarii dhaabbata.

/durba: fi k`ullubbi: ʔabba:tu bakka ga:ri: da:bbata/.

English: The father plants the garlic and the girl in a good place.

➤ Illocutionary acts:

- a) Direct: assertive (informing)
- b) Indirect: directive (advising, warning)

The proverb metaphorically compares “*qullubbii*” (literally means ‘garlic’) to “*durba*” (literally means ‘a virgin girl’) for arranging marriage rituals. One of our consultants explained that just as we select fertile soil for planting vegetables like garlic to ensure good production, the community also carefully chooses good parents to arrange marriage alliances for their children, aiming for happy and prosperous marriages. The community carefully follows socio-cultural norms when deciding on marriage contracts to ensure happy and prosperous marriages. The proverb advises people to be systematic in their selections to achieve positive outcomes. An elderly man uses the proverb to advise the girl's parents to engage their daughter for marriage alliances with good parents to avoid negative consequences like divorce. He emphasizes the importance of

selecting suitable spouses for successful marriages. The proverb explains that parents who conform to what is decent in the socio-cultural norms of the community are good for marriage as they attain honour and respect in community. Conversely, parents who go against the norms of the community are uncultured and unsuitable for marriage because such parents lack dignity and honour as they live outside the community's norms.

An elderly man wants to convince the girl's parents to select good parents for marriage alliances to prevent negative consequences such as divorce. The proverb is declarative in form, and it is the speech act of advising and warning, and serves as a directive speech act.

4.2. Discussion

This study conducted a pragmatic analysis of Maccaa Oromo marriage proverbs in Horro Guduru, focusing on the identification of illocutionary acts, description of their forces, and exploration of perlocutionary effects using Searle's Speech Act Theory. By analysing how these proverbs function in communication, negotiation, commitment, socialization, and moral guidance within the community, researchers aimed to uncover implicit meanings, communicative strategies, and sociocultural functions of the proverbs. The contextual use of marriage proverbs illustrates their importance as culture-specific instruments for societal communication, reflecting the community's cultural heritage, spirituality, and marriage norms. Findings suggested that proverbs are essential for societal communication, supporting the idea that they play a vital role in conveying cultural values and beliefs (Bascom, 1965; Finnegan, 1976; Mieder, 2007).

The study shows that Maccaa Oromo marriage proverbs reflect the community's cultural heritage by embodying ancestral mentality, spirituality, beliefs, and norms. These proverbs highlighted values such as faith, omens, upbringing, morals, wisdom, respect, truthfulness, bravery, kinship, and status, offering insights into the community's worldview and cognition. The study revealed the complexities and dynamics existing between marital relationships in the community, with omens playing a significant role in determining marriage practices. Proverbs such as "Halkanii fi salgan yoo laate" emphasized the community's reliance on spiritual communication, respect for elders, and adherence to cultural practices guided by Seera Waaqa. The research findings indicated that proverbs are integral to the community's cognition in Horro Guduru Oromo culture, guiding familial integrity and serving as tools for the cognitive representation of society's wisdom. This result aligns with (Mieder, 1994; Miruka, 1994) who aver that proverbs serve as tools for the cognitive representation of society's wisdom. The study also highlighted the interplay between language, culture, and beliefs in shaping communication practices within the community, emphasizing the importance of as cultural artefacts that embody and transmit the collective wisdom and values of a community.

Moreover, the study emphasizes the role of the marriage proverbs mirroring the community's values, philosophies, and religious beliefs. Marital proverbs like "A person stays in a place where Waaqa has tied him/her without a chain" advocate against divorce, stressing the importance of cultural norms and family unity. Proverbs reflect respect for moral codes and criticize deviation, as per (Bascom, 1965). Additionally, the research sheds light on the culture-specific nuptial song ritual, *ininayyoo*, performed exclusively by girls in betrothal marriages under Gadaa marriage law (*seera rakoo*). This practice illustrates the interplay among language expressions, cultural traditions, and societal standards, demonstrating gender-related linguistic variations. Furthermore, examining these proverbs reveals how they encapsulate the community's culture, history, philosophy, cognition, and religion. This perspective aligns with Sumner (1995), who argues that proverbs are depositories of wisdom for the Oromo nation.

In the study on Maccaa Oromo marriage proverbs in Horro Guduru, researchers identified five types of illocutionary acts—assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declaration—that serve unique communication purposes. The study uncovered the presence of both direct and indirect illocutionary forces in each type of act, with directive and expressive acts being particularly prevalent in the marriage proverbs. While most direct illocutionary acts are assertive, one is directive; most indirect illocutionary forces are directives and expressive acts. This finding contradicts with existing notions that direct forces are assertive but indirect forces

are mostly directive (Austin, 1962; Searle, 1979). Assertive illocutionary forces mainly assert cultural values, aligning with the concept that proverbs serve as carriers of wisdom, culture, knowledge, truths, and beginnings (Mieder, 2004; Miruka, 1994). The directive-indirect illocutionary forces subtly imply meanings, advising or cautioning on the community's cultural norms and mores. This finding resonates with the idea that proverbs uphold accepted ethics while commenting on deviations from cultural norms (Bascom, 1965; Miruka, 1994). Commissive acts express hope and involve multiple speech participants, aligning with past scholarly perspectives (Searle, 1979). Expressive acts convey emotions and societal values, guiding virtuous behaviour and condemning vices through actions like commending, complimenting, praising, validating, and regretting. Declaration acts link statements with subsequent behaviours, indicating confirmation. These findings illuminate the intricate role of illocutionary acts in conveying cultural knowledge and values through the marriage proverbs.

Moreover, the study indicates that marriage proverbs convey both literal and implied meanings, serving diverse communicative functions and intentions that mirror their socio-pragmatic implications. This is consistent with the notion that proverbs can convey direct/literal and indirect/implied meanings as forms of communication (Austin, 1962; Norrick, 1985; Searle, 1979). Analysing the proverbs' explicit and implicit meanings of these proverbs can unveil the cultural values and societal norms influencing marriage practices among the community. Through this examination, the researchers identified dual illocutionary forces (direct and indirect illocutionary forces) that drive speakers' linguistic performances, facilitating more effective and empathetic interactions. The study found that marriage proverbs serve various illocutionary forces, like asserting, informing, criticizing, advising, warning, hoping, praising, marrying, commending, regretting, validating, and complimenting, reflecting the rich tapestry of interpersonal communication in this cultural context.

Furthermore, the examination of the perlocutionary effects of marriage proverbs highlights their profound impacts on listeners, evoking cognitive, emotional, and behavioural responses. This finding corresponds with previous scholarly claims that these effects result from both the speaker's utterance and the hearer's interpretation (Mieder, 1994; Searle, 1969, 1979;). These effects highlight the persuasive and transformative potential of proverbs in influencing beliefs, societal norms, attitudes, taboos, and aspirational ideals concerning marriage. By uncovering these effects, the study shows how proverbs can shape attitudes, beliefs, behaviour, inspire reflection, and incite action in individuals. The various perlocutionary acts within marriage proverbs include considering, persuading, convincing, invoking, reminding, frightening, realizing, inspiring, humiliating, and causing. Essentially, this study reveals the significance of the marriage proverbs as speech acts during diverse marriage rituals, integrating locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts within their specific contexts. This observation aligns with Yule's (1996) emphasis on the importance of speech acts during marriage ceremonies, citing vows as declarative speech acts incorporating locutionary, illocutionary, and perlocutionary acts within a defined context.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1. Conclusion

This study focused on analysing the pragmatic aspects of Maccaa Oromo marriage proverbs in Horro Guduru. It aimed to identify illocutionary acts, describe illocutionary forces, and explore perlocutionary effects on listeners. Context is crucial in understanding proverbial meanings, echoing Bascom (1965) and Finnegan (1976) on the importance of contextual cues. Proverbs have fluid meanings that adapt to their context of use. After data analysis, the researchers come to the following conclusions:

Through a detailed analysis into illocutionary acts, forces, perlocutionary effects, and implicatures in Maccaa Oromo marriage proverbs, the study uncovers a complex network of communication dynamics. Various illocutionary acts, such as assertive, directive, commissive, expressive, and declarative, were identified, highlighting how speakers convey meanings subtly. These acts exhibit distinct forms and socio-pragmatic

functions in communication patterns. Illocutionary forces serve as motivations and intentions behind communicative acts, unveiling a complex communicative strategy. Maccaa Oromo marriage proverbs serve as a conduit for social cohesion, aiding in the transmission of cultural values and norms by reflecting the worldviews and societal standards of the community. The study unveils how understanding the deeper implications of these proverbs beyond literal meanings imparts cultural wisdom, societal advice, and moral guidance. These proverbs, rich in cultural wisdom and societal values, elicit varied perlocutionary effects on audiences. The reception and interpretation of proverbs go beyond literal meanings, evoking emotional, cognitive, and behavioural responses in listeners, fostering introspection, moral contemplation, or even behaviour modifications, and guiding social conduct. Implicatures, intricately woven into illocutionary forces and perlocutionary effects, further enriches communicative exchanges by implying meanings beyond the literal meanings.

In essence, this study highlights the interplay of illocutionary forces, perlocutionary effects, and implicatures, in shaping human communication, revealing intricate power dynamics, cultural norms, and interpersonal relationships interwoven in communicative exchanges. The results of the present study add new knowledge to the current of speech acts and pragmatics mostly based on cultural values and social functions of Oromo marriage proverbs. However, this study has not investigated other aspects of pragmatics such as politeness strategies from sociological and anthropological perspectives to uncover the rich indigenous knowledge within these cultural expressions. Methodologically, this study focused on illocutionary acts and forces of Oromo marriage proverbs using the qualitative study with limited participants. We suggest a mixed study that can be projected to further aspects of pragmatics of Oromo proverbs.

5.2.Recommendation

The study recommends further exploration of Oromo proverbs through various pragmatic lenses, including politeness strategies and interdisciplinary examinations from philosophical, sociological, and anthropological perspectives to uncover the rich indigenous knowledge within these cultural expressions.

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Authors' contributions

- 1 Collected data, organized and analyzed the data, and wrote the manuscript
- 2 Co-advised, and commented the manuscript.
- 3 *Corresponding author and principal advisor, enriched the data and edited the manuscript

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