UNIVERSITÉ DU BURUNDI
GRENIER DU SAVOIR DU BURUNDI
Dépôt institutionnel officiel
https://repository.ub.edu.bi

Socio-cultural prerequisites for understanding proverbs : the case of rundi proverbs related to the concept of family

HARERIMANA, Félicien; Superivor . Matutin SIKOGUKIRA

1998

UB, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines

https://repository.ub.edu.bi/handle/123456789/1080

Document téléchargé depuis le **Grenier du Savoir du Burundi** — https://repository.ub.edu.bi

THE UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

SOCIO-CULTURAL PREREQUISITES FOR UNDERSTANDING PROVERBS: THE CASE OF RUNDI PROVERBS RELATED TO THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY

BY

Félicien HARERIMANA

Supervisor :
Dr. Matutin SIKOGUKIRA

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE « Licence en Langue et Littérature Anglaises ».

Bujumbura, September 1998

DEDICATION

To all of you
Who know me as I am,
Understand where I've been,
accept who I've become
and help me find a way
in this jungle that we call "Society"

I Do dedicate this thesis

Acknowledgements

Many people, both within and outside the University of Burundi, have been of a great importance to me ; some in all my student life and others in the preparation of this thesis.I have therefore accumulated quite a big debt of gratitude. My grateful acknowledgement of special indebtedness is made for them all.

I am tremendously indebted to the industrious and devoted Dr. Matutin SIKOGUKIRA, Senior lecturer at the University of BURUNDI, who assisted me in laying the groundwork of this thesis at the initial stage of topic selection and supervised this work until its completion.

I am mostly indebted to my parents who always found joy to provide me with moral and material support from my first step at primary school until now.

My sincere thanks are also due to my sisters and brothers especially Rémy NZISABIRA (Jimmy) and Scholastique KANYARUHIMBI who have been at my parents' place whenever the latter could not reach me.

I also owe gratitude to the English teaching staff at the University of BURUNDI and MAKERERE University for the efforts made to show me the way to new horizons.

I finally convey my warm feelings to relatives, friends and comrades. May all of them find in these pages the fruit of our mutual understanding and combined efforts.

It is difficult to mention all of them by name. Nevertheless, it would be ungrateful not to mention Floribert KUBWAYEZU who deserves special thanks for our brotherly relations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Dedication i
- Acknowledgements ii
- Table of contents iii
- Epigraph v

CHAP I : THE PROBLEM AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY 1

1.0. Introduction 1
1.2. Statement of the problem 2
1.3. Aims and motivation of the study 5
1.4. Research questions 7
1.5. Scope of the study 8
1.6. Methodology 8

CHAP II : LITERATURE REVIEW 10

2.0. Introduction 10
2.1. Definitions of key terms 10
2.1.1. Definition of society 10
2.1.2. Definition of culture 13
2.1.3. The concept of family 18
2.1.4. Operational definitions of the three concepts . . . 26
2.2. Understanding proverbs 30
2.2.1. Description of proverbs 30
2.2.2. The context of utterance of proverbs 32
2.2.3. Understanding society as a prerequisite to understanding

proverbs 34

2.2.4. Understanding culture as a prerequisite to understanding proverbs 39

2.3. Towards a sociolinguistic study of proverbs 41

2.4. Principles of Rundi Proverbs interpretation 42

CHAP III : METHODOLOGY 47

3.0. Introduction 47

3.1. Data collection procedures 47

3.2. Data analysis procedures 51

CHAP IV : DATA ANALYSIS 58

4.0. Introduction 58

4.1. Proverbs dealing with the family in general 65

4.2. Proverbs dealing with the husband's behaviour . . . 79

4.3. Proverbs dealing with the wife's behaviour in relation to the rest of the family 96

4.3.1. Proverbs dealing with women's negative side and weaknesses 98

4.3.2. Proverbs dealing with women's positive values . . 103

4.4. Proverbs dealing with children in relation to the rest of the family 107

GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS 117

Appendix 123

Bibliography 127

Epigraph : "Proverbs bear age and he who would do well may view himself in them as in a looking-glass".

Mapletoft (1707) Two Angry Women of Abingdon

CHAPTER I: THE PROBLEM AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY.

I.0. INTRODUCTION.

To satisfy his needs, to exchange with other people, to share knowledge or to cooperate in various activities, man uses language. But there are some aspects of any language which are very difficult to master. This incomplete mastery of a language would be due to the fact that some aspects of language require some knowledge of the society and the culture of the users of that language.

In fact, a society has a great influence on a language and so does its culture. Therefore, a deep study of the culture of the language one sets out to investigate, the indigenous tradition of its users, the tradition which is always based on widely held beliefs and customs, religion... all of these are required for a thorough knowledge of one's language. Indeed, a study of a given language is made more or less difficult by the complexity of factors which constitute that society and which consequently influence that language. Among those factors, we can mention:

- Activities carried out by community members to earn their living,
- Their attitudes towards natural events like death, birth..., their beliefs, their history, their culture, the environment in which they live and others.

All these factors are specific to each society and consequently to each language. Rundi proverbs are therefore one of these aspects of language which are so closely related to culture that any attempt to undertake their semantic study is doomed to failure unless it takes into account the Burundian culture, which is very complex. It is this closeness of language and culture that we have showed in our study, which we have entitled:

"Socio-cultural prerequisites for understanding proverbs : the case of Rundi-proverbs related to the concept of family".

This study has been carried out on the basis of some Rundi proverbs and some socio-cultural phenomena underlying their use and which presumably are the basis of their structure and interpretation.

I.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

The subject under study calls for a research in a very complex area, that is, proverbs, especially when we know that they depict culture and society.

In fact, the terms "culture" and "society" themselves have got a wide range of implications as we have seen it and they consequently have a problem of definition. Moreover, the concept of family, which is part of our study, has also various interpretations, depending on the context of use, which is

understandable as long as we know that polysemy is a natural phenomenon in all languages. Looking at how they are structured, one finds that proverbs are built on symbols and a symbol always refers to something. Nevertheless, there is no hint, no theory to interpret symbols and this makes it difficult to understand proverbs.

Symbols do not give meanings of things they stand for. They rather give a reference, a connotation, they send to the culture and philosophy of the society which uses them by means of a series of analogies. One symbol may have various and logical interpretations, or apply to many realities. All those symbols on the basis of which proverbs are constructed are taken from man's day to day life. Most of the time we tend to interpret them literally, forgetting that they refer to culture, to art, to religion or to individual or collective life and therefore, making proverbs confusing.

The analysis of proverbs is interpretative, because the symbol is a representation of moral things. Indeed, in the example :

"Iséma y'umugabo yirukana ishishiro".

"A bad man, a harbinger, refuses to welcome a yellowish leaf of banana-tree".

The term "ishishiro" : a yellowish leaf of banana-tree symbolizes banana-wine which in the Burundian culture, helps to strengthen good social relations. It is given as a gift at various social ceremonies : dowry, wedding, investiture etc.

The understanding of the proverb requires therefore the knowledge of "ishishiro", and all its implications in the Burundi socio-cultural context. The actual meaning of the proverb is : " a bad man, a harbinger, does not encourage friendship", and this is not acceptable in the Burundian culture because Burundians always warmly welcome whoever comes to pay a visit to them, especially when he brings some banana-wine.

The symbolic system is characteristic of Rundi culture and Rundi proverbs reveal the Burundian culture because they are loaded with cultural messages. Zuure (1932 : 127) calls them "Le vrai miroir de l'âme du Murundi".
That is : the true miror of the soul of a Burundian.
This means that through proverbs, one can see how Burundians view things.

Since proverbs are built on symbols, we assume that linguistic knowledge or linguistic competence alone cannot help in their understanding, it rather necessitates the empirical knowledge of culture and society. Otherwise, the linguistic explanation alone would miss the pragmatic and cultural interpretation of proverbs. We assume then that a good understanding of proverbs requires a full knowledge of the culture and society, and history because proverbs always allude to the latter or a combination of these elements. Proverbs are never out of date, although culture is subjected to constant change. The failure to understand proverbs or their misuse is

due to the lack of certain notions of Burundian culture.

I.3. AIMS AND MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY.

What does this work aim at ? What are the motivations which have led us to carry out our research on this topic ? Nobody ignores how proverbs portray the everyday life and culture. This means that every Burundian, whether old or young, poor or rich, with this or that quality or defect, finds his place in proverbs. It is in proverbs that Barundi express what they like and dislike, how things have to be or should not be.

In short, all the Burundian culture and history are expressed in proverbs. It is this richness of proverbs that attracts our interest and hence, our motivation to carry out a research of this kind. Moreover, proverbs are greatly used in oral literature where their value is of a paramount importance. Murekambanze, (1989 : 9), talking about proverbs, says that "they are to oral literature what children are to parents".

Achebe (1985 : 6) shares the same view and stresses their importance to oral literature in these words : "Proverbs are palmoil with which words are eaten".

Nevertheless, the understanding of kirundi proverbs is not an easy task. It is a privilege of people who master the Burundian culture. The meaning they carry is far different from

the meaning of any other ordinary sentence. In fact, proverbs are always connotated and constructed on the basis of symbols, the explanation of which has to be found in the Burundian culture. Sakaganwa (1987 : 61) states the following :

> Dans le langage proverbial, il y a un double raisonnement : Le raisonnement interne et le raisonnement externe. Alors que le raisonnement externe relève de l'expérience quotidienne, le raisonnement interne relève de la culture (...) le choix, la sélection des mots ne relève pas du code sémantique ordinaire, mais du code sémantico-culturel

which means:

> In a proverbial statement, there is a double reasoning: the internal reasoning and the external reasoning. While the external reasoning comes from the day to day life experience, the internal reasoning pertains to culture (...) the choice, the selection of words is not part of the ordinary semantic code but belongs to the semantico-cultural code (translation is mine).

This is mainly what our investigation will provide evidence for. We will provide evidence for the necessity of socio-cultural prerequisites to understand them, especially in their internal code, that is, their connotative aspect. They cannot be separated from it. We will try to analyse them in their symbolic construction so as to see the socio-cultural concepts which veil their meanings and in doing so, we will unveil the multiplicity of aspects that are entailed in proverbs. We are committed to bringing people to be conscious of the importance of socio-cultural prerequisites to understand

proverbs so as to avoid their misuse and to be conscious of their value in communication and the preservation of the Burundian culture.

I.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS.

The questions this study aims at answering investigate the extent to which the understanding of proverbs in general and proverbs related to the concept of family in particular requires an understanding of the culture and the society in which the language is used, Kirundi being the language we are working on. Thus, the following are our research questions :

- What is the relationship between proverbs and culture, or proverbs and society ?
- Can proverbs be understood without reference to social customs and culture ?
- Why do some people not use proverbs appropriately ?
- Is the linguistic competence alone sufficient for the understanding of Kirundi proverbs or do we need socio-cultural knowledge as well ?

I.5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY.

A desire to gather information about proverbs in the Burundian socio-cultural context directs this research to the sociolinguistic domain. But as one can see, the area of work is too broad. Therefore, we have limited our research to a relatively restricted area which is the concept of family and

We have selected proverbs related to the family and which show clearly that they are closely related to culture and society, and hence, that their understanding presuposes the understanding of culture and society.

The kirundi language has numerous proverbs and each of them is a cultural store although this richness is not directly apparent. Some of them are loaded with a religious message, some others with various pieces of advice. We could not pretend to study them all because it would have been pretentious or even unfruitful. We have limited our study to proverbs describing the behaviour of members of the family. We have focussed on the aspect of culture to enveil that richness and henceforth help in the understanding of those proverbs.

I.6. METHODOLOGY

The aim of our study being to show that the understanding of Rundi-proverbs depends on the understanding of the corresponding Rundi-culture and society, the methodology of our work consisted of collecting a number of Rundi-proverbs, forty proverbs, related to the concept of family. We have analysed them so as to show the socio-cultural reference underlying them and which forms the basis of their interpretation. Our study was based on the synchronic approach, which takes the language as an institution with its laws agreed upon by the society and which are reflected by the collective consciousness.

We have therefore carried out a logical and psychological analysis of the elements constituting a proverb as they are reflected in the society and culture. It is the reliable empirical analysis of the interaction of proverbs and social life that have given us the socio-cultural prerequisites to understand proverbs.

CHAPTER II : LITERATURE REVIEW

II.0. INTRODUCTION.

Nothing is more challenging than carrying out a research on a subject containing many concepts with varied definitions, which may be misleading. This is the case for our topic but this is also one of the raisons d'être of our study. In fact, defining the terms society, culture and family is of paramount importance to our study because proverbs are one of the main concerns of language use in its social context. Moreover, we have to show what culture brings in and what society brings in to the understanding of proverbs.

II.1. DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS.

II.1.1. DEFINITION OF SOCIETY.

What is society ? It is not very easy to define the term "society" or to differentiate it from culture. The relation between culture and society is somehow ambiguous. Benedict (1960), cited in Shapiro (1960 : 171) talking of society says that:

> A society may be any animal agregation, which holds together as an interacting group and among the members of which exists an awareness of belonging together : The consciousness of kind.

As an illustration he says that :

> A wild horse, herd under the leadership of a dominant stallion is a society. A human society is

also an animal agregation with just those qualities.

He adds that a human society is a permanently organized population, acting in accordance with its culture. However, he does not tell us about the number of people required for the group to be called a society, or else at which number the group ceases to be called a society ? Moreover, he tells us nothing about the kind of interaction, which is among them, nor does he explain how that society operates.

Rodfield (1960), quoted in Shapiro (1960 : 173), improves the definition by adding a new element, that is, "people organized in a group to solve a common problem".

He says :

> A society is people with common ends getting along with one another (...) at least, there is none until they begin to work out their common problems of getting a living and of living together. A society has then organization. It is people doing things with and to and all in ways that those people have come to accept.

As we analyse the above definition, we find that a society is not merely an agregation of people, there must be a common interest and an organization, but we still cannot see how big that agregation must be to be called a society. In this sense, a group of boys organized to play football is a society. It is therefore implied that one person may belong to different societies. At this level, we remain with our thirst to know how large the society must be.

Le Grand Dictionnaire Encyclopédique (1985 : 9650) defines Société (lat : societas) as :

> Ensemble d'êtres humains vivant en groupe organisé. C'est un milieu dans lequel quelqu'un vit, caractérisé par ses institutions, ses lois et ses règles :
>
> "A set of human beings living in an organized group. It is an environment in which one lives, characterized by its institutions, its laws and its regulations.

Although this definition brings in a new element of institutions, laws and regulations, we still do not know the size of societies, probably there is none at all. Rodfield (1960), quoted in Shapiro (1960: 346), denies the existence of the limit of the number of people composing a society. He argues that there may be great societies and little societies. As an instance, he shows that groups of nations taken together are great societies. One speaks of western society in contrast with oriental society.....

In some sense, all the people of the world taken together constitute a single society. Obviously, this is not the kind of society we are operating in for our study. How then is "society" understood in Burundi ? What is society in Burundi? Rodegem (1970: 382) calls society "umuryango". Nevertheless, he does not make a difference between society and family. The word "umuryango" as it is defined by Rodegem (1970: 382) comes from the verb "kurya" which means: to eat. Finally, "umuryango" is: "Ceux qui mangent ensemble". That is, those who eat together. However, the dictionary points out the condition which must be fulfilled for a woman to be a family member. It

states : "Umugore aba umuryango iyo afise abana yavyaye mu muryango w'ibugabo":

> (A woman becomes a family member when she has given birth to children in her husband's family). Rodegem (1970 : 382) says also :"Umugore si umuryango : En cas de dispute, l'épouse prend toujours le parti de sa famille". (A woman is not a family, in case of quarrel, the wife always takes the side of her family). That is, in the husband's family when she has children and in her parents family, when she has none.

It is worth mentioning that the above definition does not make a difference between "family" and "society". Both of these terms are translated by the same Kirundi word "Umuryango".

II.1.2. DEFINITION OF CULTURE.

Culture is another concept which must be explicated for proverbs to be well understood. In fact, culture is the cornerstone of every language in all its aspects, for language and culture are so closely linked that the understanding of one supposes the understanding of the other. Language exists because culture exists for language expresses what its users have gone through, what they have experienced, what they think and how they behave. Shapiro (1960 : 170) expresses this link in these words: "The bulk of culture is phrased in thought sub-

vocal speech and transmitted by word of mouth".

It is often said with only slight exageration that culture exists in and through communication (...) we were born in culture, grew in it and it continues to exist after our death.

Indeed, Hoebel (1960), cited in Shapiro (1960 : 172) defines culture as follows : It is the integrated sum total of learned behaviour traits which are manifested and shared by the members of a society.

He adds that culture is wholly the result of social heritage for it may be thought of as a social heritage for it is transmitted by precept to each new generation.

What is more, its continuity is safeguarded by punishment of those members of a society who refuse to follow the patterns for behaviour that are laid down for them in the culture. By the above definition, we understand that culture is something of present day, but also something historical.

In any nation, the culture is as old as that nation. If then language is all the time linked to and undetachable from culture, and if in proverbs, we find all the traits of culture, it becomes clear that the understanding of proverbs is not possible without a prior understanding of culture in all its learned behaviour traits as it is said in Shapiro (1960)'s above definition. It becomes a complicated task when we know

that culture is constantly subjected to change. Lado (1974 : 143) describes culture as :

> All those historically created designs for living, explicit and implicit, rational, irrational and non-rational, which exist at any given time as potential guides for the behaviour of men.

This definition expresses even more clearly the complexity of culture. First and foremost, the fact that culture is historically created is repeated in all the definitions. This shows that a language which expresses culture to which it is closely linked refers to present day concepts, but also to very remote notions and abviously, a language can refer to facts which are no longer existent.

Another complexity of culture understanding raised in the above definition is the fact that it is not always made of apparent notions. It is partly explicit and partly implicit, not exclusively rational, but it may be irrational. In fact, one cannot explain why things are handled in a given way, we just realize and conform to it. This means that there are no studies of culture as such, the best way to know it is to be fully integrated in it and to experience it. Therefore, the matter of the subject is not why it is or it was like that, but how it is or how it was.

It is also necessary to mention that a culture is anonymous: nobody is the author of a culture. It is rather created in and by the society. It is transmitted from generation to generation and as times go by, as things evolve,

culture also undergoes changes and modifications.

To understand culture is therefore to understand that modification which happened and which led people to find new solutions and therefore, to change culture. This is especially true for proverbs because, they have that quality of remaining valued and helpful as we will see it later, even though their reference may be of remote times and non existent at the time of utterance.

The historical feature of culture is also found in Nida (1978 : 49) : Culture as defined by anthropologists is :

> Tout comportement acquis socialement ou ensemble des traits matériels ou non qui sont transmis d'une génération à l'autre. Ces traits sont transmissibles et accumulés. Ils sont culturels dans la mesure où ils sont inculpés par la société mais ne sont pas d'origine génétique.

Which we translate as :

> All socially acquired behaviour or a number of material and non-material traits which are transmitted from a generation to another. These traits are transmissible and are gathered. They are cultural in so far as they are inculcated by society and not of genetic origin.

As they are inculcated, there is also language to symbolize all aspects of these traits. This is the reason why all aspects of language especially proverbs are to be studied in relation to culture.

Finally, we realize that these definitions are all true but it is not easy to combine all to get one. Nevertheless, none of them is complete because they cannot replace one

another, and their analysis shows us that in a sense, culture is an abstract thing. It is a way to behave, to think, to react, to act and to interact in and with the environment and with others but is never something which we can see with our eyes, smell with our noses, hear with our ears....

Culture is very complex and as our proper eyes cannot see their eyelashes, but those of others, it is the same for culture. In fact, we can see and criticise easily others'culture but it is even very difficult to see our own culture because all we do, we do it unconsciously.

Another thing worth mentioning is that the origin of culture is not known. It is as controversial as the origin of human species or human languages. In fact even the theory of the psychoanalyst Sigmund (1951) is not agreed upon and is simply taken as a myth. It states that at a given moment of the evolution of humanity a father took the wives of his young males and the latter killed him and ate his meat. After that, they felt remorseful and then, developed a complex which is now called "oeudipus complex" and then, they invented the law against the incest. The patrilineality and all the literature about it took the origin in this.

Even though we do not know the origin of the culture, we accept that it is linked to language and a man cannot live without it. Otherwise, there is a risk of losing his language or even being affected himself because, as Shapiro (1960 : 181)

says:

> Much psychopathology is the product of an unmastered conflict within the individual who is unable to assimilate the standards of the cultural ideal to the impulses of the self. It is the Freudian conflict of the super-ego and the id.

To avoid this, the individual is obliged to conform to cultural norms in words and actions.

II.1.3. THE CONCEPT OF FAMILY.

The word "family" though evident or simple it may seem, anthropologists prove it to be confusing. The reality to which it refers is close to daily life but this may be misleading because even our daily life differs from family to family.

Nevertheless, it is a worldwide reality although there is no natural law to shape it and make it universal. It is a social reality which attracts various domains of study : Sociology, anthropology,..., and of course, sociolinguistics which is our interest here. It is in family that language is first acquired and it is also there that one's mind gets an orientation. In fact, we view things in a way that they are presented to us by members of our family. Our "psyche" or our mind is in a way or another influenced by direct environment at the early stage of our development.

When a kid is born, he already finds an important part of the lexicon, a great number of symbols and his mind receives

at the same time all the reality they stand for, together with the literature to name them and also all the implications that words have. The family has therefore a very great influence on language in general and occupies an important place in our present study.

The anthropologist Levis-strauss, (1960), cited in Shapiro (1960 : 273) wonders : What is the ideal of what we have in mind when we use the word "family" ?

The answer to this question is far from being subsequent because not all cultures view the "family" in the same way. Let us try to show it on the basis of different views, by different authors :

First of all, what does Levis - Strauss (1960), cited in Shapiro (1960 : 274), suggest ? For him, the word "family" designates a social group offering at least three characteristics:

"1° It finds its origin in marriage.

2° It consists of husband, wife and children born out of their wedlock, though other relatives may find their place close to that nuclear group.

3° The family members are united together by :

a) Legal bonds

b) Economic, religious and other kinds of rights and obligations.

c) A precise network of sexual rights and prohibitions and a varying and diversified amount of psychological feelings such as love, affection and respect.

Do these characteristics apply to all families in the world ? Certainly not. In fact, the above definition by Levis-strauss (1960) does not resist empirical experiences of other antropologists such as shapiro (1960 : 272) who states that in India in the early 19th century, the basic social unit was constituted by a type of family which should be described as domestic rather than conjugal : Ownership of the land and of homestead.

Talking about the Turkanaland of Kenya, Turkana being one of the tribes of the Kenyan society, Gulliver (1955 : 123) says :

> The Turkana nuclear family has elements both from a polygynous family and of a patrilineal expanded family. It is composed of a man, his wives and unmarried daughters, his sons and their wives and children.

Le Grand Dictionnaire Encyclopédique (1983 : 414) gives two different definitions of family.

1° "Ensemble des habitants de la maison". That is : A group of persons forming a household.

This definition differs from the definition by Levis-strauss (1960) cited in Shapiro (1960 : 273) because here, the members of the family do not necessarily have to be born out of parents' wedlock. They just have to live in the same house. In this sense, three young men hiring a house would make a family.

The same dictionary gives a second definition :

2° "Ensemble des personnes liées par un lien de parenté ou d'alliance". That is : A group of persons linked by a blood relationship or other alliance.

The Britanica World Language Dictionary (1959 : 457) gives different definitions some being nearly the same as the latter:

e.g. 1° Family : group of persons consisting of parents and their children.

2° A group of persons forming a household including servants

3° A succesSsion of persons connected by blood.

It is then obvious that the definitions of family are different, which means that their structures vary from family to family and proverbs or other literature related to it are understood differently. What does the family in Burundi share with the family described in the above definitions ? We should first point out that even within Burundi, the family is not understood in the same way ; the following is a stricking

illustration of that fact.

In Burundi the word "mwenewacu" is understood differently among Burundians. For some, it designates "my brother" if the speaker is a boy and "my sister" if the speaker is a girl. This means that we have the same parents especially the same father. But for others, by the word "mwenewacu", they understand : a parallel cousin. What does this show ? The structure of this word Mwenewacu : Mwene + uwacu, "Mwene" meaning "who belongs to", "uwacu" meaning "one of us"

This shows clearly that for those who view "Mwenewacu" as a parallel cousin, a family is extended to cross cousins but for those who view it as a brother, the family is made of the father, the mother and the children.

Despite this nuance, the family in the Burundian socio-cultural context still has certain aspects that it shares with the definition which holds all the ideas that Burundians have about the word family. As this description of family is not an end to our study in itself, but rather a means to an end. Let us show the kind of family we have been operating in for our study :

In Burundi, there are two types of family :

Rodegem (1970 : 382) gives these definitions

"Famille (family) : "Ubwoko", and this is a highly extended concept which would nearly parallel the English reality named by "race". It is out of interest in our study.

The same author gives another translation which is "Inzu" that is "house" and this would parallel what is called "household". This is not our interest because a household may comprise persons who have no blood relationship among them. Another definition given by the same author is near the concept which is the concern of our study :

"Umuryango" à rapprocher de "Kurya" :
Which means that "family" is to be related to "to eat" that is, those who eat together.

He goes on explaining :

"Iyo ari umugore akuze atagishaka abagabo, aguma mu vyiwe, kuko yabaye umuryango. Umugore aba umuryango iyo afise abana yavyaye mu muryango w'ibugabo..."

Which we can translate as :

"When a lady is old and no longer needs a husband she stays in her ownings because she has become a family. That is a member of a family..."

As we can see, none of these definitions is fully satisfactory for our study. The family which is the concern of our study, the Burundian family, is made of all those persons whom a baby grows up seeing around it and who are likely to influence its language. As one can see, those are very numerous and the study would be too broad to be tackled in this paper, since servants, baby-sitters, houseboys... if there are any, are members of that family.

We will rather restrict this study to the family made of a husband, a wife and children raised and nurtured within the family, within that kind of family which is the first social group that the child comes to know and whose manners he adopts. We will exclude what Rodegem (1970 : 383) calls :

"ibiryangoryango" or "ibisanira", that is : extended relatives. This restriction is due to the fact that within the local group, each family is likely to view things differently as its neighbours, although they can have certain common ways since there are relatives among them.

Indeed, in that family there is a certain range of manners which are shared by all the members with certain ways in common among them and obviously, as each reality which is viewed has an expression for it, we will try to study the way proverbs are understood, proverbs which are an aspect of language which expresses better the ways life is viewed.

Before we describe proverbs, we should note that the family we have after excluding extended relatives is that which is described by Sohier (1954 : 39):

> La famille comprend tous les parents descendants d'un ancêtre commun, jusqu'au degré le plus éloigné. Mais dans ce groupement se forment une série de petites sociétés, de communautés. Ce sont les ménages, les foyers, comprenant le père, la mère et les enfants. C'est à cette société qu'on réserve le plus souvent le nom de famille...
>
> We can translate this as :
>
> The family comprises all the relatives descending from a common ancestor to the farthest degree. But this grouping comprises a series of small societies, of communities. Those are households, homes comprising the father, the mother and children. It is to that society that we apply very often the name of family...

This definition is close to that of Keuppens (1954 : 34). He distinguishes between the nucleus family (urugo) and the parental family or clan family (famille clanique or umuryango). It is this nucleus family that is the main concern of our study.

II.1.4. OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF THE THREE CONCEPTS.

We have said earlier that the terms "society" and "culture" are somehow ambiguous and that they both have an influence on language in general and on proverbs in particular, but even though they coincide in some sense, there are still ways to distinguish them.

U.B

In fact, some anthropologists have realized this overlapping between the terms culture and society on the one hand and society and family on the other.

Radcliffe-Brown (1952 : 4) expresses the fuzziness of the slight differences with Lado (1974 : 110) : It seems to me that some anthropologists use "culture" as equivalent to what I call a form of social life.

Although Radcliffe-Brown (1954), Goodenough (1957) and Hymes (1964 : 36) quoted in Lado (1974 : 110), agree on the fact that culture is the "know-how" that a person possesses to get through the task of daily living or else, the cumulative knowledge of man's various achievements as Betty (1970 : 1) puts it, they do not remove the overlap between culture and society. It is Mair (1965 : 78) who clearly shows the nuance which is between them. He realizes that :

> Culture is the common possession of a body of people who share the same traditions in social terms and such body is what we call "society".

The relationship between culture and society is therefore like the relationship which is between the weapon and the warrior wherein the warrior is society and the weapon is culture, if we view "life" as a struggle of man with nature.

The concept of "culture" covers both man's sociological and biological needs, that is, the sum total of the psychological operations of a mass of individuals forming a

society, which contributes to its survival. Society is rather different from culture, at least if we look at the description of society by anthropologits. Indeed, Radcliffe - Brown (1952 : 10) describes a society as a whole made of components or units:

> The components or units of a society are persons, and a person is a human being considered not as an organism but as occupying a position in a social structure.

The term 'structure' here refers to some sort of ordered arrangements of those components, the components which designate persons as it is said in the above definition.

If we have said that culture is not a material phenomenon but ideas, customs, arts.... of a human group at a given time, we cannot say the same for a society because a society is composed of persons rather than ideas. This is the main difference between these terms and both culture and society influence the language and vice-versa. The relationship between language and society is that the structure of a language determines the way in which the speakers of that language view the world and the society which uses that language is but a part of the world.

If then society is made of persons, culture helps in the adaptation of those persons to society. This adaptation may serve to adjust to the physical environment and we may speak of an ecological adaptation. It may help to maintain co-operation between persons, to regulate persons' behaviour or

else to solve conflict and we may call it a social adaptation.

All that is expressed in language in general, and proverbs in particular, is but one among the various aspects of language. Coming back to the terms 'family' and 'society', we notice that they tend to overlap as well. This overlapping is due to the fact that the 'family' takes different forms in different societies. Moreover as we see it in Fried (1968:277).

> Both the origins of the family and the steps by which it has developed into its present multiplicity of forms are obscure.

Nevertheless, Fried (1968:295) recognizes that ancient trinity of father, mother and child/children has survived more vicissitudes than any other human relationship. It is the bedrock underlying all other family stuctures. The concept of 'family' in Burundi can by no means escape that complexity of forms which is mentioned above. This complexity is due to the fact that the same term 'umuryango', which is usually translated as 'family' stands for different realities. It may stand for the reality which is designated by the English words 'lineage' or 'clan'.

This fact of associating the same word 'umuryango' to different realities is certainly the basis of the confusion which exists between 'society' and 'family'. For Rodegem (1970), 'family' and 'society' are translated by one and only one Kirundi word 'umuryango'. Nevertheless, when Burundians are using the word 'umuryango', they always know what they mean and

they often add a determinant to define what this word stands for, because they are conscious of the mutiplicity of usage of this word. Indeed, we often hear : "umuryango w'abihebeye Imana" (a religious congregation), or umuryango w'abatare (the clan of Batare) and so on. In order to avoid this confusion in this paper, we use the concept "umuryango" : family, to mean that unit of structure from which a kinship system is built up, that is, that group which Radcliffe-Brown (1952:51) calls : An elementary family consisting of a man and his wife and their children.

This elementary family however is far from being universal. It differs from society to society. This is instanced by Gulliver (1955:123) about the Ugandan family :

> A 'family' in Uganda stands for a homestead composed of a man, his wives and unmarried daughters and his sons and their wives and children and all these members of the family are in a single homestead composed of different "ekals" an ekal being a term which designates the fenced, enclosed yard belonging to each wife inside a homestead. In such a family, a child may live in a yard other than that of its half-sibling, though both belong to the same father.

As for the concept 'society', we view it as a network of social relations among which we meet a great diversity of kinship systems. 'Society' is in this sense broader than the 'family'.

II.2. UNDERSTANDING PROVERBS

II.2.1. DESCRIPTION OF PROVERBS

In many societies of oral tradition, proverbs are very important. It is presumably for this reason that the field of proverbs has attracted many researchers so far. Nevertheless, there are still many things to study in this field, for proverbs are like a very deep and dark forest : as you progress in it, the darkness goes deeper and things to discover increase. It is probably for this reason that nobody has succeeded in defining a proverb accurately by giving a full account of all the reality and emphasis about the proverb in a single definition. Conscious of this complexity of proverbs, we are not claiming to succeed where others have failed. Moreover, a definition of proverb is truthfully requisite but it is not indispensable for the present study.

However, we rather judge it important to describe proverbs so as to show how they are linked to culture and society. Stylistically speaking, proverbs are brief, concise and condensed, they are free of superfluous words. They tersely give an account of the memory of a society, its history, the know-how and ingeniosity of the inhabitants, their manners, their moral treaty, the social guardlines..... This fact is a model in itself of a compressed and forceful language. They are constructed on the basis of symbols and this is mainly the reason why they are elusive. In fact, these symbols are taken

from the deep culture and their understanding is therefore difficult to repay since their meaning is given by the culture itself. As far as symbolism is concerned, it is not to be separated from cultural, artistic, religious life, it is also linked with the individual and collective psychology. Symbols, elementary constituents of proverbs are nothing but a representation of moral things by images or by representations of natural things.

To understand proverbs becomes then decoding symbols and this can only be done by integrating that symbol in the symbolic system of a given culture which is the Burundian culture in our case. Proverbs have two levels of meanings : the denotative meaning and the connotative meaning. The former can be easily perceived. It concerns everyday life and daily experiences. In fact in the proverb : *"Inkokokazi irapfa amagi akabora"*. which we translate as : "A hen dies and eggs rot", we know from experience that a hen takes care of its eggs. The connotative meaning requires various social attitudes, a panoramic view, an extended and complete outlook of the culture. The Kirundi name "umwibutsa" is very revealing. "Umwibutsa" comes from the verb "kwibutsa" : to remind. There is therefore an idea of time, of past experiences. Indeed, proverbs recall what happened some time ago.

II.2.2. THE CONTEXT OF UTTERANCE OF PROVERBS.

It would be misleading to give a context of utterance of proverbs because, unlike tales, proverbs do not have one special occasion for utterance. They can be said whenever people are conversing. In any kind of speech act, they are allocated a very important place for they carry truth, advice and are used to give strength and power to what we are saying. They embody precision and warnings, we use them whenever we want to convince. Wherever people are, in the family, in court, in the road, at the market, at school, while teaching, in church... people may use proverbs to strengthen what they are saying. We can also use them simply for an ornate literay style. In fact, a speech uttered with proverbs is always interesting to hear because, as Zuure (1932) says: " Les proverbes font le charme dans la conversation, ce sont les fleurs du beau langage, le vrai miroir de l'âme du peuple". Which we translate as : Proverbs make a delightful conversation (...) they are flowers of a good discourse, the true mirror for people's mind.

The same observation is also made by Murekambanze (1989:9): "A proverb is to oral literature what children are to their parents".

They are universally accepted because they are a cultural heritage embodying the popular wisdom. In fact, a proverb gives an account of a common experience because it is built according

to what people have seen or lived and can be used whenever an authority or a parent wants to adjust people's conduct or children's behaviour. Tuzagi (1985:41) recognizes that a proverb possesses an incomparable persuading force.

Proverbs are then necessary wherever and whenever people are exchanging. They are a way to recreate past experience and communicate it to others. They are means to express thoughts and ideas. They are a tool helping to garantee a continuity of behaviour.

II.2.3. UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY AS A PREREQUISITE TO UNDERSTANDING PROVERBS.

The approach to the description of society which has been sketched in the introduction of this chapter provides an assertion that the understanding of a society and its organisation may shed, and it certainly does shed, a light on the understanding of proverbs. In fact, if a society is defined as a system of status relationships many of which take the form of relationships of kinships, it goes without saying that languages in general and proverbs in particular, reflect this reality. This is well reflected in Martinich (1990 : 3) :

> It is not odd to think that the structure of language is the same or similar to the structure of reality. For language is the expression of thought and if human thoughts can count as knowledge about the world thought would seem to be a reflection of reality.

If we take this point of view for granted for our study, it becomes indispensable to start by the analysis of the family, its organization and the relationship between its members because, as it is stated in Abdoulaye (1985), "c'est au sein de la famille que s'établissent les relations sociales les plus permanentes et les plus étroites entre parents et alliés". Which we can translate as : "it is in the family where very close and permanent social relations between parents and their allied are established".

Proverbs therefore picture norms and laws regulating that society and those status relationships. Nevertheless, this picture given by proverbs is not automatically grasped by people, because comprehension of proverbs involves more than a knowledge of phonological, syntactic and semantic rules. It is rather a knowledge of the real world, the real society.

This picture is caught through an analysis of the universe as grasped in and by the society, according to the culture. Cauvin (1981 : 75) expresses this in these words :

> Quand l'émetteur choisit des mots qui forment le proverbe il ne choisit pas simplement des lexèmes dans un code sémantique, il choisit des images dans un code culturel.

That is:

> When the encoder chooses words which constitute a proverb, he does not simply choose lexemes in a semantic code, he chooses images in the cultural code.

We should recall that, generally speaking, a Burundian family is founded on a monogamic marriage and the traditional way of organization is based on the principle that the couple is established in the young man's land. The couple and the offspring are under the authority and responsibility of the father who is owed a great respect and the expansion of that family to clan and to a large society is patrilinear. The wife is chosen in a separate family which has no blood relationship with the husbands. However, the cross-cousin marriage, the so-called levirate and sororate was tolerated in former times, together with polygamy.

Nevertheless, in the Burundian society, nowadays, even though such things are not taken as immoral for they do not violate any recognized rule, they are perceived as reprovable and blamed and henceforth, they are taken as amoral. As far as polygamy is concerned, there are laws which prevent it. There are no formal rites of passage which regulate the passage of an individual from the social status of a child to that of an adult. The so called ceremony of "Kwatirwa" (to be invested in the group of wisemen) does not depend on age : Whether married or not, a man can be integrated and be called, umushingantahe: that is a wiseman with a strong personality to settle a quarrel or legal dispute. In such societies where the passage from childhood to adulthood is done thanks to a given ceremony of initiation, proverbs about "child" or "adult" are not grasped in the same way as in Burundi where a person is always taken as a child and treated like that to some extent by his parents.

If we say for instance : *Akabondo kabondogotwa aho kabonwa.* A child snores where he is welcome. It is perceived differently depending on whether we are in a society which recogonizes or not the rites of passage referred to above. If we are in a society where those rites of passage exist, this proverb concerns only young children who have not undergone such rites of passage. In Burundi, on the contrary, we can say this proverb implying a young child to mean that a child jokes in the parenthood and for an adult, it would mean that among his relatives, a person can joke.

Given this brief description of the organization of the Burundian family, it is understandable that a proverb cannot be understood if one does not understand that reality especially when we know that proverbs use symbols and images. In this sense, a proverb like ; *Akarundi k'umugabo kugara urugi atari kanini* (a man's leg closes the door even though it is thin) would not be understood quite well if one does not master the organization of the family. Indeed, in Burundi, the man is the chief in the family and if he decides to close the door or to do something else, whether weak, ill or old, his wife cannot decide the opposite. He is the master in the house, he is the chief and others are submitted to his orders.

A wife cannot decide against him, otherwise, she can be kicked out. This would not probably be the same in the matrilinear society, where the maternal uncle is the first responsible of the family. Concerning the fact that polygamy

is not tolerated in Burundi, we can see it stated in the proverb: *Umugabo aharitse yamana induru* (a polygamous man always has trouble).

If we observe the Burundian society well, we find it easy to interpret this proverb ; it would not be the same for a person whose society tolerates polygamy. This trouble is not felt in the same way in a polygamous society and a monogamous one. In fact, if in a monogamous society children treat one another as brothers and sisters, there is a slight difference in the polygamous society where children of the first wife see themselves as more legitimate than others.

Moreover, if a wife in the polygamous society has a privilege of selling the harvest and henceforth buy herself clothes, the wife in a monogamous society is convinced that she must be clothed by her husband. For this, she may quarrel with him if he does not buy her clothes.

Furthermore, even other men do not stand him because they consider polygamy something amoral. It is rather different in a polygamous society where the more wives you have, the more esteemed you become and the more consideration you get.

The understanding of this proverb requires therefore a previous knowledge of the society, be it at the present time or in its history for proverbs ensure the continuity of the tradition which they refer to. It is very important therefore

to have the knowledge of who is and who is not taken as child or an adult and recognized so by the society. Who is the head of the family ? Who is responsible for children ? Is it the maternal uncle as in the matrilinear society ? Is it the father as in patrilinear societies ? Does the society give more rights and honor to people who are more aged than others like in gerontocracy ? Does the collectivity recognize this fact ?

All of these and other characteristics of a given society must be taken into consideration for a good understanding of proverbs, which are after all, the reflection of that society in one sense or another. This is what is implied by Baregeranye (1984 : 3): "The way our community is structured influences very much our language behaviour and this is acquired in childhood".

This would help to avoid a certain misunderstanding of language in general and of proverbs in particular between the speaker and the hearer, which may take place because of the mismatch of the society and its organization despite the linguistic competence they may have.

II.2.4. UNDERSTANDING CULTURE AS A PREREQUISITE TO UNDERSTANDING PROVERBS.

The close relation between language and culture has never been denied, it is the nature of that relation which still has to be agreed upon. The anthropologist Nida (1978) has tried to study this link and has come up with a consistent viewpoint that any attempt to the study of any aspect of language would be doomed to failure unless it is based on culture.

It is therfore clear that a culture plays an important role in the understanding of language. If the language is separated from culture, there may result a great misunderstanding. Nida (1978 : 22) illustrates this by this striking example found in the Korean culture : "En Corée, c'est le donneur qui doit être reconnaissant plutôt que le récipiendaire" (in Korea, it is the one who offers something who has to be grateful and not the one who receives).

How can we interpret this fact which can look strange in other cultures among which the Burundian culture ?

Normally in Burundi, if someone offers you something, you have to express thanks and not him. Nida (1978) explains this by the Budhism which is the main doctrine in Korea. According to this doctrine, if one offers something, this helps him to earn merits and thanks from heaven. This shows us the extent to which proverbs, which are an aspect of language and which

are culture bound, need to be studied within a culture. Let us take the example of this Kirundi proverb : *Umuryango uryoha uryana* (a family is pleasant but may make trouble).

This proverb can be said when members of a family refuse to assist one of theirs who experiences a misfortune. Asked to a Korean to give the context of use of this proverb, he would probably utter it when someone refuses to receive what he is offered. It is therefore very difficult to understand proverbs if we do not perceive what they refer to in the culture.

In his research on American and Japanese cultures, Nida (1978) finds that in Japan, to show reverence, politeness or feeling of respect, people bow while when someone bows his back or if he bows his head for Americans, it is a sign of submission and according to him, this originates in the time of slavery when a slave had to bow his back whenever he had to be flogged. From that time on, if one bows his back, it means he is submitted to semeone else as if he were his slave.

There is a kind of reconstruction of the collective habits which underlie proverbs. To understand proverbs is therefore a matter of trying to find out what words, symbols and images making that proverb refer to in the culture. We must look at the culture first and describe it so as to understand proverbs.However,this is difficult because as Shapiro (1960:249)says: "a description of culture is never an account of actual social behavior but is rather a reconstuction of the

collective habits which underlie it".

Moreover, if proverbs are a means by which behavioural norms and other cultural traits are transmitted to new generation, we have to go deep into the culture to understand them because norms are themselves culture bound. They can only be explained by someone who knows the inner culture.

II.3. TOWARDS A SOCIOLINGUISTIC STUDY OF PROVERBS.

Many studies carried out so far about provebs were pragmatically oriented. In fact, some like Murekambanze (1989) concentrate on how proverbs are used in communication, that is, in the songs where they are used. Sindayikengera (1997) also shows their pragmatic meaning by relating their significance to the context of use. Indeed, these studies are context-dependent whereas the present study is culture dependent. The former are obviously the domain of pragmatics which always focuses on language in actual use and the latter - the present study - is in the domain of sociolinguistics. There is a difference between those two fields although there may be some resemblance. We may say that sociolinguistics and pragmatics have something in common.

In fact, as Crystal (1987:120) puts it:

> Sociolinguistics overlap with pragmatics in their study of the social relationships which exist between participants and of the way extralinguistic setting activity and subject -

matter can constrain the choice of linguistic feature and varieties.

From this, we conclude that, and this justifies our work in the sociolinguistic field, language understanding is not only reached through context interpretation or the verbal or performance analysis. If it were the case, pragmatics would be enough. The analysis of attitudes, culture or society is also of much help and this is the domain of sociolinguistics, the field we have chosen to operate in. Indeed, we find that to a vocabulary system parallel another system, a social or cultural one, and those systems are intertwined ; an analyst of the language must first understand all of them.

II.4. PRINCIPLES OF RUNDI-PROVERBS INTERPRETATION.

This section about the principles of Rundi-proverbs interpretation is very important but much literature which has dealt with proverbs so far has provided principles of a pragmatic analysis of proverbs. These fit only the study of language in actual use. In fact, Sindayikengera (1997: 53) aims at showing the meaning of proverbs by relating their significance to the context in the limit of pragmatic principles and maxims. To attain his goal, Sindayikengera (1997: 53) gives four features of context relevant in proverb analysis : "Participants ; setting ; message-form and pressupposition". Of course these proverbs must be in a given context because, according to him, proverb understanding has much to do with language function as it relies on the speaker

communicative goals and all the proverbial statements bear indirect illocutionary acts.

According to those who, like Sindayikengera (1997) and Murekambanze (1989), studied proverbs pragmatically, to decipher an illocutionary act is of a paramount importance in the understanding of proverbs because it allows to show how proverbs must be understood at that time. Indeed, Cauvin (1962: 25) shows the importance of an illocutionary act in these words: "il consiste à rendre manifeste comment les paroles pouvant être comprises soit comme un conseil, soit comme un commandement" (it consists of showing how the utterances must be understood either as an advice or as a command).

The above approach is genuine and it actually gives a clue to understanding proverbs. Nevertheless, it is insufficient. Indeed, in a linguistic study like in any other social science, a forewarned is not always a forearmed it is even the opposite: as soon as one finds a solution to a problem, some other problems arise which need other solutions. In fact, if an illocutionary act shows "HOW" utterances must be understood at a given time, this brings us to wonder "WHY" they have to be understood like that, what gives strength to a given concept in a proverb, which they may not have in an ordinary speech. A pragmatic analysis alone cannot provide an answer to those questions, but a sociolinguistic approch is also needed, it should even be prior to any attempt of study to go deep in the culture because as Nida (1978 : 283) says, "Rien ne peut

remplacer le bain culturel. Chaque langue est une partie intégrante du contexte culturel" (Nothing can replace a cultural stock. Each language is an integral part of the cultural context).

Indeed, if the pragmatic analysis is a speaker's goal-centered study, there must also be a sociolinguistic analysis and the latter is a culture-centered study, which leads us to understand proverbs. This value of culture is stated by Nkurikiye (1991:13): "Speech and culture are a shared system of meaning that is learned, revised, maintained and defined in the context of interacting". To understand proverbs therefore requires :

- Going back in the tradition and analysing culture :
- Analysing symbols which are used in proverbs, so as to understand what they represent in the culture,
- Finding out the beliefs and values which motivated the community to use such symbols and images in a given proverb because before we get ideas and signs which are the basis of our understanding, we must understand first concrete objects which stand for abstract ideas. This is what Keane (1989 : XI) expresses in the following words :

> Il faut pouvoir montrer le lien entre la génèse de la figurativité profonde à partir de l'expérience perceptive et l'engendrement discursif de la figurativité sémantique à partir de notre activité énonciative :

Which means :

> We must be able to show the link between the origin of the deep imagery on the basis of perceptive experience and the bringing about of the semantic discursive imagery on the basis of our verbal activity.

It is therefore on the basis of what is perceptible like symbols that we can understand images of language in general and proverbs in particular. This procedure is provided by Keane (1989: XII) in the following words :

> Il y a un double mouvement qui consiste d'abord en l'engendrement des figures (percepts) grâce au traitement du sensible par l'appareil sensoriel et cognitif, puis en la génération des contenus sémantiques figuratifs.

That is :

> There is a double movement consisting firstly of the generation of figures (percepts) thanks to the treatment of the perceptible by sense-organs or by cognition then after of the generation of the figurative semantic contents.

The understanding of proverbs involves then the transposition of the traditional cultural content in the modern cultural content. This means that it is the modern culture which is molded in the traditional culture; hence, we must first of all be able to understand the traditional culture, before we look at other elements which generate sense in proverbs like: grammatical procedures, norms, figures of speech. This understanding of culture helps us to interpret symbols whose meaning or value depends largely on the collective beliefs and ideas and impressions that a society has to them. After and only after we have got a trustworthy

reference of a given symbol or image in the culture and society, we try to look for the relationship between the social communication and culture in general and establish a correspondence between facts which we observe in a given situation and facts which are raised by images of proverbs. In this case we can then claim to understand proverbs and the situations in which they are used.

Having now the above operational definitions and having reviewed what other studies about proverbs have reached so far and the principles of analysis they used, we can now try to go further so as to reach our aim. For this, we adopt the methodology which we describe in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

III.0. INTRODUCTION.

The methodology of the present work comprises two main parts :

- The collection of the data on the one hand,
- Its analysis on the other.

In the section about the collection of the data, which we have entitled "Data Collection procedures", we show how we collected our proverbs and the motivations which led us to choose these proverbs.

As for the data analysis procedures, we show the methodology which fits the analysis of proverbs in the spirit of our research questions.

III.1. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES.

In Kirundi, there are plenty of proverbs related to the concept of family. We collected only forty (40) among them and we based our choice on proverbs whose analysis reflects the Burundian culture and society.

All these proverbs were collected from Rodegem (1983). Proverbs which are in this book express the essential values needed in all human life but also behaviours which are cursed in Burundi according to the Burundian culture and customs. However, we analysed only proverbs related to the concept of family. We selected proverbs which appear to be, among Rundi proverbs, specific to the Burundian socio-cultural context and which are frequently used in daily communication. If we chose to rely exclusively on Rodegem (1983) in the constitution of our corpus, it is because he is one of the famous anthropologists who deeply studied the Kirundi language and Burundian culture and society in general, and Rundi proverbs in particular.

In fact, the message provided in proverbs is always encoded and Rodegem (1983) has tried to decode it, which has led him to classify them in a number of themes depending on the messages that these proverbs are loaded with. These messages show how the world is viewed by Burundians.

Rodegem (1983) has forgotten little about Burundians of all categories of age, sex and social status, their society and customs, all their qualities and their defects. He has presented proverbs as a culture store, a true looking glass in which every Burundian can see his or her own image. All that is taken as secret, taboo, as well as what is taken as public is clearly shown in the proverbs listed in Rodegem (1983). Rodegem (1983) has proceeded by a thorough observation of

Burundians in their social milieu so as to discover in deeds or actions what Burundians do not make public or express in speech. He has gone further to discover the basis of behaviour and has found that behaviour is dictated by the social setting and adaptations to the world in which one lives. This consideration about the basis of behaviour by Rodegem (1983) inspires reliance in so far as it is also shared by other eminent anthropologists who studied deeply the Burundian cultural anthropology like Ntahokaja (1978 : 1) who shares Rodegem's (1983) views about the Burundian customs in the words we translate as :

> The Burundian customs are the ancestor's ways of behaving in their nuclear family, among neighbours dictated by a hidden spirit but which is shown in speech and actions. Nevertheless, all is given by the land on which one lives...

Rodegem (1983) is therefore worth being used in our research because the proverbs he studied explore all the domains and show all aspects of life and all considerations given to it by Burundians. Moreover, Rodegem has the advantage of being non-native and therefore, his study ran less risks of taking things as minor or evident. This is what may happen to a Burundian studying Kirundi. There are certain things he minimizes or takes for granted. He may even draw his own conclusions or let his own cultural bias creep in his investigation. Rodegem (1983) has studied all details of culture in Rundi proverbs.

Rodegem (1983) has gained much appreciation and has helped many researchers such as Bapfutwabo (1961), Murekambanze (1989), Sakaganwa (1987), Tuzagi (1985)... who have used his work as a reliable source for their studies. Moreover, none of the reseachers who worked on Kirundi and the Burundian culture after him so far has questioned his success.

But why do we prefer a written source ? Most researchers who use the method of interview or questionnaire for their data collection meet a great obstacle which we want to avoid in the present work : It is a mismatch between the speaker or researcher's intention and the hearer's interpretation because of the indirectness of the relationship between them or between linguistic knowledge and language use. Nevertheless, even when one knows much about his interviewer, one may not get a reliable information because of many factors such as the immediate stimuli which may be acting upon one's interlocutors.

The corpus we used is made of forty (40) proverbs related to the concept of family. We classified these proverbs into four categories :

- Ten proverbs related to the family in general,
- Ten proverbs related to the father in relation to the rest of the family,
- Ten proverbs dealing with the wife's behaviour in relation to the rest of the family and finally,
- Ten others dealing with children in relation to parents in

particular and to the society in general.

Each category of proverbs has been divided into two subcategories :

The first category deals with proverbs which talk about morality or good behaviour which is very much valued in the Burundian society. The second category deals with proverbs which talk about bad behaviour, which is rejected in the Burundian culture.

In the following section, we show the approaches and procedures we used to analyse our data.

III.2. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURES.

In the first chapter that we have entitled "The problem", we said that our research aims at showing that there is a socio-cultural knowledge which is required for the understanding of proverbs and the lack of which leads to the misuse and misinterpretation of proverbs. This will be shown through the analysis. Ntahokaja (1978), who studied thoroughly the Burundian culture and customs will certainly be of much help to us. Indeed, we will be analysing how the culture and customs of Burundians are reflected in proverbs, which are as we said earlier, a good didactic and informative medium for Burundians.

The analysis methods and procedures are chosen according to our research design and to our aim. Furthermore, our methods are chosen taking into consideration the following observations by Brown and Yule (1983 : 233).

> We might say that the knowledge we possess as users of a language concerning social interaction via language is just one part of our general sociological knoweledge.

This point of view by Brown and Yule (1983 : 233) accords well with our research hypothesis. Indeed, there is a certain accordance of opinion between the above view according to which our ability to interact well via language is assessed by the sociocultural knowledge we possess and our views according to which there is a certain socio-cultural knowledge prior to the understanding of language in general and proverbs in particular.
If our sociocultural knowledge is weak, our social interaction via language and our understanding of language in general and proverbs in particular will be weak as well.

We will also analyse our corpus with Cauvin's (1981 : 22) approach to proverbs; who views a proverb as both an "Interpersonal message and a message of the tradition."

In our analysis, we will be interpreting a proverb not as an interpersonal message, which would rather be within the field of pragmatics, but as a message between the tradition and the situation of use, which is the field of sociolinguistics. Nevertheless, although Cauvin (1981 : 22) presents us a proverb

as loaded with two kinds of messages, none of these messages is easy to get because we already know that proverbs are always connotated. The message is hidden by images and symbols which are usually used. Todorov and Ducrot (1983) realize that a proverb has different denotative meanings and connotations:

> In a proverb, the linguistic level corresponds to the primary denotation, the cultural level corresponds to the second denotation whereas the personal level corresponds to the connotation. (the translation is mine).

As our analysis mostly aims at showing the sociocultural prerequisites to interpret and understand proverbs rather than anything else, we will be concerned with two of the above three levels of proverb meanings: The linguistic level and the cultural level.

The linguistic level or the primary denotation is the one which does not require a prior knowledge of culture. Lexemes are simply interpreted in their dictionary meanings without taking them as symbols or images. It is this level of analysis which is accessible to persons who do not master the socio-cultural associations of symbols and consequently, this level of meaning deviates from the true interpretation of proverbs which as we have seen, are most of the time built on symbols. This level of meaning may even lack logic.

The second step of our analysis will be concerned with the cultural level or second denotation of a proverb as it is described in Todorov and Ducrot's (1983) above definition. This

level of interpretation requires a knowledge of culture and society. In fact, it is at this level that we are confronted with symbolic meanings. Therefore, we will be looking for the sociocultural association of symbols and images which will be met in our corpus, and we will have to show what those symbols represent. Nevertheless, we know that in certain cases, symbols and images can stand for different realities. If such a case is met, we will solve it before we deal with the second denotation, that is the cultural interpretation.

To this end, we will adopt the method of componential analysis which we owe to Miller and Johnson-Laird (1976: 362). It is a method which will help us to solve the problem of ambiguity of some lexical items used in Kirundi proverbs. For those who use it, componential analysis helps to break down a word into a set of semantic components or semantic features. Indeed, Miller and Johnson-Laird (1976: 362) use kinship terms in their componential analysis. This method will be of a great help in our study in so far as we are dealing with proverbs related to the concept of family in which we find many kinship terms. In their componential analysis of kinship terms, Miller and Johnson -Laird (1976 : 362) say :

> When people say "this is the child" the kin term "child" is part of an expression used to refer to a particular individual and serves the same identifying role as any concrete noun. When they say "come here son", the kin term "son" is used as a term of address and serves the same purpose as a proper name...

Miller and Jonhson-Laird (1976) in their analysis of kinship terms find that sex, generation, consanguinity and lineality are semantic components of English kin terms. Probably they are not the same in the Burundian culture. Or else, there may be other semantic components of Burundian kinship terms. It is in fact what our componential analysis of proverbs related to the concept of family will help us to find out. That is, to see what words composing a proverb refer to. As far as our study is concerned, componential analysis is not an end in itself. It is rather a means to an end. At its level, we will be able to avoid the confusion which may be brought about by the phenomenon of polysemy, in case there is any. This is the case of such words like : "inka" : cow. In fact, as we can see it in Rodegem (1961) and Bapfutwabo (1961), a cow is associated with prestige, high reputation, richness, good fortune and happiness. Cows are also associated with the tutsi ethnic group. In dowry discourse, "cow" is used to refer to the woman to marry. It is in cases like this of a cow where componential analysis will be useful. That is, to know that in a given proverb, the term 'inka' (cow) implies (prestige) and not "woman" and in another one, it rather refers to Tutsi ethnic group, indeed, we can only know the second denotation or cultural meaning of a given proverb after we have solved the problem of polysemy or ambiguity, or else, the multiplicity of references of lexemes contained in a proverb. In other words, we must know the true meaning of lexemes contained in proverbs before we understand them as images. The componential analysis then will help us to locate a word in its operational field,

in case the word has many associations. Our work as we have said in the previous chapter consists of showing what symbols (concrete objects) and images (abstract things) stand for in the Burundian culture and society because we assume that the misinterpretation of proverbs can only be understood in that way.

The componential analysis will therefore help us to get the second denotation or cultural meaning. We have adopted this method because we agree with Sapir-Whorf (1959 : 38) who say: There is a close relationship between the vocabulary or lexicon of a language and the cultural environment in which it evolves.

This means that words and phrases always have interpretation in the culture because they name things as people view them ; and we know that culture and society have a great influence on how people view the world in which they live.

The third and last step of our analysis will consist of showing the mismatch between the primary denotation and the second denotation as they are described in Todorov and Ducrot's(1983) definition quoted earlier. In other words, we will analyse the difference between the linguistic level of a proverb and the cultural level. Our analysis will bring us to show that language and culture are interdependent and that the understanding of a proverb requires a sociolinguistic competence beside the linguistic competence.

If the primary denotation and the second denotation are the same, then we will conclude that the understanding of proverbs does not depend on society and culture. If, on the other hand, there is a difference between the primary denotation and the secondary denotation, then we will conclude that the understanding of proverbs requires the understanding of culture and society.

These two levels are therefore evenly important because we must combine them all to reach our aim, that is to show the socio-cultural prior knowledge of culture and society, which allows us to understand proverbs. The primary denotation will be got thanks to the syntactic analysis, the second denotation will be reached through our componential analysis which will provide us with semantic features of lexemes and different cultural associations of words. Of course, we will also refer to Rodegem's (1983) and Ntahokaja's (1978) studies on the Burundian culture and Kirundi language.

The last step will then be to compare the literal and the proverbial or cultural meaning and draw conclusions from that comparison of the two levels of denotation.

CHAPTER IV : DATA ANALYSIS

IV.0. INTRODUCTION.

The analysis we undertake to do helps us to highlight the contribution of society and culture knowledge in the understanding of Rundi proverbs in general and of proverbs related to the concept of family in particular. The phenomenon which is shown by the occurrence of symbols together with the value of proverbs themselves in the Burundian society will be helpful for us.

In fact, in Burundi as elsewhere in the world, proverbs are a means of expression and a medium of education. They are essentially characterized by their non-literal and metaphorical meaning and in that they have two levels of meaning, that is, the explicit one and implicit one. The understanding of the latter cannot generally be predicted on the basis of the sole lexical meanings of morphemes. It becomes even more complicated when it comes to proverbs related to the concept of family because the Burundian family is a very complex institution. It is in it that life and the socio-economic organisation take their roots. Indeed, as Abdoulaye-Bara Nop (1985 : 145) puts it : "C'est au sein de la famille que s'établissent les relations sociales les plus permanentes et les plus étroites entre parents et alliés" (It is within the family that close and permanent social relations between parents and allied are established).

Therefore, to understand proverbs related to the concept of family, there is a certain number of things one must know. It is extremely important to know the cultural stock of the language in general because all the implications of proverbs are based on the culture and the society and on the world in general. Indeed, it is in the society that we depict the various socio-cultural references and their figurative meanings which allow us to understand proverbs.

For instance, one has to know the social relations between people, roles and status of members of the family, how they are organized in hierarchically ordered groups or classes. We have also to see whether or not the difference of rights and considerations between members of family is due to the difference of gender or age. Moreover, Crystal's (1987) findings suggest that the behaviour of people in the family is different depending on sex and age, and that norms for behaviour are culturally bound. Functions and roles are given differently to men and women for the sake of a good and successful organization of family life in all domains.

Every member of the family has responsibilities towards others. Indeed, when it comes to the husband, Nsabimana (1991) finds that he is above all in the family. He is the chief, he supervises work and the management of family wealth, he is also the one who is primarily concerned with the security of the family hold; needless to recall that he must be authoritarian in his commandment and his management of the family hold. In

his analysis of the concept of "umugabo" (man or husband), Nsabimana (1991) realizes that the way we call the husband in Kirundi reveals clearly that he is the owner of everything in the family. In fact, "umugabo" is a substantive of the Kirundi verb "Kugaba" which means to own, to have plenty of rights over something. It also means to give kindly and freely something to someone. Indeed, traditionally in Burundi, a wealthy man could offer cows or properties to his friend or to his servant. But "umugabo" also implies strength, self-reliance, self-defense, hard work, justice, who does not side with this or that person in a conflict. Segalen (1981) on his turn has tried to find out the reason which leads to the subdivision of roles between men and women. His findings show that honor and physical strengh are the main criteria for the difference of roles in the running of the family. He also realizes that wife-husband relationship is that of submission and domination. Although Ntabona (1992 :354) realizes also that husbands are being exacting towards women, he calls on making a nuance with regard to the terms : "submission" and "domination".

For him, it is not injustice as such, it is only an inequality created by the tradition. This nuance can only be made by a person who knows Burundians well, their culture and their society, because the explanation of such a nuance is culture bound. This reveals that the way members of the family have to behave, the responsibilities they have to assume, the roles they have to play and the social status they deserve are determined by culture. In proverbs, such a nuance is hidden in

the connotative meaning and it hampers the understanding of proverbs which, as we have seen earlier, are extremely close to culture and society. This is what our analysis is attempting to show. Of course, there are many other proverbial statements which are built upon the basis of culture and the understanding of which depends largely on culture knowledge.

The kind of proverbs we would like to start with are proverbs related to the family in general. Such proverbs give a faithful picture of the type of family as the Burundian culture wants it to be, although it is not easily understood by a layman as far as the culture knowledge is concerned.

Talking of "family" as a concept, we have seen earlier that it is a multireferential one. Let us first analyse it as a whole without considering the family hold, that is the individuals it comprises. We will analyse it as the hearth, the family circle, a true home as it is meant by the expression "feel at home". In the proverbs related to the family that we have chosen to analyse in this section, the Kirundi words "urugo" and "umuryango", which frequently translated imperfectly the word family. It is also the case for the word "umugabo".

Indeed, these words are homonymous, polysemous and thus ambiguous. For this reason, we use the componential analysis to show which sense fits the word family in our study. This lexical knoweledge is very important because one cannot

understand the word when it is used as an image if one does not understand it lexically. These words denote certain combinations of qualities that would appear to show a complex lexical gap in English and this justifies the role of componential analysis here. With componential analysis, we describe the meanings of these words into a set of meaning components or semantic features, which are, as Leech (1969 : 20) says, "The factors or contrastive elements which it is necessary to posit in order to account for all significant meaning relations".

Indeed, the lexical item "urugo" (fence) is analysed in terms of the materials in which it is made, its role and in terms of its physical state, that is whether it is animate or not. The lexical item "umugabo" (a man) is analysed in terms of the marital status, his social consideration, moral and physical strengh, his economic position. For the lexical item "umuryango" (family) we considered the features of blood relationship, the wideness and eventually persons it comprises because we have seen that it is very complex. Our componential analysis therefore proceeds by contrasting the different features of the different aspects of these homonymous words as it is shown in the following table.

Table I : The concept of UMURYANGO (Family)

	Most salient meanings				
Features	Made of Persons	Members must be linked by blood relationship	Limited to one household	Made of parents and children	Kinship relations
Umuryango (Family)	±	±	±	±	±

Table II. The concept of "Umugabo" (man)

	Most salient meanings.						
Features	Human	Bachelor	has children	has physical strength	must have moral strength	rich	fair
Umugabo (Man)	±	±	±	+	±	±	±

In this study, the words described in the chart are polysemous. Only one meaning has much concern to us. In fact, the term "urugo" (fence) as it is used in our corpus has nothing to do with that circular enclosure made of trees which protects houses or delimitates the houseyard. It is rather the whole of the unit made of the husband and wife, together with children if they have any. It extends the meaning to the harmony which must exist among those persons and in this, it

is not merely a habitat, but it is that cordial group characterized by enthusiasm, affection and kindness. It has the meaning that we have in the expression "home is sweet".

"umugabo" : This word "umugabo" (a man) has also many aspects as we said before and as Nsabimana (1991) presents it to us. In fact, this term firstly refers to a physical appearance, physical strength and all that contributes to showing virility. There is a nuance however when it comes to its cultural reference. Indeed, the cultural meaning of the word "umugabo" explores mainly the moral side although it does not exclude some physical aspects. Therefore, this word as we see it in the chart designates a man, who is married, who is rich and strong physically, although this is not indispensable, and who, above all, must be fair.

For him, the moral strengh is the primary quality that he must have to be called "umugabo" but for the second one, which is not very interesting to us here, the physical strength is the prior feature. This aspect insists primarily on the physical features of virility, that is, anything pertaining to the characteristics of mature manhood physically speaking, whereas in the feature that we are interested in here, this manliness is mainly moral and its manifestations are culture bound.

IV.1. PROVERBS DEALING WITH THE FAMILY IN GENERAL.

As far as the concept "umuryango" is concerned, the chart shows us that there are two main aspects of this homonymous word and the main aspects are distinguished by the features of blood relationship which may be extended to relatives or limited to one household. In this very limited area of familyhood, the kin terms: son, daughter, brother, sister, father and mother are frequent but the in-laws are to be classified in the first category, which is not very interesting to us in our study. In the family we are interested in then, there must be a blood relationship, it must be limited to one household, that is, it must comprise a father, a mother, their direct offsprings if there are any but not grandchildren or in-laws and this translates what we call "urugo". The following proverbs have been chosen. They are related to the "family" taken as a whole, the hearth, the family circle, a true home as it is meant in the phrase : "feel at home".

<u>These proverbs are</u> :

1. *Uwusize inyama mu ziko akayisangayo aba adafise uwiwe.*

- <u>literal meaning</u> : He who leaves meat in a fire place and finds it there when he is back must have no relatives.
- <u>Proverbial meaning</u> : Among members of the same family, everything is a common property.

2. Umuryango uva ku muryango.

- Literal meaning: The family starts on the doorstep.
- Proverbial meaning : The extention of friends depends on the sociability in the household.

3. Uwukize akiza uwiwe.

- Literal meaning : He who survives helps his relatives.
- Proverbial meaning : The improvement of life condition of one family member entails that of other members.

4. Ibisangiye imizi bisangira kwuma.

- Literal meaning : What share roots dry together.
- Proverbial meaning : Who have the same ancestor lead the same life.

5. Izisangiye urugo zisangira urunyago.

- Literal meaning : Cattle sharing the same cattle-shed share spoliation as well.
- Proverbial meaning : Who have the same ancestor lead the same life.

6. Indahiro mbi irengesha umuryango.

- Literal meaning : A bad oath makes the family brew.
- Proverbial meaning : A whole family pays for the bad behaviour of one family member.

7. Uwawe akwima amata ntakwima amahere.

- Literal meaning : A relative of yours refuses you milk and not scabies.

- Proverbial meaning : It is in case of misfortune that one remembers those he had rejected.

8. Uwutazi iminsi yitigura incuti.

- Literal meaning : Who ignores days rejects relatives.
- Proverbial meaning : He is careless he who rejects his relatives.

9. Ntawusukiranya amata n'amateke.

- Literal meaning : Nobody mixes milk and cush-cush.
- Proverbial meaning : A good association is made between individuals who are equal.

10. Uwutagira inka ntagira igabo.

- Literal meaning : Who has no cows has no manliness.
- Proverbial meaning : Self-sufficiency is one of the qualities of a man.

From the primary denotation or literal meaning to the proverbial meaning, there are certain things one must know about the Burundian family which is molded according to the philosophy of Burundians themselves. Therefore, what it is and what it is not is clearly shown in proverbs which, in the Burundian society, are a grain-store for culture and customs

in so far as they perpetuate memories of people. Indeed, as it is meant in the proverb : "uwudasize izina asiga umugani" : who leaves no name leaves a proverb. This simply means that a man who has no children to perpetuate his name leaves a proverb behind him. Proverbs therefore show what the Burundian family is.

The first characteristics of a Burundian family is unity. In fact, in Burundi, everything that belongs to someone belongs to the whole family. Selfishness or even capitalism is not encouraged. It is rather the philosophy of altruism and every Burundian grows up with such ethical doctrin concerning the sacrifice of self in favour of others and of the society as a whole. The welfare of one is the concern of the whole family and whatever belongs to one belongs to all to some extent. This is shown in the proverb :

- *Uwusize inyama mu ziko akayisangayo aba atagira uwiwe.*

The key words in this proverb are "inyama" (meat) and uwiwe (a relative). In Burundi traditional society, meat is a very precious and copious meal. Nevertheless, it is not something which is frequent in the Burundian daily meal. This may be due to the fondness, to the affection they have for their cattle. They could only kill a cow on very important social occasions or simply if it dies by itself or if it is growing old.

In case such circumstances happen, all the neighbours would come to beg a portion of meat which was called "incira", a share from the infinitive "gucira" : to share which means, to give freely a small part of something.

Even though it is not a man's job to do the cooking, he would control in case it was the meat which was cooked and this shows to which extent meat is precious.

Despite this value of meat, close relatives were allowed to eat that meat. It was a right due to the solidarity and unity talked about in the above lines. If one has nobody who can feel at home in his house, this means that one has no relatives. Therefore, to understand that proverb one needs to know primarily all that importance, all that expense of meat in the Burundi traditional society together with what "uwiwe" refers to and the proverb comes out to mean that a member of one's family will not hesitate to use anything belonging to the family.

The second denotation or the proverbial meaning then is "Among members of the same family everything is a common property". But who is a close relative and who is not ? In the first position come members of the nuclear family called "abavandimwe": those who come from the same womb or else "bene mugabo umwe", who belong to the same man or else "abavukanyi": those who were born together. Ntabona (1992) shows that such ties start on the nuclear family with the consanguinity bond

and may be extended to other relatives : "umuryango uva ku muryango": the family starts at the door step. To those persons we add people who are assimilated to them, those are close friends who call themselves "pfa mpfé" :If you die, I will die too or else "abanywanyi", which initially means "those who have made an agreement or pact to maintain friendship in the presence of witnesses" or nowadays, close friends. To all this, we add members of the extended family. All these persons are called "abanje" (mine). It is this principle of unity which explains solidarity. Members of the same family are taken as other selves who are beside us. Ntabona (1992) calls them (le moi communautaire) (the social self). The word "uwiwe" (one of his persons) is also found in the third proverb we would like to analyse which is : "uwikize akiza uwiwe":

Literal meaning: He who survives helps his relatives.

Proverbial meaning: The improvement of life condition of one family member entails that of other members.

In this proverb, "gukiza" : to recover normally applies to illness and to pregnancy. Indeed, when a woman gives birth to a child, people tell her : "uragakira" : may you recover or if you recover from an illness, they tell you the same. Analogically, if one becomes rich, when he was poor before, people say : "yarakize", that is : he got over his poverty and poverty is to be cursed.

Therefore, when one gets rich, one helps the rest of his family to get out of that "illness" which is poverty ; thanks to the traditional solidarity between Burundians. That is, a harmonious unity and agreement in aims, principles and ideals. We should also note that the education of children is not only given to their father and their mother, but to the family and society in general. In fact, Burundians know that the child belongs to the country, to the society. In that, a child grows up with a very strong attachment to the family, for which he remains grateful and consequently, must help if he gets means.

All this social reality is then very important to understand the proverb "uwukize akiza uwiwe", because "uwiwe" is not only one's son as many European societies may understand it. Given this Burundian solidarity, the French proverb : "chacun pour soi et Dieu pour tous", that is, "one for himself and God for us all", may be changed in "one for all and God for each" in the Burundian socio-cultural point of view.

This solidarity is shown in good fortune or happiness as well as in misfortune. The following proverbs show it clearly *Ibisangiye imizi bisangira kwuma*. The Literal meaning "what share roots dry together". "Izisangiye urugo zisangira urunyago": cattle sharing the same cattle-shed share spoliation as well. These two proverbs have the same cultural meaning: people who have the same ancestor have the same fate, because they lead the same life.

Despite the difference of symbols which these two proverbs are based on, the meaning is the same ; in fact, the word imizi (roots) refers to the origin of something, in its genuine as well as in its figurative meaning. "Imizi (roots) are the basis of life. For a Burundian, to lose a father means to lose a reference, to lose life. It is in this sense that a person who loses his father says "Ndarandutse", to mean: I'm uprooted, I have lost my substructure, my basis, the foundation of my life because the father is taken as a support. Indeed, one often hears people insulting one another saying : "urakaranduka" that is, may you be rooted out which simply means : may you lose your father.

In Burundi then, members of the same family are compared to branches of a tree which, once the tree is rooted out, all the branches dry together. This is what is implied in the proverb : *"ibisangiye imizi bisangiye kwuma"* (literal meaning). Those which share roots dry together. Nevertheless, it is necessary to mention that in the Burundian culture, a man does not entirely die out if he has children. The latter are called by his name "bene naka"; that is, the descendants of Mister so and so, or "ahasiga naka" (the land left by Mister so and so). The offspring is aware that the eye of its forebears is overwatching it wherever it is. This is shown in some cultural facts. For instance, when it comes to eating the products of the first harvest, sorghum pastry for instance, they put a little part on the ground to show that they share with their ancestors.

It is this consciousness of the same belonging which is implied in the proverb : *ibisangiye imizi bisangira kwuma*. The same for : *izisangiye urugo zisangira urunyago* : cattle sharing the same cattle-shed share spoliation as well. In the latter however, the image is not the same but spoliation also sends to the Burundian traditional society : In former times, under the kingdom of Burundi, the king had full rights on people and their possessions. He could decide to have a person killed depending on the mistake he would have made. The punishment which was frequent was the spoliation of cows. It was the king's lawsuit for those who disobeyed authorities "Kunyaga urukombamazi" is the expression naming that punishment. This means that all the cows one possessed would be spoliated without any other form of trial. This was a dreadful punishment indeed, especially when we know the value of cows for Burundians. Indeed, a cow was associated not only with richness but also with honor. To spoliate one's cows was consequently to dishonor him. When one was dishonored, all the family would share the shame as well. The proverb *izisangiye urugo zisangira urunyago* therefore simply means : Those people who share home share also misfortune or better, members of the same family have the same fate. That is, whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. Hence, the word "urugo" (cattle-shed) in the denotative meaning is the symbol of family and spoliation is the symbol of whatever misfortune would happen, but a good understanding of the proverb entails going back to the history of the Burundian society when this practice was in use and to feel with the senses of a Burundian of that time who

was experiencing it. Otherwise, the fact that spoliation does not exist nowadays would perhaps hamper the understanding of that proverb.

As the whole family would be victim of the mistake made by only one member, it is the same even presently, members of the same family share misfortune as they share times of joy. Spoliation of cows was not the only punishment one could endure, it was frequent that a man who happened to do wrong, to misbehave could be asked to brew beer which he had to give as a fine. Most of the times, that fine would consist of many pots and the family would help. This is what helps us to understand the proverb : *Indahiro mbi irengesha umuryango*: (A bad oath calls the family on brewing).

But what is a bad oath ? To take a bad oath means to commit a perjury. A swearword for a man was a guarantee, it was a kind of deposit in pawn, a solemn declaration that he would tell the truth or keep a vow. If nowadays people swear with an appeal to God as witness, it was not so in the traditional Burundian society, it was just promising many pots of beer, cows or simply to give his hand as a pawn. The swearword was usually a blasphemous use of sacred things. For example a man would swear by the name of his daughter or mother and if he did so, it was asserting that not to realize what he promised to do meant to have sexual intercourse with his daughter or with his mother which is a crime in the Burundian society and if one member of a family committed a crime, it was the whole family

which would pay the rap.

The family was then always united whether in happiness or in sorrow and the misfortune of one was a source of trouble for all. Nevertheless, it would happen to a member of family to get rich but forget the rest of the family and break that solidarity. Nevertheless, if by misfortune he became victim of any calamity, accident or illness, he would come back to his family to ask for help. This is expressed in the proverb *Uwanyu akwima amata ntakwima amahere* (a relative of yours refuses to give you milk but not scabies). Milk in this proverb is a symbol of happiness, of pleasure, of richness whereas scabies are the symbol of all sorts of misfortune (illness, starvation and others).

The second denotation therefore would be "a relative of yours may refuse to share joy and happiness with you but asks for help from you in case of misfortune". This sympathetic help that Burundians give to members of their family and even to one who rebels against the family shows that solidarity is part of the Burundian culture. It was stupid and careless for a man to reject his relatives because sooner or later he would come to them again as the following proverb shows *uwutazi iminsi yitigura incuti* Literal meaning He who ignores days rejects relatives.

"Iminsi" in this proverb is the symbol of the unpredictability of the future. This word "iminsi" is also the symbol of a bad

future, problems which are likely to happen. It is the same word which we find in the expression : "gutega iminsi" : to wish to someone a very bad future to wish him misfortune or in cursing expressions like : "uragahura n'iminsi" : may you meet with days, which simply means to wish problems to someone. *uwutazi iminsi yitigura incuti* therefore in its second denotation or proverbial meaning is: "He who does not know to prepare his future rejects relatives. He who is careless rejects his relatives. This means that relatives who give a hand to you when you are in need, it is to be extremely careless to reject them when you are rich. This is to say that Burundians' lives are intimately linked. To reject relatives is finally like destroying the house that one will lodge in in the evening.

This solidarity was extended from members of the same nuclear family to a larger group or extended family with blood ties between individuals or simply a group made of friends or simply people with any other real relationships or created relationships. There is for instance a certain prohibition of marriage between persons belonging to different groups of people, the difference lying in certain cultural considerations. Let us analyse the following proverb *Nta wusukiranya amata n'amateke* (nobody mixes milk and cush-cush).

The understanding of this proverb requires all the referential meanings of milk and cush-cush and Rodegem and Bapfutwabo (1961) provides us with some. He has classified

certain key-words with what they refer to. Indeed, in the world of richness, he lists; banana-trees, beer, sorghum, grain store, milk, churn, butter and all that is associated with these words. Cow and milk are also associated with the tutsi ethnic group. The cultural meaning of the above proverb is therefore: A good association is made between individuals who are equal.

Indeed, in Burundian traditional society, cows confer prestige and high reputation whereas cultivating is considered an underestimated job, at least if we compare it to cattle-breeding. Consequently, a person whose job is tilling the soil was less valued than a stock farmer. A good understanding of that proverb is therefore given to us by all those associations of the two words "amata" : (milk) and "amateke" : (cush-cush). Coming back to cows, we realize that possessing cows may be an advantage to have not only power and prestige, it may also allow someone to be accepted for marriage or to be refused in case one has no cows.

To have many cows is one among other conditions which were required to be called "umugabo", that is a respectable man as the Burundian society wanted him to be. This helps us to understand the proverb: *Uwutagira inka ntagira igabo*.

Literal meaning: Who has no cows has no manliness

Proverbial meaning: Self-sufficiency is one of the qualities of a man.

In this proverb, the word "igabo" needs also to be understood because it conditions the understanding of this proverb.

Nsabimana (1992) analyses the term "umugabo" and finds that it is to be associated with cows. He argues that for the traditional Burundian, the very happiness and the most important richness one could get was a cow. The person who had no cows would work days and days for the one who had them, so that himself could receive at least one as a gift. Then, he had to accept to be "umusavyi" (a servant) and work for him, to be submitted to his orders. The owner of cows would be his "shebuja" or his master.

A person who is in such a life condition cannot have "igabo". This word is defined by Nsabimana (1991) as the pride of being umugabo (a man). His research reveals that : "kugira igabo" is : To have self-control, to master his emotions in hard times. We also use this expression for a person who is proud of what he is and what he has. Therefore, it is a man worthy of that name who can be proud. That is what helps us to understand the proverb "uwutagira inka ntagira igabo" whose literal meaning is: He who has no cows has no manliness.

It is indeed very clear that one cannot be called "umugabo" (a man), with all the references that Burundians give to the concept. The man whom that proverb is about is not proud because he is submitted to someone else. In fact, we

showed in the above lines that whoever has no cows has to be submitted and even to be illtreated from time to time by his boss. Furthermore, he cannot be proud of what he has because, in Burundian traditional society, a man who had no cows had nothing else worth being proud of. Everything was less valuable than cows ; hence the proverbial meaning of the proverb *uwutagira inka ntagira igabo* is: self-sufficiency is one of the qualities which give manliness. It is therefore thanks to a socio-cultural prior analysis of the concept of family that we have come to a clear understanding of the proverbial meanings of the above proverbs dealing with the husband's behaviour.

IV.2. PROVERBS DEALING WITH THE HUSBAND'S BEHAVIOUR.

From the analysis of the proverbs we have discussed so far, we have seen a number of cultural facts which allowed us to understand the proverbs. Indeed, we know now how the husband is viewed, his consideration in the family. We have seen that he is the first concerned with all that is in his family. The honor or dishonor of the latter depends to some extent on him and on how he runs his family or how he behaves and there is also a certain solidarity between members of the same family which characterizes the Burundian culture and which must be taken into consideration to understand certain proverbs. Some other proverbs were understood thanks to the analysis of some cultural concepts like the concept of cows and them.

We would now like to analyse another series of proverbs which are related to the father in relation to the rest of the family. In this category, we have also chosen randomly the following ten proverbs among plenty of others:

1. Nta nka zitagira impfizi.

- Literal meaning: There are no cows without a bull.
- Proverbial meaning: An offspring comprising no boy is not an offspring at all.

2. Urugo rurimwo umugabo runywa amata.

- Literal meaning: An enclosure in which there is a "man" drinks milk.
- Proverbial meaning : A family in which there is a respectful man has everything.

3. Incabwenge y'umugabo isiga imihora.

- Literal meaning : An intelligent man applies lotion on roads.

Proverbial meaning : An intelligent man tries to be kind with everyone.

4. Urugo rutagira umugabo ntakitarukengera.

- Literal meaning : A family with no husband is belittled by everybody.
- Proverbial meaning : A man is the honor for the family.

5. Ikobero ry'umugabo ryama ku jisho.

- Literal meaning : A man's spear always lies on his eyes.
- Proverbial meaning : Bravery is an indispensable quality for a man.

6. Inkingi iryana ntiyegamigwa.

- Literal meaning : A ferocious pillar is not leaned upon.
- Proverbial meaning : A man with bad behaviour inspires no security.

7. Utongana n'ishiga ukarya bibisi.

- Literal meaning: "Who quarrels with either of the three stones forming a traditional stove eats crudities."
- Proverbial meaning : A man who illtreats his wife has no happiness at home.

8. Rwitera imanza yenze babiri.

- Literal meaning : He brings trouble to himself he who marries two wives.
- Proverbial meaning : Polygamy is the cause of annoyance.

9. Akagabo karajije ukuguru hanze kitwa imburamutima.

- Literal meaning : A man whose leg lodges outside is called heartless
- Proverbial meaning : A married man who runs after other women is heartless.

10. Umugabo gito agaya ubwo araje.

- Literal meaning : A stupid man criticises the pastry he kept for the next day.
- Proverbial meaning : A man of low morality criticises his wife simply because she is no longer young.

These proverbs related to the husband as the previous ones or any other category of proverbs are also linked to the Burundian culture and society. Their understanding requires the understanding of how the husband is viewed in the Burundian society, his social status, the place and consideration he is given by the rest of the family which is under his authority and the society in general and all cannot be detached from the symbolic system of the Burundian social environment. In fact, in those proverbs related to the husband, the series of words: inka (cow), inkingi (pillar), ishiga (stove), amata (milk), ikobero (spear) are very rich in meaning; they are symbols which evoke and call to mind a great deal of the Burundian tradition. Indeed, according to Ntahokaja (1978), these words have a very wide semantic field which is based on the Burundian way of life. Therefore the interpretation of Burundian proverbs

comes out to be the interpretation of the Burundian tradition and this procedure leads us to classify these proverbs into two groups. That is, proverbs with a positive connotation and those with a negative connotation.

1° PROVERBS WITH A POSITIVE CONNOTATION.

- Nta nka zitagira impfizi :

Literal meaning : There are no cows without a bull.

Proverbial meaning : An offspring comprising no boy is not an offspring at all.

In this proverb, the proverbial meaning is given by the association of "inka" (cow) and impfizi (bull). If we start by what we already know about a cow from Ntahokaja (1978) and Rodegem (1961), we know that cattle is associated with the Tutsi ethnic group or prestige, richness, etc; everything of great value and nice reputation was likely to be associated with cattle. Nevertheless, the above proverb seems to show that even among cows, male cows are more valued than female cows. If we look in Rodegem and Bapfutwabo (1961), we find out that a young man is associated with a bull which is, in the Burundian culture, an archetype of power and strength, whereas a female cow is associated with ladies. This brings us to give the cultural meaning of the proverb *Nta nka zitagira impfizi* (A descendance comprising no boy is not a descendance at all).

This difference in esteem and consideration between men and women is to be explained by the fact that the Burundian society is patriarchal. In such societies, males occupy a high-ranking position. They have the right to everything. Ntabona (1992) speaks of an authoritative obedience of men over women. This power or right of men to act or command is given to them by their physical condition together with their economic position as first owner of the land and all that is in it, the other members of the family being taken as simply helpers. A man would ever since be esteemed thanks to what he owned among other things. It is in this point of view that we can understand the proverb *urugo rurimwo umugabo runywa amata* (an enclosure in which there is a "man" drinks milk).

This literal meaning does not show us the true meaning or cultural meaning of the proverb being veiled by the images and symbols which are used. In fact, an enclosure cannot drink. Moreover, the word milk must symbolize something because there must be a reason for milk alone to be used in the proverb rather than banana wine or sorghum beer and so on, which as we know, are very appreciated in the Burundian society. We have seen that "urugo" may mean the family and coming back to the word "milk", if we refer to Rodegem and Bapfutwabo (1961), we conclude that "milk" stands for a number of things in the world of richness among which he has not forgotten fence, the cow, butter, the churn, sorghum, grain-store, banana-tree, beer, etc. With this we can then give the proverbial meaning or the cultural meaning of this proverb which is: A family in which

there is a respectful man has everything. A respectful man is indeed a man who, apart from his self respect, truthfulness and loyalty has also richness. This richness that he gets through his working hard allows him to strengthen his manship (ubugabo) not in a merely biological sense of this word, that is, a mature strong and vigorous person of masculine gender, but its moral sense, that is, a responsible, virtuous and wise man, a man who asserts himself by his positive moral values and who fulfils the qualities recommended by the society in which he lives. This is a man that Nsabimana (1991) and Ntabona (1992: 262) have described and whose moral qualities and whose behaviour in their families and society allow us to understand the proverb *Incabwenge y'umugabo isiga imihora*, whose literal meaning is : An intelligent man applies lotion on roads.

This literal meaning does not provide us with the meaning of the proverb since there is an incompatibility between certain words like : "gusiga" that we have translated as "to apply lotion on something" in the sense of to embellish and "imihora" that we have translated as "roads". Indeed to embellish roads in the sense of "gusiga" has no meaning as such "gusiga" is done mostly on human beings. The true meaning is then given by the interpretation of an analogy which is between "gusiga imihora": to apply lotion on roads and "gusiga umuntu": to apply lotion on a person.

Traditionally, as we can see in Ntahokaja (1978), this was done to babies or to husbands by their wives. A mother applied lotion on her baby or a wife would apply lotion on her husband. In either of the cases, it was to show love, affection and tenderness. It is this feeling of love and affection that is encouraged to show to "roads" which, in this case, means everybody one can meet. The wisdom in Burundi therefore consists of showing kindness and to be lovely to everybody because it is a best way to prepare a nice future for oneself. This leads us to the proverbial meaning or cultural meaning which is "an intelligent man tries to be kind with everyone".

Apart form these two qualities required for a man to be esteemed, there are many others among which we can mention bravery. Indeed, a man in his family had to be able to protect his family and under his protection, the family hold would feel secure. On the contrary, the family in which there was no man was looked down upon and belittled as the following proverb shows *urugo rutagira umugabo ntakitarukengera* (A family with no husband is belittled by everybody).

Therefore, for this role of protection to be well fulfilled, the husband needs some tools that he uses in his duties and functions and as his duties are different from those of the rest of the family, the tools he uses are equally different. Indeed, Rodegem and Bapfutwabo (1961) provides us with the information about how duties are shared among members of the family and how tools are distributed accordingly. As far

as the husband is concerned Rodegem and Bapfutwabo (1961) says that he is the defender and the supporter of the family hold. For this, he must possess a spear, a bow, and arrows. He will ever since be associated with such symbols as : the door with the specific role of protection. He accepts to be attacked first for the others to be out of reach. The danger reaches them after the husband has been seriously injured just as the interior of the house is reached after the door has been damaged. He will also be called and symbolized by the central pillar of the hut for both the husband and the central pillar of the hut share the role of protection. The rest of the house leans on that central pillar exactly like the rest of the family leans on the father, their protector.

Therefore, the mother and her children are always confident in the power of the father be it the physical or the moral strength. They associate him with the bull, which is in the Burundian society, the archetype of power. The father himself is conscious of his role of protection ; it is his job. He is indeed always watching his spear. It is always near him because he knows that at any time, in case of a danger, he has to use it so as to protect his family. It is his weapon, sign of his bravery, source of his self-reliance, his esteem and consideration. Therefore, the proverb *ikobero ry'umugabo ryama ku jisho* does not mean that he is warlike as the layman in the Burundian culture may think. It rather suggests that a man deserving honor is always ready to face whatever may come to agitate the family or disturb peace in it. The whole family

seeing the husband holding a spear, instead of feeling fear or panic, feels secure; this is part of the Burundian culture.

Despite this power and confidence that the husband inspires to the rest of the family, it may happen that the husband becomes a source of trouble in the family. All depends on the way he behaves. Whether he conforms to the norms and regulations recognized by the Burundian society and culture, or not, this determines the way he is seen in his family and this is expressed in proverbs. The case we have already seen shows a husband whose behaviour meets with the assentation of the Burundian society and culture. Let us now analyse proverbs which show the behaviour which is rejected by the Burundian society and the Burundian culture.

2° PROVERBS WITH A NEGATIVE CONNOTATION.

Like the preceding ones, they carry pieces of advice. They describe the kind of behaviour which is to be avoided unlike the preceding ones which show a model husband, these ones show the anti-model of the husband and the aftermath of such rejected behaviour on the Burundian family. The following proverbs show what is described in the above lines :

1. Inkingi iryana ntiyegamirwa :

- Literal meaning : A ferocious pillar is not leaned upon.
- Proverbial meaning : A man with bad behaviour inspires no security.

2. Utongana n'ishiga ukarya bibisi.

- Literal meaning : who quarrels with either of the three stones forming a traditional stove eats crudities
- Proverbial meaning : A man who illtreats his wife has no happiness at home.

3. Umugabo gito agaya ubwo araje.

- Literal meaning : a stupid man criticises the pastry he kept for the next day.
- Proverbial meaning : A man of low morality criticises his wife simply because she is no longer young.

4. Akagabo karajije ukuguru hanze kitwa imburamutima.

- Literal meaning : A man whose leg lodges outside is called heartless.
- Proverbial meaning : A married man who runs after other women is heartless.

5. Rwitera imanza yenze babiri .

- Literal meaning : he brings trouble to himself he who marries two wives.

- Proverbial meaning : polygamy is the cause of annoyance.

In these proverbs, the words : "inkingi" (pillar) ; "ishiga" (either of the three (3) stones forming a stove); "ubwo araje": (a one-day old pastry), are part of the Kirundi symbolic system as we have seen at the beginning of this chapter. "Inkingi" is the symbol of protection, which is the role of the husband who, in the Burundian society, is the breadwinner. He has got to do everything, to support the rest of the family. If he fails to do it, he runs the risks of losing his consideration in the society. He is no longer "umugabo", a man with great honor but "akagabo", a so called man. Therefore, working hard for a man is to keep his manship. There are other qualities and other virtues he must have some of which are : sociability, serenity and calmness. In case he lacks these qualities, he becomes an animal to fear. Let us show it in the following proverb *Inkingi iryana ntiyegamigwa*.

Having seen what "inkingi" (the central pillar of the hut) means, and knowing the association which is made between it and a husband, it becomes easier to get the proverbial meaning or the cultural meaning which is: A hostile man inspires no security.

In such a case, the family feels no security, no confidence and is permanently frightened which may result in divorce. As one leans on something that can protect him, it becomes evident that, since that husband is a threat to his

family the latter no longer relies on him. But such a bad behaviour of the husband may be a cause of trouble in one way or another in so far as we have seen that, even though the husband is number one in his family, his wife also has a very great role to play and the harmony depends on the way she plays it. This is what we find in the proverb: *Utongana n'ishiga ukarya bibisi* (He who quarrels with either of the three stones forming a traditional stove eats crudities).

Again, here, if we analyse what Rodegem and Bapfutwabo (1961) say on "ishiga" (a stone of a stove), we associate it with a wife, because of her role in the family. Indeed, in the Burundian culture, wives are responsible for house chores or housework, cooking being one of these chores.

She has also to control the household equipment. The couple in particular and the family in general cannot get on well if the man illtreats the wife because she can refuse to do any work and the husband may starve. He has therefore to try to get on well with his wife in order to get everything well done. Otherwise, the household may go straight to its downfall, to the ruin and this leads us to give the proverbial meaning or cultural meaning of the proverb which is "A man who illtreats his wife has no happiness at home". He has no happiness because, economically speaking, the wife who is illtreated is the one who primarily works hard in conditions that are not good. Socially, that man is criticized by the society. But how does such a behaviour happen on the behalf of

the husband ?

Most of the time, the husband may be unfaithful and one of the defects, which are cursed in the Burundian culture, is unfaithfulness ; even polygamy was not encouraged although it was tolerated. This is shown through the proverb *Rwitera imanza yenze babiri* (He brings trouble to himself he who marries two wives) or simply : "polygamy is the cause of trouble".

A man who is unfaithful is therefore seen as someone who is not serious, he is not even called a "man" but a so-called man, that is a man with low morality. This is what is expressed in the proverb *Akagabo karajije ukuguru hanze kitwa imburamutima* (A man whose leg lodges outside is called heartless).

In this literal meaning "kuraza ukuguru hanze" is a euphemistic way of saying : to commit adultery. Indeed, in the Burundian culture, it is not good for a man, a protector of the family as we have seen it earlier, to spend a night outside his home, for it would be a lack of seriousness. If he dares do so, he is no longer called "umugabo" (a man) but "akagabo", '(a diminutive of man). Nevertheless, in this proverb, "akagabo", a miniature of man does neither denote smallness nor endearment, it rather denotes meanness, a narrow-minded man ; it refers to a person wanting in dignity or honor, and to lodge one's leg outside, said of a man does not merely mean to pass the night in another family, it is simply a euphemistic speech

and it is in the Burundian culture to disguise one's language. This means as we said earlier to commit adultery and from this we get the proverbial meaning or the cultural interpretation of this proverb which is:

A married man who runs after other women is heartless. As one can see, faithfulness is a quality much appreciated in the Burundian society. It is even one of the qualities which award the name of "umugabo", a man with all its implications in the Burundian socio-cultural context. Once one has made a commitment to live with a given woman, he breaks it at his risk to lose his honor and consideration. They had to continue to live together for ever whatever might happen to either of the couple, otherwise, he would not be worth being called "umugabo" but "akagabo", a mean man, a honorless man. This is what is implied in the proverb *umugabo gito agaya ubwo araje* (A stupid man criticises the pastry he kept for the next day).

The cultural interpretation of this proverb requires a prior interpretation of the symbol of : "umutsima uraye". (The pastry of the night before). As far as this symbol is concerned, Rodegem and Bapfutwabo (1961) associate it with what he calls "femme fanée", that is a faded wife, a wife who is no longer young and consequently, who is no longer beautiful, no longer attractive exactly like the pastry on the following day of its preparation. Such wives are protected in a way or another by the society and culture from the menace of being cheated or even rejected by husbands to the benefit of young

and beautiful ladies, those who are not treated as "umutsima uraye": (The pastry of the night before).

One of the ways to protect them is this criticism or belittlement of men who cheat their wives because they are no longer attractive which is expressed in the above proverb whose cultural denotation is now given thanks to the above symbolic meaning. This cultural interpretation or proverbial meaning is therefore: a man of low morality criticises his wife simply because she is no longer young.

This is a wise way to prevent men from being capricious or from abusing their relatively high status compared to the status of women. Indeed, the Burundian society allocates the first place to men and women come second in the hierarchy of the family. This does not mean, however, that men have the right to oppress women. This recognition of men's authority does not mean that men are masters and women slaves. It is simply a way to keep order and to avoid anarchy.

To succeed in his role of keeping order in the family - Nsabimana (1991) says that a man must have a number of virtues such as: the truth, courage, firmness in character, and wisdom. He must be self-contained and must have a self control in hard times. This is a feature which distinguishes him from women who are often said not to have those qualities. He must be intelligent and must have a strong personality to settle a quarrel or legal dispute and he must also be a good witness

during any social contract. He must be self-reliant but not self-willed or stubborn, he must have self-sacrifice towards his family and his surroundings.

Apart from his moral and economical strengh, physical strength is also needed to ensure his self-defense or the defense of his family because one of his roles is that of a protector, and that distinguishes him from women who are said to be weak. He needs to care much about what he says and what he does, so as to be a good model of his family whose behaviour and education are strongly dependent on him. In case his family behaves well in accordance with the Burundian culture and customs, it is a honor for him and on the contrary if it is a behaviour which is rejected in the Burundian society, all the shame and dishonour fall on him.

Through these proverbs related to the husband in relation to other members of his family, we have seen that no true understanding of them is possible that does not take into consideration the socio-cultural behaviour, the social status of a man (umugabo) in the family. We have seen a number of things which led us to understand those proverbs among which we can mention the relatively high position of the masculine gender over feminine gender, the difference of responsibilities of men and women or their difference of power and authority in the family. We have also seen a number of symbols whose association has brought us to make a correlation between them and what they stand for , all this has allowed us to understand

proverbs related to the husband in his family .

IV.3. PROVERBS DEALING WITH THE WIFE'S BEHAVIOUR IN RELATION TO THE REST OF THE FAMILY .

Just as there are proverbs related to the husband, there are also provebs related to the wife. In fact, wives have also their rights and duties, they have their own concern related to their conditions and the way they stand them is dictated by the society they live in, the culture and customs of the society and their own principles of human morality and duty , their philosophy which is influenced by the society in which they live. Here, also, as in the preceding section, we have selected ten proverbs through which we will see that the philosophy and principles of human morality which is reflected in proverbs are dictated by the socio-cultural norms and these socio-cultural norms must be known first so as to be able to understand the message contained in proverbs. The proverbs we have selected are:

1. Urugo rurimwo umugore runywa amazi.

- Literal meaning : A fence in which there is a woman drinks water.
- Proverbial meaning : we can expect nothing precious in a family run by a wife.

2. Umugore ntaganza urwarwa aba ashaka inzira ija iwabo.

- Literal meaning : A woman does not seek to own banana-wine, otherwise, she is seeking a way home.
- Proverbial meaning : A wife has to stand in her lower position under the husband.

3. Nta jambo ry'umugore.

- Literal meaning : No word of a wife.
- Proverbial meaning : wisdom is rarely expected from wives.

4. Nta bucuti bw'umugore.

- Literal meaning : No social relationship with a wife.
- Proverbial meaning : women are unreliable.

5. Umugore musangira amata ntimusangira amazi.

- literal meaning : a wife shares milk with you but not water.
- Proverbial meaning : (same as in four).

6. Inkono isha ukwo igomba.

- Literal meaning : a cooking pot cooks as it wishes.
- Proverbial meaning : we are not always able to change our wives' behaviour.

7. Inkokokazi irapfa amagi akabora.

- Literal meaning : a hen dies and its eggs rot.
- Proverbial meaning: children's character strongly depends on their mothers.

8. Wabira ntumva ukavyara ntabarirwa.

- Literal meaning : you marry a deaf wife and you give birth to stubborn children.
- Proverbial meaning : If one marries a stubborn wife, one breeds uncooperative children.

9. Aho umuvyeyi aguye hatorwa ingovyi

- Literal meaning : we find a cradle where a mother falls.
- Proverbial meaning : mothers are always close to their children.

10. Umugore ni amashiga mu nzu.

- Literal meaning : A woman is a stove in the house.
- Proverbial meaning : work in the kitchen is a special duty required from women.

IV.3.1. PROVERBS DEALING WITH WOMEN'S NEGATIVE SIDE AND WEAKNESSES.

In the first proverb *urugo rurimwo umugore runywa amazi*, the literal meaning reveals a certain belittlement of women in the families. In fact, to offer nothing but water reveals either poverty, selfishness or powerlessness or else, lack of right which contrasts with husbands who, as we saw it in another proverb related to the husband, offer milk ; milk being a symbol of wealth and prestige.

Let us refer to the Burundian culture to decipher the cultural implication. As far as the limits of rights is concerned, Ntahokaja (1978 : 39) tells us that the only things to which women had full rights to were "umweko" (a small piece of cloth used by women as a belt); "Ikazanga", (a small container usually in earth (clay) used to hold or keep butter that women use for ointment to soften their skin); "Inkono yo ku ziko" (a cooking pot) ; "Icavuye i wabo" (anything that she brought from her parents); "N'ico agabanye" (what she got as a gift).

Ntabona (1992 : 303) states that in traditional Burundi, women were mainly modest and obedient, hard-working and simply in charge of upbringing and breeding children. On the other hand, husbands had to decide on all the family richness apart from what has been listed above, women themselves were under the authority of their husbands. We should stress that mean men had to be assimilated to women in case they had no qualities of men. From this, we understand that women had the right to valueless things like water or taken so, like food. Indeed, in the Burundian culture, men would not give much importance to food, otherwise, they would be taken as greedy and selfish which would make them lose their esteem and consideration. On the contrary, sorghum beer and banana wine were given much value and women would not have the right to them unless they were authorized by their husbands. This is what appears in the proverb : *Umugore ntaganza urwarwa aba ashaka inzira ija iwabo* (A woman does not seek to own banana-wine, otherwise, she is

seeking a way to her parents' home).

Banana-wine or sorghum beer were therefore in the powers of men and this was a sign of men's superiority and wealth. A man who had much beer to offer was powerful since it was beer together with cows that were given as dowry or offered to the king or any other wealthy man to ask for a portion of land. Beer was also important because it could be given as a kind of payment or ransom by someone who wanted to redeem himself. He could ever since be forgiven for any mistakes that he could have made and all their aftermath. To have the right to things of such importance was a proof of superiority on the part of men and the cultural meaning of that proverb is then apparent. It is : A wife has to stand in her lower position under the husband, otherwise, if she wants to dominate, she is looking for a divorce. This women's lack of authority on valuable things brings us to reach the cultural meaning of the first proverb "urugo" rurimwo umugore runywa amazi, which is: We can expect nothing precious in a family where there is no husband, a family run by a wife.

This fact of owning only things of insignificant value parallels with another belittlement consisting of taking women as persons with small minds. This is what people imply in the proverb *Nta jambo ry'umugore*.

Literal meaning : No word of a woman.
Proverbial meaning: Wisdom is rarely expected from wives.

But why this belittlement ? Nizigiyimana (1979) tried to find an answer to this question and we get it in his comment :

In traditional Burundi, women were considered weak persons, and of small minds, always easy to fool and they had unpredictable reactions. They were always taken as persons wanting in discretion and therefore, nobody could have confidence in them, unless he wanted to get his secrets reveiled. (translation is mine). Ntabona (1992) states the same in the words we translate as:

> Women had no right to speak in an assembly holding even very few men. No woman could take the floor when there was a man around. The speech delivered by a woman was considered as valueless. She had to accept to be represented by men,

hence : *Nta jambo ry'umugore.*

It is a senseless speech, short of reason and wisdom and lacking judicious judgement. This proverb therefore implies that wisdom is rarely expected from women. Then the understanding cannot be detached from the Burundian culture because, not all cultures view women as low persons. Beside this lack of wisdom, women are taken as versatile persons whom it is wise not to rely on. This is expressed in the proverb *Nta bucuti bw'umugore* (No family relationship with a wife).

This is to be interpreted through how the Burundian society is organised. Indeed, the organisation in the patrilineal system brings people to consider a woman as a

member who is not fully integrated in the family. Rodegem (1970) notices that in case of quarrel, women always side with their parents and, in case of disagreement between the couple, the husband has got the right to repudiate her. Likewise a woman who does not find satisfaction in living with her husband may willingly go home. This is what we understand in the proverb *Umugore musangira amata ntimusangira amazi* (A wife may share milk with you but not water). Milk being the symbol of richness, it stands for anything precious while drinking water shows poverty. The cultural meaning is then: A wife will harmoniously live with you while you are rich but as soon as you become poor her love for you will go as well.

Although it is said above that women are under their husband's authority, the former are not always able to change their behaviour. This is what is expressed by the proverb: *Inkono isha ukwo ishatse* (A cooking-pot cooks as it wishes).

The understanding of this proverb requires a genuine knowledge of the Burundian symbolic system. For this, we refer, to Rodegem(1961) who tells us that this symbol refers to women's house activities. As it is the role of women to prepare food and an earth pot being the major culinary vessel, women are therefore called by the instrument they use in their everyday activities and the earth pot is among them. This means that, although women are believed to be under their husband's control, they are not taken as children to educate but rather, partners to cooperate with, otherwise, husbands would have to

face very annoying aftermath that would result from the illtreatment of women by their husbands in case there is any.

IV.3.2. PROVERBS DEALING WITH WOMEN'S POSITIVE VALUES.

The proverbs we have studied so far portray the negative side of women and their weaknesses. But, though the Burundian society sets them on the lower position behind men, both men and women are evenly important in the family for a better life. Indeed, men and women in the society in general and in families in particular are like the two wings of a bird : If one wing does not work, the bird cannot fly. This is even true especially when we know that there are certain chores which are shared between men and women so that men have their own work which is different from women's work. Therefore, men and women are complementary and the idea of superiority ought to leave the place to equality.

However, this should not exclude mutual respect. Coming back to this irreplaceable role of women in families, we think of their role of bringing up and educating children. This is a role left to women in the Burundian society and children are at a high rate what their mothers want them to become. This can easily be found in the proverb *Inkokokazi irapfa amagi akabora* (A hen dies and its eggs rot).

The cultural meaning of this proverb is given by the interpretation of the symbol "hen". In fact, in the Burundian symbolic system as we find it in Rodegem and Bapfutwabo

(1961:388), a hen is the symbol of a mother who educates her children. She gives them the necessary care and warmth exactly like the care that the hen takes of its eggs. If a hen dies, its eggs rot. The only difference is that for eggs, it is a physical decay or rotness, while for children, it is a moral deterioration. Indeed, it is women who cultivate the moral virtues and good socio-cultural behaviour because they are constantly with children. For this, a good choice of a wife determines one's offspring's good behaviour. On the contrary, it is the other way round if one marries a wife of bad morality. This is what is implied in the proverb *Wabira ntumva ukavyara ntabarigwa* (If one marries a stubborn wife, one breeds uncooperative children). This denotes this role of women consisting of cultivating good behaviour in children, and one can only give what he has. If mothers are vicious, children will be naughty as well and if, on the other hand, mothers are virtuous children will be well-bred too. In the Burundian culture then, it is the role of women to educate children and do domestic work, or simply "to make homes" as it is said ; just as it is the role of men to build houses.

Women are conscious of their role and even the Burundian society recognises them as children breeders. It is what they express in the proverb *Aho umuvyeyi aguye hatorwa ingovyi* (We find a creadle where a mother falls).

This denotes that mothers are always with children whose care is one of their main duties and even their primary role.

We may deduce a general interpretation of this proverb: Tools and their users always go together. This proverb therefore refers to women's jobs in the families like in the proverb *umugore n'amashiga mu nzu* (A woman is the three stones which make a fire-place).

If we refer to Rodegem (1961) who says that women may be symbolized by the tools they use in their daily activities, and if we know that in the Burundian customs, it is up to women to do the culinary work, we understand that this proverb simply means that work in the kitchen is a special duty required from women.

Men know it and they rarely give them the right to possess things. Everything or almost everything in the house is under the strict control of men and in certain cases, the layman in the Burundian culture may interpret certain men's behaviour as a sign of selfishness. An instance is found in the proverb: *umugore ntarya incira ni ko gucira umugabo*" (a wife does not eat meat received as a share, otherwise, it is a disdain or scorn towards her husband). This has only to be interpreted within the boundaries of the Burundian culture because there is nothing of selfishness in this proverb, it is only the customs and beliefs of Burundians. Similarly, men are forbidden to eat the part of dough or pastry left on the spatula or in the pot after the preparation. Indeed, according to what is said in the Burundian culture, if a man eats on that pastry that is called "Umurahu" from the verb "Kurahuka" (not to be

quiet), he ceases to be calm.

So much for proverbs related to wives in relation to the rest of the family, we have seen some of the sociocultural behaviour which must be known to understand proverbs and a number of symbols used in those proverbs may conceal the real meaning of them unless one has much knowledge of the Burundian culture and Burundian society. For the very case of the ten proverbs that we have studied, we have seen that the understanding of the proverbs was given to us by a prior knowledge of women's lower position under their husbands and their irreplaceable role in families especially when it comes to the education of children.

Indeed, defects and qualities are called so within the boundaries of the Burundian culture and customs. Duties and considerations are also shared between husbands and wives depending on the norms fixed by the Burundian customs.

IV.4. PROVERBS DEALING WITH CHILDREN IN RELATION WITH THE REST OF THE FAMILY.

Proverbs related to children in relation to the rest of the family are understood through the same process of interpretation but norms that regulate their behaviour and the socio-cultural constraints and advantages differ from those regarding husbands and wives in families. Similarly, boys and girls have different norms of behaviour that govern their

attitudes between themselves and towards their parents and the Burundian culture and society will lead and impose a certain philosophy upon life which will then mold and veil the meaning of proverbs. To show this, we consider the following proverbs related to children :

1. Urugo rutavyaye umuhungu ntiruba ari urugo".

- Literal meaning : A fence that does not breed a boy is not a fence.
- Proverbial meaning : A descendance comprising no boy is not a descendance at all.

2. Umugabo avyara abakobwa gusa ngo ndahonye.

- Literal meaning : A man who gives birth to ladies only says : it is the end of my breed.
- Proverbial meaning: Boys perpetuate the name of the clan.

3. Imbuto ibutura amagara.

- Literal meaning : A good seed produces testicles.
- Proverbial meaning : A nice birth is that of a boy.

4. Aho abakobwa batari imfyisi zigabura amaboko.

- Literal meaning : where there are no girls, wolves share arms.
- Proverbial meaning : Boys cannot replace girls.

5. Ubutarondeye inaga burondera umwuko.

- Literal meaning : A pastry that does not stay on the cooking pot stays on spatula
- Proverbial meaning : Who does not take after his or her mother takes after his or her father.

6. Nta wumenya iyo amaratwa y'inyana akura arora.

- Literal meaning : Nobody can predict the orientation of a calf's horns.
- Proverbial meaning : The character or personality of children is unpredictable.

7. Umugongo w'umuvyeyi ucumura wicaye.

- Literal meaning : The mother's back sins while it is sitting.
- Proverbial meaning : Parents pay for their children's mistakes

8. Umwana arya inkware nyina akayiruka amoya.

- Literal meaning : A child eats the partrige and his mother vomits its feathers.
- Proverbial meaning : (same as in 7).

9. Wenda nabi ugata uvyara nabi ntuta.

- Literal meaning : If you marry badly you throw but if you breed badly you don't.
- Proverbial meaning: when one's wife misbehaves, divorce is possible but if one's children misbehave one is condemned to keep them.

10. Inzu y'umwana irasusurutsa ntuyinjira

- Literal meaning : One's child's house may be warm but one cannot enter it.

- Proverbial meaning : Despite the love that girls have towards their fathers, culture prevents the latter from entering their houses once they are married.

From the literal meaning to the cultural meaning, we follow the same steps as in the other proverbs of the preceding section. In the proverb *urugo rutavyaye umuhungu ntiruba ari urugo*, the literal meaning : A fence that does not breed a boy is not a fence ; the word "urugo" (fence) stands for the couple (husbands and wives), which is connected to it by the grammatical relationship of metonymy and this unveils, though not fully, the meaning which is then: A couple that does not breed a boy is not a couple at all. This implies that boys are given much importance. At this level of meaning, the problem of culture occurs. Indeed, something remains puzzling : why are boys preferred to girls ? This is obviously hard to understand in other societies whose cultures differ from the Burundian culture, because not all societies make a difference between children on the mere consideration of gender. The same applies to the matrilineal societies where much importance is given to girls.

In the Burundian culture, however, it is frustrating not to have a boy among one's children and the reasons are to be found in the Burundian customs. Indeed, Ntahokaja (1978) shows us why boys are given a very great importance : In the Burundian society, only boys can continue bear the name of the father's clan. Moreover, Ntahokaja (1978) adds that girls are not allowed to inherit something from their fathers' belongings. Girls could not be landowners unless it was a land given to them as a gift. Besides, in every day life, ladies seem to be subjugated by men by making them servile. This explains why boys were preferred to girls and the meaning of the proverb therefore becomes clear: an offspring comprising no boy is not an offspring at all. This superiority of gender in favour of the masculine one is expressed in other proverbs such as: *umugabo avyara abakobwa gusa ngo ndahonye* (A man gives birth to girls only and says: "it is the end of my breed"). Or, *Imbuto ibutura amagara* (A good seed produces testicles) which means: A nice birth is that of a boy and the reasons to this are again culture bound.

Although boys are sometimes preferred to girls, it is worth mentioning that, in certain cases, girls are also given much importance. It is for instance in the case one has only boys and it would happen that parents feel frustrated. Example *aho abakobwa batari imfyisi zigabura amaboko*: where there are no girls, wolves share arms. This refers to the Burundian tradition according to which when a cow received as dowry dies, girls would share lower limbs.

Despite this importance given to boys, therefore, the Burundian society recognizes that to give birth to girls is not to be blamed on women. It only depends on the will of God, and if it is either a boy or a girl, the father or the mother has nothing to change. This is expressed in the proverb: *Ubutarondeye inaga burondera umwuko* (A pastry that does not stay on the cooking-pot stays on spatula).

Rodegem and Bapfutwabo (1961) show us that, in the Burundian symbolic system, most objects having a straight form symbolize the maculine gender, such as the spear and arrows that men use to protect and defend the country, the door which protects the house, the pillar, etc., whereas round objects symbolize feminine gender. Example, the earth cooking pot, a millstone, the pastry, etc.

From this point of view, the earth cooking-pot symbolizes a wife. Therefore, it has to be handled with extreme care for it can break. Similarly, a wife has to be taken care of because she is physically and morally fragile. The breaking off for a pot evokes therefore the feminine defects of not keeping the secrets. Other round objects which symbolize a woman are the pastry as we have seen it and when it is a pastry of the preceding day, it symbolizes a woman who has lost her beauty. Women are also symbolized by a millstone for its round form but also because it is the role of women to grind. The bitter narrow pea (courgette) symbolizes women who are stubborn and who do not show any respect towards their husbands. As far as

young cows and sheep are concerned, they symbolize women alluding to their reproductive functions. Goats symbolize women who are careless and insolent. A hen symbolizes women alluding to the role of taking care of children. A stick used as a support in walking symbolizes a woman as a loyal companion of a man.

As we have seen it in Rodegem and Bapfutwabo (1961), the cooking-pot symbolizes women and the spatula symbolizes men. Hence the cultural meaning of the proverb *Ubutarondeye inaga burondera umwuko* (who does not take after their mother takes after their father).

Nevertheless, fathers or mothers have nothing to change in matters of heredity. Similarly, Burundians know that nobody can change the personality of children. This is what we find in the proverb *Ntawumenya iyo amaratwa y'inyana akura arora* (Nobody can predict the orientation of a calf's horns).

In this primary denotation, a calf as symbol of a child is only understandable within the boundaries of the Burundian symbolic system, elsewhere in other cultures, the calf would symbolize something else, may be something with a bad connotation but in Burundi, cows have a very good connotation and are lovely. The cultural meaning is therefore (The character or personality of children is unpredictable).

This is to say that, though parents have a non negligible role in the education of their children, there is also another part which is providential. So parents are not to be fully blamed in case their children misbehave and also, they are not to claim their efforts on the other way round because there is, to some extent, something done by the divine providence. Indeed, children may have different personalities despite the fact that they have the same parents. These ones have got to stand their children even when they have bad behaviour. This shows the extent to which Burundians are attached to their children more than to anything else. This appears in the proverb: *Wenda nabi ugata uvyara nabi ntuta* (when one's wife has a bad behaviour divorce is possible but when one's children misbehave, he is condemned to keep them). This shows once again that women are not fully integrated in their husbands' families, because in case of strong misunderstanding between the couple, the husband may dismiss his wife. When it is a misunderstanding between children and parents, it is a misfortune that the latter are obliged to stand. Most of the times, if children are a nuisance in the society, parents pay the rap. This is illustrated by the proverbs;

- *umugôngo w'umuvyeyi ucumura wîcaye*, or
- *umwâna arya inkware nyina akayiruka amoya.*

The literal meaning of the first proverb is: The mother's back (The rear part of human body from the neck to the end of the spine) sins while sitting ,"the back " refers to Burundian

custom of carrying babies on the back . In other cultures where such a custom does not exist , it would be hard to see what "the back " refers to, and the proverb culturally denotes that parents pay for their children's mistakes. This is the same meaning of the second proverb whose literal meaning is: a child eats the partrige and his mother vomits its feathers. Parents are indeed much attached to their children and they may even sacrifice their own interests for the benefit of children. Nevertheless, they do not always get a reward from all that they do for their children either because children may be ungrateful or simply because of some cultural constraints :this is expressed in the proverb: *Inzu y'umwâna irasusurutsa ntuyinjira*: (one's child's house may be warm but one cannot enter it).

This refers to the Burundian custom that prevents fathers from entering their married daughter's houses. This shows that culture may be a barrier between people and prevent one from doing something he would be enthusiastic to do .

To conclude this chapter, we have seen that there is a certain philosophy which regulates the family and which shares out the roles and responsibilities between men and women and which determines and differentiates men's rights and those of women. It is this philosophy of life that determines the societal rules or norms that allow people to get the message loaded in proverbs. That is what allowed us to understand proverbs we have sampled in our corpus.Otherwise, even in the

case of the perfect knowledge of rules of grammar and vocabulary , one cannot define words of proverbs by circumlocutions,that is, by a roundabout speech in the manner of dictionaries.It is all this that we must know first to make any attempt on proverbs' interpretation. In other words, Rundi proverbs are among the category of sentences whose understanding requires certain socio- cultural stereotypes rather than a mere linguistic knowledge of the Kirundi language.

Indeed, as these proverbs related to children are understood thanks to the knowledge of culture and symbols referring to children, they reflect the philosophy of Burundians, what they view as qualities and what they rather call defects. The patterns of behaviour are mainly linked to culture and children who comform to such patterns are called good children or well-bred children, and those who deviate from such norms are bad models.In these proverbs related to children, we find also a quasi absence of childbearing regulation or birth-rate regulation. This fact of finding a certain prestige in having many children helps to understand proverbs. We should also mention a certain difference of birth - rights between girls and boys, the latter being entitled by birth to certain privileges that the former do not have . The case of such advantages being the right to inherit the father's land but also to perpetuate the family's name . This is a mentality peculiar to the Burundian society and which may hamper an easy understanding of proverbs.

GENERAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

With this work, the main target we wanted to reach was to provide evidence for the necessity of sociocultural prerequisites to understand proverbs. This means that we had, on the basis of some Rundi proverbs related to the concept of family, to try to show the difference between the literal meaning of proverbs and their proverbial meaning or cultural meaning and then, give the conclusion which should be a response to our hypothesis .

To this end, we have organized our work in four chapters: The first chapter or introductory chapter states the problem and gives the hypothesis of our work which is mainly oriented to the idea according to which proverb understanding is not possible outside the culture with which the language is intertwined. In other words , we believe that proverbs are so linked with culture that the sole linguistic competence cannot help in their understanding . This has led us to define our aim of the study which we have given in the introductory chapter.

The second chapter, the chapter about the review of related literature , looks back on certain outstanding works which deal with proverbs. It gives a survey of the value of proverbs in communication by evaluating them in actual use. This chapter provides the reader with a criticism on researchers who studied proverbs : This is to view proverbs as something which can only be studied pragmatically, that is,during the interaction

between the speaker and the hearer, taking into account the setting .

These authors followed the approach of Cauvin (1981) following an immediate line, which is mainly about the relation between the speaker and the hearer. For us, it was rather the message between the situation and the tradition. In this chapter , we also provided the operational definitions of certain key terms without which our work would have been confusing and unsuccessful. The subject of chapter three, on the border between the review of related literature, on the one hand, and the data analysis on the other, is about the procedures we used to collect the data and the procedures to analyse it. It gives the volume of the corpus and shows how it is subdivided in different sections to make the task easy. The selection was based on the moral value they express. It also provides the method of analysis we used. Here, Cauvin's (1981) analysis approach has particularly shaped this chapter especially his two-sided approach to the meaning of a proverb, that is the denotative meanings and the connotative meanings.

The last chapter as the title suggests is the analysis of the forty proverbs related to the concept of family we had selected. What have we discovered then? Now that we have come to the end of our analysis, the main idea that must be kept in mind is that proverbs can only be understood within the culture and their references are to be seen in the tradition. In proverbs therefore, people communicate to others not only their

thoughts and ideas, but also the tradition. There must be a relationship between the speaker and the hearer but also between the situation of proverb use and the tradition.

Thanks to a clear knowledge of culture and society, we make an accurate perception of the message which is in proverbs. Indeed, when a person utters a proverb, he consciously or unconsciously connects the addressee to the tradition and the latter must first know what symbols and images contained in proverbs refer to. He then relates this symbolic meaning which he gets by relying on tradition to the present situation of use. This is where we need to have some insights of sociolinguistics. They help us to see how communication involving proverbs occurs between speakers thanks to the knowledge of society .

All along the analysis, we have seen that if one has no societal and cultural knowledge, one cannot get an accurate perception of the message carried by proverbs. Indeed, the hearer and the utterer of proverbs should both have the same sociocultural stimuli so as to get the meaning. Otherwise, one would be making a rush and superficial interpretation, and this is what is usually done because, looked at them superficially, proverbs seem to be easy to understand. The fundamental prejudice is that one thinks he has understood the meaning of a proverb yet it is but a surface meaning. Proverbs look like clear and this may bring people to get an impression that they lack in depth of the message. This is what we tried to show all

along this study, which led us to see the necessity of a genuine return back in the past for a better understanding of proverbs ; for proverbs are but a way of expressing thoughts and ideas, recreating past experiences and communicating them to others .

Our conclusion is that a linguistic knowledge by itself is far from being a guarantee to proverb understanding. Proverbs are surrounded by a certain respect that we owe to our forbears and which we inhereted from them. Indeed, proverbs bear age and continue after their users have died. About proverbs therefore, we can ask a lot of right questions but we cannot always provide simultaneously full or acceptable answers, unless we accept to take time and study them .

We cannot deny some shortcomings of our work. These may be increased by the fact that we purposefully made a short corpus, which would after all have made the results more reliable. The work would have been very long compared to the time we had at our disposal. We have to draw the reader's attention on what may reasonably be called shortcomings: it is due to our need to concentrate on a few aspects among many, so as to be thorough in our analysis .

We should also note that connotation itself is something confusing because it is a way in which meanings show instability. Other imperfections which may appear would be due to the lack of substantial literature related to proverbs in

the sociolinguistic field because many if not all the research studies carried out so far on Rundi proverbs were pragmatically oriented. This means that they were interested in proverbs in actual communication and on the basis of their practical effects on the audience. Some other works were intended to study the situations which prompt or incite people to utter a proverb. There are also other researchers who studied proverbs stylistically, that is, they concentrated their effort on styles and structures of proverbs but there are none or very few who studied Rundi proverbs socioculturally. This leads us to say that an accurate and full scientific study of proverbs must take into consideration every object and happenings in the universe, not only by the time they happen but also in the remote times, that is, which involve the tradition because proverbs outlive people, objects and situations which are the basis of their creation. However, those are indispensable for proverb understanding.

All those studies are necessary but not sufficient and this study is another minor but not less worth contribution to the complex study of proverbs. We should recall that an exhaustive study of proverbs would require a scientifically accurate knowledge of everything in the proverb user's world, which is not possible because, as we all know, the actual extent of human knowledge is very small compared to the reality carried by proverbs. Future researchers could investigate the sociocultural prerequisites to understand proverbs other than those related to the concept of family but with proverbs other

than those which make our corpus because, as we have seen in our analysis, each proverb requires its sociocultural prerequisites to understand it.

Another aspect which would interest the researcher is the psychological process which involves the transfer of images, analogies and symbols of proverbs in their sociocultural references to understand the actual situation of proverb use. Indeed, proverb usage is but a kind of translation of the traditional sociocultural content by the modern cultural content. It is a modern culture which we mold in the traditional culture and this involves some intricate manoeuvres or exercises of the mind to establish a correspondence between facts or messages seen in this or that situation and facts evoked by images, symbols and analogies of a proverb.

APPENDIX : The Corpus

1. Proverbs dealing with the family in general.

1. Uwusize inyama mu zîko akayisanganyo aba adafisé uwîwe.
   Among members of the same family, everything is a common property.
2. Umuryango uva ku muryângo.
   The extention of friends depends on the sociability in the household.
3. Uwukize akiza uwîwe.
   The improvement of life condition of one family member entails that of other members.
4. Ibisângiye imizi bisangira kwûma.
   Who have the same ancestor lead the same life.
5. Izisângiye urugo zisangira urunyago.
   Who have the same ancestor lead the same life.
6. Indahiro mbi irengesha umuryango.
   A whole family pays for the bad behaviour of one family member.
7. Uwanyu akwima amata ntakwîma amahere.
   A relative of yours refuses you milk and not scabies.
8. Uwutâzi iminsi yitigura incuti.
   He is careless he who rejects his relatives.
9. Nta wusukiranya amata n'amateke.
   A good association is made between individuals who are equal.
10. Uwutagira inka ntagira igabo.
    Self-sufficiency is one of the qualities of a man.

2. Proverbs dealing with the husband's behaviour

Proverbs with a positive conotation	Proverbs with a negative conotation
1. Nta nka zitagira impfîzi. An offspring comprising no boy is not an offspring at all.	6. Inkingi iryana ntiyegamirwa. A man with bad behaviour inspires no security.
2. Urugo rurimwo umugabo runywa amata. A family in which there is respectful man has everything.	7. Utongana n'îshiga ukarya bibisi. A man who illtreats his wife has no happiness at home
3. Incabwênge y'umugabo isiga imihora. An intelligent man tries to be kind with everyone.	8. Rwitera imanza yenze babiri. Polygamy is the cause of annoyance.
4. Urugo rutagira umugabo ntâkitarukengera. A man is the honor for the family	9. Akagabo karajije ukuguru hanze kitwa imburamutima. A married man who runs after other women is heartless
5. Ikobero ry'umugabo ryama ku jisho Bravery is an indispensable quality for a man	10. Umugabo gito agaya ubwo araje. A man of low morality criticises his wife simply because she is no longer young.

3. Proverbs dealing with the wife's behaviour in relation to the rest of the family.

Proverbs dealing with women's negative side and weakness.	Proverbs dealing with women's positive values.
1. Urugo rurimwo umugore runywa amazi. We can expect nothing precious in a family run by a wife.	8. Inkokokazi irapfa amagi akabora. Children's character strongly depends on their mothers
2. Umugore ntaganza urwârwa aba ashâka inzira ija i wabo. A wife has to stand in her lower position under the husband.	9. Aho umuvyêyi aguye hatorwa ingovyi. Mothers are always close to their children.
3. Nta jambo ry'umugoré. Wisdom is rarely expected from wifes.	10. Umugoré ni amashiga mu nzu. Work in the kitchen is a special duty required from women
4. Nta bucuti bw'umugoré. Women are unreliable.	
5. Umugoré musangira amata ntimusangira amâzi. (Same as in four).	
6. Inkono isha ukwo ishatse. We are not always able to change our wives' behaviour.	
7. Wabira ntumva ukavyara ntabarirwa. If one marries a stubborn wife, one breeds uncooperative children.	

4. Proverbs dealing with children in relation to the rest of the family.

1. Urugo rutavyaye umuhungu ntiruba ari urugo.
   A descandance comprising no boy is not a descendance at all.
2. Umugabo avyara abakobwa gusa ngo ndahonye.
   Boys perpetuate the name of the clan.
3. Imbuto ibutura amagara.
   A nice birth is that of a boy.
4. Aho abakobwa batari impfyisi zigabura amaboko.
   Boys cannot replace girls.
5. Ubutarondeye inaga burondera umwuko.
   Who does not take after his or her mother takes after his or her father.
6. Nta wumenya iyo amaratwa y'inyana akura arora.
   The character or personality of children is unpredictable.
7. Wenda nâbi ugata uvyara nabi ntûta.
   When one's wife misbehaves, divorce is possible but if one's children misbehave one is condemned to keep them.
8. Umugongo w'umuvyeyi ucumura wicaye.
   Parents pay for their children's mistakes.
9. Umwâna arya inkware nyina akayiruka amoya.
   (same as in 7).
10. Inzu y'umwâna irasusurutsa ntuyinjira.
    Despite the love that girls have towards their fathers, culure prevents the latter from entering their houses once they are married.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdoulaye, B.N. 1985. La Famille Walof. Paris: Karthala.

- Achebe, c. 1985. Things Fall Apart. London : Heinemou.

- Alleau, R. 1977. La Science des Symboles. Paris : Payot.

- Baregeranye, J.P. 1984. Markers of Power and Solidarity in Kirundi Current Usage, Bujumbura : University of Burundi.

- Benedict, R. 1960: The Growth of Culture. New York : Oxford University Press.

- Betty, P. 1970. Lineage and State Relations in Five Interlacustrine Bantu Societies. New-York: Oxford University Press.

- Cauvin, J. 1981. Comprendre les Proverbes. Paris: Saint-Paul.

- Crystal, D. 1987. The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language. Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

- Dalfova, A.T. 1984. Lögbara Proverbs. Amsterdam : Mouton.

- Ducrot, O. and Todorov, T. 1983. Dictionnaire Encylopedique des Sciences du Language. Paris : Seuil.

- Freud, S. 1951. Totem et Tabou : Interpétation par la Psychanalyse de la vie sociale des peuples primitifs. Paris: Payot.

- Fried, M.H. 1968. Readings in Anthropology, New York: T.Y. Crowell.

- Goodenough, W.H. 1964. Cultural Anthropology and Linguistics. London : Penguin.

- Gulliver, PH. 1955. The family helds. Westport Connectictut: Negro University.

- Hoebel, A. 1958. Man in the Primitive World : An Introduction to Anthropology. London: Mc Grow - Hill Book Company.

- Hymes, D. 1964. Towards Ethnographies of Communication : The Analysis of Communicative Events. London : Penguin.

- Kabugubugu, M. 1997. The Limits of Translatability of Language Specific and Culture-specifc Expressions. Bujumbura : University of Burundi.

- Keane, T. 1984. Nouveaux Actes Sémiotiques. Limoges : Pulim.

- Lado, R. 1974. Linguistics Across Cultures.
Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

- Leech, G.N. 1983. The Principles of Pragmatics.
London: Longman Group Limited.

- Levinson, C.S. 1983. Pragmatics.
London: Cambridge University Press.

- Levis-Strauss, C. 1960. Anthropologie Structurale.
Paris: Plon.

- Mair, L. 1965. An Introduction to Social Anthropology.
Oxford: the clarendon Press.

- Matrinich, A.P. 1960. The Philosophy of Language.
New York: Oxford University Press.

- Miller and Johnson-Laird, 1976. Language and Perception.
Massachussets : Havard University Press.

- Murekambaze, V. 1989. A Pragmatic Analysis of some Kirundi Proverbs. Bujumbura : University of Burundi.

- Nida, E. 1978. Coutumes et Cultures : La Côte aux Fées.
Neuchâtel et groupes des missionnaires.

- Nizigiyimâna, D. 1979. Le Personnage d'Igisîzimwe à Travers Quelques Contes de son Cycle. Bujumbura : Université du Burundi.

- Nkurikiye, S. 1991. The Pragmatic of Kirundi Marriage Discourse Speechs Acts and Discourse strategies. Muncie : Ball state University.

- Nsabimâna, J.M. 1991. Une Approche du Concept d'Umuryango et ses Différentes Acceptions à Travers des Proverbes Kirundi. Bujumbura : Université du Burundi.

- Ntabona, A. 1992. "La Famille Burundaise et ses Défis". Au coeur de l'Afrique, Bujumbura : Presse Lavigerie.

- Ntahokaja, J.B. 1978. Imigenzo y'Ikirundi. Bujumbura: Université du Burundi.

- Piddington, R. 1950. An Introduction to Social Anthropology. Edimburgh : Oliver and Boyd.

- Radcliffe - Brown, A. 1952. Structure and Function in Primitive Society. London : Broadway house.

- Recanati, F. 1987. Meaning and Force, the Pragmatics of Performative Utterances.
Cambridge : Cambridge University Press.

- Rodegem, F.M. et Bapfutwabo 1961. Proverbes Kirundi, Dictons Locutions Usités au Burundi. Belgique : Tervuren.

- Rodegem, F.M. 1973. Anthologie Rundi.
Paris: Colin.

- Rodegem, F.M. 1983. Parole de sagesse au Burundi.
Feeters: Leuven.

- Rodfield, R. 1960. How Human Society Operates.
New-York: Oxford University Press.

- Sakaganwa, J.P. 1987. Essai d'Interprétation Stylistico-Sémantique de Quelques Proverbes Kirundi.
Bujumbura : Université du Burundi.

- Segalen, V. 1977. Les Immémoriaux. Paris: Plon.

- Shapiro, H.L. 1960. Men, Culture and Society.
New York : Oxford University Press.

- Sindayikêngera, M. 1997. A Pragmatic Analysis of Some Kirundi Proverb Expressing Negative Wisdom.
Bujumbura: University of Burundi.

- Sohier, A. 1954. Traité Elémentaire de Droit Coutumier du Congo-Belge. Bruxelles: larcier.

- Tuzagi, H. 1985. La Conception Traditionnelle de la Mort à Travers Quelques Proverbes Kirundi. Bujumbura: Université du Burundi.

- Wholf, B.L. 1959. "Language, Mind and Reality" In Language Thaught and Reality. Selected Writing of Benjamin Lee Wholf. Cambridge : Technology of Mit.

- Zuure, B. 1932. L'âme du Murundi. Paris : Beauchesme.

Dictionaries and Encylopedia.

Britanica World Language dictionary 1959

Grand Dictionnaire Encyclopédique 1983 Tome 14

Grand Dictionnaire Encyclopédique 1985

Encyclopedia Britanica 1971

Dictionnaire Rundi-Français 1970

Dictionnaire des Citations du Monde Entier Sous la Direction de Florence Montreynard. (1989).