

GENDER IDEOLOGIES AND POWER RELATIONS IN EKEGUSII

PROVERBS

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DECLARATION

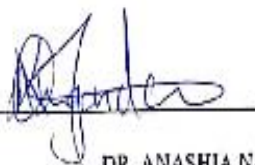
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This is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University or for any other award .

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DEDICATION

To my parents Daniel Ombongi and Rebecca Gesare: Your determination, enthusiasm, resilience and aspiration have been my inspiration. You gave me an impetus and spirit to advance, you poured everything you had into my education. You are the greatest, excellent and perfect father and mother in the world.

To my wife Edinah Bochari, your fountain of love and unmatched encouragement has been my pillar to the greatest performance throughout this study. You are the best and loving companion God ever granted me.

To my beloved daughter Blessing Angel Gesare, you kept my education dreams alive. Your warmth and understanding was overwhelmingly encouraging. This study will inspire you to become one of the greatest world scholar

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ABSTRACT

Language is the primary vehicle for transmitting cultural norms, values and ethos from one generation to another. The essentialisation and crystallization of the norms and conventions are recorded in a community's proverbs, totems and mores. Ekegusii proverbs reflect and transmit the community's accumulated wisdom since they are a manifestation of its values, which are generally accepted and ingrained from one generation to another. This study investigated the link between language, gender discourses and power ideologies in Ekegusii proverbs. The objectives of the study are to examine how language is used to construct gender identities in Ekegusii proverbs; analyze ekegusii proverbs that promote gender division; assess how power relations associated with gender are depicted in Ekegusii proverbs and to establish the effect of discourses of essentialism in Ekegusii proverbs on social order. The study espouses Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (1989; 1993; and 2001) and Van Dijk (2001). A descriptive research design has been used. Purposive sampling is used in the selection of 131 proverbs gendered proverbs from a target population of 1013 proverbs. The three-dimensional discourse framework was employed in the analysis and interpretation of data. Findings of the study reveals that gender identities are embedded in Ekegusii proverbs, sexist and obscene language which derogates womanhood is prevalent, misogynistic ideologies such as gender bias and discrimination, stereotypical gender roles and perceptions, objectification of women are evident in the proverbs. Patriarchal ideologies which enhance the dominative and protective forms of paternalism are highlighted. The study further reveals that linguistic features such as metaphors, syntactic structures and diction are used as means of enacting power and gender relations in the Abagusii community. The study concludes that gender ideologies and latent structures make a significant contribution to gender discrimination, especially when accepted as entirely legitimate and normal. The study recommends that gendered proverbs be consciously improved to portray gender neutrality, equality, and contemporariness. There is need for scholars to create contemporary proverbs that portray the honest and 'uncoloured' picture of women and their contribution to humanity. This study will be useful to various stakeholders charged with accelerating national efforts to achieve gender equity such as National Gender and Equality Commission, Education Centre for Women and Democracy, The Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development, and Civil Society Organisations, among others.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS.

Construction: The way men and women are represented in Ekegusii Proverbs. We construct meaning using representation systems, that is, concepts and signs

Conceptual metaphors: Linguistic item which represents a concept

Discourses: Conversations, talk, history of talk about idea(s) from one's particular place in society

Discursive practice: Contextual analysis that involves the situational context

Essentialism: The claim that males and females are inherently different, supports polarized genderism

Gender: socially constructed different roles and responsibilities, identities and expectations that society assigns to the two sexes; in this case Ekegusii society.

Gender discourses: talk about gender

Gender ideology: Set of beliefs that govern people's participation in the gender order

Hegemony: Location of power in everyday routine structures

Hegemonic Masculinity: Configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy

Ideology: Shared meanings about Gusii men and women, and about men and women in general, in Kenya, which are in the form of ideas and beliefs. The beliefs and ideas are embedded in language of Ekegusii proverbs and differentiate men and women.

Language: Gendered discourse or social practice (verbal and non verbal text and talk) in Ekegusii proverbs. In this sense, language is part of society and not external to it; it (language) signifies, constitutes and constructs of the word in meaning.

Masculinities: a set of characteristics and behaviours prescribed for Gusii men in Ekegusii proverbs which are transmitted from one generation to another

Power: the process of having the authority, resources and the ability to control and determine the living conditions of people based on their socio-cultural ideology. Power given to either men or women or the old by the Ekegusii culture.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an introduction to the study. It begins by giving the background to the study, followed by the statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions and research assumptions. Further, the rationale of the study and scope and delimits are provided.

1.1 Background of the Study

This research is an amalgamation of applied linguistics, linguistic anthropology, and sociolinguistics. In Gusii language, the community is referred to as Abagusii. The Gusii community is a Bantu group living in the Western part of Kenya. Guthrie (1970) groups the Abagusii under Bantu speaking family which is the largest single language group in Africa, making two-thirds of Africa's population. They are the subgroup of the Benue-Congo language family of the Niger-Congo branch of the Kordofanian language family and they share similarities with the Kuria (Abakuria) and the Maragoli. The factors that determine the grouping of the Gusii among the Bantu is their language and culture (Keragori, 1995). The Abagusii mainly occupy Kisii and Nyamira Counties and are bordered by the Kipsigis to the East, the Maasai to the South East and the Luo to the West.

The study focuses on Ekegusii proverbs as the text of study. In Ekegusii proverbs are called *emebayeno*. Ayioka (2014) observes that proverbs are part of the coded language of the Abagusii (*chimbachero, chiabagusii*). They are expressions of art that Abagusii use to preserve their values, identity and important historical realities. Moreover, proverbs among the Abagusii are mostly articulated by the elderly to reflect deep knowledge and experience (Okemwa, 2012). Thus, Proverbs and sayings in Ekegusii are used as part of oral tradition of Abagusii. Proverbs are used to express

wisdom of the Abagusii and are passed down from generation to generation to express different aspects and meaning contextually.

The interface between language, gender and power is an interdisciplinary field that has come to the forefront in applied linguistics, linguistic anthropology, gender studies, sociolinguistics and its related studies. Languages form how human beings articulate their ideas and communicate to one another and they are used to state the various forms of ideological expressions. Languages are also connected to our thoughts for it is the mirror through which we look at the world. Language is a mirror that reflects the past of a society and chronicles of history testify to this claim. As long as languages have existed the differentiation between males and females has always been present in them (Prewitt, Caswell & Laakso, 2012). Human beings are enigmas when it comes to the discourse of language use in relation to gender and power. Thus, discourse languages are manipulated to suit different ideological blocks. Language plays a key role in expressing ideological discourse like gender which gives human beings an expression of power.

The above view suggests that the interface between gender and power is about social attitudes. The society demands men and women to act and behave differently in the society; hence, setting different roles in the society and expecting them to fulfill those roles, which in due course of time may empower some and many would disapprove the same. Men and women are expected to be socially different, in that society provides different social roles for them and expect different behaviour patterns from them. Societal perceptive of these different roles and behaviour patterns expected from men and women, empowers some, while disempowering others.

Thus, in the study gender is conceived as a socio-cultural construct that divides people into various categories such as male and female with each having certain characteristics, behaviour or stereotypes which shows that gender is constructed by societal norms and roles. Power on the other hand is not something that can be owned, but rather something that acts in a certain way that is more of a strategy than a possession (Foucault, 1980). Power is therefore, exercised through a net like organization and in this case, individuals are vehicles of power, not its point of application. One way of enacting power is to control the context of a speech situation which involves language used and the people involved (gender). Language is used to construct gender in that we use language to highlight and carry what society expects from both genders.

Tyson (2006), asserts that if language is the ground of being, then the world is infinite text, which is, an infinite chain of signifiers always in play. He affirms that since human beings are constituted by language, they too are texts. Therefore, following a deconstructionist perspective language has implications for subjectivity, for what it means to be a human being. Beyond the world and humans as a “galaxy of texts” with unending meanings, language is equally an integral part of discourses of gender and power. Thus, the whole idea of maleness or femaleness, power or powerlessness is framed by language. Consequently, languages of the world distinguish gender and what varies is the degree of this distinction (Prewitt, Caswell, & Laakso, (2012). Point out that generally, languages of the world can be grouped to three broad categories: gendered, natural gender, and genderless languages. Gendered languages are marked by assigning their nouns a feminine or masculine as well as neuter. Example of languages in this category include; German, French and Hebrew. Natural languages on the other hand distinguish gender using pronouns such as he or she and most nouns

have no grammatical gender marking. Ekegusii, a Bantu language spoken in Kenya and classified as E42 by Guthrie (1967) belongs to this category. Genderless languages lack grammatical gender distinction in the nouns of their languages. Nonetheless, whether languages are gendered, natural gender or genderless does not necessarily translate to gender equity in the linguistic societies.

Languages reflect the culture and enhance the survival of the stereotypes within the societies of the speakers. In fact, language is the main means of gender stereotypes. Lakoff (2003) observes that English language has various words which describe women who are interested in power and this presupposes the inappropriateness of the attitude. The words include shrew, bitches among the more polite ones. There are no equivalents for men. On the other hand, men who fail to dominate their women are denoted as henpecked and pussy-whipped presupposing negative connotations. This then implies that gender stereotypes are embedded in language. Lewis and Lupyan (2020) observe that children begin to ingrain gender stereotypes in their culture by the age of two and that young children have strong gender stereotypes as do older adults.

Language, therefore, has power in shaping social stereotypes about gender. Gendered language can have effects on people's social judgments, decisions, and behavior (Martyna, 1980). Hence, there is need to rally behind change in language so as to curtail social inequalities. Linguists advocate for the change of gendered polarized language to neutral language. Norway as a country has reformed its languages to reflect a more genderless outlook (Gabriel and Gygax, 2008). In the context of language and gender relationships, proverbs acquire great significance because they mirror the traditional power relationships between genders. Meider (2008) define proverbs as précised and condensed sayings that are frequently used to express general truths or practical precepts. He and Zhang (2018) observe that proverbs are

literary gateways to language, thinking, culture, and mode of life and other social aspects of a particular nation. Proverbs are considered culture loaded (Kövecses, 2005). That is, they are pieces of language which have accumulated wisdom, distinct cultural implications and strong national characteristics. Moreover, culture is not only about traditions or beliefs; it tells us about the thinking and social practices of a society or a nation. Thus, proverbs are embedded in cultural concepts of a given group, region or nation. Proverbs have their origins in oral tradition and tend to change little from generation to generation.

The research examines how power relationships of different genders are determined through linguistic choices in proverbs in Ekegusii. Proverbs are chunks of a language and language is considered as a mirror to the nation (Edward et al. 2014). Consequently, language not only throws light on the nation's history and culture but also depicts its beliefs and values. Moreover, language is a pathway to social reality (Edward et al. 2014). On the whole, gender-related proverbs give us insight into the social reality of a particular gender in the culture of a nation.

The research aims to unearth the ideologies embedded in Ekegusii proverbs that promote gender polarization. Bem (1993) defines gender polarization as the 'subtle and insidious use' of the perceived difference between women and men 'as an organizing principle for the social life of the culture. Galbraith, (2007) observes that ideology is explicitly or implicitly expressed in language choice for there is no language that is ideologically empty. And those language users demonstrate gender and power relations in particular contexts in their language choices. Lomotey (2019) argues that gender ideologies such as misogynistic are inherent in proverbs and continue to be perpetuated although proverbs seem to be used less frequently.

Therefore, the research is set to explore the implicit language in proverbs that shed light on patterns in gender ideologies and stereotype norms in Abagusii culture.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Language is a powerful tool that carries the values, beliefs and traditions of a culture from one generation to the next. In Ekegusii culture, proverbs play a significant role in preserving and passing down wisdom and traditional values.

The use of masculine language gender discrimination and maintaining existing gender inequalities. This is because language has the power to shape people's perceptions and behaviours, influencing social judgments and decisions. In contrast, languages like English and French have consciously embraced gender neutrality, leading to more gender equality in those societies.

The research aims to explore how language, gender and power are intertwined in Ekegusii proverbs. It will focus on how men and women are portrayed in these proverbs, particularly in terms of physical, emotional, intellectual, and financial and leadership qualities. This research, therefore, seeks to uncover how these language choices contribute to gender imbalances and undesirable disparities in society.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate gender ideologies and power relations in the language of Ekegusii proverbs.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to;

- i. Examine how language is used to construct gender identities in Ekegusii proverbs.

- ii. Analyze Ekegusii proverbs that promote gender division
- iii. Assess how power relations associated with gender are depicted in Ekegusii proverbs.
- iv. Establish the effect of discourses of essentialism in Ekegusii proverbs on social order

1.5 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. How is language used to construct gender identities in Ekegusii proverbs?
- ii. How do Ekegusii proverbs used to promote gender division?
- iii. How is power relations associated with gender depicted in Ekegusii proverbs?
- iv. What are the effects of discourses of essentialism in Ekegusii proverbs on social order?

1.6 Research Assumptions

The study will be based on the following assumptions;

- i. Language in proverbs has power in shaping gender identities in the society.
- ii. Ekegusii proverbs can be used to promote gender division.
- iii. There exists relationships between language, gender and power and is depicted in proverbs.
- iv. Gender discourses have an impact on social order.

1.7 Justification and Significance of the Study

Reflection on language, gender and power is an interdisciplinary approach as it is an amalgamation of applied linguistics, linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, gender studies, education, linguistics and its related studies. The study revolved around the

link between these concepts and to find out what kind of relationship exists between these elements with close reference to language in Ekegusi proverbs. Proverbs are a reflection of lifestyle, ethical standards and socio-cultural norms of a particular locality or society. Moreover, the essentials and crystallization of a culture's norms and conventions are recorded through its proverbs and platitudes.

This research, therefore, has an empirical contribution to research on language, power, and gender as major concepts in society and academics. The study makes contributions to theoretical concepts in applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, gender studies, and discourse analysis. The findings from this study complement other studies in linguistics by advancing knowledge especially in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by showing how language as a form of social practice creates gendered ideologies, which in turn lead to the creation of social identities in Ekegusii proverbs. The study shows how language creates gendered identities and hence social inequalities in in society.

The findings of this research demonstrate the many ways in which language, gender and power in Ekegusii proverbs are connected. The connectedness of language, gender and power in Ekegusii proverbs is important to the stakeholders who are charged with accelerating national efforts to achieve gender equity such as National Gender and Equality Commission, Education Centre for Women and Democracy, The Collaborative Centre for Gender and Development, and Civil Society Organisations, among others (USAID, FIDA & NDI, 2013). Adesida (2007) argue that proverbs describe social norms on the basis of gender as they highlight power relations in society. Thus, by studying the proverbs of a particular language, one can easily understand how gender is presented in that language. Therefore, this study makes a contribution in showing how sociocultural norms and ideologies affect gender roles in

Ekegusii society. This may in turn form a basis for equal development of both men and women in the society.

Lakoff (1975) notes that oppressive language has been institutionalized in societies that promote male chauvinism. Such language puts men in superior positions and emphasizes the inferiority of women in discourses. The study intended to explore the contribution of proverbs from the Ekegusii language in the development of gender inequality and ambivalence in Ekegusi society. This research show how the Ekegusii proverbs are used to express power relations in language with a view of assessing the manner in which they are used to perpetuate and reinforce gender imbalance in society. A study on language, power, and gender in proverbs is likely to shed light on proverbs that reveal hegemonic masculinity in society. Various scholars show that language use generally marginalizes abuses or demeans women (Wodak, 1997; Tannen, 1994 and Wang, 2012). The findings of the research therefore, reveal information on some causes of gender inequality in the society which has implications on Millennium Goal Three of Gender equality that was later replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals of 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals of 2015 [SDGs] (UN, 2013), which replaced the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) also identify gender equity as a core development factor. The research therefore comes up with measures for curbing gender discrimination through use of gender neutral language.

The findings of this research have implication on how language is used in education domain. Children exposed to gendered proverbs may grow up as perpetrators of issues of inequality since education is a lifelong experience. This study is also a point of departure for exploring more gender issues at different levels of language education

(e.g., schools, universities, and virtually-mediated education spaces) in the pursuit of gender responsiveness.

1.9. Scope of the study

The study meticulously examines how language is utilized to convey different forms of ideological beliefs within Ekegusii proverbs. By analyzing the ideologies embedded in these proverbs, the research aims to shed light on how these features are rooted in specific ideological frameworks. Furthermore, the investigation will extend to exploring the power dynamics existing between gender as well as how gender discourses shape social hierarchies.

Overall, this study holds significant importance in the field of Applied Linguistics, as it seeks to unravel the complex interplay between language, power structures and gender dynamics, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of the societal norms and values reflected in Ekegusii proverbs.

The Researcher was using existing data, (secondary data). It took three months to gather and organize the proverbs based on their goals and objectives. After that, it took an additional nine months to analyse and interpret the proverbs. This means the researcher spent twelve months working on understanding the meaning and significance of the proverbs.

1.9 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter has presented a background to the study. It has also presented the statement of the problem, the research objectives, research questions and assumptions. The chapter also presented the justifications well as its scope and delimits. The next chapter presents the literature review and the theoretical framework that guided the study.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL
FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents a review of related literature, which lays the foundation for this research, as well as the theoretical framework for the study. The chapter reviews available theoretical and empirical literature on language, gender, power and ideology. This chapter first presents the literature review and then discusses the theoretical framework. Section 2.1 begins by presenting literature on language and gender. It provides a brief overview on language and gender. Section 2.2 provides review on language and power. Section 2.3 is on the interface between language, power and ideology. This section is then followed by section 2.4 that focuses on language, gender and social equality. Section 2.5 reviews literature on studies on gender, power and Section 2.6 deals with studies on Ekegusii Proverbs that shows hence showing the gap that the proposed study is set to fill. Section 2.7 deals with the theoretical basis for the study. The section focuses on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as propelled by Fairclough (1989, 1993, 2001, and 2010). Section 2.8 finally provides a summary of chapter 2.

2.1 Language and Gender

This involves how language is used according to gender. This includes the words and phrases, the tone and body language. Studying language and gender can help in understanding how communication styles vary between genders and how these differences can impact relationships and interactions in the society.

Foley (2006) in his book, "Anthropological Linguistics: An introduction," observed that the connection between language and gender is not 'natural' but culturally constructed. This is so because societies associate certain forms of language for the

different gender. From his research, the researcher in this study is able to analyse how Ekegusii proverbs are used in specific forms of language that are often linked to different genders. The current study also analyses how certain words and phrases that may be considered more masculine or feminine and how the language is used to reflect gender norms. This may include things like using different tones of voice, word choices or even non verbal communication styles.

Lakoff (1975) in his book, "*Language and Women's Place*" in the topic "*Women and Language*" says that women employ a distinct style of speech, which comprises linguistic features that demonstrate and reinforce women's inferior position in society. Lakoff's study on gendered language, focuses particularly on the 'linguistic discrimination' experienced by women in society. Lakoff (1975) divides this discrimination into two overall types: 'the way they [women] are taught to use language' and 'the way general language use treats them', both of which function to degrade the woman to a submissive position in society: 'that of sex object, or servant'. Thus, Lakoff (1975) perceives gendered language as an expression of the unequal roles of men and women in society. Through introspection of her own and her acquaintances' speech, Lakoff (1975) identifies nine linguistic features that comprise a style of language which she labels 'women's language', as this style dominates the language of most women. Examples of these features are hedges, empty adjectives, intensifiers, and tag questions, all of which are problematized as they contribute to the oppression of the 'woman's personal identity, by denying her the means of expressing herself strongly'.

Lakoff further says that these inequities have great consequences for women's influence in society, as 'women are systematically denied access to power, on the grounds that they are not capable of holding it as demonstrated by their linguistic

behavior along with other aspects of their behavior. Lakoff's study provides insights in the study of language, gender and power. While Lakoff's study focused on women's language in conversations the current study examines how the Abagusii use their language through proverbs to propagate gender disparities and also to analyze whether their form of speech has anything to do with gender. His data collection method was mainly introspection and observations while the current study was a textual analysis of proverbs. Therefore, through Lakoff's study, the researcher in this work is able to analyse the Ekegusii proverbs to provide valuable insights into the relationship between language, gender and power dynamics.

Holmes (1984) in his book. *"Hedging your bets and sitting on the fence: Some evidence for hedges as support structures"*, presents a much broader understanding of the functions of tags. Holmes study reveals that 'all tag questions function as devices for eliciting a response from the addressee by virtue of their interrogative form'. Thus, tag questions are not necessarily expressions of insecurity or uncertainty. Holmes data analysis consisted of a speech corpus consisting of 43,000 words. The findings of the study revealed that tags are mainly used to express primarily one of two overall meanings: modal or affective meaning. Thus, tags that carry modal meaning are 'speaker-oriented', as they mark '[the] speaker's degree of certainty about [a] proposition: e.g. requesting reassurance, confirmation, agreement, etc. Both Lakoff's and Holmes study reveal that women use more tag questions than men, although the difference is not very pronounced. Holmes study focused on the use of tag questions by men and women while the current study focused on proverbs. Moreover, Holmes' method was mainly a corpus analysis that contained actual utterances that are bound to a certain context while the current research mainly used an analytical method of textual analysis of proverbs. Among the Abagusii, male and female wear different

cultural hence linguistic worlds. His argument helps the researcher in this work to analyse if these differences in language contribute to gender stereotypes, and if these stereotypes are passed down through generations in proverbs.

Mohammed A(2020)'s Journal on, "*Language and Gender*", topic of "*Differences in men's and women's speech*" the study highlights how language has been utilized as a tool for female oppression by males, shedding light on the intricate dynamics of gender relations. It is evident that language not only mirrors a patriarchal system but also reinforces the notion of male supremacy over women. Through Mohammed's insightful work, the researcher gains a deeper understanding of how the Kisii males employ Ekegusii proverbs to subjugate females. To further elucidate, consider the use of specific linguistic devices that perpetuate gender inequality. For instance, the prevalence of gender-specific vocabulary or the way in which certain speech patterns are associated with either men or women can be seen as mechanisms that uphold traditional gender roles. Additionally, in examining the historical context in which certain languages developed can provide valuable insights into the origins of gendered language norms. Furthermore, exploring the power dynamics inherent in language use can uncover how linguistic structures can either empower or disempower individuals based on their gender. By analyzing real-life examples of how language is wielded in everyday interactions, this research unveils the subtle ways in which gender biases are reinforced through communication. Therefore, Mohammed (2020)'s research serves as a crucial contribution to the field of linguistics by shedding light on the different ways in which language influences gender dynamics. By examining the relationship between language and gender, the research finds ways of creating a more inclusive and equitable society where language is not used as a tool of oppression, but rather as a means of empowerment and understanding.

Shalini Yadav (2015)'s Journal on "*Gendered 'Dominance' and 'Difference' in Interactional Sociolinguistics*", topic of, "*Face-to-Face Gendered Discourse*", this study highlights the differences in interactional styles between male and female speakers, showcasing how these variations contribute to the dynamics of communication. While the distinctions may not be overtly pronounced, they certainly exist to a certain extent. For instance, male speakers often exhibit a more assertive and direct communication style, while female speakers tend to employ an indirect approach. These differences in communication styles can influence the power dynamics within a conversation, with male speakers sometimes asserting dominance through their speech patterns. Shalini's research sheds light on how these subtle differences in interactional styles can manifest in various linguistic contexts. By analyzing the role of proverbs in Ekegusii, the study provides valuable insights into how different interactional styles contribute to male dominance in the language. Through a careful examination of gendered discourse, Shalini's work offers a comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in communication patterns between men and women.

Rothermund and Strack (2024) journal on, "*Male Dominance in Language*", in the topic, "*Generic Masculine Form*", highlights that simply reminding individuals about this bias may not be sufficient to overcome it. They find that contextual information play a crucial role in shaping how the grammatically masculine form is interpreted. For instance, in Ekegusii proverbs, the way in which masculine terms are used can influence the perception of gender bias. By delving into Ekegusii proverbs, the researchers aims to understand how male bias is influenced by the context in which it is presented. This research sheds light on the complexities of language and how subtle cues can perpetuate gender stereotypes. For example, the choice of words in a proverb

can either reinforce or challenge traditional gender roles within a community. Moreover, the study emphasizes the importance of considering the broader socio-cultural context in discussions about language and gender. By examining how language reflects and shapes societal norms, researchers can develop strategies to promote more inclusive and gender-neutral communication. This research contributes to ongoing conversations about gender equality and the power dynamics embedded in language use. Ultimately, it underscores the need for conscious efforts to overcome the male dominance of the generic masculine and create a more equitable linguistic environment.

Gramera (2019) Journal on, "*Language, Gender, and Power*", in the topic, "*The Dominance and Differences*", argues that societal perspectives play a significant role in shaping the behavior patterns expected from men and women. These societal norms can either empower certain individuals or disempower others based on their gender. For instance, in many cultures, men are often encouraged to exhibit qualities like strength, assertiveness, and leadership, while women are expected to be nurturing, caring, and submissive. This dichotomy in expectations can lead to inequalities and reinforce gender stereotypes. Building on Gramera's work, it becomes evident how language, particularly in proverbs, is used by communities to reinforce and perpetuate these gender norms. For example, proverbs like "Boys will be boys" normalize and excuse male behavior that may be aggressive or disrespectful, while phrases like "Sugar and spice and everything nice" suggest that girls should embody sweetness and passivity. These linguistic expressions not only reflect societal attitudes towards gender but also shape how individuals perceive themselves and others. By examining how language is utilized in proverbs, this study uncovers the subtle ways in which masculinity is valued and femininity is devalued. This analysis highlights the

importance of challenging traditional gender roles and promoting equality in language use to create a more inclusive and empowering society.

Lihong Gu (2013) journal on, "*Language and Gender: Differences and Similarities*", in the topic, "*Differences between languages of both genders*," focuses on exploring the distinctions between the languages used by males and females. He argues that gender differences in language extend beyond mere speech patterns; they also serve as reflections of the distinct lifestyles and attitudes of men and women. For example, in many cultures, men tend to use more assertive language, while women may employ more nurturing and empathetic words. Moreover, the differences in language between genders can be observed not only in verbal communication but also in written texts, body language, and even non-verbal cues. This nuanced understanding sheds light on how language is intertwined with societal norms and expectations regarding masculinity and femininity. For instance, studies have shown that women often use language to build rapport and establish connections, while men may use language to assert dominance or authority.

By recognizing and analyzing these linguistic features, the researcher in this work gains valuable insights into the different ways in which language shapes and reflects gender dynamics in society. Understanding these differences can lead to more effective communication strategies that take into account the diverse linguistic styles of both men and women. In essence, language and gender are deeply intertwined aspects of human communication that merit further exploration and study.

DONG Jinyu (2014) in the article titled "*Study on Gender Differences in Language*" the topic of "*Social Root of Language Gender Differences*" by arguing that gender disparities in language are not mere coincidences, but rather deeply rooted in social

constructs. These differences serve as fundamental aspects of social life and human interactions, shedding light on the historical origins of language variations between men and women. It is evident that societal norms and expectations shape the linguistic behaviors of individuals based on their gender roles and status. For instance, men and women may use language differently to assert their authority or express emotions. Drawing from Dong's research, it becomes apparent how cultural elements, such as Ekegusii proverbs, are utilized to establish and reinforce social hierarchies by emphasizing the superiority of males. Through the analysis of such proverbs, this study observes the different ways in which language is intertwined with power dynamics and societal structures. By examining how specific phrases or expressions are employed within a cultural context, the researcher is able gain valuable insights into the underlying mechanisms that perpetuate gender distinctions in language use. Therefore, the study conducted by Dong sheds light on the relationship between language, gender, and society, highlighting the different ways in which linguistic differences reflect and perpetuate broader social inequalities. By exploring these dynamics in depth, the researcher is able to unearth the multifaceted nature of gendered language patterns and their implications for social dynamics and power relations. This exploration serves as a valuable contribution to the ongoing discourse surrounding gender studies and language analysis, offering fresh perspectives on the complex interplay between language, culture, and identity.

Pakzadian and Koo (2018)'s journal on, "*The role of gender in conversational dominance,*" in the topic, "*Gender in Conversation*", argue that, Communication situations are loaded with "gender role" that is manifest in all manners of language use and cultural manifestations and practice. All these social and interactive instances are variously called upon, directly or indirectly to capture and present discourse on the

gender structure. Gender, therefore, turns out to be embedded in all institutions, actions, beliefs and desires that go along with the mapping of language use through communication, interaction and establishment of the social order. In this study, the researcher analyzes how patriarchy is enhanced through Ekegusii proverbs. When we delve into the complexities of gender in conversational dominance, this study finds out that it extends far beyond mere words exchanged. Gender roles dictate not only the language we use but also the subtle expression in our interactions. For example, in many cultures, men are expected to take the lead in conversations, often dominating the discourse while women are encouraged to be more passive listeners. This dynamic is deeply ingrained in societal norms and can be observed in various settings, from casual gatherings to formal meetings. Moreover, the influence of gender is not limited to verbal communication alone. It permeates through non-verbal cues, body language, and even the choice of words we use. For instance, studies have shown that women tend to use more inclusive language, while men may use more assertive and commanding phrases. These patterns reflect the underlying gender roles that have been shaped by societal expectations and historical contexts. In the realm of Ekegusii proverbs, the researcher sheds light on how patriarchal values are reinforced through traditional sayings. These proverbs often carry deep-rooted meanings that reflect and perpetuate gender stereotypes. By examining the language and themes present in these proverbs, the researcher gains valuable insights into how gender dynamics are subtly reinforced and maintained within the cultural fabric. Gender in conversation goes beyond the surface level of words spoken; it encompasses a complex interplay of societal expectations, cultural norms, and historical influences. In looking into the details of language use and communication patterns, the study uncovers the underlying gender structures that shape our interactions and relationships. Through

studies conducted by Pakzadian and Koo the researcher is able to unravel the layers of gender dynamics embedded in our everyday conversations and strive towards a more inclusive and equitable society.

Hartmann (2004) in his book, *“Women Language: flowery tentative & ‘qualified’”* studied the language of women and claimed to have located some of its euphemistic qualities. She describes their language as ‘flowery’, ‘tentative’, and ‘qualified’ and therefore a lesser or deficient form. Interruption is a mechanism by which males can prevent females from talking and they can gain the floor for themselves. This contributes to the contraction and maintenance of male supremacy. However, this study shifts gender ideologies and power dynamics within Ekegusii proverbs. This examination sheds light on how linguistic practices contribute to the reinforcement of male supremacy.

Rothermund and Fritz (2024) ‘s Journal on, *“Overcoming the Male Dominance of the Generic Masculine,”* they argue that male bias is closely linked to how the masculine form is interpreted based on the presence or absence of the feminine form. This implies that the gender representations within language are subject to adjustment based on contextual cues. For example, in languages where there is a clear distinction between masculine and feminine forms, the choice of words can significantly impact the perceived gender dominance. Ekegusii proverbs are deeply rooted in the cultural fabric of the community, often reflecting traditional gender roles and societal norms. By examining how these proverbs are structured and the gender connotations embedded within them, the researcher gains insights into how language perpetuates or challenges male dominance. Rothermund and Fritz's work opens up a broader discussion on the power dynamics inherent in language use. The way in which people communicate, the words they choose, and the meanings they convey, all contribute to

shaping societal perceptions and reinforcing or dismantling gender stereotypes. By exploring these expressions within different linguistic contexts, it helps to build a more inclusive and equitable language environment that recognizes and respects diverse gender identities.

Lakoff (2007), her book, *“Language and Women’s Place,”* on the topic on *“Female Register,”* emphasizes that the female register relies essentially on the idea that there are sex-exclusive markers (linguistic features that are used by only one sex) rather than sex-preferential markers (features used more frequently by one sex than by the other). For instance, adjectives of approval such as lovely, gorgeous, divine are used exclusively by women, but great, terrific, neat and so on are used by both sexes, then it is not unreasonable to see the situation in terms of an opposition between female and neutral discourses. Moreover, this study delves into intricate relationship between gender ideologies and power relations in Ekegusii proverbs. By examining the language used in these proverbs, this research uncovers deeper insights into how gender is constructed and maintained within a specific context. Through a careful analysis of the linguistic choices and underlying meaning, this research will gain a better understanding of how language shapes and reflects attitudes towards gender.

Anna & Emma (2019)’s journal article on, *“Sex Roles”*, in the topic, *“Male Bias in Language,”* argue that a male bias in language is characterized by the implicit assumption that an unspecified individual is male. This bias can manifest through the use of words or inflections that explicitly reference men or masculinity. However, what is particularly interesting is that this association can also be present without any linguistic cues, reflecting a broader androcentric worldview. To further illustrate this concept, consider the common use of terms like "mankind" or "manpower," which inherently suggest a male-centric perspective. These linguistic choices subtly

reinforce the idea that men and masculinity are the norm, while women and femininity are often relegated to the periphery. This tendency, known as androcentrism, not only influences language but also shapes societal perceptions and behaviors. By acknowledging and addressing male bias in language, the society can strive towards a more inclusive and equitable society. It is essential to be mindful of the words we use and the implications they carry, as language plays a powerful role in shaping our understanding of the world. Moving forward, promoting linguistic diversity and sensitivity can help challenge traditional gender norms and create a more balanced representation of all individuals, regardless of gender.

Wodak (2010) in his publication “Critical Discourse Analysis; *Overview, challenges and perspectives :Pragmatics of society*” on the topic, “Gender Roles” she argues that gender is “not a pool of attributes ‘possessed’ by a person, but... something a person does... and varies between different racialized ethnic and religious groups as well as for members of different social classes. By studying these proverbs, the researcher gains insight into how gender is understood and communicated within the Gusii community. It provides a unique perspective on the relationship between language, culture and gender roles.

In his publication, Thorne (1993) on the topic, “*Gender and Women’s Studies*,” argues that the term gender “does not refer to grammatical gender (the system to be found in some language of organizing certain word class into contrasting categories of masculine, feminine, neuter) but referred to social categories based on sex but encompasses behaviour, roles and images that, although not biologically determined are regarded by society as appropriate to its male and female aged between (41-60 Years) members. Gender is distinguished from sex in that sex is referred to as a biological component of male and female, whereas, gender component what is

socially learned and acquired. By studying language and gender, it becomes evident how language can both reflect and perpetuate gender norms and stereotypes. By examining the language used in Ekegusii proverbs, the researcher is able to uncover underlying gender biases and assumptions that have been ingrained in cultural discourse over time. This further emphasizes the complex interplay between language and gender.

Goodman (2013) publication on "*Literature and Gender*" under the topic "Social Constructions" maintains that gender refers to ways of seeing and representing people and situations based on sex differences" while sex "is a biological category: female and male. Basing on the above opinions while sex is mainly a biological configuration, gender is a social construction of people. However, in the Ekegusii proverbs, the study delves into how language reflects and perpetuates gender norms and stereotypes. For example, some proverbs may reinforce traditional gender roles or highlight disparities between male and female. By exploring language and gender in Ekegusii proverbs, the researcher is able to gain insights how societal beliefs and values are transmitted through language. This analysis also sheds light on how power relations are portrayed in shaping gender identities and expectations within the specific context.

Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, (2013) publication on "*Language and Gender*" on the topic "*Gendered discourses*", considers gender to be a system of meaning, a way of construing notions of male and female, and language is the primary means through which we maintain meanings, and construct new ones. Therefore, social groups are constituted within discursive practices. By studying and examining how Ekegusii proverbs are used to reinforce stereotypes about gender. These proverbs shape the beliefs of the Gusii community on what means to be a male or female. The researcher

is also able to gain insight into how language can influence our understanding of gender identities.

Holmes (2014) on his publication on “*Women’s talk*”, he argues that that women and men develop different language use patterns, that women tend to focus on the affective functions of an interaction more often than men, women tend to use linguistic devices that stress solidarity more often than men, women tend to interact in ways that will maintain and increase solidarity, while (especially in formal contexts) men tend to interact in ways that will maintain and increase their power and status, and, are stylistically more flexible than men. For instance, men seem less linguistically influenced by others. Through Holmes argument, this research looks how language and gender dynamics play out within the cultural and linguistic framework of Ekegusii proverbs, shedding light on the unique insights that may emerge from this exploration. Ultimately, the examination of language and gender interactions offers a rich tapestry of insights into societal norms, power relations and communication styles that warrant continued exploration and analysis

Tannen (2015)’s publication on “*Gender and Discourse* “ on the topic, “*Social Interactions among Male and Female*” reveals that men look at conversation as making negotiations while women tend to communicate to connect with other people, finding common grounds, build connection and intimacy. Moreover, women in the office lack confidence as shown in giving of orders and male and female have a different way of giving orders. From Tannen’s work, this research explores how cultural and linguistic factors influence the ways in which gender is expressed and perceived in Gusii community. By examining the usage of language in Ekegusii proverbs, the researcher can gain insight into the complex interplay between gender, communication and cultural identity. This comparative analysis offers a fresh

perspective on the relationship between language and gender, complementing Tannen's seminal work and enriching an understanding of how communication practices shape social interactions

Davies (2018) in his publication on "*Discourse and Society*" on the topic, "Expressions of gender", defines gender as the society's expectations about how men and women should think, act and relate as girls and boys, and women and men. He further observes that gender is usually contrasted with sex which is biological. Sex includes the genetic makeup, hormones, and body parts, especially the sex and reproductive organs. Men like to project an image of themselves as tough and masculine, and see nonstandard language and profanity as showing these traits. Taking a closer look at the language used in Ekegusii proverbs, the researcher is able to draw parallels to Davies' (2018) observations on gender expressions. Ekegusii proverbs, like many linguistic expressions, reflect societal norms and values related to gender. By examining these proverbs through the lens of gender discourse, the researcher is able to uncover deep insights into how gender identities are constructed and reinforced through language

Wardhaugh (2021), in his book, "*An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*" the topic, "*Sexist Language*", observes that society has a hierarchical set of power relations in which language behaviour reflects male social dominance. Yet another is that male and female have learned to act in certain ways and follow different rules of language use. Through, Wardhaugh's argument, it is evident that language plays a crucial role in shaping gender identities and reinforcing societal expectations. By exploring language and gender in Ekegusii proverbs, the researcher is able to gain insight into the intricate ways in which language can both reflect and perpetuate gender

biases. This analysis underscores the importance of critically examining language use and its implications for gender equality.

Mose (2022)'s Journal article on, "*Gender Prejudices in Ekegusii Language*", in the topic of "*Roles and Stereotypical Constructions in Ekegusii Proverbs or Wise Sayings*", sheds light on the societal expectations imposed on men and women within the Gusii community. The study uncovers a stark contrast in the prescribed behaviors for individuals based on their gender, as dictated by entrenched stereotypes. For instance, women are often depicted in Ekegusii proverbs with negative connotations, portraying them as subservient and inferior to men. This perpetuates a patriarchal system that elevates men while suppressing women, reinforcing gender biases and inequality. By examining Ekegusii proverbs or wise sayings, Mose's study reveals how language can be a powerful tool in shaping perceptions and reinforcing societal norms. An example of this is seen in proverbs that glorify men's roles as leaders and decision-makers, while portraying women as passive and obedient. These linguistic constructs not only reflect existing gender prejudices but also perpetuate them, creating barriers to gender equality and inclusivity within the community. Mose's study underscores the importance of addressing gender biases embedded in language to foster a more inclusive society. By challenging and redefining the gender stereotypes present in Ekegusii proverbs, there is an opportunity to promote gender equality and empower women to break free from traditional roles. This study serves as a valuable resource for this research, seeking to advocate for language that promotes diversity and respect for all individuals, regardless of gender. In essence, language can be a powerful tool for social change, paving the way for a more equitable and inclusive community for all.

2.2 Language and power

In the field of Applied Linguistics, the concept of power can be understood in a few different ways. One aspect of power in Applied Linguistics is how language can be used to exert control or influence over others. Linguistics is the study of language and how it works, so when we talk about power from a linguistic perspective, the researcher looks at how people use language to assert authority, manipulate others or persuade them to do something. Power can be expressed or exerted in various situations. It can come in many forms such as physical strength, authority, influence or control over resources. For example, a government leader may have power through their authority to make decisions that affect the whole country, while a professional athlete may have power through their physical abilities on the field. Understanding the different forms of power can help the researcher navigate relationships, organizations in the GUSII community.

Another aspect of power in Applied Linguistics is how language can be used to shape social structures and hierarchies. For instance, certain dialects or languages may be seen as more prestigious or powerful than others, leading to inequalities in society. On the other hand, power can also be understood as a physical strength or the ability to control resources or make decisions. For example, a country with strong military has power in the international arena. Overall, the concept of power is complex and can be understood in various ways depending on the context. In Applied Linguistics, power often relates to how language is used to influence or control others, but power can also be seen in other dimensions such as physical strength or control over resources.

Various scholars agree that power is demonstrated through language. For instance, Lakoff (1975) in his publication "*Language and Women's Place*", in the topic "The Dominance Approach" posits that there exists a relationship between language, gender

and power. Lakoff argued that women speak differently from men and that, women's language or way of speaking express powerlessness. This assertion is based on the view that women's language is associated with greater politeness that renders their language the "language of powerlessness". Lakoff supports her ideas when she proposes the dominance approach. The dominance approach is the view that men and women inhabit the same cultural and linguistic world, in which power and status are distributed unequally, and are expressed by linguistic as well as other cultural markers. Thus, as much as women and men have access to the same set of linguistic and conversational devices and use them for the same purposes the apparent differences are in usage and reflect differences in status and in goals.

Analysis related with dominance framework usually argue that differences between women and men's speech arise because of male dominance over women and persist in order to keep women subordinated to men. Lakoff observes that men are naturally more dominant than women mainly through speech patterns or behaviour towards or around women. Women on the other hand act less dominant around men, in that, women use tag questions more than men not only for politeness but uncertain whether they are correct and needed a male opinion to ascertain their view points. This kind of difference in style of speech between the two sexes results from male supremacy and possibly an effect of patriarchy. Brown and Levinson (2019) in their publication, *Politeness: Some Universals in Language Usage* states that the level of politeness is expected from 'inferiors to superiors' this rendered women speech as inferior. Moreover, Lakoff observes that women's speech is often "tentative, powerless, and trivial" which implies that language itself is a tool of oppression. She asserted that women's way of speaking reflects and produce a subordinate position in society. According to her, women's language is rife, with devices as mitigators (example; sort

of, I think) and unessential qualifiers (really happy, so beautiful). The concept of dominance is key to this study especially in the analysis of power retains in Ekegusii proverbs where traditional gender roles and expectations are reflected and reinforced. The research will further help in getting the complexities of gendered communication patterns and the impact of societal power structures on language use.

Cameron, McAlinden & O’Leary (1988) in their publication, “*The social and linguistic functions of tag questions*”. In the topic, “*Women in their speech communities*,” contribute to the discussion of the relationship between tentative language and status/power in their study of tag questions. The study was inspired by the fact that different linguistic fields hold conflicting understandings of the functions of tag questions. In sex-difference research the tag question is seen as ‘a marker of tentative or “powerless” language’, while discourse studies see the tag as ‘a marker of power and control in talk’, because it forces the addressee to ‘produce an answer...or to be accountable for its absence’. The data of the study consisted of nine hours of unscripted talk from three different broadcast settings, as for instance classroom and courtroom settings. Tags in this material were collected and categorized according to Holmes’ functional framework and then broken down by the two variables in question – gender and power. The findings of the study revealed that men scored higher on modal tags, and women scored higher on affective tags. Interestingly, results also showed a significant difference between the tags uttered by ‘powerless’ and by ‘powerful’ participants: ‘no powerless person of either sex use[d] either facilitative or softening tags in any of the three settings’, only ‘powerful’ speakers used these (89). Yet, when it comes to modal tags ‘powerless’ speakers scored higher (two to one). Their study reveals the aspect of power in question tags and helps the researcher in the current study in focusing on power relations in proverbs and shed light on the

prevalence of modal tags among “powerless” speakers, surpassing those powerful speakers by the ratio of two to one. This exploration underscores the nuanced dynamics of power embedded within tags. Nevertheless, the study transitions to a different scope as it shifts its focus towards power relations in Ekegusii proverbs, presenting a fresh perspective on the intricate interplay of language and power

Reid and Ng (2002) on the study, “*Language and Power*”, in the topic, “*Situational Social Discourse*”, argue that language can reflect, create, hide, and legitimize power. They acknowledge that language reflects and reproduces the power and status of social groups and is specific to the context of discourse. Language is also able to create power and usher dynamic change into situational social discourse. Their study suggests that the initial use of low-power linguistic strategies can be used in specific contexts to enhance and equalize the power dynamics of discourse. The researchers maintain that in social discourse, conversants tend to expect certain language forms from particular social positions and will thus react accordingly. Their empirical studies suggest that by using the discourse style most typically associated with their social roles, powerless speakers can create conversational power situations. Their argument helps the researcher to provide the analysis on how language is used strategically to influence power relations. This analysis extends to diverse contexts such as the examination of language and power relations in Ekegusii proverbs. By recognizing the power embedded in language, individuals can become more adept at navigating and reshaping power dynamics in various social contexts.

The connection between gender status and language results to male’s dominance in almost all aspects of life (Robinson, Frost, Buccigrossi and Pfeffer (2003), the ways men use their discourse styles are based on “speaking with authority”. Moreover, the

authoritative qualities in language used by men indicate a higher degree of power language usage among them compared to women. Moreover, the research on language and power extends to the realm of cultural expressions in Ekegusii. These proverbs offers a unique insight into how language reflects and shapes power dynamics within Gusii community. By analyzing the language used in proverbs, the researcher uncovers underlying beliefs and values that contribute to the construction of gender roles and societal norms

Nemeti and Bayer (2007) in their publication, "*Gender differences in the use of linguistic forms in the speech of men and women applied the dominance theory,*" in the topic, "*Usage of Power Language*" argue that men and women are living in a world that has unequal distribution of power and status; whereby more focus of power is put upon male dominance and gender division in analysis. The study reveals that men are mainly associated with authority and leadership; thus, indicating the expectations of the society in regarding men as the leader. Therefore, in interpreting these expectations into their language use; the usage of power language is expected to be higher in serving their role to lead in the society. This study provides insights in analysis of power relations in proverbs. By analyzing power relations in Ekegusii proverbs, the researcher is able to uncover subtle nuances and implicit messages that reinforce gender stereotypes and hierarchies. Proverbs, often encapsulate societal norms and values, making them a rich a source of information for studying power dynamics. Through a careful examination of language use in proverbs, the researcher is able to better understand how power is constructed, maintained and challenged within different cultural contexts.

Thorne and Henley (2007) in their publication, "*Languages, Sex Difference and Dominance*" in the topic, "*Language Differences Between Males and Females*" argue

that male dominance has powerfully shaped the meaning of words referring to both sexes, thus: Words associated with males more often have positive connotations, they convey notion of power and leadership. In contrast, female words are more often negative, conveying weakness, inferiority, immaturity, a sense of trivial. Feminist writers have also identified male dominance as the chief cause of language differences between males and females. Through Thorne and Henley's publication researcher is able to examine how gender and power relations in Ekegusii proverbs use linguistic disparities in different cultural context hence, shade light on how language is used to reinforce and challenge traditional gender roles, offering valuable insights into complexities of communication and representation within the community.

Newman (2008)'s publication on "*Transforming Presence*" in the topic "*Powerless Language*" shows that the use of this "powerless" language among female lecturers might be the early indications that the use of power language is greater among male lecturers compared to the females. Thus, male lecturers have the opportunity to practice power language in interacting with the students compared to female lecturers who would have to adapt in the same conception in order to maximize their use of power language. While Newman's study focuses on power retains in classroom the current study focuses on language in proverbs in Ekegusii by delving into the intricacies of language use within specific cultural frameworks and offer a unique lens through which to examine how linguistic traditions and gender dynamics intersect. By expanding the understanding of language beyond its functional aspects to encompass its sociocultural implications. The researcher is able to get deeper insights into how communication shapes relationships, power structures and societal norms. In essence, language serves as a multifaceted tool that reflects and reinforces broader societal constructs, making it a rich idea for research.

Saul (2010) publication on “*Language into Language*” in the topic, “*Categorizations of Reality*”, reveals that men use power language which is generally regarded as more significant compared to females since it has not only the ability to shape the thoughts put by the society upon them, but it also gives men the ability to shape the reality. The findings of this study show that men are able to shape reality through the use of their language depending on social perspective and in a society which accepts man as more dominant than woman; their usage of language is said to be more significant and powerful. Therefore, the researcher in this study will use Saul’s argument which views language as a tool to shape and control the narrative, ultimately influencing how reality is constructed and maintained.

Webb (2012)’s publication on, “ *Teaching the Literature of today’s Middle* “ in the topic, “*Different and Separate Cultural Worlds*” is based on the assumption that males are more superior and dominant compared to female. He sought to analyze the influences of male dominance in their language use pattern. Using the difference theory the study concludes that the power of discourse usage refers to the “control” put upon non-powerful participants of communication by those who are dominating the interaction. One of the reasons that was identified is that of culture; even though men and women are living together socially, they belong to different and separate cultural worlds thus promoting the difference in ways of speaking between them. Hence, the basis of power language usage among men is highly initiated by the cultural and societal influences and expectations. While Webb’s study provides insights on the causes of male dominance this research aims in shining a spotlight on the role of proverbs in perpetuating gender-related issues within the Gusii community. Proverbs, as succinct expressions of cultural wisdom, often encapsulate and reinforce societal beliefs about gender roles and relationships. By scrutinizing the

language embedded in proverbs, the study is able to unravel the intricate ways in which Ekegusii proverbs contribute to the maintenance of gender disparities and power imbalances within the Gusii culture

2.3 Language and Ideology

Ideology in Applied Linguistics refers to the beliefs and values that influence how language is studied and used in practical settings. This means that the way people approach language learning and teaching is shaped by their underlying beliefs about language, culture and society. For example, someone who believes in the importance of cultural diversity may approach language teaching in a way that promotes understanding and appreciation of different cultures. On the other hand, someone who values efficiency and practicality may focus more on teaching language skills that are immediately useful in real-life situations.

According to Barthes (2016)'s publication on, "*Ideology Vs Culture*" in the topic, "*Dominant Power and Ideology*," ideology is myth since it's a means through which beliefs and representations sustain and legitimate current power relations. For instance, a dominant power legitimates itself by promoting beliefs and values favourable to it. This is done through naturalizing and universalizing such beliefs so as to render them inevitable. Building on Barthes' argument, this research explores how Ekegusii proverbs utilize language and ideology to reinforce male dominance. By analyzing the linguistic patterns and underlying messages in these proverbs, the researcher is able to unearth how gender roles and power relations are perpetuated through cultural expressions. This research further sheds light on the intricate relationship between language and ideology hence offering valuable insights into ways in which ideologies manifest in everyday discourse.

Guiora et al. (1982)'s research article, "*Language Environment and Gender Identity Attainment*" In the topic, "*How Language Affects Attitudes about Gender Parity*", argue that gendered languages, with their specific grammatical structures, play a pivotal role in shaping individuals' perceptions of gender. Unlike non-gendered languages, which do not impose gender distinctions linguistically, gendered languages compel speakers to constantly consider and acknowledge gender differences. Moreover, speakers of gendered languages tend to attribute gender features to objects and individuals more readily. For instance, in languages like French or German, where nouns are gendered, speakers may inadvertently assign gender characteristics to inanimate objects. This phenomenon highlights the profound impact of language on shaping our perceptions and attitudes towards gender roles. In a fascinating extension of this research, the study explores how speakers of Ekegusii language apply proverbs selectively to reinforce male dominance. Proverbs, as linguistic expressions of cultural values, provide valuable insights into how gender dynamics are perpetuated through language. By examining the nuances of language use within specific cultural contexts, researchers can uncover the intricate ways in which language shapes and reflects societal norms and beliefs. Guiora et al.'s research sheds light on the intricate relationship between language, gender identity, and cultural perceptions. It underscores the importance of recognizing the subtle yet significant ways in which language influences our understanding of gender roles and societal constructs. By delving deeper into the complexities of language and gender, the researcher gains a deeper appreciation for the multifaceted nature of human communication and cultural dynamics.

Xiao (2021) Journal article on, "*Gender in language and gender in the social mind*", in the topic, "*Linguistic Gender Inequality and Language Reform*" , focus is on

languages that possess a sex-based grammatical gender system, where nouns related to male individuals are categorized under the masculine gender, while those associated with female individuals fall under the feminine gender. A notable observation made is the inherent asymmetry in the roles assigned to the masculine and feminine genders within such linguistic frameworks. In these languages, the masculine gender often assumes a generic role, allowing it to encompass both men and women or refer to individuals of unknown or irrelevant gender. Conversely, the feminine gender carries a specific female connotation, restricting its usage solely to denote female individuals. This distinction highlights a systemic bias towards the masculine gender, granting it a broader and more versatile scope compared to the feminine. The researcher in this study focuses on how Ekegusii masculine terminologies are elevated to a position of superiority, thereby relegating female individuals to a subordinate status. This phenomenon underscores the deep-rooted gender dynamics present within language structures, reflecting and perpetuating societal norms and power dynamics. Through this examination of linguistic gender inequality, Xiao's study prompts us to reflect on the profound impact of language on shaping our social constructs and calls for a critical reevaluation of language norms to promote gender equality and inclusivity. The discourse initiated by this research serves as a crucial step towards fostering a more equitable and empowering linguistic landscape for all individuals, regardless of gender identity.

Olga et al (2023)'s Journal on, *"How language can be used to promote gender equality in geoscience"*, in the topic, *"Gender inclusive language"*, they emphasize that language serves as a crucial tool for human interaction within societies, encompassing various vocal signs, assumptions, social norms, and cultural beliefs. It not only facilitates communication but also plays a pivotal role in shaping social

structures and relationships. For instance, the use of gender-inclusive language in academic settings can contribute to a more equitable and inclusive environment for all individuals, regardless of their gender identity. Moreover, language reflects the values and norms of a particular society, serving as a mirror that reflects the prevailing ideologies and power dynamics. By analyzing how Ekegusii proverbs are utilized to establish social order, researchers can gain insights into the ways in which language influences perceptions and behaviors within a community. This exploration sheds light on the intricate relationship between language, culture, and social hierarchies, highlighting the potential of language as a tool for both empowerment and discrimination. The study underscores the multifaceted nature of language and its role in shaping societal structures and norms. By recognizing the power of language in promoting gender equality and social justice, individuals can work towards creating more inclusive and equitable spaces where all voices are heard and valued. The current research focuses on how language is used to construct ideology. The study hypothesizes the presence of gendered ideologies produced, perpetuated, consumed and maintained by the use of language proverbs in Ekegusii society. The study critically analyzed the discourses so as to unearth the underlying gendered ideologies in proverbs.

2.4 Language and social equality

Social equality in Applied Linguistics refers to the idea of fairness and justice in the field of language study and application. It means that everyone, regardless of their background or identity, should have equal opportunities and access to language resources and education. It also involves promoting the use of inclusive language practices that respect and value all individuals, regardless of their gender.

Therefore, language is fundamental to gender inequality and this can be found in the way in which language is used about by women and the way women used language (Lakoff, 1975).

Fairclough (2001) observes that language is both a means of control and a means of communication. This then implies that language is a key contributor to social inequalities, since it creates, sustains and passes on ideologies that can influence a peoples mind. Moreover, the domination of one gender in proverbs is likely to be reproduced by people's day to day discourses, which construct a worldview that the people consider as a reality. Language could affect the participation of the both men and women in social activities.

Siegal and Okamoto (2003) study on textbook, "*Language on Stereotypical Images of Japanese Men and Women*", reveal that men are given high-status roles, such as professors and supervisors, while women are assigned subordinate roles, such as being house-wives and secretaries. Further, there is no office situation whereby a woman gives an order or instruction nor is there a situation where a husband shares housework with his wife. Hence, textbooks reinforce the traditional gender stratification while ignoring the diversity and change in gender roles in contemporary Japan. Siegal and Okamoto study provides insights to the current study which was set to explore the impact of gender discourses on social order.

Prewit-Freilino et al. (2011)'s publication on, "*The Gendering of Language*", examine differences in gender equality between countries with gendered, natural gender, and genderless language systems. The findings of the study reveal that out of 111 countries investigated where gendered languages are used, they positively correlate with more gender inequality compared to countries with natural gender or genderless

languages. Their study also show that in countries where conscious efforts are made to make language gender neutral, this has had positive impact on gender equity in society. Prewit-Freilino et al study helps the researcher in shedding light on the importance of language in shaping attitudes and behaviours towards gender equality. It underscores the need for continuous efforts to promote inclusive language practices as a means to achieve greater gender equity in the society. The findings also provide valuable insights for policymakers and advocates striving to create a more equitable and inclusive community for all individuals.

Various studies such as of (Ndambuki 2010; Nzomo, 2014) on their publications on Discursive Representation of Women's Interests and Needs and Women in Political Leadership in Kenya respectively, show underrepresentation of women in key decision making areas, especially those pertaining to the legislature, leadership and policy making, prevents women from achieving significant impact on many national and individual outcomes. This is despite the various agencies supporting the equal access of men and women to power, decision making and leadership, at all levels as a necessary precondition of democracy. In the context of the Gusii community, where traditional beliefs and practices pose additional obstacles for women aspiring to leadership roles, the work of Ndambuki and Nzomo becomes even more significant. By analyzing the ways in which cultural norms and linguistic expressions shape perceptions of female leadership, these studies offer a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by women in asserting their authority and influence in traditionally male-dominated spaces. Through their publications, the researcher in this work is able to advocate for greater awareness and sensitivity towards gender dynamics in leadership and decision-making, urging for more

inclusive practices that empower women to take on leadership roles without being hindered by stereotypes or biases.

Okello (2010) in his research topic, "*The role of women's organisations in enhancing women's participation in politics in Kenya*" analyses the gender equity discourse in the representation and participation of women in the political process from the prism of political science and sociology, but of course, with often salient results. The current study intended to examine how language in Ekegusii proverbs contributes to underrepresentation of women in the society. Therefore, through Okello's work, the researcher in this work gets the insight why women are not involved in politics and society by looking at the language used in Ekegusii proverbs. This helps the researcher to get the how these proverbs contribute to women not being represented equally or fairly

Kariuki (2015) on his publication on, "*Attaining gender equity for inclusive development in Kenya*", in the topic, "*Women and Leadership*", avers that women comprise fifty percent or more of the world's population but they are underrepresented as leaders and as elected officials in most countries of the world. This is despite the extensive measures and interventions that continue to be put in place in order to close the gap. The increasing divergent levels of political participation and representation both across and within countries have increased interest and resulting research on women's underrepresentation at all levels of government and decision making. For instance, the low number of women in electoral politics and other key sectors of the economy has been noted in global conferences such as The World Summit for Social Development [WSSD] (1995 & 2000), The Fourth World Conference on Women (UN Women, 1995), and the Cairo Conference on Population and Development (United Nations Population

Fund, [UNFPA], 1994). The current research focuses on the Ekegusii proverbs and how they are used as perpetrators of gender inequality. The study delves into Ekegusii proverbs that propagate gender inequality, shedding light on cultural norms and beliefs that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in various spheres. By examining these proverbs, this research is able to uncover deep-rooted biases and stereotypes that hinder gender equality progress. It is evident that addressing gender disparities requires a multifaceted approach that tackles societal norms, legislative frameworks and educational systems.

Jakiela and Ozier (2017)'s publication on "*Gendered Language*", in the topic, "*Female Labor Force*", shows a robust negative relationship between the prevalence of gender languages and women's labor force participation. It also shows that traditional views of gender roles are more common in countries with more native speakers of gender languages. The findings of this study reveal that in African countries where indigenous languages vary in terms of their gender structure, educational attainment and female labor force participation are lower among those whose native languages are gender languages. Their work helps the researcher in this work to analyse how the Ekegusii proverbs influence societal norms and expectations regarding gender equality. The researcher is able to examine how gendered language play a significant role in limiting women's involvement in the labor force and perpetuating unequal treatment of female in the community.

2.5 Gender and proverbs

There are numerous definitions of proverbs varying from philosopher to philosopher and dictionary to dictionary. Meider (1993) describes proverbs as an expression which, owing its birth to the people, testifies to its origin in form and phrase. A proverb is an expression of what is apparently a fundamental truth – that is, a truism,

– in homely language, often adorned, however, with alliteration and rhyme. Further, some proverbs have both literal and figurative meaning, either of which makes perfect sense; but more often they have but one of the two. Meider (1993) further argues that a proverb must be venerable; it must bear the sign of antiquity, and since such signs may be counterfeited by a clever literary man, it should be attested in different places at different times. Proverbs are a “short, pithy sayings that reflect the accumulated wisdom, prejudices, and superstitions of the human race. This definition clearly shows aspects of ‘prejudices’ and ‘superstitions’ which are crucially important; and later on the analysis of the data of the current research will show in human prejudices and superstitions are reflected in the proverbs of different languages. Proverbs thus reflect gender issues; due to the use of stereotypical language choices and the use of masculine generic that create a negative psychological impact that lead to negative real-world consequences.

Ogunwale (1998)’s publication on, “*The Derogation of Masculinity in Yoruba Proverbs*” in the topic, “*Masculine Metaphors*” reveals the existence of proverbial oppression of men as against women in the Yoruba culture . This clearly shown in the meaning, potentials and interpretations of some masculine metaphors in Yoruba proverbs where the male folk actually occupy an advantaged position. However he discusses some Yoruba proverbs that attribute negative characteristics to the male folk such as disgracefulness, insolence, disobedience, indolence, and absurdity. Moreover, this research extends its scope to explore the dynamics of gender within the Ekegusii proverbs, drawing parallels and distinctions with the Yoruba context. By examining how gender roles and stereotypes are reflected in these proverbs, a deeper understanding of cultural norms and values emerges. This comparative analysis offers valuable insights into the intricate interplay between language, culture and perceptions.

Discrimination against women in society is reflected in proverbs, which influence the society greatly, and that females are defamed, belittled, and laid in their position of being subordinate to males. Wang observes that proverbs related to female gender reinforce the stereotyped images of women and revealing a high degree of misogyny, and that these proverbs influence the social concept and social roles deeply and reinforce the gender bias in reality. The study clearly reveals gender bias ideology in society, and states that both Chinese and English proverbs reflect such phenomenon as men are superior to women; men work outside while women are in charge of housework; men are stronger than women; talent men match good-looking women.

Hussein (2005) in his publication on, *“The social and ethno-cultural construction of masculinity and femininity in African proverbs”*, in the topic, *“Foundation of Masculinity and Femininity”*, analyzes the role of African proverbs in building the foundation of masculinity and femininity. The findings of the study revealed that African proverbs perpetuate specific gender biased legacies and pervasive ideologies as they associate maleness with prestige, wisdom, firmness, or strength while associating feminity with meekness, disrespect, inconsistency, and fragility. Hussein’s study provides insights in analysis on how Ekegusii proverbs specifically contribute to the reinforcement of gendered ideologies, highlighting the need for a critical examination of cultural narratives that shape perceptions of masculinity and feminity.

Meider (2008) traces back the study of proverbs to the time of Aristotle and observes that proverbs are chunks of a language and language is considered as a mirror to nation. He further argues that proverbs are simple products of mythical folks rather they are always intentionally or unintentionally coined by individuals. Proverbs are transferred from generation to generation. According to Meider further identifies four major sources of proverbs which are through classical languages, antiquity, religious

texts, modern text sources, culture etc. In this case, gender-related proverbs give us insight into the social reality of a particular gender in the culture of a nation.

Dominguez (2010) in his publication on, “ *Function of proverbs in discourse*”, in the topic, “*Transnational Social Network*” observes that values and beliefs are codified and manifested in all aspects of linguistic communication, such as popular expressions, shared vocabulary, oral traditions, conversational rules and modes of interaction, and even linguistic modes of creativity. Proverbs reflect social beliefs regarding gender; and by looking at the proverbs in a particular language or in a particular culture one can understand how gender is perceived in that culture. He further argues that since “oral traditions influence the way members of any given community think, thus, how they perceive and feel about the world around them, oral tradition of proverbs provide insights into how different societies think about women differently or in the same way. Through Dominguez’s work, the researcher is able to unravel the intricate tapestry of how gender is perceived and portrayed through Ekegusii proverb.

Schipper (2010) in his publication, “ *Never marry a woman with big feet*”, in the topic, “Gender Identity and how Patriarchy Roles”, observes that the basic themes of proverbs are derived from elementary human experience and activities. For instance, through the body human beings express how we feel and who we are or at least who we are allowed to be in the midst of the social pressure we all suffer to a larger or smaller extent in the cultural context we live in”. In his study of Dutch proverbs Schipper observed the aspect of gender identity and how patriarchy plays its role. For instance; “A good woman goes without a head” which implies that to have a head is to have brains, to be intelligent, to have one’s own will; but a woman is not expected to be a rational creature. Further, according to Schipper, “Tvambo in Angola and

Namibia refer more explicitly to the consequences for girls of this type: ‘A girl of a will of her own will not get married’. Schipper observes that the notion that women have no brains is presented in the proverbs of many languages and cultures across the globe as generally in proverbs. For instance, “Women are mostly associated with beauty and men with intelligence”. Schipper’s, views were considered in the analysis of representation of women in Ekegusii proverbs. The analysis of Schipper’s insights, offers a deeper understanding of how women are represented and perceived within the Gusii community. Through careful examination of Ekegusii proverbs, the researcher is able to unravel the intricate tapestry of societal norms, values and gender relations that shape the perceptions and interactions of the community.

Balogun (2010), in his publication, *“Proverbial Oppression of Women in Yoruba African Culture”*, studies proverbial oppressions of women in Yoruba African culture from a philosophical perspective. The findings of the research reveal that proverbs violate the rights and dignity of women and that they are indicators of discrimination against women in Yoruba culture. Balogun concludes that the most fundamental yet neglected aspect in gender discourse lies in the proverbial resources of a community. Balogun, is of the view that in this culture, on matters of language gender relations, the proverbial oppression of women is more pronounced than that of men. In this view, proverbs have served as a major avenue for the continued perpetration of male domination and female discrimination among the Africans”. Proverbs have been said to exert power against the masculine gender. The research benefits from Balogun’s study in terms of key concepts in the study. Wang (2012) similarly focuses on sex discrimination in English proverbs and their translations. She argued that the discrimination against women in society is reflected in proverbs. Wang’s study provides insights on the current study. Through Balogun’s publication this research

analyses the Ekegusii proverbs to see if female are contributing positively in the society amidst negative portrayals.

Alhassan (2012) on, "*Language and Gender*", analyzed Dagbanli community in Ghana proverbs and reported that negative portrayal of females, in proverbs, is deleterious both intellectually and socially, and such presentation of female persona contrasts sharply against visibly positive representation of male. However, at very few instances, uniqueness of the woman as mother and wife is applauded. However, there are only a handful of proverbs that portray women positively such as a motivator, cherisher, committed, and devoted persons in the roles of mothers or wives. Alhassan mentions a study that compares the portrayal of women in different cultures through proverbs. This study aims to understand how Ekegusii culture portrays women through their proverbs.

In short the current study focused on proverbs which are commonly used traditional sentence which comprises of moral values, wisdom, truth and traditional interpretation in a figurative, secure and memorable form which is passed on from one generation to another (Mieder, 2014). That is, values and beliefs are codified and manifested in all aspects of linguistic communication, such as popular expressions, shared vocabulary, oral traditions, conversational rules, and modes of interaction. Moreover proverbs are universal truths and normalized sayings that are regularly used as precise expressions about society.

He and Zhang (2018) describe proverbs as a kind of folk literature that is composed of ordinary people, not scholars or officials. A good example is when workers such as peasants, cooks, hunter, sailors etc. formulate proverbs in a nonstandard form to express their experiences. Thus proverbs are literary gateways to language, thinking,

culture, and mode of life and other social aspects of a particular nation. The roots of proverbs are in cultural concepts and social encyclopedia of a nation. They usually tend to change precisely over centuries by sticking to the central idea. Among the essential features of proverbs that He and Zhang identify about proverbs are that they are both synthesized and used in non-standard form situations. They express the truth to teach people important lessons. The language of proverbs is simple and easy to understand. Besides this they are straightforward. Proverbs tend to have harmonious rhyme which makes them easy to remember and read.

The study also considers proverbs as a tool for managing transfer of traditional norms and values from one generation to the next with a slight or no variation (Pervaz et al., 2021). Pervaz et al., 2021 further notes that proverbs enjoy unique significance in the context of gender biasedness as they induce, illustrate, and perpetuate the power relations in the society.

2.6 Studies on Ekegusii Proverbs

Proverbs are short sayings that offer wisdom or advice based on common experiences. By studying Ekegusii proverbs, the researcher will be able to learn about the culture, beliefs and values of the Ekegusii speaking community. For example the Ekegusii proverb, “*Mokungu suka moino, kae Bosibori ensi yaye nero yoka abwate agosera*” (Please move aside let Bosibori have her only sharpening tool) .The conceptual metaphor uses words like *ensi*(sharpening stone) to avoid being euphemistic to mean manhood. The proverb cautions only women to avoid cohabiting with married men. The proverb cautions women against immoral behavior in the community, thus, excludes men

Through this research, the researcher gains insight into the history and traditions of the Gusii community as well as how they view the world and relationships. By analyzing these proverbs, the researcher is able to get how proverbial language is used to demean females in the community.

Various scholars have looked at Ekegusii Proverbs. Atemba (2011), in his book, *“Abagusii Wisdom Revisited”*, posits that as a spoken art proverbs are a major part of the Abagusii culture, which reflects all aspects of their life. Atemba’s study underscores how Ekegusii proverbs serve as repositories of historical knowledge preserving ancient wisdom and traditions for future generations. Through these proverbs, the Abagusii people not only pass moral lessons and societal norms but also ensure the continuity of their cultural heritage.

Otiso (2016)’s publication on, *“Examining the indigenous wisdom in Ekegusii proverbs”*, examines the cultural values and wisdom that are transmitted through Ekegusii proverbs. The study demonstrates how proverbs are used to comment on a variety of human experiences and to maintain societal order. Among the cultural issues that the research examines include gender construction, paradoxical experiences, as well as the perception of death. Otiso’s study sheds light on the utilization of proverbs to navigate paradoxical experiences, where seemingly contradictory elements are harmoniously reconciled through the wisdom encapsulated in these linguistic expressions. By analyzing the interface between language, gender and power, this study uncovers the subtle ways in which linguistic expressions reflect and perpetuate existing power dynamics within the community. In essence, this study serves as a testament to the enduring relevance of proverbs in shaping and preserving the cultural identity of the Gusii community.

Oseko (2017), publication on, “*The significance of metaphor in Ekegusii proverbs*”, in his study on the effective use of metaphors in Ekegusii proverbs shows that in Ekegusii proverbs use metaphors to relay messages. Further, Oseko’s study illustrates how metaphors as a form of imagery are effective in the construction of reality from abstract ideas. This is beneficial to the proposed study which will show how gender and power is constructed in proverbs. The findings of the study revealed that women are portrayed as inferior, worthless and weak and thus constructed in specific roles as domestic workers, wives and caretakers. The study provides insights on gendered language in Ekegusii proverbs. However this study focused on women only. Through Oseko’s study, this study seeks to unravel the intricate tapestry of gender roles embedded in cultural discourse. Through a meticulous examination of language nuances and societal implications, the research endeavors to illuminate the complexities of gender representation used in Ekegusii proverbs.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the theoretical frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (2001) and Van Dijk (2001) in data analysis and interpretation. CDA appeared in the 1980s as an approach toward the combination of language studies and social theory (Fairclough 1992a, b) and it stems from a critical theory of language which sees the use of language as a form of social practice. CDA has been used in different subject areas. CDA is an amalgamation of various views which postulate that social reality is constructed in and through discourse and that language is a form of social practice and a means of control and communication. After publication of some important books such as Fairclough's *Language and Power* (1989), and Ruth Wodak's *Language, Power and Ideology* (1989), CDA has emerged as a significant paradigm of research within linguistics. CDA examines the

means by which political power, power abuse or domination manifest in and are enacted through discourse structures and practices. According to Fairclough (2001) CDA is an interdisciplinary area which endeavours to see the sights of social and political context in order to liberate ideologies, hegemony, control and dominance and social powers.

Fairclough (2001) approach to CDA is sociocultural approach. Fairclough points out that language is a social practice and is part of the society, and it is determined by social structures. Language is also seen as a social process in the sense that discourse is the whole process of social interaction which involves the process of production and the process of interpretation. The process of interpretation is cognitive. That is, it draws upon internalized meanings or ideologies, which Fairclough (2001) call Members Resources” [MR] for interpretation. People acquire their internalized MR through social interaction and use these internalized MR to engage in their social practice including discourse. Lastly, language as a social practice involves social conditions of production and social conditions of interpretation. These include the social situation or immediate environment, the social institution and the society in which the discourse occurs. These bring the idea of context which shapes the MR which people engage in the production and interpretation, and which in turn determine the way in which texts are produced and interpreted.

Van Dijk (2001) includes a cognitive component in the theory of ideology that is calls the shared mental representations of language users as members of groups, organisations or cultures. Van Dijk (2001; 1998) represents social cognition in three ways. The first is through knowledge from a cultural perspective, that is, the knowledge shared by all competent members of a society. Culturally shared knowledge is presupposed in public discourse and is seen as a common ground. The

second way is through attitudes which are the opinions people share in their day to day discourses. The last and most important concept is ideology. According to Van Dijk (2001), ideologies are the basic principles that organize the attitudes shared by the members of a group. These ideologies are used by the dominant groups so as to reproduce and legitimize their domination over others. This concept of ideology was applied in the analysis of gendered ideologies in Ekegusii proverbs.

Wodak (2001) argues that CDA is used nowadays to refer more specifically to the critical linguistic approach of scholars who find the larger discursive unit of text to be the basic unit of communication. CDA is applicable in so many areas of study of language but the proposed study will focus on three tenets of CDA only; CDA and Power, CDA and ideology and Discursive Practice.

2.7.1 CDA and Power

The first tenet that is applicable to this study is language and power. CDA aims to make the relations between language and power asymmetries more transparent in order to help crystallize the ways power is used and abused linguistically and how dominance is maintained through texts and talks produced in the context of social interaction (Fairclough, 1989, Wodak, 2001). Birch (1991) observes that power may be exerted through language by saying, telling, showing, referring, controlling, doing and so on, is always about action and interaction, always about power and control. Language has two versions of power: power in discourse and power behind discourse (Fairclough, 1992a; Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). By the former they mean the power appears in lexical choices and syntactical structures e.g. directive speech acts, imperatives etc. The latter includes power behind discourse where the whole social order of discourse is put together and held together as a hidden effect of power e.g. the hidden power of media discourse to influence/change (Fairclough, 1992a).

Fairclough (1989) and Wodak (2001) portend that CDA takes a particular interest the relationship between language and power because it is usually in language that discriminatory practices are enacted, in language that unequal relations of power are constituted and reproduced, and in language that social asymmetries may be challenged and transformed (Blacledge, 2005). Van Dijk (2001) views CDA as type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. In CDA, language both reflects and recreates power providing a useful starting point of knowledge for how power is exercised and practiced. Fairclough (2001) advocates for an increased focus on language, and how it constructs the social identity. This study sought to bridge the gap between linguistics and other disciplines that address the problem of gender inequality in the society.

Locke (2004) argues that CDA is a prevailing social order and social process as constituted and sustained by the recurrence of particular constructions of, or versions of reality often referred to as discourses. These recurrent versions of reality or discourses form ideologies. In CDA therefore, it is very rare for a text to be the work of any one person. The study applied this tenet in the analysis of power relations as reflected in gendered Ekegusii proverbs.

2.7.2 CDA and Ideology

The second tenet that is applicable to this study is ideology. Gramsci (1971) argues that ideology is tied to action and ideologies are judged in terms of their social effects rather than by their truth values. Kress (1990) stresses that the defined and delimited set of statements that constitute a discourse are themselves expressive of and organized by a specific ideology. Fairclough (1995) concurs that ideology is located in both structures and events. Thus, CDA shows non-obvious ways in which language

is involved in social relations of power, domination and ideology (Fairclough, 2001). Ideology involves knowledge, representation, ideas, cultural leadership and authority. Language, in this respect, is not simply a tool of communication, but a means by which people demonstrate their commitment, in one way or another, to certain ideologies. Thus, ideologies are produced and reflected within the discourse and their main purpose is to offer change in society. In this sense, ideologies are abstract thoughts which can be/applied to reality.

Fairclough (1992b) points out that the function of ideology is to construct texts which constantly and cumulatively impose assumptions upon the interpreter and the text producer, typically without being aware of them. CDA establishes relation between social practices and assumptions which underlie in discourse. Fairclough (1992) believes that ideologies are most effective when most invisible. Invisibility is achieved when they are brought to discourse implicitly leading the interpreter to textualize the world in a particular way. Fairclough (1992b) in his CDA model emphasizes that ideologies may be reflected in the vocabulary. The analysis can also draw upon the ideological and political importance of particular metaphors and conflicts between alternative metaphors (Fairclough, 1992b).

The main argument of CDA, according to Fairclough, (2001) and Van Dijk, (2001) is that discourse is coloured by and is productive of ideology. That is, CDA sees a prevailing social order and social process as constituted and sustained by the recurrence of particular constructions of or versions of reality often referred to as discourses (Locke, 2004). These recurrent versions of reality or discourses form ideologies. Habermas (1977), Meyer (2001) and Wodak (2001) argue that CDA aims to investigate critically, social inequality as it is expressed, signalled, constituted and legitimised by language use. CDA in this study aims to investigate critically gender

and power relations in Ekegusii proverbs and consequently social inequality as it is expressed, signalled, constituted and legitimized by everyday language use.

2.7.3 Discursive Practice

Discursive practice, according to Blackwell (2009) is a theory of linguistic and socio-cultural characteristics of recurring episodes of face-to-face interaction; episodes that have social and cultural significance to a community of speakers. It is a way in which language is used to communicate and create meaning in the society. Essentially, it is about how people talk, write and interact with each other to convey their thoughts and ideas.

Fairclough in his CDA model links text to sociocultural practice. Discursive practice involves receiving and producing messages and addresses the processes by which cultural meanings are produced and understood. Fairclough (1992b) maintains that discursive practice is constitutive in both conventional and creative ways: it contributes to reproducing social society (social identity, social relationships, systems of knowledge and belief) as it is, yet also contributes to transforming society. Discursive practice signifies the context which ultimately means the very shape, meaning, and effect of the social world – the various social roles people play, the socially and culturally situated identities they take on, the social and cultural activities they engage in, as well as the material, cognitive, social, cultural, and political effects of these (Gee, 2005). It is at this level where ideologies and sociocultural patterns are shaped and also shape the sociocultural practices.

The Discursive practice also emphasizes on the contextual analysis that involves the situational context (questions about time and place) and the intertextual context (looking for additional texts/information about or from producers and their product)

as central for the process of interpretation (Janks, 1997). The analysis of Ekegusii proverbs will be conceptualized as a discursive practice. Thus, the analysis will involve a precise focus on how the text is produced, who are the participants, what are the circumstances and what linguistic devices have been used. In other words, the focus will be on linguistic analysis, using some sort of framing for interpretation

In summary, the study applies CDA as an approach for explaining social and cultural aspects of proverbs since CDA treats discursive as "a form of social practice" (Wodak, 2001, cited in Wang, 2006). Moreover, CDA is in particular interested in figuring out the relationship between power and language (Wang, 2006) which was applied in analyzing the power relationships depicted in proverbs through multiple identities of men and women.

2.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented a review of the literature that is related to the interest of the present study. The chapter covers the interface of language, gender and power with a close relation to ideology. The literature shows that the use of gendered language contributes to prejudice and disempowering of women in the society. This chapter has also presented Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theoretical framework that has been applied in the analysis of study data.

The chapter that follows presents the research methodology that was adopted for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodological procedures that were used in the study. Specifically, it provides details on the research design, sampling techniques and sample size, data collection procedures, data analysis and presentation. It ends with the ethical and confidentiality considerations made for the study.

3.1 Research Design

This research adopted a descriptive qualitative research design because it offers a detailed picture or account of some social phenomenon, setting, experience and group. According to Chelliah & Reuse (2011) this design allows for the investigation of the nature of a language by collecting primary data from written native speaker resources. This argument helps the researcher to understand how language works and how it is used in real life. It also helps the researcher to get better understanding of the language being investigated. Neergaard et al. (2009) observe that descriptive qualitative research design is aligned with pragmatism and decisions are made about how the research should be conducted based on the aims or objectives and context of the study. This allows the researcher to be more flexible and adaptable in descriptive research method towards fitting the objectives of the study. From a philosophical perspective, this approach to research is best aligned with constructionism and critical theories that use interpretative and naturalistic methods (Lincoln et al., 2017). Their work helps the researcher to look at how people interpret and make sense of the world around them. It is more focused on understanding people's perspectives and experience hence helps the researcher to look at the deeper meaning and interpretations behind people's actions and beliefs. Moreover, in qualitative

descriptive research, this translates into researchers being concerned with understanding the individual human experience in its unique context.

The descriptive qualitative research design is appropriate because gendered discourse is best studied within a given context such as situational, intertextual and societal (Fairclough 1989, Wodak, 2012). Therefore, from Fairclough and Wodak's work, the researcher is able to look at how gender is represented and talked about in different settings like in conversations and broader societal norms. The study applied CDA whose main aim is to look beyond the superficial meaning of discourses and to uncover hidden ideologies behind the superficial meanings of texts.

3.2 Target Population

The target population for this study are all the proverbs from the two books on Ekegusii language and culture which are; Ngonko and Boera (1980) and Nyarangi (2006). The selected primary sources of data combined has one thousand one hundred and thirteen (1013) proverbs. The researcher will sort out the proverbs according to the research objectives and how they relate to the culture of the Abagusii people in Kenya.

The choices of these texts are appropriate for this study because the survey of other books such as *Abagusii Wisdom Revisited* by Atemba (2011), *Proverbs of the Abagusii of Kenya: Meaning and Application* by Okemwa (2012) and *Ekegusii English Dictionary* (Bosire & Machogu, 2013), shows that most of the proverbs are replicated. Therefore, the researcher is able to understand which proverbs are popular and widely used across different sources.

3.3 Sampling techniques and Sample size

This study employed purposive sampling procedures. The researcher applied non-probability sample or judgemental based on the objectives of the study. This is helped in coming up with sample stratification plan and calculation of the sample size. Gendered and power relations proverbs were derived from Emebayeno yekegusii by Ngonko and Boera (1980) and Nyarangi (2006). Purposive sampling was used to collect gendered and power relations proverbs from the selected texts. In addition, Gall et al (1996) suggest that the goal of purposive sampling is to collect cases that are likely to be information rich. On this account, the selected primary sources of data combined had one thousand one hundred and thirteen (1013) proverbs. From this number the study identified and collected one hundred and thirty one (131) gendered Ekegusii proverbs. The collected proverbs constitute a unique sample that bears the basic elements of gender, power and ideology. These elements distinguished the selected proverbs from the rest in the primary sources of data. Basing on the three aspects; gender, power and ideology and the objectives of the study, the research found the collected data to be both relevant and representative of Ekegusii gendered proverbs.

3.4 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The researcher used the following research instruments: Native speaker's intuition or introspection and verification check lists to gather as much information as possible about Ekegusii proverbs.

3.4.1 Native speaker's intuition

Primary data for the study consisted of Ekegusii proverbs with the aspects on gender and power. The data was identified through self-interpretive reading of all the proverbs in the primary sources of data. Being a native of Ekegusii speaker made it

easy for the researcher to identify Ekegusii proverbs with aspect of gender and power. This is in line with Chomsky (1957) views on the native speaker's intuition (cf. Chomsky, 1965). Chomsky supports the native speaker intuition as a method of data collection where he asserts that every speaker of a language has mastered and internalized generative grammars that express his knowledge of his languages. Therefore, the researcher is able to read through all the proverbs in their primary sources to find the ones that fit the research objectives. The method is based on the idea that the native speaker has a deep understanding of the language and culture, allowing him to easily identify relevant proverbs. He adds that "consistency among speakers of a similar background and consistency for a particular speaker of different occasions is relevant information". (Chomsky, 1965:79). Basically Chomsky believes that a native speaker of a language has a natural ability to understand and use the rules of that language without being explicitly taught. This can provide valuable data for studying language hence helping to uncover the fundamental principles that underlie the Ekegusii proverbs. The researcher uses the native speakers' competence to generate appropriate data displaying gender and power (cf. Appendix II).

3.5 Validity of the Instruments

Cresswell (2012) defines validity as the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences. To guarantee that the instruments are legitimate, the researcher discussed the instruments with the supervisors and other research experts in the Department of Language and Linguistics of Machakos University to evaluate the items contained in various instruments. The suggestions and clarifications by the experts were used to improve the instruments designed.

3.6 Reliability

To measure reliability of the instrument, the test- retest technique were used to assess the reliability of checklist as the research instrument; the analysis was done twice at an interval of two weeks, to ascertain consistency of results.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher used qualitative data methods which is non-numerical and center around on written words. This will allow the researcher to deep dive into the mindset of research objectives. The Resaercher used documented text materials from Ngonko and Boera 1980 and Nyarangi 2006 to extract proverbs guided by research objectives

3.8 Data Analysis

In this study, data analysis started with the identification and selection of Ekegusii gendered proverbs that reflect gender and power discourse from the primary sources of data. The collected proverbs were categorized in four groups in relation the objectives

The interpretation was done by dealing with the relationship between the text and interaction. The analysis entailed understanding and examination of the process of production, interpretation, and consumption of a text with the third level "sociocultural practice" focusing on issues of power. The researcher interpreted Ekegusii proverbs by grouping them according to gender and power guided by the research objectives. The proverbs were interpreted as an instance of discourse practice. The last stage was explanation, that is, the relationship between interaction and social context. The discourses were explained basing on the socio-cultural practice.

Example;

Eero n'eyabagaka

The sittingroom belongs to the men

The proverb is a declarative simple sentence

The lexicals *Eero* and *Abagaka* are used to instill male dominance in the community. This is because, important decisions are made from the sitting room, even important visitors are received in the sitting room.

The hidden information in the proverb, brings in the idea of “power behind discourse” which discriminates female from important decision making.

3.9 Ethical considerations

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the Machakos University. The researcher then obtained a research permit from the National Council for Science and Technology (NACOSTI). The researcher acknowledged the ownership of the original data. The research was conducted with honesty and integrity. Honesty was strictly observed in data interpretation in order to avoid subjective interpretation of proverbs.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter focuses on the research methodology adopted in this study. It has presented the research design, the sampling procedures used, the sample size and the target population, the data collection procedures adopted, methods of data analysis, Validity and Reliability of instruments and presentation and ethical and confidentiality considerations made for the study. The next chapter is on objective one which focuses on gender identities and construction in Ekegusii proverbs.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENDER IDENTITIES AND CONSTRUCTION IN EKEGUSII PROVERBS

In Ekegusii proverbs, gender identities and construction are explored and represented. This means that the proverbs in Gusii culture talk about different roles, characteristics and expectations associated with being a male or female. This proverbs will help to shape and define what it means to be a man or a woman in the community.

This chapter is based on the first objective of the study, which is to analyze how language is used to construct gender identities in Ekegusii proverbs. The chapter interprets and analyses how language represents the multiple identities of both genders in Ekegusii proverbs. Finnegan (1970) observes that in many African cultures a feeling for language, for imagery, and for the expression of abstract ideas through compressed and allusive phraseology comes out particularly clearly in proverbs. Foley (1997) states that the link between language and gender is not natural but culturally constructed. Noteworthy; a part from a male–female gender identity dichotomy, globalized social, cultural, political, and economic changes exert influence upon gender ideologies (ways of thinking, acting, behaving), relationships (social identities), and practices. Hence, this section analyses proverbs as linguistic expressions of gender discourses. The chapter argues that language reflects as well as preserves, propagates and perpetuates gendered culture.

Gender discourses and practices are part and parcel of any society's life and normatively people think, act, and behave according to their gender roles or identities. Noteworthy, proverbs exists in different communities in different forms and serves different functions. As Jenkins (1996) puts it that communities and cultures within societies have different constructs and expectations of gender. In this respect, most

proverbs reflect the cultural values, social and physical environment of the community which creates them. This section, therefore, examines the proverbs from Ekegusii language to depict gender representation in society, and it also aims to infer an in-depth understanding of the Ekegusii proverbs from a CDA perspective.

This implies that the study deals with Ekegusii proverbs as texts and discourses in Fairclough's (2001) and Van Dijk's (2001) CDA frameworks; which imply ways of constituting knowledge, together with social practices, forms of subjectivity, and power relations. According to CDA, discourse shapes the society by constituting knowledge, social relations and social identities. Van Dijk (1997) argue that discourse directly influences the mental models and hence the opinions and attitudes of recipients. Thus it is through the mental models of discourse that we acquire our knowledge of the world, our socially shared attitudes, our ideologies and fundamental norms and values. The analysis is qualitative in nature and applies a textual analysis to show how the language of proverbs is assertive in the formation of gender identity. Thus, by analyzing how language is used in Ekegusii proverbs, the study investigates the significant role of language in the formation and construction of gender identity in cultural setup.

The analysis in this section is therefore in term of: gender identify and the masculinity construction, gender identify and the femininity construction, Gender identity and Construction of Gender roles and comparative presentation of masculine and feminine identities.

4.1 Gender identity and the masculinity construction

The masculine identity is traditionally associated with males. Masculinity is socially and discursively constructed. That is, masculinity is what a given society accepts as

features associated with males and the expressions of maleness. Such forms are known as hegemonic masculinity (cf. Connell 1995; 2005). According to (Connell 1995, 2005) hegemonic masculinity is a dominant form of masculinity in a given setting. This section focuses at how men are represented in Ekegusii proverbs. It assesses how Ekegusii language is used to propagate views on what it means to be ‘a man’ among the Abagusii people. The section examines the representation of men as reflected in a number of Ekegusii proverbs. The aim is to analyze traditional and the cultural view on what it means to be a man – what one looks like, his social roles, expected behaviour among other parameters in the Gusii society and explore the interrelation between language, gender and culture. CDA is applied in analysis of proverbs as texts. Hence, Van Dijk’s (2006) levels of analysis, and other linguistic strategies of discourse analysis are incorporated in the analysis of how language is used to propagate gender identities.

4.1.1 Men and Bravery

Ekegusii proverbs are traditional sayings or phrases in the Ekegusii that often convey wisdom or cultural beliefs. The researcher looked on how language is used to convey cultural beliefs and values. This involved how the language is structured and how it reflects the culture of the Abagusii. The researcher therefore, analysed words and phrases used to express ideas about bravery and masculinity in the culture.

The data collected reveal that Ekegusii proverbs express masculine models exuding strength, power and energy. Men are symbols of bravery and courage. Thus, bravery is one of the major marks of masculinity among the Gusii (and in many cultures as well). Proverb 1 below reveals that bravery and courage is a virtue that is admired by all but equated to men:

Example 4.1:

Ensinyo magokwanwa bobo mbamura etabwati

(A despised neighbourhood has no brave men)

The proverb above can be understood as reflection of how societal attitudes and perceptions are used to impact behavior and characteristics of people within the Gusii community. The proverb makes use of topicalization and negation. In the sentence *Ensinyo magokwanwa bobo* (A despised neighbourhood) is topicalised information that emphasizes negative out group properties of Gusii men should be. Moreover, the proverb makes use of negation that is used to refer to the denial of the opposite proposition of the negation. The proverb implies that if a neighbourhood is despised, then it does not have brave men. And if it does have men, then they are 'sissy' like no wonder they are despised. The Gusii society naturally expects men to be brave and take care of their neighbourhoods. Thus, being bold is equated to being a man. Moreover, in Gusii community parents remind boys of the fact that being a man is being brave and courageous.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a way of examining language to understand power dynamics, social structures and ideologies. Therefore, the above proverb reflects and reinforces beliefs or stereotypes about female, that their existence cannot be realized, unless there are men. This means that they are considered to be weak and cannot defend themselves unless there are men.

Example 4.2 below exudes the masculine model of strength:

Nguru chia momura nchogu egwati mbara

(A man's strength is like an elephant splitting wood)

The above proverb makes use of figurative language that is an extension of meaning of words by metaphoric transfer . Figures of speech in CDA are portrayed as rhetorical devices which are the bases for implicatures and hence pragmatic meaning. Metaphors and similes are comparative constructions in language in which an entity attributes are transferred onto another entity in the text. In this regard, the meaning of a word expression or proposition does not have meaning on its own but in metaphorical relationships which happens to be more or less provisional located in a given discursive formation. In Example 4.2 above a man's strength is equated to an elephant splitting firewood by use of a simile. The proverb glorifies a man's energy equating it to an elephant splitting wood. The elephant represents strength, long life, reliability and trust. Noteworthy; strength is synonymous with courage or bravery yet no reference is made to a woman. This therefore indicates that society expects men to exude strength but does not expect women to display strength. Example 4.2 thus epitomizes the height of bravery, as one of the major ideals of masculinity in the society. The use of metaphorical language reinforces assumptions held about Example 4.1 and 4.2 above show that the socio-cultural expectation is that men should be brave.

Example 4.3 below shows that masculinity and femininity are bolstered in Gusii community by the socialization process and the agents and agencies involved in the process. Proverbs are seen as an agent of socialization where they play the social construction of gender in young members of the society as shown:

Example 4.3

Omomura ingetii akororerwa

(The ability of a young man is seen on the battle ground)

Proverb 4.3 above shows instances of lexicalization. Lexical items are words that are used to hold the structures of a sentence together. According to CDA discourse is comprised of units which include words. Thus, words are not put to use in isolation but are incorporated into lexical and grammatical patterns in texts where they are acted upon by other words in complex and unpredictable ways (Widdowson, 2007). Consequently, language users have a choice of several words depending on discourse genre, personal context (mood, opinion, perspective) social context (formality, familiarity group membership, dominance relation) and sociocultural context (language variants sociolect, norms and values).

In example 4.3 the lexical item '*Omomura*' means a young man whose ability will only be judged not at home but in the battlefield. This proverb shows instances of enculturation since it makes young men in Gusii community to construct their identities that they ought to be strong, brave, and adventurous so that whoever who is cowardly is derided upon. These findings are in line with Samovar et al (2007) views that state that from infancy members of a culture learn their patterns of behavior and ways of thinking until most of them are internalized and habitual. It is clear that young men in Gusii community grow up knowing that as men they need to be strong, brave and courageous. This implies that, once born, one is socialized into the culture of one's society and human behaviors and attitudes towards male and female are not innate but one learns them from the social environment in which one is brought up.

4.1.2 Men as Providers

A man as provider is another key indicator of masculinity among the Abagusii. In other words a man is represented as breadwinner and head of the family and home. Miescher (2005) considers this aspect under the concept of "adult masculinity" where in African context a real man is expected to be able to take care of his family. Gusii

men strive hard to fulfill this expectation and a man who fails to fulfill this socio-cultural expectation is often perceived as not man enough. The data collected revealed the concept of the male breadwinner in a number of proverbs as shown:

Example 4.4

Omosacha omuya noyokoringa nkundi kagosa mochie mogoko osoa nyomba.

(A responsible husband is the one who hides something in his fist as he enters his homestead and there will be happiness)

Example 4.5

Omosacha asache, omokungu akunge

(Let the husband look for wealth and let the wife take care of it).

Example 4.6

Basacha mbaniberani konabakungu mbaiborerani

Men help fellow men in creating wealth as women help fellow women in begetting children

Example 4.7

Omosacha karebwoye ne ritiiro rire enyasi

(A man who is in his home is a pillar on a wall)

Example 4.4 to 4.7 uses the term *omosacha*, which is derived from the verb *gosacha*. The verb translates to look for/ gather wealth. Thus, being a man is also understood to mean providing basic needs and comfort. In example 4.4 and 4.5 language has been used metaphorically to present men as the bread winners in the family. Males in Gusii

community are therefore often raised to view the 'man' as the dominant force and provider in the household amid shifting societal norms. Example 4.5 shows that a male who goes to his home with something in his fist (usually something good and beneficial to the family) brings joy since he is fulfilling his duty. The proverb is thus a reminder of what is expected of men in their families. Men should endeavour to ensure that the needs of their families are catered for.

The syntactic structure of example 4.5 above is that of an affirmative sentence. Affirmative sentences are those that state what someone is, has or does. The sentence shows that in Gusii community men are regarded as the sole creators of wealth. On the contrary women are regarded as begetting children and taking care of them. It is assumed that it is the responsibility of a man to look for food and mass wealth for the family hence in Gusii community even a woman's possession is considered to be her husband's. Thus, the discursive use of proverbs in Gusii community reflects the aspect of linguistic sexism where the women sex is devalued while the male sex is reflected positively.

Example 4.6 *Basacha mbaniberani konabakungu mbaiborerani* (Men help fellow men in creating wealth as women help fellow women in begetting children) on the other hand demonstrates that certain beliefs were used to profile men and women. Example 4.7 acquires its meaning from the construction of houses as shown (*omosacha karebwoye ne ritiro rire enyasi* (A man who is in his home is a pillar on a wall). Pillars reinforce the strength of a wall and by extension a house. Thus the meaning of the lexical item *omosacha* (man) in this sense is viewed as the pillars in their homes, due to the roles that they take up. Men are expected to provide for the family, run the affairs of their families and solve any disputes that may arise. Comparing men to a pillar shows the pivotal role of men in families.

In a nut shell, the expected characteristic of a real man is working man who is economically productive. The man is expected to ensure sufficiency supply of food for the family. Thus, a man is perceived more as a provider than an equal partner in a marriage setting.

4.1.3 Men as protectors

Man as a protector is a key marker of masculinity in Gusii community. Men are not only expected to provide material needs but provide family with protection. The relevance of this protection is seen in proverbs that reflect protection of the homestead and community as shown:

Example 4.8

Nsinyo machaywa imbarura etabwati

(For a region is despised, then it lacks of boys or men)

Example 4.9

Nguru chia momura, nchongu egwata mbara

(A young man's strength is like an elephant splitting firewood)

Example 4.10

Kurera abamura bairane ng'ombe ntoki nse

(Alert the men to come back, the stolen cattle have been found)

Example 4.8 to 4.10 employs the use of preposition; the use of certain words that take certain ideas for granted in text by use of rhetoric for persuasive purposes (Huckin, 1997). The proverbs above show that the Gusii community considers boys and men as

a source of protection and security in the society. Example 4.8 (*Nsinyo machaywa imbarura etabwati* (For a region to be disrespected then it is because of its lack of boys or men) presupposes that for any region to be disregarded then most probably it is due to lack of boys or men that should stand up against external aggression. This proverb also explains the desire for male children by people.

Similarly example 4.9 (*Nguru chia momura, nchongu egwatia mbara*) emphasizes on the importance of a male child in a homestead. Through the use of the conceptual metaphors the male child is likened to an elephant which presupposes that he is strong in nature and should be able to fight and protect the family when need arises. This is further shown in example 4.10 (*Kurera abamura bairane ng'ombe ntoki nse*; Alert the men to come back, the stolen cattle have been found) which shows that the men had gone to fight for the community. The proverbs in this section shows gender identity is constructed discursively and shows prejudice against women. Example 4.9 and 4.10 clearly shows in Gusii community women are considered as being of less value as compared to men. Such proverbs are insinuations and like presuppositions they are notoriously manipulative because they are difficult to challenge (Huckin, 1997).

4.1.4 Men as lecherous

A Man as lecherous is another masculine ideal in Gusii community that is reflected by sexual prowess of man. The data collected revealed that gendered proverbs reflect polygamous marriage that indicates sexual potency and competence among men. Sexual prowess in Gusii community is shown by the number of wives or partners a man has, and the number of children he has. Gendered proverbs stereotypical represent men as lecherous as shown below:

Example 4.11

Chieri ibere tichianya koriseria amo

(Two bulls will never graze from the same paddock)

Example 4.12

Nyamokungu omo ,aye mosiereku okobera kobunera abagaka chinkore

(You who has one wife sit close to the door lest you break the elders' drinking straw)

Example 4.13

Otaraita egesimba karamanya ekio engoko yachia korigia aroro

(Before you kill the mongoose ask why the hen went there)

Example 4.14

Chiombe n'abana

(Cows are children)

The interpretation of example 4.11 depends on the context in which it is used. First, example 4.11 *Chieri ibere tichianya koriseria amo* (Two bulls will never graze from the same paddock) shows that polygamy is accepted in the community but polyandry is not accepted. The image of two bulls implies men which means they are of equal strength while the term paddock is case of semantic derogation; the use of words and phrases that are demeaning and that make a certain person or group of people to be viewed negatively. Danforth & Kim (2008) observe that semantic derogation is achieved through the use of demeaning metaphors and other figures of speech. Paddock here refers to women and more specifically their sexual organ. The proverb

presupposes that two men cannot control one homestead at the same time. The same applies to leadership that, in any institution, community or society, only one leader will be there at a time.

Example 4.12 on the other hand ridicules a man who has married just one wife and thus should sit close to the entrance since he is not a real man as shown: (*Nyamokungu omo aye, mosiereku okobera kobunera abagaka chinkore* (You who has one wife sit close to the door lest you break the elders' drinking straw). Example 4.12 presupposes that a real man is that who has married many wives and traditionally, those who married only one wife were demeaned to have failed to dominate "their" wives. Thus, the one with one wife is not supposed to dine with the elders who according to society are respectable. Consequently, this proverb is a deliberate attempt to encourage men to be polygamous a situation which subjugates women.

Moreover, the Gusii society seems to be more tolerant of men with multiple sexual partners as compared women as shown in example 4.13 below:

Otaraita egesimba karamanya ekio engoko yachia koriogia aroro

(Before you kill the mongoose ask why the hen went there)

The mongoose and the hen are used metaphorically. The mongoose denotes a man who flirts with as many women as possible while a woman is represented as a hen. The use of the images implies that one should not prosecute a man who has an affair with the wife, daughter or relative because they may have gone to look for him. This then implies that it is okay for a man to be promiscuous but not a woman. Therefore, the centrality of sexuality in the construction of masculinity is also articulated through

practices of multiple partners and casual sex with women constructed as objects for male gratification.

Example 4.14 on the other hand shows that polygamy is equated to one having many children. The Gusii community values children and hence having many is seen as a sign of ideal masculinity. Moreover, when a child is born he or she is named after a deceased member of the community that upheld good morals which is a sign of continuance of existence through these newborns.

Example 4.14

Chiombe n'abana

(Cows are children)

In example 4.14 above children are likened to cows because a cow is valued among the Gusii people since payment of dowry is in form of cows, goats and sheep. Thus, by comparing children to cows places emphasis on the value that this community had for children the same way it valued dowry. Therefore, a man who married many women could have many children and hence was respected in the community. The use of metaphor (*Chiombe n'abana*; cows are children) also presupposes that it was through payment of dowry that a woman could be married and bear children.

4.1.5 Men as firm and decisive

In Gusii community men are represented as decision makers in the family and important social actors in clan negotiations as shown below:

Example 4.15

Eero n' eyabagaka

(The sitting room is for men)

Example 4.16

Ase abagaka bare ing'ana tirianya gosareka

(Where men are, things will never go wrong)

Example 4.16 asserts that *eero* (the sitting room) is a preserve of *abagaka* (adult men). That is, the sitting room belongs to men only. In Gusii community the sitting room is usually reserved to entertain important guests and it also serves as the dining room. Consequently, it is usually furnished with comfortable chairs. The sitting room is also used for holding important meetings such as negotiations or solving conflicts. The proverb is used symbolically to presuppose that it is men who discuss issues that relate to the community.

This is further shown in example 4.16 where women are excluded from important activities such as decision making: *Ase abagaka bare ing'ana tirianya gosareka* (Where men are, things will never go wrong). The proverb implies that men are wise and that they handle issues peacefully. The above proverbs confirms Peterson & Runyan (1993) assertion that the social construction of gender is actually a system of power that not only divides men and women as masculine and feminine, but typically also places men and masculinity above women and femininity, and operates to value more those institutions and practices that are male dominated and or representative of masculine traits and style. In the two proverbs women are disempowered by presupposing that women in the society are dependent and indecisive. On the contrary, the proverbs empower men as firm and decisive. Thus, language as an

instrument of expression is seen reflect the interests of a given social group: man and woman (Spender, 1980).

Example 4.15 and 4.16 show that proverbs are used in perpetuating the exclusion of women from the decision making process in traditional societies. Therefore, the society through various institutions should engage in a radical dismantling of these male constructed proverbs, replacing them with proverbs that promote societal well-being and construct positive identities for women.

4.1.6 Marginalized and subordinate masculinities

The analyzed data reveals that some proverbs reflected men identities that are marginalized and subordinate. Cheng (1997) argues that the marginalized masculinity represents a more nonconforming or 'failed' masculinity. Connell (2005) observes that hegemonic masculinity not only exists in contrast to femininity but also in relation to other non-hegemonic forms of masculinity, which she calls marginalized masculinity and subordinated masculinity. In Gusii community the dominant, highlighted and celebrated identities are (e.g. men as brave, protectors, and providers) as discussed but others are marginalized and relegated to the background. Thus, the marginalized and subordinate masculinities in Gusii community are those the society disregards or looks down upon. Proverbs that reflect marginalized masculinity in Gusii community include:

Example 4.17

Omosacha otabwati bana nigo ange entetere etasimekirie

(A fatherless man is no better than unplanted seed)

Example 4.18

Omosacha ogoteba buna takunyuoma omokungu ogosaneru nabasacha bande,takonyora mokungu akonyuoma

(The man who says that he will never marry a woman who is admired by other men, he will never marry)

Example 4.19

Omosacha otaragacha enyomba yaye oyio mbosa

(A man who has not built his own house is useless)

Example 4.17 to 4.19 shows that men in these category exhibit qualities considered as opposite to those valued in hegemonic masculinity hence they have the marginalized and subordinate masculinities. A real man in Gusii community should marry and sire children as shown in example 4.18 *Omosacha otabwati bana nigo ange entetere etasimekirie* (A fatherless man is no better than unburied seed). A man without children is metaphorically compared to unburied seed which is unproductive. The proverb thus was used in Gusii traditional society to compel men that had attained the age of marriage to marry and sire children. Failure to which, they were regarded as useless due to the lack continuity of life through children. This is the reason why his parents were under obligation to search for a wife for him. The cultural belief of marriage is also permeated in example 4.19 *Omosacha ogoteba buna takunyuoma omokungu ogosaneru nabasacha bande,takonyora mokungu akonyuoma* (The man who says that he will never marry a woman who is admired by other men, he will never marry) that men are expected to marry. The proverb cautions such man that if he continues being selective he may end up not being married yet marriage is their obligation.

In Gusii community once married a real man must have a homestead (*omochie*) where his wives and their unmarried daughters and uncircumcised sons live, and the cattle camps (*ebisarate*). A man who lacks a homestead is ridiculed with proverbs such as in example 4.20 *Omosacha otaragacha enyomba yaye oyio mbosa* (A man who has not built his own house is useless). Following the concept of marginalised masculinity men who lacks a home, house and homestead for their family are looked down upon based on their disability. An idea man is expected to build their own house and settle there and those who have not done so are not respected.

4.2 Gender identity and the femininity construction

Language plays a major role in the social construction of gender, especially through the usage of proverbs. This section focuses on the construction of feminine ideals in Ekegusii proverbs. Language is part and parcel of the culture of any group of people. Cameron (1999) states that language encodes a culture's preoccupation and its values and it is also a major avenue through which culture is transmitted from generation to generation and to others who have access to the community. Thus, how women are represented in any language is a key component in CDA since languages may have undertones of sexism. Cameron (1999) argues that the world is represented from a masculine point of view and in accordance with stereotyped notions about women, men and the relationship between them. The analysis therefore in this section is on the use of language in the construction of the female identity through the usage of Ekegusii proverbs. The representation of women in Gusii culture demands paying attention to certain lexical patterns, figures of speech and myriad of other linguistic forms since inscriptions of overt sexism, derogatory depictions, negative values and female stereotyping become noticeable. The discussion also includes how language in Ekegusii proverbs constructs and reinforces gender stereotypes in Gusii society.

4.2.1 Women and reproduction

One of the greatest ideal of being a woman in Gusii society is childbearing and child upbringing yet procreation is a product of both the husband and the wife. The birth of child in Gusii community served to solemnize marriage (Ngoko and Boera, 1980). In many African societies, children are a source of happiness among married couples and woman value is measured by having children as shown below:

Example 4.21

Okoibora nokuya gwakorete omokungu monyaka ntin'gana

(Giving birth is good because it made the promiscuous woman to be a queen)

Example 4. 22

Totogia moiseke kieni motogie mwana

(Never praise a woman for her beauty but rather by child bearing ability)

Example 4.21 *Okoibora nokuya gwakorete omokungu monyaka ntin'gana* (Giving birth is good because it made the despised wife/woman to be a queen) reveals that women with children are accorded respect in spite their morals. The lexical item '*monyaka*' refers to a person of loose morals but it can also refer to anyone who is not respected in the society. If a woman with such morals gives birth and the children and they become successful that earns them respect. The proverb thus presupposes that the responsibility of child bearing as a noble role since it can transform the status of a woman. Noteworthy, the Gusii community encourages accepted behavior by women such as giving birth and managing their homes.

Example 4.22 *Totogia moiseke kieni motogie mwana* (Never praise a girl for her beauty but rather by giving birth) on the other hand reveals that Gusii community value children and the owner attached to the bearer. The proverb presupposes that the value of a woman is not attached to her beauty but to the ability to bear children. This also implies that women are expected to beget children for them to be respected. This proverb therefore shows that the discursive uses of proverbs are discriminative since as women value is based on begetting children men's evaluation is on the basis of their actions and achievements as discussed in section 4.1.

The aspect of women and reproduction is also attached child bearing ability as shown in proverb 24 below:

Example 4.23

Omokungu siomiasiomia ng'ai akomanya bwarugeirwe gose mboke gose mbwa'mwana?

(How will a wife /woman who roam from place to place know where the ugali has been cooked and whether it is just a little meant for the child?)

In example 4.23 above the lexical item *omokungu* refers to a wife/woman and is derived from the verb *gokunga*, which means 'to take care of. The Gusii community views a good wife/woman as the one who keeps to her homestead and manages the affairs of her home. The duties that such a woman should do include cooking, fetching water, gathering firewood, taking care of the children and keeping the home tidy. Thus, the behavior of a woman who wanders from homestead to homestead is discredited since this is not the socially accepted. In this vain, such proverbs represent also represent the virtues of the Gusii community. For instance, the rebuke of a

woman who wanders from house to house is done by using the duties that are culturally feminine, that is, cooking and taking care of children as shown below:

Example 4.24

Omokungu okonya kobayabaya tamanyeti eyaroseringwa endagera

(A roaming woman does not know the pan that has been used to prepare food)

4.2.2 Women and Marriage

The data collected reveal that the traditional Gusii community pressure on women to marry and make marriage a form of social identity. Heterosexual marriage is presented as a normative life choice or requirement for women. In this vain, for a woman to be successful and be respected in the community, she has to be married. Noteworthy, is that in Gusii community any person who has attained the age of marriage was expected to get married and beget children but the pressure to get married manifests differently. The society makes insinuations that for a woman to have a fulfilled life, she must be married. According to Fairclough (1989) humans categorize reality through language (discourse). In this vain, a cultures language and language forms serve to shape our beliefs, expectations and sense of reality. The data collected reveal that oral traditions such as proverbs are the main foundations for the pressure society mounts on women to get married as shown below:

Example 4.25

Moiseke onyabagambi bange tanyagosoka

(A young woman with many advisors will not get married)

Example 4.26

Onabaiseke bange nkerandi kiamabere botakana botakaera

(He who has many daughters is a gourd of milk that will never go dry)

Example 4.27

Omoiseke omobe momura oare aganyete

(A bad girl waits for a distant suitor)

Example 4.28

Ritinge ndiamochie mogare

(A concubine needs a wide/ rich homestead)

Example 4.29

Ritinge mbotuko rikong'anya

(A concubine goes away at night)

Example 4.25 to 4.29 represents the traditional Gusii community thoughts and opinion about women and marriage. Thus, proverbs are a mean of linguistic practice that is part of socialization. Example 4.25 *Moiseke onyabagambi bange tanyagosoka* (A young woman with many advisors will not get married) makes reference to 'Omoiseke' a young unmarried woman. The proverb is meant to warn her against listening to many advisors which may make her miss a marriage partner in future. In other words women should accept any suitor that comes their way. The gendered linguistic structure in example 4.21 plays a deterministic role that persuades Gusii women to agree to get married to any suitor that comes their way. Moreover, marriage is a union involving both male and female but emphasis and reference in

example 4.21 is placed on a woman (*Moiseke*). The study observes that such a gendered linguistic structure is intended to deny women the authority to question the intended suitor. The proverb presupposes that consequences for challenging such hegemony would be that the woman would remain unmarried. This subsequently led to such a woman being disrespected and frowned at in traditional society.

Example 4.26 *Onabaiseke bange nkerandikiamabere botakana botakaera* (He who has many daughters is like a gourd of milk that will never go dry) as a gendered proverb creates an assumption that girls in any homestead are likely to be married and bring wealth. The use of the conceptual metaphor; a gourd of milk that will never go dry implies that a homestead with many daughters is assured of wealth just like flowing milk (livelihood) once the bride price is paid by the bridegroom's family. Another proverb that shows societal expectations on women's behavior and marriage is as highlighted in example 4.27 *Omoiseke omobe momura oare aganyete* (A bad girl waits for a distant suitor). The assumption is that a well-behaved girl would be married to nearby suitor while bad ones were to wait for the one who comes from far since he does not know them in terms of behavior. This proverb addresses the phenomenon of virtue where by women in traditional Gusii community were implored to behave well so that they would have an opportunity to be married nearer their homes; something which was considered a privilege.

Example 4.28 *Ritinge ndiamochie mogare* (A concubine needs a wide/ rich homestead) and example 4.29 *Ritinge mbotuko rikong'anya* (A concubine goes away at night) shows the use of semantic derogation. Choti (1998) observes that Ekegusii language remains a linguistic deviation with contemptuous and derogatory terms. The word *ritinge* (concubine) is a word used discursively in the two gendered proverbs to imply a woman who cohabits with men temporarily. In Gusii community a woman

who remarries and divorces severally is considered to be a *ritinge*. Thus, in example 4.28 *Ritinge ndiamochie mogare*. The noun ‘Ritinge’ is therefore a woman who has separated from her husband and she is cohabiting with another man. ‘*Ndiamochie mogare*’ means such a woman can only be sustained in a home or a husband who has money- literary a big homestead. This proverb negative represents women as promiscuous and materialistic and cautions men against them since such a union is solely dependent on the availability of money. In Gusii community such a woman cannot be married legally because she belongs to another man.

Example 4.29 affirms the above assumption: *Ritinge mbotuko rikong’anya* (A concubine goes away at night) in that the proverb warns men against marrying a woman who was once married by somebody since if they dare such woman will one day carry everything in the house at night and disappear to her legal husband. Equally, she will run away when you are in problems or sick. The two proverbs show that the society expects women to stick to their marriages in spite of any changes such as domestic violence and infidelity lest they will be frowned at. The study observes that there is no semantic equivalent term for Ritinge to imply men are divorced or separated from their wives. As much as women cannot express authority to move from one marriage union to another, a man can marry and divorce several times in the traditional society. The proverbs hence show gender biasness and prejudice against women since the term *ritinge* exclusively refer to women.

4.2.3 Women as objects

The data collected reveals that the objectification of women permeates traditional Gusii community. The data shows that in Ekegusii proverbs women are objectified, whereas their male counterparts are accorded subject status. Such beliefs and attitudes are passed onto generations through the socialization process. Thus, proverbs are an

agent through which male-centeredness continues to shape the way women are viewed. In section 4.2.1 the findings show that a man is seen as the sole provider in the home, thus he must prove himself able to care for his wife even before marriage. Consequently, this leads to the issue of the bride price. Bride price is an indicator of objectivation of women since it makes women a thing to be bought, sold, traded in or pawned for cash. For instance, in traditional Gusii community women are represented as a source of wealth through the payment of bride price as seen in the proverb below:

Example 4.30

Onabaiseke bange nkerandikiamabere botakana botakoera

(He who has many daughters is like a gourd of milk that will never go dry)

Example 4.31

Omoiseke omuya, omonyene chiombe namoroche

(A good girl is always seen by those with cows)

Example 4.30 shows that women are a form of object through which wealth is generated as explained in section 4.2.2. Thus, the society through its oral traditions reflects women as objects and not subjects. This is further amplified by Example 4.31 that shows that women are seen as objects by their parents since they earn them bride price. In fact in some circumstances the bride price system conditions the mind of African women to seek to marry older, richer men. This system helps to perpetuate the objectization of the African woman. Therefore, the practice of bride price in the marriage institution often solidifies the objectification of women in marriage and relationships. The society through its oral traditions tells us that women are not subjects but objects.

The concept of bride price reflects how male-centeredness continues to shape the way women are viewed. The analyzed data reveal that women are viewed from the men's point of view. Consequently, men are seen as complete human beings with agency while women are denied agency. Proverbs in marriage institution shows that women are objectified. Some of the semantic concepts used in Ekegusii proverbs render women as having no agency and as merely sexual objects meant to gratify men's sexual demands. Some of proverbs reveal that women were represented as sex objects:

Example 4.32

Omokungu bwe'bwateranetie takweroka o'mwekungi .

(A pregnant woman will never claim to be a virgin)

Example 4.33

Omokungu otagete koibora tari korara na'yanga

(A woman who wants to give birth never sleeps with clothes)

Example 4.34

Omokungu nigo ange chinchoke, morende buya onyore oboke,gokomogechia nigo akoba omotindi

(A woman is like a bee, treat her well and you will eat honey, mistreat her and she will turn violent)

The above Ekegusii proverbs represent women as sex objects. Example 4.32 *Omokungu bwe'bwateranetie tagoteba buna no'mwekungi* are (A pregnant woman will never claim to be a virgin) shows that women are there for sex and nothing else.

Women are also regarded as objects when they are minded of their role of child bearing as shown in example 4.33 *Omokungu otagete koibora tari korara na'yanga* (A woman who wants to give birth never sleeps with clothes). The imagery of a woman as a bee, the lexical items such as eat and honey in example 4.34 *Omokungu nigo ange chinchoke, morende buya onyore oboke, gokomogechia nigo akoba omotindi* (A woman is like a bee, treat her well and you will eat honey, mistreat and she will turn violent) reflect women as commodities of men.

The study observes that the traditional Gusii community socialized women to accept playing the object role as long as they satisfy the desires of men. Consequently, women had to embrace this societal expectation by paying attention to their physical appearance and to remain attractive as dictated in the proverbs below:

Example 4.35

Ekieni ki'omokungu mbosa onye onde taiyo okomotonera

(A beauty of woman becomes useless if no one admires her)

Example 4.36

Omokungu nigo akogoka ekeru akorora omosacha agogenda gochia ase are

(A woman smiles when a man approaches her)

The lexical items that describe a woman's beauty shows that women have to pay attention to their beauty since they are expected to be admired by men in order to be respected as shown in example 4.35 and entertain them as reflected in example 36. The study further observes that the representation of women in these proverbs may reflect as well as influence the socialization process of children and the social

regulations in traditional Gusii communities. The study observes that proverbs as an agent of socialization determine how people make sense of reality which accordingly influences the course of their actions. The findings in this section conquer with Moscovici (1984) who argues that “where reality is concerned, these representations are all we have, that to which our perceptual, as well as our cognitive systems are adjusted”.

4.2.4 Vulnerability and dependence

In Gusii community the female gender is represented as vulnerable especially where physical strength is concerned. In a number of proverbs women are represented as a vulnerable as shown below:

Example 4.37

Mosacha kare moyo nigo anga ritiro rire enyasi

(When the husband is alive, he is like wall pillar)

Example 4.38

Omosacha karebwoye ne ritiro rire enyasi

(A man who is in his home, he is like a wall pillar)

Example 4.37 and 4.38 above presupposes that the absence of male figure indicates destruction for women. Both proverbs reveal that men play a pivotal role in the society while women are relegated to a secondary position. The conceptual metaphor man is a pillar in both the proverbs indicates that presupposes that women depend on men for protection and a woman cannot protect herself or feel safe without a man.

Women are represented as vulnerable as shown in proverbs that reveal the absence of male figure (widowhood) which portrays destruction of women:

Example 4.39

Mokungu takomanya buya bwamosacha oye gotatiga otigaire omoboraka

(A woman will never know the value of her husband until she becomes a widow)

Example 4.39 above represents women as those who are reliant on men for their worth and decisions of life.

4.2.5 Women and intelligence

The data collected reveal that some of the Ekegusii proverbs portray women as being imprudent, childish and unintelligent. A close analysis of the data shows that women are presented as unintelligent and uselessly talkative. Example 40 and 41 below show that women are represented as uselessly talkative:

Example 4.40

Abakungu nabaya ko'menwa yabasarirwe

(Women are good only spoiled by gossiping)

Example 4.41

Omosacha oyo nigo abwate omomwa bwo'mokungu

(He is a man with a woman's tongue)

Example 4.40 and 4.41 indicate that language of proverbs is based on human experience and activities and frequent references are made to body parts. In the two proverbs women's goodness is compared with a part in a human body the mouth and

the tongue which establishes negative connotations. The mouth has been used metaphorically to show that women do most of the talking, yet it is usually about nothing important. Example 4.41 above show that the proverb makes reference to a woman's tongue yet the proverb is about a man. This clearly shows that there is no equivalence of this proverb for the male gender. In other words as much as women talk much they say nothing. Women in traditional Gusii Community are thus represented as loquacious, weak and incapable of thinking for themselves. The findings presuppose that women do not participate in the community governance because they are intellectually incapable of doing so. The proverbs are meant to discredit women intellectually.

In example 4.42 and 4.45 women are not only represented as talkative but they are also projected as fools:

Example 4.42

Omokungu nigo akorengereria buna omwana

(Women's thinking is that of a child)

Example 4.43

Omokungu nigo ange omwana

(The woman is like a child)

Example 4.44

Omokungu tari korengereria are goetania egetanda keria akorarera

(A woman never thinks beyond her bed)

Example 4.45

Omokungu amo negento getari kiangencho nigo babwekaine

(A woman and something useless are the same thing)

The proverbs above depict gender bias and discrimination prevalent in Gusii community. The proverbs make use of semantic traits of such lexical items as: child, never thinks and invalid, that carry the nuance of negativity. Women are also perceived to be brainless to an extent they are compared with children as reflected in example 4.42-4.45 hence they must be guided at all times. The four examples show that by equating a woman's cognitive thinking with that of a child or invalid portrays how a woman's intellect is demeaned as compared to a man's. The study observes that such beliefs and opinions in traditional Gusii community were meant to deny women the opportunity to participate in various spheres such as sociopolitical decision making for the betterment of the family or society. This is the reason why in traditional Gusii community leadership is preserved for men. In the contemporary world such opinions do not hold nonetheless there are many men who still do not trust women's intelligence. The above findings confirm (Cameron, 1999) findings that suggest that women, when compared to men, lack the necessary air of competence, seriousness, directness, assertiveness.

4.2.6 Negative representation of women: evil/untrustworthy/gossipers and promiscuous

The data collected reveal that Ekegusii proverbs are used to subjugate women. According to (Tair, 1980) the word woman in the proverbs generally carries negative connotations and is used in a belittling and derogatory manner. The use of proverbial language through metaphors reflects social views and attitudes of the Gusii

community such as defaming, belittling and regarding women as subordinate. Such gendered proverbs have been used to demean womanhood.

For instance, women have been presented as evil beings" who subvert men's "ideal" plans as shown below:

Example 4.46

Kobeka Mokeira ibega inkebera kwerentereire

(Cohabiting with another woman other than your wife is like bring upon yourself a boil)

Example 4.47

Esese eaberi nero yarusetue esese etwoni bogere

(A female dog made a male dog to loiter from far)

Example 4.48

Onye mokuomana nomosacha oo botuko, nabo okorara chotoro chionsi, onye mokuomana na mokao tobaisa korara nonya

(If you quarrel with your husband, you can deeply sleep but if you quarrel with your wife, never attempt to sleep)

Example 4.46 and 4.48 shows that evilness is something that is usually associated with women. Example 4.46 above compares women to a boil meaning that they are trouble. The proverb thus implies that keeping close to "Mokeira" which a woman's reference will be bringing trouble for yourself. The proverb cautions the male gender or any other person to be weary of people who cannot be trusted, since they will

eventually lead one to trouble. The proverb shows gender biasness since as much as it is warning everyone reference is made to women (Mokeira). This proverb is further affirms with example 4.47 that warns men not to repose too much confidence in any woman since they are generally trouble, *esese eaberi* (female dog) refer to women that they are the source of evil caused by men (male dogs). Women are presented as evil and negative especially someone who is capable of harming others and plotting against them. Example 48 shows that women are very dangerous and men should be very careful with them especially if you have differences. This finding in Ekegusii are in line with (Adler, 2012) who observes that women are considered to be gifted with the power of manipulation of the minds and that is why they are used by evil forces for making men commit evil deeds.

The data collected reveal that women are generally more prone to getting jealous and devising great plots against one another as revealed in the data below:

Example 4.49

Baibori bamwabo nechinyongo chio'borongi

(Two wives are two pots of witchcraft)

The metaphor “*nechinyongo*” maps onto “*chio'borongi*”. In traditional Gusii community a pot was used as the cooking vessel as opposed to the more modern *sufuria*. This proverb presupposes that witchcraft is brewed in pot and such a pot was believed to get rid of the sorcery even when cleaned. This proverb therefore presupposes that two wives never ceasing to plot evil against each other. Therefore two women according to Gusii culture are seen as witches as long as they lived together. The proverb thus renders women as vicious and covetous and as people who

can never live in harmony with other women, as rivalry never ceases between them as long as they live together sharing a man. This proverb is further affirmed by the example 50 below:

Example 4.50

Moibori omino nkerecha kere enyasi

(Your co-wife is like a devil in the wall)

The phrase “*a devil in the wall*” depicts women negatively. Subsequently, the proverbs in this category warn people against women. The proverb insinuates that Women should be extra careful with their fellow women since they are there to undermine the efforts of their fellow women.

Further some proverbs associate with lexical items such as confrontations and gossip which depict women as the being a reason for all the conflicts that ever take place or will take place as shown in the example below:

Example 4.51

Mwanya baiseke bange tanya koborwa insega

(The family with many girls never misses contestations)

Example 4.52

Ekero chingoko chigochicha amo koragera tobaisa gochiruta obori

(Where hens gather to feed do not throw millet)

Example 4.53

Omokungu nyamang'ana mange omoeri oye nigo agwesamba omonwa

(A gossiping woman burns her mouth in the end)

Example 4.54

Abakungu nabaya ko' nemenwa yabasaririe

(Women are good but gossiping has made them wicked)

The word *bange* in example 4.51 to 4.54 is highly negative as they show women a reason for all the conflicts in the society. Women are also associated with negative social activity of gossip that may be a threat to a peaceful society. Example 4.51 *Mwanya baiseke bange tanya koborwa insega* (The family with many girls never misses confrontations) insinuates that whenever women are together, chaos, noise and any other form of conflict should be expected. Example 4.51 to 4.54 insinuates that women are good at gossip and they can never be trusted with any secrets at any level of institution.

In example 4.52 *Ekeru chingoko chigocha amo koragera tobaisa gochirutera obori* (where hens gather to feed do not throw millet) is a warning that women can never be trusted with any interest. Further, through semantic derogation the word *engoko* is used metaphorically used to invoke negative attitudes towards female gender as shown in the proverbs below: This explains why in traditional Gusii community where the community secrets were never vested in the house of a woman. This is further backed up by narratives in Gusii community that show that women betrayed their society. The study observes that these proverbs were coined like this to deny women to participate in leadership roles. In example 4.54 *Abakungu nabaya ko' nemenwa yabasaririe* (women are good but gossiping has made them wicked) the

adjective ‘wicked’ has been used instead of bad or evil to represent women as in possession of all evilness.

A further close analysis of the proverbs reveals that gendered proverbs also reveal the aspect of promiscuity in the society and often such proverbs are directed towards women more than they are to men as shown in the examples below:

Example 4.55

Omokungu omonyakieni ne'mechando

(A beautiful young woman is trouble)

In example 4.55 a beautiful young woman *omokungu omonyakieni*, in this proverb is metaphorically referred to as trouble, “*mechando*”. This proverb depicts gender prejudice in the representation of a beautiful woman who instead of being appreciated the focus is on the negative. This proverb is used to demean, disrespect and devalue the females in this society. The proverb presupposes that the beauty of a woman is attached to promiscuity. This proverb shows unfair treatment of the beautiful feminine folk as there is no established casual connection between physical beauty and faults in character. The proverb associates that elegance and admiration with a promiscuous lifestyle.

In example 4.56 below the imagery of a woman being a cow is commonly used in Gusii community to discredit women:

Example 4.56

Mokungu obande nyabarati ere bweri torusia mokorogoto agage insoni chitamere magachi otangange tureti binyunsa bire mioro

(Somebody's wife is like a black cow in the cowpen, do not remove the barrier or else she will be loose and shame will befall you at the elder's court)

The woman in proverb 4.56 is compared to '*Nyabarati*' a name given to a black cow. The image cow compares a woman to a cow in the shade which a man should not let loose lest shame will befall you in the elder's court. The proverb insinuates that in this case a woman is an immoral being but a man is not. The semantic references to women in Ekegusii proverbs as with lexical items such as a *hen, cow, wicked, devil, and trouble* generally demean women. Such proverbs play a communicative role of warning members of the society against women. The analysis above shows that the portrayal of women in Gusii culture is through a number of metaphors such as imagery of tamable animals such as a cow or birds such as a hen.

Nonetheless, illustrations which make references to women are not only belittling but prejudiced against women. Such realities contributes to the establishments of stereotypes which are definitely very negative and they end up prejudicing people in society towards women. These findings reveal that language used in a given community influences the way its members analyze and interpret their daily experiences and world view. Moreover, language used in society contains views that are biased which end up influencing societal perceptions to the extent that it feels natural or the 'norm'.

Other negative nuanced proverbs in Gusii culture depict women as lazy and parasitic as shown below:

Example 4.57

Sinywa koruga otamere nko mbese

(Cook unworthy ugali and give excuse of firewood`)

Example 4.58

Tobaisa gosanera omokungu obwate chimbere chingiya onye tobwati enibo

(Do not desire a woman with beautiful breasts if you do not have wealth)

Example 4.59

Omokungu ne'mbogo egokonywa amanyinga korende tegokoa manyinga

(A woman is like a tsetse fly that sucks blood but doesn't donate blood)

Example 4.57 projects women as lazy people who do not own up to their mistakes and accept guidance. Instead they always come up with excuses when they fail to perform their duties. In this case they cannot be trusted by societal roles. Example 4.58 *Tobaisa gosanera omokungu obwate chimbere chingiya onye tobwati enibo* (Do not desire a woman with beautiful breasts if you do not have wealth) reveal that Women are materialistic and they do not like poor men. Such kind of women marries men for money and wealth. Further, in example 4.59 *Omokungu ne'mbogo egokonywa amanyinga korende tegokoa manyinga* (A woman is like a tsetse fly that sucks blood but doesn't donate blood) women are portrayed as extravagant in spending the hard-earned money of their men. The proverb implies that men are disturbed by the lavish spending of their wives who do not realize the pain of earning. The study observes that such negative representation of women was meant to deny them from participating in important activities in the society.

4.2.7 Positive representation of Women

Data analysis reveal that nonetheless the assumed ‘paucity’ of women as represented in some Gusii proverbs, they are ideally expected to be hardworking. There are other proverbs that create a positive impression about women’s roles and emphasize how essential they are in the family.

The proverbs depicts the importance of women in the family and community at large. The proverb suggests that women are productive when they are in the home and the family will never survive without them. The importance of women is through negation where a homestead without a woman is metaphorically equated to a granary without grains. The conceptual metaphor of a woman being a granary with grains illustrates the importance of a woman in family and community.

Some proverbs 4.60 – 4.61 represent the high esteem that the Gusii community place on mothers as shown below:

Example 4.60

Abanto bonsi bagokoanga, irana ase nyoko

(If everybody hates you, go back to your mother)

Example 4.61

Omokungu nere ogotinyia omwana oye amariga

(It is a mother who wipes her children tears)

Example 4.60 makes use of conditional sentences to insinuate that a mother will never abandon her children irrespective of the situation while example 61 insinuates that it is only the mother that can effectively wipe the tears of the child. The proverb

presupposes that it is only mothers that give unconditional love. A further analysis shows that the representation of women in some proverbs relate to what they ought to be rather than what they are as shown in example 62 *Omong'ina omuya nigo amanyete ekio abana baye bagochia koria* (A good mother knows what her children will eat).

4.2.8 Contestation of masculine identities

A close analysis of the data collected reveals that some proverbs in Gusii culture manifest women with excessive masculine energy. Proverbs for women who are more assertive, adventurous, independent, and strong has been central in Gusii discourses. Connell (1995) cautions that masculinity is not a property of men, and reminds us to be weary of using the terms 'men', 'male' and 'masculinity' interchangeably. Likewise, Sedgwick (1995) declares: "As a woman, I am a consumer of masculinities, but I am not more so than men; and like men, I as a woman am also a producer of masculinities and a performer of them." This reinforces the fact that women too hold and display features of masculinities. Proverbs that reveal feminine masculinity in Gusii culture depict woman traits such as competitiveness, aggressiveness, and dominance are as shown below:

Example 4.63

Omokungu oisaine abasacha batano na barare

(A woman who is worth seven men)

Example 4.64

Omokungu omokong'u korende tabwati ensara

(A strong woman but without an arrow)

Example 4.65

Nigo are omokungu ouretwe obosacha

(She is a woman whose penis was taken from her)

Example 4.63-4.65 above reveal that in Gusii culture a woman who exhibits features of masculine energies such as assertive, independent, and strong woman and probably participates in activities traditionally ascribed to men is seen as a man in a woman's body. For instance, in example 4.63 *Omokungu oisaine anasacha batano na' barare* (A woman who is worth seven men) the meaning of linguistic form woman is semantic understood through the concept of the lexical items worth *seven men*. Such a woman is bold and confident of her abilities which in Gusii culture ascribes to a real man. The masculine energy in such a woman expressed through her toughness, strength and resilience. In contemporary world this quality can be helpful in difficult times and challenging situations where a woman may need to be strong for herself or for others.

In example 4.64 *Omokungu omokung'u korende tabwati ensara* (A strong woman but without an arrow) and example 4.65 *Nigo are omokungu ouretwe obosacha* (She is a woman whose penis was taken from her) reveal that strong women, assertive and independent women are seen as men in a woman's body. The two proverbs above make reference to the body parts of a man *ensara* (arrow) and *obosacha* (penis) which conceptual portrays the masculine energies of a man. Noteworthy, is the fact that such proverbs that reveal masculine energies in women show that despite the progress made by women they continue to face traditional stereotypes.

The above analysis is further affirmed by proverbs that reveal name calling of women that show masculinity as shown below:

Example 4.66

Nigo omokungu obariretie amaiso

(She is a red eyed woman)

Example 4.67

Omokungu nyamong'ento

(A muscular woman)

A semantic interpretation of concepts *red-eyed* and *muscular* as used in example 4.66 and 4.67 reveal a case of semantic derogation in representation of women who have made significant progress in activities traditionally ascribed to men. The concept of colour red in example 4.66 in Gusii culture is associated with danger. This then implies that the colour “red” is synonymous with wild, uncontrollable and domineering characteristics. Therefore, instead of a woman who is perceived to be independent, assertive, and strong women in Gusii culture to be appreciated the society looks at her as unmanageable and non-marriageable. A muscular woman on the other hand presupposes a hard working woman however such a woman is semantically seen in the lens of a man.

4.3 Gender identity and Construction of Gender Roles

This section focuses on representations of men and women in Ekegusii proverbs in terms of their responsibilities, roles and positions in the family or household. Blackstone (2003) defines gender roles as particular traits, statuses, or values that

individuals, groups and societies ascribe to individuals purely based on their sex. Some proverbs in Gusii societies reflect gender role constructs that exist among them. Otiso (2016) observes that proverbs construct gender besides aligning the gender roles of men and women. Gender construction and gender roles are intertwined since a person's sex presents the ground for gendering and assignment of the gender roles. As discussed in section 4.1 gender identities are socially constructed based on our everyday observations, experiences and encounters with other individuals in other society.

Dobson (1995) argues that individuals develop different identities based on their interactions with their fellow beings. The sense of community and fellowship relates closely to the idea of social identity of an individual self (Dobson, 1995). Noteworthy, there are strong influences of the community and the people with whom an individual self identifies and associates (Ibid). Consequently, gender (the acceptance of self as female or male sex and the roles and expectations attached to that sex) as one of the identities of an individual is largely created by her/his social interactions and influenced by the community.

Moreover, gender roles are reinforced from an early age at the family unit in our society. In this vain, the development of a person's gender identity depends on what was attached to one as a child through socialization. Socialization is achieved through various agents such as family, peer, churches, schools and media that contribute to the shaping of gender roles. The gender roles and identity is closely associated with the culture and institutional arrangements of the society through which it operates. In fact, (Hall, 1990) observes that gender identity is not universal but culture specific discursive construction and cultural identity is continuously formed. That is gender identity is cultural specific and socially constructed, which shows variations across

time and space. This section therefore discusses gender identity and construction of gender roles in Ekegusii proverbs where language plays a major role of gender construction. The analysis is in terms of gender roles sub categories which are reproductive, productive and socio-political management roles.

4.3.1 Reproductive roles

Reproductive roles have to do with activities that include child bearing, care giving and mentorship in the home. Proverbs in this category are used in various contexts such as at an initiation ceremony when teaching the initiates their gender responsibilities and roles in the family or at a wedding ceremony when advising a married couple on married life. Hussein (2005) argues that the female body is the subject of numerous assumptions and projections in oral traditions such as proverbs regarding what is good, bad and repugnant. In this vain, mothers are reflected to be the creators of society given that they are the makers of the future generations. Some proverbs show that a fundamental role that gives a woman an identity is the role of child bearing as shown below:

Example 4.68

Nonyuoma omokungu omuya mwanchaine nigo are omogeni mbaka oiboire

(A wife remains a stranger until she gives birth)

Example 4.69

Omokungu otagete koibora tari korara na 'yanga

(A woman who wants to give birth never sleeps with clothes)

Example 4.68 and 4.69 show that in Gusii culture the construction of femininity in Gusii culture is embedded in the concepts of fertility and reproduction which are directly linked to the notion of motherhood, procreation and lineage longevity. In example 4.68 *Nonyuoma omokungu omuya mwanchaine nigo are omogeni mbaka oiboire* (A wife remains a stranger until she gives birth) shows that a wife only becomes valued after she gives birth. This explains the reason why mother in Gusii culture is more glorified than a wife as discussed in section 4.2.1.

These findings are in line with Hussein (2005) who contends that the politics of representing the mother figure in glorified manner is ingeniously related to the reproduction role; that is by projecting women within the paradigm of sex. Consequently, reproduction in many African cultures is presumed to be the main function of women. Example 4.69 *Omokungu otagete koibora tari korara na'yanga* (A woman who wants to give birth never sleeps with clothes) when used in the context of a male-female relationship; is based on sociological-biological trajectory that insinuates women as selfish, untrustworthy and treachery. Noteworthy as much gendered proverbs reflect societal perceptions of gender roles historically, the study observes that in contemporary Gusii society the younger generations are shunning some of these pieces of advice.

A close analysis of data in this section reveals that caregiving and mentorship of children are engrained in Gusii culture and as such these functions regularly fuel expression in both proverb formulations and usage. The range of issues canvassed in proverbs focused on caregiving and mentorship as roles of a mother as shown below:

Example 4.70

Kera engoko nigo egokurera ebichuchu biaye binyore endagera

(To your mother, you are still child regardless of age)

Example 4.71

Omwana ekeru are na ng'ina nigo akogendera koba omwana botambe

(A child to the mother never grows)

Example 4.72

Abanto bonsi bagokoanga, irana ase nyoko

(If everybody rejects you, go back to your mother)

Example 4.70 to 4.72 inscribes the conceptualization of femininity as reflected in the maternal roles of mothers in terms of birth, nurturing and socialization of children. The use of the conceptual metaphor in example 4.70 *Kera engoko nigo egokurea ebichuchu biaye binyore endagera* (Every hen will scratch the ground for its chicks) where a woman is equated to a hen presupposes that a cock (men) which is a masculine noun cannot raise chicks (children). Example 4.71 *Omwana ekeru are na ng'ina nigo akogendera koba omwana botambe* (A child to the mother never grows) ingeniously associates a lifelong role of nurturing and socialization with mothers. Example 72 *Abanto bonsi bagokoanga, irana ase nyoko* (If everybody rejects you, go back to your mother on the other hand reveal that love, compassion, and dedication are perceived as feminine attributes. The proverb projects women maternal love and compassion for their children and that such love transcends barriers and disabilities.

Moreover, some proverbs insinuates that mothers were responsible of imparting early knowledge and values such as leadership and life skills that enable them co-exist in

the society. This explains the reason why the moral characters of a child in traditional Gusii culture are associated with the mother as shown:

Example 4.73

Nyang'era ndotungi na emori yaye ndotungi

(The female cow which is uncontrollable passes the same traits to its young ones)

In example 4.73 a woman is conceptually presented as a cow. The proverb presupposes that one of the grounds of ascribing femininity is that mothers provide education, parenting and encouragement to their children. In example 4.73 above *Nyangera* is a female cow. It is associated with a woman that if a woman is rowdy, the same will be reflected in children. The proverb ingeniously excludes men from unruly children but associated them with the mother since the society ascribes the role of education, parenting and knowledge to mothers.

Thus, being a mother in traditional Gusii culture was important as mother brought forth children, nurtured and cared for them. Consequently, every child was supposed to respect its mother irrespective of whom she was as inscribed in the proverbs below:

Example 4.74

Omwana omoriri nere orachaye ng'ina

It is only a foolish child who despises her mother

Example 4.75

Nyoko naba omogutu gose gakobeka amachanchabe tokomokana

You cannot deny your mother due to old age or dressed in rags

Example 4.74 and 4.75 reveal the value placed on mothers by their children due maternal to the maternal roles they play in their life.

4.3.2 Productive and management roles

Productive roles are activities carried out by men and women in order to meet the needs of the family and management roles are activities that ensure the provision and maintenance of resources for family needs and those that involve socio-political decision making. People learn gender roles from institutionalized gender systems, which are through various means such as social, economic, legislative, political, traditional and cultural structures.

A close analysis of the data reveals that in traditional Gusii culture housekeeping and domestic chores that predominantly performed by women. Such chores include daily routine tasks such cooking, washing, and serving visitors as shown in the proverbs below:

Example 4.76

Omong'ina omuya nigo amanyete ekio abana baye bagochia koria

(A good mother knows what her children will eat)

Example 4.77

Sinywa koruga otamere nko mbese

(Failure to cook is not attributed to poor firewood)

Example 4.78

Omokungu siomiasiomia ng'ai akomanya bwarugeirwe gose mboke gose mbwa mwana?

(How will a wife /woman who roams from place to place know where the ugali has been cooked and whether it is just a little meant for the child?)

Example 4.79

Moiseke tari bogeni

(A lady is not worth a visitation)

Example 4.76-4.79 above reveals that housekeeping in traditional Gusii culture is a chore reserved for women. The proverbs portray the woman as a domestic being. The proverbs show that women in Gusii culture are responsible for home chores and related issues as cooking and serving visitors. Example 4.76 *Omong'ina omuya nigo amanyete ekio abana baye bagochia koria* (A good mother knows what her children will eat) insinuates that mothers are always responsible than the fathers in providing for the family.

Example 4.78 and 4.79 reveals that it is the responsibility of women to stay at home and prepare food for their children. Example 4.79 *Moiseke tari bogeni* (A lady is never a visitor) insinuates that the place of women is in the Kitchen. This implies that ladies should be serving never sit and wait to be served whenever they go for visitation. They should join those doing such chores. The study observes that such proverbs that depict women as domestic being are normally used as a proof of women's weaknesses and incompleteness. The findings show that when such biased beliefs as domestic chores being a preserve for women may predispose girls into thinking that their place is in the kitchen/ homestead. It is also such biased beliefs that places women in subordinate positions. Another proverb that affirms the sentiments above is shown below:

Example 4.80

Enka etabuati omokungu nigo enga ekiage getabuati endagera

(A homestead without a woman is like a granary without grains)

The proverb above represent women positive in that it acknowledges the centrality of a woman in the homestead. Conversely, this acknowledgement is constricted to a small space since it shows that women's activities are mainly confined to indoor activities and domestic chores such as cooking for the family and raising children. The proverb reveals that women are productive when they are in the home and the family will never survive without them. The metaphor of a granary represents a woman's strength in the home, in that among other things, she does the household chores, raises children and takes care of hospitality. Yieke, (2001) observes that such biased portrayal serve to subvert the Gusii girls' way of thinking and as a consequence, restrict the choices available for girls, especially in the public domain.

A further analysis of the masculine roles shows that men are expected to do the heavy task while the light ones are reserved for women. Accordingly, some activities are considered masculine, while others are viewed as being feminine. The data shows that some tasks and activities like tilling in the farm or harvesting were meant for both men and women.

Example 4.81

Mokungu tana gotomwa sira

(A woman is never sent to collect a debt)

Example 4.82

Omokungu omweanyi motarere ekeru gietoigo

(Visit a proud woman during the rainy season)

Example 4.83

Mokungu omworo, mororere mogondo

(Judge the laziness of the woman at the garden)

Example 4.81-4.83 shows a distinction of the duties of *omokungu* (a woman), and a man (*omosacha*) in society. The term *omokungu* (a woman) in Ekegusii is derived from a verb *ogokunga* which means to 'take care of.' The two lexical terms are used metaphorically to express society's expectations of a woman. All the proverbs insinuate that a woman is expected to remain within the homestead and manage the affairs of her home. In example 4.81 *Mokungu tana gotomwa sira* (A woman is never sent to collect a debt) reveal that in traditional Gusii culture the duties of a woman entailed cooking for the family, taking care of the children and taking care of the home. Thus, the woman should stay within a homestead and responsibilities which involved being away from home like going to collect a debt were not meant for women. On the contrary, the same proverb reveals that a man is expected to go out to work and take care of his wife's needs. Tasks which involved moving away from home were meant for men. This is implicitly expressed in their *omosacha* which derived the Kisii word *ogosacha* meaning go out in search of property or assets.

Example 4.82-4.83 further illustrates the roles of a woman. The proverb reveals that another role of activity that women participate in is farming. Example 4.82 suggests that if you visit a woman during the rainy season you are likely to find her house full of mud and generally the house disorganized and dirty. The proverbs highlight the

important role of women as home keepers. This presupposes that it is the role of women to keep a home conducive and habitable to all. Example 4.83 on the other hand suggest that if you want to know whether a woman you have married is hardworking, give her a jembe to go and weed at the garden so that you can assess her. Thus, the Gusii society equates a dirty home to an irresponsible and a lazy woman while a clean home reflects a focused woman who is committed to her duties.

The analysis also reveals that Ekegusii proverbs emphasize on the need for the man to ensure that his woman is well-groomed:

Example 4.84

Omokungu nigo ange chinchoke, morende buya onyore oboke, gokomogechia nigo akoba omotindi

(A woman is like a bee, treat her well and you will eat honey, mistreat her and she will turn violent)

In the proverb above a woman is conceptually as bee which is a derogatory term applied to women who have achieved success in traditionally male-dominated society. Such women often take on “masculine” traits hence they must be treated well by men in order to be more productive. The proverb reveals that as much as such women equal the men in so many ways; the proverb still emphasizes on the sheer authority that the men have over them irrespective of their achievements as shown by use of modal auxiliary and the conceptual metaphor honey that equates to edible food.

4.3.3 Gendered proverbs and Social roles

The data collected also show how gendered Ekegusii proverbs define social roles among the Abagusii. The study observes that gendered Ekegusii proverbs as a cultural

tool serves to define the duties and responsibilities of individuals towards others in society. In Abagusii culture family is regarded as the main principal of the community (cf. Ayioka, 2014). In this spirit, men and women are assigned different social roles that help in establishing and maintaining of a new family. Some of gendered Ekegusii proverbs that illustrate social roles are as shown below:

Example 4.85

Esigani mboraro inka

(A go-between is a bridge to a home)

Example 4.86

Genda ase getinge omere otari kenyambi

(Go to your marital home and flourish but not be a weed)

Example 4.87

Onye nyokokoro kare inka,rirorio mbuya ore,onde taiyo oragokune

(As long as your grandmother is at home,nobody will harm you)

Example 4.88

Eero n' eyabagaka

(The sitting room is for men)

Example 4.85 *Esigani mboraro inka* (A go-between is a bridge to a home) reveals a social role played by an elderly woman. The sentence has three lexical items that demonstrate this role I *esigani* (a go- between), *mboraro* (a bridge) and *inka* (a home). The, lexical item a *go-between* signifies a person who helps a man to get a suitable

woman for a wife. In Gusii culture such a woman has the responsibility to study the habits of the man and woman and their family backgrounds before they could be linked by marriage. This was usually done with a purpose of ensuring that the two avoids marriage conflicts. The lexical item *mboraro* (a bridge) is conceptually used to mean unity of the two families. The use of the conceptual metaphor bridge helps to highlight the role of an elderly woman in a family. In Gusii culture, the mediator was to maintain constant contact with the family to help them remain united. Thus, in traditional Gusii culture the elderly women play this fundamental role in ensuring that a man and a woman are able to form a new family as signified by the lexical item *inka* (home).

Example 4.86 *Genda ase getinge omere otari kenyambi* (Go to your marital home, grow well and do not be a weed) makes reference to women. The proverb is in form of a declarative sentence and in terms of contextual meaning is a message of goodwill to a woman who is leaving her father's home to go and settle or start a new life in her bridegrooms place. The lexical item *Kenyambi* (weed) is a conceptual metaphor that refers to a woman as unwanted plant. The bride is being advised not to be a weed. The woman is advised ingeniously on the roles that she should play while in her new home. The lexical item *omere buya* (grow well) conceptual refers to untroubled union. Example 4.86 thus enumerates the social expectations of the society on a woman who is leaving her patriarchal home to go and start a new life in marriage. The proverbs express the social bond that exists among the people in society.

Example 4.87 *Onye nyokokoro kare inka, riroria mbuya ore, onde taiyo oragokune* (As long as your grandmother is at home, nobody will harm you reveal that another a social role of elderly women such as grandmothers is to protect their grandchildren.

The proverb insinuates that grandmothers are always wise and can give you advice which will safeguard you from danger.

Example 88 *Eero n' eyabagaka* (The sitting room is for men) makes reference to men and thus reveal their social roles. The proverb emphasizes that *eero* (the sitting room) is a reservation of *abagaka* (adult men). This is a room that is usually reserved to entertain important guests and it also serves as the dining room. The *eero* (the sitting room) is also used for holding important meetings such as negotiations or solving conflicts. The proverb thus hints on the social the roles that men take part in, which include being the decision makers in the family and taking part in family and clan negotiations. The study observes that since this proverb makes reference to *abagaka* (adult men) the proverb insinuates that there are certain roles which women and young males.

4.4 Complementary presentation of Masculine and Feminine identities

The data collected show that there are proverbs which make reference to both men and women. These representations usually emphasize gender constructions by demarcating the roles of men and those of women. Such proverbs are illustrated below:

Example 4.89

Omosacha asache n'omokungu akunge

(Let the husband look for wealth and let the wife take care of it.)

Example 4.90

Abasacha mbaniberani na abakungu mbaiborerani

(Men help one another to beget wealth while women help one another to beget children)

Example 4.91

Omokungu nigo are egesicha, omosacha oye norobayo rorigeterete

(A wife is like a flower and the husband is like a fence around it)

Example 4.92

Omokungu otamire bwoye tari ko'anga mosacha omotagete barare nere

(A divorced woman does not refuse a man who wants to sleep with her)

Example 4.93

Omokungu nere okobiara omosacha

(It is a woman who gives birth to a man)

Example 4.89 and 4.93 above reveal the different gender roles as projected in proverbs. In Example 4.89 *Omosacha asache n'omokungu akunge* (Let the husband look for wealth and let the wife take care of it) men are assigned the role of gathering for wealth while the women are to take care of it. In Gusii culture such demarcation of the roles for men and women facilitates effectiveness as each person concentrates on specific duties. The proverb also enables people to judge the efficiency or inefficiency of a particular person based on the performance of their gender roles in case of conflicts.

Example 4.90 *Abasacha mbaniberani na abakungu mbaiborerani* (Men help one another to beget wealth while women help one another to beget children) is a proverb

used in the context of marriage. The proverb was used in a case where a man wanted to marry but could not meet the obligation of paying dowry in form cattle. In this case his male relatives were required to contribute since they are the ones who own livestock. This acts of generosity show that men help one another in getting wealth. The second part on women happened in the context of polygamous marriage which was allowed in traditional Gusii culture. In case of a polygamous marriage where a daughter got married and dowry was paid, it was acceptable for the same dowry to be given out to facilitate a step-son's marriage. The proverb emphasizes on the virtue of communal sharing. The men share that which they have accumulated while the women share through their children. Noteworthy, is the view that the world is viewed from men's perspective. The data reveals that women are projected as additional, secondary and supportive in their social roles. Men are seen as wealth creators and women role is secondary that of taking care.

Example 4.91 *Omokungu nigo are egesicha, omosacha oye norobayo rorigeterete* (A wife is like a flower and the husband is like a fence around it) through imagery portrays the woman as a flower garden; beautiful yet frail and powerless without the man who ensures her safety as a fence does to a flower garden. In fact, in traditional Gusii marriage ceremonies, the bride is usually referred to as a flower that the man sees and decides to seek permission from her family to pluck her and take her away. This proverb shows the relative status and position of both genders in Gusii social fabric. Men are metaphorically referred to as the fence which implies that women relies on men for protection. The proverb ingeniously renders men powerful, strong and entrusted with the cultural responsibility of controlling and safeguarding the supposedly minus strength in womenfolk. This dependency of women upon men ranges from the affairs of homemaking to the wider socio-economic sphere as

discussed in section 4.1. The controlling power of men is also reflected in moral issues as portrayed in Example 4.92 *Omokungu otamire bwoiya tari ko'anga mosacha omotagete barare nere* (A divorced woman does not refuse a man who invites her to bed with her) where the community perceives a divorced woman as a prostitute and who can sleep with any man.

Example 4.93 *Omokungu nere okobiara omosacha* (It is a woman who gives birth to a man) shows that irrespective on how men may express their masculinity the women are considered with high respect since she is the one that gives birth to a man. In this regard a woman is valued in traditional society especially if she gives birth to boys. In fact, if a mother gave birth to daughters only in traditional Gusii society, she was not accepted and the husband ended up marrying another woman to bear him boys. Hence in Gusii customs, men maintained the lineage of the family while girls were mainly important because of the dowry that parents received when they married.

A close analysis of the data collected reveal that some proverbs disclose a gender-neutral language. A gender-neutral language is a generic term covering the use of non-sexist language, inclusive language or gender-fair language. The purpose of gender-neutral language is to avoid word choices which may be interpreted as biased, discriminatory or demeaning by implying that one sex or social gender is the norm. The following proverbs below illustrate how the Ekegusii proverbs employ a gender-neutral language to express social expectations particularly such as cooperation, kindness to others especially strangers, respect for the elderly and unconditional love for family members and friends:

Example 4.94

Nguba emo tekoira ngombe roche

(One shield cannot take cattle to the river)

Example 4.95

Nchera ya bange ngiya nabo omo akorusia onde kiogoto riso.

(A path of many is safer for one may remove a speck from the other's eye)

Example 4.96

Nchera ya babere nobwari

(A path of two is all joy)

Example 4.94 to 4.96 reveals a gender-neutral language in Ekegusii proverbs. The proverbs address the phenomenon of virtue for both men and women. Example 4.94 *Nguba emo tekaira ngombe roche* (One shield cannot take cattle to the river) shows the use neutral terms to refer to both men and women. *Nguba emo* (One shield) represents both men and women who may be individualistic, followed by the verb phrase ``cannot take'' (*tekaira*), which carries the informative function of the verb, then the noun *ngombe* (cattle) and lastly the prepositional phrase *roche* (to the river). The proverb warns members of the society on how risky it can be to take the cattle to the river alone. This may due to the presence of cattle rustlers and wild animals. The proverb reveals that the Abagusii greatly valued cattle as part of their wealth hence the need to secure it from all sorts of threats. This proverb therefore emphasizes on virtue the importance of unity and cooperation in society.

In example 4.95 *Nchera ya bange ngiya nabo omo akorusia onde kiogoto riso* (A path of many is safer for one may remove a speck from the other's eye) the word *many* refers to both men and women. The proverb uses the image of a speck (*kiogoto*) is

conceptually used to refer to problems that one may encounter yet they cannot be handled by an individual. The proverb reveals that it is good to travel in the company of others. The proverb encourages members in the society to co-exist with others. The virtue of unity and cooperation is also reflected in Example 96 *Nchera ya babere nobwari* (A path of two is all joy) that reveals that describes a journey of two as *obwari* (joy). The proverbs discourage individualism and encourage interdependence in the society.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter focuses on gender identities and construction in Ekegusii proverbs. The data analyzed has revealed that gender identities and construction are embedded in Ekegusii gendered proverbs. It reveals that gender identities and construction in Ekegusii proverbs are manifested in the following ways: gender identifies and the masculinity construction, gender identity and the femininity construction, gender identity and construction of gender roles and comparative presentation of masculine and feminine identities. The data shows that Ekegusii gendered proverbs and culture determine the social status of men and women and their roles. The data shows that the social expectations of traditional Gusii society are ingeniously woven in Ekegusii proverbs. The data shows that language in Ekegusii proverbs plays a major role in the social construction of gender. The study shows that proverbs construct gender identities and societal relationship between male and female.

CHAPTER FIVE

EKEGUSII PROVERBS THAT PROMOTE GENDER DIVISION

This chapter discusses the second objective of the study which focuses on the ideologies in Ekegusii proverbs that promote gender polarization. Hussein (2005) defines gender ideology as a systematic set of cultural beliefs through which society constructs and wields its gender relativity and practices. Gender ideology is enclosed in literary genres such as legends, narratives, myths and proverbs or sayings about what is expected of males or females in terms of conduct, roles and functions. This chapter focuses on proverbs which to a great extent embody what is deliberated as desired and undesired behaviour of men and women. As seen in chapter four proverbs are a rich source of imagery hence conceptual metaphors. However, language is not only a means of communication but a medium through which we make sense of the vast universe in which we live. This then implies that language affects human thought processes and behavior (cf. Whorf, 1956; Boas, 1966).

Oha (1998) argues that the problem with the subject on proverbs is that one can be tempted to think highly of the colorful language they use and their value-carrying roles and ignores their sexist tone. Kochman-Haladyj (2020) observes that one of the characteristics of proverbs that warrant them a critical examination is that they promote gender stereotype and they influence the power dynamics between the male and female in African cultures, especially at the disadvantage of women. This is the reason why the current study determines the ideologies in Ekegusii proverbs that causes gender division. Bem (1993) defines gender polarization as the ‘subtle and insidious use’ of the perceived difference between women and men ‘as an organizing principle for the social life of the culture’. This chapter therefore shows how linguistic distinctions in Ekegusii proverbs create perceivable gender ideology. The chapter is

based on the assumption that by making such distinctions the Abagusii end up creating stereotypes, triggering prejudice and instigating discrimination.

The discussion presented in this chapter is based on Fairclough's (2001) and Van Dijk's (2001) CDA tenet on ideology. The two scholars agree that CDA is an approach to language as the primary force for the production and reproduction of ideology. This chapter therefore applies the basic principle of CDA which is the belief schemes that come to be accepted as "common sense". The discussion considers that every society has a set of systems to censure and control the normative concepts of masculine and feminine behaviors. Fairclough (2001) avers that language is a discourse and that discourse is a social practice which involves the whole process of social interaction. Consequently, discourses govern the interpretation of our everyday existence and influence both our way of thinking and our relationship with one another in the world. The process of interpretation is cognitive (Fairclough, 2001). That is interpretation draws upon internalized meanings or ideologies. Van Dijk (2001) shares the same views as he perceives ideology as cognitive where he says that language users as members of groups, organizations or cultures have shared mental representations from which they draw during their interactions.

This chapter focuses on gender ideology which is a system of shaping different lives for men and women by placing them in different social positions and patterns of expectations. Thus, a society strengthens its gender ideology as a form of everyday social practice. Proverbs in the current study are seen as vanguard of mobilizing gender ideology. Proverbs mediate the way of being in Gusii culture including discourse. The gender ideologies in Ekegusii proverbs discussed in this chapter are regarded as mental representations that are productive of ideology. The study

therefore analyzes Ekegusii proverbs that cause gender division in terms of: misogyny and patriarchy ideology.

5.1 Misogyny Ideology

Kramarae (2000) defines misogyny as hatred of, contempt for, or prejudice against women. Misogyny is a form of sexism that is used to keep women at a lower social status than men, thus maintaining the social roles of patriarchy. Misogyny over years has evolved as an ideology and can be assumed to be perception held by the traditional society and predominantly by men, and as a widespread cultural custom or system. The analyses in the current study reveal that misogyny in Ekegusii proverbs manifests itself both in audacious ways and also in other proverbs it is more elusive or concealed in ways that provide plausible deniability. As shown in Chapter 4 some Ekegusii proverbs represent women negatively. This section however, analyses how Ekegusii proverbs highlights the ideology of misogyny. Misogyny in Ekegusii proverbs is prevalent since such proverbs portray the concept of sexism in language. Sexism in language entails the degrading of any member of the society through language medium. Such language denotes sex based discrimination, and "behavior, conditions, or attitudes that foster stereotypes of social roles based on sex, the forms of misogyny presented in this study are gender bias and discrimination, stereotypical gender roles and perceptions, objectification of women, sexual objectification and Bravery versus beauty stereotype.

5.1.1 Gender bias and discrimination

Gender bias and discrimination is prevalent in traditional Gusii society. Language is a major instrument that integrates gender biasness in a society. The analysis of the data collected shows that the Ekegusii linguistic proverbs decide the supremacy of one gender in a particular society. This then implies that the contribution of Ekegusii

linguistic proverbs in the development of gender inequality is eminent in Gusii society. The study observes that Ekegusii proverbs not only represent but also promulgate, preserve, and spread gender bias and discrimination as discussed in the forms below:

The analyzed data reveal that some Ekegusii proverbs assert that women lack the intelligence, acumen, and brain power. Such proverbs depict gender bias and discrimination by denying women's intellectual capacity and wisdom. This is despite of women making substantial contribution to the contemporary Gusii society as shown below:

Example 5.1

Omokungu nigo anga omwana

(A woman is like a child)

Example 5.2

Omokungu nigo agotegerera ogosemigwa kwo'monto omoriri

(A woman listens only to the advice of the fool)

Example 5.3

Okerengereria kwo'mokungu nigo konge ogwekumba kwe'chimbere chiaye

(The thinking of the woman is as twisted as her breasts)

Example 5.4

Eise konyarekana egento giokoagacha giachire ase omokungu,nigo akogesaria

(If you give a woman anything important, she will misuse it.)

In the above proverbs, female in the sexist proverbs are given semantic traits such as: *child, foolish, twisted, misuse as* shown in proverb 5.1 to 5.4. These proverbs advance gender bias and discrimination as depicted in traditional Gusii culture. The four proverbs assert that female lack the intelligence to the extent that they are compared to a child and that their thinking is twisted as their breasts. This implies that female are seen as lacking intelligence, wisdom, artistic qualities, and critical thinking. Example 5.1 *Omokungu nigo ange omwana* (A woman is like a child) shows in traditional Gusii culture women are classified as children in terms of their thinking capacity. The proverb insinuates that just like a little child a woman is easily manipulated due to her incapacitated rationality.

This proverbs subtly disempowers female and enhance male patriarchy where by women always need guidance of a male. The lexical choices embedded in the proverbs further show how proverbs enhance marginalization of the female. Example 5.2 *Omokungu nigo agotegerera ogosemigwa kwo'monto omoriri* (A woman listens only to the advice of the fool) advances the ideology that trying to teach women is all insignificant and pointless. This socially constructed cultural artifact has maintained that women are basically inferior to men not just in physical capabilities but in rational engagement. The above proverbs ingeniously justify the notion of women being assigned secondary positions in leadership and any other responsibilities. The findings support Oboler, (1985) view's that men in traditional African society are presumed to be more intelligent than women. Consequently, women are thought particularly to be incapable of foresight and lack the ability to make and carry through sensible and realistic plans. The finding confirms Oha's (1998) assertion that proverbs permeate a kind of permanence to this negative image construction but is silent on how to subvert it.

Gender bias and discrimination is also manifested in proverbs that convey inferiority of women. Gender ideology is perpetuated through sexist language that represents women as inferior in the biological context. The data collected and analyzed reveal women's unfitness to assume important places in the traditional society and, by implication, emphasize the necessity of their social and emotional dependence on men.

Example 5.5

Mosacha kare moyo nigo anga ritiro rire enyasi

(When the husband is alive, he is like wall pillar)

Example 5.6

When a young man is in their homestead, he is like a cobra

Momura kare sobo, nigo ange rirubi nyamong'ento

Example 5.7

Mokungu takomanya buya bwamosacha oye gotatiga otigaire omoboraka

(A woman will never know the value of her husband until she becomes a widow)

Example 5.8

Omosacha nigo are omotambe kobua getunwa kende gionsi

(A man is taller than any known mountain)

In Example 5.5 above, the man has been conceptually represented as the pillar of the home. The lexical item pillar indicates that the strongest and the most reliable source of support that a woman has is the husband. In example 5.6, The young man is

metapholically regarded as a copra. The copra being one of the most dangerous snake, is equated to a male in a homestead to mean that the homestead is well protected in his presence and there is enough security. As discussed in chapter 4, one of the gender roles of the man is the provider, offers security, and protects the members of the society and the decision maker. This implies that a woman may find it hard to survive without a man as insinuated in example 5.7 and 5.8. Nonetheless the woman is always there behind a man and covers up for the man by taking up most of his roles. Yet the man still stands out according to the values of the traditional Gusii society. These proverbs therefore emphasize masculinity superiority. Noteworthy, is that proverbs reflect a conceived way that the traditional Gusii society has for perpetuating a degrading meaning on women in order to keep them at an inferior citizen position in the society. The findings of this research are supported by (Crotty, 1998) view that that culture has an influence on an individual's view of the world. Moreover, proverbs have an influence on thought as shown in the way the concept of gender is so obstinately engraved from it.

The proverbs below further affirm the society's denial of female psychological and social existence without men:

Example 5.9

Omokungu ogosaba okwabwera takoborwa mosacha

(A woman who apologizes never lacks a husband)

Example 5.10

Omokungu nigo atakeire koba omwororo naende omoigweri

(A woman must be humble and obedient)

The proverbs above advance the culture of silence among women. The proverbs implicitly or explicitly demand of women to obey their husbands without question. Example 5.10 insinuates that the society expects that women should be humble and never to argue with their husbands irrespective of the circumstances. That is, once married, a woman should exist in harmony with her husband, and what she does or thinks should not collide against her husband. Women should therefore remain humble in marriage in order to maintain her husband.

Women through Ekegusii proverbs have negatively been portrayed as senseless, devilish, and weak and morally debased. Some Ekegusii proverbs manifest women as an evil sub-species of humanity as shown below:

Example 5.11

Kae omokungu esiko korende tobaisa ko' moegen

(Respect a woman but never trust her)

Example 5.12

Omokungu oria ogoaka omonwa mwana oye takorogwa

(The wizard never witches the child of loud-mouthed mother)

Example 5.13

Onye gokonyuoma omokungu omonyakieni, omany nobwate esira namaweri

(If you marry a beautiful woman, then you owe death a debt)

Proverb 5.11 and 5.12 is the patriarchy's pronouncement of the dangers that follows women's agency in the society. Example 5.13 *Onye gokonyuoma omokungu*

omonyakieni, omanyenobwate esira namaweri (If you marry a beautiful woman, then you owe death a debt) manifest a woman as leading man into trouble in the proverb insinuates that marrying a beautiful woman may give you stress due to infidelity and you may die earlier. The proverbs express the society's reservation about the reliability and totality of women. Such sexist proverbs remind men of the endangerment that women pose and also conscientize that they are evil. Thus, the sexist proverbs serve a dual purpose, one is to put men on the alert against the schemes and plots of women and the second is to remind women of whom they are. Such sexist proverbs have brought about the denial of the complementary contribution of women at homes and the wider society. The proverbs represent women as traitorous and doubtful hence any positive contribution they render to the society is relegated and denied. The proverbs present the womenfolk as disloyal beings. The proverbs under this group caution men never to trust a woman if not, they would be crumbled. These proverbs are ingeniously used by men to subjugate women to this life of infidelity in order to have an unending control over them and save them from themselves. Examples below further affirm the above argument:

Example 5.14

Omokungu omonyakieni tanya kobera ase nyuomo yaye matuko onsi

(A beautiful woman has never stayed in marriage)

Example 5.15

Konyuoma omonyakieni nigo enga buna gosimeka amatunda ase amatabekani ase kera omonto akoyarora

(Marrying a beautiful woman is like planting a vine on a roadside where everyone will admire)

Example 5.14 represents women as cheats. Women have been presented as unpredictable and non-trustworthy with regards to staying truthful in marriage and sexual issues. The proverb suggests that promiscuity among women is not inevitably due to lack or deprivation but it is engrained in them. Hence men are suspicious of their wives, especially attractive ones. Such proverbs also represent women as voracious. Example 5.15 similarly renders women as cheats. This proverb conceptually compares marrying a beautiful woman to planting a vine on a roadside. This proverb reminds men that women will always remain unfaithful. In Gusii cultural setting, polygamy is permissible but polyandry is treated with disdain. Consequently, a woman is expected, according to Gusii culture, to stick to one man regardless of the man's behavior. Thus, the aspect of unfaithfulness in marriage and relation never apply to men since men are stereotypically represented as polygamous in nature while women are expected to be faithful and loyal to their men as affirmed in the proverb below:

Example 5.16

Konyuoma omokungu oyomo no 'korengereria kwo 'moisia

(Being a monogamous is a young boy's thinking)

Some demeaning attributes on women by men is based on their biological sex difference. This is depicted in proverbs that represent men as normative model of humanity and women are an afterthought. For instance, the unwarranted patriarchal

prejudice against women is revealed in proverbs which attributes the absence of sexual organs of a man and beards as shown below:

Example 5.17

Nigo are omokungu ouretwe obosacha ne, chinderu gekogera nigo aichire noborimo

(She is a woman whose manhood and beards were taken away from her because they always lie)

The above proverbs demonstrate the aspect of sexist stereotyping in gender-based proverbs. The proverbs above reveal that the men in traditional Gusii culture consider a man's penis and beard as a constituent of complete humanhood. Consequently, the absence of a penis and beards in adult women is used as a degrading punishment from God due to their habitual denial of men's act of kindness. The analysis reveal that the Gusii culture use language to misogynistic give a bias definition and understanding of women as weaker sex and which still remain unchallenged in Gusii contemporary society. This also implies that language is engrained in culture and that in most cultures are being endorsed by men who approve derogatory language to suppress women. This justifies the reason why women with feminine masculinity in traditional Gusii culture are persistently reminded that they are women regardless of their achievements. These proverbs are a clear indication of how abstract ideas of a given are embedded in proverbs. The stereotypes derogate women or subjects their value by comparing them basing on biological features of men. These findings are supported by Romaine (1994) who asserts that language is determined by men to perpetuate the worldview in which women are perceived as deviant and deficient.

Women are also represented as dangerous beings. They can cause destruction and so a lot of precaution needs to be taken in handling them as shown below:

Example 5.18

Ey'ekoroma ngete egosererwa.

(That which bites is thrown away using a stick)

Example 5.19

Engu'ko enyeanyi yaborwa maswa.

(A lazy mole does not get bedings)

The above proverb conceptually represents woman as mole. Moles are both destructive and edible. The proverb implies that women may be of great importance in the society but they are also destructive. They are good because in Gusii culture they fend for their families. A mole being small in size also represents women as being stubborn. Thus, women are likened to imply that can also bring trouble.

Within the Gusii traditional society there exist a long-lived prejudiced representation of women as lacking the attributes of charisma, boldness, and bravery.

Example 5.20

Omokungu na keria getabuati ngencho nigo babwekanie

(A woman and something useless are the same thing)

Example 5.21

Omokungu nigo ange omwana

(A woman is like a child)

Example 5.22

Bakungu n'abaya ko' nemenwa yabasaririe

(Women are good but they are affected by gossiping)

In the data above the semantic traits of such lexical items as: child, and invalid in example 5.20 and example 5.21 all carry the nuance of negativity. They imply that women are not strong enough to be entrusted with leadership roles. In example, 5.22 women are considered to be good; only that their mouths let them down. The proverb suggests that women are chatty. The study however observes that there is no equivalence of this proverb for the male gender. The proverb insinuates that women do most of the talking, yet it is senseless. This subjugates women to silence implying that the accepted view is when one talks less.

In cases where a woman seeks to prove her boldness, she is scorned that she is manlike as shown:

Example 5.23

Nigo are omokungu obariretie amaiso

(She is a red eyed woman)

Example 5.24

Omokungu nyamong'ento

(A muscular woman)

Some proverbs depict women as evil doers and prostitutes as shown in the use animal metaphor below:

Example 5.25

Esese eaberi nero yarusetie entwoni Bogere.

(A female dog made the male dog come all the way from Luo land)

Example 5.26

Sese mbe teri na ande agiya

(A bad dog has no good place)

Example 5.27

Esese entindi neya ngori ntambe

(A vicious dog is tethered with a long rope)

Example 5.25 implies that the cause of vices done by men is women. The conceptual metaphor of a dog insinuates a woman is despicable and a prostitute. The proverb as insinuates that whatsoever a man does is as a result of vexation by a woman. Hence, woman is seen as the source of evil. The proverb insinuates that women biologically are creatures that were created with genes of all vices in the society. Example 5.26 shows that an immoral woman is compared to a bad dog. The proverb insinuates that a woman just like a dog is likely to misbehave regardless of where she is. In example 5.27 a woman has been conceptually represented as a vicious dog which implies that women are troublesome. This proverb caution men against such women. Men are supposed to be aware of their wives who can cause harm to them. The linguistic representation of women as dogs is that of sex discrimination since the proverbs lack

the male equivalent. The data reveals that women are likened to dogs to portray them as worthless.

The analysis of these sexist proverbs above shows that the life of a woman in Gusii traditional society is taken for granted. Where women portray feminine masculinity such as leadership, assertiveness and boldness they meet derogative labels such as *Obariretie amaiso* (red eyed woman) and *Omokungu nyamong'ento* (A muscular woman). It is clear that instead of the society supporting such women to balance their feminine and masculine traits they are scolded at. The findings are in tandem with Fasold's (1990) argument that sexist language, and, by extension sexist proverbs, encourage discrimination and can discourage women from pursuing their dreams, hence disempowering them. In fact, Balogun (2010) rightly puts it that "proverbs have served as a major avenue for the continued perpetration of gender discrimination among the Africans.

5.1.2 Stereotypical gender roles and perceptions

This section focuses on proverbs as a discourse in which females are portrayed based on stereotypical gender roles and perceptions. Miller (1982) indicates that 'the conception of stereotyping involves describing how people think about others and why they do so. Balogun (2010) observes that stereotypical gender roles and perceptions continue to frustrate the current efforts towards gender sensitization and the attendant of women empowerment in the continent.

Findings from the sample proverbs of this study indicate that linguistic representations of gender roles in Ekegusii proverbs tend to denigrate, discriminate against, and assign subordinate positions to the sexes. For instance the proverbs reflect the caretaker-caregiver stereotype where public caretaking roles are assigned to

men while those of women encompass the mothering, nurturing, cooking, and caregiving roles (cf. Lakoff, 1993). The proverbs below represent the women's roles:

Example 5.28

Kera engoko nigo egokurea ebichuchu biaye binyore endagera

(Every hen will scratch the ground for its chicks)

Example 5.29

Omwana ekeru are na ng'ina nigo akogendera koba omwana botambe

(A child to the mother never grows)

Example 5.30

Omong'ina omuya nigo amanyete ekio abana baye bagochia koria

(A good mother knows what her children will eat)

Example 5.31

Omokungu siomiasiomia ng'ai akomanya bwarugeirwe gose mboke gose mbwa mwana?

(How will a wife /woman who roams from place to place know where the ugali has been cooked and whether it is just a little meant for the child?)

Example 5.32

Moiseke tari bogeni

(A lady is never a visitor)

The above proverbs reveal how proverbs in traditional Ekegusii culture tend to set limits to gender performance. It is clear that women's roles in traditional Ekegusii culture were confined in homestead where they were to perform light roles such as cooking, caring and mentorship roles as depicted in example 5.28 to example 5.32. This also aligns with the findings of Oha (1998) which proved that the female gender is put in the position of invisibility in the Igbo society which reflects through language.

On the contrary men are presented as caretakers as shown below:

Example 5.33

Omosacha omuya noyokoringa chinkundi kagosoa mochie mogoko osoa nyomba.

(A responsible husband is the one who hides something in his fist as he enters his homestead and there will be joy)

Example 5.34

Omosacha ore nomogoko noyokogenda gotwara chimbeba onyora oitire chinchogu

(A happy husband is the one who goes to hunt rats but ends up killing elephants)

The identified proverbs assign the responsibility of providing for the family's upkeep: feeding, clothing, shelter and education of children, to the husband. The husband/man is perceived more as a provider than an equal partner in a marriage setting.

The data also reveal the pillar-appendage stereotype where by men are metaphorical presented as pillar within the home domain as shown below:

Example 5.35

Mosacha kare moyo nigo anga ritiro rire enyasi

(When the husband is alive, he is like wall pillar)

Example 5.36

Omosacha karebwoye ne ritiro rire enyasi

(A man who is in his home is a pillar on a wall)

Example 5.37

Mokungu takomanya buya bwamosacha oye gotatiga otigaire omoboraka

(A woman will never know the value of her husband until she becomes a widow)

Example 5.35 to 5.37 insinuate that in traditional Gusii culture a man carries heavy responsibilities as compared to women hence if the husband/man dies, the family will collapse or the children will be unruly due to lack of the father figure to control them

On the other hand some proverbs advance the concept of heterosexual intimacy where a woman is seen as a romantic entity whose core function is to complements men and the society. In this case women are presented appendages as shown below:

Example 5.38

Mokungu tari mokungu gotatiga kanyuomire

(A woman is not compete unless married)

Example 5.39

Mokungu otabwati mosacha tari gotegererwa

(A woman without a husband has no voice)

Example 5.40

Riso rimo ndiateki

(One eye is likely to get spoiled)

Proverb 5.38 and 5.39 show that women must be attached to men in order to be complete. The proverbs insinuate that a woman cannot do anything perfectly on her own. In example 5.40 a woman is conceptually represented as an eye. Women provide supporting services in the homestead such as taking care of the home. Thus, marrying one woman is likened to having one eye. The proverb encourages men to be polygamous. The eye metaphor insinuates that women are delicate hence a man should marry more than one wife to provide the supporting services. The use of images in this proverbs correlate with the traditional view of women taking the secondary position in the society. The analysis in this section reveal that these stereotypes in traditional culture polarize female-male attributes along subordinate-dominant binaries which in turn set limits to gender performance. It is obvious that Ekegusii proverbs reflect the dominant position of the masculine gender in language. According to Lakoff's (1993) , language is man-made, and that there is only one gender – the masculine norm; feminine being a deviation from the norm. This means that when language is used in Gusii community, male terms are defaulted as the standard ;which makes feminine qualities seem less important or value.

In fact in some circumstances gender roles bring about gender inequalities as shown in the proverbs below:

Example 5.41

Mokungu tana gotomwa sira

(A woman is never sent to collect a debt)

Example 5.42

Eero n' eyabagaka

(The sitting room is for men)

Example 5.43

Ase abagaka bare ng'ana tirianya gosareka

(Where men are, things will never go wrong)

Example 5.44

Mokungu tari korengererea goetania ase egetanda keria akorarera

A woman never thinks beyond the bed where she sleeps

The proverbs above disqualifies women from other responsibilities such as outside the homestead as insinuated in example 5.41 and leadership as insinuated in example 5.42. Such stereotypical depiction of women in these sample proverbs reveal women's oppression in the traditional culture which is deeply rooted in man-made society (patriarchy). The analysis chapter section reveal that gender based proverbs are formulated to reveal the society's belief that men and women assume different roles, which have a great affinity with public and domestic spheres, respectively. Example 5.43 cleverly insinuates that men are considered to be having necessary skills in handling disputes while lack them. Consequently, women are excluded from decision-making within families and communities in traditional Gusii society. Example 5.44 on the other hand insinuates that women cannot think rationally hence cannot constructively contribute to the development of the community. The pattern of

discourse in these Ekegusii proverbs is connected to the society stereotypical believes that women are by nature inferior to men and accordingly, should not be permitted any leadership role. The study observes that the gender based proverbs above are a source of promulgating gendered ideologies such as women taking secondary roles in society. The findings align to Hussein's (2009) findings that gender based proverbs refute that women own intellectuality, rigorousness, competence and rationality, which one needs to possess in order to take part in the challenging social, political and economic affairs of the society.

Further some proverbs show the society's view that men and women belong to separate spatial dimensions of existence. Such differences are based on some stereotypes and shared beliefs. The fundamental impression given by some of these proverbs is that the nature of women distinctly differs from that of men (Balogun, 2010). The perception of sex and sex differentiation leaves women at the mercy of men since the possession of a penis signifies a higher position in Igbo society. The data reveal that in traditional Gusii culture men and women are stratified along differential patterns of space. This spatial division of the sexes usually brings about difference in the structure of male and female power, access to property, and participation in social activities. The language used in proverbs in Ekegusii features males as having more authority and control over property, while females are having less say in decision making. This creates an indicator on how much power each gender has in the community. Additionally, because of this separation, male and female participate in different social activities, as revealed in the proverbs below:

Example 5.45

Omosacha asache omokungu akunge

(Let the husband look for wealth and let the woman take care of them)

Example 5.46

Abasacha mbaniberani na abakungu mbaiborerani

(Men help one another to beget wealth while women help one another to beget children)

Example 5.47

Omokungu nigo are esesicha, omosacha oye norobayo rorigiterete

(A wife is like a flower and the husband is like a fence around it)

Example 5.48

Omokungu kamoe omonwa, omosacha kamoe ebikoro

(A woman is for gossiping while a man is for development)

The data above reveal gender-based divisions of labor in traditional Gusii culture. It is clear that men undertake the duty of controlling heavy and mobile economic resources outside their homes while women assume control over reproductive duties in the domestic sphere. The data reveal that a spatial differentiation of the sexual sphere is widespread in traditional Gusii culture. Such differentiation is unfair as is reflected in the kind of access the sexes have to the socio-economic resources of their society. In example 5.45 *Omosacha asache omokungu akunge* (Let the husband look for wealth and let the woman take care of them) wealth accumulation is for men while women are given the responsibility of caring for it. The proverb justifies the reason why women are confined in the homestead. Further, Ekegusii proverbs advances this gender ideology as shown in example 5.46 *Abasacha mbaniberani na abakungu*

mbaiborerani (Men help one another to beget wealth while women help one another to beget children) to show the differential socialization of their female and male children. The male children grow up knowing that they will inherit their father's property unlike the female children, who will join another family through marriage. A keen analysis of example 5.46 reveals that the harmless rhetoric was used to ingeniously rob female folks of any family inheritance. This in the contemporary society is obvious injustice on the grounds of gender differences. The data reveal that proverbs have cunningly been employed as ideological apparatus for this preservation, and the stereotypic schema of this unjust traditional Gusii culture. The findings above reveal Collins (1998) an aspect of dichotomous thinking in which differences are set between men and women in oppositional terms.

The data on stereotypical gender roles and perceptions reveal that gender roles are not biologically made but are produced culturally. Hence, the meanings of proverbs are largely dependent on the meanings that people ascribe to their own experience and interactions with others (cf. Miller, 2005). The data shows that different roles are assigned to different sexes, and that language is created to maintain this division. The findings reveal that women are typically relegated because of the bias in gender role. Ekegusii proverbs are an agent of prejudice in Gusii society. Proverbs are used to channel gender ideology in the society. The analysis reveal that in traditional Gusii society women were suppressed and they are treated as lower part of the society, and their roles were restricted to household chores and birthing.

5.1.3 Objectification of Women

Collins (1996) observes that objectifying women is a mechanism through which men control positions of social and economic influence in their society by and limiting their participations to domestic spheres. Ekegusii proverbs reveal the existence of

modes of objectifying women within the display of the patriarchal structure. The Gusii culture sets a customary bride price to be settled by any man who wants to take a wife. Bride price is a form of objectification of women since it makes women a thing to be bought, sold, traded in or pawned for cash. Therefore, one of the conditions for aptness in traditional marriage is that the man has a bride price in terms of cows, sheep and goats. The bride price is a mean through which families enhance their wealth as shown below:

Example 5.49

Omoiseke omuya, omonyene chiombe namoroche

(A good girl is always seen by those with cows)

Example 5.50

Onabaiseke bange nkerandi ki'amabere botaka na botakaera

(He who has many daughters is a gourd of milk that will never go dry)

The data above shows that marriage in traditional Gusii culture is like a business transaction which costs the buyer cows, sheep and goats. The cost of the bride price sometimes is too heavy as cautioned in the proverb below:

Example 5.51

Tobaisa gosanera omokungu obwate chimbere chingiya onye tobwati enibo

(Do not desire a woman with beautiful breasts if you do not have wealth)

The above proverb indirectly represents the objectification of women. It is clear that a woman is perceived as a commodity that is exchanged with wealth. Another form of

objectification of women in Gusii culture is in proverbs that places different demands on their body and reproduction as shown below:

Example 5.52

Totogia moiseke kieni motogie mwana

(Never praise a girl for her beauty but rather by giving birth)

Example 5.53

Omokungu otamire bwoiye tari ko'anga mosacha omotagete barare nere

(A divorced woman does not refuse a man who invites her to bed with her)

Example 5.54

Omokungu nere okobiara omosacha

(It is a woman who gives birth to a man)

The proverbs above clearly show the patriarchal demands on women by the society. Example 5.52 indicates that women were only cherished for their production. The data reveals that women objects of reproduction and in fact a woman gain respect and admiration after siring children. Example 5.54 depicts that the traditional Gusii culture a woman gets joy when they give birth to children and more so male children who ensure the continuation of the lineage. It is clear that the female gender is being viewed as objects rather than the subject of existence in the some Ekegusii proverbs.

Some proverbs when used in specific context portray a woman as an object of man.

For instance in

Example 5.55

Kiao nkiao na kiabande nkiabande

(What is yours is yours and what is not yours is not yours)

Example 5.56

Kee keyia nkeerwa

(A new vessel is highly regarded)

The above 5.55 proverbs when used by a man to refer to a woman shows that a man can use a woman in whatever manner they wish since she belong to him. This then implies that a woman has no control over herself and is manipulated by a man. Another proverb that demonstrate objectification of women is example 5.56 *Kee keyia nkeerwa* (A new vessel is highly regarded) that metaphorically represent a woman as a new vessel in traditional Gusii culture when used in a polygamous situation where a man married a new woman he would disdain the older woman and favour the new woman who is seen as a new vessel. The new woman is thus seen as an object that should provide joy and love for her husband and ensuring that he is happy. The proverb insinuates that as soon as a woman becomes old she is disregarded and replaced by the new vessel.

5.1.4 Sexual objectification

Misogynistic ideology is also reflected in proverbs that degrade the being of women as sexual objects that satisfy the pleasure of men. Such proverbs enhance the concept of heterosexual hostility. That is, proverbs that represents the hostility and distress faced by women for their sexuality and beauty. This way woman's aura and attractiveness is portrayed in negative sense to cite it as a reason of disgrace to the society. Such proverbs reveal the suppression of women and show the multifaceted

relationship between power and sexuality, and hegemonic masculinity as a source for the imposition and practice of unwanted sexual assault on women.

Example 5.57

Omokungu ekeru abwatete enibo namaboko aye, omogongo nigo ore getanda igoro

(When a woman has money in her hand, her back will be on bed)

Example 5.58

Omokungu nenyongo yoboke

(A woman is a pot of honey)

Example 5.59

Rigia omorugi oria okwegokia nere taria kogokia abanto bande

(Get wife to please yourself not other people)

Example 5.60

Omokungu omonyakieni ne'mechando

(A beautiful young woman is trouble)

Example 5.61

*Konyuoma omonyakieni nigo enge buna gosimeka amatunda ase amatabekani ase
kera omonto akoyarora*

(Marrying a beautiful woman is like planting a vine on a roadside where everyone will admire)

Example 5.62

Omokungu omonyakieni tanya kobera ase nyuomo yake matuko onsi

(A beautiful woman has never stayed in marriage)

The above data demonstrate how men use women for sexual satisfaction. Example 5.57 shows that women are enticed with money or wealth for exchange of sex. The proverb insinuates that when a man has money he can use it as bait to have many women. The proverb reflects Tlou's (2002) opinion that one aspect of the traditional socialization of males into dominance in Africa is the male demonstration of their sexual prowess on females. Through the conceptual metaphor that a woman is a pot of honey example 5.58 demonstrates that men perceive women as an object which is edible which as implies that women are there for sex. Example 5.59 affirms the arguments by insinuating that women are there to please and satisfy their husbands. Example 5.60 to example 5.62 shows negative representation of beauty; the proverbs equate beauty to face threatening terms such as trouble and promiscuity instead of appreciating it. The findings of the current study reflect Disch (1997) views that proverbs demonstrate men's collective and individual assumption of power over women and sexual humiliation of women.

5.1.5 Bravery versus beauty stereotype

The analyzed data reveals that whereas bravery is equated to young men, beauty is equated to women especially those who are young and have not given birth as demonstrated in the proverbs below:

Example 5.63

Ensinyo managokwanwa bobo mbamura etabwati

(A despised neighbourhood has no brave men)

Example 5.64

Nguru cha momura nchogu egwati mbara

(A man's strength is like an elephant splitting wood)

The above proverbs specifically make reference to men yet bravery or courage is a virtue that is valued by all. This kind of representation of men discriminates against women since they are part of society and any society's security is very important. This then gives women minor or lesser issues that society does not consider supreme. Example 5.63 equates a young man's energy to an elephant splitting wood. The study observes that there are no proverbs about strength that makes reference to a young woman. This therefore indicates that society does not expect women to show strength. And if they do they are negatively presented as discussed in section 5.1.1. Nevertheless, young women are represented in terms of physical beauty as shown below:

Example 5.65

Buya bwomosubati nsigiti etaratwa

(The beauty of a woman is like an ewe that has not given birth)

Example 5.66

Omokungu omuya mbokano botingire bogaika

(A good wife is like a well-tuned harp)

In Example 5.65 the beauty of a woman is conceptually represented as an animal metaphor ewe that has not had a young one. A ewe is gentle is relatively small size. It appears that attractive physical looks are typically while example 5.66 makes reference of a good wife to a musical instrument ‘harp’ that is well tuned. The use of ewe in this context reinforces the gender ideology as a belief system”, which portrays women as weak physically. The representation of virtues such as bravery in reference to the male gender only is very discriminatory considering that such roles eventually impact on the society’s social perceptions and determinations.

5.2 Patriarchy ideology

This section focuses on patriarchy as an ideology canvassed in Ekegusii proverbs. Patriarchy is a social system in which positions of dominance and privilege are primarily held by men. Walby (1990) defines patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. Walby places emphasis on a system which helps feminist to reject the notion of biological determinism which says that men and women are naturally different because of their biology and bodies thus they are assigned different roles or the notion that every individual man is always in a dominant position and women at a subordinate one. African gendered-proverbs are patriarchal in nature and they promote gender inequality (Gyan et al, 2020). The analyzed data reveal that Ekegusii proverbs are products of long-time patriarchal culture and as a result, they reflect high levels of gender inequality against women. The data in section 5.1 revealed that gender norms and stereotypes are strongly entrenched in the cultural domination of man over a woman (patriarchy). This section therefore discusses patriarchy as an ideology in terms of paternalism (dominative paternalism ideology and protective paternalism ideology) and hegemonic masculinity.

5.2.1 Paternalism ideology

Paternalism is the idea that women are a weaker sex hence they need to be controlled and protected by the male members of the society. Paternalism in Gusii society is projected in proverbs that reveal dominative paternalism and protective paternalism. The representation of men and women in Ekegusii proverbs intends to mark the patriarchal trends in Gusii society as replicated in the language of proverbs. The analyzed data reveal that Ekegusii proverbs support patriarchy as the governing style of the society.

5.2.1.1 Dominative paternalism ideology

One form of paternalism is dominative paternalism. Dominative paternalism denotes the notion that women are devoid of wisdom. Consequently, they must be made submissive towards men. This then means that proverbs promote subservience; imposed willingness to do what other people want. Sultana (2010) asserts that subservience insinuates compliance and obedience which may not be self-generated but rather insidiously imposed through structures of domination and subordination. This belief is created by the proverbs that create a view that men have control and power and that they are the leaders is covertly reiterated in the affirmation that women must be submissive to men as shown in the proverbs below:

Example 5.67

Omokungu nigo atakeire koba omwororo naende omoigweri

(A woman must be humble and obedient)

Example 5.68

Omokungu ogosaba okwabwera takoborwa mosacha

(A woman who apologizes never lacks a husband)

The above proverbs encourage subordination of women in a family structure. The proverbs show how subordination of women is cunningly arrayed to allow complicity between male dominant male and subordinate women. For instance, example 5.67 *Omokungu nigo atakeire koba omwororo naende omoigweri* (A woman must be humble and obedient) allows for the inclusion of the possibility of voluntary recognition of female subordinate status. Example 5.68 *Omokungu ogosaba okwabwera takoborwa mosacha* (A woman who apologizes never lacks a husband) shows that complicity of female subordinate status is due to maintenance of marriage. The analysis therefore reveals that subordination is achieved when women are forced to stay under control of male. The society dictates that a woman should be married hence such proverbs encourage control and suppression of women since. In traditional Gusii society a husband is an element of pride for a woman.

Dominative paternalism also concedes that men have a set of qualities and characteristics and women have another that is inherently different. For instance, the masculine characteristics such as dominance, strength and bravery are attributable to men as shown below:

Example 5.69

Omosacha ekero aitabire nonye nechinyasae chiaye nigo chigoitaba

(When a man says yes, even his personal gods will yes)

Example 5.70

Eeri tiyanya kwana marara

(A bull will never bellow while lying)

Proverb 5.69 and 5.70 shows how Ekegusii language in proverbs renders men as source of strength and power to the family as well as an assurance to future prospects of being followed by other. Example 5.69 signifies that men are always right in whatever they regard as being good. Example 5.70 further affirms the same assertion by insinuating that men are always courageous irrespective of the situation they are in. Even when they are sick, they are expected to defend their family and community. These proverbial gender discourses create a differential hierarchy between women and men. The proverbs in this section represent male perceptions, promote male supremacy and defend male interests and privileges.

5.2.1.2 Protective Paternalism

Protective paternalism is the idea that endorses the belief that male domination is beneficial for women in the society. In Gusii community, this belief is reflected in rules and restrictions that limit women's participation in the community. It is based on the idea that male, because of their strength and knowledge, should protect and care for the female. It is the belief that owing to their wisdom, physical dominance, men are supposed to protect and cherish females in the society as demonstrated below:

Example 5.71

Omokungu nigo anga esesicha, omosacha oye norobayo rorigiterete

(A wife is like a flower and the husband is like a fence around it)

Example 5.72

Abamura n'amaaga

(Young men are the fencing branches)

Example 5.73

Omosacha karebwoye ne ritiiro rire enyasi

(A man who is in his home is a pillar on a wall)

Example 5.74

Abamura bao ne chinsara chire esero

(Your sons are the arrows in a quiver)

The above proverbs show how the lexical items *man*, *sons* and *husband* has been used to portray care and protection rather than a woman and wife. Proverbs that represent men as protectors conceptualize them using lexical items such as; *fence*, *fencing branches*, *a pillar on a wall*, *arrows in a quiver* to heighten the verb protect. This implies that, protecting someone is the archetypical quality of male members only. The Ekegusii proverbs contain male subjects as references for protecting and supporting females to survive safely in the society. All such concepts portray protective paternalism as an ideology in the Ekegusii context.

5.2.2 Hegemonic Masculinity

Another ideology advanced in patriarchal societies is hegemonic masculinity. The data collected reveal that some proverbs highlight hegemonic masculinity either explicitly or implicitly. Hegemonic masculinity is the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (Connell, 1995). Thus, hegemonic masculinity legitimates the domination of men over women. Proverbs in African culture are an agent of highlighting the cultural ideal of masculinity such as competitiveness,

supremacy, power, endurance, confrontation, independence, and willingness to take risks as demonstrated below:

Example 5.75

Omosacha omuya noyokoringa nkundi kagosa mochie mogoko osoa nyomba

(A good man is the one who hides something in his fist so that when he gets home he brings joy) to his family)

Example 5.76

Ngongo machaywa imbarura etabwati

(For a region to be disrespected, then it is because of its lack of boys or men)

Example 5.78

Ase abagaka bare ing'ana tirianya gosareka

(Where men are, things will never go wrong)

Example 5.79

Omosacha otabwati bana nigo ange entetere etasimekirie

(A fatherless man is no better than unburied seed)

Example 5.75 Omosacha omuya noyokoringa nkundi kagosa mochie mogoko osoa nyomba

(A good man is the one who hides something in his fist so that when he gets home he brings joy) to his family represent the ideol/ogy of male sexism in the family. The society inspires men to maintain their masculinity by avoiding practices that connote

inferiority as shown in Example 5.76 *Ngongo machaywa imbarura etabwati* (For a region to be disrespected, then it is because of its lack of boys or men) and Example 5.78 *Ase abagaka bare ing'ana tirianya gosareka* (Where men are, things will never go wrong. Men are not only indoctrinated with masculine ideals, they are also heartened to exercise those ideals in gallant deeds. Example 5.79 *Omosacha otabwati bana nigo ange entetere etasimekirie* (A fatherless man is no better than unburied seed) shows how men with marginalized masculinity are ridiculed in the society.

5.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter focuses on Ekegusii proverbs that promote gender division. The findings of the study indicate that language is a powerful tool for establishing and perpetuating social realities. Gender ideologies in proverbs yield a rich view of the complex structures that uphold the gender order. The analysis of Ekegusii proverbs highlights examples of misogyny and patriarchy Ideology. The data reveals that Ekegusii proverbs spread misogynistic ideologies such as gender bias and discrimination, stereotypical gender roles and perceptions, objectification of women, sexual objectification and bravery versus beauty stereotype. Patriarchy ideologies are highlighted in proverbs that enhance paternalism that is dominative paternalism and protective paternalism. The analysis also reveals that Ekegusii proverbs perpetuate the notion of hegemonic masculinity. The study observes that many of the proverbs examined contain conceptual metaphors that emphasize a social justification for male structural power. The study shows that proverbs function as agents through which cultural beliefs are stored and shared. Hence, proverbs play a significant role in the transmission of gender ideologies. The next chapter focuses on power relations in Ekegusii gendered proverbs.

CHAPTER SIX

POWER RELATIONS IN EKEGUSII GENDERED PROVERBS

In this chapter, the researcher looks at how Ekegusii proverbs are used to reflect the power dynamics between men and women. These proverbs often contain hidden messages about the roles and expectations of each gender within the community.

Language shows a significant role in shaping the material reality; and the relation of language with power can also not be denied. Gender impartiality involves equity between men and women, especially when it comes to privileges and power positioning. Proverbs acquire great significance where gender and language relations are concerned since they mirror the traditional power relationships between genders.

Various scholars weigh in on the concept of power. Cameroon et al (1985) believe that the traditional ideas about power have mainly focused on the economic aspect of power. This means that when people think about power, they often think about money, resources and control over economic systems. This notion of power has been commonly accepted for a long time

The notion of power is of interest to critical linguists due to the role played by language in stabilizing societal norms. Wodak (1997) proclaims that in so far as language is concerned, women should resist 'sexists' or demeaning language and fight it wherever it occurs. The link between gender and power is all about social attitudes and the society presumes men and women to act and behave differently in the society by assigning dissimilar roles in the society and expecting them to fulfil those roles, which in due course of time may empower some and many would disapprove the same. Language is one of the ways of endorsing power and constructing gender. The analysis of proverbs reflects interplay of power, gender and ideology.

The analysis in this section is in close reference with CDA and more specific the tenet of power and dominance. Van Dijk (1996:84) elucidates that power is based on privileged access to valued social resources. CDA is applied as an approach for explaining social and cultural aspects of proverbs since it treats discourse as "a form of social practice" (Wodak, 2001). Further, CDA is precisely concerned with the relationship between power and language (Wang, 2006) which is applied in analyzing the power relationships depicted in Ekegusii gendered proverbs through multiple identities of men and women. Thus, CDA provides a theoretical ground that enables a comprehensive examination of the gender-related power dynamics entailed in the Ekegusii proverbs, and how they may affect the power relations in the Gusii society. In essence, this chapter is about language analysis to explore how traditional proverbs can shape and reflect power relations based on gender in the Gusii community. The analysis of power relations in Ekegusii gendered proverbs is analysed and presented in terms of: Proverbial language as a tool of oppression and subjugation of women, proverbial language that express dominance of men, language, gender roles and power relations, proverbs that position women as objects and Gender, power and intelligence.

6.1 Proverbial language as a tool of oppression and subjugation of women

Balogun (2010) opines that the most fundamental yet neglected aspect in gender discourse lies in the proverbial resources of a community. That is, proverbs that relate to women violate their rights and dignity, and are indicators of subordination and demeaning of women in much of African culture.

The data analysis of Ekegusii gendered proverbs reveal that proverbs deal with gender power relations in a specific way. The analysis of gendered proverbs in the Ekegusii language reveals a distinct approach to gender power dynamics predominantly fall

within a male-centric genre, promoting and reinforcing male superiority and the subjugation of female. These proverbs often portray female and their perceived qualities in a negative light, while extolling males and their attributes. Within Gusii community, the language utilized in proverbs serves to marginalize female. This use of proverbial language, laden with metaphors, mirrors the prevailing social perspectives and attributes of the Gusii people, which include denigrating, demeaning, and positioning women as inferior, as evidenced by the data below;

Example 6.1

Kobeka Mokeira ibega inkebera kwerentereire

(Cohabiting with Mokeira (another woman other than your wife) close to you is like bring upon yourself a boil)

Example 6.2

Esese eaberi nero yarusetie esese etwuoni bogere

(It is a female dog that made a male one to come for it from far)

Example 6.3

Ekeru chingoko chingochicha amo koria endageria tobaisa gochiruta obori

(Where hens gather to feed do not throw millet)

Example 6.4

Abakungu nabaya ko' nemenwa yabasaririe

(Women are good but gossiping has made them wicked)

Example 6.5

Omokungu amo negento getari kie'ngencho nigo babwekaine

A woman and an invalid are the same thing

The above data represents women as evil and gossipers. The lexical items in proverb 6.1 to 6.5 deliberately express gender imbalance since they depict women in the negative light. Proverb 6.1 and 6.2 represents women as people who can never be trusted. For instance in 6.1, the lexical *inkebera* (boil) implies that having romantic relationship with another woman other than your wife can cause problems and very painful, just like a boil. It indicates that this situation can lead to trouble and discomfort in your life, similar to how a boil can be irritating and difficult to deal with. It will also create tension, arguments and emotional pain for everyone involved, just like how a boil can be painful and cause discomfort. 6.2 also indicates that female are naturally attractive to male counterpart. Being attractive or appealing to males, make males to be willing to go their way and to be with them. Proverb 6.3 and 6.4 represent women as gossipers who imply that women cannot be trusted the society's secrets and they are disregarded that they cannot discuss anything meaningful. The metaphor of the hen in the proverb devalues women and destroys their dignity in the community. To break it down, in Gusii culture, hens are often seen as symbols of being submissive or passive, while roosters are seen as strong and dominant. So, when the proverb uses hens gathering to feed, it implies that the female should be passive and submissive, like hens. This can be harmful because it reinforces stereotypes that female should be quiet, obedient, and take a backseat to men. It also suggests that the female's opinions and contributions are not as important as men's. Overall, the text is pointing out how language and proverbs can have a big impact on how we see and treat different groups of people. The proverbs represent women as people who don't keep secrets because of their loose tongues and eavesdropping. They are chatty and

gossipers. The image women as hens portray them as untrustworthy. For this reason, women cannot be trusted with powerful positions in society because of their divisive nature. The proverbs relate women to the verbal process (of saying). This represents women as "verbal" entities that are fond of talking and not action oriented. This implies that women are portrayed as time wasting creature whose value is chiefly ornamental, or as one whose work consists of menial or non-essential tasks. These proverbs provide a basis on which women are cut from power and decision making.

Other proverbs represent women as being evil especially when they are married to one man as expressed in the proverbs below:

Example 6.6

Baibori bamwabo nechinyongo chio'borongi

(Two wives are two pots of witchcraft)

Example 6.7

Moibori omino nkerecha kere enyasi

(Your co-wife is like a demon at the wall)

Women are conceptually represented as witches and as a devil. The proverbs utilize the metaphor of the witch and devil. Both a witch and the devil are known to be evil in the society and in many religions. The devil and a witch are commit all sorts of evil such as kill, betray, humiliate, torture among others. Thus, the ideological agenda of the linguistic aspect of the above proverbs is to represent women as malicious and full of envy, as people who can never live in harmony with other women, as rivalry never ceases between them as long as they live together sharing a man. The proverbs

suggest that women cannot live together because they are capable of hurting each other and in return destroy the whole family. Such proverbs use strong derogatory lexical words to depict women as evil, hateful and dangerous. They are depicted as vicious people who cannot live together peacefully even as wives or elsewhere. Therefore, the proverbial language oppresses women as it discredits them as it implicitly empowers men. Male dominance and power is shown as two women are presented as fighting against one man they are married to.

Ekegusii gendered proverbs also disregard women's beauty and relate it to promiscuous character of the woman through metaphors as shown below:

Example 6.8

Omokungu omonyakieni ne'mechando

(A beautiful young woman is trouble)

Example 6.9

Omokungu omonyakieni tanya kobera ase nyuomo yaye

(A beautiful woman has never stayed in marriage)

The data above reveals that instead of physical or otherwise beauty of the woman being valued it becomes her source of distress due to the connotations it comes with, in the traditional Gusii society. The beauty of a woman is understood as trouble by men who are the dominant group. Thus, the beauty of a woman in proverbs is partial and paints a derogatory image about women.

The above proverbs are used to demean women and to abuse their status. The study observes that such proverbs do not only subjugate the female gender but also give

them strong negative representations. The study observes that the ideological intention behind the proverbial language is to demonize women as evil people. Within the CDA framework, the representation of women as evil, gossipers, unreliable and untrustworthy and as trouble shows that women are marginalised and negatively represented and subordinated to the men. The analysis shows that there are strong negative connotations and downgrading of women in these proverbs. The study notes that there is no proverbial language that describes men in a derogatory manner which implies that a sign of power. It is evidence from such proverbs that the concept of equality in any institutions such as family cannot be fair in Gusii traditional culture.

The study notes that women are not portrayed in the gendered proverbs that possess masculinity tendencies that include fearlessness, boldness, honesty, confidence, generosity, consideration, modesty, etc. that could be of benefit to humanity. The study observes that women are negatively represented in Ekegusii gendered proverbs. The implication of with such representation on the power relationship between men and women in the Gusii cultural setting is that men will take the headship position while the women will be subordinates. Moreover, the society may not provide equal development opportunities and support for the female gender as they do for the male gender. Such stereotypical depiction of women in traditional proverbs has continued to limit and deny the notable contributions of women in the enhancement of humanity in the society. The use of negative connotations to represent women ingeniously empowers men as people of integrity and stature because they can be trusted and relate well with others. Women have also been presented as incompetent, unreliable, and gullible when sent to run errands as shown:

Example 6.10

Mokungu tanya gotomwa sira

(A woman is never sent to collect a debt)

The lexical items in the proverb above reveal that the integrity and honesty of a woman is questioned. This is shown in the use of the negation item *tanya* (never). It is clear that women are portrayed as people who cannot accomplish any mission. The ideological implication of this proverb is that women are inefficient to carry out some roles they are sent to accomplish. This proverb supports the view that women are weak hence it gives men power and dominance over them.

Some proverbs depict women as people who subjugate peace and cause chaos where peace should prevail:

Example 6.11

Mwanyana baiseke bange tanya koborwa insega

(The family with many girls never misses confrontations)

Example 6.12

Ey'ekoroma ngete egosererwa.

(That which bites is thrown away using a stick)

Proverb 6.11 insinuates that women are not peaceful people. This then implies that women will never agree when carrying out meaningful meetings at home or in any other domain. Proverb 6.12 on the other hand reveals that they are destructive and dangerous. That is they can cause harm and so a lot of precaution needs to be taken in handling them. When such proverbs are passed from one generation to another, men

take advantage and use them in the context where women are prevented from being involved in societal affairs. Proverbial language also depicts women as lazy as shown:

Example 6.13

Engu'ko enyeanyi yaborwa maswa.

(A lazy mole does not beddings)

Example 6.14

Omokungu ne'mbogo egokonywa amanyinga korende tegokoa manyinga

(A woman is like a tsetse fly that sucks blood but doesn't donate blood)

Proverb 6.13 employs the use of mole metaphor. Moles are both destructive and edible. A mole has a small size but it's stubborn. When applied to women, it implies that women though they are of importance in the society, they are also destructive. The hidden ideology in this proverb is that no matter how hard women will work hard, men will always find a gap to discredit them. Proverb 6.14 metaphorically compares a woman to a tsetse fly. A tse tse fly is a parasite that is harmful to humans and lethal to livestock. Thus, the ideological scheme behind the the use of the conceptual metaphor is to demonstrate that as much as men may try to make progress in developing their family the enemy is within whose agenda is to pull them down.

A close analysis of the data reveals that women are seen and commented in the context of their married status and lives as shown:

Example 6.15

Moiseke onyabageni bange tanyagosoka

(A young woman with many advisors will not get married)

Example 6.16

Onabaiseke bange nkerandi ki'amabere botaka na botakaera

(He who has many daughters is a gourd of milk that will never go dry)

The data reveals that women are respected once they get married. Some proverbs use words to exclude a woman's proficient contribution to the community and to show that men live in apprehension and suspicion with them as shown in the data below:

Example 6.17

Onye gokonyuoma omokungu omonyakieni, omanyenobwate esira namaweri

(If you marry a beautiful woman, then you owe death a debt)

Example 6.18

Onye mokuo'mana nomosacha ogo, botuko nabo okorara chotoro chionsi, onye mokuo'mana na mokao tobaisa korara nonya

(If you quarrel with your husband, you can deeply sleep but if you quarrel with your wife, never attempt to doze)

The above proverbs bring deep effect on social concepts and on the above proverb this could be a negative effect. The choice of the word "death" to mean "betrayal" in the proverb in relation to a woman shows the negative attitude with which a woman is treated. The proverb suggests that beautiful women may give you stress due to infidelity and you may die earlier. It depicts a woman as a cause of unhealthy

competition among men. It also warns the men against beautiful women. The proverb brings the woman at the centre of conflict among men. Example 6.18 uses hyperbole to depict women as very dangerous being hence men should be very careful with them especially if they have differences. The proverbs reinforce the stereotypical images of women in revealing a high degree of misogyny. It makes women be handled with misogynistic attitudes even when the men have them as their wives. They are never trusted and men look at them with apprehension and suspicion. Such kind of perceptions is used by men to deny women from positions since they are represented as untrustworthy beings.

The data collected also reveals that men have the power to judge the identity of women as shown below:

Example 6.19

Ekieni ki'omokungu mbosa onye onde taiyo okomotonera

(A beauty of woman becomes useless if no one admires her)

Example 6.20

Nonyuoma omokungu omuya mwanchaine nigo are omogeni mbaka oiboire

(A wife remains a stranger until she gives birth)

Proverbs 6.19 and 6.20 illustrate power behind discourse. Proverbs 6.19 uses words to disregard the beauty of women by men and to show that the man is the judge the personality for the woman. Men can tell whether a woman is beauty is worth or not but what wonders how beauty is measured. The proverb puts the woman in desperate position due the ascendancy of men. Example 6.20 on the other hand demononstrates

how a woman lacks identity unless she gives birth. The lexical items *mwanchaine nigo are omogeni* shows the refusal of men to regard a woman's identity and instead emphasize on the reproduction role which demonstrates the fact that in this culture men subjugate women and they have freedom to marry another woman to sire for them children if the first wife fails to do so.

6.2 Proverbial language that express dominance of men

This refers to phrases or sayings that are commonly used to show that men have power or control situation. For instance, lexical such as *ritiro* (pillar) is used metaphorically to refer to men. Pillars being stronghold of the building, therefore, they can determine the strength to the building, and so, does men to their families. Presenting male as the all-powerful saviour of the woman hence reveals the patriarchal nature of this society. Tallbot (1998) observes that men and women interact in such a way that both have learned to behave in certain way where men place themselves at the helm of power while women take subordinate positions. For instance, Ekegusii proverbs depict men as protectors. For men to graciously take up this role, they are first convinced into seeing themselves as the most powerful in society, and as superior to women and for that matter, the need to protect their subordinates. As discussed in chapter 4 and 5 Ekegusii men are presumed to be stronger, more intelligent and possess leadership traits and the competence to provide security, sustenance and livelihood for themselves and women as exemplified by the proverbs below:

Example 6.21

Mosacha kare moyo nigo anga ritiro rire enyasi

(When the husband is alive, he is like wall pillar)

Example 6.22

Omosacha kare bwoye ne ritiro rire enyasi

(A man who is in his home is a pillar on a wall).

Example 6.23

Mokungu takomanya buya bwamosacha oye gotatiga otigaire omoboraka

(A woman will never know the value of her husband until she becomes a widow)

The above proverbs reveal that women are vulnerable and weak, and therefore need protection from men. Moreover, the proverbs covertly and implicitly expect men to protect women, even if they (men) do not have the physical, emotional and psychological ability to do so. Proverbs 6.21 to 6.23 shows inferiority of females in Gusii traditional society. The study observes that Ekegusii proverbs use metaphors to reinforce and accentuate male superiority and female subjugation. The pillar metaphor in proverb 6.22 shows that a man is reliable source of support. The ideological agenda of representation of widows in example 6.23 as vulnerable is to demonstrate that women are weak without men; they are doomed to fail. These proverbs explicitly ascribe power to men. The findings reflects Gyan et al., (2020) sentiments that there is a significant presence of patriarchal values in African gender-based proverbs since these proverbs accord the male gender higher status in the power structure and promote acceptance for this power dictation among the female gender.

Moreover, in marriages, men are supposed to take up the protector role, where they protect women from physical danger as well as the properties women accrue as shown in the proverbs below:

Example 6.24

Omokungu nigo are esesicha, omosacha oye norobayo rorigiterete

(A wife is like a flower and the husband is like a fence around it)

Example 6.25

Abamura n'amaaga

(Young men are the fencing branches)

Example 6.24 and 6.25 reveal that men are protectors as shown by the the metaphor of a fence. Thus, as the fence protects a garden from destruction, men are supposed to care for and protect their wives from danger. Dominance in the proverbs above is shown by the way men seek to protect even the weakest among them. They ensure that even the weak are valued and recognized. The ideological agenda behind these proverbs is to remind men that it is their responsibility to render security, protect and to provide since they are heads of family and society. The data further demonstrates that Gusii culture is family oriented; most of the proverbs in Gusii have references to familial relationships.

Negation is utilized in the structure of proverbs by men to refuse to be inferior and to be handled as immature. Such proverbs are used to remind men on what the society's expectation's as shown below:

Example 6.26

Omosacha otabwati bana nigo ange entetere etasimekirie

(A fatherless man is no better than unburied seed)

Example 6.27

*Omosacha ogoteba buna takonyuoma omokungu ogosaneru nabasacha
bande,takonyora mokungu akonyuoma*

(The man who says that he will never marry a woman who is admired by other men,
such man will never marry)

Example 6.28

Omosacha otaragacha enyomba yaye oyio mbosa

(A man who has not built his own house is useless)

The proverbs above provide inscriptions on what it means to be a real and a mature man. Example 6.26 to 6.28 reminds men that for them to gain respect they must sire children, marry and build a home. Such roles earn a man authority and power.

The position of women is pegged on whether they have a man or not in traditional Gusii society. Women in some proverbs are seen as others and outsiders as demonstrated below:

Example 6.29

Mokungu tari mokungu gotatiga kanyuomire

(A woman is not compete unless married)

Example 6.30

Mokungu otabwati mosacha tari gotegererwa

(A woman without a husband has no voice)

Example 6.31

Genda ase getinge omere otari kenyambi

(Go to your marital home, grow well and do not be a weed)

Example 6.32

Ng'ombe yareng'e yane yaroka omonyenyi ng'a tata.

(A cow that was mine calls the butcher father)

The above proverbs define a woman as an outsider. A woman must leave her father's home and get married for her to be complete and respected. Views of unmarried women are not respected since they are outsiders. Thus, women are controlled by men. Proverbs 6.29 and 6.32 through use of negative structure depict the power of men by showing that a woman has no place in the family and society. Example 6.29 shows the representation of a man as a semi god that a woman must have. Example 6.30 shows that the voice of a woman is suppressed if they are not married. Contextually men express their power and dominance by ridiculing women who are not married. This proverb can be affirmed in circumstances where a man is seen as the voice which implies that a man exerts authority and superiority. Such proverbs are used to silence women in the family and society.

Example 6.31 *Genda ase getinge omere otari kenyambi* (Go to your marital home, grow well and do not be a weed) reminds women that they are outsiders and they must start a life in their marital home. The ideological aspect of these proverbs is to demonstrate that women need men to be complete hence ascribing power to men. Moreover, the proverb reflects women as second class being whose identity have been subjected adversely. Example 6.32 employs the conceptual metaphor of a cow to refer

to a daughter. A woman is referred to as a cow. That is, daughters are others/ outsiders since when they grow up they are given in to the family they get married to. Just like a cow lack of power and authority women has no authority over what happens to her and is as a result of situations that happen to her.

Through lexicalization, proverbs utilize euphemistic language to promulgate the ideological difference between genders where men are given all the freedom to what pleases them as shown below:

Example 6.33

Chieri ibere tichianya koriseria amo

(Two bulls will never graze from the same paddock)

Example 6.34

Chiombe n'abana

(Cows are children)

The proverbs above show that a man has power over a woman. The images of bulls and paddock in example 6.33 represent man and woman respectively. The negative structure is used ideologically to allow men own many wives. The hidden agenda of the proverb is that a man has a right to marry more than one wife or even have mistresses. In contemporary Gusii society, such a proverb not only encourages immorality but also infidelity among men and undermines the woman who has no voice to correct the ill behavior of the man since he can justify himself with the proverb. Proverb 6.34 justifies why men should have many partners. It is therefore, true that proverbs express a masculine gender that presents ascendancy over the

feminine gender. Such proverbs contextually is used to give men power to have multiple sex partners but a woman is supposed to remain faithful. In cases, where a woman is found in the act of infidelity she is rebuked and termed as prostitutes and as immoral as shown:

Example 6.35

Otaraita egesimba koramanya ekio engoko yachia korigia aroro

(Before you kill the mongoose ask why the hen went there)

Example 6.36

Mokungu obande nyabarati ere bweri torusia mokorogoto agage insoni chitamere magachi otangange tureti binyunso bire mioro

(Somebody's wife is like cows in the shade do not you remove the barrier or else she will be loose and shame will befall you at the elder's court)

Proverb 6.35 and 6.36 demonstrates that while a man is allowed to engage in multiple relationships a woman is scorned at and even blamed for the immoral behavior of a man. In example 6.35 the image of mongoose and hen refers to a man and woman respectively where a woman is blamed for an immoral act. The proverb demonstrates that when found with questionable sexual behavior, women are addressed with misogyny and labeled as whores, twilights, as prostitutes, as morally rotten, and so on as shown by equating them to a hen. In example 6.36 the image of a cow represents women who are presented as loose and immoral. That is, somebody's wife is like a cow in the shade which you 'the man' should not let loose lest shame will befall you in the elder's court. This reference to immorality targets women, instead of a general reference to immoral behaviour and its consequences for both men and women. The

proverbs demonstrate unfair treatment to women since promiscuous men are let to scot free. The proverbs also present women as helpless to change the situation or their position. This eventuates to despondency and desperation in women folk as they are at the mercy of the men.

Ekegusii gendered proverbs depict men in dominant social status in most social spheres, and women are required to assent to men. For instance, in traditional Gusii society men are depicted as stronger, more intelligent and possessing leadership qualities as well as the ability to provide stability, sustenance and livelihood as demonstrated in the proverbs below:

Example 6.37

Eero n' eyabagaka

(The sitting room is for men)

Example 6.38

Ase abagaka bare ing'ana tirianya gosareka

(Where men are, things will never go wrong)

Proverb 6.37 and 6.38 depict men as perfect planners and free of making mistakes. The language in proverb 6.38 is used in the context that depicts men as perfect *ing'ana tirianya gosareka* (things will never go wrong) people who carry out important issues in the family and society because their affairs are orderly. These proverbs implicitly remind women that they can be parralled to men in terms of making decissions and organizing affairs. Both proverbs express power and dominance by men. Thus, above proverbs depict men as the head of the family and

society. The proverbs explicitly portray men as reasonable people in the society. This gives them credit and much praise since they make important and difficult decisions in the family and for the society. This makes them earn some dominance in the family. Such proverbs deny women from leadership positions and they emphasize masculine ascendancy. The data reveals that language is used in different domains such as family institution and in public spheres as a tool to attain a powerful stand in decision making and to attain control. The analysis above presents the man as the chief authority in the family and society. The proverb is used as a vehicle to dominate women and put them in the lesser position that makes them have no voice in the social set up of the family and in the society at large. The above proverbs reflect male dominance as the man is regarded as the leader, wise administrator, and the organizer of the home and society. The man holds the highest position and has authority over the woman. The proverb presents the men as indomitable and superior to the women. Men are also depicted as courageous and resilient of handling tough circumstances, and are even expected to die as a sign of masculinity as shown below:

Example 6.39

Nsinyo machaywa imbarura etabwati

(For a region to be disrespected, then it is because of its lack of boys or men)

Example 6.40

Omomura ingetii akororerwa

(The ability of a young man is seen on the battle ground)

Example 6.41

Ensinyo managokwanwa mbamura etabwati

(A despised neighbourhood has no brave men)

The proverbs above exemplify courage and bravery as one of Gusii key masculine values. The proverbs insinuate that men should be ready to defend their society whenever any difficult situation arises. Men hegemony is reflected in proverbs 6.39 and 6.40 through use of words that imply the bravery of men begins at a tender age as shown by the lexical items boys and young man. The data reveals that men are culturally raised to believe that they should be ready to defend their families and society. The proverbs above emphasize the authority of men in the family and society and to protect male identity. It is clear that each family and society must have brave and courageous men. The study observes that patriarchy has played a major role in the formulation of Ekegusii gendered proverbs. While men are constructed as brave and courageous they construct female feminine identities as weak and perpetuate the subordination of women to men. Courage and bravery are attributes shared by both genders yet the above proverbs excludes women.

The proverbs above emphasize phallocentric undertones they also attempt to position women as lower than men. It is no wonder that where women depict feminine masculinity such as brevity they are reminded that they lack a penis as shown:

Example 6.42

Omokungu omokong'u korende tabwati ensara

(A strong woman but without an arrow)

Example 6.43

Nigo are omokungu ouretwe obosacha

(She is a woman whose penis was taken)

The above proverb depicts that in Gusii culture it is believed that men are superior to women and this influences the construction of gendered proverbs. The proverbs above express the humility of a woman and the exaltation of men even though the woman seems to deserve greater credit from what she is in the society. Therefore, instead of the society supporting the feminine masculinity attributes in women they are instead scolded at and reminded that they do not have a penis as shown by the metaphor arrow. The use of such proverbs dismisses a woman's identity and dignity and holds her in the lesser position than that of men. Proverb 6.42 and 6.43 demonstrate that marginality of women is due to emphasis on patriarchy and masculinist in the society. The data reveals that men strive so hard to tread over the identity and dignity of the women. This, is even after their divine and noble obligation, a woman's place is still inferior to that of men. The data shows language itself is one of the most basic markers of patriarchy and often is used as a manipulative tool. The data reveal that men define language representing women incapable of prompting the linguistic process as men use it to maintain their authority and interests, thus denying women of power. The findings are in line with Spender (1980) who observes that, language reflects the interests of a given social group: man and woman. Thus, men have the power to define reality, and hence, the usage of language reflects men's interests. The findings in this section shows that Ekegusii gendered proverbs that are associated with the place of women promotes patriarchy and the subjugation of women.

Some proverbs demand that women they should remain submissive hence reveal power and dominance of men as shown below:

Example 6.45

Omokungu ogosaba okwabwera takoborwa mosacha

(A woman who apologizes never lacks a husband)

Example 6.46

Omokungu nigo atakeire koba omwororo naende omoigweri

(A woman must be humble and obedient)

Example 6.47

Omoiseke omuya, omonyene chiombe namoroche

(A good girl is always seen by those with cows)

Example 6.48

Obotoereru bwo 'mokungu nabwo ekieni kiaye

(A woman's politeness is her greatest beauty)

Example 6.49

Omokungu omobe nsagasaga ekobongia buna amaemba 'nkongo

(A bad or an ill-mannered woman is like the rustling wind that gathers everything)

Proverb 6.45 to 6.49 encourages women to patient, obedient, polite, submissive, and hardworking and to remain permissive in order to win the callousness of their husbands. The woman is expected to stay silent even when she experiences problems, biases, partiality and even abuse. The woman remains subject to the man and has to devise ways of living peacefully with the man. There is power behind discourse as the

proverb seems friendly to the woman yet its in-depth has a lot to be desired. The perception that men have control and authority and that they are the leaders is covertly reiterated in the affirmation that women must be submissive to men and shows that women are positioned as silent and passive, as contrasted to men who wield authority and knowledge. These proverbial gender discourses thus create a differential hierarchy between women and men.

Example 6.47 Suggests that for the lady to get a good and responsible husband should expedite high level of acceptable character. It is the same character which will make her fame among the suitable and responsible men. Example 6.48 demonstrates that a polite woman is admired more and liked in the society the data reveals that logically, society shapes women to be very subservient and being verbose and assertive is suppressed. This submissiveness and silence that is encouraged among women subjugates them and does not in way bring about gender equity. Thus, the woman is expected to be indulgent and never speak or highlight the disgracefulness, insolence, disobedience, indolence, and absurdity of men. They should keep their mouth shut and suffer silently.

The language that a given society uses determines how that society perceives and understands the world. Ekegusii proverbs make open orientations to women and articulating the roles men and women ought to play, hence they foster the formation stereotypical perceptions which are prejudiced against women. Furthermore, they promote gender inequality. Moreover, contextualizing these proverbs within the CDA theoretical framework, a wide power disparity is found between the male and female gender in Gusii culture. This negates the promotion of equality in traditional Gusii such cultures.

6.3 Gender roles and power relations

Another area concept that demonstrates the power relations is gender roles. Allotey, et al., (2022) observes that in the African society with highly definitive gender roles and a patriarchal power distribution system, proverbs has remained tools for culturally supporting and enshrining cultural expectations from men and women. The data collected reveals that gendered-proverbs are patriarchal in nature and they promote gender inequality as demonstrated in gender roles. For instance men are expected to be providers in family set up. Such proverbs depict women as financial liabilities to men. Moreover, men must also offer women psychological support. By men being the providers in traditional Gusii society some proverbs suggest that men are the rightful owners and controllers of resources as demonstrated below:

Example 6.51

Omosacha asache n'omokungu akunge

(Let the husband look for wealth and let the wife take care of it)

Example 6.52

Abasacha mbaniberani na abakungu mbaiborerani

(Men help one another to beget wealth while women help one another to beget children)

Example 6.53

Omokungu ekero abwate onibo nigo akoba omosacha

(A wealth woman becomes a man)

The proverbs above show that men are providers and controllers of resources. The parallelism in example 6.51 and 6.52 shows that proverbs are an agent of domination and control by men in Ekegusii gendered proverbs. Proverbial structuring of words is used to reinforce men's superiority and women's subjugation. The superiority of men is shown by demonstrating that they are in full control of everything that goes on in the family. Male dominance is expressed in the proverb as the man is regarded as the owner of wealth. He holds the highest material position and has authority over the woman. The woman only takes care of wealth. In cases where a woman has wealth it belongs to a man as demonstrated in Example 6.53. Proverb 6.53 insinuates that wealth in a homestead belongs to a man regardless of who accrued it. This implies that men control the possessions of women. The proverbs therefore reflect a woman being subservient to man as whatever she obtains is taken care of and controlled by the man in traditional Gusii culture.

Proverb 6.51 to 6.53 further demonstrate that women are barred from certain critical economic or political activities, that their roles are associated with fewer powers and prerogatives than are the roles of men. For instance they are confined in the homestead where they play supportive roles such as taking care of the wealth accumulated by men and begetting children. This implies that the Gusii traditional society is male-dominated which may spill to the contemporary society to some extent. Consequently, this results to female subordination and sexual asymmetry. The analysis shows that Ekegusii gendered proverbs ascribe high authority to men and assign women as subordinates to men. The proverbs show that in traditional Gusii community men and women belonged to different spheres of public domain. CDA therefore helps to reveal the hidden motives of language which serve the interests of the dominant group. The complementary representations of the proverbs above reveal the gap that has alienated

both "men and women from sharing both public roles in life and responsibilities at home.

Women were to stay in the homestead as shown below:

Example 6.54

Enka etabuati omokungu nigo enga ekiage getabuati endagera

(A homestead without a woman is like a granary without grains)

Example 6.55

Mokungu mworu, mororere mogondo

(Judge the laziness of the woman at the garden)

The proverbs above admits that women are limited to a small space since their activities are mainly confined to indoor activities and domestic chores such as cooking for the family and raising children. The findings resonate with Hall (2004) who observed that in the traditional worldview, men were firmly placed in the defined public world of business, commerce and politics and women were placed in a private world of home and family. In such ambiance, men were regarded to be in power over women.

Cummins (2019) observes that the most powerful individuals on the dominance hierarchy of society control the behavior of subordinates in order to maintain priority of access to competitive resources (such as food). This is typical of Gusii traditional society where men are the bread winners as shown below:

Example 6.56

Omosacha omuya noyokoringa chinkundi kagosoa mochie mogoko osoa nyomba.

(A responsible husband is the one hides something in his fist as he enters his homestead and there will be joy)

Example 6.57

Omosacha asache omokungu akunge

(Let the husband look for wealth and let the wife take care of it)

The above examples show that husbands are responsible of providing for the family. The concept of the male breadwinner is a significant aspect of all Gusii marriages. Such roles put financially unstable men under undesirable social pressure. It is worth noting that such proverbs ingeniously represent women as inferior to males and they reveal society's expectations of males in providing for females even when they are uneconomically unstable. The analysis reveals that the man is the provider, offers security, protects the members of the society and the decision maker etc. Noteworthy, the woman is always there behind him providing support yet the man still stands out according to the values of the Gusii society. For instance, the woman in the family and society performs reproductive and productive roles but no one ever recognizes their overwhelming great and significant contribution.

The data reveals that power is demonstrated through language. The proverbs above show societal and cultural expectations of both genders through language in proverbs. The data shows how societies have fixed certain roles in proverbs. The study reveals how power relationships are depicted through the feminine and masculine identities. The findings are in line with Kamwendo and Kaya (2016) study that observed that

African proverbs have gender connotations that propagate patriarchal system in African communities and reverberates the subordination of women.

It is however worth noting that some gender-based proverbs in Gusii culture give women high esteem as shown below:

Example 6.58

Enka etabuati omokungu nigo enga ekiage getabuati endagera

(A homestead without a woman is like a granary without grains)

Example 6.59

Abanto bonsi bagokoanga, irana ase nyoko

(If everybody rejects you, go back to your mother)

Example 6.60

Omokungu nere ogotinyia omwana oye amariga

(It is a mother who wipes her children tears)

Example 6.61

Omong'ina omuya nigo amanyete ekio abana baye bagochia koria

(A good mother knows what her children will eat).

The power dynamism that is implied in proverb 6.58 to 6.61 favours women/mothers/wives. In example 6.58 recognizes the importance of women in the family and community at large. A homestead that has a woman is likely to stand as demonstrated with the conceptual metaphor of woman being a granary. Example 6.59

and 6.60 describes women as people who possess unconditional love and are concerned with the wellbeing of their children in whatever circumstance. Example 6.61 shows that women are able to provide for their families just like the husband. The analysis in this section relates to (Kochman-Haładyj, 2020) findings that showed that proverbs promote gender stereotype and they influence the power dynamics between the male and female gender in African cultures at the disadvantage of women. The findings reveal that Ekegusii gender-based proverbs promote cultural dynamics and beliefs that stage a certain type of power structure between men and women.

6.4 Women as dependants

The text is referring to proverbs that suggest women to be dependent on men for support or care. These proverbs imply that women are not independent or capable on their own. Such proverbs can reinforce gender stereotypes and limit women's opportunities for personal and professional growth. (Collins, 1996). In traditional Gusii culture women are used as a conduit through which families enhance their wealth and alliance by giving away their female children in marriage in exchange of cows and goats:

Example 6.62

Onabaiseke bange nkerandi ki'amabere botaka na botakoera

(He who has many daughters is a gourd of milk that will never go dry)

Example 6.63

Omoiseke omuya, omonyene chiombe namoroche

(A good girl is always seen by those with cows)

The above data reveals the objectification of women permeates traditional Gusii community. The proverbs reveal the buyer-commodity stereotype. Gusii culture recommends a customary bride price to be settled by any man who wants to take a wife. In this vein, women are projected as objects that are bought by men through the bride price. This then implies that once is bought by the man is under the control of him. The proverbs depict women as objects that male members of the society can use to acquire status and wealth. Proverbs that enhance buyer-commodity stereotype portray misogyny that aims at perpetuating and legitimizing the patriarchal order.

Gender is a salient social category in the Gusii society. Woman's identity and dignity is assigned material value equivalence in some proverbs through use of succinctly structured words. Women in such proverbs have been given material wealth equivalence which drains their dignity. They are seen as objects with value assigned to them. Ekegusii gendered proverbs depict women as degraded and immoral objects of satisfaction as shown in the proverbs below:

Example 6.64

Tobaisa gosanera omokungu obwate chimbere chingiya onye tobwati enibo

(Do not desire a woman with beautiful breasts if you do not have wealth)

Example 6.65

Omokungu nigo ange chinchoke, morende buya onyore oboke, gokomogechia nigo akoba omotindi

(A woman is like a bee, treat her well and you will eat honey, irritate her and she will turn violent)

Example 6.66

Omokungu nenyongo yoboke

(A woman is a pot of honey)

Example 6.67

Omokungu ekero abwatete enibo namaboko aye, omogongo nigo ore getanda igoro

(When a woman has wealth in her hand, her back will be on bed)

The data above reveal women as immoral objects of satisfaction all of whom “may be won” as long as you have wealth. Example 6.64 and 6.65 demonstrate that women are commodities that are available and purchasable as long as you have the resources. The proverbs show that only the rich could afford to pay for a beautiful looking girl. The poor could only have the dowries since they could not afford the doyen of the society. Noteworthy, is the fact that women’s beauty is presented a negative connotation of promiscuity and powerless.

Proverb 6.65 likens a woman to a bee which produces honey. The image honey stands for the sexual anatomy of a woman. Example 6.65 and 6.66 shows that there is dominance of class in the proverb ‘the rich’ and ‘the poor’ have to take their place. This makes the poor woman remain in the poor class and the rich or the good looking woman to stand a better chance of being in the upper class. Similarly, in proverb 6.66 the sexual anatomy of a woman is metaphorically presented as a pot of honey to insinuate that women are there for sex and men can find them any time. The metaphor of honey is used to hide the ideological agenda driven by men and it causes disrespect to women. Language in the above proverbs ascribes power to young men who yearn to have sex with beautiful women. Proverb 6.67 reveals that a woman is a commodity

that is bought by a man for sex. Language is therefore used to oppress women since it demeans women.

Loaded words are also used to express power relations between genders in Ekegusii gendered proverbs as shown:

Example 6.68

Kiao nkiao na kiabande nkiabande

(What is yours is yours and what is not yours is not yours)

The proverb uses the words “*Kiao*”, what and “*nkiao*”, yours to show the relationship between man and woman in the family set up. It refers to a woman as something which implies an object. A woman is viewed from the same perspective as a home and other material property of the man. It is used to praise those with well-kept homes and wives while at the same time ridicule the careless and those with unkempt homes and wives. The proverb portrays that a healthy, well-kept woman is a reflection of the husband’s effort and hard work. It is a manifestation of comfort and luxury due to the sufficient provision by the man.

The proverb reflects men dominance as portrays a woman as dependent on the man, as one who cannot be appealing as a result of her own effort and hard work. Therefore, the context of this proverb is that a man can use what belongs to him in whatever manner you wish but you cannot use what does not belong to you in the same manner. A woman is regarded as an object that belongs to a man and so can be used in whichever way he feels. A woman seems not to have control over herself. She is there to be manipulated by the man as he may wish. The semantic construction of proverbs reveals that, women are positioned as objects and are denied all sense of

subjectivity. The above proverbs reveal that Ekegusii gendered proverbs present women as degraded and immoral objects of satisfaction. Noteworthy, cultural aspects of a society play a significant role in influencing the linguistic choices used in a society, so the Ekegusii gendered proverbs, too, reflect the cultural underpinnings. The study observes that Ekegusii gendered proverbs tend to foster a level of power disparity that promotes women relegation. Such proverbs within the domains such as marriage, social and political domain cause a power misbalanced at the disadvantage of women and sometimes, this creates a cultural environment that oppresses women.

Some proverbs depict women as inanimate objects such as pots that portray power relations as shown:

Example 6.69

Kerutu takorera kiabande, emboga nere enyongo.

(Do not envy other peoples things, yours is in the pot)

Example 6.70

Twoni ibere tichiana koiyekerwa nyongo emo.

(Two cocks cannot be cooked in the same pot)

The conceptual metaphor of a pot in proverb 6.69 and 6.70 present the image of a woman as a cooking vessel. The “pot” is a metaphor that represents two gender roles of a woman: the cooking activity and the “productive woman”. Men are advised not to lust for other people’s women. Pots are used for cooking what is put in them. They have no choice over what shall be cooked in them. A woman was only allowed to be married to not more than one man. It is observed men were not constrained by such

limitations. Therefore women are not allowed to practice but men are allowed to practice polygamy as the source of power which renders women subordinate and subservient as shown in the proverbs below:

Example 6.71

Nyamokungu omo aye, mosiereku okobera tobunera abagaka chinkore

(You who has one wife sit close to the door lest you break the elders' drinking straw)

Example 6.72

Konyuoma omokungu oyomo no 'korengereria kwo 'moisia

(Being a monogamous is a young boy's thinking)

Example 6.73

Riso rimo ndiateki

(One eye is likely to get spoilt)

The power dynamics implications of proverbs 6.71 to 6.73 reveal that women are not only subordinates to their husbands but they are also to accommodate the negative excessive of their husbands. The proverbs reveal that women should accept the practice of polygamy without any questions. Proverbs 6.71 and 6.72 support polygamy in traditional Gusii ridiculing men who have married just one wife. This then implies that Ekegusii gendered proverbs expose the support for mens inappropriate and patriarchal behaviours. Example 6.73 employs the conceptual metaphor of a woman as an eye to imply that a woman is the one who takes care of the home and safeguards it. Thus, marrying one woman is likened to having one eye just in case such a woman is likely to pass on the man will lose a lot of things. The

ideological agenda in the conceptual metaphor of a woman as an eye is that a woman cannot do anything perfectly on her own. The eye metaphor represents a woman as delicate as an eye that can pass any time and a man as perfect and immortal being. Therefore, in traditional Gusii culture a man is advised to have more than one wife so that in case one passes on there is another one to take charge. This shows that men are culturally accorded higher power dynamics over women. The image of an eye correlates with the traditional view of women taking the secondary position in the society. Moreover, such proverbs disprove mutuality in marriage and they support husband's infidelity against their spouses.

Some Ekegusii gendered proverbs represent women through the conceptual metaphor of a cow. This may be attributed to the biological functions of women. A woman is depicted as a creature that performs the animal functions of producing and rearing offspring (Brennan, 2005). Thus, the cow symbol in Gusii culture used to imply not only productivity but also the promiscuity of women as shown below:

Example 6.74

Neng'ina ekwanera emori, tari emori ekwanera eng'ina.

(It is the cow that takes care of the calf not the calf taking care of the cow)

Example 6.75

Nyang'era ndotungi ko n'emori yaye ndotungi

(The way a cow is, so shall its calf be)

Example 6.76

Eeri magwari neyang'o? Otaroochi eng'ina nyabiseembe

(When you see a big bull don't ask for its mother, its mother is Nyabisembe; the huge Cow)

Proverb 6.74 above insinuates that just a cow takes care of its calf, a woman is also supposed to take care of her children; she should provide for them and protect them. A woman is depicted as a creature that performs the animal functions of producing and rearing offspring. The proverb shows that as much a woman is given this responsibility, she is lowly regarded just like cows are. Proverb 6.75 demonstrates a case of semantic import in that just like calves get their attributes from their mothers and especially the bad attributes. The proverb implies that women are likely to be blamed for their children's bad behavior. Example 6.76 shows that in Gusii culture the productivity of a woman is measured not only by her ability to give birth but also the ability to be sexually and economically productive. The ideological intention behind these proverbs is to represent women as lower beings and to ingeniously elevate the status of men. The study observes that the ideological functions of proverbs are to legitimize and reinforce the patriarchal ideology. It is obvious that Ekegusii gendered proverbs are products of long-time patriarchal culture and as a result, they reflect high levels of gender inequality against women.

6.5 Gender and Power

Gender and power refers to the relationship between gender (male, female or non-binary) and the ability to influence or control others. In Gusii community, male gender has more power or authority than others. This gives a picture on how individuals are treated and what opportunities they have access to.

Understanding gender and power is important in order to address these inequalities and create a more equitable society where all individuals have the same opportunities

and rights, regardless of their gender. By recognizing and challenging gender norms and stereotypes. This research helps in working towards a more just and inclusive community for everyone.

This is clearly revealed in proverbs that explicitly enhance the ideology that women cannot reason deductively in decision making as shown below:

Example 6.77

Omokungu nigo akorengereria buna omwana

(Women's intelligence is that of a child)

Example 6.78

Omokungu nigo ange omwana

(The woman is like a child.)

Example 6.79

Omokungu amo negento getabuatingencho nigo bibwekaine

(A woman and an invalid are the same thing)

Example 6.80

Omokungu tari korengereria are goetania egetanda keria akorarera

(A woman never thinks beyond her bed)

The proverbs above use lexical items such as *child*, *invalid* and *never thinks beyond her bed* to portray women as being imprudent, inane, and unintelligent. Example 6.77 and 6.78 equates the brain of a woman to a child while in example 6.79 a woman is

compared to an invalid. These children lack wisdom due to their young age and cannot reason like adults. The idea behind the language of this proverb is to demean to a woman to the level of a child. Proverb 6.79 portrays women with emotion, tenderness and lack of logic. The proverbial language dominates since it depicts women's unfitness to assume important places in society, and by implication, emphasize the necessity of their social and emotional dependence on men. The adjectives used in these proverbs to describe women reveal the oppressive intention against women. The study observes that such representation devalues women and implicitly regards men as reasonable, thoughtful, intelligent and with wisdom. Moreover, these proverbs show men dominance who believes to be more intelligent than women. Women have been portrayed as inferior and consequently as unable to exercise authority or occupy public office.

Proverb 6.80 demeans women who are perceived never to think beyond their beds. The manner of thinking of a woman is presented negatively by presenting women as foolish. The proverb reveals that women have limited forethought and a dearth of the ability to make sound judgment and decisions. The ideological scheme in the language of these proverbs is that it has the potential of influencing men's role in decision-making processes in most traditional communities. The proverbs dent the agency of women. They portray women as unintelligent and unable to make any decisions without the guidance of a man. These findings are in tandem with Oboler (1985) who reported that among the Nandi, men are believed to be more intelligent than women. Thus, they are likely to occupy secondary positions in family, leadership and in public domain. In fact Oboler (1985) observes that it is usually assumed that a woman in a leadership or decision-making position would probably not make good and visionary decisions.

This finding show that Gusii culture has traditionally empowered men over women because of cultural beliefs like men are wiser and women being incapable of making the right decisions. Such power relations are likely to be depicted in domains such as family. Thus, proverbs in Gusii traditional society can serve as tools for the consolidation of men's position and the undervaluing of the socio-economic and political roles of women in community development processes. Men in the society are therefore accorded men gendered leadership and decision-making roles/powers.

6.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter analyzes how language is used in power relations in Ekegusii gendered proverbs. The study observes that Ekegusii gendered proverbs highlight the nature of power relations. The results show that such proverbs dehumanize women and deprive them of social autonomy. The study reveals that Ekegusii gendered proverbs still resonate with patriarchal ideologies. The findings reveal that power relations in Ekegusii gendered proverbs produce a rich view of the complex structures that uphold the social order. The analysis of proverbs highlights examples of sexism. Many of the proverbs examined contain metaphors, negation and loaded language that reinforce a social justification for male structural power. The analysis shows that men are expected to control, provide for and protect women who are assumed to be the weaker.

The chapter reveals that proverbs function as containers through which cultural dogmas are stored and shared. They play a significant role in the transmission of gender ideologies and the machinations of power play. However, largely due to the patriarchal nature of Gusii society, just like most societies of the world, the subordination of women has been prominently expressed in proverbs, which has further aggravated the disadvantaged conditions of women.

The next chapter focuses on the effect of discourses of essentialism in ekegusii gendered proverbs on social order.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE EFFECT OF DISCOURSES OF ESSENTIALISM IN EKEGUSII

GENDERED PROVERBS ON SOCIAL ORDER

This section delves into examining the impact of discourses surrounding essentialism in Ekegusii proverbs on the structure of the society. Essentialism is a concept that categorizes individuals into fixed groups based on the belief that inherent characteristics have been predetermined by nature. Gender essentialism in particular, perpetuates stereotypes concerning the behaviours and roles of men and women. For instance, the notion that men should exhibit aggression while women are expected to be nurturing. Such beliefs are often used to rationalize issues like sexism and the gender pay gap.

Sanauddin (2015) emphasizes that exploring the relationship between gender and language goes beyond merely describing linguistic patterns among men and women. It sheds light on how language serves as a symbolic tool for shaping and regulating personal, communal and cultural identities. The underlying premise of this chapter is that despite being revered for their wisdom and accuracy, Ekegusii proverbs may harbor sexist ideologies. By dissecting these proverbs, the research aims to uncover the subtle ways in which they reinforce and perpetuate gender biases community.

The analysis focuses on the link between language and gender in proverbial discourse and how proverbs play an important role in manifestation of gender stereotypes in Ekegusii Proverbs, Sex, gender roles and gender inequality in Ekegusii proverbs and the ideologies that justify them.

7.1 Exploring Gender Bias in Ekegusii proverbs

Gender bias in Ekegusii proverbs refer to unequal treatment or stereotypes based on gender that are present in Ekegusii proverbs. These proverbs may reflect cultural beliefs or attitudes towards men and women, and can perpetuate ideas of superiority or inferiority based on their gender.

By exploring gender bias in Ekegusii proverbs, we can better understand the ways in which gender roles and expectations are reinforced in society. This awareness can help us to challenge and change these biases to create a more equal and inclusive community for all individuals based on their gender.

According to Watson and Hill (2006) to bias means to pigeonhole, to thrust into tight slots of definition which allow little adjustments or change. Gender bias are thus seen as static, taken-for-granted, culture-specific, simplistic, and impressionistic generalizations about gender attributes, differences, and roles of individuals and groups based on distinctions of biological sex. A close analysis of the data collected reveal that Ekegusii Proverbs reflect gender bias that polarize female-male attributes along subordinate-dominant binaries. For instance, the analyzed data reveals the pillar-Support appendage stereotype in family sphere as shown in the examples below:

Example 7.1

Omosacha karebwoye ne ritiro rire enyasi

(A man who is in his home is a pillar on a wall)

Example 7.2

Mosacha kare moyo nigo anga ritiro rire enyasi

(When the husband is alive, he is like wall pillar)

Example 7.3

Momura kare sobo, nigo ange rirubi nyamong'ento

(When a young man is in their homestead, he is like a cobra)

Example 7.4

Mokungu tari mokungu gotatiga kanyuomire

(A woman is not complete unless married)

Example 7.5

Mokungu otabwati mosacha tari gotegererwa

(A woman without a husband has no voice)

Proverbs 7.1 to 7.4 shows how language in proverbs is used to discriminate one gender over another. In proverbs 7.1 and 7.2 language is used to overtly prejudice women. The pillar attribute in a family set up is directly given to a man. The generic-level knowledge schema of 'pillar' and 'support' relate to the semantic domain of building and construction where buildings are propped up by pillars and beams. This metaphor reveals the male as the stronghold of the family, the physical and spiritual pillar without whom the family lacks morale and falls apart. This is in spite of women playing this role in some families. The proverbs imply that a woman must have a man to be complete. The above proverbs insinuate that men have the potential power and traits necessary to govern and lead the social institution such as family while women need them to be complete as shown in proverbs 7.4 and 7.5. They demonstrate total biases as denial of women's social existence outside men.

Male children are perceived to be the potential leaders in the future as depicted in proverb 7.3. The analyses demonstrate that proverbs express attitudes and ideologies and influence the society deeply. They are full of acuteness in structure and sense and draw widely from culture and family.

The second stereotype is where men are perceived as the breadwinners and women as the consumers and caretakers as shown:

Example 7.6

Omosacha omuya noyokoringa nkundi kagosoa mochie mogoko osoa nyomba

(A good man is the one who hides something in his fist as he gets his home and there is joy)

Example 7.7

Omosacha ore nomogoko noyokogenda gotwara chimbeba onyora oitire chinchogu

(A happy husband is the one who goes to hunt for rats but ends up killing elephants)

The above proverbs show that the expectation of the society is that man is the caretaker and breadwinner of the family while the woman should be the caregiver and the consumer of the husband's wealth. The study observes that in traditional Gusii society it is the obligation of men to construct and fund their families. Such gendered proverbial discourse sustains and amplifies such viewpoints, which have a noteworthy influence on individuals. The view is that even in the changing circumstances, where women contribute to family upkeep, these expressions still remain static and constant. The study observes that such masculine identity for men may make them to be aggressive in order to meet societal expectations.

Another stereotype is pegged on the belief that women are imprudent, frail, jealous, wicked, and dependent while men are construed as rational, independent, and superior as shown the as analyzed in chapter 5 and 6. Moreover, a woman is stereotypically a gossip and talkative. She is also taken to be inherently wicked. Such descriptions reveal that women are devalued in Ekegusii gendered proverbs. Such misogynistic ideologies in proverbs permeate a kind of permanence to this negative image construction but are silent on how to subvert it. Women are denied leadership positions because they are perceived as irrational and untrustworthy. Therefore, the persistent, tenacious and devious nature of gender ideologies and stereotypes have contributed to maintaining the prevailing gender status quo and have subsequently, propagated gender discrimination in Gusii culture and across several generations. The negative representation of women through the gendered language in proverbs shows that the traditional Gusii society has great gender stereotypical.

The examples also depict that men are stereotypically action oriented while women are stereotypically chatter boxes and gossips as shown:

Example 7. 8

Omokungu kamoe omonwa, omosacha kamoe ebikoro

(A woman is for gossiping while a man is for development)

Example 7.9

Ekeru chingoko chingochicha amo koria endagera tobaisa gochiruta obori

(Where hens gather to feed do not throw millet)

Example 7.10

Omokungu nyamang'ana mange omoeri oye nigo agwesamba omonwa

(A gossiping woman burns her mouth in the end)

Example 7.11

Abakungu nabaya ko' nemenwa yabasaririe

(Women are good but gossiping has made them wicked)

The proverb; *Abakungu nabaya ko'nemenwa yabasaririe* (Women are good but gossiping has made them wicked)

It is a compound sentence which appreciates women to be good but uses the conjunction “*ko*” to bring contrast. The lexicals, “*ko, ememwa and yabasaririe*” (but, mouths and made them wicked) brings in aspects of gossips .Stress is placed in the conjunction “*ko*” and in the negation connotation “*yabasaririe*” to create a clear picture on how women are perceived in this community.Gossiping can have harmful effects and it is better to speak openly and honestly with others rather than spreading rumours.So,while women may be inherently good, the act of gossiping can sometimes bring out the worst in them.The study observes that Ekegusii gendered proverbs advocate passive, subordinate and domesticated role into which gender stereotypes have positioned women which may create personality crisis especially among the educated ones who may want to aspire beyond the artificial limits set by gender categories.

The proverb; *Omokungu kamoe omonwa,omosacha kamoe ebikoro* (A woman is for gossiping while a man is for development)

The words; *Omokungu* (a woman)*omonwa* (mouth) *kamoe* (give)*omosacha* (a man) *ebikoro* (development) are stressed to bring in the aspects of juxtaposition to show that women waste a lot of time in gossiping instead of talking of development matters which the men are associated with.

The verb *kamoe* (give) is used to describe actions of each gender to show how cultural ideology are instilled the the Ekegusii proverbs to propagate gender stereotypical community.

The analysis shows that the discourse of gender essentialism justifies and reinforces gender stereotypes. The analysis reveals that Ekegusii gendered proverbs are used to negatively present all women. The discourse of gender essentialism also reinforces specific beliefs about the masculine and female identity that legitimizes social systems in which people are treated differently.

7.2 Sex and gender inequality in Ekegusii proverbs

The researcher examines ekegusii proverbs in order to understand how they reflect attitudes towards sex and gender. In this research, the researcher has looked at how ekegusii proverbs are used to reinforce inequalities between men and women. The language used in such proverbs is analysed to express the hidden biases in them.

The research aims in shedding light on how language, specifically through proverbs can either perpetuate or challenge gender inequalities in Gusii community. By examining these proverbs, the researcher can better understand the cultural attitudes towards sex and gender .

The data reveals that proverbs regarding leadership, headship and management rights seem to uphold the positive-male and negative-female operational spaces for the sexes shown:

Example 7.12

Eise konyarekana egento giokoagacha giachire ase omokungu,nigo akogesaria

(If you give a woman anything important, she will misuse it)

Example 7.13

Omokungu nigo ange omwana

(A woman is like a child)

Example 7.14

Eero n' eyabagaka

(The sitting room is for men)

Example 7.15

Ase abagaka bare ng'ana tirianya gosareka

(Where men are, things will never go wrong)

Example 7.12 and 7.13 creates a negative schema of women's capability handle any important roles in spheres such as leadership. The two proverbs represent women as foolish and irrational to legitimize this stereotype. Example 7.14 and 7.15 represent men as rational, intelligent and action oriented. The proverbs reveal that man is designated for power, dominance, and decision-making so that every action he takes can be rationally justified. The analysis reveals that the ideological structure of

Ekegusii gendered proverbs designate a man in higher structure as leadership and women in inferior positions such as shown in the proverbs below:

Example 7.16

Omosacha asache omokungu akunge

(Let the husband look for wealth and let the woman take care of them)

Example 7.17

Abasacha mbaniberani na abakungu mbaiborerani

(Men help one another to beget wealth while women help one another to beget children)

Example 7.16 and 7.17 represent man aggressive and ambitious to acquire wealth. The data shows that women are held in low esteem in the society. Women are given secondary positions. They are treated as objects whose purpose is to give birth and work at home. The structure of the above proverbs is evidently instituted on the interaction between what is socially anchored and the proverbial indication. This shows that gender inequality ideological structure is both produced and reproduced via the discourse of the proverb. It worth noting that in Gusii contemporary as much as women have shown their prospective to function meritoriously in governance spheres—albeit excluded by the prevailing patriarchal social orders from some leadership positions—Ekegusii proverbs still maintain their original fixed formats. Therefore, the study observes that endorsement of gender essentialist ideas in proverbs forecast support for gender discrimination and lack of support for gender equality. Another consequence may be that both men and women may accept gender inequality and that this leads to men's increased support for gender discrimination.

These findings demonstrate the existence of the male-as-norm ideology in Gusii culture and system of representation and also show the high esteem attached to male roles and expectations while relegating those of females.

The analysis reveals that gender differentiation is based on men's and women's social positions. The ideological structure in Ekegusii gendered proverbs show's that men's domination and women's subjugation frames each gender's identities and acts based on their social practice, where males are ascribed to be in public and women are attributed to be in the domestic zone as shown:

Example 7.18

Omokungu siomiasiomia ng'ai akomanya bwarugeirwe gose mboke gose mbwa mwana?

(How will a wife /woman who roams from place to place know where the ugali has been cooked and whether it is just a little meant for the child?)

Example 7.19

Moiseke tari bogeni

(A lady is never a visitor)

Example 7.20

Omokungu omweanyi motarere ekeru gie'toigo

(Visit a proud woman during the rainy season)

The examples above show that culturally, a man and a woman have been assigned different social roles. A man's role is outside the house as a breadwinner; a woman's

role is inside the house where she deals with household chores and in the homestead. The data depicts family and household as a principal site for gender construction and gender discrimination. While at home, a woman carries out reproductive roles that include child bearing, care giving and mentorship in the home. The force of proverbial discourse, and preserve and family and household institution strengthen such beliefs, which have a considerable influence on society if people tolerate them. These proverbs create ideologies that marginalize women in Gusii community where women are relegated into secondary positions. They are nurtured as depends who hold second place in community do not hold the opportunity to venture outside their homes due to restrictive culture. The analysis above reveals the social positions of men and women. The ethical structure given to men's domination and women's subjugation frames each gender's identities and acts based on their social practice, where males are ascribed to be in public and women are attributed to be in the domestic zone.

Gusii culture being a highly patriarchal society, the value and position accorded to men in the society devalues women and girls. The proverbs demonstrate that men are accorded privileged position in the society and female prejudice is a common practice in such society. Such proverbs contribute to gender inequality as shown:

Example 7.21

Omokungu nigo are esesicha, omosacha oye norobayo rorigeterete

(A wife is like a flower and the husband is like a fence around it)

Example 7.22

Omoiseke omuya, omonyene chiombe namoroche

(A good lady is always seen by owners of cows)

Proverb 7.21 above reveals men as having the potential power and traits necessary to govern and lead the social institution such as family. Yet, this is not a base that can be always relied on. Example 7.22 marriage is beyond being in love with somebody whom you want to get married to, but it is a matter of how to construct a family and support that family financially in terms of being capable of perpetuating a prosperous life. Hence, the need to pay the bride price before marriage.

The analysis further reveals that women are assisted by their beauty and age while men are judged by their physical strength and the traits of governing and leading social institutions as shown below:

Example 7.23

Ensinyo makwanwa bobo mbamura etabwati

(A despised neighbourhood has no brave men)

Example 7.24

Nguru cha momura nchogu egwatia mbara

(A man's strength is like an elephant splitting wood)

Example 7.25

Ekieni ki'omokungu mbosa onye onde taiyo okomotonera

(A beauty of woman becomes useless if no one admires her)

Example 7.26

Buya bwa'mosubati/ ekieni kia'mosubati nsigiti etaratwa

(The beauty of a woman is like an ewe that has not had a young one)

Example 7.27

Omokungu omuya mbokano botingire bogaika

(A good wife is like a well-tuned harp)

The above proverbs show that the ideological structure of Ekegusii proverbs is restored through the social practices that allocate each gender to his/her social role. Proverb 7.23 to 7.26 shows the intricacy of gender and power relations in which men are powerful and physically strong whereas women are dominated and judged by appearance, since age matters for them to be attractive. Schipper (2003) observe that the superior physical strength of men have had far reaching consequences for the gender history of mankind. In many ways the male sex has made use of its physical size and power for its own gain and benefit. This ideology and socialization reinforce the confinement of women to domesticate chores.

7.3 Chapter Summary

This chapter focuses on the effect of discourses of essentialism in Ekegusii gendered proverbs on social order. The findings of the study reveal that discourse in Ekegusii gendered proverbs demonstrates the ideological framework of gender. The findings reveal that gender ideologies and latent structures make a significant contribution to gender discrimination, especially when are accepted as entirely legitimate and normal. The analysis also proves the discourse function in the (de)construction of the binary gender when critically analyzed in the lens of CDA. The results reveal that discourse in Ekegusii gendered proverbs describes gender inequalities as natural phenomenon. Ekegusii proverbs depict social practices that are a matter of social construction and these constructions are being evolved and practiced based on certain values, norms, tradition and customs of the society. However, these constructions of social practices

in Ekegusii proverbs do not always value neutral since they relate to power relations in society and usually these serve the social, economic and political interests of dominant groups in it. The Ekegusii gendered proverbs also reveal that gender roles are socially constructed and since they are linked to Gusii culture they are ingrained in the ideological and institutional arrangements of the society.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study analyses gender ideologies and power relations in Ekegusii proverbs. It aims to explore how language constructs gender identities, examine ideologies promoting gender division, assess power relations and determine the impact of essentialism discourses on social order. The study utilizes Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) concepts such as power abuse, ideology, dominance and Fairclough's framework (1989). It highlights how ideologies and power relations are embedded in Ekegusii proverbs, influencing societal gender roles.

The findings of the analyses for each objective are presented in the sections that follow.

8.1 Summary

This section presents a summary of the findings of each of the objectives of the study as follows:

8.1.1 Gender identities and construction in Ekegusi proverbs

The main focus of this chapter was to analyze how language is used to construct gender identities in Ekegusii gendered proverbs. The chapter interpreted and analysed how language represents the multiple identities of both genders; male and female in Ekegusii proverbs. The study analysis was in terms of gender identify and the masculinity construction, gender identify and the femininity construction, gender identity and construction of gender roles and comparative presentation of masculine and feminine identities.

From the analysed data, the researcher found out that certain features of the language like the way sentences are structured in proverbs and the way

In the analysis of gender identity and the masculinity construction the findings of the study revealed that Ekegusii language is used to propagate views on what it means to be 'a man' among the Gusii people. The findings revealed that among the features of language that reveal the identity of a man are topicalization, negation and metaphor. The study revealed that Ekegusii gendered proverbs express masculine models exuding strength, power and energy as in proverbs such as *Ensinyo managokwanwa mbamura etabwati* (A despised neighbourhood has no brave men). The proverb uses both negation and topicalization and *Omomura ingetii akororerwa* (The ability of a young man is seen on the battle ground). The data also shows that another key indicator of masculinity in Gusii community is a man as provider as exemplified in *Omosacha omuya noyokoringa chinkundi kagosa mochie mogoko osoa nyomba*. (A responsible husband is the one who carries food as he enters his homestead and there will be warmth at home). This was shown by use of relative clauses and declarative sentences. The study also shows that a Gusii man is a protector and this is at family level as shown in the proverb *Ngongo machaywa imbarura etabwati* (For a region to be despised then it is because of its lack of boys or men) presupposes that for any region to be despised then most probably it is due to lack of boys or men that should provide protection.

Being a lecherous, is another masculine ideal in Gusii community that is reflected by sexual prowess of man. Sexual prowess in Gusii community is shown by the number of wives or partners a man have, the number of children he has and his desire for sex as shown by proverbs such as *Nyamokungu omo aye, mosiereku okobera tobunera abagaka chinkore* (You who has one wife sit close to the door lest you break the

elders' drinking straw) and *Otaraita egesimba karamanya ekio engoko yachia koriogia aroro* (Before you kill the mongoose ask why the hen went there). In Gusii community men are represented as decision makers in the family and important social actors in clan negotiations.

The analyzed data also reveal that some proverbs reflect men identities that were marginalized and subordinate such as *Omosacha otabwati bana nigo ange entetere etasimekirie*

(A fatherless man is no better than unburied seed) and *Omosacha otaragacha enyomba yaye oyio mbosa* (A man who has not built his own house is useless). These proverbs represent a nonconforming or 'failed' masculinity identity.

The study also analyzes gender identity and the femininity construction. The findings of the study show how language plays a major role in the social construction of gender, especially through the usage of proverbs. The findings of the study reveals that feminine construction in Ekegusii gendered proverbs is created through special use of certain lexical patterns, figures of speech and myriad of other linguistic forms to reveal overt sexism, derogatory depictions; negative values and female stereotyping. The data reveals that one of the greatest ideal of being a woman in Gusii society is childbearing and child upbringing yet procreation is a product of both the husband and the wife as shown *Totogia moiseke kieni motogie mwana* (Never praise a girl for her beauty but rather by giving birth). The study reveals that the traditional Gusii community pressure on women to marry and make marriage a form of social identity.

The data collected shows that proverbs are the main foundations for the pressure society mounts on women to get married such as *Moiseke onyabagambi bange*

tanyagosoka (A young woman with many advisors will not get married). The data collected reveals that the objectification of women permeates traditional Gusii community. The data indicates that in Ekegusii proverbs women are objectified, whereas their male counterparts are accorded subject status. Such beliefs and attitudes are passed onto generations through the socialization process. Objectification of women in Gusii community is shown through the practice of bride price in the marriage institution. Noteworthy, the concept of bride price reflects how male-centeredness continues to shape the way women are viewed.

The data also shows that Ekegusii gendered proverbs represents the female gender as vulnerable especially where physical strength is concerned. This is achieved through the proverbs that show absence of male figure (widowhood) which portrays destruction of women as in *Mokungu takomanya buya bwamosacha oye gotatiga otigaire omoboraka* (A woman will never know the value of her husband until she becomes a widow). A good number of proverbs make use of semantic traits of such lexical items as: child, never thinks, invalid, etc. that carry the nuance of negativity in women. The analysis reveals the use of proverbial language through metaphors reflects social views and attitudes of the Gusii community such as defaming, belittling and regarding women as subordinate. Such gendered proverbs have been used to demean womanhood. The analysis also shows that some proverbs create a positive impression about women's roles and emphasize how essential they are in the family such as *Enka etabuati omokungu nigo enga ekiage getabuati endagera* (A homestead without a woman is like a granary without grains). The proverb makes use of conceptual metaphor of a woman being a granary with grains illustrates the importance of a woman in family and community.

A close analysis of the data collected reveals that some proverbs in Gusii culture manifest women with excessive masculine energy such as assertive, adventurous, independent, and strong as *Omokungu oisaine abasacha batano na barare* (A woman who is worth seven men) and *Omokungu omokung'u korende tabwati ensara* (A strong woman but without an arrow). Proverbs that reveals masculine energies in women shows that despite the progress made by women they continue to face traditional stereotypes.

The analysis as reveals that gender construction and gender roles are intertwined since a person's sex presents the ground for gendering and assignment of the gender roles. The analysis of gender roles reveals three main sub categories which are reproductive, productive and socio-political management roles. The study observes that gendered Ekegusii proverbs as a cultural tool serves to define the duties and responsibilities of individuals towards others in society. The data collected shows complementary presentation of masculine and feminine identities which make reference to both men and women as in *Omosacha asache n'omokungu akunge* (Let the husband look for wealth and let the wife take care of it). The data reveals that women are projected as additional, secondary and supportive in their social roles. Men are seen as wealth creators and women role is secondary that of taking care.

8.1.2 Ekegusii proverbs that promote gender division

In Gusii culture, it has been found that proverbs are used to reinforce the idea of gender differences and division. These proverbs often highlight traditional roles and expectations for male and female in the community. For example, some proverbs indicate that female are better suited for certain tasks like cooking or childcare, while men are expected to be providers or leaders. These proverbs contribute to gender inequality by perpetuating stereotypes and limiting opportunities for both male and

female. They reinforce the idea that certain jobs or responsibilities are only suitable for one gender, this leads to discrimination and unequal treatment.

The findings of the study reveal that Ekegusii proverbs that promote gender division are manifested in form of misogyny and patriarchy ideology. The analyzed data of Ekegusii proverbs reveal that gendered proverbs express a deep misogyny. The results show that misogyny in Ekegusii proverbs manifests itself both in audacious ways and also in other proverbs it is more elusive or concealed in ways that provide plausible deniability. The study observes that misogyny in Ekegusii proverbs is prevalent since proverbs portray the concept of sexism in language. The analyzed study reveals that misogyny in Ekegusii gendered proverbs is manifested in form of gender bias and discrimination, gender roles and perceptions, objectification of women, sexual objectification and bravery versus beauty stereotype.

The findings of the study reveal that Ekegusii gendered proverbs reflect gender bias and discrimination in traditional Gusii society. The findings of the study show that language is a major instrument that integrates gender biasness in a society. This is reflected in Ekegusii linguistic proverbs that decide the supremacy of one gender in a particular society. The study observes that Ekegusii proverbs not only represent but also promulgate, preserve, and spread gender bias and discrimination as shown in proverbs that assert that women lack the intelligence, acumen, and brain power as in a proverb like *Okerengereria kwo'mokungu nigo konge ogwekumba kwe chimbere chiaye* (The thinking of the woman is as twisted as her breasts). The study also indicates that gender biased proverbs disempowers women and enhance patriarchy where by women always need guidance of a man. The lexical choices embedded in the proverbs further showed how proverbs enhance marginalization of women. For instance in traditional Gusii society women are thought particularly to be incapable of

foresight and lack the ability to make and carry through sensible and realistic plans. The data reveals that gender bias and discrimination is also manifested in proverbs that convey inferiority of women such as *Mokungu takomanya buya bwamosacha oye gotatiga otigaire omoboraka* (A woman will never know the value of her husband until she becomes a widow). Other proverbs affirm the society's denial of female psychological and social existence without men as in *Omokungu nigo atakeire koba omwororo naende omoigweri* (A woman must be humble and obedient). The analysis reveals that the Gusii culture use language to misogynistic give a bias definition and understanding of women as weaker sex and which still remain unchallenged in Gusii contemporary society. This also implies that language is engrained in culture and that in most cultures are being endorsed by men who approve derogatory language to suppress women.

The analyzed data also shows that Ekegusii gendered proverbs are discursive in which females are portrayed based on stereotypical gender roles and perceptions. The findings from the sample proverbs indicated that linguistic representations of gender roles in Ekegusii proverbs tend to denigrate, discriminate against, and assign subordinate positions to the sexes. The analysis reveals that proverbs in traditional Ekegusii culture tend to set limits to gender performance. For instance, women's roles in traditional Ekegusii culture were confined in homestead where they were to perform light roles such as cooking, caring and mentorship roles. The husband/man is perceived more as a provider than an equal partner in a marriage setting. The data reveals gender-based divisions of labor in traditional Gusii culture. As such men undertake the duty of controlling heavy and mobile economic resources outside their homes while women assume control over reproductive duties in the domestic sphere. The analysis shows that these stereotypes in traditional culture polarize female-male

attributes along subordinate-dominant binaries which in turn set limits to gender performance.

The analysis of Ekegusii proverbs reveals the objectification of women in Gusii culture. Ekegusii gendered proverbs reveal the existence of modes of objectifying women within the display of the patriarchal structure. The results show that Gusii culture sets a customary bride price to be settled by any man who wants to take a wife. The data indicates that marriage in traditional Gusii culture is like a business transaction which costs the buyer cows, sheep and goats. The data reveals that women are objects of reproduction and in fact a woman gain respect and admiration after siring children. Some proverbs when used in specific context revealed that a woman is an object of man. For instance in Example *Kiao nkia na kiabande nkiabande* (What is yours is yours and what is not yours is not yours) when used by a man to refer to a woman shows that a man can use a woman in whatever manner they wish since she belong to him. This then implies that a woman has no control over herself and is manipulated by a man.

Misogynistic ideology is also reflected in proverbs that degrade the being of women as sexual objects that satisfy the pleasure of men. Such proverbs enhance the concept of heterosexual hostility. The data indicates that the suppression of women and shows the multifaceted relationship between power and sexuality, and hegemonic masculinity as a source for the imposition and practice of unwanted sexual assault on women as shown in the proverb *Omokungu nenyongo yobokeye* (A woman is a pot of honey). The data demonstrates how men use women for sexual satisfaction. The analyzed data reveals unfair comparison between boys and girls; whereas bravery is equated to young men, beauty is equated to women especially those who are young and have not given birth.

Chapter five also analyzes patriarchy as an ideology canvassed in Ekegusii proverbs. The analyzed data reveal that Ekegusii proverbs are products of patriarchal culture and as a result, they reflect high levels of gender inequality against women. The analysis reveals that gender norms and stereotypes are strongly entrenched in the cultural domination of man over a woman (patriarchy). Patriarchy as an ideology is revealed in terms of paternalism (dominative paternalism ideology and protective paternalism ideology) and hegemonic masculinity. The paternalism ideology is revealed in proverbs that portray women as a weaker sex hence they need to be controlled and protected by the male members of the society. The study indicates that the representation of men and women in Ekegusii proverbs intends to mark the patriarchal trends in Gusii society as replicated in the language of proverbs. The analyzed data reveal that Ekegusii proverbs support patriarchy as the governing style of the society.

Paternalism is also indicated in dominative paternalism where women are represented devoid of wisdom. Women in Ekegusii gendered proverbs are represented as submissive towards men as shown in proverbs as *Omokungu ogosaba okwabwera takoborwa mosacha* (A woman who apologizes never lacks a husband. The analysis revealed that Ekegusii gendered proverbs encourage subordination of women in a family structure. The proverbs reveals how subordination of women is cunningly arrayed to allow complicity between dominant male and subordinate women. Protective paternalism was demonstrated in proverbs that show men as protectors as *Omokungu nigo are esesicha, omosacha oye norobayo rorigeterete* (A wife is like a flower and the husband is like a fence around it). The results show that hegemonic masculinity is another ideology advanced in patriarchal societies. The data collected reveals that some proverbs highlight hegemonic masculinity either explicitly or

implicitly to show competitiveness, supremacy, power, endurance, confrontation, independence, and willingness to take risks

8.1.3 Power relations in Ekegusi gendered proverbs

The analysis on power relations in Ekegusi gendered proverbs provided a comprehensive examination of the gender-related power dynamics entailed in the Ekegusii gendered proverbs and how they may affect the power relations in the Gusii society. The chapter analyzes Ekegusii proverbs as discourse forms. The analysis focuses on gendered power relation and social control embedded in Ekegusii proverbs. The analysis of power relations in Ekegusi gendered proverbs is analyzed and presented in terms of: proverbial language as a tool of oppression and subjugation of women, proverbial language that express dominance of men, language, gender roles and power relations, proverbs that position women as objects and Gender, power and intelligence.

The data reveal that proverbial language is a tool of oppression and subjugation of women. That is language in a patriarchal society is used to portray how women are downgraded as was depicted in proverbs that use derogatory language in Gusii culture to propagate the mainstream oppression and subjugation of women in Gusii society. The data analyzed reveals that proverbs deal with gender power relations in a specific way. The data demonstrates that Ekegusii proverbs are chiefly male genre which encourages and enhances male domination and oppression of women. For instance, in most proverbs women and their presumed characteristics are negatively presented while men are positively presented as in a proverb like *Kobeka Mokeira ibega inkebera kwerentereire* (Cohabiting with another woman is like to bring upon yourself a boil). The ideological agenda in this proverb is hidden within the use of metaphors which may cause disrespect to women at whatever age. Women are

conceptually represented as witches and as devils. Therefore, the proverbial language oppresses women as it discredits them as it implicitly empowers men. The data also indicates that Ekegusii gendered proverbs disregard women's beauty and relate it to promiscuous character of the woman through metaphors. The proverbs in this category are used to demean women and to abuse their status. The analysis demonstrates that there are strong negative connotations and downgrading of women in Ekegusii gendered proverbs. Yet there is no proverbial language that describes men in a derogatory manner which implies a sign of power. It is evidence from such proverbs that the concept of equality in any institutions such as family cannot be fair in Gusii traditional culture.

The study also finds that Ekegusii proverbial language express dominance of men. For instance, the data collected demonstrated that man in Ekegusii proverbs is represented as the all-powerful savior of the woman. For men to graciously take up the role of being protectors they are first convinced into seeing themselves as the most powerful in society, and as superior to women and for that matter, the need to protect their subordinates. Ekegusii men are presumed to be stronger, more intelligent and possess leadership traits and the competence to provide security, sustenance and livelihood for themselves and women. The ideological aspect of these proverbs in Ekegusii gendered proverbs demonstrates that women need men to be complete hence ascribing power to men. Moreover, the proverb reflects women as second class being whose identity have been subjected adversely. The data reveals that through lexicalization, proverbs utilize euphemistic language to promulgate the ideological difference between genders where men are given all the freedom to what pleases them.

Ekegusii gendered proverbs depicted men in dominant social status in most social spheres, and women are required to assent to men. For instance, in traditional Gusii society men are depicted as stronger, more intelligent and possessing leadership qualities as well as the ability to provide stability, sustenance and livelihood. The data reveals that language is used in different domains such as family institution and in public spheres as a tool to attain a powerful stand in decision making and to attain control. Proverbs are thus used as conduits through which women are dominated and put in the lesser position that makes them have no voice in the social set up of the family and in the society at large. The analysis also reflects proverbs that emphasize phallogocentric undertones that were used to position women as lower than men. Such proverbs demonstrated marginality of women in Gusii community is due to emphasis on patriarchy and masculinity in the society.

The data reveal that some proverbs demand that women should remain submissive hence showing power and dominance of men as in *Omokungu ogosaba okwabwera takoborwa mosacha* (A woman who apologizes never lacks a husband). The study observes that the perception that men have control and authority and that they are the leaders is covertly reiterated in the affirmation that women must be submissive to men and shows that women are positioned as silent and passive, as contrasted to men who wield authority and knowledge.

Power relations are also demonstrated in the gender roles. The data collected reveals that gendered-proverbs are patriarchal in nature and they promote gender inequality as demonstrated in gender roles. For instance men are expected to be providers in family set up hence depicting women as financial liabilities to men. The superiority of men is shown by demonstrating that they are in full control of everything that goes on in the family. The data revealed that power is demonstrated through language. Thus

proverbs show how societal and cultural expectations of both genders through language. The data shows how societies have fixed certain roles in proverbs. The study reveals how power relationships are depicted through the feminine and masculine identities.

8.1.4 The effect of discourses of essentialism in Ekegusii proverbs on social order

The chapter examines the effect of discourses of essentialism in Ekegusii proverbs on social order. The analysis focuses on the link between language and gender in proverbial discourse and how proverbs play an important role in manifestation of gender stereotypes in Ekegusii, sex, gender roles and gender inequality in Ekegusii proverbs and the ideologies that justify them.

The findings of the study reveals that the first effect of discourses of essentialism in Ekegusii gendered proverbs that impacts on social order are gender stereotypes. The analyzed data reveals the pillar-Support/appendage stereotype in family sphere that shows how language in proverbs is used to discriminate one gender over another. The second stereotype is where men are perceived as the breadwinners and women as the consumers and caretakers. The study observes even in the changing circumstances, where women contribute to family upkeep, these expressions still remains static and constant. Another stereotype is pegged on the belief that women are imprudent, frail, jealous, wicked, and dependent while men are construed as rational, independent, and superior as was analyzed in chapter 5 and 6. Such descriptions reveal that women are devalued in Ekegusii gendered proverbs. The study observes that such misogynistic ideologies in proverbs permeate a kind of permanence to this negative image construction but are silent on how to subvert it. The data also depicts that men are stereotypically action oriented while women are stereotypically chatter boxes and gossips. The analysis shows that the discourse of gender essentialism justifies and

reinforces gender stereotypes. The study establishes that gender essentialism reinforces social inequalities related to gender. The data reveals that proverbs regarding leadership, headship and management rights seem to uphold the positive-male and negative-female operational spaces for the sexes. The data shows that women are held in low esteem in the society and are given secondary positions.

8.2 Conclusion

This research examines gender ideologies and power relations in the language of Ekegusii gendered proverbs. Objective one focuses on gender identities and construction in Ekegusii proverbs. The study reveal that gender identities and construction are embedded in Ekegusii gendered proverbs. The study shows that proverbs make use of sexual symbols and images that degrade women. The research has investigated gender identities in these proverbs on the basis of their lexical items. It is at this level of meaning that these proverbs obtain their sexist and obscene connotations which are construed as being laden with an impertinent reference that derogate womanhood. The data reveal that Ekegusii gendered proverbs and culture determine the social status of men and women and their roles. The data show that the social expectations of traditional Gusii society are ingeniously woven in Ekegusii proverbs. The study concludes that language in Ekegusii proverbs plays a major role in the social construction of gender. The study shows that proverbs construct gender identities and societal relationship between male and female.

Objective two focuses on Ekegusii proverbs that promote gender division. The findings of the study indicate that language is a powerful tool for establishing and perpetuating social realities. The study reveals that gender ideologies in proverbs yield a rich view of the complex structures that uphold the gender order. The analyzed data reveals that Ekegusii proverbs spread misogynistic ideologies such as gender bias

and discrimination, stereotypical gender roles and perceptions, objectification of women, sexual objectification and bravery versus beauty stereotype. Patriarchy ideologies are highlighted in proverbs that enhance paternalism that is dominative paternalism and protective paternalism. The analysis also shows that Ekegusii proverbs perpetuate the notion of hegemonic masculinity. The study observes that many of the proverbs examined contains conceptual metaphors that emphasize a social justification for male structural power. The study concludes that proverbs function as agents through which cultural beliefs are stored and shared and thus proverbs play a significant role in the transmission of gender ideologies.

Objective three focuses on power relations in Ekegusii gendered proverbs. The study reveals that linguistic features such as metaphors, negative syntactic structures and vocabulary are used as means of enacting power between genders. The findings of the study reveals that metaphors construct power reality between genders through transfer of meaning to imagery understood by the listener/reader. The results shows that such proverbs dehumanize women and deprive them of social autonomy. The study reveals that Ekegusii gendered proverbs still resonate with patriarchal ideologies. The findings reveals that power relations in Ekegusii gendered proverbs produce a rich view of the complex structures that uphold the gender order. The analysis of proverbs highlighted examples of sexism. Many of the proverbs examines contained metaphors, negation and loaded language that reinforce a social justification for male structural power. The analysis shows that men are expected to control, provide for and protect women who are assumed to be the weaker.

The study therefore concludes that proverbs function as containers through which cultural dogmas are stored and shared and that they play a significant role in the transmission of gender ideologies and the machinations of power play. Proverbs also

form an integral part of society and provide the means by which gender- based power relations are embedded in different societies. The study concludes that language is used as a tool to construct gender and language is used to deliver what the society expects from both the sexes and ultimately power is displayed and attained through language.

Objective four focuses on the effect of discourses of essentialism in Ekegusii gendered proverbs on social order. The findings of the study reveals that discourse in Ekegusii gendered proverbs demonstrates the ideological framework of gender. The study showed that proverbs serve as conduit for the continued perpetration of gender discrimination and undermining of women in traditional Gusii society. The study reveals that Ekegusii gendered proverbs show the conservative view of women. The study therefore concludes that gender ideologies and latent structures make a significant contribution to gender discrimination, especially when are accepted as entirely legitimate and normal. The results revealed that discourse in Ekegusii gendered proverbs describes gender inequalities as natural phenomenon. Ekegusii proverbs depict social practices that are a matter of social construction and these constructions are being evolved and practiced based on certain values, norms, tradition and customs of the society. The study concludes that the proverbial discourse shows explicit and implicit ideologies that uphold current gender inequities and gender bias represents the structure of the ideological communities, which is fostered discursively, thus it is an inescapable reality.it is also important to be aware of proverbs that cause gender discrimination and their impact in the society and challenge the beliefs associated with them.By promoting equality and respect for all individuals,the community will work towards a more inclusive and fair society for everyone

8.3 Recommendations

The analysis on ideologies reveals that Ekegusii gendered proverbs represent an overvaluation of masculine values but proverbs facilitate devaluation of women. Therefore, proverbs are used in propagating the exclusion of women from the decision making process in traditional African societies. The study recommends linguists and literary writers should engage in a radical dismantling of these male constructed proverbs, replacing them with proverbs that promote societal well-being and construct positive identities for women. This may be done by researchers through initiating a process of un-learning and re-learning which will require scholars to confront biases and preconceptions. They will further question the Ekegusii proverbs assumptions, challenge the beliefs by being open to new perspectives. The study further recommends a need for women to defy the way they are represented in misogynistic language. The participation of women in sexism entails that they often accept the patriarchal ideology enforced on them and behave accordingly to the extent of articulating the same sexist proverbs imposed on them. Therefore, concerned gender bodies including professional social workers ought to work hard to empower women through capacity building schemes such as training which can serve as an avenue to enlighten women so they can boldly uphold the view that all persons, irrespective of sex and gender are an equal member of the society. By this, they may even challenge male-biased gender representations articulated by men.

The analysis on power relations reveals that proverbs are not only an embodiment of cultural and moral values, through which meaning is expressed but also an avenue for gender stereotype. In view of the much significance and value attached to proverbs, a critical analysis of Ekegusii gendered proverbs reveals the semantic devaluation of

Gusii women. The study therefore recommends the need to address this social-cultural epidemic.

The analysis on the effect of discourses of essentialism in Ekegusii gendered proverbs on social order revealed that proverbs serve as conduit for the continued perpetration of gender discrimination and undermining of women in traditional Gusii society. The study recommends that gendered proverbs be consciously improved to portray gender neutrality, equality, and contemporariness. Besides, Kenya is part and parcel of globalization and so is Gusii culture. One of the global agenda is “gender equality and women empowerment”, as stipulated in in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) initiated in 2000 and its replacement, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which came into effect in January 2016. SDG seventeen-point agenda set up by the United Nations/World Health Organization is to tackle the pressing problems facing our world by 2030, among which also is gender equality. Therefore, there is need for scholars from the Gusii community to create proverbs that show the true and equal roles of both male and female in the community. These new proverbs should accurately represent the contributions of male and female in the progress of humanity without any bias or unfairness.

Generally, the study recommends the need to the revolutionalization of proverbs as linguistic resources which eventually may help in the deinstitutionalization of the patriarchal discourse in Gusii and Kenya. To effectively address this, informal and formal education has to be adopted. The entrenchment of new lines of thoughts that promote gender equality in formal education curriculum as early as possible will create societies where gender-based proverbs are disregarded. And informal education that promotes gender equality in both public and private spheres through media

channels and societal institutions such as churches and occupational associations will foster necessary transformations in the society.

8.4 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations, which can be summarized as follows:

The findings of this study are limited to negative representation and sexist proverbs against women in Ekegusii culture. By using non-probability sampling, the findings of this study are limited and cannot be generalized to all Ekegusii proverbs. The data also show some proverbs that portray the positive aspect of womanhood. The study comprehends that there are certain proverbs that convey the positive reality of women but it is paramount to understand that the meaning in those few ones will always be questionable in comparison to these sexist ones. Thus, it is devious to accommodate two opposing views like women as evil and a woman is like granary in a family. The opposing views create a possibility on the (mis)representation of women in Ekegusii gendered proverbs.

Moreover, this research observes that gendered proverbs can still be reconstructed to accommodate both man and woman in the society. Therefore, proverbs should be used in a referent context and not generalized. This recommendation does not entail the rejection or renunciation of Ekegusii proverbs but a proper scrutiny of proverbs so as to depict the reality of women. The analyzed data of the study emphasizes that women are unreliable and evil and any proverb stating otherwise will be suspiciously considered.

8.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The current research opens up a number of avenues for future research.

The question that this raises for future research is if proverbs are social construction as discussed in chapter 4, and this construction is part of the cultural artifact, they may want to investigate what may hinder the reconstruction of the negative proverbs against women. By understanding the portrayals of women in Ekegusii gendered proverbs, future research could use this as a basis to determine if language used in Ekegusii proverbs misrepresents men. For example, one might ask if men are well portrayed in the proverbs of Gusii culture.

A comparative study on power relations of proverbs from other languages could be done to establish the similarities and differences. By doing such, researchers can be able see how different cultures think about power and authority. It will also help to see the similarities and differences in how power is understood and valued in different communities.

Research on Ekegusii gendered proverbs using pragmatic and semantic theories such as Relevance Theory would give further insight on the topic as this study is based on Critical Discourse Theory to study the proverbs. By applying these theories, it will help to get the significance of proverbs in communication

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APPENDIXES

Appendix I: Naturilistic Intuitive Data Guide

The researcher will provide proverbs from the selected texts basing on the following criteria.

1 Categories of gendered proverbs

i .Proverbs for men,

ii .Proverbs for women

iii .Proverbs including both genders

2. Areas Of Analysis

- i. How language is used in prejudiced gender inferences
- ii. What are the hidden gendered ideologies in Ekegusii ?
- iii. How is language used to define gender roles in the proverbs collected?
- iv. What are the perceived gender constructions in Ekegusii?
- v. How is language used to express power relations?

Appendix II: Verificational Checklist

For each of the structures below: (a) Tick if it the content is paced accordingly.

Categories of gendered proverbs

Proverb	Men	Women	Both men and women	Gender Role	Hidden ideologies

Appendix II1: Sampled ekegusii gender proverbs

	Ekegusii	English translation
1	<i>Abakungu nabaya ko' nemenwa yabasaririe</i>	Women are good but gossiping has made them wicked
2	<i>Abamura bao ne chinsara chire esero</i>	Your sons are the arrows in a quiver
3	<i>Abamura n'amaaga</i>	Young men are the fencing branches
4	<i>Abanto bonsi bagokoanga, irana ase nyoko</i>	If everybody hates you, go back to your mother
5	<i>Abasacha mbaniberani na abakungu mbaiborerani</i>	Men help one another to beget wealth while women help one another to beget children
6	<i>Ase abagaka bare ing'ana tirianya gosareka</i>	Where men are, things will never go wrong
7	<i>Baibori bamwabo nechinyongo chio'borogi</i>	Two wives are two pots of witchcraft
8	<i>Bakungu mbabuati nderu</i>	Women have no beards
9	<i>Bakungu tibabwati nderu gekogera nigo baichire noborimo</i>	Women do not have beards because they always lie
10	<i>Basacha mbaniberani konabakungu mbaiborerani</i>	Men help fellow men in creating wealth as women help fellow women in begetting children
11	<i>Buya bwomosubati/ ekieni kwomosubati nsigiti etaratwa</i>	The beauty of a woman is like an ewe that has not had a young one
12	<i>Chieri ibere tichianya koriseria amo</i>	Two bulls will never graze from the same paddock
13	<i>Chiombe n'abana</i>	Cows are children
14	<i>Eeri magwari n'yang'o? otaroochi eng'ina Nyabisembe</i>	When you see a big bull don't ask for its mother, its mother is Nyabisembe; the huge
15	<i>Eeri tiyanya kwana marara</i>	A bull will never bellow while lying
16	<i>Eero n' eyabagaka</i>	The sitting room is for men
17	<i>Eise konyarekana egento giokoagacha giachire ase omokungu, nigo akogesaria</i>	If you give a woman anything important, she will misuse it.
18	<i>Ekeru chingoko chingochicha amo gokorageria tobaisa gochiruta obori</i>	Where hens gather to feed do not throw millet
19	<i>Ekieni ki'omokungu mbosa onye onde taiyo okomotonera</i>	A beauty of woman becomes useless if no one admires her
20	<i>Engu'ko enyeanyi yaborwa maswa.</i>	A lazy mole does not get beddings
21	<i>Enka etabuati omokungu nigo enga ekiage getabuati endagera</i>	A homestead without a woman is like a granary without grains
22	<i>Ensinyo makwanwa bobo mbamura etabwati</i>	A despised neighbourhood has no brave men
23	<i>Esese eaberi n'yarusetie entwoni Bogere.</i>	A female dog made the male dog come all the way from Luo land

24	<i>Esese embe teri na ande agiya</i>	A bad dog has no good place
25	<i>Esese entindi n'ya ngori ntambe</i>	A vicious dog is tethered with a long rope
26	<i>Esigani mboraro inka</i>	A go-between is a bridge to a home
27	<i>Ey'ekoroma ngete egosererwa.</i>	That which bites is thrown away using a stick
28	<i>Genda ase getinge omere otari kenyambi</i>	Go to your marital home, grow well and do not be a weed
29	<i>Kae omokungu esiko korende tobaisa ko' momwegena</i>	Respect a woman but never trust her
30	<i>Kera engoko nigo egokurea ebichuchu biaye binyore endagera</i>	Every hen will scratch the ground for its chicks
31	<i>Kerutu takorera kiabande, emboga nere enyongo.</i>	Do not envy other peoples things. Yours is in the pot
32	<i>Kiao nkiao na kiabande nkiabande</i>	What is yours is yours and what is not yours is not yours
33	<i>Kobeka Mokeira ibega inkebera kwerentereire</i>	Keeping Mokeira close to you is like bring upon yourself a boil
34	<i>Konyuoma omokungu oyomo no'korengereria kwo'moisia</i>	Being a monogamous is a young boy's thinking
35	<i>Konyuoma omonyakieni nigo enge buna gosimeka amatunda ase amatabekani ase kera omonto akoyarora</i>	Marrying a beautiful woman is like planting a vine on a roadside where everyone will admire
36	<i>Kurera abamura bairane ng'ombe ntoki nse</i>	Alert the men to come back, the stolen cattle have been found
37	<i>Mabeka Mokeira ibega,nkebera nkerenteire</i>	Associating with another woman other than your wife, is a call for stress
38	<i>Moibori omino nkerecha kere enyasi</i>	Your co-wife is like a devil in the wall
39	<i>Moiseke onyabagambi bange tanyagosoka</i>	A young woman with many advisors will not get married
40	<i>Moiseke tari bogeni</i>	A lady is never a visitor
41	<i>Mokungu otabwati mosacha tari gotegererwa</i>	A woman without a husband has no voice
42	<i>Mokungu mworo, mororere mogondo</i>	Judge the laziness of the woman at the garden
43	<i>Mokungu obande nyabarati ere bweri torusia mokorogoto agage insoni chitamere magachi otangange tureti binyunsa bire mioro</i>	Somebody's wife is like a cow in the shade do not remove the barrier or else she will be loose and shame will befall you at the elder's court)
44	<i>Mokungu takomanya buya bwamosacha oye gotatiga otigaire omoboraka</i>	A woman will never know the value of her husband until she becomes a widow
45	<i>Mokungu tanya gotomwa sira</i>	A woman is never sent to collect a debt
46	<i>Mokungu tari korengererea goetania ase egetanda keria akorarera</i>	A woman never thinks beyond the bed where she sleeps
47	<i>Mokungu tari mokungu gotatiga kanyuomire</i>	A woman is not compete unless married

48	<i>Momura kare sobo, nigo ange rirubi nyamong'ento</i>	When a young man is in their homestead, he is like a cobra
49	<i>Mosacha kare moyo nigo anga ritiro rire enyasi</i>	When the husband is alive, he is like wall pillar
50	<i>Mwanya baiseke bange tanya koborwa insega</i>	The family with many girls never misses confrontations
51	<i>N'engina ekwanera emori, tari emori ekwanera eng'ina.</i>	It is the cow that takes care of the calf not the calf taking care of the cow
52	<i>Nchera ya babere nobwari</i>	A path of two is all joy
53	<i>Nchera ya bombera ngiya nabo omo akorusia onde kiogoto riso.</i>	A path of many is safer for one may remove a speck from the other's eye
54	<i>Ng'ombe yarenge yane yaroka omonyenyi ng'a tata.</i>	A cow that was mine calls the butcher father
55	<i>Ngongo machaywa imbarura etabwati</i>	For a region to be disrespected, then it is because of its lack of boys or men
56	<i>Nguba emo tekoira ngombe roche</i>	One shield cannot take cattle to the river
57	<i>Nguru chia momura, nchongu egwata mbara</i>	A young man's energy is an elephant splitting firewood
58	<i>Nigo are omokungu ouretwe obosacha</i>	She is a woman whose penis was taken from her
59	<i>Nigo omokungu obariretie amaiso</i>	She is a red eyed woman
60	<i>Nonyuoma omokungu omuya mwanchaine nigo are omogeni mbaka oiboire</i>	A wife remains a stranger until she gives birth
61	<i>Nsinyo machaywa imbarura etabwati</i>	For a region to be disrespected, then it is because of its lack of boys or men
62	<i>Nyamokungu omo aye, mosiereku okobera tobunera abagaka chinkore</i>	You who has one wife sit close to the door lest you break the elders' drinking straw
63	<i>Nyang'era ndotungi ko n'emori yaye ndotungi</i>	The way a cow is, so shall its calf be
64	<i>Nyoko naba omogutu gose gakobeka amachanchabe tokomokana</i>	Even if your mother is old or dressed in rags you won't deny her
65	<i>Obotoereru bwo'mokungu nabwo ekieni kiaye</i>	A woman's politeness is her greatest beauty
66	<i>Okerengereria kwo'mokungu nigo konge ogwekumba kwe chimbere chiaye</i>	The thinking of the woman is as twisted as her breasts
67	<i>Okoibora nokuya gwakorete omokungu monyaka ntin'gana</i>	Giving birth is good because it made the despised wife/woman to be a queen
68	<i>Omoiseke omuya, omonyene chiombe namoroche</i>	A good girl is always seen by those with cows
69	<i>Omoiseke omobe momura oare aganyete</i>	A bad girl waits for a distant suitor
70	<i>Omokungu nigo atakeire koba omwororo naende omoigweri</i>	A woman must be humble and obedient
71	<i>Omokungu amo negento getari kiangencho nigo babwekaine</i>	A woman and an invalid are the same thing

72	<i>Omokungu bwe'bwatranetie tagoteba buna no'mwekungi are.</i>	A pregnant woman will never claim to be a virgin
73	<i>Omokungu ekero a bwate onibo nigo akoba omosacha</i>	A wealth woman becomes a man
74	<i>Omokungu ekero abwatete enibo namaboko aye,omogongo nigo ore getanda igoro</i>	When a woman has money in her hand, her back will be on bed
75	<i>Omokungu kamoe omonwa,omosacha kamoe ebikoro</i>	A woman is for gossiping while a man is for action
76	<i>Omokungu na keria getabuati ngencho nogo babwekanie</i>	A woman and an invalid are the same thing
77	<i>Omokungu ne'mbogo egokonywa amanyinga korende tegokoa manyinga</i>	A woman is like a tsetse fly that sucks blood but doesn't donate blood
78	<i>Omokungu nenyongo yobokeye</i>	A woman is a pot of honey
79	<i>Omokungu nere ogotinyia omwana oye amariga</i>	It is a mother who wipes her children tears
80	<i>Omokungu nere okobiara omosacha</i>	It is a woman who gives birth to a man
81	<i>Omokungu nigo agotegerera ogosemigwa kwo'monto omoriri</i>	A woman listens only to the advice of the fool
82	<i>Omokungu nigo akogoka ekero akorora omosacha agogenda gochia ase are</i>	A woman smiles when a man approaches her
83	<i>Omokungu nigo akorengereria buna omwana</i>	Women's intelligence is that of a child
84	<i>Omokungu nigo anga esesicha,omosacha oye norobayo rorigeterete</i>	A wife is like a flower and the husband is like a fence around it
85	<i>Omokungu nigo ange chinchoke, morende buya onyore oboke,gokomogechia nigo akoba omotindi</i>	A woman is like a bee, treat her well and you will eat honey, mistreat and she will turn violent
86	<i>Omokungu nigo ange omwana</i>	A woman is like a child
87	<i>Omokungu nigo are esesicha,omosacha oye norobayo rorigeterete</i>	A wife is like a flower and the husband is like a fence around it
88	<i>Omokungu nyamang'ana mange omoeri oye nigo agwesamba omonwa</i>	A gossiping woman burns her mouth in the end
89	<i>Omokungu nyamong'ento</i>	A muscular woman
90	<i>Omokungu ogosaba okwabwera takoborwa mosacha</i>	A woman who apologizes never lacks a husband
91	<i>Omokungu oisaine anasacha batano na barare</i>	A woman who is worth seven men
92	<i>Omokungu omobe nsagasaga ekobongia buna amaemba 'nkongo</i>	A bad or an ill-mannered woman is like the rustling wind that gathers everything
93	<i>Omokungu omokong'u korende tabwati ensara</i>	A strong woman but without an arrow

94	<i>Omokungu omonyakieni ne'mechando</i>	A beautiful young woman is trouble
95	<i>Omokungu omonyakieni tanya kobera ase nyuomo yake matuko onsi</i>	A beautiful woman has never stayed in marriage
96	<i>Omokungu omokung'u korende tabwati ensara</i>	A strong woman but without an arrow
97	<i>Omokungu omuya mbokano botingire bogaika</i>	A good wife is like a well-tuned harp
98	<i>Omokungu omweanyi motarere ekero toigo</i>	Visit a proud woman during the rainy season
99	<i>Omokungu oria ogoaka omonwa mwana oye takorogwa</i>	The wizard never witches the child of loud-mouthed mother
100	<i>Omokungu otagete koibora tari korara na'yanga</i>	A woman who wants to give birth never sleeps with clothes
101	<i>Omokungu otamire bwoiye tari ko'anga mosacha omotagete barare nere</i>	A divorced woman does not refuse a man who invites her to bed with her
102	<i>Omokungu siomiasiomia ng'ai akomanya bwarugeirwe gose mboke gose mbwa mwana?</i>	How will a wife /woman who roams from place to place know where the ugali has been cooked and whether it is just a little meant for the child?
103	<i>Omokungu tari korengereria are goetania egetanda keria akorarera</i>	A woman never thinks beyond her bed
104	<i>Omomura ingetii akororerwa</i>	The ability of a young man is seen on the battle ground
105	<i>Omong'ina omuya nigo amanyete ekio abana baye bagochia koria</i>	A good mother knows what her children will eat
106	<i>Omosacha asache n'omokungu akunge</i>	Let the husband look for wealth and let the wife take care of it
107	<i>Omosacha ekero aitabire nonye nechinyasae chiaye nogo chigoitaba</i>	When a man says yes, even his personal gods will yes
108	<i>Omosacha karebwoye ne ritiro rire enyasi</i>	A man who is in his home is a pillar on a wall
109	<i>Omosacha ogoteba buna takonyuoma omokungu ogosanneru nabasacha bande,takonyora mokungu akonyuoma</i>	The man who says that he will never marry a woman who is admired by other men,such man will never marry
110	<i>Omosacha omuya noyokoringa chinkundi kagosoa mochie mogoko osoa nyomba.</i>	A responsible husband is the one who carries food as he enters his homestead and there will be warmth at home
111	<i>Omosacha omuya noyokoringa nkundi kagosoa mochie mogoko osora nyomba</i>	A good man is the one who hides something in his fist so that when he gets home he brings joy to his family
112	<i>Omosacha otabwati bana nigo ange entetere etasimekirie</i>	A fatherless man is no better than unburied seed
113	<i>Omosacha otaragacha enyomba yaye oyio mbosa</i>	A man who has not built his own house is useless
114	<i>Omosacha oyo nigo abwate omomwa bwo'mokungu</i>	He only has a woman's tongue

115	<i>Omokungu nigo akorengereria buna omwana</i>	Women's intelligence is that of a child
116	<i>Omokungu okonya kobayabaya tamanyeti eyaroseriwa endagera</i>	A roaming woman does not know the pan that has been used to prepare food
117	<i>Omwana ekeru are na ng'ina nigo akogendera koba omwana botambe</i>	A child to the mother never grows
118	<i>Omwana omoriri nere orachaye ng'ina</i>	It is only a foolish child who despises her mother
119	<i>Onabaiseke bange nkerandi kiamabere botaka na botakoera</i>	He who has many daughters is a gourd of milk that will never go dry
120	<i>Onye gokonyuoma omokungu omonyakieni, omanyenobwate esira namaweri</i>	If you marry a beautiful woman, then you owe death a debt
121	<i>Onye moko'mana nomosacha oo,botuko nabo okorara chotoro chionsi,Onye moko'mana na mokao tobaisa korari nonya</i>	If you quarrel with your husband, you can deeply sleep but if you quarrel with your wife,never attempt to sleep
122	<i>Onye nyokokoro kare inka,riroria mbuya ore,onde taiyo oragokune</i>	As long as your grandmother is at home,no nody will harm you
123	<i>Otaraita egesimba karamanya ekio engoko yachia koriogia aroro;</i>	Before you kill the mongoose ask why the hen went there
124	<i>Rigia omorugi oria okwegokia nere taria kogokia abanto bande</i>	Get wife to please yourself not other people
125	<i>Riso rimo ndiateki</i>	One eye is likely to get spoilt
126	<i>Ritinge mbotuko rikong'anya</i>	A concubine goes away at night
127	<i>Ritinge ndiamochie mogare</i>	A concubine needs a wide/ rich homestead
128	<i>Sinywa koruga otamere nko mbese</i>	Cook unworthy ugali and give excuse of firewood
129	<i>Tobaisa gosanera omokungu obwate chimbere chingiya onye tobwati enibo</i>	Do not desire a woman with beautiful breasts if you do not have wealth
130	<i>Totogia moiseke kieni motogie mwana</i>	Never praise a girl for her beauty but rather by giving birth
131	<i>Twoni ibere tichiana koiyekerwa nyongo emo.</i>	Two cocks cannot be cooked in the same pot

Appendix IV : Introduction Letter.



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REF. MksU/GS/N/036/VOL.1

14th April, 2023

The Director,
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation,
P.O Box 30623,
NAIROBI.

Dear Sir,

RE: DAVINS NYANUGA OMBONGI (C80-6957-2021)

The above named is a PhD student in the second year of study and has cleared course work. The University has cleared him to conduct a research entitled: "Gender Ideologies and Power Relations in the Language of Ekegusii Proverbs."






Kindly assist him with a Research Permit in order to undertake the research.

Thank you

The stamp is circular with the text "DEAN OF GRADUATE SCHOOL" around the top and "MACHAKOS UNIVERSITY" around the bottom. In the center, there is a signature and the date "14 APR 2023".
PROF. RICHARD R. R. R. R. R., PhD
DEAN GRADUATE SCHOOL

KRP/gm

Appendix IV: Approval Letter from NACOSTI

 <p>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</p>	 <p>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION</p>
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<p>This is to Certify that Mr. Davins Nyanuga Ombongi of Machakos University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kisii on the topic: Gender Ideologies and Power Relations in the Language of Ekegusii Proverbs for the period ending : 25/April/2024.</p>	
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