

POWER RELATIONS– A CASE STUDY OF PROVERBS IN KI-EMBU

BY

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that this research project is my original work and has not been presented by another person to any higher institution of learning.

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Declaration by supervisors

This research project has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.

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DEDICATION

To my husband Peter Njuguna Simon, your fountain of love, unmatched encouragement and financial support has been my pillar to the great performance throughout this study. You are the best companion God ever granted me.

To my son, George and daughter, Tonia who kept my education dreams alive. Your warmth and understanding was overwhelmingly encouraging. May you fight to be great academic champions?

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the analysis of Ki-Embu proverbs that express power relations between genders and between ages. It seeks to investigate how the proverbs express power relations in the language in question and also examines their meaning. Moreover, the study investigates whether proverbs reinforce and perpetuates the subjugation of one gender or age group as opposed to dominance and exaltation of the other. Together with this, the study seeks to find out if proverbial language in Ki-Embu is a medium of expressing power relations between genders and ages and the role of context in expressing power relations. The study has based the analysis on Critical Discourse Analysis Theory to show that power is indexed and expressed in Ki-Embu proverbs. It is an exploration of how opaque relationships are a subtle factor in securing power which ultimately creates power imbalances.

The study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one provides the background of the study by presenting a brief description of the language under study and also on proverbs which are the linguistic features to be analyzed. It goes further to present the statement of the problem, the objectives, the hypotheses, the scope and limitation, the theoretical framework, literature review, significance of the study and the methodology used for data collection and analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis Theory which is used as the framework of the data analysis has been discussed in detail in this chapter. It guides into the unraveling of the hidden

meaning of proverbs to bring out the manner in which power relations are expressed.

Language and reality are closely related and they interact with each other. Reality influences and shapes language while language reflects and affects reality. Hence, language is a social tool. Chapter two of this study highlights some of elements of language that are closely linked to this study. Some of which include men and power, language, age and power, and language and culture. It also looks at the form and functions of proverbs and types of proverbial meaning to review more literature on the linguistic features of the study. It is also in this chapter that we have discussed the basic concepts of CDA and its methodology.

Chapter three and four which are the core parts of the study provide an analysis of proverbs that demonstrate proverbial men dominance, women subjugation and dominance of the old using proverbial metaphors, ellipsis, negative structures and words in Embu culture. The discussion in these chapters focuses on figurative language, figures of diction and linguistic devices such as syntactic structures and vocabulary and how they are used to proverbially express power between genders and ages. Context from CDA point of view in relation to the proverbs analyzed has also been discussed.

Finally, chapter five gives a brief summary of the study. It outlines the findings of the study in relation to the objectives and the hypothesis of the study and gives recommendations. It also confirms that the Critical Discourse Analysis Theory is adequate in unraveling hidden meaning in proverbial language.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we will discuss the background of the problem based on Kì-Embu, which is the language under investigation and also on proverbs which are the linguistic features to be analyzed in this study. It will also provide an overview of the theoretical model used in the analysis of data, that is, Critical Discourse Analysis. This involves unraveling the hidden meaning in texts. Other major areas to be covered in this chapter include:

the statement of the problem, the objectives, the hypotheses , the scope and limitation, literature review, the research methodology and the significance of the study.

1.2 Background to the Study

The language under study is Kì-Embu which is spoken by the Embu people who inhabit the Eastern, Western, and the Northern districts of Embu County in the Eastern region of Kenya.

This area lies in the South-Eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya and is separated from the neighboring lands by Mt. Kenya to the North, River Ena to the South, River Thuci to the East and River Rupingaci to the West. The Embu neighbours three other

ethnic groups. To the South is the Mbeere, to the East is the Achuka, and to the West is the Agikũyũ of Kĩrĩnyaga.

The Embu belong to the Bantu language family who settled in their present land between the 16th and 17th centuries having trekked from Meru. According to Guthrie (1967) the Embu are Bantu speakers of zone E ‘group 50’ under the label E52. Others in this group are the Kikuyu, Meru, Tharaka, Kamba and Thaico who are all Eastern Bantus.

Chesaina (1997) says that the Embu and the Mbeere have often been erroneously, regarded as a ‘primitive’ dialect of the Gikuyu language. Mutahi (1997) studied Kĩ-Embu and Kĩ-Mbeere as Gĩkũyũ dialects. However, Kĩ-Embu, Kĩ-Mbeere and Kĩkuyu are discrete languages.

In Kĩ-Embu there exist linguistics variations among its speakers which give rise to three distinguishable dialects; the Kĩveti, Kĩrũgũrũ and the Southern dialect. Kĩveti is the dialect spoken by the people of Runyanjes and Kyeni areas; Kĩrũgũrũ is spoken in the Northern parts of Embu close to the Mt. Kenya forest (Irangi), Manyatta, Ngandori and Nginda areas. This area is very rich in agriculture and is usually referred to as the ‘tea growing zone.’ Dairy farming also does well in this part of Embu. The southern dialect also called Kĩmbeti and is spoken in Gaturi and in the lower parts of Embu near the boarder of Embu and Mbeere. This is the

Mbeti area which is usually referred to as ‘Weru’ which means dry, because it is not as wet as the northern parts. Economically this is the ‘coffee growing zone’ of Embu with some little dairy farming.

Administratively, Kĩrũgũrũ and the Southern dialects are spoken in the Western district while Kiveti is spoken in Eastern district of Embu. The three Kĩ-Embu dialects are distinguishable at the lexical and phonological levels. Lexically, distinctions are observed in words and phrases. For example going up the hill is used variably as ‘Kunũkia’, ‘Kũthangata’ and ‘kwambata’ by the Kĩveti, Kĩrũgũrũ and Kĩmbeti respectively, Wandĩrĩ, (2010). ‘Iici’ /i: si/ (No) - southern, ‘ka’/ka/ (No) - Kiveti, ‘aca’/asa/ (No) - Kĩrũgũrũ. Phonologically, variations are observed with regard to features of intonations Ki-Embu being a tonal language, tone plays a role in differentiating meaning. The tonal; levels can be identified in Ki-embu as:

Level (-)	nĩguo	it is true
High (/)	nĩguo	is it true? (Exclamation)
Low (\)	nĩguo	a gesture of keen listening

How intonation is placed in a word can cause pronunciation differences which can be used to tell whether one is speaking Kĩrũgũrũ, Kĩveti or southern dialect a word such as Mũcikiri’ /Mũsikiri/ for *bicycle* is pronounced differently as /mosikiri/ by kiveti dialect speakers as /mo’sikiri/ by the Kĩrũgũrũ dialect

speakers and /'mosiriki/ by the Kĩmbeti or southern dialect speakers. Wandiri (2010). This study will use data collected from across all of the three dialects.

According to Wanjohi (2001) Kĩkuyu lexical similarity is at 73% with Kĩ-Embu, 67% with Kikamba and 63% with Kĩmeru. Though this similarity is above average, Kĩ-Embu is an autonomous language from all the closely related languages. The 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census recognizes Embu as distinct from both Kikuyu and Kĩmbeere and puts the total population of Embu at 324,092 and 168,155 and 6,622,576 for Mbeere and Kikuyu respectively.

1.3 Proverbs

Proverbs are said to be an intuitive aspect of adults' mental functioning. How they are used and understood is maintained to be less intuitive. The wise saying are acquired and learnt by listening to elders' talk. This is so as elders occupy a vintage position in most African traditions as human repository of command or primordial wisdom, they are the masters of eloquence, rhetoric and meaning. Adedimeji (2010).

The earliest collections of proverbs can be traced as far back as ancient Egypt about 2500 BC while the Old Testament attributed some 900 proverbs to King Solomon (10th Century BC) The first person, to engage more systematically in the collection and classification of proverbs was the Greek Philosopher Aristotle (384-

322 BC). He considered proverbs a survival of an older wisdom; "proverbs are ... elements of old philosophy which survived thanks to their brevity and dexterity" (Karagiorgos 1999).

Buchanan (1965) gave further insight on proverbs when he quoted the English Philosopher, Sir Francis Bacon who observed nearly four hundred years ago that 'the genius, wit and spirit of a nation are discovered in its proverbs.' Also, of about the same time, the Spanish writer Miguel de Cervantes remarked that proverbs are short sentences drawn from long experiences. He goes on further to quote the English Quaker William Penn who commented one hundred years later ; "The wisdom of nations lies in their proverbs which are brief and pithy."

According to Benjamin Disraeli, one of the keenest minds of the 19th Century, stated that proverbs are anterior to books and formed the wisdom of the vulgar and that in the earliest ages they were the unwritten laws of morality."

Norrick (1985: xiii) identifies two basic characteristics that differentiate proverbs generally from freely formed utterances. He says that proverbs are performed; inventoried linguistic units and they are traditional items of folklore, which are available as performed utterances which meet the speaker's need for formulating an original utterance of his/her own. At the same time, they are readily available in

recurrent situations which call for stock formulas (ibid). Dundes, (1981) has defined proverbs as the ... “wisdom of many, the wit of one”.

Mariana&Vogelzang, (1996), maintained that a proverb is an anonymous miniature piece of verbal art used rhetorically to highlight an argument relating to human behavior. It is the recognizability of the saying, often combined with the linguistic delight involved in manipulating figurative speech, metaphors and humorously exaggerated categorical statements ... “proverbs are unsystematic, they may contradict each other and their purpose is not primarily to give a moral instruction, but rather to support an argument by referring to what is tacitly assumed to be commonly accepted knowledge, whether or not the point is moral. In addition, proverbs fulfill a function as entertainment and linguistic pleasure.”

According to Crystal (1997), proverbs feature prominently in interpersonal, transactional and ideational language use. He explains that due to universality of human experience; they exist in all languages with similarities in terms of their reliance on vivid images, domestic allusions and word play.

Hogopian(2008) says that a proverb is a folk saying common in use and pithy in structure which contain special conclusions and recommendations in regard to almost every life situation.

Adedimeji (2012) views a proverb as any saying or epigram that addresses the heart of the matter in a given context, truthfully and objectively and is ascertained by world knowledge.

Proverbs play significant roles in clarifying, exemplifying, underscoring and influencing communication. With broadly analyzed sample proverbs in Kì-Embu, this study will seek to fit in the language in the African context. In many African languages expressions are not considered rich and intelligent except when they are duly laced with proverbs. In Kì-Embu a speaker who is regarded as a great orator constantly punctuates his speech with appropriate proverbs and aphorisms to drive his point home.

The ability to sum up ideas and experiences in captivating succinct expressions has always been a profound sign of native intelligence, linguistic competence and cultural erudition in Kì-Embu.

In elder meetings and other cultural activities in Embu, proverbs are regarded high and profound source of rhetorical power and language maturity. In important sittings in the land, proverbs are seen as major tool or instrument of communicating and cultivating pleasure and entertainment among the people present. They are also used to solve disputes and conclude arguments among the members of the society.

Like in other African cultures, proverbs are common features of conversational eloquence in Embu and they are said to carry the wisdom of the land, and are employed to reinforce meaning and express conventional truths. The Embu people utilize proverbs to touch a wide array of human concerns and activities and concentrate themselves on highlighting the roles of men, women, and the youth.

Proverbs are used in articulating different issues and consolidating the diversified views of people in an attempt to advance societal values and beliefs. They are used to cement that which protects the identity of the people of Embu.

The Aembu, in projecting their Africanness and cultural background, articulate the rich cultural ethos of proverbs in their spoken and written works to reinforce meaning and to provide the cultural milieu of the people.

Proverbs in the traditional set up of the Aembu were a major or key tool/instrument used for instruction to impart knowledge, values and attitude to the young by the older generation. Though used in this way, the origin of proverbs is known to be from the language of the ordinary people of Embu but not coined from academic philosophies.

At the same time, proverbs are held strongly as pieces of advice concerning a recommended direction of action. Moreover, proverbs in Embu are facilities for outlining and organizing quickly and effectively, things which we experience in

everyday situations and provide a commonplace thinking. In all these ways proverbs have deep effects on social concept. This study, thus, has an intriguing background on which to base its analysis in an attempt to investigate how these highly held features of the language express power relations among its speakers in as far as gender and age is concerned.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Religion and patriarchy are some social and cultural tools used to perpetuate male dominance structures in the societies which are male centered. Prejudice against women has been institutionalized in these societies by emphasizing that women are second class human beings who should only be recognized in relation to men. Furthermore, a number of studies including those of Wang (2000), Wodak (1997), Tannen (1994) Smith (1995), Ooko (2008) among others that have been carried out on gender pay attention to language use in relation to gender in which a notable percentage show that language use generally marginalizes, abuses or demeans women.

Various women liberation movements and groups have also evolved, considerable scholarly efforts to expose the sources and dangers of oppression of women and the voice of the youth restoring the identity and dignity of women and empowering them for national development has also been noted. While such efforts are commendable, it is important to note that substantial success has not

been recorded in the drive towards the empowerment of women and the youth. This is because one of the causes of gender imbalance in the African culture has not been adequately so far undertaken. This study reflects on this salient problem, the pervasiveness of oppressive proverbs. Hence, this study seeks to find out how power relations are expressed in Kì-Embu proverbs between genders and ages.

The following research questions will guide the current study:

1. How do Kì-Embu proverbs express power relations between genders and ages?
2. Does the use of these proverbs reinforce the subjugation of one gender or of age group as opposed to dominance and exaltation of the other?
3. Is language used in Kì-Embu proverbs a medium of expressing prejudice and subjugation against women dependency and despondency of the young?
4. What is the role of context in understanding the power relations as expressed in Kì-Embu proverbs?

1.5 Objectives

1. To examine how Kì-Embu proverbs express power relation and their meaning.
2. To investigate whether use of proverbs in Kì-Embu reinforces the subjugation of one gender or age group as opposed to the dominance of the other.

3. To find out whether language as used in Kĩ-Embu proverbs is a medium of expressing prejudice and subjugation against either gender and dependence and despondency of either age group.
4. To examine the role of context in understanding the power relations between genders and ages.

1.6 Hypotheses

1. Kĩ-Embu proverbs express power relations through use of terms, negation, ellipsis and metaphor in which intended meaning is encoded.
2. Use of proverbs in Kĩ-Embu reinforces subjugation of female gender and the young as opposed to dominance and exaltation of male gender and the old.
3. Language as used in Kĩ-Embu proverbs is a medium of expressing prejudice and subjugation against women and despondency of the young.
4. Kĩ-Embu proverbs utilize context in creating and expressing meaning.

1.7 Rationale of the Study

This study falls in the domain of discourse analysis which studies spoken and written texts to unravel the meaning hidden in words and other linguistic features. Proverbs are pithy expressions which convey very rich meaning. This study will find out how the 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.

Subjecting proverbs to linguistic study will reveal the various terms syntactic structures and metaphors used to express power relations between genders and ages which will give a better understanding of the position of men and women, young and old in society. In this way advocacy for gender equality and ways of upholding identity and dignity for all can easily be formulated.

The study will act as a guide to linguists, writers, political scientists, language planners and political ideologists in Kenya and the rest of the world by demonstrating that any feature or form of spoken or written text should be analyzed for power relations hidden within its form and structure in order to understand how power is exerted without violence by clever use of language.

Moreover the study provides an opportunity to analyze use of language in proverbs and this will contribute academically to the existing knowledge. It will also add to already existing records and publications on power relations as one of the issues that make one gender seem to dominate the other.

As proverbs are loaded with hidden feelings, wits, and intentions of the speaker, they can be used as tools to cover individual opinions in public interactive situations and also to protect our personal attitudes. This study seeks to underscore the need for positive use of proverbs and not to discard them altogether. By use of Kĩ-Embu proverbs, it provides a conceptualized image of the real world.

While speakers at different levels of the societal hierarchy use proverbs to create the worldly reality and to solidify their beliefs, values, attitudes, economic and political status and pass this from generation to generation, some of the cultures passed on through the use of proverbs may not be appealing to the present generation for instance, gender inequality. This study, by understanding the meaning in Kì-Embu proverbs will help highlight some of the unappealing elements in society so that they may be dealt with appropriately.

In conclusion, the research findings will benefit researchers and linguists by illustrating that the discourse has an underlying ideological purpose and therefore reassert the power of words in expressing hidden meaning.

1.8 Scope and Limitation

In this study, the researcher will solely be concerned with Kì-Embu proverbs and how power relations are encoded in them. It will in particular investigate power relations between gender and age. It will be concerned with how different metaphors, ellipsis, negative structures, vocabulary and context are used in Kì-Embu proverbs to encode power relations.

The study will not touch on the variation of the Kì-Embu dialects as the researcher is well versed with proverbs across the three dialects i.e. Kirũgũrũ, Kìveti and

Kĩmbeti. This study will be based on discourse. It will use the critical discourse analysis theory to analyze how power relations between genders and between ages are expressed in Kĩ-Embu by use of proverbs.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

The present study is based on Critical Discourse Analysis Theory (henceforth CDA) as the framework of the analysis. The main proponent of this approach include Norman Fairclough, Teun Van Dijk, Ruth Wodak, Jurgen Habermas, Gunther Kress, Theorem Leuwan, Siegfried, Jäger, James Paul Gee, Christina Schäffner, Reger Fowler. Robert Hodge, and Theo Van Leeuwen, among others. They emphasize the role of context for interpretation.

Fairclough (1995) argues that the analysis of texts should be isolated from institutional and discourse practice within which texts are embedded. Contexts here include the environment in which discourse is set (e.g. the background of the proverbs) and the target audience. In CDA they must be considered for a realistic interpretation of texts and discourse. Thus CDA is a theory whose purpose is precisely to expose power structure and disorders of discourse and consider the context of language use to be crucial.

CDA consider 'text' as the basis unit of analysis. This is informed by the proponents of this theory that the meaning potential of language is realized in units

no smaller than a text. Fairclough (1995) asserts that the smaller units such as words, meaning of components can be analyzed, but their relevance is only obtained in the perspective of their contribution to the meaning expressed by the whole text in context.

The idea of 'critical' does not mean the common sense meaning of being negative -rather 'skeptical'. Reisigl and Wodak (2001) define 'critical' as not taking things for granted, opening up complexity, challenging reductionism, dogmatism and dichotomies, being self-reflective in research such that opaque structures of power relations and ideologies are made manifest. In order to understand language use in proverbs and decode the hidden meaning and its effects to the hearer/reader we have settled on CDA theory. CDA is a theory that is concerned broadly speaking with highlighting the traces of cultural and ideological meaning in spoken and written texts. The theory sees discourse as social practice, implies a dialectal relationship between a particular discourse event and the situations, institution, and social structure that frame it.

CDA views discourse, the use of language in speech and writing, as social practice. The discursive event is not only shaped by society but also shapes society. Discourse is socially constituted as well as socially conditioned. It constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people Wodak (1996:17).

Norman Fairclough (1995), one of the founders of CDA has described it as:

...”aiming to systematically explore often opaque relationship of causality and determination between

- a) Discursive practices, events and texts and
- b) Wider social and cultural structure relations and processes, to investigate how such practices events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power”; (ibid:132).

Van Dijk (2001:352) defines CDA as:

A 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 political context.

CDA takes explicit position and in this way want to understand, expose and ultimately resist social inequality. Thus CDA is a theory whose purpose is precisely to expose power structures and discords of discourse. CDA also views language as a social practice and considers the context of language use to be crucial. In the process of being socialized into a culture a language is used in the transmission of cultures, beliefs, customs, ideas and values. This means that the study of language is seen in relation to its use or function.

Fairclough sketches a three dimensional framework for conceiving of and analyzing discourses.

1.9.1 Dimensions of CDA

As we analyze the proverbial discourse we will put into consideration that every instance of language use is a communicative event consisting of three dimensions which are; the textual, a discursive practice and a social practice (Jorgensen and Phillips 2002:67). The dimensions seek to establish and explore the relationship between text and its social context.

1.9.1.1 Discourse – as – text

These are linguistic features and organization of concrete instances of discourse, choices and patterns in vocabulary (e.g. wording, metaphor), grammar (transitivity, modality), cohesion (e.g. Conjunction, schemata) and text structure (e.g. episode marking, turn – taking system) which should be systematically analyzed. Of interest in this study are the cohesive devices, vocabulary and text structure as used in proverbs to achieve effective communication. This study will identify and analyze them in the case study in Kiambu proverbs.

1.9.1.2 Discourse – as – discursive practice

This views discourse as something which is produced, circulated, distributed and consumed in society Fairclough sees these processes largely in terms of their circulation of concrete linguistic objects (specific texts or text types that are produced, circulated consumed and so forth). Approaching discourse as a discursive practice means that after the analysis of vocabulary, grammar, cohesion

and text structure, attention should be given to speech acts, cohesion and intertextuality – three aspects that link a text to its wider social context.

Fairclough distinguishes between manifest intertextualising (i.e. overtly drawing upon other texts) and constitutive intertextuality or interdiscursivity (i.e. Texts are made up of heterogeneous elements: generic conventions, discursive types not register, style). The study, however did not deal with this dimension.

1.9.1.3 Discourse –as – Social- Practice

These are the ideological effects and hegemonic process in which discourse is seen to operate. Hegemony concerns power that is achieved through constructing alliances and integrating classes and group through consents, so that the articulation of orders of discourse is correspondingly one stake in hegemonic struggle Fairclough (1992:93). It is from this third dimension that Fairclough constructs his approach to social change when the latter is viewed from the angle of intertextuality. “The way in which discourse is being represented, re-spoken, or re-written shed light on the emergence of new orders of discourse, struggles over normativity, attempts of control, and resistance against regimes of power” Blommaert (2006:30). This dimension will be used in this study in that it will

In addition to these, Fairclough suggests a three fold distinction in research methodology. CDA, according to Fairclough, should make a progression in the

phase of description, to interpretation, to explanation Fairclough (1989:26). CDA focuses on the textual- linguistic features of the material. Description is an activity similar to that of participation in the sense that the researcher adopts the participants categories in his description, but the researcher (in contrast to the participant) need to make his/her interpretive framework explicit. Interpretation is concerned with the way in which participants arrive at some kind of understanding of discourse on the basis of their cognitive, social, and ideological resources.

The interpretive phase requires a degree of distancing between the researcher and the participants, but the interpretation is still done by means of categories and provided by the participant. Often Fairclough argues, such interpretations display ideological framings participants 'reproduce' elements of social ideologies through everyday internationally organized interpretive procedures.

For this reason, C DA requires a third phase:

1.9.1.4 Explanation

In this explanatory phase, the researcher draws on social theory in order to reveal the ideological underpinning of laid interpretative procedure. Social theory creates the distance necessary to move from non-critical to 'critical' discourse analysis. It provides the longer picture in which individual instances of communication can be placed and from which they derive meaning. It also provides grounds and transcending the limitation of lay consciousness the ideological dimensions of discourse.

1.9.1.5 Interpretation

Interpretation arises from an act of reading or analysis which makes meaning of a text Locke (2004:5) Extending this definition, Fairclough argues that in respect of discourse analysis, interpretation focuses on dimensions of discursive practices which include:

- a) its manifestation in linguistic form (in form of texts)
- b) its instantiation of a social practice (ways of thinking, ways of being in the world – political ideological etc)
- c) Dimensions which focus on socially constructed processes of production distribution, and consumption which determines how texts are made, circulated, and used.

This focuses on the ways in which texts operate in the world, how they are made, disseminated, and read. It also draws attention to the relationships between texts (intertextuality).

1.9.2 Stages of Critical Discourse Analysis

Corresponding the three dimensions of CDA Fairclough distinguishes three stages of analysis. He asserts that the nature of analysis changes as one shifts from stage to stage. The stages shift from description, into interpretation and description.

1.9.2.1 Description Stage

This involves systematically describing what linguistic features are in a text (such as new reports, memory commentaries column adverts etc) as well as highlighting features which are not. A text need not be a string of sentences indeed it could consist of one word or even one letter. Texts are described to show their explicit as well as implicit nature with the focus on the social variable of text. Capturing discourse in use requires the description of the linguistic features people in interaction with each other use as they mutually construct the event.

1.9.2.2 Interpretation stage

CDA interprets texts on behalf of readers who do not take up a critical position to indicate how such readers can be manipulated unwillingly by the text or positioned into particular reading because of the social values they carry. Hence, the texts need to be interpreted relative to the processes of production and interpretation that define discursive practice. The main concern here is how participants arrive at some kind of understanding of the discourse on the basis of their cognitive, social and ideological resources. Blommaert (200: 30).

1.9.2.3 Explanation stage

CDA explains connections between texts and the wider social and cultural context and or explains how wider social and cultural contexts might shape the interpretation of a text. We placed the proverbs under analysis in their appropriate

Embu context for easy interpretation. The relationships between these two stages form Fairclough's dimensions of discourse and discourse analysis as follows;

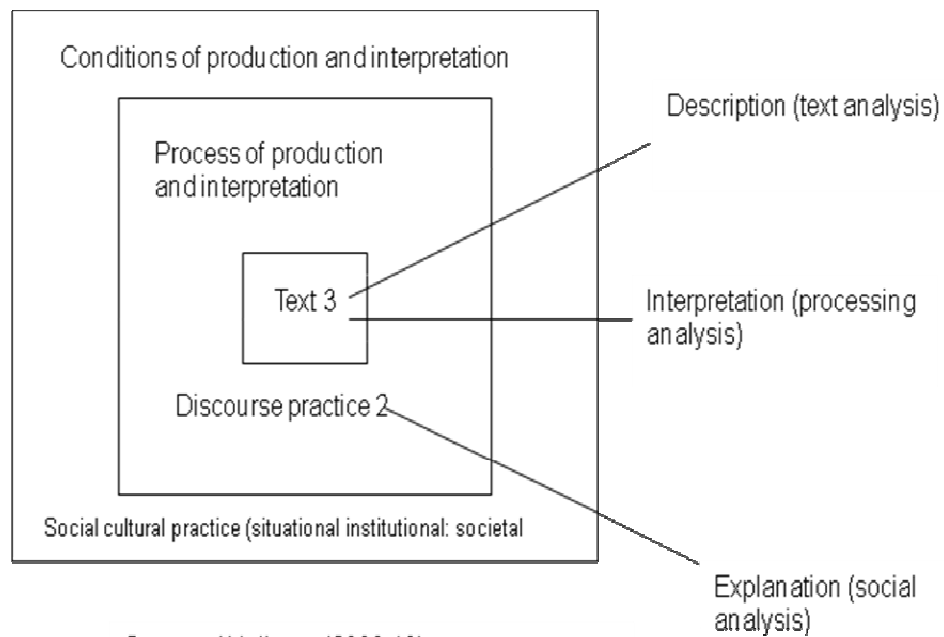


Figure 1.1: Fairclough dimension of critical discourse analysis

CDA focuses on the interpretation of a text which Fairclough terms as coherence. This is reader description, that is, the extent to which readers (the target as well as the non-target coherence) are disposed to subscribe to a text's preferred reading and, in general, how readers actually respond to a text. This focuses on a text in such a way that it discursively position readers via its preferred meaning.

Foucault (1991) characterizes discourse as systematically organized sets of statements that give expression to the meaning and values of an institution.

Discourse analysts have to use the term discourse to refer to the discourse practice which is bound to particular reading context and socio-cultural practice which is relevant to my study. Socio-cultural discourse is a Foucaultian discourse that refers to the way, in which knowledge is organized, talked about and acted upon in different institutions. This is bound to a particular social context with regard to social cultural practice.

CDA typically studies how content features (such as properties of language users of powerful groups) influence the ways members of dominated groups define the communicative situation in preferred context models (Rojo & Van Dijk 1997:358). They argue that CDA aims at making transparent the connections between discourse practices, social practices, and social structures, connections that might be opaque to the layperson.

Wodak (1995) came up with the development of discourse historical method which denotes an attempt to integrate systematically all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text.

This was a great manifestation that the context of the discourse had a significant impact on the structure, function and content of the utterances made. Her historical approach is similar to Fairclough's in that language; ...”manifests social processes

and interaction”...”and constitutes those processes as well” Wodak & Ludwig, (1999:12).They further argue that discourse, always involves power and ideologies and explains that no interactions exists where values and norms do not have a relevant role(ibid).

According to them, “discourse ... is always historical; connected synchronically and diachronically with other communicative events which are happening at the same time or which have happened before (ibid: 12). They also observed that “readers and listeners, depending on their background knowledge and information and their position might have different interpretation of the same text” (ibid: 13).

According to Fairclough and Wodak, (1997:271-280) the main levels of CDA may be summed up as follows

- a) CDA addresses social and political problems
- b) Power relations are discourse
- c) Discourse constitutes society and culture
- d) Discourse is historical and can be understood in relation to context
- e) The link between text and society is mediated through CDA
- f) Discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory
- g) Discourse is a form of social action that can be used to make transparent the underlying power relations.

1.10 Language, Ideology and Power

Spolsky (1998:94) defines power as ...”the social and material resources a person can command, the ability (and social right) to make decisions and influence events.

Cameroon et al (1985) observes that traditional notions of power have posited an economic view of the concept. Other theorists relate power to politics, where those in the political hierarchy are seen as possessing power and using it to control those beneath them. On the other hand, others define power as the ability to impose one’s will on others.

Karl Marx, cited in Fairclough (1989) focusing on economically oppressed men viewed power as the property of the social economic class with the most resources. While conceptualizations may differ in many ways, power has generally been viewed as a commodity that people have a differing amounts.

Foucault (1980) cited in Fairclough (1989) differs with these tangible and economic views of power. His argument is that such views are simplistic and that power is larger than the individual’s actions. He goes on to say that actions comprise only part of the vehicles of power and hence we experience multiple related structures of power such as gender, race and class.

According to Fairclough (1989:13);“One aspect of power is the capacity to impose and maintain a particular structuring of some domain or other – a particular way of dividing it into parts, of keeping the parts demarcated from each other, and a particular ordering of these parts in terms of hierarchical relations of domination and subordination.”

The notion of power is of interest to critical linguists since they appreciate the role played by language in stabilizing societal norms. Feminists lay their emphasis resisting oppression and exercising power over others and have predominantly provided the conceptualization of “empowerment.”Wodak (1997) asserts that in so far as language is concerned, women should resist ‘sexists’ or demeaning language and fight it wherever it occurs. Radical feminists take structural approach to oppression and view the current linguistic system as “corrupt beyond repair” and emphasize on new alternative system. They see the current system as overly patriarchal and therefore advocate a new language system. At the same time, Blommaert (2005) is of opinion that language is vital in expressing societal norms and expectations and that it could easily be said to be the most powerful tool used to establish culture of a people.

He states that;

One does not just ‘have’ or ‘know’ language. Such seemingly innocuous phrases hide a complex and highly sensitive political – economic dynamics of acquisition and differential distribution. Words, accents, intonations, contours, styles all come with a history of assessments and evaluation. This

is where language leads us to the heart of social structures; an investigation into language becomes an investigation into systems and patterns of allocation of a power symbols and instruments and thus an investigation into the basic patterns of privilege and disenfranchisements in societies, Blommaert (2005:61).

In this view, it is necessary to acknowledge that language is not just a simple and straightforward system used only in communication. It also reveals about the society and is in itself a major site of conflict when its role in the propagation of inequalities is analyzed.

The notion of ideology is about the tendency to represent issues in one way or another and its standpoint is what determines how issues are portrayed. Ideology involves a systematic organized presentation of reality. Kress & Hodge (1979), Van Dijk (1998) argues that social actors implement ideologies in their discourse and other social practices. In using dominant ideological constructs in daily life, they change the meaning of those ideologies. These meanings help in the explanation of how dominant ideologies are used and what kind of conflict are reinforced in their usage.

According to Lennan (1991) cited in Van Dijk (1998) for a set of ideas or beliefs to be considered ideological, they need to be shared by a significant number of people, from a coherent system and must connect to the use of power to the society. Ideology is centrally about power and some people are seen as having

power to impose their views on others and they at the same time use this power to prevent other people from obtaining a perspective at variance with what they (the powerful) want. In a male dominated world therefore, men seek to control what women are and impose their will on them.

In CDA, dominance is seen not as being obtained through imposition of the will of the dominant group, but by the ability of the dominant group, to present itself as being best equipped to fulfill the interests and goals of the whole society William (2001) cited in Van Dijk (2008).

Phillips (1992) cited in Wodak (1997:377) observes that;”Language has become relevant in the study of ideology because of its widely recognized involvement both in thought and in social action and for some, because of its concreteness on materiality. Language is central to the creation, promulgation and maintenance of ideologies. We experience the world through human interaction that is constituted by discourse and much of the ideational content of human dealings is expressed and mentally experienced through language.

Wodak (1997) states that in enforcing ideologies language is manipulated to express particular viewpoints. In order to win and maintain ideas for the dominant group, the ideas are made to seem natural, part of common sense and emanating from human nature. She goes on to say that among critical linguist, the importance

of studying ideology is linked to the understanding of nonviolent means of exercising power over others.

Van Dijk (1993:254) states that “modern and more effective power is mostly cognitive and enacted by persuasion, dissimulation or manipulation ...managing the mind of others is essentially a function of text and talk.” Discourse is appreciated as being at the forefront of fighting for or against certain causes and its study has gained prominence in our current situation in society. In our study, we will explore ideology as a standpoint in relation to how the sample proverbs express power relations in the Embu community.

1.11 Use of Proverbs and Power.

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

Balogun states that;”the domination of women by men and their oppression is fostered in Africa, in fact, globally, through cultural vehicle such as proverbs.” She argues that though the use of proverbs may differ from society to society, what is common to proverbs everywhere is that they touch on a wide array of human concerns and activities. She notes that proverbs are highly regarded in the thinking

and communication process of African as a whole and attributes this to the little attention that has been directed towards the relationship between proverbs and the power relations that portray females based on stereotypical gender roles and perceptions.

Balogun (2005:39) asserts that “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. According to Ogunwale (1998), the existence of proverbial oppression of men as against women is evidence in Yoruba culture. He argues that judging from the meaning , potentials and interpretations of some masculine metaphors in Yoruba proverbs, it is the female folk who actually occupy an advantaged position,(ibid:103).He discusses some Yoruba proverbs that attribute negative characteristics to the male folk such as disgracefulness, insolence, disobedience, indolence, and absurdity.

Balogun, however, 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. According to Oyewunmi ,cited in Balogun (1999), the traditional African family is a non gendered one in that kingship roles and categories are not gender differentiated as power centers within the family are diffused and not gender

specific and that the fundamental organizing principles of social roles is 'seniority' grounded on chronological age and not gender.

Balogun departs from the standpoint which may suggest that there is no gender crisis in African culture and asserts that proverbs are linguistic resources construed as cruel and unfair pithy sayings that derogate the dignity, integrity, rights and freedom of woman folk.

Daramola (2004) cited in Balogun (2005) is of the view that different sets of proverbs accompany various activities, events, things and ideas and may take collective, didactic, abusive and even eulogistic forms, and proverbs have taken derogatory garb, and they reveal that women's safety, well-being and rights are of little interest to the male folk.

Wang (2000) observes that the 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. One such resource that brings out this reality is the proverb. Wang argues 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.

This argument goes further to say that the study of proverbs digs out the deep-rooted 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.

Proverbs as the essence of the language and mirror of reality, can reflect people's views, values, attitudes, behavior or system of a society hence power relations in proverbs provide a glimpse of inequality between genders in reality. The fact that proverbs are rich in pithiness, frankness, appeal and are handed down by mouth and ear makes them a great social tool which exerts a profound and pervasive influence on both individuals and society at large. It is difficult to dispute or challenge a person who uses proverbs when speaking since one presents in a form which is not personal, as one calls upon pre-existing knowledge which is said to be self-evidently true.

1.12 Gender and Gender Dichotomy

Gender is a social construct which is heavily grounded on being male or female. "...gender is to a very large extent judged according to one's sex; involving the whole gamut of generic, psychological, social and cultural differences between males and females. It is a complex term that is not innate" Wardhaugh (2002:314).

Gender is constructed and means that one's maleness or femaleness is more extensive than the fact that one is born anatomically male or female.

Crawford (1995:13) defines gender as a social construct. She says "Gender is not an attribute of individual but a way of making sense of transactions. It is conceptualized as a verb and not a noun." She adds that "gender related processes influence behaviors, thoughts and feelings in individuals, they affect interactions among individuals, and they help determine the structure of social institutions."

In this view, gender roles are socially constructed. That there are physiological differences between men and women is a fact. However, there are social constructed differences. These differences are reflected in language use in forms of gender, a variable in the current study. Gender is assumed to be dichotomous in that a person can be classified as either masculine or feminine but not both.

Belier (1987:112) cited in Creedon (1993:5) states that "During enlightenment period, thinking was organized in dualism --- mind/body; public/private; nature/culture; reason/emotion and so forth. The assumption underlying these pairs of supposed opposites was that one of them described a male characteristic leading us to the conclusion that male is the opposite of female."

This result to a culture built on a particular set of gender assumptions structured to amplify if not to produce gender asymmetries and inequalities we come to view these differences as part of the natural world.

Goffman, cited in Smith (1995) is for the idea that the appearance of genitals at birth which provides a basis of what is probably the first, the most pervasive and most stable organization of human groups. She goes on to say that "...from the moment of birth, genital anatomy is a cue for all sorts of discriminative beliefs, expectations and behaviors."

This kind of portrayal illustrates that dominance carry connotations. People have explicit attitudes about the attitude held in respect to gender constitute our social representation of men and women as distinct social groups i.e. femininity and masculinity. The society, thus, constructs the world in binary opposition. The dominant dichotomy structures are used to construct different sets of power relations and to subordinate others. Social structures would not exist if they were not constantly produced and reproduced by individuals in daily life. Religion, family and the entire society including use of language in discourse such as proverbs reinforce the dominating dichotomies.

Crawford (1996:26) states that "gender illusions are fostered by dichotomizing women and men, portraying them as fundamentally different and opposed in personality and in need."

1.13 Gender as a Social Construction

Blier (1997) cited in Creedon (1993:5) says that gendering, the gerund, is the process that begins the moment a baby takes its breath. She adds that gender differences are sets of attributes socially and culturally constructed on the basis of birth assignment as male or female.

According to Samovar et al (2007), ...”from infancy members of a culture learn their patterns of behavior and ways of thinking until most of them are internalized and habitual” Hence, once born, one is socialized into the culture of one’s society .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.

Gender roles are reinforced from an early age at the family unit in our society. Thus development of a person’s gender identity depends on what was attached to one as a child through socialization. The various agents of gender socialization in our society include family, peer, churches, schools and media. These contribute to the shaping of gender roles. Here the family is the basic /primary agent while the others are secondary agents. Through this socialization we learn to be either males or females. To achieve this language is their major tool. Proverbs are used to impart this in a more lenient and comfortable manner.

1.14 Literature Review

Very few studies have been carried out in Kĩ-Embu the existing work includes a study by Nyaga (1998) who carried out a syntactic study on Kĩ-Embu sentences based on the Government and Binding Theory. Nyaga's study will be useful to this study as the researcher will refer to it for verification of structural properties of Kĩ-Embu sentences and analyze how the proverbs deviate from the structures.

Gitonga (2009) carried out a study on Kĩ-Embu using the ethnographical approach. The study demonstrated how communication intentions change with time and context. The current study will look at how communication intentions change due to use of imagery and organizations of information used in proverbs. Gitonga has studied Kĩ-Embu in Kiswahili deriving his examples from the language. This may have only little to contribute to the current study as we will not consider the intentions of our texts in relation to time but we will analyze how Kĩ-Embu proverbs express power relations.

Wandiri (2010) analyzed Kĩ-Embu sentences using the Relevance Theory and focused more on how information is carried on or conveyed in sentences. This study will analyze Kĩ-Embu proverbs using the Critical Discourse Analysis Theory. Wandiri's study will help the researcher to understand the Kĩ-Embu sentence structures to get the conveyed meaning from the proverbs analyzed.

Other literatures in Kĩ-Embu are by Mwaniki (1973) and Chesaina (1997). Their literature mainly gives the researcher knowledge about the history and culture of the Embu. Some of this literature will be useful source of information about Kĩ-Embu and the Aembu which the researcher may use for this study.

Other scholars have studied languages which are closely related to Kĩ-Embu. Some of these works will be useful to this study. Mutahi (1977) studies the sound change and classification of dialects of Mt. Kenya. In his study Mutahi discusses how Kĩ-Embu lost /p/ and acquired /v/. He also discussed phonological features of prenasalisation. This is the placement of sound /m/ and /n/ before the voiced stops, Mutahi says that these features are unique to Kĩ-Embu and distinguished it from other dialects he studied. Mutahi's findings will be useful to this study. The study will adopt the spellings and pronunciation of Kĩ-Embu words as studied in Mutahi's work.

1.14.1 Literature Review on Proverbs

This part of the study is a review of studies on some of the work carried out on proverbs including those on power relations using proverbs. According to English writer Robert Payne quoted in LI Jinghua, (2006) "the wisdom of a people lies in their proverbs." With the development of women's liberation in the societies of the world since 1960s, many societies have undergone a revolution of reforming their languages into equal and unbiased ones and mostly the English language.

Many scholars and socialists try to analyze women's way of using language and make comparisons between the two genders. For instance, in the United States, Lakoff, one of the most important pioneers made great progress in the study of language and gender. Proverbs are part of language and a rich source of culture and social reality. They spread among a people with popular image and rich significance and have a long history as they are passed from generation to generation.

According to Wang (2000) Proverbs

...stem from a wide origin from literary works to folk stories, from religious beliefs to natural phenomenon, from realizations to experiences and wisdom of people in different times and different social classes; they include oral ones to written ones; they are accumulation and summary of people's experiences and are handed down from generation and generation; they bring about deep effects on social concepts.

In conclusion, from what we have observed so far from the background of this study and elsewhere, many scholars are in agreement that proverbs and sayings of a people manifest their national character and personality traits.

Blehr (1973) did a comprehensive study and wrote on what he thought a proverb was in his research. This is important in this study as it seeks to explain what a proverb is and gives an insight of the proper understanding of the term.

Mieder & Dundes (1981) worked on “Proverbs as a Wisdom of Many” using essays on proverbs. His argument is based on the fact that proverbs are not personal but are ready pithy structures which can be wittily used to enrich text by speakers and writers. The present study will derive a lot from this study in the understanding of the reason why proverbs are regarded as the wisdom for many.

Lawal (1997) worked on a thesis that emphasized that proverbs seem to contain the richest pool of pragmatic or semantic factors, the meaning provided through proverbs therefore, are significant for attention. This study reinforces the need to study Ki-Embu proverbs which have not yet been carried out so far. Lawal also says that proverbs exist in all languages with similarities in terms of their reliance on vivid images, domestic allusions and word play. This will be useful to the current study in identifying and comprehending the meaning behind the images, domestic allusions and word play in Ki-Embu proverbs in an attempt to demonstrate the social relationships evidenced in the proverbs.

Mieder (1993) did a study on “Proverbs are never out of season”; a popular wisdom in the modern age. The study links the use of proverbs and the contemporary society and shows their relevance in the present situations with an aim of maintaining proverbs as important features of language. It will be of great help to the current study in looking at the relevance of the proverbs in question in the contemporary society.

Wanjohi (1993) studied and published on the wisdom and philosophy of African proverbs using the Kikuyu world-view. The work undertakes proverbial translations from Kikuyu to English observing all the techniques necessary to maintain one of the major characteristics of proverbs, brevity. His work is important in this study as it will help in reference to the translations of proverbs with utmost sustainability of their brevity.

Crystal (1997) studied proverbs and stated that they feature prominently in interpersonal, transactional and ideational language use. This will help in the evaluation of the proverbs in question to find out if they exploit the three levels of language use.

Honneck (1997) in his study examines proverbs as complex intuitive aspects of mental functioning of a people and advocates for interdisciplinary perspective to explain how people use and understand them. He suggests cognitive science approach in unraveling the secrets behind the proverbs. This study does not use this approach but will use CDA approach to analyze Ki-Embu proverbs. However, his analysis of the various figurative speeches such as imagery and metaphor shall be of great use to this study.

Ogunwale (1998) worked on a study; “The derogation of masculinity in Yoruba Proverbs” He asserted the existence of proverbial oppression of men as against

women in Yoruba culture. The current study, on matters of language and gender relations will seek to find out whether, the proverbial oppression of either gender is more than the other.

Pante et al (2000) worked on Samburu sayings. In the study, the authors used a wide background of general culture and ethnographic knowledge to capture a large collection of proverbs and sayings where nearly all the aspects of Samburu culture and life are expressed. In their work 803 proverbs were listed and dealt with innumerable aspects of human life from the idea of God, to relationship among people, from animals to water, trees and rain. The present study will narrow itself to the power relations as expressed in Ki-Embu proverbs and will resourcefully refer to this work on matters of translations and also how they explain the relationship among people especially between men and women, children and the older groups.

Wanjohi (2001) worked on a synthesized comprehensive collection of 1821 Kikuyu (Kenya) proverbs. In his study he brought all the known Kikuyu proverbs ‘under one roof’. He also gives a literal/denotative translation in English of each Kikuyu proverb in order to enhance its symbolic power and applicability, while at the same time safeguards its brevity.

Wanjohi's study is very important to the current study as Kikuyu has 73% lexical similarity with Kĩ-Embu. Hence the present study will depend so much on his study to seek guidance to an objective and effective translation from Kĩ-Embu into English without distortion of meaning. However, although this is an age of gender sensitivity, an all inclusive language may not be possibly used in an attempt to safeguard the authenticity of the proverbs in question.

Balogun (2010) studied proverbial oppressions of women in Yoruba African culture from a philosophical perspective and argued that the proverbs in her data portrayed that proverbs violate the rights and dignity of women and that they are indicators of discrimination against women in Yoruba culture. Although the present study is based on Kĩ-Embu her study will help in finding out if her standpoint is echoed in Kĩ-Embu proverbs.

Shariati and Tayebi (2012) carried out a study on the characteristics of proverbs using a comparative approach between Mesopotamian language and a local dialect of Persian (Jiroft). This will help in highlighting the characteristics of proverbs in the current study.

Wang (2012) worked on sex discrimination in English proverbs and their translations. She argued that the discrimination against women in society is reflected in proverbs. The current study will find out if the proverbs in Kĩ-Embu Reflects the same, or otherwise.

1.15 Research Methodology

This section deals with a description of data collection instruments and procedures used for the administration of such instruments, sampling techniques and data analysis and presentation procedure.

1.15.1 Data Collection Procedure

The research is based on Ki-Embu, a Bantu language spoken by the Aembu of the current Embu County, in the Eastern region of Kenya. The main source of data was generated from the researcher. Having been born in the Northern part of Embu land, the researcher acquired a native speaker like competence in Ki-Embu. The researcher made good use of this competence to generate relevant data for this study. Chomsky supports the native speaker intuition as a method of data collection. He asserts that every speaker of a language has mastered and internalized generative grammars that express his knowledge of his languages. 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).

The data collected was counter-checked with three informants to ensure objectivity and acceptability especially in proverbial vocabulary. The informants identified are adults who are between forty and sixty years old all of Embu origin. One from Makengi-Northern dialect, Karurumo-Southern dialect and Mūvū, (Kyenī area) -

Kìveti dialect. All have grown up in Embu land in the above mentioned places. The informant from Karurumo is more than sixty years old and has great command in the language and has not been influenced by other languages having lived in Embu land for much of his life. Hence, he helped in further comparisons and counter checking of the elicited data. Out of all the proverbs collected sixty one Kì-Embu proverbs were selected due to their suitability to this study and analyzed.

1.15.2 Data Analysis

After collection and administration of the research data, the data was analyzed using the core principles concepts of Critical Discourse Analysis. Textuality standards such as, figures of language, figures of diction, syntactic structures, vocabulary and context were described, analyzed and interpreted with an aim to determine how power relations are expressed in Ki-Embu proverbs. The terms, negative structures and metaphors were carefully analyzed for hidden meaning and each sample proverb explained.

1.15.3 Data Presentation

Data was presented by use of description, interpretations and explanations according to their suitability in the textual analysis based on vocabulary, syntactic structures and figures of language. Kì-Embu proverbs were described and chosen from the data collected and described according to their suitability in illustrating

power relations between genders and between ages. The proverbs described were interpreted based on their meaning to establish the effects and contributions on power relations in Kì-Embu. The proverbs were then analyzed to move from the level of non critical to critical discourse analysis to express power relations in the language in questions.

1.16 Significance of the Study

Kì-Embu lacks elaborate analysis of its linguistics properties and some of the works in record include that by Guthrie (1967), Mwaniki (1973), Chesaina (1997), Gitonga (2000), Wandiri (2010) among others which have been done on it as a discrete language without being thought of as one of the Gikuyu dialects. It is to the best of my knowledge that no researcher has dwelt on a systematic and comprehensive analysis of power relations in Kì-Embu based on proverbs.

This study will provide further insight in the language by comprehensively analyzing proverb and how they express or bring out power relations in this language. This will provide a platform for the language to participate in comparative research with other languages, making it resourceful to comparatists (researchers).

The study through the analysis of proverbs will enhance people's awareness of the inequalities in society and bring about better understanding of the relationship

between language and society. It will trigger the need to find ways to equip women with the tools of discourse that serve to empower them rather than keep them down.

On the other hand, according to Shariati & Tayebi (2012) no geolinguistic or historical in other words diachronic or synchronic studies of the characteristics of proverbs have been recorded. This study will help in identifying some of the characteristics of proverbs and in this way it will add more knowledge on what already exists as far as proverbs are concerned.

1.17 Conclusion

This chapter forms an introduction to the study. The background to the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives, the scope and limitation, the theoretical framework, literature review, research methodology and the significance of the study. Kĩ-Embu like other African cultures holds proverbs highly and regards them as nuggets of wisdom among its people. As its main objective, this study is set to investigate how power relations are expressed between genders and ages in proverbs. The theoretical framework to be used in this study has been discussed in detail. This theory will be put in use in chapter three and four where analysis of proverbs for hidden meaning will be done in details. The literature review has captured various texts and books which are of great value to this study. The texts and books reviewed relate to Kĩ-Embu, proverbs and gender inequality.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE IN RELATION TO THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

Language provides a means of meaningful interaction and is a system of transmitting knowledge, values and attitudes. We experience language not as something separate but as an intrinsic part of our everyday reality. We also put language to use to give shape to our internal thoughts and to give external expression to our communicative purposes and only produce it when we have the occasion to use it. At the same time, we learn the culture of our society through language and act accordingly as members of the society. Hence in this chapter, we seek to link language to some of the elements expressed by it in an attempt to lay a basis for the study. The section also highlights some of the areas that this study is concerned with. Moreover the chapter explores and reviews literature that shows the relationship between Critical Discourse Analysis and the concept of power which is our major area of study.

The chapter opens with a brief background of language and gender, highlight language and culture, language, age and power and men and power. The concepts and methodology of CDA are also reviewed before looking at the forms and functions of proverbs. At the same time we give a brief description of types of proverbial meaning as background information on the linguistic features under analysis.

2.2 Background

Language, to a great extent, reflects social views and attitudes of human beings such as females are defamed, belittled and regarded as subordinate to their male counterparts. As a peculiar result of the development of the human society, language reflects society naturally. Language is like a mirror through which social views and attitudes of human beings are seen. According to Nilsem (2007) language and society are viewed as a chicken and egg.

According to Wang (2000) language use is the evidence of the values and beliefs of a society. He asserts that all kinds of unequal phenomenon in the society including sex discrimination are bound to be reflected in language.

According to Spender (1965) cited in Warddough (2002) language helps form the limits of our reality...it is a means of ordering and manipulating the world. It is through language that we become members of a human community that the world becomes comprehensible and meaningful that we bring into existence the world in which we live. Proverbs as features of language are used to bring out the reality of the world.

Lakoff, one of the most important pioneers of gender studies in the United States, made great contributions to the study of language and gender. His contributions added to the progress of language planning in the United States in an attempt to

reform the English language into an equal and unbiased one in the 1960s. QinXiubai (1996) cited in Wang(2000) states that ‘Language reflects social activities, the sex discrimination and discrimination on language are not determined by the natural properties of language symbols, instead they are a reflection of social values and ways of thinking in a particular society or culture.’ In its original meaning, language is a tool for people to communicate with each other; it doesn’t discriminate against either gender. However, with development of society, women and men take on different social roles and this discrimination takes place.

Proverbs as essence of language and carrier of culture can reflect a people’s perspective and system of society and influence social concepts deeply. Thus proverbs are more representative and persuasive to be used to make research on power relations in Kĩ-Embu.

2.3 Language and Culture

Trudgil (1995) states that; “social functions are fulfilled by language; language is not simply a means of communicating information. It is also a very important means of establishing and maintaining relationships with other people. When we interact with other people, we cannot avoid giving clues about our feelings, attitudes, and what sort of background we have. The information derived from us

as an indication of our ideas and attitude can be used by people we interact with to help them formulate an idea about us.”

Sapir Whorf hypothesis cited in Trudgil (1995) explains that our perception of the world may be conditioned by language. Thus, language as a social phenomenon is closely tied up with the social structure and value of society. A language can affect a society by influencing or even controlling the world view of its people. In this way language help us to share what is locked in our minds. This can be achieved through spoken, sign or written form.

According to Tannen (1994) “language is part of culture and an instrument for transmitting and perpetuating implicit historically situated and culture bound principles of social order and systems of belief that define and assign unequal value of femininity and masculinity.”

Bonvillian cited in Samovuor et al (2007:164) states that speakers use language to convey their thoughts, feelings, intentions and desires to others. Language links interlocutors in a dynamic, reflective process. We learn and understand other people through what they say and how they say it; while we learn about ourselves through the way the other people react to what we say and we learn about our relationships with others through give-and –take of communicative interactions.

Halliday (1978:9) asserts that “It is through language that we learn the culture of our society and act accordingly as members of that society. Through language, the values, beliefs, attitudes, mode of thoughts and actions are transmitted.”

According to Pauwels (1998:228)...”Inequalities in the linguistic portrayal of sexes reflect and contribute to the unequal positions of women and men in society. The power relations experienced in society is as a result of the manner in which boys and girls are brought up and the different roles men and women fill in society.” Proverbs which are linguistic features analyzed in this study derive highly from a culture of a people. This study will consider proverbial language and how it contributes to the reinforcement and perpetuation of inequality between genders and ages in Embu culture.

2.4 Language, Age and Power

Language is used to express and highlight issues of social concern in everyday life. It is also used to display our social roles and how they are indexed in language use.

According to Fairclough (1989: vi)

Language is no autonomous construct, simply a system of sentences, but language as discourse, as action; similarly, society is no mosaic of individual existences looked in some stratified structure, but a dynamic formation of relationships and practices constituted in large measures by struggles for power, professions not guilds but as institutions whose conventions are ideologically shaped by such social relationships are realized through such particular discourses.

CDA explores and explains texts which evidence crucial moments in discourse where participants may be placed at social risks during the communication, suffering disadvantage in consequence of the inequalities of communication (ibid:4) he gives examples of learners in alien society, children, the speech and hearing disadvantaged. Language contributes to domination of some people by others.

Fairclough asserts that there are power relations between social groupings; between women and men, ethnic groupings, between young and old, which are not specific to particular institutions.

According to Van Dijk (1996) different types of power may be distinguished according to the various resources employed to exercise...the more or less persuasive power of parents, professors, journalists may be based on knowledge, information, or authority. He continues to say that the notions of discourse access and control are very general and it is one of the tasks of CDA to spell out these forms of power. If discourse is defined in terms of complex communicative events, access and control may be defined both for context and for the structure of text and talk themselves. (ibid: 356).

It is Van Dijk's view that power and dominance are involved in mind control as recipients accept beliefs, knowledge and opinions through discourse from what they see as authoritative, trustworthy and credible sources.

According to Wodak (1997) recipients may not have the knowledge, and beliefs needed to challenge the discourse or information they are exposed to. The control and dominance of a group such as discursive influence may be due to context as well as the structures of text and talk themselves...discourse is involved in dominance and in production and reproduction of social inequality. Discourse analysis involves examining the context of the discourse; historical, political, and social background of the main participants. She continues to say that language manifests social processes and interactions and constitutes those processes as well...discourse always involves power and ideologies and there are no interactions where power relations do not prevail and where values and norms do not have a relevant role. This study seeks to establish how language in proverbs expresses power between ages.

2.5 Men and Power

Holmes (1998) sets a list of some testable claims on men and women and calls them 'sociolinguistics universals tendencies.' One of the five claims states that women tend to interact in ways which will maintain and increase solidarity, while men tend to interact in ways which will maintain and increase power and status.

According to Wardhaugh (2002) in their interactional patterns, in conversations, men and women seem often to exhibit the power relationship that exists in society with men dominant and women subservient. The author gives an example of Margaret Thatcher whose voice was said not to match her position as British Prime Minister as her voice sounded too 'shrill' and was advised to lower its pitch, diminish its range, and speak more slowly to adopt an authoritative almost monotonous delivery to make herself heard. This shows that women have to change their normal ways of doing things to be more like men in order to fill positions previously held by men.

Coates (1996) asserts that just as the communicative style of women has been overly stereotyped as co-operative, so too the verbal style of men has been overgeneralized as competitive and lacking in cooperativeness. Coates continues to say that social relationship is best perceived as some kind of hierarchical set of power relationship in which men have ascendancy. Language reflects the social dominance of men.

Lakoff (1975) is of the opinion that men are dominant and women lack power.

Crawford (1995) declares that power relations best explains what happens when men and women interact.

Talbot (1998) cited in Wardhaugh (2002) asserts that men and women are social beings who have learnt to act in certain ways hence men learn to be men while

women learn to be women as society subjects them to different experiences. “Differences between men and women explain the different positions men and women fill in society. Men have more power and may be more assertive while women tend to be ‘kept in their place’ but aspire quite often to a different and ‘better’ place” Wardhaugh (2002:323). We seek investigate if Kĩ-Embu proverbs portray superiority of one gender over the other.

2.6 Basic Concepts of Critical Discourse Analysis

It is important to review the basic concepts in CDA embarking on the analysis to helps us understand and interpret proverbial discourse in Ki-Embu. Ouko (2012) cites four indispensable concepts of CDA which include; critique, power, history and ideology.

2.6.1 Critical

A critical study refers to both attitude and method. The word critical or critique has often been given negative connotations of carping and complaint, and of examining a system, idea, book, or play to provide a negative judgment. Critical linguists, however, seek to understand the relationship between ideas and their social conditions of possible existence. They go beyond the negative sense of the word to study what else is beyond the obvious “the hidden text.” Texts are analyzed to find out how they influence people, inform them, and entertain and so

on. A critical method therefore, examines how meaning is created in text and the influence it has on the audience and readers.

Proverbs as an essence embodies certain attitudes toward genders and ages and a critical discourse therefore aims at unraveling ideologies expressed in the discourse and revealing how power structures are constructed through the proverbial language.

2.6.2 Power

Van Dijk (1998) asserts that a Critical Discourse Analysis is a 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 power within them and how it relates to text and talk in social and political context. A critical study of Ki-Embu proverbs analyses the social power within them and how it relates to text and context.

2.6.3 Ideology

Eagleton (1991) defines ideology as a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class of people. In CDA, ideology is seen as an important means of establishing and maintaining unequal power relations and language mediates ideology in a variety of social institutions.

To understand how ideologies are produced through proverbs it is important to analyze proverbs and how they are received and interpreted, and their social effects. This study seeks to use Ki-Embu proverbs to reveal the ideology hidden in them.

2.6.4 History

In CDA discourse is historical and can only be understood with reference to their historical context. This requires referring to extra linguistic factors such as culture, ideology and society in historical terms. In analyzing proverbs we shall place them within the context in order to derive the meaning based on the Embu culture. According to Wodak (1997) a historical approach requires that the content of an utterance be confronted with historical events and facts with a focus on the psycho-social dimension of discourse.

2.7 Metaphors

According to CDA, Fairclough (1989:119) “Metaphor is a means of representing one aspect of experience in terms of another, and is by no means restricted to the sort of discourse it tends to be stereotypically associated with. He continues to say that any aspect of experience can be represented in terms of any number of metaphors... for different metaphors have different ideological attachments.” Metaphors inform the major ideological structure and persuasion strategy to which they are related. Pragmatically metaphors are implied comparisons.

Therefore, the qualities of one object onto another and can enhance an object's emotional impact by conscious volition on the hearer's existing thoughts and feelings about the world around them. They are also tools of simplifying complex principles into imagery as the listener/reader understands to picture themselves in the scenario one is describing to communication. Nevertheless, metaphors are not only mere reflection of a pre-existing objective reality but also a construction of reality. Thus, they can be used to construct a reality of power relations between genders and ages in proverbial language.

2.8 Methodology of Critical Discourse Analysis

There is a common strategy for discourse analysis. According to Luke(2002) CDA involves a principled and transparent shunting back and forth between the micro-analysis of texts using varied tools of linguistic, semantics and literary analysis and the macro analysis of social and formation, institution and power relations these texts index and construct. Language use, discourse, verbal interaction and communication belong to the micro- level whereas power dominance and inequality belong to the macro- level. In everyday interaction the two levels make a unified whole.

Some of the CDA proponents such as Fairclough and Wodak rely much on text analysis. This calls for other theories both social and linguistic to draw on to bridge the two levels.

According to Widdowson (2007) analysts may also become more actively involved in studies based on social problems such as power abuse, dominance and inequality as it is expressed and reproduced in discourse. They make their social or political position explicit, take sides and actively participate in order to uncover, demystify, or otherwise challenge dominance with their discourse analyses.

The current study adapts interdisciplinary approach combining and integrating CDA and pragmatics in order to clarify and theorize the concepts of text discourse, context and how power is enacted in proverbial language. CDA as a multidisciplinary theory helps us account for the intricate relationships between texts, talk, social cognition power society and culture as reflected in Ki-Embu proverbs while pragmatics on the other hand will distinguish the important features used in proverbs for example metaphors. The researcher will actively participate in some of the analyses.

2.9 Forms and Functions of Proverbs

Alabi (2000:215-230) highlights the forms and function of proverbs into three:

- a) Proverbs that echo other proverbs in a culture.

According to Alabi, these proverbs aim freshness, reducing boredom of encountering everyday proverbs.

- b) Proverbs that are garnished by rhetorical elements such as unusual collocates, parallel structures, anastrophe, parentheses and ellipsis.

These proverbs serve the function of engaging the minds of the audience or readers in intellectual tasks of identifying the meaning within the pithiness of the proverbs.

- c) Proverbs that sparkle ‘with the vivid imagery of its language and its culture.

These functionally provide the necessary cultural milieu for the discourse in question.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter we discussed some important elements of language that are related to this study. We also discussed the basic concepts of Critical Discourse Analysis and its methodology. In conclusion, the methodology of CDA emphasizes the micro and macro levels of discourse, power and the role of context analysis create meaning as a unified whole. We also suggested an eclectic framework integrating CDA and pragmatics as necessary for the analysis of power relations in Kì-Embu proverbs.

The forms and function of proverbs was also looked at to give further insight into proverbs which are the features of language to be analyzed in subsequent chapters. In the next chapter we analyze sample Kì-Embu proverbs for power relations using metaphor and ellipsis.

CHAPTER THREE

METAPHORS AND ELLIPSES IN KI-EMBU PROVERBS

3.1 Introduction

In chapter two we linked the different elements of language relevant to the study and reviewed the concepts of CDA as a way of laying a foundation to the study.

As we have already stated in the preceding chapters, an effective and critical proverbial analysis should unravel the hidden meaning that may not be obvious to laypersons with an aim of bringing to surface the power relations that they express. This may be possible in the use of pragmatic strategies such as figures of language. Chapter three analyses power relation in Ki-Embu proverbs with specific reference to metaphor and use of ellipsis.

In this chapter we have briefly looked at figurative language to link it to our first item of analysis, the metaphor. It has also been based as an example of tropes. Subsequently we have looked at figures of diction and in particular ellipsis. The analysis of Ki-Embu proverbs has also been carefully undertaken. This has been looked at in line with the objectives and hypotheses of the study.

3.2 Figurative Language

A figurative word or phrase is used in different way from the usual semantic meaning in order to influence the kind of idea or picture formed in one's mind. Figurative language results therefore in extension of meaning, the most common

being metaphorical transfer of sense. Figures of speech in CDA are seen as rhetorical devices that are the bases for implicatures and hence pragmatic meaning. An account of Ki-Embu proverbs identifies their social role in unmasking pragmatic intentions and the hidden agenda carried in them.

3.2.1 Tropes

These are figures of speech which change the typical meaning of a word or words. According to classical rhetoric in tropes the encoded meaning is replaced by a related figurative meaning. Examples of tropes include metaphors, hyperbole, irony, metonymy, paradox, oxymoron, anthemeria, litotes, metalepsis and synecdoche (Wales 1989). This study analyses metaphor as a pragmatic strategy.

3.2.2 Metaphors

Wales (1989:176) defines figurative language as ...”an extension of meaning of words by metaphoric transfer. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one object or idea is applied to another, thereby suggesting likeness or analogy, between the two.

According to cognitive theory, metaphors help to conceptualize more abstract and emotive reality and may contribute to certain kind of emotive appeal in the audience or reader. The theory asserts that metaphors and emotion are regarded as operating within the continuum of textual features influencing each other. Metaphors according to this theory presides over the expression of a certain kind

of emotive state as a way of conceptualizing it and helps to express abstract concepts as concrete experience. According to Lakoff & Johnson (1980:10) metaphors help us relate concepts by allowing us to comprehend one concept in terms of another as well as hide other aspects of the concept.

In Embu proverbs are used to subjugate women. In this context use of proverbial language through metaphors reflects social views and attitudes of the Aembu such as defaming, belittling and regarding women as subordinate. Let us consider some sample Ki-Embu proverbs.

Proverbs are used to define women as spiteful and of low status through use of metaphors;

1. *Aka àirì ní nyũngũ igìrì cia ũrogì.*

Two wives are two pots of witchcraft.

The metaphor “*nyũngũ igìrì cia ũrogì*” maps onto “*aka àirì*”. It is important to note that this is a very old proverb as indicated by the use of ‘pots’ as the cooking vessel, as opposed to the more modern *sufuria*. It is in the pots that witchcraft was brewed in traditional Embu. A pot that was used in this way was believed never to get clean of the witchcraft ever again. The proverb is back grounded on the fact that such pots never used to get clean hence it portrays two wives as ,never ceasing to plot evil against each other. Therefore two women according to Embu culture are seen as witches as long as they lived together. The interpretation of the proverb is that it has been used in Embu culture to demean women and to abuse their

status. It portrays women as spiteful and full of jealous, 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. Men dominance is evident as the two women hate each other as a result of competition for the man

Use of metaphors that derive from the way of life of the Embu people is used to coin proverbs that demean women status by using them for sexual gratification.

2. *Kigwa gikũra gikokagia mũrĩo gitina.*

As sugarcane grows older, its sweetness flows to the bottom.

The metaphor of “*kigwa*”, sugarcane, is used in this proverb to represent the woman while “*gitina*”, bottom, represents the sexual anatomy of women. In this proverb the metaphors contribute to an emotive appeal in the listener/reader and are utilized as a strategy to see women from a sexual gratification point of view. Sugarcane is derived from the Embu people economic activity of agriculture and as the proverb suggests the sweetest part of sugarcane is the bottom. The bottom of the crop is used to compare with the sexual parts of a woman in this culture. The proverb is used by men to exploit older women. It also gives way for young men to crave for older women and lack respect for them as they seduce them in order to experience the ‘sweetness’ of old age. Used in this way the proverb devalues women and destroys their dignity in the community. The ideological agenda in this proverb is hidden within the use of metaphors which may cause disrespect to women at whatever age.

Use of proverbs in Embu disregards women beauty and relates it to promiscuous character of the woman through metaphors.

3. *Mwari mweka nì magambo.*

A beautiful young woman is trouble

A beautiful young woman, *mwari*, in this proverb is metaphorically referred to as trouble, “*magambo*”. This meaning brings with it a different image of the beautiful woman and a rich significance to the dominant group, the men, who instead of looking at her and appreciating her beauty, focuses her from the negative side. The physical or otherwise beauty of the woman has no one to appreciate and uphold, rather, it becomes her source of agony due to the connotations it comes with, in the Embu society. It is used to demean, disrespect and devalue the females in this society. Her beauty is attached to promiscuity and a woman can never feel comfortable to be proud of what she is. The proverb poses an unfair indictment of the beautiful feminine folk as there is no established casual connection between physical beauty and faults in character. It confuses, perhaps even equates elegance and admiration with a promiscuous lifestyle.

According to Embu culture men define the status of women and decide whether they are good or no as evident in use of metaphors;

4. *Mwere mweka ũmenyagwa na maketha*

A good millet plant is distinguished by the harvest.

The use of metaphor, a good millet plant, “*mwere mwege*” in this proverb presents power behind discourse. The millet plant represents the woman while harvest, “*maketha*,” represents her ability to bear children and also to be productive on other matters of life. The use of passive form emphasizes the act of distinguishing the good millet plant from a “bad” one. Here, for a woman to be regarded well, she must meet this condition if not she is disregarded and disrespected.

The proverb is used in Embu to encourage women to endeavor to please their husbands, so that children might find favors with them. Besides it is ridicule to the barren women, it is used to encourage women to train their children values of the society. According to this culture, good wives are pointers of good children and families. Love and hatred are contagious. The honesty and love shown by a woman to her husband are reciprocated on their children. The proverb undermines women and seeks to place her in a position below the man. The woman according to this proverb is at the mercy of the man to determine whether the harvest is good enough or not. It makes women who cannot get children and those with unruly children feel inadequate and have a poor self-concept hence look up to the man for mercy. This makes the woman live a life fully defined by the man, hence fully dominated. The proverb ascribes power to the dominant group as the man stands out as the judge of character of the woman. The implication in the proverb is that a woman might be good in all other aspects but “harvest.”

Use of loaded words and augmentives to communicate meaning in proverbial language provides an ideological scheme in which men dominate.

5. *Ndia nyama ndicumikagua na nyama.*

A carnivore/ a meat eater is not let to salivate with meat

The proverb utilizes negative structure in simple present tense to exert authority of the statement. The metaphors meat eater, “*ndia nyama*,” is augmentative to emphasize the size and impact of the subject, the man, and meat, “*nyama*” has been used to reflect woman who is the object in the text. There is an opaque way in which the term “*salivate*” has been used to show the wanting, lusting for women by men while the presupposed ways through which this happens is the ways in which women present themselves before men. For instance, their manner of sitting or mode of dressing. The man in this case dominates the woman even in her mode of dressing. The woman is not at liberty and is always apprehensive of what should be best for the man. A woman who does not meet their expectation is labeled immoral and unworthy of a good man. The metaphors as used in the proverb are an ideological scheme for classifying behavior to emphasize male ascendancy. Again the man determines and lays standard on the way a woman should dress and carry herself before him. This is prejudice against woman as no one ever bothers what the men put on; male children are even let to stay naked!

Women are wittily expressed unreliable and of questionable character through use of metaphors that depict such kind traits, for instance;

6. *Aka nì njǔkì.*

Women are bees.

The proverb refers to women as ‘bees,’ “*njǔkì*”. This is an insect that flies to distant places looking for nectar to make honey but may stray and never come back. The proverb is in plural statement which makes it all inclusive to all women. The metaphor used in this proverb is a complex of encoding of attitudes towards women. The proverb is oppressive as it reflects a woman can leave home to a very distant place never to come back if she finds another place she could stay or live. The fact that bees are insects with no permanent home reflects the nature of women as unpredictable. It pictures a woman as of unpredictable character, with natural propensity to be involved in multiple affairs at the same time. It implies that women by nature are unreliable, and by virtue of this, they ‘hook up’ with the best suitor in conjugal relationships. It presents women as covetous. It ascribes a psychological trait to women without compelling evidence for it.

Proverbs are also used selectively to define women as morally loose through use of metaphors that give them a negative definition in relation to men.

7. *Ŭcio nì watwuikire kiere kìa njirari.*

That one has become a millet plant of the road.

In this proverb, certain woman is referred metaphorically as a millet plant of the road “*kiere kìa njirari.*” The use of pronominalization “That one,” “*ucio,*” makes the proverb be specific and referring to a particular woman, one with a certain characteristic that is not all inclusive in women. The metaphor represents

promiscuous women who are morally loose and is not directed to all women. While it is a welcome moral nugget through correction of immoral behavior, it is oppressively biased against women. The oppressiveness of the proverb derives from the absence of corresponding behavior cautioning against men's nefarious behavior. The reason being that in Embu men are conceived to be always right and can have as many women as they can. Hence, a woman believed promiscuous is labeled by this proverb "a millet plant" from which all sorts of birds can lay on and feed from.

According to my informant, Mr. Clement Njirũ, this proverb is also used to refer to a woman who is morally pure. In Embu, it is believed that a millet plant that grows at the road side escapes the sight of birds that are used to feed from plantations hence it is never attacked by birds. In the same way a woman who is referred in this way is seen to be morally pure. The proverb is oppressively biased against women in this sense in that men can only spare a woman who is exclusively aside, out of their sight, out of their reach. Otherwise they will ensure that they seduce and even abuse each and every woman in their proximity

The use of metaphor expresses the relationship between men and women in a pithy way to bring out the ideological significance in which women are dominated by men.

8. *Mwere wa mũka kīgũta ũvũragwa gakinda kamwe.*

The millet harvest of a lazy woman has only one bundle to thresh.

In this proverb the metaphor of the “millet harvest” is used to represent the outcome of some effort while “*gakinda kamwe*” one bundle, which is used diminutively represents very little. The metaphor is used to code the relationships of the world with people creating an ideological significance between men and women. It is used to rebuke the lazy woman. In Embu society, farming is the way of life and millet is highly held as it is used to make fermented ‘*uji*’ which was believed to boost the virility of men. In fact being able to make the traditional gruel was one of the vital qualifications of a good wife. It is oppressive in that it only picks on the lazy woman yet there are lazy men. The proverb captures the negative perception of women in the Embu culture.

Some proverbs lure women into the believe that they are of great value and they matter through use of metaphors yet, there is a lot to be desired in their in-depth

9. *Mũndũmũka nĩke mũciĩ.*

The wife is the home.

The wife is metaphorically referred to as “*the home*”. This maps freedom, love, warmth, sense of belonging and so on. The proverb appreciates the woman as the pillar of the family, as the main fountain of love and warmth. The proverb is also prejudiced in that a home without a wife is messed up, untidy and very lonely. In this case the woman is the only one who can redeem organization, tidiness and warmth .While doing this she has to use time and energy. Hence she is not appreciated for what she is but how much she does. The proverb portrays the

extent to which a woman is misused in the family. It is used to brainwash the woman, to lure her into the belief that she is of great value, while in the real sense the man wants to make use of her manually and mentally.

Ki-Embu, an African language, shows male superordinancy which is contrasted to female inadequacy and subordination through the stereotypes associated with each gender and also through proverbs. CDA makes it clear the connection between the use of language and the exercise of power.

Ki-Embu proverbs use metaphors to reinforce and accentuate male superiority and female subjugation as analyzed in the examples below.

10. *Mũndũmũrũme nĩke gĩtugĩ kia mũciĩ.*

The man is the pillar of the home.

In this proverb, the man has metaphorically been referred to as the pillar of the home, *gĩtugĩ kia mũciĩ*. The pillar here connotes the strongest and the most reliable source of support. According to gender roles the man is the provider, offers security, protects the members of the society and the decision maker etc. However the woman is always there behind him 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 Embu society. The proverb is used to shield men who fail to accomplish their mandate and to uphold their dignity, identity and position in the family and society. It emphasizes masculine ascendancy.

Use of metaphor is utilized in proverbs to express a selfish tendency in men in which women are targets.

11. *Arŭme nì ngŭ ciotanaga.*

Men are firewood that warms each other.

The proverb refers to men as “firewood that warms each other”. The use of plural form “*arŭme*” point to no exception of men while the simple present marks it as a frequent occurrence among men. The insight of the proverb in reference to the metaphor used is that firewood in the traditional Embu set up are in bundles in readiness to have them on the fire to keep it burning. While some are burning the rest get some warmth from them and on the ready to be next. The use of the words “warm each other” presupposes the fact that if one has to warm then you must be close to the fire. Hence men are close to women even the married ones and once their spouses or fiancées are a way their place is quickly taken by other men who are always ready to step up for them.

In the absence of the man, the other men are on the ready to take up his place and continue exploiting the woman sexually. The proverb warns men against leaving fellow men in charge of their homes. The proverb reflects men as selfish and obtrusive.

Metaphors are used to emphasize the authority of men in the family and society and to protect male identity.

12. *Mündürũme nĩ mũgambo*

A man is the voice

The proverb metaphorically refers to the man as ‘voice’, “*mũgambo*”. A man’s voice is normally deep, strong and authoritative. Hence, by just saying he exerts authority and superiority. A woman’s voice is shrilled, ranged, too fast and varied as opposed to a man’s which is normally low pitched, modulated, slow, monotonous and authoritative. The way a man speaks is said to earn him respect, dignity, identity and authority. It is supposed to earn him recognition, as the head of the family, as the authority and should not be disputed or even challenged. It reflects that a man’s voice is enough to make him be felt, obeyed and recognized.

This proverb presents the man with an opportunity to roar at the women, to diminish their identity and dignity and to rule over them. It also grounds the men to be tyrants in the family and society. Since according to this proverb women cannot challenge the decision of men, a woman in the Embu culture is a victim of oppression and tyranny of men hence she has no choice but submit. The proverb is an ideological strategy that expresses men dominance in Embu community.

Although Embu society acknowledges the wisdom of the elderly, the young are regarded as requiring a lot of guidance and tolerance. CDA helps to reveal the hidden motives of language which serve the interests of the dominant group. This is achieved through analyzing opaque text to make them more transparent to the layperson. Proverbial metaphors are utilized to protect the interests of the group

and to keep them at a distance. In Embu children are expected to be on the receiving end, they are allowed to do but not to think. Some Kĩ-Embu proverbs are used to express power relations between ages. CDA which requires that we consider the social conditions which affect the social production suggest a fruitful line of enquiry into finding out how metaphors are used to express power between ages.

Kĩ-Embu proverbs utilize metaphors to express the dominance of the old as exemplified below.

13. *Ngwaci ya mwana wene niyo ivoragia mwaki*

The sweet potato of another person's child is the one that puts out the fire.

In this proverb the image of a *sweet potato* "ngwaci" connotes the needs of a child who is not yours while "putting out the fire" "*kuvoria mwaki*" represents the blames that this child is faced with within the host family. The proverb communicates the fact that a parent is only inclined to notice or find the weaknesses of other people's children but not those of her/his own. It also implies that the needs of a child who is not your own are too difficult to meet.

The proverb puts the parent as powerful and dominant in that the children have to depend on them for support and provision for basic needs. It also ridicules parents who are biased against other people's children and give priority to their own. It requires the parents to be fair to all the children. The proverb, however, reminds

parents that all children in the society should be treated equally and offered equal opportunities.

Metaphors are utilized to emphasize the rigidity of the old and to uphold their status quo they are used to highlight the need for the young to respect the old.

14. *Mŭciari nì mŭciari*

A Parent is a parent

The proverb maps the metaphor of a parent onto a parent. This implies that there is nothing that could possibly be compared to a parent or even replace her/him. The proverb uses the words ‘*a parent*’ repetitively for emphasis and also to reflect the rigidity of parents. Parents are not perfect in varied aspects of life. Some may be reckless and of wanting character while others may not be physically appealing or even not able to take up their roles as parents. Some may be physically or psychologically challenged, and so on. The proverb exerts authority of the parent to the children by emphasizing to them the need to respect, obey and recognize their parents despite how they look or what they are. It is used to make children realize they must respect and obey their parents despite the conspicuous weaknesses of the parent. It presents children with the obligation to recognize, listen to and obey their parents even when they do not measure up to their expectations. The proverb is used to have the young accept the status quo of the parent.

Through use of metaphors the need for a parent to bring up children of character is emphasized.

15. *Mũciari ndarì ngoro na kìmira kìa mwana wake.*

A parent does not get nauseated by the mucous of his/her child.

This proverb utilizes the metaphor of ‘nausea’, “*ngoro*” to express disgust and irritation of the parent while ‘mucous’, “*kìmira*” represents the unbecoming and unacceptable behavior of children. The proverb presents the parent with an obligation to mould and to encourage good character among the young children. It expresses power in that the parent should guide and counsel the children to get them back to track and impart in them acceptable moral character. The use of the negative structure is to remind the parent that whatever weakness a child might have he/ she should correct it himself just as he/she would help the child to clean the nose. The proverb also reminds the parents of their responsibility to correct the wrong doings of the children to make them be of upright and acceptable behaviors according to the standards of the society. The proverb is used in Embu culture to have the parents embrace all the children despite their weaknesses.

Proverbial metaphors are used to express power relations between ages and they present the old with the responsibility to shape the character of the young.

16. *Mũtì ũrũngagwa wì mwitì*

A tree is straightened up while still young

The proverb utilizes the metaphor “*tree*”, “*mũtì*”. It also uses passive construction as it does not specify the doer of the action. This strengthens the ideological

intention of the statement. Naturally it is easier to correct and shape the direction in which a tree grows while it is still young. If let to grow older, it becomes rigid hence difficult to direct it as desired. The image in this proverb represents children as they grow. According to the proverb, the conduct or character of a person can best be molded while the person is still young. Like a tree is difficult to straighten at an older age so does a child become rigid with the bad character when he is left to grow older without being guided and counseled.

The proverb expresses dominance from the old in that they have responsibility to judge the character of the young as either good or bad and the authority to correct it. This is because the parents have the knowledge and skills to help the children into the acceptable morals and behaviors. According to CDA social structures of a social institution has social order and order of discourse which involves a distinctive restructuring of its social roles into a set of situation where discourse occurs in which people participate in discourse. In the Embu culture the old have the role of guiding the young through their lives.

Metaphors serve to express that parents lay a concrete foundation of character in their children and this depict an ideological purpose

17. *Njokoma mbaro yumaga ikũrĩrori.*

A good club is determined right from its base.

The *club*, “*njokoma*” in this proverb represents the child while *the base* represents the foundation of character. The descriptive element “*mbaro*” “good”

distinguishes the one being referred to from the others and is said to have this trait right from its foundation. This presupposes that there are bad ones which can also be determined at the same point.

The proverb emphasizes good conduct of the child right from the early age. It emphasizes on the concrete and well laid foundation of the child which determines his character later in life. The base refers to the home in which the child grew up and the kind of parents.

Dominance in this proverb is evidence in that for a child to have a good foundation, the parent must be able to provide a conducive environment in which this character may develop. At the same time, the old determine the character of the young in that they guide, control and direct the behavior of a child and therefore dominate. Parents use the power of their knowledge and array of experiences to achieve this end.

The use of proverbial metaphor warns the old against overlooking the ill behavior among the children as it has consequences that might affect them

18. *Kaviŭ gatemaga mŭnori.*

A knife cuts the one who sharpens it.

The metaphor of '*knife*' represents the children while 'one who sharpens it' represents the parent and elders.

The proverb expresses the fact that the elders determine the conduct of the young. If they overlook and encourage evil in their children, these evils are believed according to Embu culture, to come back to them in a way or another. For instance, if the old do not discourage stealing and bullying among the children, they are believed to eventually steal from them or even end up beating them. The proverb ridicules parents who allow misconduct in their children for one reason or another. Again there is power on the side of the elders because they actually determine the conduct of their children either good or bad.

Proverbial comparison through use of metaphor manifests the emphasis placed on the need for the young to respect the old.

19. *Icoya rìthekaga mwagaũ.*

A green banana leaf laughs at the dry one.

The metaphor of *green banana leaf* ‘*icoya*’ maps onto the young while the *dry one* ‘*mwagau*’ maps onto the old. The use of the verb “*laughs*” personifies the leaves to actualize the action and to help the young identify with it. The image of a banana plant has been used in this proverb to relate the dry banana leaf to the green one. The proverb implies that the dry leaf has not chosen to dry up but at the same time it cannot reverse natural trends hence has inevitably to cope with the situation it finds itself in. The proverb presupposes that just like the dry banana leaf has got to that situation, so will the green one. Therefore the young will inevitably get to old age.

The proverb guides the young into respecting the old. Normally, the youth feel at the apex of life and too good to be like their parents. They find the old as frail, old fashioned, tyrants, who cannot fit in their seemingly fashionable lifestyle of dressing, hairstyling, use of language, view of religion, music and friends. They associate the old with redundancy and insecurity. This proverb reminds the young that just like a green banana finally dries up, so will the young get to old age. The proverb exerts power on unequal encounter as the old get their way to have the young respect them. They achieve this by their authoritative position over the young.

Metaphors also express an inherent attachment between the young and the old that has some ideological implication as the traits of the old determine those of the young.

20. *Ngima yumaga muturi*

Ugali comes from flour.

The proverb uses the metaphor of “*ugali*” to represent the young and “*flour*” to represent the old. The presupposition is that flour is the raw material while *ugali* is the final product. This proverb embodies particular power relations between the young and the old in the manner in which they relate to each other in the conventions of the discourse type. The proverb relates the resemblance of a child with the parents. It acknowledges the inherent potentiality of the child and attributes them to the parents. ‘*Ngima*’ in this case is a product from flour and

therefore it takes after the flour in many ways. In the same way, a child resembles the parent in many ways. The proverb not only reflects the physical resemblance, but also the wholesome likeness of emotional and social traits between parents and their children. This is unfair to the young as normally, there are other factors that influence one's character including environment. The youth may not be exposed to the same environment and experiences as the old as they grow. It is not obvious that the child takes up all the traits from the parent. It is pestilential to the young when certain negative traits of the parent have to be linked to them especially when they make simple normal mistakes. This drains their self esteem and discourages them from concentrating on their strengths hence, lose focus in their lives. This proverb is pointer to why many of the children from humble backgrounds end up in very miserable lives as they believe that they are '*ngima*' that came from that kind of flour. The proverb may be used to frustrate efforts towards empowering the young.

3.3 Figures of Diction

Figures of diction select and use words appropriately for a given audience and purpose. They are also referred to as figures of choice and style and include anaphor, parallelism, climax, ellipsis, repetition, rhetorical questions, humour anecdotes, analogy, arithithesis, exemplification and comparison and contrast (McPherson1920:171-172). Ellipsis is analyzed.

3.3.1 Ellipsis

Ellipses occur when some essential structure is omitted from a sentence or clause and can only be received by referring to the element in the preceding text. The sentence can only be understood in conjunction with another utterance that supplies the missing element. Righam (2000:56). However, ellipsis in proverbs is as a result of explicit context in which the speaker has to share with the hearer or the common encyclopedic entry they share by the fact of being native speakers of the language.

Halliday (1994:296) says that ...cohesion in a text is achieved by ellipsis where we presuppose something by what is left out. It contributes to the semantic structure of the discourse and sets a relationship that is not semantic but lexicogrammatical- a relationship in wording rather than directly in meaning.

Proverbs in Embu utilize ellipsis and though some words are left out, the speaker/writer expects the audience to derive meaning from the proverb since he is expected to have the omitted word from the language he/she identifies with as a native speaker. Ellipsis is used as technique to convey power relations between genders and ages. Some of the proverbs that point to women subjugation in this case are analyzed

Proverbs through use of ellipsis manifests a picture of a woman as that of little value right from birth.

21. *Ithano cia kavìcì na ithatũ cia kerìtu*

Five for the new born baby boy and three for the new born baby girl.

The proverb uses ellipsis as it does not explicitly indicate what five and three stand for. The structure begins with an adjective of number and leaves out the noun it describes. The left out word is “*ngemi*” which means *ululation*.

According to the Embu culture a new born baby boy was received with five powerful thrills of ululation while a baby girl with three. The proverb is used to express the little value a woman is received with right from birth. This belittling is lifelong and a woman in Embu is seen as of little value and meaning.

Use of ellipsis achieves in expressing the suspicious position in which a woman is placed in society as no one believes in what she says until it happens.

22. *Kia mũndũmũka gītìkagua gwakìa*

A woman's can only be believed or taken serious when it is finally dawn.

Ellipsis has been used in this proverb as what it says about a woman is left out. In its original form ‘*word*’ has been left out that is, ‘*kiugo*’. This proverb affirms the fact that a woman cannot be trusted or taken serious in Embu culture. It is an expression of distrust in any decision making and even active participation in the

family and society. Whatever she might say will only be taken seriously when it finally happens.

Ellipsis is also used to suggest that an old woman is of little value to the Embu society and to give the conception of long spinsterhood among the Aembu.

23. *Gikũrũ k̐ega nwa ndigũ.*

The only good old thing is a banana.

This proverb has used ellipsis to ridicule the old woman by their husbands and other men. The omitted word in this case is “*kindũ*” which means “thing”. It is pithily used to point to a woman in the context in which it is used. The use of “only” to mean “nothing more besides” in the proverb implies that nothing else is good but a banana. The men find this old woman as of little value and give them an excuse to stray out with other women. The excuse is that the woman is now old. This proverb is an insult to the woman as a banana is regarded higher than her at her old age. The woman is devalued as the husband does not see anything good in her hence she is soon laid off and a more energetic and more appealing woman takes her place.

On the other hand, the proverb can be used as a reflection of the Embu conception of long spinsterhood. It is expected that a lady will get married by a specific age and when the contrary happens she will begin to lose respect as indicated by her comparison with a banana.

Discrimination against women in Enbu culture comes out in the way ellipsis is used to explicitly show the undermining of women's ability by comparing weak children to them.

24. *Kaŭgì ta ìthe karitu ta ngina.*

Intelligent like the father foolish like the mother.

The proverb uses ellipsis to compare children with the parents. The omitted word is “*kana*” child, which is used diminutively in the construction to show the pride of a parent towards a bright child. The bright child is compared to the father while the weak child to the mother. This is unspeakable discrimination against women. In the Embu culture, even when the fault of the child is as result of negligence of the father, the unbecoming behavior is blamed to the mother. The woman in the family and society is the beast of burdens and no one ever recognizes her overwhelming great and significant contribution. The fact that women are compared to a foolish child means that men are busy fault finding despite the effort put by the woman to hold the family together and to mould the best of characters in her children. All credit goes to the father who wants to be associated with the best characters of the family. He appreciates none of the effort put by the woman in bringing up the children. Any character deficiency exhibited by a child is linked to the shortcoming of the mother. The proverb is abusive to the women. It belittles and demeans them. It does not recognize a woman as part of the fruitful but reflects her in terms of failure and unbecoming characters. She is associated with the manner less, the drunkards, the murderers, the robbers, and all sorts of

social evils since she is said to have failed in molding them. The proverb positions women as inconsequential and inconspicuous.

Proverbs in Embu utilize ellipsis in proverbial language to express social relationship and power between the young and the old.

25. *Ya kũvĩa ìvìcaga na mbere.*

That which cooks with the first boil of water.

The proverb like many others utilizes ellipsis and puts the listeners to task. The words ‘pot’ and ‘water’ have been left out. The pot represents a child while water represents efforts child requires to grow. In Embu there are several types of food that require boiling for some time for them to cook, for instance, maize, beans, peas, black beans etc. Sometimes they may not cook depending on the way they were stored or other reasons. The one that does not cook is referred to as ‘nema kũvia’. While cooking, one can tell whether the food will cook or not.

The proverb derives from this background and is used to refer to hard-core children who won’t change their unbecoming behavior even when they are guided, counseled, corrected, directed and so on. The proverb is used on the verge of giving up on the child who seems determined not to change. It shows power of the old as it implies that a good character is basically as a result of their efforts.

Though proverbs are used as nuggets of values they carry within them hidden power and express the social relationship between ages with the old being dominant.

26. *Rwì ìtara rùthekaga rwì riko*

The one in the wait laughs at the one already on fire.

The word ‘firewood’ that is *ruku* has been left out. In this subject of power relations, the firewood already on fire reflects the old who are seen as redundant and insecure while the firewood on the wait reflects the young. The proverb implies that just like the firewood on the wait eventually gets onto the fire so will the young get to old age.

It is used to remind the young that soon they will be in their parent’s shoes; hence they should obey and respect them.

Proverbs draw from natural occurrences through use of ellipsis to express the power relations exerted by the old to the young.

27. *Ya kŭra ìgìcaga ìme kwì riŭa*

That which is soon becoming bushy gets dew when there is sun shine.

The proverb uses ellipsis by leaving out the word “path”, “*njira*”, Dew a natural phenomenon, occurs in certain circumstances but at least is not associated with sunny weather. It is therefore very odd when this happens. In the same way one that is losing one’s way has some odd signs that indicate that he needs guidance. If not ready to heed the guidance and counsel from the elders, the elders use this

proverb as a gesture of giving up on the affected person. This proverb, therefore, is used as a condemnation to the affected youth. It shows that the youth are on the verge of being useless to the society. This proverb is used to deny the young a second chance to change from their mislead ways and this makes them be of no use to the society as they are already condemned by the old.

Ellipsis is used in negative structure to accentuate the male child and associate them with success.

28. *Gũtirì ù kavìcì ìtarigagwa kiongo.*

There none that has a boy that does not roast a head.

The proverb uses ellipsis like it is characteristic of other proverbs. The missing word is 'nyomba' (house). The proverb uses the imagery of head roasting. Usually, after slaughter and feasting of meat, the head is prepared by roasting it and used for soup. While doing so, there is a strong scent that spreads far and wide and registers that there must be a ceremony in this particular home. According to the Embu culture, a home with a son must have such a moment at some point because a son is associated with success.

The proverb is oppressive to the woman and skewed towards the men as victory is associated with him. According to gender dichotomy the opposite of man is woman and that of success is failure hence if men are associated with success then

women are associated with failure. The identity of men has been indexed as superior to that of women.

3.4 Conclusion

Metaphors and ellipsis are pervasive in proverbial language and are utilized in expressing power relations in Ki-Embu. Use of metaphor and ellipsis influence people's thought, attitude, actions as they simplify complex principles into more conceptualized reality. They are not mere reflection of gender reality but can be used to construct this reality as a means of maintaining and challenging power relations in society. They involve description, interpretation and evaluation in order to understand the meaning carried in them.

In this chapter we have analyzed proverbs for power relations using metaphors and ellipsis basing them on Critical Discourse Analysis Theory using eclectic approach.

CHAPTER FOUR

NEGATIVE STRUCTURES AND VOCABULARY IN KI-EMBU PROVERBS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a continuation of chapter three in analysis of Ki-Embu proverbs. While in the previous chapter we analyzed proverbs using figurative language and cohesion, in this chapter we will analyze more proverbs using syntactic structures and vocabulary. In particular we will analyze the proverbs using negative sentence structures and words. It is in this chapter that we shall look at context of the proverbs analyzed.

4.2 Syntactic Structure

CDA analysts are concerned with studying those linguistic properties that can be manipulated to denote social power. In this regard it was suggested that structures such as words forms and sentence structures are considered ‘grammatically obligatory’ and contextually invariant hence, usually not subject to speaker manipulation hence irrelevant in the study of social imbalances. Nevertheless, CDA also considers such subtle structures because even though they do not directly express underlying meaning and beliefs they actually signal properties of pragmatic properties of communication. Wodak & Meyer (2001) Things such as intention of speaker, their current mood their opinion and the impression they have of the other participants in the communicative event are all subtly signaled by among other things the sentence structure. For example a man who wants to hide

his negative opinion about women and succeeds in controlling his choice of vocabulary, but through the evaluation he makes or subtle structural characteristic such as word order, use of active or passive voice, pronominal relations, use of negative structures among other things will betray his deep feelings.

According to the third Hallidayan function of language (textual function) meanings are carried and expressed in the syntactic forms and processes and as such meanings can be read off from the syntax Fowler et al (1979). We consider some of the ways in which propositional structure can be altered to communicate ideological biases.

4.2.1 Negative Structures

Grammatical forms of language code happenings or relationships in the world, the people or animals or things involved in those happenings or relationships, and their spatial and temporal circumstances, manner of occurrence and so on. We represent textually some real or imaginary action, event, state of affairs or relationship through choice of different grammatical processes and the selection that we make can be ideologically significant.

According to CDA, Fairclough (1989) negation is the basic way we have of distinguishing what is not the case in reality from what is the case. It is a way of

implicitly taking issue with the corresponding positive assertions. These positive assertions are to be found in antecedent texts which are within reader's or hearer's experience. Negation can be sincere, manipulative or ideological. It is a typical strategy identified in CDA where those in powerful positions negotiate favourable terms for themselves while at the same time representing any alternative views as deviant (ibid: 155). We consider some of the proverbs that express power imbalance through use of negation.

Negation in Ki-Embu proverbial language is used to highlight gender bias against women and to emphasize ascendancy of men.

29. *Ngingo ndikĩrũkaga kiongo*

The neck can never surpass the head.

The neck and head are used in this proverb as imagery to represent woman and man respectively. Negation has been used to show the woman that she cannot take the position of the man. The body parts take their rightful position and so should the woman. The negative structure is used to indicate that men take issue with women who behave in a manner to suggest that they might take the position of men. It aims at keeping the woman at a distance. Since the head connotes topmost and leader, it presupposes that the man has automatic power over the people. As a leader you lead, implement decisions on behalf of the rest. The proverb 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 fact

that the head is permanently above the neck allows for blatant brainwashing of women, with a view of getting them to view themselves as inferior to men.

Proverbs through use of negative structure express the power of men by showing that a woman has no place in the family and society. The proverb is used to silence women in the family and society.

30. *Mündümũka ndarì kwao.*

A woman has nowhere to call home.

This proverb is used to show that a woman does not belong to any one or anywhere hence, manifests a woman's identity as subjugated beings, second class citizens. The woman is neither here nor there. It reflects the way the woman has been disowned by her own society. Where she is born, the family expects that she will get a suitor soon and leave for elsewhere. Where she gets married she is never received and anchored as a true member of the new family but she is treated as a foreigner, a new comer. She can be mistreated and blamed for all the wrongs in the new family. She lives at the mercy of the husband and has no right to own property and even that which she works so hard for belongs to the man. The woman is at crossroads as she cannot tell exactly where she belongs. Once she is married, her bed is said to have been destroyed, where she goes she has no right to have her own bed but has to use that of the husband who treats her as part of his property. She is given an equal value with the goats, cows, beds, plates etc. Where does the woman really belong?

Proverbial language utilizes negative structure to disregard, devalue and ignore women identity right from a tender age.

31. *Gutirì kanini kareìgeria nguo.*

There is none who is small once she fits herself clothes.

'*Kanini*' in this proverb is referring to a growing young girl who after fitting herself a dress can tell she is smart despite her age. The girl feels mature and soon the men notice her and start their wooing.

The proverb is used by men to cover up their wanting for these small girls who may not be mature enough to be wives. They use the proverb to qualify themselves to have the young girls for conjugal benefits and also for wives. They lure the girls into relationships as they can easily manipulate them due to their age. Here, we see the men taking advantage of the women at a tender age, a man who disregards, devalues and ignores the dignity and identity of a woman.

Women who are married as second wives are disrespected by members of the family as expressed in the proverb

32. *Gūtirì wonaga njaga ya ngina nwa ya ngina mūnini.*

None sees the nakedness of the mother but of the step mother.

In this proverb the imagery '*nakedness*' is used to represent the weakness of the step mother. The proverb presents a woman who is despised by the children of her own husband. The proverb is selective and targets women from polygamous

families. Such women have to persevere with the harsh situation they find themselves in, in order to please the husband. She has to restrain herself from fighting with the husband's children. The proverb presents the challenges a woman is faced with in coping with her step children. The fact that the children do not see the weakness of their real mother presupposes that the mother has weaknesses but the step mother is treated prejudicially. Though polygamy was accepted in the traditional Embu women who were married after the first wife were not treated with the respect they deserved and this can be seen from the proverb.

Proverbs also draw from natural facts through use of negative structure to manifest power of men over women through sexual exploitation.

33. *Ng'ombe ndikũraga kìgori.*

A cow never grows old on the liver.

A cow is used in the proverb as an imagery to represent source of meat, a living thing that depreciates with time. 'Kìgori' (liver) is another imagery that represents an ever soft or tender part of the cow. As the rest of the parts wear and tear and eventually become very tough, the liver remains tender. This is another proverb that gives way for women to be exploited sexually. The cow stands for the woman while liver stands for her sexual parts. The proverb is used as an excuse for having old women for their sexual gratification. They believe that though the rest of the body might look old these particular parts remain good for them. This denies the old woman the respect she deserves from the rest of the family. She is also drained

of her dignity, and her identity as source of empowerment for other women is wasted since she does not feel good enough for this kind of title.

Use of negatives portrays the unreliability of women folk and their dismissal by society.

34. *Mũndũmũka ndamenyagìrwa.*

You never know with a woman.

The proverb presents a woman as unpredictable therefore, unreliable. This leaves the man in a better position in decision making.

Power between genders is expressed through negative structure to express how men use crafty means to exploit them by what they are.

35. *Mwarì mūtune ndarìvaga ngari nwa makanga acokagìria ngantho.*

A brown woman does not pay bus fare she only thanks the taut.

This is a very recent proverb that has been coined from the reality of ‘matatu’ transport. It is used to rebuke the beautiful young women who are admired by all sorts of men. It warns them of the consequence of free gifts from men. Men are very willing to do things for free for women with the hidden agenda of winning them into sexual relationships. ‘Thanksgiving’ represents many ways of appreciating the free transport, the major target being that of the woman giving herself up to the man. This is yet another proverb reflecting dominance of men over the women. Men take advantage of the women’s nature of the desire for gifts

of fortune. The proverb presents the exploitative attitude of men towards women especially sexually. It also manifests crafty selfishness of men towards women.

Proverbs highlight 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. The use of some proverbs dismisses her identity and dignity and holds her in the lesser position than that of men.

36. *Ngina wa ndūrūme ndarì mŭkia.*

The mother of a ram has no tail.

The insight of the proverb comes out from the imagery of a ewe and a ram. Literally, a ewe has no tail yet, it bears a ram with such a huge and fat tail. As it grows older the ram becomes a bully even to its own mother. The ewe in this proverb represents a woman while the ram represents the heroes born of this woman. It is the woman who bears all the men, the rich and famous, the kings and the heroes. The lack of tail of the ewe represents the humility of the woman, the humble background from which the heroes came from, yet, the noble role of the woman is never recognized.

It is the same men who strive so hard to tread over the identity and dignity of the woman. Even after her divine and noble obligation, her place is still inferior to that of men, subject to those she held in her womb, nurtured in her own hands and saw them grow. She is dominated by those she bore and tendered. The men dominate

her and forget where they came from. In all these, she remains humble and defenseless.

Negatives are also utilized in Ki-Embu through proverbial language to maintain and influence power relations as well as impact on attitudes. Let us consider more examples that manifest men superiority and glorification through use of negative structures.

Proverbs utilize negative structures to reflect superiority and to defend identity of men right from an early age

37. *Gũtìrì mũndũmũrũme na kavìcì.*

There is no man and a little uncircumcised boy.

The imagery of ‘mũndũmũrũme’ has been used to represent a mature man while ‘kavìcì’, a diminutive form, has been used to represent a small uncircumcised man, a man not yet initiated into adulthood. According to the proverb the boy is treated with an equal status as a mature man especially when it pertains eking a living, providing for the family. According to the proverb the man commands respect right from the tender age all the way to adulthood. It protects the identity and dignity of a man. The proverb reflects the domineering spirit instilled in men while still at the tender age which is then carried onto adulthood. As the boys grow into men they uphold the same spirit and continue exerting power over the females.

Negatives are used to emphasize the ability of men and to protect the physically weak men and to highlight them as suitable heads of family and society.

38. *Njamba tì ikere.*

A hero is not determined by looking at the size of his calves.

Heroism in Embu culture is not associated with women but with men. It is the men who went to war and the role of women was to ensure that there were enough supplies of food and water. The imagery of calves has been used to represent the general physique of the hero. According to the proverb the power of a man is not determined by his physical appearance as opposed to the normal trend whereby physical strength is associated with gallantry or strength.

Dominance in the proverb is expressed by the way men seek to protect even the weakest among them. They ensure that even the frail are respected and recognized. It manifests men as good enough to render security, provision, protection and sound decision making. Despite their weaknesses, they are strong and reliable heads of family and society.

Proverbs use negative structure to refuse to be inferior and to be handled as immature. They are used to project the independence and authority of male folk.

39. *Mũndũmũrũme tì kavìcì.*

A man is not a little uncircumcised boy.

The proverb presents a contradiction between it and another one looked at earlier '*gūtirì mündümürũme na kavìcì.*' According to the Embu culture, a boy could be ordered around, fed by the mother, clothed by the mother, beaten and punished in many other ways. This proverb emphasizes the need for the community to recognize a mature man as able, independent, reliable, brave, as a decision maker and an authority. It stands out among those expressing the man's dominant position in the society. He is absolute and should not be ordered around. The proverb warns the society against undermining and underrating the ability of men. It defends the identity of a man as superior and authoritative in the society. The man in this proverb refuses to be treated as inferior, as weak, as unable and so on, by the woman and society.

Negatives are ideologically used to allow men to have many wives.

40. *Gūtirì njamba ya mwera ũmwe*

There is no cock of one hen

The images of cock and hen represent man and woman respectively. The negative structure is used ideologically to allow men own many wives.

The proverb in the essence expresses the fact that men own women. It also reflects the nature of men of desiring to have many women around them. The underlying assumption of the proverb is that a man has a right to marry more than one wife or even have mistresses. Used in the modern society it encourages not only

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. The expression presents derogation of feminine gender. Its meaning, potential and interpretation express a masculine gender that presents ascendancy over the feminine gender.

Creative use of negatives in proverbs brings out the expectation of a man from a woman, submissiveness, innovativeness and so on. This makes the woman remain inferior to men as in the examples 41 and 42.

41. *Gǔtirì nginyanthì ìtarì mǔtegi*

There is none that steps on the ground that has no trapper.

In this proverb, '*nginyanthì*' is augmentative. It represents an unbeatable, big thing that steps on the ground. The image reflected in this proverb is of a dangerous, great animal which is not easy to hunt or trap. However, the proverb asserts that even such animals as long as they touch the ground shall be trapped.

The '*nginyanthì*' here represents those very cruel, heartless, men who see themselves as overly powerful and are arrogant and greatly unapproachable. They think they are topmost and no one can dare with them. This is given a match image of trapper who maneuvers wise and creative ways of dealing with such a person.

The trapper in this case is wise creative wives who get ways of dealing with the cruelty and heartlessness of the husband and survive on without being battered and

mistreated. The proverb encourages the women to be innovative, patient, obedient, submissive, and hardworking, remain indulgent in order to win the ruthlessness of their husbands. The woman remains subject to the man and has to invent 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.

42. *Gũtirì ngoma ìtarì mwovì.*

There no insanity without someone to control it.

Like the above proverb, this proverb uses two images one of insanity and the other one is the person who controls this insanity. It is also a nugget of virtues for those living together as it emphasizes the need to learn to live with each other. In Embu culture the proverb is used to encourage the virtue of tolerance and mostly used to encourage women to persevere the behaviors of men. The use of insanity in this proverb expresses the very derogative behavior of said person. It presupposes some kind of behavior that may be super-human. It is an irritating and annoying behavior. When used to refer to men and women relationship, it shows that women have to tolerate some unspeakable character from men. It also reflects superiority in men.

According to Fairclough (1989) ideology is the prime means of manufacturing consent and language contributes to the domination of people by others through common-sense assumptions and the way these assumptions can be ideologically shaped by relations of power.

Negative structures are also used to express power relations between the old and the young. The old stand out as credible source of guidance and counsel due to their array of experiences, knowledge and skill. There is one- way flow of advice and words of wisdom in which the young are on the receiving end. Some examples of such proverbs include;

43. *Mwana muciare ndatecagwa*

An already born child is never discarded

The background of the proverb revolves around children who are very naughty and mischievous such that they become a bother to their parents. They are unruly and normally bring shame to their parents who sometimes don't want to be associated with them. The proverb reassures parents that since they were born they cannot be disowned.

The resistance of these children presents the fact that the dominated group does not always accept their position but also struggle for power. It also presents the parent as dominant in that they have a choice to accept and recognize the unruly children as they have to depend on the parents despite their rebellion. The child is dependent on the parent and may finally have to conform and obey the parents as expected.

Dominance of the old is achieved by excluding the young from some important functions in the community.

44. *Ivìcì itithiùcaga ũthoni.*

The uncircumcised do not go to dowry negotiation.

The proverb disqualifies the uncircumcised to attend dowry negotiations since they are regarded impure according to Embu culture. It strengthens and nudges forwards the dominance of the old over the young. The old have say over the young in determining which occasions are suitable for the young and which ones are not.

The old have power over the young as they determine who is wise among them depending on how they understand instructions and counsel from the old.

45. *Mwana mŭgì ndarì mivere ya ndeto*

A wise child gets meaning easily.

The proverb is selective as it focuses on the wise among the young. It is pointer that the old appreciates those who understand instructions, counsel and advice without much effort from them. One who can interpret meaning from either verbal or nonverbal cues.

The proverb emanates power from the fact that the old have authority, they determine who an intelligent child is depending on how they respond to instructions, guidance and counsel. The children cannot otherwise determine who is wise and who is not among the old.

Dependence of the young from the old is expressed using negative structures which present the old as dominant.

46. *Mwana wì kìo ndagaga mũthambia.*

A hard working child does not lack someone to shower him or her.

This is a proverb that encourages hard work among the youth. It shows that for a one to be successful, one must be supported. This to support according to the proverb is not for every child. The proverb is selective on only those who work hard. This proverb emphasizes the life skill of hard work to all children from all backgrounds. It is resourceful in the contemporary Embu society as it is used to encourage the young to work hard in their academics, especially those from humble background for instance, orphans, single parent children and so on. Like in other African set ups, in Embu, children belong to the society not to a parent hence; the children are assured that their talents and potentials will not go to waste as it will be nurtured by the society.

The proverb expresses the dominance of the old in that they are the ones to determine who is hard working and who is not. They decide who qualifies for support and who does not. It presents the young as having to depend on the decisions of the parents and also as being at their mercy.

The use of negatives is used with other linguistic resources such as hyperbole to intensify the ideological agenda in proverbs between the old and the young.

47. *Mũrega akìathwa ndaregaga agìkũnjwa.*

One who refuses to be directed does not refuse to be folded.

The proverb is hyperbolic in its use of 'be folded'. The hidden meaning in the proverb is inevitable problems or learning things the hard way.

This proverb reveals that the young are ordered and given instructions by the old who expect them to obey and follow the instructions without question. According to the proverb one who refuses to obey the orders and directives from the old eventually faces consequences of the disobedience.

The proverb reflects the young as subject to the old as they have to obey instructions. It also reflects the tyranny of the old as they do not expect to be challenged by the young. The proverb brainwashes the young and subjects them to the belief that the old are superior. The proverb also stalls the creativity and potentiality of the youth who may have to wait for instructions from the old. The proverb also reinforces some existing stereotypes about the young. For instance, 'the youth are the future leaders.' This makes the young to 'sit' on their talents and abilities waiting to use them later. Like the proverbs on women this proverb forecloses the superb contributions of the young to the community.

4.3 Lexical Items

Lexical items are said to be contentives as they have in them descriptive content or meanings that refer to our experiences of the world. Words are also used to link or hold together the structures of a sentence.

CDA to structural view of discourse is that discourse is comprised of units which include words. According to Widdowson (2007) 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. The text themselves contract complex and unpredictable relations with context. So what words mean by convention and what people mean by them on a particular occasion of use are two quite different things. He goes on to argue that what people mean is not always apparent from what they say as there is always an underlying attitude or point of view in the wording of a text. (ibid: 70). According to Fairclough (1989) what is ideologically significant about a text is its vocabulary per se: it is the way words co-occur or collocate. The task that CDA sets itself is to discover traces of ideological bias expressed through the wording in a given text. We consider use of terms in Ki-Embu proverbs.

Distrusting a woman is a lifelong affair in the Embu culture and an immature man is of higher status than her as we observe in the example

48. *Mwii na kivici akenaga kia rua nwa mwii na mündümũka akenaga akua.*

One who steals with an uncircumcised man gets relieved once he gets circumcised but one who steals with a woman is only happy when she dies.

This proverb uses an inference triggering device in the choice of contrastive word “*but*” that is “*nwa*” as this helps us to understand the implication of the proverb. The use of the verb “*akenaga*” repetitively highlights the weighty connotation the word is associated with, that of never trusting a woman until death. The contrastive approach of “*kivici*”, uncircumcised man, with “*mündümũka*”, a typical word for woman, helps the reader/listener look at a woman in relation to immature man.

This is such a strong proverb used in Embu to undermine women. The woman in this proverb is used on a level platform with an uncircumcised man who is given a better consideration once he gets initiated into adulthood. According to the proverb, whether a child or adult the woman is seen from the same perspective, childlike. The proverb tells us when the man can be trusted but for the woman it is until death that she can be trusted. The proverb expresses the dominance of men as the man is given a better footing than a woman. The proverb implies that women naturally have the tendency to divulge secrets It explains partly, or wholly why

women are not always involved in decision making despite their indispensable contribution to society.

Woman's identity and dignity is assigned material value equivalence in some proverbs through use of pithily structured words.

49. *Mwarì mwaro avitũkagìrìra thome ya ngĩa.*

A beautiful lady passes by the threshold of the poor.

In this proverb *a beautiful lady*, “*mwarì mwaro*” is said to pass by the *threshold of the poor* the use of these words connotes that a beautiful woman cannot match the status of a poor man since the poor cannot afford to have her. According to the Embu culture, dowry was paid in large numbers of cattle sheep and goats. Only the rich could afford to pay for a beautiful looking girl. The poor could only have the dowdies since they could not afford the doyen of the society. The threshold has been used to show how closely the beautiful would pass next to the poor man's door.

Women have in this proverb been given material wealth equivalence which drains their dignity. They are seen as objects with value assigned to them. There is dominance of class in the proverb ‘*the haves*’ and ‘*the have nots*’ 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. There is bias and inequality in the way women are looked at in the society as expressed

by this proverb and the society should appreciate every woman and give her chance to explore either side of the continuum and the ‘unpleasant’ woman should not be discriminated against by men.

Words are used in proverbs to foreclose a woman’s proficient contribution to the community and to show that men live in apprehension and suspicion with them

50. *Mwìtwa nì mǔndǔmǔka nì mwìtwa nì gìkuǔ.*

One who is called by a woman is called by death.

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 “*downfall*” in the proverb in relation to a woman shows the negative attitude with which a woman is treated. The meaning behind discourse is that a woman has someone behind her all the time and if she succeeds to lure a man into a relationship, this man is deemed to be killed by the other associate of the woman. It depicts a woman as a cause of unhealthy competition among men. It also warns the men against indulging themselves with married women. It also brings the woman at the centre of conflict among men.

The use of the word ‘*mwìtwa*’ does not mean that the woman simply calls the man in the literal meaning of the term this might be through the power of her beauty or the man might just be that type of men who like being around women. The term in this proverb represents the whims of one’s wife or other women’s. The proverb reinforces 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. The proverb warns men who go by the whims of their wives or other women to be causing their own downfall. It is gender biased against women as it forecloses the supportive and proficient advice women are capable of giving to their husbands, associates friends and relatives.

Words are used to disregard the beauty of women by men and to show that the man is the judge of character for the woman.

51. *Mündümũka mwaro nì mītugo tì ũthaka.*

A good wife is character not beauty.

This is another proverb presenting power behind discourse. The insight of this proverb is triggered by the question; who determines a good wife? If the man; does he measure up to the good character of the wife so determined? Domination in the proverb projects in that even that lazy, drunkard man wants to have a well behaved wife. The uncouth, barbaric men also want to have women of character. The negating word “*not*”, *tì*, shows the refusal of men to regard a woman’s beauty and instead emphasize on the character this manifests the fact that in this culture men subjugate women and seem to succor them when they are asking for a hand in marriage. The proverb puts the woman in desperate position due the ascendancy of men. The import of the proverb is that marriage is not an automatic guarantee that a man possesses the heart of the wife but is determined by how well she behaves.

Embu is patriarchal (it is the man who woos and marries the woman and not the other way round). Emphasis is placed so much on the woman's character and how she carries herself before the husband, his family and before other men

Use of words such as metaphor in proverbs is used pithily to take advantage of women and to lure the woman into believing that despite what she is she is of value when the otherwise is true.

52. *Mũgũnda wa mwimwa ni iirì nìguo wì matunda maaro.*

The farm of the barren is the one with sweet fruits.

The proverb utilizes three important metaphors which includes “*mũgũnda*” which represents woman sexual anatomy, “*mwimwa nì iirì*” referring to a tough, harsh, arrogant women and or one with no children, “*matunda maaro*” “fruits” here representing conjugal relationship. In this proverb, the harsh and arrogant woman is seen as morally pure due to her unapproachable nature. Her fruits are imagined the best since no children interferes with them. Her farm remains intact since no children ever steps on it. This means that her sexual organs are still very much fallow. This interprets a woman as good for sexual exploitation. Every man woos this woman since he knows that other than not having children, she is the best to derive sexual pleasure from. Such women are normally targets for sexual abuse by men. Use of the phrase “is the one” presupposes that the other farms have fruits but those from this particular farm have something not found in the others. This means that even when a man has married this barren woman before, and decides to marry another woman to bear him children, he holds up to this woman for his

conjugal needs. This proverb is a manifestation of how women are regarded as sexual objects.

Use of words show the way in which women are silenced and exploited by men as they choose what to do and with whom and do not expect any challenge from the woman.

53. *Mwongia wa mbere acokagìrìrwa na methori.*

One returns to the first wife in tears.

This proverb like those others has power behind discourse. The power relation depicted in this proverb lies in the use of the words “*acokagìrìrwa na methori*” which means “*return in tears*” The use of these words implies that the man had left home happy and on coming back he is in tears due to various reasons. This means a man might stray and leave home for other women. Mostly this man is strong and well up at his moment of arrogance. After he is used and wasted by other women, and is of little value, the man walks back to the first wife. It is unfortunate men take advantage of the patient and understanding nature of women. The man is presented as the decision maker as with whom and how to spend his time, property, and energy with even if the property is as result of the first wife’s toil. The woman is dominated by the man who simply says he is back home without considering the agony he has caused the woman in the event of being away from her.

Use of words as an avenue to domination and control by men is another feature that is evident in Ki-Embu proverbs. Proverbial structuring of words is used to reinforce men superiority and women subjugation. As exemplified below.

54. *Mũthuri nikũthuranĩra maĩndũ na mũtũmia nĩ gũtũmĩria maĩndũ*

A man plans and organizes while a woman perseveres and remains silent.

The proverb derives from two Ki-Embu words ‘*mũthuri*’ and ‘*mũtũmia*’. The former comes from a Ki-Embu word ‘*kũthuranira*’ which means putting together in order while the latter is derived from the word ‘*gũtũmia*’ which means keeping your mouth shut.

Male dominance is expressed in the proverb as the man is regarded as the planner, the administrator, and the organizer of the home and society. He holds the highest position and has authority over the woman. On the other hand, the woman is expected to remain silent even when she experiences problems, injustices, prejudice and even abuse. The proverb presents the men as indomitable and superior to the women. 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.

According to Wardaugh (2002:316) “women are named, titled and addressed differently from men and are sometimes required to be silent in situations when

men may speak. Doing so in occasions in which their husbands are present makes them to be seen as ideal wives.”

The Embu proverb affirms these findings as women who do not talk about the ills of their spouses and those who remain silent while their husbands speak are regarded as the ideal wives in Embu culture.

Euphemistic words are utilized to communicate ideology between genders in which men are portrayed as superior to women.

55. *Mbere ya arũme ndĩrĩ mwene*

The front of men is not owned.

In this proverb, the word ‘*mbere*’ is used euphemistically to represent the sexual anatomy of a man. According to the proverb these parts have no owner. The proverb presents the infidelity and men promiscuity as inherent by nature. It presupposes that men expect women to pout for them and be ready to receive them sexually since no one should claim them. At the same time women are expected to remain faithful to the man whatsoever and keep to the same man. If found with questionable sexual behavior, women are addressed with misogyny and labeled as whores, twilights, as prostitutes, as morally rotten, and so on. This prostrates them with anger since they feel cheated and unfairly treated. Yet, they have nothing to do 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.

56. *Ndìrì ìvǔragwa nì mǔtì wayo.*

A mortar is best hit by its own pestle.

“Mortar and pestle” are used euphemistically to represent the female and male conjugal anatomy respectively. While the mortar is normally the major vessel, it is made to have to depend on the pestle. According to the proverb the woman can only get conjugal gratification from the husband. It reflects that only the husband can be fit and sufficient for the wife. The proverb does not nevertheless; restrict the husband to the wife. This expresses men ascendancy.

Loaded words are also used to express power relations between genders in Kì-Embu proverbs;

57. *Kìndũ nì mwene*

Something is the owner.

The proverb uses the words “*kìndũ*”, something and “*mwene*”, owner to show the relationship between man and woman in the family set up. It refers to a woman as something which implies an object. She 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.

Men dominance in this proverb is expressed by the fact that it reflects a woman as dependent on the man, as one who cannot be appealing as a result of her own effort and hard work. It portrays a woman as one who cannot manage herself and demeans a woman's resourcefulness and contribution into a good and successful family and community. A healthy and well kept woman brings respect and dignity to the husband. It emphasizes the man as able to maintain the woman with high standard and beauty. This gives the men a better position than that of the woman and contributes to keeping the woman as inferior to the man

Men ascendancy is reflected in proverbs through use of words that imply the bravery of men begins at a tender age as endurance is compared with a baby boy.

58. *Kwiyũmìrìria ta kana ga kavìcì*

To endure like a baby boy.

The use of the comparative “as” or “like” gives the proverb an ideological interpretation in that it implies that only baby boys endure and ignores the fact that baby girls go through difficult experiences as well.

In Embu culture a boy is believed to have remarkable endurance due to his playful and mischievous nature which exposes him to painful, difficult and humiliating experiences that he encounters as he plays with his mates. In all these he has to prove himself hardy to his age mates. For this reason the proverb uses his comparison to a brave and tolerant person. The proverb expresses endurance as a

natural endowment for men and not for women. It overlooks the problems women have to undergo and the endurance they require to have to go through their duties as mothers, and wives. This means that only the masculine endure otherwise the women problems are normal and justified.

Use of words is also evident in proverbs that manifest power relations between ages. Let us consider the examples.

59. *Mũgì nì mũtare*

A wise one has been counseled

The proverb exerts the need for children to heed counsel from their parents and elders. It expresses a cause and effect situation in which for a person to have wisdom he must be advised and normally counsel comes from the elders and not vice versa according to the Embu cultural set-up. The use of passive construction in the proverb achieves the ideologically motivated omission of the agent. It allows for the noun “*mũgì*” which denotes the young to be placed in the subject position hence emphasize the meaning of the proverb.

The power relation between the young and the old is exhibited by the fact that the young cannot counsel the old. The old are emphasized as source of knowledge and wisdom due to their experiences. The young may not challenge the authoritative ideas from the elders but simply accept them as they are from authoritative, trustworthy and credible sources.

Loaded words in proverbs communicate dominance of the old folk over the young as exemplified;

60. *Ngemi ciumaga na mucii*

Ululation come from home (charity begins at home)

The use of *ululations* “*ngemi*” in the proverb represents blessings and well wishes from the parent and other members of the family. It implies that for one to thrive and do well in life, one must get blessed and sent out well by the parents. In the traditional Embu culture this was done by a parent spitting on his chest, and a little on the child. The parent would then put his hands on the child’s head. It could also be done verbally by the parent with such words as ‘*ũrothiù na njira ìtarì kathukì*’ which means “may you follow a path without stubble”. The proverb holds the young with home ties. Its theme is to make sure that however far one goes one should remember to return home to the parent. This is power over the young by the old.

Proverbs bring out power relations between the old and the young through use of idiomatic expressions;

61. *Canga na ndaki warita unue kũgũrũ.*

Wander around villages and break your leg if foolish.

The proverb gives the young freedom to roam around the villages as long as they are wise enough. It is mostly used to warn girls in which case *'breaking the leg'* is an idiomatic expression meaning to get untimely pregnancy.

Early pregnancy in Embu culture is associated with shame and disgrace to the family. Those who got themselves in such situations could only be married by the old men since they could not get suitors of their age.

This pithy message to the young was a great caution and discouragement of the habit of loitering in the villages. It is an encouragement to engage in constructive activities as a way of using their leisure time. Entertainments were well organized and were open to all as acceptable values were imparted to both boys and girls in these arenas. Power relations are expressed through the manner in which the old organized activities for the young and defined what they had to do, when and where to do it. The old used their more advanced knowledge on life to dominate the young.

4.4 Context In Relation to the Analyzed Ki-Embu Proverbs

According to Widdowson (2007) Context are the situations in which we find ourselves, the actual circumstances of time and place the here and now of the home, the school, the workplace and so on. As they interact, people naturally make reference to what is present in such situations. According to CDA, context is not what is perceived in a particular situation but what is conceived as relevant.

Although there can be no appeal to a common situation, there must be an appeal to a common context of shared knowledge or otherwise no communication will take place at all. Some of this context will be created by means of the text itself. Context can be thought of as knowledge of the world that the text is used to refer to but of the world as it is known by particular groups of people. This involves what these different groups know about as matters of fact and their distinctive ways of thinking about these things. CDA also views context as a mental construct.

According to Wodak & Meyer (2001) in CDA the aims of the researcher are best achieved if the discourse structures are related to the structure of both the local and global context. The global contexts are related to the social, political, cultural, and historical structures in which the communication takes place. For a critical appreciation of any text such factors are considered to form the ultimate explanatory and critical rationale of discourse and its analysis.

Local context on the other hand is determined by the immediate interactional situations encompassing such notions as ‘the overall domain of the communicative event, the participants and their roles in the interaction goals, knowledge, intentions, norms, and other beliefs (ibid: 108). In other words what we say, and how we say it depends on who is speaking to whom, when and where with what purpose.

In our study in defining the context of Ki-Embu proverbs, we recognize that being linguistic features, the societal domain in which it is grounded is the societal setting specifically the complex relationship that exists between men and women, old and young. This is a complex field of engagement since there are many factors that shape the relationships but in our study we find that the major action involved is that of propagating male superiority and female subservience. We also observe that the local setting of the text is Embu culture.

This is important because as we had established earlier, the culture plays a role in shaping people's attitudes through the stance it takes in some issues. Proverbs play a role of features of linguistic reference from which speakers writers and other artists can draw. They present complicated issues and give them the societal perspective.

4.4.1 Context of Proverbs

According to the proverbs analyzed in the two chapters we can conclude that in economic context women are more dependent than men while the young are more dependent than the old. The analyses show that proverbs express attitudes and ideologies and influence the society deeply. They are full of pithiness in structure and sense and draw widely from culture, family, the human body and environment to accentuate meaning and communicate ideology. Proverbs are pervasive in

effective communication among people with common context both situational and of values.

4.5 Conclusion

In the preceding chapter we analyzed proverbs on the basis of metaphors and ellipsis. We looked at twenty eight proverbs that reflect power relations between genders and between ages. The proverbs were put into three; those which subjugate women those which reflect male dominance and those which manifest power relations between ages.

We have analyzed proverbs that express power relations between genders and ages on syntactic structures, negatives, and words in this chapter. It is clear that people have been absorbing the stereotyped and old thought oppressive proverbs which as a result have widened the gap between genders and ages. The fact that proverbial language on women drains away their identity, dignity, rights, freedom, and empowerment in the Embu cultural milieu is well expressed in this chapter. We have also looked at the context from which these proverbs draw.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This study sampled proverbs from Ki-Embu in which the results of the analysis indicated that proverbs reinforces and perpetuates inequality and attitudes between genders and ages.

The use of power relations in proverbs portrays gender differences as a major characteristic of the society. As proverbs are passed from mouth to ear, these differences are transmitted from generation to generation. One of the objectives of this study was to find out how Ki-Embu proverbs express power relations between genders and between ages.

From the findings, it is clear that there exists proverbs in Ki-Embu with terms structures and metaphors which at the surface structure may look positive but they have underlying meaning which is demeaning to the women while male terms, structures and metaphors have positive meaning. This confirms the hypothesis that there are terms, structures and metaphors in which meaning is encoded.

The second objective was to find out whether use of proverbs reinforces the subjugation of one gender or age group as opposed to dominance and exaltation of the other. This study has revealed that proverbs are used to subjugate women and

exalt men; women are socially oppressed, derogated and demeaned. It has also demonstrated that language used in proverbs play a major role in creating, transmitting and sustaining gender biases based on gender differences and patriarchy in the society. Our study also confirms that the language used in Ki-Embu proverbs portrays divergent attitudes towards women. The proverbs through use of terms, structures and metaphors bring out meaning in women as sex and material value-bound objects. Women are portrayed negatively in matters of victory and upward mobility. This is meant to suppress and exclude them in authoritative spheres where men are exalted and glorified. To go by this objective this study has also demonstrated that proverbs are used to exert authority over the young. It has shown that the young are dependent on the old on matters to do with guidance, counsel and material support. It is also clear that the old manipulate the character of the young through the values, beliefs, skills and knowledge they impart into them.

The third objective of the study was to find out whether, language as used in Ki-Embu proverbs is a medium of expressing power relations between genders and ages and whether it is a medium of prejudice and subjugation against either of the gender and of expressing dependency and despondency of either age group.

Language is a reflection of social inequalities between genders and ages that people have within them. This means that the way people choose to use language

in their day to day lives denote the bias that they harbor behind their minds. The data analysis in this study reveals that women are victims of sexual abuse, verbal abuse and of punishment. The proverbial language is used prejudicially against women and many proverbs are used to emphasize the superiority of men. The analysis of the study has portrayed women as evil and “the root for disasters” while the concept that consider males as superior to female in intelligence, strength and leadership abilities has been reinforced.

Moreover, language use in proverbs portrays the old as the authority and the young as the disadvantaged since they do not have enough wisdom, credibility, knowledge and skills to challenge the ideas of the old. Even when they grow, they are made to believe that the ideas of the old are excellent and ideal which should never be challenged. This has suppressed the innovativeness and creativity of the young. Use of proverbs that are gender biased against women reinforces and perpetuates cultural gender stereotypes.

The fourth objective of the current study was to find out the role of context in understanding the power relations between genders and ages. The analysis indicates that the context of each proverb is important as it links the speaker’s meaning to the audience. It helps the audience to interpret the meaning communicated in the proverb. Ki-Embu proverbs utilize context in creating and expressing meaning in that they use images and metaphors derived from the

people's way of life. They utilize the Embu culture to make the proverbs be relevant to the people.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has sought to find out how various linguistic features including metaphors, ellipsis, negative syntactic structures and vocabulary are used as means of enacting power between genders and ages. According to the findings of the study, metaphors construct power reality between genders and ages through transfer of meaning to imagery understood by the listener/reader. They help people to think of concepts differently by focusing the ideas created by the metaphor. The transferred information by the metaphor activates information which is applied to influence people's attitudes, beliefs and opinions. The uses of metaphors play a great role in creating and maintaining power relations between genders and ages.

The other linguistic device analyzed was ellipsis. By omitting some essential structure of the proverb, the speaker/writer puts the audience/reader to task of filling the missing element of the sentence. As far as proverbs are concerned there must be an explicit context from which it draws. Ellipses used in Ki-Embu proverbs achieve the ideological purpose of dominance of men over women and the old over the young.

The study also analyzed negative structures in proverbs and concluded that as linguistic devices they are utilized by those in powerful positions to negotiate

favourable terms for themselves while at the same time representing any alternative views as deviant. According to our analysis negative structures accentuate the superiority of men and women inferiority.

We also explored use of words in proverbial language and our findings were that proverbs pithiness is achieved through use of vocabulary. Diminutives, augmentatives, euphemistic words among others are utilized to convey the ideological concepts between genders and ages. Use of loaded verbs is also evident in Ki-Embu proverbs and communicates very weighty information about the attitude of the community on both gender and age.

Gender imbalance is fostered in Africa and the rest of the world through cultural vehicles such as the proverbs. According to the data analyzed in this study, proverbs have served as an avenue for the continued perpetration of gender discrimination and undermining of the youth among the Embu, an African community. One of the orientations transmitted through proverbs is the conservative view of women. Though not all women are oppressed and not all proverbs demean women, for most part, Ki-Embu proverbs clearly point to the subjugation of women in Embu community. The male users of such proverbs consider them witty rather than oppressive while women referents feel humiliated by them.

As a result of this, the struggle for women empowerment and development in our society may not succeed unless urgent attention is paid to restore the identity, dignity and the welfare of women and empower them for contemporary challenges. The perception of women's personality, their strengths and weaknesses by the society and by themselves, is, among other things, the result of the way they are portrayed in the proverbs analyzed in this study.

The study revealed that men and women are often portrayed in ways that reflect and sustain socially endorsed views of gender. The traditional views on women have been carried down by mouth and ear and continue even today as evidenced in this discussion. Moreover, proverbs have undermined the complimentary contribution of women in the family and society at large. The proverbs analyzed encourage men to nurture a picture of the rein of suspicion, secrecy, dishonesty, and carefree attitude which has resulted to tyranny attitudes among the male folk. While the analysis indicates that proverbs foster dependence and frustrates the efforts of empowering women, it is clear that they promote male ascendancy and independence.

One of the characteristics of proverbs that make them an effective tool of reinforcing inequality in society is the fact that they are rich in pithiness, frankness, appeal, and they are handed down by mouth and ear. They can also be

remembered easily and spread universally. Thus they exert deep and pervasive influence on both individuals and society as a whole.

Despite the awareness of women's efforts to liberate themselves, many Embu men use proverbs to justify their chauvinism. Nevertheless, proverbs are human saying coined to reflect the values, beliefs and culture of a people some of which may be misleading.

Language in proverbs is used such that the ideas in them seem natural and part of common sense that emanate from human nature. The language uses nonviolent means of exercising power over the other. These words used by Wodak have been affirmed in this study as the domination of the old in Embu proverbs is such that it is normal for the old to have authority over the young. The old exert nonviolent power over the young by use of proverbs in Ki-Embu.

The analysis of the study as far as power relations between ages is concerned is that the old dominate the young as they are authoritative as a result of their cultural knowledge, beliefs, skills that the young do not have. Moreover, the young are not able to challenge the old as they find them as credible, trustworthy and reliable sources of guidance and counsel.

Despite all these observations, proverbs remain as nuggets of wisdom in many African cultures including Ki-Embu from which great orators and artist among others derive to accentuate and highlight discourses at given contexts.

5.3 Recommendations

Several issues arise from the study that may require attention for further research.

These include:

There is need for a study on language planning in Ki-Embu that might help in proper reconstruction of some of the oppressive proverbs as a gesture to advocate for an all inclusive language use.

There is a definite need for further research with regard to the power relations portrayed in language used in songs. As we looked at proverbs, there were some used in traditional Embu songs that made us realize that some of other features of songs portray power relations between genders and also between ages. This calls for a research to find out more on the topic.

A comparative study on power relations of proverbs from other languages could be done to establish the similarities and differences.

Research on Ki-Embu proverbs using pragmatic and communication theories such as Relevance Theory would give further insight on the topic as this study was based on Critical Discourse Theory to study the proverbs.

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APPENDIX

Aka airì nì nyũngũ igìrì cia ũrogi.

Two wives are two pots of witchcraft.

Kìgwa gìgìkũra gìcokagia mũrìo gítina.

As sugarcane grows older, its sweetness flows to the bottom.

Mwari mwega nì magambo.

A beautiful young woman is trouble

Mwere mwega ũmenyagwa na maketha

A good millet plant is distinguished by the harvest.

Ndia nyama ndicumìkagua na nyama.

A carnivore/ a meat eater is not let to salivate with meat

Aka nì njũkì.

Women are bees.

Ŭcio nì watwuìkire kiere kìa njìrari.

That one has become a millet plant of the road.

Mwere wa mũka kīgũta ũvũragwa gakinda kamwe.

The millet harvest of a lazy woman has only one bundle to thresh.

Mũndũmũka nìke mũcì.

The wife is the home.

Mündümürüme nìke gítugì kia mǔciì.

The man is the pillar of the home.

Arǔme nì ngǔ ciotanaga.

Men are firewood that warms each other.

Mündürüme nì mǔgambo

A man is the voice

Ngwacì ya mwana wene niyo ìvoragia mwaki

The sweet potato of another person's child is the one that puts out the fire.

Mǔciari nì mǔciari

A Parent is a parent

Mǔciari ndarì ngoro na kìmira kìa mwana wake.

A parent does not get nauseated by the mucous of his/her child.

Mǔtì ũrǔngagwa wì mwìthì

A tree is straightened up while still young

Njokoma mbaro yumaga ìkǔrìrorì.

A good club is determined right from its base.

Kaviũ gatemaga mǔnori.

A knife cuts the one who sharpens it.

Icoya rìthekaga mwagaŭ.

A green banana leaf laughs at the dry one.

Ngima yumaga muturì

Ugali comes from flour.

I thano cia kavìcì na ithatŭ cia kerìtu

Five for the new born baby boy and three for the new born baby girl

Kia mündümŭka gètìkagua gwakìa

A woman's can only be believed or taken serious when it is finally dawn.

Gìkŭrŭ kìega nwa ndigŭ.

The only good old thing is a banana.

Kaŭgì ta ìthe karitu ta ngina.

Intelligent like the father foolish like the mother.

Ya kŭvia ìvìcaga na ma mbere.

That which cooks with the first boil of water.

Rwì ìtara rŭthekaga rwì riko

The one in the wait laughs at the one already on fire.

Ya kŭra ìgìcaga ìme kwì riŭa

That which is soon becoming bushy gets dew when there is sun shine.

Gūtìrì ìì kavìcì ìtarigagwa kiongo.

There none that has a boy that does not roast a head.

Ngingo ndikìrūkaga kiongo

The neck can never surpass the head.

Mündümūka ndarì kwao.

A woman has nowhere to call home.

Gutirì kanini kareìgeria nguo,

There is none who is small once she fits herself clothes.

Gūtìrì wonaga njaga ya ngina nwa ya ngina mūnini.

None sees the nakedness of the mother but of the step mother.

Ng'ombe ndikūraga kìgori.

A cow never grows old on the liver.

Mündümūka ndamenyagìrwa.

You never know with a woman.

Mwarì mūtune ndarìvaga ngari nwa makanga acokagìria ngantho.

A brown woman does not pay bus fare she only thanks the taut.

Ngina wa ndūrūme ndarì mūkia.

The mother of a ram has no tail.

Gŭtìrì mŭndŭmŭrŭme na kavìcì.

There is no man and a little uncircumcised boy.

Njamba tì ikere.

A hero is not determined by looking at the size of his calves.

Mŭndŭmŭrŭme tì kavìcì.

A man is not a little uncircumcised boy.

Gŭtìrì njamba ya mwera ũmwe

There is no cock of one hen

Gŭtìrì nginyanthì ìtarì mŭtegi

There is none that steps on the ground that has no trapper.

Gŭtìrì ngoma ìtarì mwovì.

There no insanity without someone to control it.

Mwana muciare ndatecagwa

An already born child is never discarded

Ivìcì itithiìcaga ũthoni

The uncircumcised do not go to dowry negotiation.

Mwana mŭgì ndarì mivere ya ndeto

A wise child gets meaning easily.

Mwana wì kìo ndagaga mũthambia.

A hard working child does not lack someone to shower him or her.

Mũrega akìathwa ndaregaga agìkũnjwa.

One who refuses to be directed does not refuse to be folded.

Mwìi na kìvìcì akenaga kìa rua nwa mwìi na mũndũmũka akenaga akua.

One who steals with an uncircumcised man gets relieved once he gets

Mwarì mwaro avitũkagìrìra thome ya ngìa.

A beautiful lady passes by the threshold of the poor.

Mwìtwa nì mũndũmũka nì mwìtwa nì gìkuũ.

One who is called by a woman is called by death.

Mũndũmũka mwaro nì mītugo tì ũthaka.

A good wife is character not beauty

Mũgũnda wa mwimwa ni iirì nìguo wì matunda maaro.

The farm of the barren is the one with sweet fruits.

Mwongia wa mbere acokagìrìrwa na methori.

One returns to the first wife in tears

Mũthuri nìkũthuranìra maũndũ na mũtumia nì gũtumìria maũndũ

A man plans and organizes while a woman perseveres and remains silent.

Mbere ya arūme ndìrì mwene

The front of men is not owned.

Kìndũ nì mwene

Something is the owner.

Ndìrì ìvūragwa nì mŭtì wayo.

A mortar is best hit by its own pestle

Kwìyŭmìrìria ta kana ga kavìcì

To endure like a baby boy.

Mŭgì nì mŭtare

A wise one has been counseled

Ngemi ciumaga na mucìì

Ululation come from home (charity begins at home)

Canga na ndaki warita unue kŭgŭrŭ.

Wander around villages and break your leg if foolish.