A RELEVANCE THEORETIC ANALYSIS OF DHOLUO NEOLOGISMS

BY

ADUDA KENNEDY

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university.

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ADUDA KENNEDY   DATE

This research project has been submitted for examination with our approval as the university supervisors.

_____   _____

PROF. JOHN HAMU HABWE   DATE

_____   _____

MR. MAURICE J. RAGUTU   DATE

DEDICATION

In loving memory of Mum (*Dorcas Aduda*) and Dad (*Joshua Aduda*).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

*	Ungrammatical
1PL	First Person Plural
1SG	First Person Singular
3SG	Third Person Singular
CCTV	Closed Circuit Television
KSN	Kisumu South Nyanza
n	Noun
NEG	Negation
PAST	Past Tense
PL	Plural
POSS	Possession
PRE	Prefix
PRES	Present Tense
RFL	Reflexive
RT	Relevance Theory
SG	Singular
v	Verb

ABSTRACT

This dissertation was a study of the nature of Dholuo neologisms. The research problem focused on the comprehension process of Dholuo neologisms. The analysis was carried out within the framework of Relevance Theory.

The data used in the study was drawn from native speakers of Kisumu-South Nyanza variety of Dholuo. Some of the data were also drawn from Ramogi FM, a radio station that broadcast in Dholuo.

The research activities and findings are discussed in the four chapters of this research. Chapter one gives a general background on Dholuo and in addition, includes a detailed description of the research problem, objectives of the study, rationale, theoretical framework and the methodology.

Chapter two concentrated on the morphological structure of Dholuo neologisms with an emphasis on the word formation processes involved in the formation of Dholuo neologism. The study demonstrated that derivation and compounding are involved in the formation of Dholuo neologisms. Also found to be involved in the formation of Dholuo neologisms are semantic extension and borrowing.

The relationship between context and meanings of Dholuo neologisms was investigated in chapter three. It was observed that meanings of Dholuo neologisms are determined by the context brought to bear during their interpretation. The role of ad hoc concept of broadening in the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms was also analyzed in chapter three. Relevance Theory was used in the analysis. It was demonstrated that understanding Dholuo neologisms involves expanding the linguistically specified denotation of the logical form so as to include a wide range of other related concepts.

In chapter four, it was concluded that broadening as ad hoc concept construction, brings out the meaning of Dholuo neologisms.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

The concern of this chapter is to provide the background information of the study. It begins with a background of the language of the study and the research problem under investigation. This is followed by the objectives of the study, the hypotheses to be tested and a review of the literature. The significance of the present study, the scope and limitations and the research methodology are provided as well.

1.1 Background of the language

The object language of this study is Dholuo. Dholuo language is spoken by the Luo community of Kenya. Luo are part of the Nilotic group of speech communities whose cradle land is believed to be the Southern Sudan. According to Ogot (1967:152) the Luo are believed to have arrived in the Lake region (Lake Victoria) between 1490 and 1600 A.D.

The classification of Greenberg (1995) shows that Dholuo is much more closely related to other Nilotic languages like Acoli, Alur, Shilluk, Bor, Lango and Padhola, which also fall under the Western Nilotic branch. Of the Nilotic languages in Kenya, only Dholuo belongs to the Western Nilotic group.

Today the Luo are found in Siaya, Kisumu, Homabay and Migori counties (formerly Nyanza Province). A number of the Dholuo speaking families can also be found in various parts of Kenya as a result of marriage and migration. The Kenya population census of 2009 puts the total number of Luo at four million forty four thousand four hundred and forty (4,044,440). This number includes all the Luo in other parts of the Republic of Kenya.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the Luo in Kenya are the Luhya, Gusii, Kuria, Suba, Maasai and Kalenjin with whom the Luo have varying degrees of contact. The Suba people not only live with the Luo but also speak Dholuo. The contact with the Luhyas is through intermarriage and trade in the common market places. The Kuria and Gusii interact with Luo majorly through trade. The interaction between the Maasai and Kalenjin is relatively limited. The interaction has seen borrowing of lexical items from the languages.

Adhiambo (1990) identified two major varieties of Dholuo: the Boro-Ukwala dialect and the Kisumu-South Nyanza dialects. The Boro-Ukwala dialect is spoken in Ugenya, Alego, Yimbo and parts of Gem, while the Kisumu-South Nyanza dialect is spoken in Kisumu, Homabay, and Migori counties and some parts of Siaya which are not included in the Boro-Ukwala group. Although these dialects of Dholuo have a high degree of mutual intelligibility, they are distinct enough in

their phonological and lexical features to an extent that one can tell the region a speaker comes from by the way they speak.

1.2 Background to the study

This study attempted to provide a pragmatic analysis of Dholuo neologisms within the framework of Relevance Theory. A typical dictionary definition of neologism is 'a new word or expression or a new meaning of a word (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary).

Katie (2001:268) defines neologisms as a newly invented word. These words may eventually find their way into the dictionary if they become widely accepted through the speech community. On his part Bussman (1996) defines neologism as a newly formed linguistic expression (word or phrase) that is recognized by at least part if not all of a language community as the way to denote a new object or state of affairs, be it in technology, industry, politics, culture or science.

In this study, we have defined neologisms as new words or expressions created as a result of assigning new meanings to already existing words. Neologisms, according to Bussman can be created on the basis of already available morphological means and word formation rules, semantic transfer or loans from other languages. For example;

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1. a) Morphological means;   *wang' jowi*   **'**television'.
   b) Semantic transfer;   *mbui*   'internet
   c) Loans from other languages; *mbom*   'grenade'

Neologisms develop as a result of the need to name new notions or objects that come into being as a result of new developments in technology, politics, and science. The new words enter the language with unknown meaning. According to Lehrer (1996b:366) word recognition is influenced by the frequency of the word and its semantic priming. He further notes that it takes more time to recognize unfamiliar words than familiar ones, hence neologisms as new words needs more time to be understood if there exist many words that resemble it phonetically or orthographically.

This study is based on the belief, especially in the Relevance-Theoretical account, that there is a discrepancy between the meaning linguistically encoded by a word and the meaning expressed by that word when used in a given occasion. The task of the hearer in communication is to bridge this gap. Relevance Theory which is based on human cognition and works on the principles of effects and effort, aims at providing a descriptive account on how hearers can accomplish this.

1.3 Statement of the problem

In this study we shall attempt to describe, analyze and interpret Dholuo neologisms. The literatures available on Dholuo linguistics are mainly based on

the study of grammatical aspects of Dholuo language. These studies include Omondi (1982) who studied *The Major Syntactic Structure of Dholuo*, Adhiambo (1990) a study of *Dholuo Dialects* and Okoth (1997) a study of *Functional Grammar of Dholuo*. These studies analyze problems pertaining to phonology, morphology and syntax of Dholuo. Other studies in the field of semantics mainly concentrate on meaning relations among Dholuo lexical items with no specific reference to Dholuo neologisms. These studies include Atoh (2001) a study of *Semantic Analysis of Dholuo Nouns*, and Anyim (2010) that carried out a study on *Sense Relations* in a Lexical Pragmatic Approach. There is no known study that has been carried out on Dholuo neologisms to establish how they are processed and interpreted in communication.

Dholuo neologisms are central in Dholuo culture. A lot of new objects and ideas are continually created in technology and social life. These objects and concepts are acquired and introduced into the culture and consequently new words are created to express them. These neologisms present a wide range of meanings leading to difficulties in their interpretations. A study to investigate the nature of Dholuo neologisms, and how they are processed and interpreted is, therefore, of essence. The questions this study sought to address were: how are Dholuo neologisms formed? What role does context play in the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms? And how do hearers recover the intended interpretation? We believe

that by providing explanations to these questions, our study would be able to shed light on the nature of Dholuo neologisms.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives.

1. To investigate word formation processes involved in the formation of Dholuo neologisms.
2. To establish the role of context in the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms.
3. To investigate the role of ad hoc concept of broadening in the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms.

1.5 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested;

1. That word formation processes; derivation, compounding, semantic extension and borrowing are involved in the formation of Dholuo neologisms.
2. That the context selected will determine the meaning of Dholuo neologisms.
3. That ad hoc concept of broadening brings out the meaning of Dholuo neologisms.

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1.6 Rationale of the study

This study focused on Dholuo neologisms. Neologisms as we have mentioned in the background to this study is of central importance in human communication. In the modern world, and in societies with rapid technological developments, neologisms are created to enable speakers to express these new developments. This view justifies why a study had to be done on Dholuo neologisms to understand their nature and how they are comprehended in communication.

This study will also be significant in the sense that it will bring out the characteristics of Dholuo neologisms. This is in line with the view that since Dholuo differs from other languages in its grammar, it is only imperative that aspects of Dholuo neologisms are investigated and described.

Neologisms play a significant role in language change. This is in view of the fact that as new words are created in the language, there is a change in the vocabulary as new words are introduced and old words may acquire new senses. Neologisms can also lead to language modernization in the sense that it makes it possible for speakers to express the new technological and scientific developments in the society. A study on Dholuo neologisms is therefore important as it will shed light on the features of Dholuo neologisms and how they operate in the language.

Practitioners and theorists have made various claims concerning approaches of Relevance Theoretical analysis. It is our belief that this study will provide a means of testing those theoretical claims in comprehension and also regarding the concept of ad hoc construction in the interpretation of utterance. In this way this study will be making Dholuo language to bear with modern approaches in the area of pragmatic analysis.

1.7 Scope and limitations

In this study we attempted to describe, analyze and interpret Dholuo neologisms. However, we admit here that neologism is broad and refers to a wide range of lexical items. The term neologisms may refer to new words borrowed from other languages and dialects, new words created through morphological processes operating in the language under study, words acquiring new senses and words produced as a result of speech defects. In this research however, we focus only on Dholuo neologisms formed as a result of borrowing from other languages, those created through the morphological processes operating in the languages and those formed through semantic transfer.

We have mentioned that our descriptive tool of analysis in this study is Relevance Theory. However, we shall only attempt to test its claims concerning the construction of ad hoc concepts. Ad hoc concepts are of different forms:

narrowing, broadening and approximation. We shall confine ourselves to broadening process only.

Dholuo has two varieties: the Boro-Ukwala dialect and Kisumu-South Nyanza dialect. Our study will focus on the KSN dialect which is spoken in Kisumu, Homabay and Migori counties. This is the standard variety that is used in print and is spoken by a large number of speakers.

1.8 Theoretical framework

The descriptive tool for this study is Relevance Theory. Relevance Theory was originally developed by Wilson and Sperber (1986). Relevance Theory accounts for the hearer's understanding of an utterance in terms of cognitive information processing. It puts emphasis on the internal context which includes the hearers' current knowledge, beliefs and assumptions, cultural and social conventions in the form of mental representations of propositions. The assumption of Relevance Theory about communication is that every utterance has a variety of linguistically possible interpretation, all of which are compatible with the decoded sentence meaning. However, not all these interpretation are equally accessible to the hearer on a given occasion (Wilson lecture notes, PLIN 2002:2007-08).

1.8.1 The principles of relevance theory

Relevance Theory is anchored on two principles: the cognitive principle of relevance and the communicative principle of relevance.

1.8.1.2 The cognitive principle of relevance

The cognitive principle of Relevance states that human cognition tends to be geared towards the maximization of relevance (Sperber and Wilson, 1995:31). The claim is that human beings do have an automatic tendency to maximize relevance, not because they have a choice in the matter but because the way their cognitive systems have evolved.

Sperber and Wilson (2004: 610),notes that due to constant selection pressures towards increasing efficiency, the human cognitive system has developed in such a way that the perceptual mechanisms tend automatically to pick out potentially relevant stimuli. The memory retrieval mechanisms tend automatically to activate potentially relevant assumptions, and the inferential mechanisms tend spontaneously to process them in the most productive way. Inferential communication in the Relevance-Theoretic approach, takes place against this cognitive background information one has available to yield conclusions that matter to them.

According to Relevance Theory, a stimulus is relevant to an individual when it yields a positive cognitive effect within a context of available assumptions. The most important type of cognitive effects is a contextual implication which is a conclusion deducible from input and context together, but not from neither input nor context alone. The other types of cognitive effects that can be derived during communication include strengthening, revision or abandonment of available assumptions.

Relevance is perceived as a matter of degree as not all the potentially relevant inputs can be attended to. Only inputs that are more relevant than any alternative inputs available at the time will be picked out from the mass of competing stimuli. According to Relevance Theory, the greater the positive cognitive effects achieved by processing an input the greater its relevance would be (Sperber and Wilson, 2004: 609).

The relevance of an input is also assessed in terms of the processing effort expended to derive cognitive effects. According to Relevance Theory, the less the effort of perception, memory and inference required, the greater the relevance of an input. In this way, relevance of an input is seen as a function of both effect and effort. Aiming at maximizing the relevance of an input in the Relevance-Theoretical approach is simply a matter of making the most efficient use of the available processing resources.

1.8.1.3 Communicative principle of relevance

The communicative principle of Relevance states that utterances create expectations of their own optimal relevance (Wilson and Sperber, 2004: 612). The central claim of Relevance Theory is that utterances automatically create expectations of relevance which are precise and predictable enough to guide the hearer toward the speaker's meaning. A stimulus is designed to attract the audience's attention and given the cognitive tendency to maximize relevance, an audience will only pay attention to an input that seems more relevant than any alternative input available at the time.

According to relevance theory, communication process takes place as follows:

Stimulus → context → cognitive effects → processing effort → relevance.

A stimulus which can be an utterance connects with the context within the cognitive environment against which it is processed. The cognitive environment in this case works like a filter for the interpretation and understanding of the stimulus. This will then lead to the activation of the mind to derive cognitive effects which require some processing effort hence relevance.

The communication process is entailed in the Relevance-Theoretic comprehension procedure, (Wilson and Sperber, 1995:261). According to this comprehension procedure, when constructing a hypothesis about a speaker's meaning, the hearer

takes the linguistically decoded meaning; following a path of least effort in accessing contextual information, he enriches it at the explicit level and complements it at the implicit level until the resulting interpretation meets his expectations of relevance, at which point, the hearer stops. The result would contain not the concept linguistically encoded by the word, but the ad hoc concept with a narrower denotation or a broader denotation that would warrant the derivation of expected cognitive effects.

1.8.2 Relevance theory and ad hoc concept construction

The central claim of lexical pragmatic is that the meaning that is communicated or intended by use of a word on a given occasion may be substantially different form the meaning assigned to it by the grammar. This raises the question on how hearer manages to bridge the gap between the linguistically encoded meaning and the intended interpretation.

According to Relevance Theory, the concept that is linguistically encoded by a word is seen as merely a point of access to an ordered array of encyclopaedic entries from which the hearer is expected to select. It further claims that when processing a word, the encyclopaedic knowledge is activated and added to the context and used in comprehending utterances about the word.

When the linguistically encoded meaning of a word does not satisfy the expectation of relevance, hearers engage in the construction of ad hoc concepts which give rise to meanings that are slightly different form the one that is linguistically encoded. According to Wilson and Sperber (2004: 620), ad hoc concept construction is affected by a range of factors including context, accessibility of encyclopaedic assumptions and consideration of relevance. In Relevance Theory, lexical items are treated as giving access not to ready-made interpretations but to a vast array of encyclopaedic assumptions with different entries being selected ad hoc to determine the occasion specific interpretation of a word. Ad hoc concept construction may result into an interpretation with a narrower denotation or a broader denotation than the linguistically encoded meaning.

According to Relevance Theory, an adequate account of such loose meanings or narrow meanings of a word should explain what triggers it, what direction it takes, and when it stops. The explanation advanced by Sperber and Wilson (2004: 617) is that ad hoc concept construction is triggered by the search for relevance. It follows the direction that requires less effort when choosing the most accessible set of contextual assumptions and the most accessible set of contextual implications. This will continue until the expectation of relevance is satisfied. It is reasonable for the hearer to stop at the first interpretation that satisfies his expectations of relevance, because there should never be more than one.

1.8.3 Explicature and implicature distinction

In Relevance Theory a distinction is made between an explicature and implicature. Sperber and Wilson (1986a:182) points out that an explicature is a development of a logical form encoded by a word or utterance while an implicature is an independent assumption inferred as a whole from an utterance. This distinction has an implication on the understanding of lexical items.

Contrary to the much held view that an explicature is equivalent to the literal meaning of a word, there are situations when what is expressed by use of a particular word is not exactly the meaning of the word given by its core semantics. An explicature entails the literal content of the expression uttered. Put in another way, an explicature is an elaborated form of the literal meaning.

In Relevance Theoretical account, linguistic semantics is treated as the output of linguistics decoding system and serves as an input to a pragmatic processor. This logical form consists of incomplete conceptual representations that functions just as templates for the pragmatic construction of full fledged propositions. The claim here is that during interpretation, these incomplete conceptual representations are enriched at the explicit level through pragmatic inference so that they have complete propositions.

In this regard, pragmatic processors such as narrowing, approximation are viewed as processes that contribute to the explicature. That is, they are all ways of filling in a framework provided by the literal sense. The general implication is that the conceptual content of an explicature is an amalgam of the decoded linguistic meaning and pragmatically inferred meaning. An implicature and logically independent of what the speaker actually says.

1.9 Literature review

This section has two parts: one part is about literature review relating to Dholuo grammar. The next section consists of a review of theoretical literature.

1.9.1 Literature on Dholuo grammar

Studies that have been done in Dholuo language include Malo (1952) *Dholuo without Tears*, Stafford (1967) *An Elementary with Dholuo Grammar Vocabularies*, Huntingford (1969) *Elementary Lessons in Dholuo*. These works provide grammatical descriptions of Dholuo intended, especially, for those who are interested in learning and acquiring a working knowledge of the language.

Omondi (1982) is one of the significant works on Dholuo grammar. Omondi carried out a study on the major syntactic structures of Dholuo. Some of the aspects discussed are the morphological process involved in the formation of Dholuo words such as compounding, affixation and reduplication. This study is

relevant to the present study with respect to these morphological processes which form the core of one of our objectives. However, it differs from our study in terms of its data which are typically common Dholuo lexical items. Our study concentrates on neologisms.

Okoth (1977) carried out a study on Dholuo morphophonemics in a generative framework. The study aimed at investigating the motivation for the morphophonemic alternations which are prevalent in Dholuo grammar. This study like Omondi's also discusses the morphological processes involved in word-formation in Dholuo.

Another study by Okoth (1997) attempted to describe what may be called the functional grammar of Dholuo. The study aimed at providing a descriptively adequate account of constituent order in Dholuo. The study dealt with grammatical aspects of Dholuo such as nouns, verbs and adjectives. Even though this study has no direct bearing on our study, it is crucial for our reference.

Adhiambo (1990) conducted a study on Dholuo dialects. The study aimed at defining the dialects of Dholuo by identifying the phonological, grammatical and lexical feature which marks each dialect. She found out that Dholuo has two regional dialects marked by phonological, lexical and grammatical features. This study is also crucial for our reference.

Atoh (2001) carried out a study on the semantic analysis of Dholuo nouns using a semantic field approach. Atoh's research differs from the present study in terms of its data which were purely typical nouns. Atoh's approach which is semantic field is also different from ours. Our approach is Relevance Theory. Even though Atoh's study and the present study operate within semantics, the present study has a pragmatic orientation.

Anyim (2010) also carried out a study on sense relations in Dholuo using a lexical pragmatic approach. This study is relevant to our study particularly with regard to its approach. However, it differs from our study in terms of its data. Our study focuses on Dholuo neologisms.

1.9.2 Theoretical literature

Linguistic theories have enormous amount of literature developing and expounding, applying and testing. Here we are interested in the literature of Relevance Theory, which is the theoretical framework within which this study was carried out.

Relevance Theory was developed originally by Wilson and Sperber (1986) in the publication by the title *Relevance: communication and cognition*. Wilson and Sperber were followed by a number of other studies on Relevance Theory. The most notable ones are: Sperber and Wilson (1995) post face to the second edition

of *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*, Carston (2000) *Explicature and Semantics*, and Wilson and Sperber (2002) *Truthfulness and Relevance.*

Carston (1997) proposes that there are cases where it seems that lexical concept appearing in the logical form is pragmatically adjusted, so that the concept understood as expressed by the particular occurrence of the lexical item is different from, and replaces, the concept it encodes; it can be narrower, looser, or some of the combinations of the two. In such cases the denotation of the lexical item merely overlaps with the denotation of the lexical concept from which it is derived. For example, in one context, an utterance of *I'm happy* could communicate that the speaker feels herself to be in a steady state of low-key well-being, in another that she is experiencing a moment of intense joy. The general concept *HAPPY* encoded by the lexical item *happy* gives access to an indefinite number of more specific concepts recoverable, in particular contexts by relevance-driven inference.

An utterance such as 'There is a **rectangle** of lawn at the back, involves some degree of widening or loosening to be understood. The area of the lawn referred to is very unlikely to be truly a rectangle; rather it is approximately rectangular. In this case what is expressed is not the encoded concept *rectangle* but a wider concept *RECTANGLE.*

All these examples above, according to Wilson and Sperber (2004) indicate that there is a one-to-many relation between lexically encoded concepts and the concepts they can be used to express and communicate. This is to be expected on the Relevance-Theoretic view of communication, which entails that the linguistic expression used need only provide the addressee with skeletal evidence of the speaker's intended meaning from which he can infer the communicator's intentions.

Clark and Clark (1979) conducted a study based on ad hoc concept construction. They studied a whole range of newly-coined verbs created from nouns. For example, *The paper boy **porched** the newspaper.* If the speaker knows the noun **porch** (which refers to the sheltered space in front of a house) and if he has the appropriate background knowledge about newspaper boys, he should have no trouble understanding the verb **porch** as denoting the act of throwing a newspaper onto a porch. The study shows that such neologisms present no problems of understanding to ordinary hearers as the hearer would take the concept linguistically encoded by the noun as a starting point for inferring the concept expressed by the use of the verb.

Barsalou (1992) surveys a range of experimental evidence which shows that narrowing of terms such as *bird, animal, furniture* etc vary across situations, individuals, and at times, and are strongly affected by discourse context and

considerations of relevance. He concluded that lexical items give access not to ready-made prototypes but to a vast array of encyclopaedic assumptions, with different subsets being selected ad hoc to determine the occasion specific interpretation of a word.

1.10 Methodology

This section provides a descriptive account of the procedures used in gathering and processing of empirical data pertinent to this investigation.

1.10.1 Data collection

The researcher selected 20 native speakers of Dholuo to help in the generation of the data. They comprised of 10 males and 10 females. The respondents were selected through purposeful sampling within the research area. Their age bracket ranged between 35 and 60 years. Our choice for this age bracket was informed by the fact that this age has had a greater exposure to the language.

The respondents live in Homa Bay subcounty of Homa Bay county, one of the counties in which Kisumu-South Nyanza dialect is spoken. We chose this dialect because it is considered to be the standard variety of Dholuo. The respondents had also received formal education to at least diploma level. We believed that with this level of education they have had interactions with new discoveries in social life, technology and science. Among the respondents, 5 were health workers, 10 were

teachers, while the remaining 5 were working as church ministers. Our choice for these occupations was guided by the fact that they involve active communication with the public.

A questionnaire was administered to the respondents. The questionnaire had two sections, in section one, the respondents were asked to provide their personal details. Section 2 contained a list of Dholuo neologisms translated into English, and the respondents were asked to provide their Dholuo equivalents.

The researcher also listened to Ramogi FM, a radio station that broadcasts in Dholuo. This is because media is believed to be very quick to react to any new development in the social life of a society, and in science and technology.

1.10.2 Data analysis

An inventory of the data collected was made. They were then categorized according to their sources and types. This was followed by a classification according to their morphological structures. We then carried out a description and an analysis of the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms within the framework of Relevance Theory.

1.11 Significance of the study

The findings of this study will contribute to extension of knowledge with respect to Dholuo linguistics in general and Relevance Theory in particular. The study will

also be of benefit to Dholuo speakers as they will have something written and documented in their language and for the enrichment of their culture.

1.12 Conclusion

In this chapter we have provided background information to the study. It has been introductory in its orientation. In the chapter, we have provided a background to the language of study which is Dholuo. We have also provided the research problem of the study, stated the objectives, and the hypotheses that were tested. The chapter has also provided the theoretical framework of the study, a review of the literature, the scope and limitations, and a detailed description of the research methodology.

CHAPTER TWO

NEOLOGISMS

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the salient features of Dholuo neologisms. The chapter is morphological in its orientation with emphasis on word formation processes. It is divided into three sections. In section one; we have given a general discussion on the concept of neologisms. Some of the aspects discussed here are the source areas, motivation and productivity with respect to their formation. Section two is a discussion on the formation processes involved in the creation of neologisms; word formation processes such as compounding, derivation are examined here. Although, semantic transfer and borrowing, strictly speaking, are not word formation processes, we examine them here as potential creation sources of neologisms. Finally, in section three, an attempt to classify Dholuo neologisms is made. The discussion in this chapter was intended to lay a foundation for our investigation in chapter three.

2.2 The concept of neologism

Neologisms are new words or word combinations or phrases that appear in the language due to the new developments in social life, culture and technology. Existing lexical units that acquire new meanings are also regarded as neologisms. These new words are constantly being introduced into the language often for the purposes of naming a new object or concept that is introduced into the culture of a

speech community. As we have indicated in the background to this study, we have adopted the definition that neologisms are new words formed as a result of assigning them new meanings.

Neologisms are sometimes contrasted with nonce-formation as is captured in Fischer (1998) definition;

> A neologism is a word which has lost its status of nonce formation but is still one which is considered new by the majority of members of a speech community (Fischer, 1998: 3).

This definition brings out the distinction between a neologism and a nonce-formation. A nonce formation is a word which is created and used by a speaker who believes it to be new (Bauer 1983). However, when a speaker is aware of having used or heard a word before, it ceases to be a nonce-formation.

Bussman (1996: 324) while describing neologisms points out that neologisms are newly formed linguistic expressions that are recognized by at least part if not all of a language community as the way to denote a new object or state of affairs. These new objects or state of affairs are found in areas of technology, industry, politics, culture or science. In an attempt to explain the reasons that enable the occurrence of neologisms in a language system, Aitchison (1991: 89) notes that their occurrence is justified by three causes: fashion, foreign influence and social need.

After a considerable long time of use, neologisms may get stabilised. Such stabilised neologisms may eventually find their way into the dictionary of the language. However, lexical items are considered new if they have not been included in general dictionaries of the standard variety of the language (Algeo, 1991: 2). To be enlisted in the dictionary a word has to occur with a certain frequency, a status that has not been achieved by neologisms.

In this study we have defined neologisms as lexical items that have acquired new meanings. They are created to fill lexical gaps that emerge as a result of the developments of new objects and concepts from areas of technology, science, social life and culture. However, these items can pose a great challenge in their interpretations as they cannot be found in dictionaries.

2.2.1 Sources of Dholuo neologisms

Dholuo neologisms could be drawn from a number of sources but the following are the main ones; technology, imported and social life. They are presented in the figure below.

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                          ┌──────────────┐
                          │   SOURCES    │
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         ┌────────────────────┼────────────────────┐
  ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐
  │  Technology  │     │   Imported   │     │ Social life  │
  └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘
         │                    │                    │
  ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐     ┌──────────────┐
  │ Examples     │     │ Example      │     │ Example      │
  │ Ong'ue yamo  │     │ Bunde        │     │ Oboke        │
  │ Mbui         │     │ Mbom         │     │ Pien kwach   │
  │ Nyakalondo   │     │ Kalenda      │     │ Jakom        │
  │ Kalapapla    │     │ Sofa         │     │ Ayaki        │
  │ Okolo        │     │ Orofa        │     │              │
  └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘     └──────────────┘
```
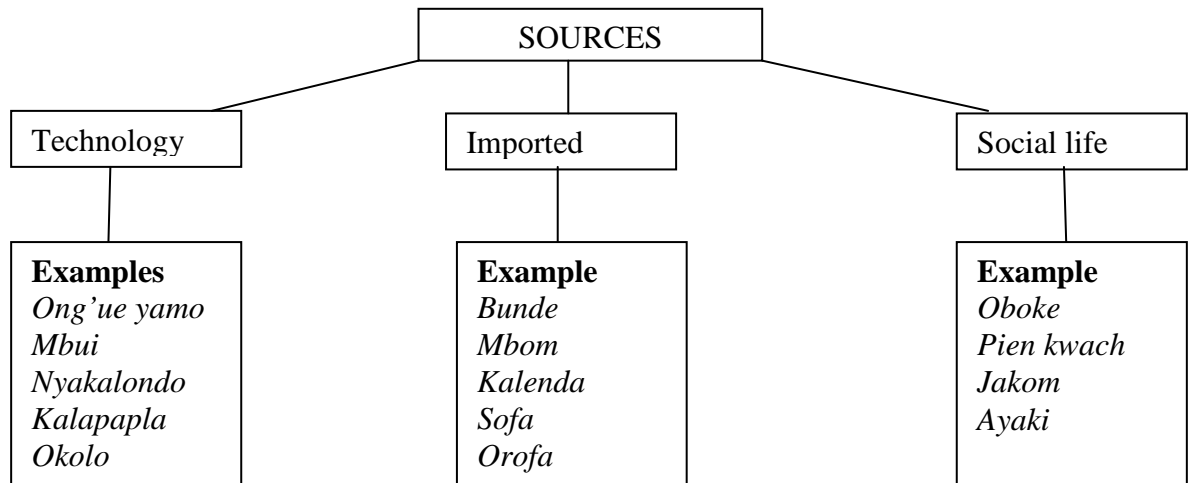
Figure 2.1 Sources of Dholuo Neologisms

2.2.1.1 Technology neologisms

Technology neologisms are words or phrases created to describe new technological discoveries. Most of the technological innovations happen in the West and then they are acquired into Dholuo culture. Consequently, new words have been created to name these new objects and concepts. Technological neologisms are exemplified in the following; *Ong'ue yamo, mbui, wang' jowi and kalapapla.*

2.2.1.2 Imported neologisms

Imported neologisms consist of words and phrases originating in another language. They are typically used to express ideas and objects that have been introduced into the speech community but do not have equivalents in the Dholuo language. However, in some cases, a lexical item is borrowed not because there is no

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equivalent but because its usage is considered more formal by the speech community. Imported Dholuo neologisms are exemplified in the following; *kalenda, musdola, masin, orofa and pesa.*

2.2.1.3 Social life neologisms

Social life neologisms are lexical items that are created to describe new objects and concepts that affect the society's way of life. Social life neologisms that are imported but are referred to by already existing words are also included here. Social life neologisms are realized in areas of education, health and religion. Such neologisms include; *andila, ayaki, pien kwach and rabo-yunga.*

2.2.2 Motivation

Motivation can be described as the conditions which may lead to a certain linguistic form. Fischer (1996: 11) equates motivation to transparency of a word syntagm. However, the degree of motivation is dependent on the simplicity of the syntagmatic analysis of the constituent of the complex word and the transparency of its meaning. In cognitive linguistics, motivation is regarded as a basic cognitive process. A lexical item that can be learnt, retrieved and produced more easily is said to be motivated as is suggested by Lakoff (1987).

> Motivation is a central phenomenon in cognition. The reason is this: it is easier to learn something that is motivated than something that is arbitrary. It is also easier to remember and use motivated knowledge than arbitrary knowledge (Lakoff 1987: 346).

A distinction is often made between a complete and an incomplete motivation. Combination of linguistic signs like compounds and derivatives are totally motivated because they can be paraphrased by grammatical syntagms. This is not the case with forms such as blends and clips which are only partly motivated as they are compositions of parts of linguistics signs and cannot be dissolved into grammatical syntagms. On this basis, motivation can be taken to refer to the analyzability of grammatical syntagms.

In this research, we have made reference to the linguistic conditions of motivation, particularly the morphological and semantic motivations which are characteristics of certain word formation patterns. A neologism is morphologically motivated if it can be broken down into its morphological constituents and the meanings of its constituents reveal its meaning. If this is the case, that neologism will be perceived to be transparent because morphological motivation on the word-formation level corresponds to transparency (Fischer 1998: 13). Let us consider example 2;

2. *Wang' dede* → 'Closed Circuit Television' (CCTV)
   'Eye of a grasshopper'

The neologism in (2) is a compound consisting of *wang'* 'eye' and *dede* 'grasshopper' as its constituent parts. If it is morphologically motivated, the meaning of its constituents should reveal its meaning. The neologism *wang' dede* is morphologically motivated because its meaning assigned by the grammar can be

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deduced from its morphological constituents *wang'* 'eye' and *dede* 'grasshopper.' This neologism is therefore said to have an increase of morphological motivation.

A decrease of morphological motivation corresponds to a loss of transparency and may mean that such a word has been lexicalized or merged. Merger is defined by Heine and Reh as follows: 'the meaning or function of two linguistic units merges into one new meaning/function which is different from that of the combined units' (Heine and Reh 1984: 44-45). In the example (2) above, therefore, the meaning of the whole is a simple semantic composition of the meanings of the parts. This compound neologism therefore is not a case of merger as the meaning of the constituent parts brings out the meaning of the compound.

A word is said to be semantically motivated if their forms can be associated freely with others like in the case of metaphors and metonymies. Let us consider the following example;

    3. *Mbui* (cobweb)   'website'

In (3) the original meaning of *mbui* is 'cobweb' while the new meaning is 'website'. To arrive at the new meaning, one needs to get locked on to the properties of the original word: interconnected threads, which is then extended to arrive at the new meaning. *Mbui* 'website' is therefore semantically motivated.

2.2.3 Productivity

Bauer (1983: 66), while studying English word formation pointed out that productivity can be viewed as the ability of speakers and hearers to produce and understand new words. It is mainly used in reference to rule governed word-formation processes which are carried out by the creation and comprehension of new words. Productivity is contrasted with creativity which is neither rule governed nor predictable. However, these two concepts cannot be kept apart in the formation of neologisms.

Productivity allows a native speaker to produce a number of principally uncountable formations. Creativity expands the language system in a motivated but unpredictable way. Bauer (1983: 63) proposed that only rule governed innovations that give rise to neologisms should be discussed. His proposal can be attributed to the fact that many creative neologisms such as blends and clippings are over-looked in morphological theories because the theories cannot accommodate for unconventional and unpredictable, morpheme creating processes.

In our discussion we have analyzed and interpreted both lexical morphological regularities and irregularities produced by both productive and creative means respectively.

2.3 Formation types of neologisms

In this section we have discussed the processes that are involved in the formation of Dholuo neologisms. Neologisms can be either a loan word in the form of a direct loan and a loan translation, or a newly coined term, either a morphologically new word or by giving an existing word a new semantic content.

The section begins by examining neologisms created through word-formation processes: derivation and compounding. This is followed by a discussion on neologisms created through semantic transfer and finally those that come to existence as a result of borrowing from other languages. Even though we are aware that semantic transfer and borrowing are not, strictly speaking, word formation processes, we have included them in our discussion because they also involve formation of new concepts.

2.3.1 Word formation processes

The formation of neologisms involves a whole spectrum of word formation processes available to speakers of the language. Plag (2003: 13) defines word-formation as the ways in which new complex words are built on the basis of other words or morphemes. The word formation processes involved in the formation of Dholuo neologisms that we discuss here are derivations and compounding.

2.3.2 Derivation

Derivation is a process of adding bound morphs to already existing roots or stems to create new words of the same or different word classes (Bussmann 1996: 50). Basically, derivation is process of creating new words by adding affixes to already existing words. However, it should be borne in mind that there is a distinction between derivation and inflection. Bloomfield (1935: 222) points out that inflections are the outer layer of the morphology of word forms while derivation is the inner layer. That is, inflections are added when all derivational processes are complete. The major differences between derivational and inflectional processes is that inflectional affixes function to express morphosyntactic categories such as plural, person and tense, while derivational affixes function to make new words.

Within derivation, a distinction is drawn between class maintaining and class changing derivational processes. Class maintaining derivational process produce a new word but does not change the grammatical category of the base from which it is derived as is exemplified in the following.

4. *Kal-apapla* (noun) – *kalapapla* (noun)   'helicopter'
   PRE-dove

In (4) , the prefix *kal* – is attached to the stem *apapla* 'dove' which is a noun to derive a neologism *kalapapla* 'helicopter' which is also a noun. The process is

thus a class maintaining derivational process because the class category of the derived element does not change.

A class changing derivational process produces a neologism in different word class from the base it was derived:

5. *Yako* (v)   –   *a-yaki* (n)   'AIDS'
   'to destroy'   PRE-destroy

In example (5) the prefix *a-* is attached to the stem *yako* 'destroy' which is a verb to derive a neologism *ayaki* 'AIDS' that belongs to noun class. The derivational process therefore is class changing since it produces a new word in a different category from its base. Other examples of neologisms formed through class changing derivational processes are:

6. *Ndilo* (v)   *a-ndila* (n)   'Anti Retroviral Drugs'(ARVs)
   'to swallow'   PRE-swallow

7. *Menyo* (v)   *ra-meny* (n)   'spot light'
   'to illuminate   PRE-illuminate

8. *Dhuko* (v)   ki-*dhuko* (n)   'traffic jam'
   'to crowd'   PRE-crowd

The examples 6, 7, and 8 above are all illustrations of class changing derivational process that involves formation of a nominal neologism from a verbal stem.

Omondi (1986:85-86) points out that Dholuo derivational affixes could fall into two categories; morphological affixes and lexical affixes. She further observes that morphological affixes are functionally definable morphemes such as the reflexive morpheme – *ruok*. Lexical affixes differ from morphological affixes in that they do not seem to have any function which is synchronically discernible. Consider the following example:

9. *Kom* (n) – *ja-kom* (n) 'AIDS'
   Chair PRE-chair 'chairman'

The prefix *ja-* in (9), is a morphological affix since it is functionally definable. That is, it carries a meaning of its own. The prefix *ja-* is defined as 'one who does x.., 'where x describes the action expressed by the noun' and can also be attached to verbs and adjectives to derive nouns from them.

In dholuo, prefix *ra-* can also be used to derive nominal neologisms from verbal stems. Consider the following example;

10. *Ng'i* (v) – *ra-ng'i* (n) 'mirror'
    'to look' pre-look

The prefix *ra-* in (10) in comparison to the prefix *ja-* in (9) does not seem to have any synchronically discernible function apart from deriving nouns from verbs. Such derivational affixes, according to Omondi are described as   lexical affixes (ibid).

Sometimes the derivation of Dholuo neologism involves multiple affixations, in which more than one affix is attached to the stem as in the following example;

11. *Londo* (v)   –   *nya-ka-londo*   'Radio'
    'to travel '   PRE-PRE-travel

In (11) both prefixes *kal-* and *nya-* are respectively attached to the stem '*londo'* 'to roam' to derive the neologism *nyakalondo* 'radio'. This is a case of multiple affixations. *Nyakalondo* in this case literally means 'a person who roams'. The prefix *kal-* is also a lexical derivational affix which does not have a discernible definition (Omondi 1986).

2.3.2.1 Motivation

Morphological motivation as we have argued in section **2.2.2,** contributes to the transparency of derivatives. It is easier to associate a derivative with its base if they resemble each other in form. If this is the case, then the meaning of the derivative seems to be primarily determined by the meaning of its constituent morphemes. For example, let's consider (6) repeated here as (12).

12. *Ndilo* (v)   -   *a-ndila* (n)   'Anti-Retroviral Drugs'
    'to swallow'   'anything that is swallowed'.

In (12) the meaning of the noun formed '*andila*' can be determined from the meaning of its constituent base morpheme '*ndilo'* from which it is derived. This

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would give the meaning 'anything that is swallowed – groundnut, beans and drugs. However, with reference to the new meaning attached to it, that is, 'Anti-Retroviral Drugs', the meaning seems to deviate slightly from the meaning of the base form. The derivative is therefore not transparent but rather opaque since its meaning does not correspond to its base.

Phenomena like the one discussed in (12) raise questions on how then do hearers arrive at the intended meaning. These are the questions that informed the aim of this research as we shall see in the next chapter.

2.3.2.2 Productivity

In Dholuo language, speakers use derivation process to generate uncountable new words to enable them to express new phenomena and old ideas which have taken on a new cultural context. However, some derivational affixes are no longer productive in the language.

The example of non productive prefixes in Dholuo is the prefix *kal-* found in *Kalapapla* 'helicopter'. This prefix must have been used in the past to create words such as *Kalamindi* 'peak' and *Kalausi* 'strong wind.' However, the morpheme has since been fossilized and ceased to be the standard means of forming new words, and as Croft (2003: 260) points out, such morphemes are retained on lexical items and reinterpreted as part of the lexical root.

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The other derivational affixes such as *ja-, a-* and *ra-* are, however, still productive in the language. For example, the neologism *jakom,* 'AIDS' is formed through analogy with words such as *japuonj* 'a teacher.; the same can be said of the neologism *rang'i,* 'mirror' formed analogously with words such as *rayue* 'broom', *rachungi* 'siever' and *raum* 'lid'.

2.3.3 Compounding

Katamba (1993: 46) defines a compound word as one that contains more than one root. A compound word may therefore be viewed as a combination of two free forms or words that have independent existence.

Okoth (1982: 32) points out that compounding in Dholuo involve more noun-to-noun relations than just that of possession. He also noted that in the compounds it is the possessed constituent that undergoes the change corresponding to the genitive case. In this research, our interest was to investigate compounding as a word formation process and its productivity in the formation of Dholuo neologisms. As is observed by Atoh (2000: 32) it is a tendency in Dholuo noun formation to use compounds to refer to a given thing, often because there is no specific single word for it. For example;

13. *Komo* (v)   +   *nyuol* (n) – *komo nyuol*   'family planning'
    'To plant'   'birth'

The compound neologism in (13) is clearly formed from the verb *komo* 'to plant' and the noun *nyuol* 'birth.' The structure of compounds of this kind is verb-noun. However, majority of Dholuo neologisms have noun-noun structure. Consider the following example;

14. *Wang'* (n) + *jowi* (n) - *wang' jowi* 'television'
     'eye'   'buffalo'

15. *Ong'ue* (n) + *yamo* (n) - *ong'ue yamo* 'mobile phone'
     run   air

16. *Wang'* (n) + *dede* (n) - *wang' dede* 'CCTV'
     eye'   'grasshopper'

Even though compounds consists of two words, they function like single words as they occupy single grammatical slots in sentences as is exemplified in the sentence below.

17. *Otedo pien kwach*
    'She cooks the **skin of leopard'**
    'She cooks chapati'

The compound neologism *pien kwach* 'chapati' in (17) functions like a single word and not as two in the sentence.

 Majority of Dholuo compound neologisms are interpreted in such a way that the left hand member somehow modifies the right hand member. However, it is not entirely applicable in Dholuo. For example;

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18. *Wang' jowi*   'eye of a buffalo'

The compound neologism in (18) should be interpreted as a kind of 'eye', namely one that belongs to a buffalo. The compounds therefore exhibit head-modifier structure, in which the head is the most important unit in the structure. Semantically, the set of entities possibly denoted by the compound, that is, all *wenge jowi* 'eyes of a buffalo' is a subset of the entities denoted by the head, that is, all *wenge* 'eyes.'

The other property of these compounds is that the compound as a whole inherits most of its semantic and syntactic information from their heads such that if the head is a noun, the compound will be a noun. If the compound is pluralized, the plural marking occurs on the head. Consider the following example;

19. a) Singular: *pien kwach*   'chapati'

    b) Plural: *piende kwach*   'chapatis'

    c) *   *pien kweje*   'skin of leopards'

In (19a) the plural of *pien kwach* 'skin of leopard' is (19b) 'skins of leopard' because it is marked on the head. The plural form in (19c) *pien kweje* 'skin of leopards' is therefore incorrect because it is marked on the non-head.

The semantic head of Dholuo compound neologism is strikingly deviant. Their semantic heads may be felt as though they are outside the compounds. For example;

20. *Wang' dede*   'CCTV'
    'The eye of grasshopper'

This compound does not express a kind of eye, but a kind of 'television' and the same holds for *pien kwach, rabo yunga, komo nyuol, it liech, wang jowi and ongue yamo*. The compound neologisms therefore denote an entity that is characterized, sometimes metaphorically by the property expressed by the compound.

2.3.3.1 Motivation

Compounds generally are morphologically motivated and they are expected to be semantically transparent, that is, the meaning of the compound corresponds to the meaning of the constituent parts. However, the semantic relationship between the parts of compound neologisms is very varied; let's consider (15) repeated here as (21).

21. *ong'ue yamo*   'mobile phone'

In (21), the meaning of the constituent parts, *ong'ue* 'a run' and *yamo* 'air' would give the meaning 'a run of air', which deviates from the meaning it expresses 'mobile phone.' This shows that the meaning of a compound neologism is not the sum of the meaning of its parts.

2.3.3.2 Productivity

Compounding is relatively productive in the formation of Dholuo neologisms. However, it is restricted to only certain combinations. The most common combination is noun-noun. Verb-noun combination is also possible but rare.

2.3.4 Semantic Transfer

Nunberg (2004: 344) defines meaning transfer as the process that allows speakers to use an expression that denotes one property as the name of another property. He further points out that meaning transfer is possible when there is a salient correspondence between the properties of another, in which case the name of the first property can be used to refer to the second. Semantic transfer normally occurs in situations whereby expressions can be used to refer to something that is not explicitly included in the conventional denotation of expression.

Semantic transfer is a broad source type of neologisms that is neutral with respect to addition or reduction processes like derivation, compounding, blending and clipping. McMahon (1994: 174) in her largely diachronic study of semantic change describes lexical creativity, as the formation of new words using a language's own resources. She further noted that the identifiable aspects of language which allow semantic change to occur is the fact that 'words are typically polysemous thus can lose or gain meaning relatively easily and do not have to lose an earlier sense to gain a new one.

When Dholuo speakers are faced with difficulties on how to express new concepts and objects in technology, science, social life and politics, they resort to already existing lexical items and assign them new concepts. This is so because Dholuo permits a great amount of flexibility in meaning. This notion is based on the fact that, depending on the context, or reference, a word may have a variety of interpretations. For example:

22. *Mbui*

   Old meaning: cobweb
   New meaning: website

Every word has a core meaning that is linguistically encoded and that the other meanings are transferred or extended. The core meaning of (22) is its old meaning 'cobweb.' The new meaning 'website' is an extension of the core meaning. A further extension might occur to include anything that happens in the internet such as electronic mails.

Semantic transfer shows that the range of meanings of a given word can vary considerably. Depending on the circumstances, the range may be broader or narrower than the core meaning. Let's consider this other example:

23. *Oboke*

   Old meaning: 'leaf'
   New meaning: 'newspaper'

The core meaning of (23) is a 'leaf'; however, the meaning can be broadened in other situations in order to meet the expectations of relevance. For one to arrive at the new meaning of (23), that is 'newspaper', the old meaning must be broadened to include other things that resemble a leaf.

The major vehicle for expanding the range of meaning so as to create a neologism is metaphor. Metaphorical extension is one of the widespread pragmatic processes which speakers constantly draw on to creatively expand the power of words. Hock, and Joseph (1996: 223) observes that metaphors come in different guises: based on perceived similarity, and contiguity or physical association. For instance:

24. *Okolo*   'train'
       'Centipede'

The word *okolo* in (24) originally referred to a centipede, but through metaphorical extension based on perceived similarity, a neologism, that refer to train, a jointed moving body which is a form of transport, has been formed.

2.3.4.1 Motivation

Neologisms formed as a result of semantic transfer are semantically motivated. The form of the neologism can be freely associated with the form of its base. Semantic motivation of this kind contributes to the transparency of the word formed. This is exemplified in the following.

25. *Tipo*

    Old meaning: shadow

    New meaning: photograph

The literal meaning of (25) 'shadow' –a shape that somebody or something makes on surface, when they are between the light and the surface, is associated with, through perceived similarity, 'photograph,' which is a picture that is made by using a camera that has a film sensitive to light inside it.

2.3.5 Borrowing

Hock and Joseph (1996: 253) defines borrowing as the adoption of individual words or even of large sets of vocabulary items from another language or dialect. In this research we define borrowing as the incorporation of imported lexical items from other languages into Dholuo language. Adhiambo (1990: 226) observes that a lot of things that are not typically Luo are named either by coinage or borrowing. It should be pointed out here that borrowing differ from code-switching in that borrowing occurs as a result of a need to express new concepts and ideas for which the language has no terms, however, speakers code switch as demanded by the conversation situations they find themselves in.

The contact between Dholuo speakers and speakers of other languages has led to the adoption of lexical items from these other languages. Apart from the utilization of elements already existing in the language, a new lexicon can also be adopted by

borrowing from another language (Wardhaugh, 2002: 188). Borrowing occur as a result of the need to have a vocabulary to express new cultural and technical items that are taken over from other cultures but do not have equivalents in Dholuo. The inventory of borrowed Dholuo neologisms is presented in the table below;

Table 2.1 An inventory of borrowed Dholuo neologisms

Dholuo	Origin	Borrowed word	Gloss
Bunde	Kiswahili	Bastola	Firearm
Mbom	English	Bomb	Bomb
Kalenda	English	Calendar	Calendar
Sofa	English	Sofa	Couch
Orofa	Kiswahili	Gorofa	Storey building
Masin	English	Machine	Machine

The borrowed items sometime are nativized by the community by integrating them more firmly into the linguistic structure of Dholuo, for example

    26. *Masin*   'machine'

In (26) the English word machine, when borrowed into Dholuo is phonologically nativized to 'masin' to ensure that it becomes pronounceable in the language. The palatal fricative/s/ is replaced by the voiceless nasal fricative /s/ for ease of articulation. This happens because Dholuo does not have a palatal fricative in its phonological system.

2.4 Types of Dholuo neologisms

Researchers in the field of lexicography have proposed several divisions for neologism. Their classifications are based on various criteria. In this study, we

have adopted Burnov and Muminov (1990) mode of classification mainly because of its appealing structural basis which seems to draw close to the morphological composition of neologisms. They proposed the following divisions: root words, derived words and compounds.

2.4.1 Root word neologisms

Root word Dholuo neologisms are composed of only roots – the most basic morpheme in a word, and they cannot be analyzed further into smaller morphemes. This class consists of existing lexical items that are assigned new meanings. Root word Dholuo neologisms are exemplified in the following:

27. a) *Mbui*   'website'

    b) *Oboke*   'newspaper'

    c) *Okolo*   'train'

    d) *Tipo*   'photograph'

    e) *Mach*   'electricity'

Borrowed Dholuo neologisms also belong to this category, for example,

28. a) *Bunde*   firearm   'pistol'

    b) *Mbom*   bomb   'grenade'

    c) *Kalenda*   calendar   'year'

    d) *Orofa*   storey building   'flyover'

2.4.2 Derived Dholuo neologisms

Derived neologisms are formed by attaching an affix to a root. They are analyzable into a sequence of smaller units hence are complex. The interpretation of a derived neologism is rather broad as it comprises the central meaning of the root and the meaning of the affix. Derived Dholuo neologisms are exemplified below;

29. a) *kal + apapla*　　　*kalapapla*　　　'helicopter'

　　b) *a + yako*　　　　*ayaki*　　　　'AIDS'

　　c) *a - ndilo*　　　　*andila*　　　　'ARV's'

　　d) *ra + bo*　　　　*rabo*　　　　'condom'

　　e) *ra - meny*　　　　*rameny*　　　'spot light'

　　f) *ja + kom*　　　　*jakom*　　　　'AIDS'

2.4.3 Compound Dholuo neologisms

Compound neologisms consist of two bases. Their bases are existing words that are combined to form new lexical items that function as single words in a sentence. Dholuo neologisms consist of two bases. Consider the following example;

30. a) *Komo + nyuol*   *komo nyuol*   'family planning'

b) *pien + kwach*   *pien kwach*   'chapati'

c) *it + liech*   *it liech*   'chapati'

d) *wang' + dede*   *wang' dede*   'CCTV'

e) *wang' + jowi*   *wang' jowi*   'television'

f) *ong'ue + yamo*   *ong'ue yamo*   'mobile phone'

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed the morphological structure of Dholuo neologisms so as to set the basis for the analysis of the effect of the morphological structure on the comprehension of Dholuo neologisms. We have examined the classification of Dholuo neologisms according to their formation types. In our analysis we observed that derivation, compounding semantic transfer and borrowing are involved in the formation of Dholuo neologisms.

CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXT AND AD HOC CONCEPT CONSTRUCTION IN THE

INTERPRETATION OF DHOLUO NEOLOGISMS

3.1 Introduction

The concern of this chapter is predominantly the analysis of samples of nominal

Dholuo neologisms in the framework of Relevance Theory. It must be borne in

mind that Relevance Theory accounts for the hearer's understanding of an

utterance in terms of cognitive information processing. It should also be borne in

mind that one of the significant claims of RT is that during interpretation, hearers

bring any of their assumptions about the world to bear upon the interpretation of

an utterance. That is, the hearer's aim is to integrate new information with old

information so as to recover information that is relevant to them.

However, before we can examine Dholuo neologisms as we relate it to RT, it is

imperative for us at this point to relate the analyses to be provided in this chapter

to our Research Objectives and Research hypotheses. In this chapter we set out to

investigate the role of context in the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms. Notice

that context in this approach is treated as the mentally represented propositions

stored in the memory concepts construction and the role it plays in the

understanding of Dholuo neologisms. Ad hoc concepts, as we have pointed out in

chapter one, differ from encoded concepts in that while the encoded concepts are

assigned by the grammar, ad hoc concepts are constructed according to the context brought to bear in the interpretation.

The hypothesis that meaning of Dholuo neologism is influenced by the context selected for the interpretation will be put to test in this chapter. In addition, the hypothesis that ad hoc concepts of broadening brings out the meaning of Dholuo will be verified in this chapter as well.

We adopt a thematic analysis in describing the data. Notice that in chapter two, we examined the classification of nominal Dholuo neologisms according to their morphological structures: root word neologisms, derived neologisms, and compound neologisms. It is this classification that we have adopted here so that in each category, we investigate their interpretation. However, we have examined borrowed neologisms separately so as to investigate their unique features. In our analyses in this chapter we have gone beyond word neologisms and used sentences.

3.2 Root word neologisms

This section examines the interpretation, analysis and processing of Dholuo root word neologisms. As we pointed out in section **2.4.1** in the preceding chapter, Dholuo root word neologisms are made up of only single roots which carry the basic meaning. That is, they are neither derived nor compounded hence cannot be

decomposed into their smallest meaningful units. Plags (2003: 10) points out that because root words consist of only one morpheme, they are described as monomorphemics.

Sperber and Wilson (2004: 614) point out that in lexical comprehension, the linguistically encoded concept of a word, which appears in its logical form, underdetermines the expressed meaning. The linguistically specified denotation of a word only provides an input to the hearer's inferential comprehension process in which it provides an access to an array of encyclopaedic assumptions from which the hearer selects and uses to comprehend utterances about that particular word. Consider the following example;

31. *Kaluma tudore gi joherane e mbui*
    Kaluma interact-PRES with PL-supporter-POSS in internet
    'Kaluma interacts with his supporters in the internet'

In (31) the linguistically specified denotation of *mbui* '*cobweb*' underdetermines the intended meaning *mbui* 'internet'. To arrive at the intended interpretation, the encoded concept *mbui* 'cobweb' has to be contextually enriched by associating it with some of its encyclopaedic properties. The encyclopaedic entries of *mbui* 'cobweb' provide the following information;

> *Mbui* 'cobweb'   - constructed by a spider
>   - threadlike
>   - interconnected

Notice that all the above entries refer to cobweb in general and are stored in the mind of the hearer. However, only a few has to be drawn in order to achieve cognitive effects and relevance. According to Sperber and Wilson in Relevance Theory, only information that is easily accessible and thus cost less effort to derive is considered during interpretation. In this context, the only entry that would be immediately accessible and thus would require less effort to recover is that 'cobweb is interconnected.' The other properties of cobweb such as 'is constructed by a spider and is threadlike' are not considered for the interpretation of 'internet' because their recovery would require more effort. The resulting interpretation would be an expansion of the encoded concept *mbui* 'cobweb' so that its denotation includes not only the actual 'cobweb' but the other things that share with it the encyclopaedic property 'is interconnected'. Internet is therefore understood to belong to this broader category with the property 'is interconnected'.

The encoded concept of the root word Dholuo neologisms can give access to an enormous amount of encyclopaedic information. However, only a subset is considered at any given interpretation. They are selected according to the prevailing context because not all information will be equally accessible during comprehension. Consider the example below:

32. *Newaidho okolo*
    PAST-1PL-board centipede
    'We travelled by a train'

In (32) the linguistically encoded meaning is *okolo* 'centipede'. However, in this circumstance, it is understood to mean a 'train'. The encoded concept *okolo* 'train' is associated with the following encyclopaedic properties;

> *Okolo* 'centipede'   - is an animal
>   - has a jointed body
>   - is slow

Notice that to understand *okolo* 'centipede' to mean train, not all the above entries will be considered. The only entry that will be considered for the interpretation of train is the fact that *okolo* 'centipede' has a jointed body. The defining properties of *okolo* 'centipede' such as –is an animal- is not taken for the interpretation of train because its recovery does not satisfy the expectation of relevance raised by the utterance; that is, its recovery require more effort. According to Relevance Theory only information that are immediately made accessible by the context are considered during comprehension because their recovery yield high cognitive efforts for less effort.

We also argue that root word Dholuo neologisms undergo contextual expansion in which conceptual materials are pragmatically added during their interpretation. Put in another way, the basic conceptual meaning expressed by the root, present in the proposition being processed is pragmatically adjusted so that the concept communicated is different from and replaces the concept encoded. For example;

33. *Rang oboke makawuono*

Read leaf POSS- today

'Read today's *newspaper'*

In (33) the encoded concept present in the preposition being processed is *oboke*

'leaf.' Oboke 'leaf' concept gives access to the following encyclopaedic

information,

Oboke 'leaf' – is part of a plant

- has leaflets.

- has a flat surface.

Notice that to arrive at the interpretation that *oboke* means a newspaper and not a

leaf. In the utterance in (33) the encoded concept is broadened so that it includes

other things that share with it some of its encyclopaedic properties. Sperber and

Wilson (2004) postulates that expansion of this kind is motivated by the search for

relevance raised by the utterance itself. From the above entries of *oboke* 'leaf', the

fact that leaves have leaflets and flat surfaces will receive more activation thus,

will be easily accessible than the fact that leaves are part of plants. In this

circumstance, *oboke* is understood to express not 'a part of plant' but an ad hoc

concept *oboke* 'leaf' whose denotation is broader. Newspapers are therefore

understood to belong to this ad hoc category.

Root word Dholuo neologisms interpretation also involves choosing, at each point,

the most accessible interpretation on the basis of the available evidence to lead to

an overall interpretation that satisfies the expectations of relevance raised by the utterance. It is only when the first accessible interpretation fails to meet the expectations of relevance that a further derivation of cognitive effects is considered. Consider the following example.

34. *Ong'iew tipo Obama*

    3SG-buy shadow Obama

    'He buys Obama's photograph'

Notice that the decoded meaning of (34) contains the concept *tipo* 'shadow' which activates a range of encyclopaedic information including the following:

    Tipo 'shadow' – an imitated shape of an object 'not real'

                    - is a reflection of an object

                    - cast on the surface against light.

Notice that the linguistically encoded concept *tipo* 'shadow' underdetermines the expressed meaning 'photograph' in example (34).To arrive at the interpretation that *tipo* 'shadow' means a 'photograph', the encyclopaedic entry that a shadow is an imitation of a person which is not real is added to the context so that the resulting interpretation is broader than the encoded concept. According to Relevance Theory, only hypotheses that are immediately accessible are considered during comprehension (Sperber and Wilson 1986:66). This means that properties such as 'a dark reflection of an object on a surface' are not brought to bear in the interpretation of (34).

In (34) the encyclopaedic information from the encyclopaedic entry that will be highly accessible is that *tipo* 'shadow' is an imitation which is not real. This will be selected and added to the context of interpretation so that the resulting interpretation is an ad hoc concept includes other things which share with the encoded concept this encyclopaedic property. Photograph is therefore understood to belong to this category. In this circumstance, *tipo* 'shadow' is understood to express not the actual shadow but a photograph.

3.3 Derived Dholuo Neologisms

Derivatives are new complex words which are formed by adding derivational morphemes to already existing roots or stems (see section **2.3.2** for a detailed discussion). The logical meaning of the derived form can be deduced on the basis of the meaning of its constituent parts. That is, the linguistically specified denotation of the derived word expresses the combined meaning of its constituent morphemes.

According to Relevance Theory, verbal comprehension starts with the recovery of the linguistically encoded lexical meaning appearing in the logical form. It is the encoded concept that is contextually enriched to yield the intended meaning. In this view, it is sufficient to point out at this juncture that understanding the meaning of Derived Dholuo Neologisms begins with understanding the stem from which they are derived. Consider the following example;

35. *Kalapapla opodho*

Pre-dove 3SG-crush

'Helicopter has crushed'

In (35) the neologisms *kalapapla* 'helicopter' is derived from the noun *apapla* 'dove' by prefixing the morpheme *kal-* which, as we argued in the previous chapter, has been fossilized in Dholuo hence does not have a meaning of its own. The prefix *kal-* is therefore retained on the stem and is reinterpreted as part of the lexical root. The linguistically specified denotation of *kalapapla* 'dove', in this view, share the same interpretation with the noun from which it is derived. However, this linguistically specified denotation underdetermines the new meaning 'helicopter'. The new meaning is understood on the basis of the encyclopaedic entries of the encoded concept. *Kalapapla* 'dove' provides access to the following encyclopaedic entries:

Kalapapla 'dove'   - is a bird

                        - can fly

                        - has wings

According to Relevance Theory, only encyclopaedic properties that are immediately accessible are selected and added to the context by following a path of least effort. From the above entries, the fact that doves 'have large wings' and 'can fly' will be highly activated, thus, will be selected and added to the context for the interpretation of Helicopter. In this circumstance, *kalapapla* 'dove' would express an ad hoc concept 'dove' which picks out a broader category whose

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members not only include the actual 'dove' but other bodies that share with it the encyclopaedic properties of 'having large wings and can fly.' *Kalapapla* 'helicopter' is therefore understood to belong to this ad hoc category with these encyclopaedic entries. It is only when the linguistically encoded concept *kalapapla* 'dove' is expanded in this manner that the resulting interpretation would satisfy the expectation of Relevance raised by the utterance in (35).

The prefix *ja-* is also used in the derivation of Dholuo neologisms. Prefix *ja-* means 'someone who does X, (where X is the action described by the noun or verb) Atoh (2001: 32). For example:

36. *Jakom onge yath*
    PRE-chair NEG-cure
    'AIDS has no cure'

Notice that in (36) the derived neologism *jakom* 'chairman' would literally mean 'one who chairs, for example a meeting or a group'. However, this is not the meaning intended in the utterance. The encoded concept *jakom* 'chairman' is associated with the following encyclopaedic entries"

Jakom 'chairman'	- one who chairs a meeting
	- exercise control over others
	- is superior

To arrive at the interpretation *jakom* 'AIDS', the linguistically encoded concept *jakom* 'chairman' with its associated encyclopaedic entries are taken as the starting

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point. From the entries, the fact that *jakom* 'chairman' exercises 'control over others and is superior' would be considered for the interpretation of *jakom* 'AIDS' because they are easily accessible. The property that *jakom* 'chairman' is a person who 'chairs a meeting' would not be considered for the interpretation of *jakom* 'AIDS' because its recovery would require more effort. In Relevance Theory, only information whose recovery would lead to the satisfaction of relevance raised by the utterance is considered during comprehension.

In this circumstance, *jakom* 'chairman' in (36) would express a broader category of related things whose members include not only the linguistically specified denotation *jakom* 'chairman' but other things with which it shares the encyclopaedic entries 'is superior and exercise control over others'. AIDS is therefore understood to belong to this ad hoc category. According to Sperber and Wilson in Relevance Theory, in (36) the linguistically specified denotation of *jakom* 'chairman' is broadened in this context so as to arrive at an interpretation that satisfies the expected relevance.

Dholuo neologisms can also be derived from verbs as we have already pointed out in section 2.3.2. The comprehension of these neologisms begins by recovering the meaning of the verbs from which they are derived. Consider the following example;

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37. *Ayaki neko*

     PRE-destroy kill

     'AIDS kills'

In (37) the neologism *ayaki* 'AIDS' is derived from the verb *yako* 'to destroy' by affixing the morpheme *a-* which means 'one that does X' where X describes the action denoted by the verb to which it is attached. In this case, the encoded concept *ayaki* would literally mean 'one who destroys.' To arrive at the new meaning *ayaki* 'AIDS', the encoded concept *ayaki* 'a destroyer' is broadened so as to include other things with which it shares certain encyclopaedic entries. *Ayaki* 'destroyer' is associated with the following encyclopaedic entries;

     Ayaki 'destroyer'   - destructive

                                   - malicious

                                   - unsympathetic

                                   - senseless

The utterance in (37) would raise certain expectation of relevance as postulated by Sperber and Wilson (1995). To satisfy such expectations, one follows a path of least effort in selecting and adding to the context the most highly motivated encyclopaedic entries. All the above entries would be immediately accessible in this context and would be considered for the interpretation of *ayaki* 'AIDS'.

In this circumstances, the result will be an interpretation in which the encoded concept *ayaki* 'destroyer' denotes a broader category of things including not only

the person who destroys but other thing with the encyclopaedic properties; destructive, malicious, unsympathetic and senseless. *Ayaki* 'AIDS' is understood to belong to this broader category and to which these encyclopaedic entries are attributed. Notice that in this interpretation, the defining property of *ayaki* 'a person who destroys' is removed from the context because, according to the relevance theory, its recovery would not yield the expected interpretation.

Examples (36) and (37) refer to the same concept AIDS. However, it is sufficient to point out at this juncture that they get their contents from different contexts. The encyclopaedic properties that are associated with *jakom* 'AIDS' in (36) are different from those associated with *ayaki* 'AIDS' in (37). This demonstrates that the context brought to bear in the interpretation is what will determine the meaning of Dholuo neologisms.

38. *Andila okonyo joayaki*

   PRE-swallow 3SG-help PRE-PRE-AIDS

   'ARVs has helped AIDS patients'

In (38) the neologisms *andila* (ARV) is derived from the verb *ndilo* 'to swallow' which is commonly used in association with food substances such as beans, and groundnuts that are eaten in solid form. This use does not include the new meaning *andila* 'AIDS'. According to Relevance Theory, the meaning of *andila* 'AIDS' can be inferred on the basis of the encoded concept *andila* 'that which is

swallowed', by attributing to it some of the encyclopaedic concept. *Andila* 'that which is swallowed' provides access to the following encyclopaedic entries;

> *Andila* 'that which is swallowed'   - are grains e.g. beans and groundnuts
>   - are food substances
>   - eaten in solid form

Notice that from the above entries of *andila* 'that which is swallowed' properties such as 'are grains and are food substances' are not considered for the interpretation of *andila* 'ARV's.' Their derivation would cost the hearer a lot of effort because they are not easily accessible in this context. The only entry that would be considered is that *andila* 'that which is swallowed' 'are eaten in solid form'.

In (38) therefore, the utterance is not understood to be expressing *andila* 'beans, groundnuts' but a broader sense of *andila* 'that which is swallowed' that includes other things to which the encyclopaedic entry 'eaten in solid form can be attributed. Anti Retroviral drugs (ARVs) are therefore understood to belong to this broad category. The denotation of *andila* 'that which can be swallowed' is broadened in this manner so that the resulting interpretation can satisfy the expectation of Relevance raised by the utterance as is entailed in Relevance Theory.

As we pointed out in the previous chapter, there are Dholuo neologisms that are derived through multiple affixations (see section **2.3.2**). The linguistic meaning of such neologisms can be predicted from all the morphemes that constitute it. This can be seen in example;

39. *Nyakalondo Ramogi nolande*
    PRE-PRE-roam Ramogi PAST-3SG-announce it
    'Radio Ramogi announced it'

The derived neologism *nyakalondo* 'Radio' in (39) is derived from the verb *londo* 'to roam' by prefixing both *nya-* and *kal- Nyakalondo* would literally mean 'one who travels from place to place'. However, this linguistically specified denotation of *Nyakalondo* does not bring out the meaning *nyakalondo* 'Radio'. To understand the new meaning, some properties of *nyakalondo* 'a traveller' are attributed to 'Radio'. *Nyakalondo* 'a traveller' provides access to the following encyclopaedic entries;

> *Nyakalondo* 'a traveller'   - a person who travels
> - collects information
> - spreads information
> - visits many people and places
> - has many stories to tell

According to Relevance Theory, only the encyclopaedic entries that are made available by the context and are easily accessible would be considered for the interpretation of *nyakalondo* 'Radio'. From the above entries' the properties that a

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'traveller' collects information, spreads information, visits many people and places, and has many stories to tell would be found more relevant for the interpretation. Notice that the defining property of *nyakalondo* 'a traveller' is a person' is not considered for the interpretation of *nyakalondo* 'Radio' because recovering it in this context would require more effort.

Inhibiting the defining property of *nyakalondo* 'a traveller' from the interpretation of *nyakalondo.* 'Radio' in (39), results in a broader sense of *nyakalondo* 'a traveller' which denotes a broader category of related things that share with the encoded concept the encyclopaedic properties; 'that which collects information, spreads information, visits many people and has many stories to tell'. Radio is therefore understood to belong to this category with these encyclopaedic properties.

3.4 Compound Dholuo neologisms

Dholuo compound neologisms consist of a combination of two bases. However, they behave grammatically and semantically as single words whose overall meaning can be predicted from the individual meaning of each element of the compound. Okombo (1982: 32) points out that compounding in Dholuo makes much use of the genitive case. However, he further observes that even though compounding in Dholuo makes much use of the genitive case, it involves more

noun-to-noun relations than just that of possession (see section **2.3.3** for a detailed discussion).

As we pointed out in chapter two, Dholuo compound neologisms are perceived to be having head-modifier structure. That is, the second element of the compound modifies the first element. Consider the following example;

40. *Atieno chamo pien kwach gi kado.*
    Atieno eat skin-POSS-leopard with soup
    'Atieno eats *chapati* with soup'.

In (40) the compound neologism *pien kwach* 'skin of leopard' would be understood as describing a kind of skin; that which belongs to a leopard. This linguistically specified meaning underdetermines the intended meaning *pien kwach* 'chapatti'. To arrive at the intended meaning, one has to get locked to the properties of *pien kwach* 'skin of leopard' and attributes some of those properties to chapatti. Sperber and Wilson in RT points out that during interpretation only information that is made easily accessible by the context is selected and added to the context. In the context of the utterance in (40) the encyclopaedic properties of *pien kwach* 'skin of leopard' that would be selected and considered for the interpretation of chapatti are 'it is brown and has blackspots'. The logical property of skin of leopard that it is 'a skin belonging to a leopard,' would be removed from the context because its recovery would require more effort. The result would be an expanded denotation of *pien kwach* 'skin of leopard' which expresses not only the

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literal sense but also other things which share with *pien kwach* 'skin of leopard' the encyclopaedic properties 'is brown and has black spots.' Chapatti is therefore understood to belong to this broader category and to which these encyclopaedic properties are attributed.

Sometimes different Dholuo compound neologisms may be used to express similar concepts. However, they are interpreted in different contexts. That is, they activate different encyclopaedic entries. Consider example (41) and example (40) above.

41. *Ochamo it liech*
    Chamo ear-POSS-elephant
    He eats chapatti

Notice that *it liech* 'ear of elephant' activates the following encyclopaedic properties;

   it liech 'ear of elephant'   - it is large
                                     - it is fan-shaped

According to Sperber and Wilson in Relevance Theory, it is these encyclopaedic entries that are selected and added to the context through mutual adjustment of content and cognitive effects so as to arrive at the intended interpretation 'chapatti.' In this circumstance, the resulting interpretation of *it liech* 'ear of elephant' would include not only the actual ear of elephant but also other things to which these encyclopaedic properties can be attributed. Chapatti would be

understood to belong to this category. It is worth noting that while (41) gets its content from a context of being large and fan-shaped, chapatti in (40) gets its content from a context of being brown and has black sports.

The meaning of Dholuo compound neologisms, just like root word neologisms and derived Dholuo neologisms are also understood by expanding the linguistically specified meaning of their encoded concept. For example;

42. *Wang' jowi ne onyiso tuk Kenya gi Nigeria*
    Eye-POSS-buffalo PAST-3SG-show play-POSS Kenya and Nigeria
    'Television showed the game between Kenya and Nigeria'

In (42) the linguistically specified denotation of *wang' jowi* 'eye of bufallo' is that it is an eye. The modifier *jowi'* 'bufallo' specifies the kind of eye as that which belongs to a buffalo. However, this linguistically specified denotation does not warrant the intended interpretation 'television'. A hearer therefore has to draw some properties of *wang' jowi* 'eye of buffalo' from its encyclopaedic entries and attribute them to television. 'Eye of buffalo' activates the following properties;

      Wang' jowi 'eye of buffalo' - is large
                                      - is bright
                                        - project images.

Notice that these encyclopaedic entries are selected from a mass of encyclopaedic entries and are added to the context for the interpretation of *wang' jowi*

'television.' This results in an interpretation in which *wang' jowi* 'eye of buffalo' is understood to express not only the actual eye of a buffalo is understood to express not only the actual eye of a bufallo, but also the things that share with it the encyclopaedic entries of being large, bright and projects images. Television is understood to belong to this category and to which these encyclopaedic entries are attributed. Sperber and Wilson in Relevance Theory, suggests that the recovery of the expressed meaning *wang' jowi* 'television' takes place through mutual adjustment of the content and context of the encoded concept until the resulting interpretation satisfy the expectation of relevance raised by the utterance.

In the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms, the logical properties of the encoded concept are not considered. This is illustrated in example (43) below.

43. *Wang' dede ojiwo arita.*
    Eye-POSS-grasshopper 3SG-enhance-security
     'Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) has enhanced security.'

Notice that (43) contains a compound neologism *wang' dede* 'CCTV' derived from the encoded concept *wang' dede* 'eye of grasshopper'. *Wang' dede* 'eye of grasshopper; is associated with the following encyclopaedic properties;

> *Wang' dede*   - body parts of a grasshopper
>   - used for sight
>   - visible
>   - captures all directions (compound)

Sperber and Wilson (1986: 138) points out that the actual context for the interpretation of an utterance is constrained by the organization of the individual encyclopaedic memory. That is, only entries that are relevant in a particular context are activated and made accessible for the interpretation of a word.

All the above entries refer to *wang' dede* 'eye of grasshopper' but the only entries that are made available for the interpretation of *wang' dede* 'CCTV' are; it is visible and able to capture all directions. The logical properties such as it is 'a body part of a grasshopper and is used for sight' are not considered because their recovery would cause more effort hence are not relevant in this context.

It is imperative to point out at this point that a typical Dholuo neologism consists of two bases. This means that they have complex mode of presentation in which recovering their linguistically specified denotation involves getting locked to the properties of both constituents. However, this does not slow down the interpretation of compound neologisms because during their interpretation, it is the linguistically decoded concept that provides the input.

3.5 Loan word Dholuo neologisms

Loan word Dholuo neologisms are words that have been adopted from other languages together with the concepts and ideas they describe (See chapter 2, section **2.3.6** for a detailed discussion). Speakers of Dholuo borrow words from

other languages in order to fill lexical and semantic gaps that emerge as a result of the need to have a lexical item to describe new concepts and ideas. That is, the need to express new concepts and ideas from technology and social life, for which Dholuo has no equivalents. However, it is sufficient at this point to argue that these borrowed words, once they get established, they may acquire new senses due to lack of another lexical item to refer to objects and ideas with which they share certain encyclopaedic properties. Consider the following examples:

44. *Obila oting'o bunde*
    Police 3SG-carry firearm
    'Police carries a pistol'

Notice that in (44) the borrowed neologism *bunde* from Kiswahili *bunduki* 'firearm' is understood in this context to refer to a 'pistol'. The encoded concept *bunde* 'firearm' provides the following encyclopaedic entries;

> *Bunde* 'firearm' – uses bullets
> - Has a trigger

According to Sperber and Wilson in Relevance Theory, a hearer in this situation takes the encoded concept together with its activated encyclopaedic properties above and begins to look for an interpretation that satisfy the expectation of relevance raised by the utterance, via mutual adjustment of context, content and cognitive effects. In this circumstance, the hearer arrives at an interpretation in which *bunde* 'firearm' expresses an ad hoc concept *bunde* 'firearm' with a broader

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denotation which includes not only the actual *bunde* 'firearm' but other things that share with it the encyclopaedic entries 'uses bullets and has a trigger.' A pistol is therefore understood to belong to this ad hoc category to which these encyclopaedic entries are attributed. According to Relevance Theory, when the linguistically specified denotation is narrower to warrant the expected interpretation, it is expanded so as to satisfy the expectation of relevance raised by the utterance.

45. *Mbom* omuoch

Bomb 3SG- explode

'A grenade explodes'

In (45) the proposition contains the encoded concept *mbom* 'bomb' which provides access to the following encyclopaedic properties;

Mbom 'bomb' – explodes

- is destructive

Notice that to arrive at the intended interpretation *mbom* 'grenade' the hearer takes the encoded concept *mbom* 'bomb' as the starting point. Guided by his expectation of relevance as is postulated by Sperber and Wilson (1995), he selects the activated encyclopaedic entries 'bombs explode and are destructive' and add them to the context of interpretation. In this circumstance, bomb will be understood to express not only the typical bomb but also other things with which it shares the encyclopaedic properties 'explosive and destructive.' A 'grenade' is therefore

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understood to belong to this broader category with the properties of being explosive and destructive. In Dholuo when there is no word to express certain concepts or objects, speakers resort to other words with which the objects share certain encyclopaedic entries. According to Relevance Theory, broadening of the linguistically specified denotation of *mbom* 'bomb' so as to denote a broader category is motivated by the search for relevance raised by the utterance in (45).

46. *Awuotho e orofa*
    1SG-walk in storey building
    'I am walking along the flyover'

In (46) the borrowed neologisms *orofa* from Kiswahili '*ghorofa*' 'storey building' is used to express the concept 'flyover'. The encoded concept *ghorofa* 'storey building' provides the following encyclopaedic entries:

    Orofa 'storey building – built on another
                        - is raised

According to Sperber and Wilson, in Relevance Theory, the utterance in (46) is intended to convey the information that 'I walk along a flyover' and not a 'storey building'. To arrive at this interpretation, the hearer takes the encoded concept *orofa* 'storey building' and following a path of lest effort, he selects the encyclopaedic entries '*orofa* is built on another' and is raised' and add them to the context until he arrives at the expected interpretation. In this circumstance, the resulting interpretation will be an ad hoc concept *orofa,* 'storey building,' which

denotes a broader category of things which includes the actual *orofa* 'storey building' and other things that share with it the encyclopaedic property 'that which is raised and built on another.' Flyover is therefore understood to belong to this ad hoc category and to which these encyclopaedic properties are attributed. The fact that the defining property that *orofa* 'storey building' is a 'building with several floors' is not selected and added to the context follows from the Relevance-Theoretic comprehension procedure of Relevance Theory which states that hearers follow a path of least effort when looking for a plausible interpretation.

47. *Onyango kalendane ng'eny*
    Onyango calender-3POSS many
    'Onyango is old'

Notice that in (47) the proposition being expressed contains an encoded borrowed neologism *kalenda* 'calender' which provides access to the following encyclopaedic entries;

   Kalenda 'calender' – shows days
           - shows weeks
           - months
           - year

To arrive at the interpretation *kalenda* 'age' the encyclopaedic entries such as calendar shows year are selected and added to the context for the interpretation of (47). The resulting interpretation would be a broader denotation of *kalenda* that includes other things that share with it encyclopaedic entries 'showing year.'

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According to the Relevance Theory, in (47) the defining property of calendar such as 'a document that shows days, weeks and months are not activated for the interpretation of age because their recovery does not yield the expected relevance raised by the utterance.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms in the framework of Relevance Theory. We have particularly examined the role of context in their interpretation. It should be borne in mind that context in this study has been treated as the mentally represented propositions stored in the minds of speakers in the form of encyclopaedic entries. In the analysis we observed that the meaning of Dholuo neologisms is influenced by the context the speakers bring to bear during comprehension.

In addition, the chapter has examined the role of ad hoc concept of broadening in the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms. Using data from Dholuo, we were able to demonstrate that understanding the meaning of Dholuo neologisms involves expanding the linguistically encoded meaning of the logical form so that it denotes a broader category of entities. From these observations, we were able to conclude that the context brought to bear in the interpretation and ad hoc concept of broadening brings out the meaning of Dholuo neologisms.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

4.1 Introduction

The essence of this chapter is to provide a summary, conclusion and recommendations for further research. We have done this by revisiting our research hypotheses with regard to the research findings and analyses made throughout the three chapters of this research. In the last section of this chapter, we have pointed out our suggestions for future research.

4.2 Summary

This study set out to examine the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms within the framework of Relevance Theory. In our expository chapter we began by giving a general introduction in which we provided a background of the language of study, and the problem under investigation. This was followed by a presentation of the objectives and hypotheses. The rationale of the study, scope and theoretical framework were also provided. We also presented a review of literature and the methodology in this chapter.

Chapter two dealt with the morphological structure of Dholuo neologisms. The main emphasis was on the word formation processes involved in the formation of Dholuo neologisms. The analysis we provided in this chapter were intended for further discussion of the comprehension of Dholuo neologisms in chapter three.

In chapter three, the actual analyses of samples of Dholuo neologisms were made. We attempted to examine the comprehension process of these neologisms in their context of occurrence. A discussion on context selection and its role in the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms was made. In chapter three we also provided an examination of ad hoc concept of broadening and the role it plays in the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms.

4.3 Conclusion

This study set out to test three hypotheses. The first hypothesis was that word formation processes such as derivation, compounding, and semantic extension and borrowing are involved in the formation of Dholuo neologisms. The study validates this hypothesis. The findings of the study as seen in chapter two, demonstrates that there are Dholuo neologisms that are derived from existing roots by attaching affixes, others are formed by combining two existing bases to form compounds especially where there is no single words to use. The findings further demonstrates that some Dholuo neologisms are created through expanding the semantic denotation of existing roots while others are borrowed from other languages particularly when there are no equivalents in Dholuo.

The second prediction of the study was that meaning of Dholuo neologisms are determined by the context selected for their interpretation. The findings of the study demonstrate that whether the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms is literal

or loose depends on the type of encyclopaedic information selected. For the meaning of Dholuo neologisms to be understood, the logical properties of the encoded concepts are dropped from the context. The hypothesis that meanings of Dholuo neologism are determined by the context was therefore tested positively.

Our final hypothesis was that ad hoc concept of broadening brings out the meaning of Dholuo neologisms. Using empirical data from Dholuo, we were able to demonstrate that comprehending the meaning of Dholuo neologisms involves expanding the linguistically specified denotation of the encoded concept in such a way that it denotes a wider range of concepts. Only then would one be able to arrive at the expressed meaning of Dholuo neologisms. It therefore would be a logical assumption to adopt; ad hoc concept of broadening brings out the meaning of Dholuo neologisms.

Our main interest in this study was the Relevance Theoretical analysis of Dholuo neologism to establish whether Relevance Theory can adequately account for the meanings of Dholuo neologisms. We were able to use this theory to establish the interpretation of Dholuo neologisms and consequently concluded that the theory is valid as a universal theory of comprehension suitable for use in accounting for meaning.

4.4 Recommendations for further research

In this section, suggestions for further research in areas related to this study are given.

First, the analysis of the role of ad hoc concept construction in bringing out meanings of Dholuo neologisms raises a question of its role in language change. We therefore suggest that a study be carried out specifically to investigate its role in semantic and lexical change in Dholuo.

Dholuo neologisms are instrumental in the modernization of the language. That is, they enable speakers to express innovations in technology that hitherto were not part of Dholuo culture. In light of this, we suggest that a detailed study on the institutionalization of Dholuo neologisms be conducted.

Relevance Theory has been found to be effective in analyzing Dholuo neologisms. Similar studies should be carried out with other aspects such as metaphors, ironies and proverb to test the effectiveness of RT with regard to their interpretation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

I am a post graduate student pursuing a master degree in Linguistics at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research for my final year project, which is a requirement of the degree programme. The research topic is: A Relevance Theoretical Analysis of Dholuo Neologisms.

I therefore kindly request you to fill this questionnaire. Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Aduda Kennedy

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

Kindly answer the questionnaire as honestly as possible.

Put a tick in the spaces provided

1. What is your gender:

   Male   [ ]

   Female   [ ]

2. What is your age bracket?

   35 – 40 years   [ ]   41 – 45 years   [ ]

   46 – 50 years   [ ]   51 – 55 years [ ]

   56 – 60 years [ ]   Others (specify) _____

3. Indicate your highest professional qualification

   Diploma   [ ]   Undergraduate degree [ ]

   Masters   [ ]   Others (specify) _____

4. What is your occupation?

   Teacher   [ ]   Health Officer [ ]

   Clergy   [ ]   others (specify) _____

SECTION B:

5. Provide Dholuo equivalents to the following:

   a) Internet   ……………………..

   b) Newspaper   ……………………..

c) Train ……………………..

d) Photograph ……………………..

e) Electricity ……………………..

f) Helicopter ……………………..

g) HIV/AIDS ……………………..

h) Condom ……………………..

i) Anti Retroviral Drugs ……………………..

j) Spotlight (torch) ……………………..

k) Pistol ……………………..

l) Grenade ……………………..

m) Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) ……………………..

n) Bank ……………………..

o) Family planning ……………………..

p) Certificates ……………………..

q) Radar ……………………..

6. Translate the following paragraph into Dholuo

I drove through the flyover and got stuck in the traffic jam at the lower end. After a few minutes, I took out my mobile phone so as to make a call to my boss. Before my boss could pick the call, a pedestrian who looked old snatched it from my hands. It was unbelievable! How could I lose two valuables in a week; first, it was my television; second my brand new radio, and now my mobile phone.

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