

**HUMOROUS TEXTS: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF LUBUKUSU  
JOKES**

**A PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ART IN  
LINGUISTICS**

**BY**

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## **DECLARATION**

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

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This project has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University Supervisors:

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DATE

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MR. H. B. MANYORA

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DATE

## **DEDICATION**

To my friend and wife

Pamela Cheruto

To my dear sons

Neville Kiprono Fabian

Sidney Cheruiyot Kabaka

You stood by me in prayer through it all.

Thank you.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This project presents the results of a linguistic study on Lubukusu jokes. The study follows the framework of Relevance Theory. What the study aimed at was to analyze Lubukusu jokes through Relevance – theoretic framework.

Chapter one gives the introduction, background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives, scope and limitations, theoretical framework, literature review, methodology and conclusion.

Chapter two focuses on the classification of jokes and their functions. Here the important role played by jokes was critically examined.

Chapter three concentrates on Lubukusu jokes and their hidden frames of relevance. This was to establish how jokes are structured and factors that determine the elucidation of Lubukusu jokes.

Chapter four tested the theory. It subjected the data to the theory and a detailed analysis provided. This was done to see whether the Relevance Theory and its tenets could adequately analyze the data.

Finally, a summary of findings and recommendations was presented in chapter five.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **1.0 Introduction**

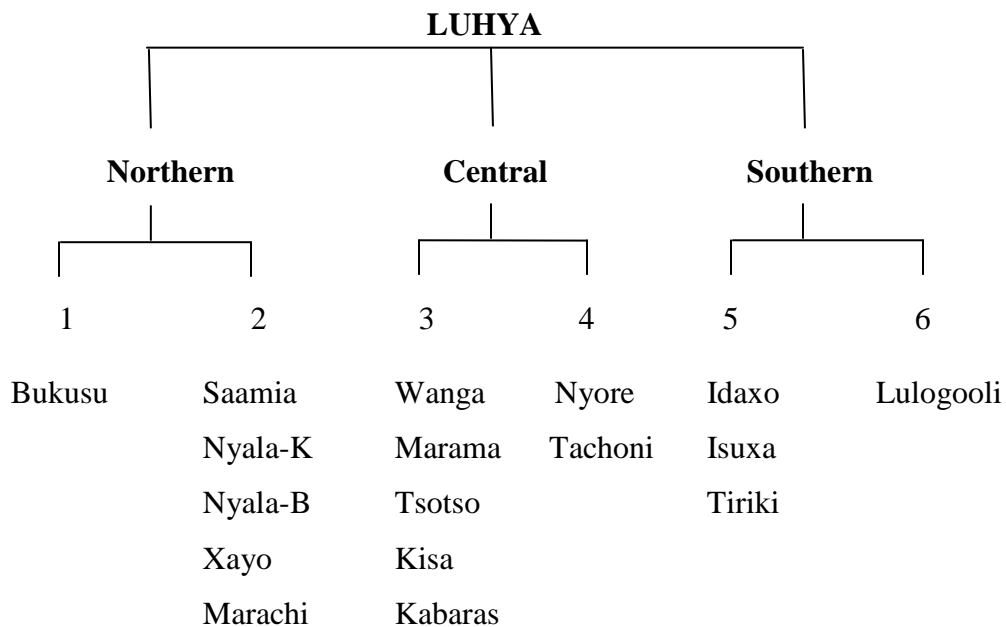
This study is an attempt to analyze Lubukusu verbs jokes using the Relevance Theory (Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1996). The chapter gives an introduction to Lubukusu language which is the source of the jokes. There is also a background to the study. The chapter goes on to state the research problem, research objectives, research hypotheses, rationale of the study, and scope and limitations of the study. There is also a discussion of the theoretical framework; that is the Relevance Theory, Literature review and methodology of the study.

### **1.1.1 Background of the Language**

This section introduces the Lubukusu language. The language is a grouping of the Luhya dialect. This study is based on the dialect of Lubukusu, which is one of the seventeen dialects of the Luhya. It is Northern Bantu language spoken in the Western Province of Kenya by the Babukusu who live in Bungoma District and are found in various parts of the country. During the last census (2009), the Bukusu formed nineteen percent of the Luhya community in Kenya. A considerable number of people speak Lubukusu; thus it is not a dying language.

Various attempts have been made by several scholars to sub-group the seventeen Luhya dialects. The scholars, Itebele (1974), William (1974) have been cited in Angogo (1983:78-80) and Mutonyi (2000: 59–63). Angogo's sub-grouping is suitable for this study because it is based upon intelligibility tests and the availability of linguistic data on Luhya dialects. Angogo (1983:80) divides the seventeen dialects of Luhya into 3 categories. These are:

- The Northern sub-group, which is made up of:
  1. Lubukusu
  2. Lusamia, Lunyala (K), Lunyala (B), Lukhayo, and Lumarachi
- The Central dialects, which consist of:
  1. Luwanga, Lumarama, Lutsotso, Lukisa, Lukabarasi
  2. Lunyore, Lutachoni
- The Southern sub-group which consists of:
  1. Lwitakho, Lwisukha, Lutiriki
  2. Lulogooli



The Bukusu people live in the Northern part of Western Kenya on the foothills of Mt. Elgon in Bungoma District. According to Whiteley (1974:89), they are found in various parts of the country: Trans-Nzoia, Lugari, Webuye and mainly Bungoma. The Babukusu claim to have come from Ethiopia, Sudan or even Egypt and moved. They moved Northwards and Southwards on

both sides along Kenya – Uganda border. They came into contact with the Kalenjin (Maasai), Bagishu, Teso and the Basoga. These groups seem to have been responsible for settling in their present habitat.

### **1.1.2 Background to the Study**

This paper examines the interpretation of verbal jokes. Jokes are spoken or written expressions with the intention of generating humor and amusement. Gumperz (1982:96) asserts that jokes are a common feature of casual conversation more so among equals. In this study, we want to find out the way in which entertainment is derived from jokes.

According to Trudgil (2000:12), language is not only used as a means of communication. It is an important means of establishing and maintaining relationships with other people. He further asserts that, whenever we speak, we cannot avoid clues about our feelings and attitudes. Consequently, jokes do more than just supplying humor. The context of a joke has influence on the people who listen to it; hence the speaker and the listeners play very important roles in the interpretation of jokes.

Patterned creativity in language use has sources originating from jokes. Conversational inference therefore becomes important at this moment. This inference is the context-bound process of interpretation by means of which the listener and the speaker in an exchange assesses each other's intentions and on which they base their responses. It therefore follows that analysis of such ongoing process require different methods of study which examine not the lexical meaning of the words or semantic structures of sentences but interpretations of the joke.

A joke is a source of humor hence leads to laughter. The study therefore aims at illustrating how language can be utilized to deliver a punchline which is the climax of a joke.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

This study attempts to analyze the Lubukusu verbal jokes using Relevance Theory. Previous research on Lubukusu language has focused on metonymy, proverbs and metaphor using other theories. No study to the best of my knowledge has exclusively focused on and addressed the analysis of Lubukusu jokes using pragmatics. The present research aims at analyzing the largely forgotten topic of Lubukusu jokes. It intends to discuss how Relevance Theory is used to analyze Lubukusu jokes; to establish the role played by ambiguity in jokes in eliciting humour; to investigate the concept of incongruity in relation to the elucidation of Lubukusu jokes.

Lubukusu jokes are central in the culture of the Bukusu and therefore have attracted this analysis. Jokes are a source of entertainment with the desired response being generally laughter brought out by humor in them. According to Chiaro (1992:2), jokes are both universal in their appeal and specific cultural artifacts, embedded within and representing different cultural assumptions.

“Anyone who has at any time had an occasion to inquire from the literature of aesthetics and psychology what light can be thrown on the nature of jokes and on the position they occupy will probably have to admit that jokes have not received nearly as much philosophical consideration as they deserve in view of the part they play in mental life,” Freud (1960:39). Not much research has been done in studying jokes as a genre; hence as linguists, we need to do more in this area.

From previous research done on humor as a style, has been noted that jokes have humor. It has

been pointed out that the same joke can have humor to some people while it is not humorous to others. In the current study we need to provide an explanation on how hearers make humorous interpretation from what a speaker says. For this to succeed, our intention will be on the mental processes that a speaker and hearer go through the interpretation which involves a search for relevance.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

In order to answer the above questions, the following are the objectives of the study:

1. To find out how Relevance Theory can be applied in analyzing Lubukusu jokes.
2. To investigate the concept of incongruity in relation to the elucidation of Lubukusu jokes.
3. To establish the role of ambiguity in selected Lubukusu jokes.

## **1.4 Research Hypotheses**

The following are the hypotheses of the study:

1. Relevance Theory can be used to analyze Lubukusu jokes.
2. The concept of incongruity is important in the elucidation of Lubukusu jokes.
3. Lubukusu jokes depend on ambiguity to elicit humour.

## **1.5 Rationale of the Study**

Naturally, jokes are used by people as a way of expressing their emotion. Many people do not know how, why and who to joke with. If we continue to see jokes as just ways of expressing our emotions, we shall never understand jokes' real meaning and appeal. People use jokes to spice up their communication with an aim of obtaining truth around them. The Relevance Theory is suitable for helping interlocutors who use jokes to pick the relevant information to help in the interpretation of jokes.

According to Dascal (2003:25), a lot has been discussed among philosophers about the nature of utterance understanding and its relation to meaning while little or no attention has been paid so far to misunderstanding. The figurative language used in jokes may be misinterpreted or misunderstood due to lack of shared knowledge. The justification of the present study largely draws from the fact that hardly any scholarly work has studied how non literal language in Lubukusu jokes has played a role in joke interpretation.

The current study is of importance as it contributes in the building up of a linguistic theory as it



sheds more light on the validity of Relevance Theory more so when put into consideration its various cognitive processes. The study enriches the scholarly understanding of the language studied in this case Lubukusu, and will serve as a written record that will be a reference point for more detailed study in the language. The theoretical orientation will be useful for the documentation of the Lubukusu jokes. It will also be of benefit to the Bukusu community to have something written of the language for the enrichment of the Lubukusu language.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitation**

This is a synchronic study of Lubukusu aimed at analyzing the Lubukusu verbal jokes. The research will be focused on Lubukusu dialect of the Luhya spoken in Trans-Nzoia and Bungoma Counties, and in other parts of the Western region. This dialect is used in the locality of the researcher who happens to be a native speaker of the language. The researcher may not be able to access all verbal jokes, thus a few will be selected in the processes of interaction between speakers and their listeners. Our research will be narrowed down to Lubukusu verbal jokes. The study will be limited to the analysis of sampled jokes to explain their production and comprehension under the Relevance Theory. It will not go beyond the sampled data because of time constraints.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

Mutual Cognitive environment of addresser and addressee form the pre-conditions for the successful realization of verbal humor. The Relevance Theory is a cognitive approach to

communication proposed by D. Sperber and D. Wilson (1986/1995). This theory pictures communication as an ostensive inferential process that adjusts in parallel, the explicit content of utterances, the implicated premises and what conclusion is arrived at, and the contextual information needed to obtain them. Humorists always design delicately their joke points and try to make their utterances ostensive to audiences who show maximal relevance expectation to those humorists' manifest stimulus. Relevance Theory centers around the importance of intention in every communicative act.

During their discussion on intention, Sperber and Wilson came close to the idea of Strawson (1964:26) and Grice (1975:72) about meaning and communication centered on the addressee's recognition of communicative intention underlying the utterance or stimulus as they call it. When one's intention becomes an explicit manifestation to the hearer, then this intention becomes an ostensive communication action, and therefore satisfy the following requirements (Sperber and Wilson 1986: 153–154):

1. attract the listeners attention.
2. speaker purposefully gives a clue to the hearer, ('ostensifies'), as to what she wishes to communicate. That is clue to her intention.
3. the hearer infers the intention from the clue and the context mediated information.  
The hearer must interpret the clue, taking into account the context and summarize what the speaker intended to communicate.

Inference can fill the gap between the semantic representation of utterances and the message that each utterance eventually communicates (Sperber and Wilson 1987:125–130). They emphasize

the role played by the communicators in manifesting both their communication and informative intention with the utterance, while the hearer tries to work out different hypotheses as to what the correct interpretation is.

In this study, thus would like to test the ability of Relevance Theory to account for the mental processes that lead to the production and comprehension of Lubukusu jokes. Relevance Theory has been assumed to be a powerful tool for explaining interpretation of all kinds of verbal communication, jokes included (Sperber and Wilson, 1986/1995). According to Attardo (1990:87), one of the classical humor theories, the Incongruity Theory is commonly considered to study humor from cognitive perspective; hence it is always combined with Relevance Theory to explain the cognitive interpretation of verbal humor, which is generalized as a process that seeks; maximal relevance, finding irrelevance or incongruous phenomena and finally deriving optimal relevance. The main research questions here are: Can Relevance Theory be of importance in explaining the production and comprehension of Lubukusu jokes? Is the subject of Lubukusu jokes worth so much trouble? What is the role of ambiguity in the interpretation of selected Lubukusu jokes? Does the concept of incongruity play a role in the elucidation of Lubukusu jokes?

Sperber and Wilson stress the importance of deduction in their interpretive model, thus bringing together new and old information previously stored in the hearer's mind. They called this, cognitive contextualization. The contextualization can produce contextual effects. A contextual effect is generated when the context is modified in a certain way by the new information. The following example of a joke will aid in explaining this.

Lubukusu	English Translation
<p>Maria: “Nafula sina sibi nende omwana woo?”  Nafula: “Alwala, takitari kambele kamalesi ne kambolela ali, embe nengasisikha kwanja niemuwe.”</p> <p>(ekoloba)</p> <p>Maria: “Sina sikila omwana nalila lukali?”  Nafula: Alikhalila sikila endikhemusisikha</p> <p>Nafula: “Emuwele kamalesi bila khusisikha echupa. Nono endikhesisikha omwana nio kamalesi kali munda kosi kesisikhe.”</p>	<p>Maria: “What is wrong with your baby?”  Nafula: “He is sick. The doctor has given me medicine instructing me to always shake it before giving the baby.”</p> <p>(in the evening)</p> <p>Maria: “Why is the baby crying loudly?”  Nafula: “He is crying because am shaking him.</p> <p>Nafula: “I gave him medicine without shaking the bottle. So I am shaking the baby in order to shake the medicine in his stomach as well.”</p>

From this joke, it can be observed that humour involves an intentional play with interpretations that are accessible or not. In this particular joke, the punchline is attained when Nafula fails to understand instructions from the doctor, thus decides to shake the baby in order to shake the medicine in the baby’s stomach as well.

Sperber and Wilson’s theory can be summarized in four sentences. (Wilson 1994: 44):

1. Every utterance has a variety of possible interpretation, all compatible with the information that is linguistically encoded.
2. Not all interpretations occur to the hearer simultaneously, some of them take more effort to think up.
3. Hearers are equipped with a single, general interior for evaluating interpretation

so that having found an interpretation that fits the criterion, the hearer looks no further.

4. This criterion is powerful enough to exclude all but one single interpretation so that having found an interpretation that fits criterion, the hearer looks no further.

Ritchie (1999:104–105) posits that when devising an utterance (by the speaker) and selecting an interpretation (by the hearer), both interlocutors follow a cognitive principle. This leads to selecting, among the choice of possibilities, to design the utterance (for speakers) and the choice of interpretations of the same utterance in the current context (for hearers), the one that satisfies these two conditions:

- a) An assumption is relevant to an individual to the extent that the positive cognitive affects achieved when it is optimally processed.
- b) An assumption is relevant to an individual to the extent that effort require to achieve these positive effects is small.

Normally, the first interpretation that satisfies these conditions is the one that the nearer is bound to choose, ignoring any other possible interpretations of the utterance.

The following is the relevance theoretical comprehension procedure (Wilson and Sperber 2004:

15).

- The hearer takes the linguistically encoded sentence meaning by following the path of least effort.
- He should enrich it at the explicit level and complement it at implicit level.
- Then stop when the resulting interpretation meets expectation of relevance.

Speakers are expected to make their utterances as easy to understand as possible so that the hearers take the path of least effort. The hearers should stop at the first interpretation that satisfies their expectations of relevance. Speakers should formulate their utterances in a way that they are easy to understand so that the first interpretation to satisfy the hearer's expectation of relevance agrees with the intended meaning.

The relevance theoretic comprehension procedure provides simultaneous answers. These are the questions the hearer was to answer in constructing a hypothesis about the speaker's meaning:

- a) What was the speaker's explicit meaning?
- b) What was the speaker's implicit meaning
- c) What was the intended context (set of contextual assumptions)?

This is to show how a hearer using the relevance theoretic comprehension procedure might disambiguate assign reference, assemble as appropriate context and derive implicatures as part of the overall process of constructing an interpretation that satisfies his expectations of relevance.

Through relevance theory an elaborative summary of comprehension of a joke can be summarized as follows: a teller of a joke produces an utterance which the receiver processes in the usual way, that is, to use Sperber and Wilson's terms, deriving the maximum contextual effect for the minimum processing effort. While producing his utterance, the teller works on the assumption that the receiver will retain his processing effort at the first valid interpretive hypothesis he arrives at ignoring automatically the possible existence of other alternatives.

As the joke proceeds, the speaker brings in an element of incongruity which surprises the listener and cuts short his processing activity as he tries to adapt this new information to that provided by the joke context created in conjunction with his encyclopedic knowledge. The receiver tries to find a solution not the problem due to the fact that his processing chain has abruptly been interrupted. He does so in a process of re-interrelation which accommodates the new information and which he realizes as possible, although not initially accessible in terms of relevance.

At this moment, the speaker realizes that he has been led up to the garden path by the teller of the joke. According to psychological theories of humor, it is a mixture of surprise, appreciation of incongruity and satisfaction at having solved the problem persecuted later in a fast and efficient manner that accounts for the pleasurable effects which give rise to laughter.

### **1.7.1 The Basic Tenets of Relevance Theory**

Relevance as characterized in Relevance Theory is a property of inputs to cognitive processes. These inputs include external stimuli (for instance utterances) and internal representations for

instance, memories or conclusions from inferences that may then be used as premises for further inferences). An input is relevant to an individual when processing it in a context of previously available assumptions. Inputs are not just relevant or irrelevant; when relevant, they are more or less. A relatively high degree of relevance is what makes some inputs worth processing.

Relevance Theory claims that because of the way their cognitive system has evolved, humans have an automatic tendency to maximize relevance. As a result of constant selection pressure towards efficiency, perceptual mechanisms tend automatically to pick out potentially relevant stimuli, memory mechanisms tend automatically to store and when appropriate, retrieve potentially pieces of knowledge, and inferential mechanisms tend spontaneously to process these inputs in the most productive way.

### **1.7.2 Relevance and Cognition**

Intuitively, relevance is a potential property not only of utterances and other observable phenomena, but of thoughts, memories, and conclusion of inferences. In relevant-theoretic terms, any external stimulus or internal representation which provides an input to cognitive processes may be relevant to an individual at some time. According to Relevance Theory, utterances raise expectations of relevance because the search of relevance is a basic feature of human cognition.

Relevance and cognition are two important aspects in elucidating jokes. Jokes are communicative acts which draw upon certain mental processes both in the production and reception. Relevance Theory which accounts for verbal communication and comprehension is the theory that sets out a general picture of the principles driving human cognitive system as a whole.



Relevance may be assessed in terms of cognitive effects and processing effort. In relevant-theoretic terms, other things being equal, the greater the processing effort required, the less relevant the input will be. Intuitively, the greater the effort of perception, memory, and inference required, the less rewarding the input will be to process and hence the less deserving of our attention. Relevance is a typical property of stimuli. For instance, utterances and also of internal representations and thoughts all of which may become inputs for cognitive processing. The search for relevance is a typical aspect of mental activity of human beings, always geared to obtaining the highest reward from the stimuli that they process.

For a joke to be humorous, the interlocutors pick what is relevant to both of them. This is because Relevance Theory deals with cognition. Cognition is what goes on in the mind. A particular situation may have different interpretations depending on the individual's context. We understand communication based on the assumptions that are relevant to it. Sperber and Wilson (1995) developed two general principles about the role of relevance in cognition and in communication.

### **1.7.3 The Cognitive Principle of Relevance**

This principle states that, the human cognition tends to be geared towards maximization of relevance (Sperber and Wilson, 1995:260). This means that the human mind has developed in such a way that it is biologically conditioned to pay attention to information that is relevant. The mind has the ability to constantly filter and dismiss information that is not worth processing, hence retaining what is relevant.

When cracking a joke, both the speaker and the hearer work on the principle of relevance. The speaker has intentions relevant to him while the hearer filters information according to what is relevant to him. The speaker will always pick the assumptions that will form the set up and the punch line: the hearer will try to resolve the incongruity by using assumptions that will lead to the punch line. By the very act of speaking to him, the communicator therefore encourages the hearer to presume that the utterance is so relevant. This is the basis for the Communicative Principle of Relevance.

#### **1.7.4 The Communicative Principle of Relevance**

The communicative principle of relevance states that every act of overt communication, communicates a presumption of its own optional relevance (Sperber and Wilson, 1995:262). According to this principle, some relevance is guaranteed from communicated information. In this principle, an utterance conveys a presumption of relevance which the notion of “optimal relevance” captures. An utterance is optimally relevant to the hearer just in case: it is relevant enough to be worth the hearer’s processing effort; it is the most relevant one compatible with the speaker’s abilities and preferences.

When processing a joke, the hearer is entitled to expect the utterance to be at least relevant enough to be worth processing which means (given the cognitive principle of relevance) that the utterance should be more relevant than any alternative input available at the time. The Communicative Principle of Relevance justifies a specific inferential procedure for interpreting an utterance that is for discovering what the speaker meant by uttering it. The communicator wanting her communication to succeed indicates that she wants her utterance to be seen as relevant by the audience. The speaker has to have the informative and communicative intentions.

She has to have an intention to inform the audience of something and also the intention to inform the audience her informative intention.

### **1.7.5 Relevance-guided Comprehension Procedure**

For one to interpret (comprehend) a joke, a procedure has to be followed. Relevance Theory helps in explaining this procedure. Yus (2008:133–135) posits that, the comprehension procedure is a complex cognitive procedure involving a mutual parallel adjustment of three sources of information: the explicit interpretation of the speaker's utterance, the speaker's implicated interpretation, and the right amount of contextual information needed to obtain the explicit and implicit interpretations. This procedure leads to three sub-tasks: three hypotheses are formed. These are hypothesis at the explicature, the implicated premises and implicated conclusion.

The relevance-guided comprehension procedure is summarized as follows:

- The hearer should take the decided linguistic meaning.
- Follow a path of least effort.
- He should enrich it at the explicit level.
- and complement it at the implicit level until the resulting interpretation meets his expectation of relevance.

The hypothesis that hearers spontaneously follow the relevance-guided comprehension can be experimentally tested by manipulating either the effort factor. It can also be tested by

manipulating the effect factor and thereby making specific interpretation more or less likely to satisfy the hearer's expectations of relevance. Hypothesis is formed on the basis of context. Context refers to assumptions expressed or implicated. In joke interpretation the new hypothesis leads to the punch line which is the climax of a joke.

## **1.8 Literature Review**

This section will focus on the following areas; Literature on jokes and theoretical literatures.

### **1.8.1 Literature on jokes**

This study is an analysis of Lubukusu jokes. According to Trudgill (1995: 57–58), language varies according to social class, age, sex, ethnic group of the speaker, and the “social context the speaker finds himself on.” Communication is the major goal of any speaker of a language. The expressions used in a language are usually inventions of the society in which the language is spoken. These expressions are at man's disposal for use, but the social context determines what is said, when and where. Effective successful and effective communication is achieved when a hearer understand the speaker's intentions. In this study, comprehension of a joke is achieved by bringing out the speaker's utterances and the hearer interpretation.

A joke has been defined by different scholars. Habwe (1999:146) in his unpublished dissertation defines jokes as expressions meant to amuse or generate humour. He observes that they are common features of casual conversation especially among equal consequently, the concept of what people find to be humorous appears surrounded by socio-cultural, geographical, linguistic, diachronic and personal boundaries.

Ritchie (2004:16) defines a joke as a relatively short text which, for a given cultural group, is

recognizable as having its primary purpose the product of an amused reaction in hearer/reader and which is typically repeatable in wide range of contexts.

Goatley (1994: 150) considers joking to be in the same category as cross word puzzles, and says that he is generally reasonably certain when one has solved a clue correctly; one simply has to go on expanding and selecting different contexts until the answer clicks. Humor is part of those kinds of genres which deliberately increase processing effort as a means of achieving as specific locutionary effect, in this case laughter. But processing is relatively limited in the sense that the receiver clearly perceives when he has reached the desired interpretation.

Chiaro (1992) observes that humor is universal and every language has its own kind of jokes. She explores the pragmatics of word play using frameworks normally adapted in descriptive linguistics. She sets out to examine the structure of jokes, quips, riddles and the extent to which they can be universal and specific to one culture. Bukusu jokes can help confirm the above in that from the jokes, the Bukusu culture will be studied and through the application of Relevance Theory, proof whether it can be applicable to other languages. Thus, deferent culture has different use of language based on group experiences and assumptions. Cultural contexts are systematically relied upon in the interpretation of utterances. It is upon this that this study attempts to give an untapped picture of the cultural structure of Lubukusu jokes basing on the Relevance Theory.

According to Jodlowiec (1991:18), a verbal joke is an ordered sequence of utterance, planned as a unit, with a humorous climax or punch line which is intentionally used by the speaker to amuse

the hearer. Jodlowiec addresses the issue of humour from a direction that successfully accounts for joke production and comprehension. She maintains that utterance interpretation as a mind-reading activity (Wilson and Sperber 2004:83) and the theoretical notion of weak communication introduced by Sperber and Wilson (1986:102) are of crucial importance to explicating joke processing and explaining what makes a punch line. This is an important obligatory ending of the joke which puts the joke together and makes it funny. In this research work, we are going to use Jodlowiec's notion of a verbal joke as kind of mini – text with well defined boundaries, in the sense that it is usually pretty obvious at which point the joke telling starts and where it ends.

### **1.8.2 Theoretical Literature**

The current research aims to analyze Lubukusu jokes using Reference Theory by Sperber and Wilson (1986/95). This theory is a cognitive theory of human communication developed by D. Sperber and D. Wilson. It emerged as cognitive centered alternative to Grice's (1975:20–24) co-operation ruled explanation of human communication. The assumption of the theory is that human beings are endowed with a biologically rooted ability to maximize the relevance of incoming stimuli which include utterances and other communicative behavior. Wilson (1994: 44) summarizes this theory as follows:

1. The decoded meaning of the sentence is compatible with a number of different interpretations in the same context.
2. These interpretations are graded in terms of accessibility
3. Hearers rely on a powerful criterion when selecting the most appropriate

interpretation and

4. This criterion makes it possible to select one interpretation among the possible interpretations to the extent that when a first interpretation is considered, a candidate matching the intended interpretation, the hearer will stop at this point.

This helps in explaining how the punch line is achieved in joke.

Gumperz (1982:131) gives a detailed discussion on contextualization cues, saying that, it is any feature of linguistic form that contributes to the signaling of contextual presuppositions. When participants understand each others' contextual cues, then conversations go smoothly. However, when contextual cues are misunderstood, conversation does not run smoothly, and participants often label each other as rude, socially awkward, foreign, strange etc. When a listener does not react to a cue or is unaware of its function, interpretation may differ. A basic assumption is that this interpretation is affected by conversational implicatures based on conventionalized co-occurrence expectations between content and surface style speaker's signal and listeners interpret.

Schroeder (2005: 8) asserts that context is like an encyclopedia about the world. It contains the values and norms of a society, the personal belief system, the cultural norms, in all knowledge that the communicators have stored in their minds at the time they enter the conversation. One of the central points of Relevance Theory is that context is not pre-given but constructed on line in accordance with the principle of relevance.

Grice (1975:29) posits that, the notion so speaker's meaning analyzed in terms of intentions, could be differentiated from sentence meaning or word meaning. Through maxims of

conversation, he demonstrated that the difference between linguistically encoded semantic structure and the suggested meaning is a consequence of general principled of co-operative behavior. Understanding an utterance is therefore a matter of choosing the best hypothesis about the speakers meaning and Grice proposes the CP and maxims as means of evaluating alternative hypotheses. It claims that the speaker should make his contribution such as is required, at the stage which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged (Grice 1975:38).

Forabosco (2008:122–123) discusses broadly the concept of incongruity and its relation to humour interpretation. Incongruity is considered to be one of the most important concepts to the description of the humor process. He argues that, traditional theories try to describe and explain why and how people enjoy humour, but incongruity provides reasons as to why and how it happens that listening to a joke may not end in a humorous reaction. Therefore, two stages of incongruity model that is, perception of an incongruity and its resolution becomes very important in our study as it is going to help us explain why some people find a joke to be humorous while others are indifferent to it.

## **1.9 Research Methodology**

This section mainly deals with the data source, data collection procedures and data analysis of Lubukusu verbal jokes.



### **1.9.1 Data Collection Procedure**

The data is from Lubukusu language, the main sources being:

- i) Primary source
- ii) Secondary source

The primary data will be collected mainly from the researcher's native knowledge of the usage of Lubukusu language by employing the qualitative approach. The researcher will also elicit data from four native speakers, two from each gender (male and female). They will be selected using purposive sampling technique. There will be no age limit since jokes are run across board within cultural groups and they are universal in nature. The researcher can speak fluently, read and write in Lubukusu language. The researcher settles on the qualitative approach because the research is not a controlled one, thus deals with data in form of words, and not numbers and statistics.

The secondary data will be obtained from the radio stations like "Mulembe", and West FM," Internet, Facebook, e-mail, SMS and unpublished dissertations at the university of Nairobi Library. The internet is very rich in jokes. The Internet has several sites, including Facebook which have readily available jokes. The data on the Internet is rated and represents the audience's taste. Another source of jokes will be a translation from the English version.

The researcher will obtain samples of data form Luyhia FM radio stations. Samples will also be obtained by browsing some websites, for instance [www.lubukusu.com](http://www.lubukusu.com), to make the data more authentic. The collected samples of jokes will create a master list, assigning every joke an entry. The researcher will settle for a number of jokes, that do not have vulgar language, and suitable

for the study.

### **1.9.2 Data analysis**

The data collected will be analyzed through the framework of the Relevance Theory – analyzing Lubukusu jokes; information stored in the memory (conceptual addresses) – the role of context in the interpretation, analyzing and processing of Lubukusu jokes; context in this study are the encyclopaedic entries, ambiguity, and the concept of incongruity in relation to the functions of different of types of jokes. Further, data analysis, interpretation and description will be done by putting the researcher's own understanding on interpretative procedure within the Relevance Theory.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **CLASSIFICATION OF JOKES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

In this paper we set to examine the different types of jokes. Humour and laughter are obtained from a joke. Humour is a quality of perception that enables us to experience joy even when faced with adversity. Like beauty being in the eyes of the beholder, humour is in the funny bone of the receiver of the experience. Humour is more limited to humans although some of the more intelligent animals also have some kind of basic ability to respond to humour on some level. At a high level humour is a stress reliever (S.Sultanoff, 1994:107).

Sometimes people make what they consider to be witty remarks at the wrong time and in the wrong company. They end up being embarrassed as the joke falls flat. A joke isn't a joke if it's not funny. When making a joke, one should make sure to test it out on a close friend or relative before going to other people with the joke.

Humour does not only bring people to laugh, but also reduces pressure, relaxes intense atmosphere, and help people avoid embarrassing situations. People of all ages and cultures respond to humour by laughing, smiling etc. Though ultimately decided by personal taste, the extent to which a person will find something humorous depends upon a host of variables, including geographical location, culture, maturity, level of education, intelligence, and context. This chapter focuses on the classification and functions of verbal jokes. The jokes will be narrowed to Lubukusu jokes.

## **2.1 Information on jokes**

Jodloweic (1988:42) defines a verbal joke as an ordered sequence of utterances, planned as a unit, with humorous climax. The climax is intentionally used by the speaker to amuse the audience.

A verbal joke is a kind of mini text with well defined boundaries indicating the point at which the joke telling starts and where it ends (Jodlowiec, 1999:242). She observes that, there are just two parts to every joke: the setting (the text of the joke minus the punch line) and the punch line. Each part is assigned a particular role in creating texts that are potentially funny.

According to Feud (1960:41), a joke is any conscious and successful evocation of what is comic, whether the comic of observation or situation. Consequently, in a joke, the meaning is attained when the punch line is achieved while in comic ugliness is concealed and later uncovered and brought into open. A joke comes to an end when punch line is achieved. A joke is something spoken, written or done with humorous intention. Jokes may have many different forms e.g. a single word or a gesture, a question – answer, or a whole short story. In order to achieve their aim, jokes may employ word play, irony, sarcasm and other devices. Jokes are typically for entertainment of friends and onlookers. The desired response is generally laughter. When this does not happen the joke is said to have “fallen flat.” In this study, humorous effect of a joke is achieved by using the Relevance Theory.

Chiaro (1992:4) posits that a joke is a playful judgment. This is where both the speaker and listener just play with words in joke capping. She refers to jokes as verbal play; that is, the

semantic property of words, the lexicon, the structure and phonology of words contribute to the art of joking. In the current study, these are important ingredients in the production and comprehension of jokes.

Joking is classified as a sub-strategy of claiming common ground, subsumable to positive politeness and therefore responsible for minimizing social distance. As a result, speakers, generate the feelings of familiarity, friendship and empathy by alluding to shared background knowledge, common attitudes and values vital for them. This claim is based on the premise that joking emphasizes mutual shared background knowledge and values hence putting the hearer at ease (Brown and Levinson, 1978/1987).

According to Ritchie (2004:16), “a joke is a relatively short text which, for a given cultural group, is recognizable as having, as its primary purpose, the production of an amused reaction in its reader/hearer, which is typically repeatable in a wide range of contexts.” Richards (1985:291), defines a joke as: “A piece of spoken or written text.” A text may be considered from the point of view of its structure or its function. Texts function differently; for warning, insulting, giving news etc. According to Leech and Short (1981:120), a text is a linguistic communication that expresses semantic meaning and which may be spoken or written. A joke is a short humorous text in which the funniness is culminated in the final sentence called the punch line (Hetzron 1991:65–66). In our study we concentrate on the spoken text; verbal jokes.

Jokes, although comical in nature, usually deal with serious issues such as politics, sex and death. Jokes are learned and shared in informal settings and change slightly with each retelling.

## **2.2 Types of Verbal Jokes**

Jokes are an essential part of the English language and culture. Naturally, most major works on language do include something on verbal humour. In the field of verbal jokes, the intrusion of language restricts the stimulus to a smaller audience. Nevertheless the topics of jokes tend to be universal. According Chiaro (1992), whatever type of a joke, for it to qualify as such, what is commonly known as a punch line a punch must always be present. The punch line is the point at which the recipient either is able to see or hear something which is in some way incongruous with the linguistic or semantic environment in which it occurs but which at first sight had not been clear.

Jokes come in different shapes and sizes. There are long and short jokes. Long jokes come in narrative or story form. Short jokes are mostly made up of question and answer, in form of riddle or only one word. In this regard, jokes have a structure. When classifying jokes, the following is put into consideration; Ethnicity, gender, dirtiness, stereotype, age and politics. Gender verbal texts involve men and women. Ethnic jokes are made when commenting on the disadvantaged people in the society such as the physically challenged. Dirty jokes attract a large number of listeners because they deal with taboos and sexual words. Political verbal jokes entertain the crowds of people in political rallies as they are rich in satire.

### **2.2.1 Jokes that Stereotype**

The role played by jokes in creating stereotypes is a very important one. Stereotypes are defined as; assumptions we make about an entire group based on observations of some members. We

attribute observations to all members of the group whether it really applies to them or not. According to Samover (2007:33), stereotypes are, “cognitive structures containing the perceiver’s knowledge, beliefs and expectancies about some human social groups.”

Very often, they are racially, culturally and ethnically based and very often, they are incorrect. For instance if we say, “All Asians are good at Math,” we have applied a stereotype of Asians. Certainly, some Asians are good at Math. Similarly we could say, “All black people are not good at athletics but some are. It is not the social, ethnic, or racial group label that is the stereotype but the qualities we assume that all members of that group display.

Stereotypes have their roots in the cultures of different people. They have a negative tone. Stereotyping is a process whereby one takes a group of people and assigns them any trait irregardless to whether positive or negative. Using the Relevance Theory, stereotypes render a maximum processing effort. Humour appreciation decreases when it depends on the concept that cannot be understood without an effort or when critical examination is required. Speed processing is essential for the success of a joke. It is evident that such ready made conceptualizations are of the utmost utility.

Dundes (1987:67) asserts that the receiver of a joke thinks immediately of certain characteristics attached to his or her stereotyped images and therefore forms specific expectations. On the other hand, the fact that the outcome of the situation therefore introduced is incongruous in view of the listener’s general sense of appropriateness. His/her expectations are nevertheless in some way coherent with the latter. Lubukusu jokes are full of humour and they make use of stereotypes. The following joke will illustrate the idea.

## Pathologist Kenya

Kumulambo mulala kuarerwa mumaiti ne kumunamuna.

(A dead body turns up at the mortuary, with a big smile on its faces.)

Takitari kakhola buchungusi, na akhupila omukhongo wa polisi lusimu

(After autopsies, the pathologist calls the police Inspector)

Pathologist: *“Kumulambo kuno kwomubukusu, afwile sikila alile busuma bukali  
nende engokho paka kasimbwa.”*

*(“This body is for a Bukusu man, who died of constipation after a very  
heavy meal of ugali and chicken.”)*

Considering the above joke, it stereotypes Bukusu men. They are known for feeding on a mountain of ugali especially when accompanied with chicken delicacy. A Bukusu man does not consider any other meal to be substantial other than ugali. Chicken stew is rare, and on those rare occasions when it is made available, a Bukusu man will most likely clear a mountain of ugali as seen in the joke above.

Bukusu women are also stereotyped in jokes. They love kids and are submissive to their husbands. These women are good cooks, they show endurance during hard times, and are always there for their husbands. They really love their husbands and will desire to have many kids. The



following joke will help to explain the idea.

### **Bukusu Women**

First Date: *Omuila musinema nende muoteli esiene.*

*(You take her to a movie and an expensive restaurant).*

Second Date: *Okenia basasi bewe ne mawe achinja engokho ne busuma*

*(You meet her parents and her mum makes ugali and chicken for you).*

Third Date: *Wasaka chiku na kenya omubeisye*

*(You have sex, she wants you to marry her).*

4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: *Mwasalile babana bataru newe kumoyo kuwayo khulubeka lwekhukhwasaka chikhu.*

*(You already have three kids together and hate the thought of having sex).*

### **2.2.2 Political Jokes**

Politics is generally held to involve the exercise of power, the operations of government and the state, though of course, elites outside of the government often have a great deal of influence, if they don't actually hold political power (Alan Dundes 1981:23). Politics is one of the subjects most often joked about hence making it the subject of humour. We find political humour in all media and genre: cartoons, comic strips, jokes, graffiti plays, stories, novels, and films. People fight political repression with humour, though humour can also be used to control people (Bakatin, 1981:24). Bakhtin (1981:25) further asserts that, "it is humour that enables us to see politicians for what they are: they are human with the same problems we all face, the same strange fixations, and the same desires." Humour stripes away illusion and awe, brings

politicians close and prevents magnification of spectacle. It familiarizes political figures and in so doing, enables people to judge them more realistically.

Political jokes are full of satire which is a significant part of the satire that specializes in gaining entertainment from politics. It has also been used with subversive intent where political speech and dissent are forbidden by a regime, as a method of advancing political arguments where such arguments are expressly forbidden. Political satire provides entertainment. The jokes make fun of negative attitude to political opponents or politician in general and also make fun of political clichés, motto, and blunders of politicians. Examples of jokes with political satire are as follows:

1. A journalist wryly commented that Mr. Paul Muite, a lawyer seeking the presidency on a Safina Party ticket, has fewer votes than clients.
2. During the last general election, Pretty Nafula said: “so a Kenyan would rather stand in the hot sun for four hours not to elect anyone but to spoil a vote?”

In Kenyan politics as in the case of last general election, major political coalitions kept on belittling small parties; “FARASI ni wawili, wengine ni NYUNGU.” In case of a race between “FARASI” (horse) is very fast compared to “NYUNGU” (donkey) in terms of speed. The major coalitions would tell this to crowds of people on campaign trails, to woo those supporters of the small political outfits. They made it clear to these voters that they would be wasting their votes if at all they voted for their small political parties. As a result, political satire was achieved and also managed to woo voters.

In analyzing political speeches, Habwe (1999:147), recognize the importance of using jokes in political rallies. He notes that jokes create humour. According to him, politicians use jokes

because they are one of the pragmatic tools that characterize political speeches during mass drives. They are a light means used by politicians for conveying strong messages. Verbal skill is important to politicians and hence can lead to their success in their political careers. Most politicians like taking cover under jokes. Since jokes are a way of saying strong messages, politicians use them for politeness sake. We may observe that jokes are one of the pragmatic tools that characterize political speeches during mass rally drives. They are a light means used by politicians for conveying strong messages, which otherwise said could imply impoliteness. Impoliteness could interfere with communication between speaker and audience.

### **2.2.3 Mchongoano as Jokes**

“Mchongoano” is a borrowed word from Kiswahili language. This is a form of a joke that has become very popular in Kenya especially among the youth. With respect to Mchongoano, its primary function is socialization. It is not a way of expressing pent up frustrations or rebelling against institutional authority, though it does challenge the social norms by confronting them head on. Mchongoano is a mechanism for social control among peer groups, because a lot of self control is required for someone to stand the slurs directed at him or close family members e.g. mother, sister, father, friends and other participants in the conversation. This view places ritual insults as an art with a socialization function (Lafever, 1983:150-161).

Kenyan websites like [www.classic105.com](http://www.classic105.com), [www.kenyanjokes.com](http://www.kenyanjokes.com), Kisii.com, [www.kisfm.co.ke](http://www.kisfm.co.ke) among others have become important sites in which participants share familiar discourse like Mchongoano purely for amusement. TV and Radio stations air programs which use Mchongoano to produce humour. “Churchill Live” on Nation TV, children programs on Citizen TV, and Radio station programs on Mulembé FM, Milele FM, among others, air

Mchongoano programs.

Githinji (2006:51) defines Mchongoano as a ritualized genre of verbal duel, which is popular with the Kenyan youth where one antagonist insults another or members of their family. They are meant to be funny. Mchongoano uses figurative language; irony, hyperbole, metaphors, and metonymy among other styles.

Mchongoano involves negotiation of status through the cultivation of self-esteem. Raising one's self esteem involves undermining that of others. In Mchongoano, the subject is normally an adjectival attribute expressed in phrases such as *wewe mzee* 'you are so old,' *kwenyu wapoor* 'you are so poor,' *mathako mfat* 'your mother is so fat' etc. In majority of Mchongoano, poverty is the most dominant topic, packaged in images of starvation, filth, illiteracy, ignorance, poor shelter, small house, and lack of TV, ridiculous breakfast menus, crime, prostitution and rural marginalization among others. The images are popular because they strike familiar chord that majority of Kenyans can relate to. For illustration, I provide some glossed example of Mchongoano.

*Ewe omutambi bali nokenda khuchingila che Munairobi batambi abandi bakuwa  
kamabia kabwe.*

*You are so poor that if you go to Nairobi streets to beg, beggars give you their money.*

In the Mchongoano above, the possibility of a poor person being assisted by beggars who themselves depend on passer-by's magnanimity is quite remote. Still, a commentary abject

poverty is presented in its harsh reality. Beyond the surface of humour, the above joke can be seen as metacommentary of third world poverty where harsh economic conditions render citizens unproductive. In desperation they beg for handouts from the government, which in turn rushes to the development partners like the Bretton Wood institutions and multilateral donors with a begging bowl. The erasure of the boundary of who is, or a beggar is not, renders the insult in the above joke ritual since it can apply to just about anybody, from the street to the government.

#### **2.2.4 Teasing as a Way of Joking**

In human interaction, teasing comes in two major forms, playful and hurtful. When teasing is playful and friendly, and especially when it is reciprocal, teasing can be regarded as flirting. People may be teased on such matters as their appearance, weight, behavior, abilities, clothing, and intelligence. From the victim's point of view, this kind of teasing is often hurtful, irrespective of the intention of the teaser. When teasing is unwelcome, it may be regarded as harassment or mobbing, especially in the work place, or as a form of bullying or emotional abuse. If done in public, it may be regarded as humiliation. One may also tease an animal, some such as dogs and cats, may recognize this both as play or harassment.

Kowalski (2000:26) defines a tease as an utterance whose meaning should not be treated seriously per se and which invariably carries humorous force to be appreciated by both interlocutors. Consequently, where a tease is used, the interlocutors may end by considering it as a mere joke. Teasing can also be of malignant nature which has potential of criticizing, mocking and ostracizing the interlocutor. Teasing must play the rapport building function for it to turn out to be a joke. When teasing is reciprocal between individuals of equal personal power mutually agreeable as to the tone and content of the teasing, and when there is no direct or indirect hostile

undertone and bonding between two people.

Teasing is categorized as playful provocation based on behavioral differences between social group members, teasing as redefinition of criticism and fictional teasing where the provocative speaker utters an entirely fictional proposition without any underlying real event or critical attitude. Further, teasing is meant to playfully annoy or challenge the interlocutor or encourage him to engage in a humorous exchange.

Hostile teasing, picking, biting humour or sarcasm too often are insults poorly disguised as humour. They are also “double bind” communications which cause confusion, personal pain and anger in the recipient. It is imperative that teasers should carefully consider the results of their jokes on friends, loved ones and family members. Teases can be formed on the spur of the moment to be used only once or to be retained in the speaker’s idiolect and reused later.

Whether teasing is playful or hurtful, is largely to the interpretation of the person being teased. If a person being teased feels harmed, then the teasing is hurtful. A difference in power between people may make the behavior hurtful rather than playful. Ultimately though, if someone perceives him or herself as the victim of teasing, and experiences the teasing as unpleasant, then it is considered hurtful. If the other person continues to do it after being asked to stop, then it is a form of bullying or abuse.

In Lubukusu, name calling and nicknames are ways of teasing. Names involved are the disliked ones. The joke below is about Bukusu boys who have just undergone circumcision.

Boy A: *Nanu khwifwe niebakhebela khulupao?*

*Who among us underwent circumcision in hospital?*

Boy B: *Esese*

*I*

Boy A: *Lola kusiriambalu kuno! Ewe omukhasi, soli omusani tawe!*

*Look at this coward! You are a woman not a man!*

In the above tease, the conversationalists challenge one another. The interaction is composed of witticism with semantic links. If one does not undergo traditional circumcision among the Babukusu, then such a boy is regarded as a “coward,” hence referred to as a “woman.”

Teasing as a way of joking makes use of linguistic mechanisms. A tease can directly be associated with lexical or syntactic ambiguity consequently functioning as interactional puns. A response to an utterance anchored in lexical ambiguity, foregrounds the contextually inappropriate interpretation unobserved by the author of the first part. This brings us to puns. Puns exploit multiple meanings of words or similar sounding words (homonymy, polysemy, homophony), for intended humorous effect. Puns may be regarded as in-jokes because their usage and meaning are entirely local to a particular language and its culture.

A tease may also come from a preceding exchange. This type of tease is known as trumping e.g.

Son: *Papa, sekhubone nowicha ta.*

*Dad, I did not see you coming.*

Dad: *Eeh! Yaani ese singenge.*

*Oh! So I am a mosquito.*

The speaker’s and listener’s mutual knowledge determines success in production and

comprehension of teases; for instance, the propensity to joke and voice modulation.

### **2.2.5 Practical Jokes**

A practical joke is a mischievous trick or joke played on someone, typically causing the victim to experience embarrassment, perplexity, confusion, or discomfort. Practical jokes differ from confidence tricks or hoaxes in that the victim finds out, or is let in on the joke, rather than being fooled into handing over money or other valuables. Practical jokes are generally lighthearted, reversible and non-permanent, and aim to make the victim feel foolish or victimized to a degree, but may also involve cruelty verging on bullying if performed without appropriate finesse.

The term “practical” refers to the fact that the joke consists of someone doing something physical, instead of a verbal or written joke. For example, the joker who is setting up and performing the practical joke might hang a bucket of water above a doorway and rig the bucket using pulleys so when the door opens the bucket dumps the water. The joker would then wait for the victim to walk through the doorway and be drenched by the bucket of water. A person who performs a practical joke is called a practical joker.

## **2.3 Functions of Jokes**

A joke is something you do or say that will bring laughter to the people who are watching. They say laughter is the best medicine and in order to provoke laughter, a joke or two is required. Laughter, the intended human reaction to jokes, is healthy in moderation, uses abdominal muscles, and releases endorphins, natural “feel good” chemicals, into the brain.

From the above discussion on the types of jokes, various functions of jokes will be highlighted.



In a nutshell, functions of jokes will be discussed.

The intention of a verbal joke is to elicit humour. During joke capping, humour between interlocutors is used to show mutual appreciation and closeness or it may signal distance. This is clearly depicted in stereotyping and teasing. Teasing can show how close you are while stereotyping have negative connotation on one group and hence shows distance.

Jokes release tension besides producing laughter. Jokes help one to recollect his or her memory. For instance, if one was happy when he got home and left the keys in the pocket, he will remember it better the next day if he was in the same happy mood.

Being happy or laughing does not mean being carefree or free of trouble. It means that one is able to take a step back and look at his or her life much easier. Laughing, an alternative to being serious all the time, is also very healthy. Laughter can often equate to happiness for most people and being happy in life brings a lot of luck.

Jokes are meant for entertainment. The entertainment can be between friends and other people. All types of jokes create humour through the discovery of a punch line and therefore they can be said to be entertaining. For instance, in political jokes, a politician directs the joke to his opponent. Listeners are the third party, who laughs after humour is attained from a punch line.

Jokes are used to convey messages on a light note. This is spelt out well by the two concepts of relevance; the informative intention and communicative intention. During communication, the speaker has to inform the audience of something and has to make the informative intention clear. Politicians use jokes to tone down an otherwise tense situation and help to pass messages which otherwise would imply impoliteness.

Bad behavior can be corrected using jokes. Comments made in stereotypes touch on people's behavior. When a man is said to be greedy to an extent of over feeding, joke eight (**J 8**) in this study, helps to correct the behavior for men who are greedy (gluttons). The man in this joke dies because of eating excessively.

Verbal jokes such as 'Mchongoano,' are used to cultivate wit. The interlocutors try as much as possible to outwit one another leading to great creativity. The implicated conclusions mean that there is a lot of inference being made. These cognitive activities lead to interlocutors being sharp at arriving at the punch line when incongruity is discovered.

Jokes can be employed by workers as a way to identify with their jobs. For instance, 9-1-1 operators often crack jokes about incongruous, threatening, or tragic situations they deal with on a daily basis. This use of humour and cracking jokes helps employees differentiate themselves from people they serve while also assisting them in identifying with their jobs.

## **Summary**

This chapter has mainly focused on types of jokes and their functions. Jokes are an integral part of human language. They are used in daily conversations during communication. Verbal humour produces laughter, releases tension, eases stress and heals (laughter is strong medicine to the mind and body). When the interpretation of a joke is correctly done, the punch line will be achieved and therefore people laugh. Furthermore, communication intention is achieved. Jokes can be categorized and discussed separately. Jokes have important roles to play in our lives as it has been observed in this chapter.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **LUBUKUSU JOKES AND HIDDEN FRAMES OF RELEVANCE**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter we are going to discuss Lubukusu jokes basing on the hidden frames of relevance. This chapter discusses the structure of jokes, their functions, factors behind different interpretations of jokes and their linguistic nature. These hidden frames of relevance; Incongruity, inference, context, and ambiguity in Relevance Theory are important in the current study.

Yus (2008:142) observes that incongruity of jokes is achieved through the pragmatics means of the recovery of explicatures and implicatures. Schroeder (2005:8) observes that context is the encyclopaedia about the world which contains the values and norms of a society, the personal belief systems, the cultural norms and all knowledge that communicators will have stored in their minds at the time they enter the conversations. Cultural representations in the minds of individuals affect intercultural misunderstandings in the global communication process.

This is because not all societies have the same value and norm systems. Communication problems between different cultures lead to misunderstandings. The way individual groups understand one another or misunderstand one another is determined by, the degree to which the world views and frames relevance or patterns of communication overlap. The larger the common ground, the more likely that there will be an adequate meeting of minds. The less common ground there is, the more likely it is that there will be serious misunderstandings. These observations are vital when studying the Lubukusu jokes.

### **3.2 The Structure of Jokes**

A joke is an expression meant to amuse or generate humour. In the study of verbally expressed humour, jokes are paramount, thus can't be ignored. Jokes have to have a certain structure. In order to ensure laughs, the audience has to believe what the speaker is talking about before laughter is introduced. Interestingly enough, people usually recognize a joke whether it makes them laugh or not. This is because there is some consistent, intrinsic structure that everyone identifies as a joke. Writing a joke is a lot different than just making people laugh. Writing jokes is easy if one does not care how funny they are. If funny jokes have to be written, then a structure should be followed. It can be a one line or a more diagonally set up structure.

Lubukusu jokes are in form of a sentence (statement), question and answer, narrative or dialogue form. Regardless of the type of joke, it must have a structure. In this study we are going to use the structure proposed by Jodloweic (1991:103–105). According to her, every joke has two parts: the set-up and the punch line. Incongruity must be resolved for the punch line to be attained.

#### **3.2.1 The Set-up**

Sacks (1974:340) defines a verbal joke as an ordered sequence of utterances, planned as a unit with a humorous climax or punch line, which is intentionally used by the speaker to amuse the hearer. This is what establishes the premise of the joke by providing the audience with the necessary background information. Set-up is the first part of a joke that sets up the laugh. It is where the audience's trust is gained. The set-up of a joke shouldn't be too long or else the speaker may forget what he or she is talking about before getting to the punch line. In order to bring laughter, the speaker has to make the listener believe what he is talking about before

introducing the laugh. The speaker and the listener have to make correct assumptions based on the contextual information available. A verbal joke is a kind of text with well defined boundaries, in the sense that it is usually pretty obvious at which point the joke telling starts and where it ends. The Set-up is relevant and it needs to be there for every joke. In Lubukusu, there are various ways of posing a joke. For instance:

*“Waulila ebolakho eli.....”*

*“Did you hear the one about.....”*

In some jokes the set up is in question and answer form. The question acts as the setting of a joke.

Wanjala: *Sina sikila bilibwa nebili ebilindwa?*

*Why are there gates around grave yards?*

Shikhakha: *Endi sikila yesi yesi ofwa kenya kengilemo!*

*Because everybody is dying to get in!*

The question acts as a set-up. Any audience will be eager to hear what Shikhakha will give as a reply.

The set-up of some jokes can be in form of a narrative. Narratives are stories that present connected events. They are told chronologically (Mieke 1985:89). In Lubukusu, the speaker announces the start of a narrative joke by using words such as:

*Kabao omwana.....*

*There was a child.....*

*Mukhwana nende Mulongo basomi mu.....*

*Mukhwana and Mulongo students at.....*

The following is an example of a narrative joke:

Lubukusu	English Translation
Wakoli nende Nelima ba-aba balwale muosipito yebabonekhe. Esuku ndala abele babira simbi nende nie baandu basokela ne Wakoli asuna mumechi alusiba. Nelima kasuna mumechi na amurusiamo.	Wakoli and Nelima were both patients in a mental hospital. One day while they were walking past the swimming pool, Wakoli suddenly jumped into the deep end and sank. Nelima promptly jumped in to save him. She pulled him out.
Ne takitari aba awa Nelima erusa ye khurula muosipito nga kabona ali amuokoe Wakoli sikila kamanya busa nono ali Nelima kaonile.	When the doctor became aware of Nelima's acts she immediately ordered for her to be discharged from hospital as she considered her mentally stable.
Ne acha khu Nelima na amubolela ali, "Nelima, endi nende elomo endayi nende embi. Endayi sikila olikhonyola erusa ye-ekhucha engo sikila omuokoe omulwale owasio, embi sikila omulwale nio-orusisie mumechi emikilee mwipafu khurumikhilila kumushipi. Pole koo, kafwile.	She went and told her, "Nelima, I have good news and bad news. The good news is you're being discharged since you saved a fellow patient, bad news is, Wakoli hang himself in the bathroom. Am sorry he is dead.
Nelima kamuchiba takitari ali, "sekemikile tawe, emurere mwipafu kome. Endikhenja engo asii?"	Nelima replied, "He didn't hang himself, I put him there to dry. How soon can I go home?"

According to Chiaro (1992:49-52) a common discourse pattern that explains how narrative jokes are presented is proposed. She calls it the problem-solution pattern.

SITUATION → PROBLEM → RESPONSE → RESULT/EVALUATION

This situation acts as the set-up of the joke.

### **3.2.2 The Timing**

Timing in humour is concerned with the amount of time delay between the end of the set-up of the joke and the delivery of the punch line. According to Audrieth (1998: 42), “too short a time and the impact is lessened by the abrupt end of the joke.” Timing in humour comprises of pauses and speech rate, which either speeds up or slows down the rate of speech (Norrick, 2001:255). The notion of timing is a very significant issue. Timing speeds up or lowers down speech rate in jokes.

In humour, timing is everything. The pacing of the delivery of a joke has a strong impact on its comic effect. Dean (2000:125) asserts that, the only thing that is certain about timing of a joke is that it is essential to being funny. The timing within the structure of a joke is of crucial importance. “Successful jokes and appropriate audience response are determined chiefly by use of timing.” Timing makes the difference between a joke that is extremely effective and one that flops. Usually, timing relates to the delivery of the punch line.

Through timing, the speaker knows when to stop speaking in the midst of a routine in order to allow thinking time for the audience to prepare itself for the laugh that is coming up. The delay between the end of the set-up of the joke and the delivery of a punch line is brought about by timing. Ajaye (2002:20) advises would be the performers to “light the fuse” of their joke by “taking a pause before you deliver the punch line.

### **3.2.3 The Punch line**

A punch line is the final part of a joke that makes people laugh. It is a profound statement, usually the word, sentence or exchange of sentences which is intended to be funny or to provoke laughter or thought from listeners (Dynel 2008:12). Punch lines generally derive their humour from being unexpected. Few punch lines are inherently funny, out of context, but when a speaker sets up the premise and builds up the audience's expectations, the punch line can function as the climatic part of the joke. Therefore the punch which is a very critical aspect of a joke, leads to what is called a punch line, or the climax of a joke that leads to humour production. The punch line leaves the surprise to the very end so that you have the audience anticipating the joke.

The humour appears when a set-up suggests one interpretation but followed by an ending that does not agree with this interpretation. This is to say that, the punch line is the point at which the recipient either hears or sees something which is in some way incongruous with the linguistic or semantic environment in which it occurs but which at first sight had not been apparent. A punch line is a very critical aspect of a joke. It is what initially makes the audience laugh.

Suls (1972:84) posits that, the most fundamental feature inherent to almost all jokes is that, "a joke's ending does not follow directly from its preceding text." The punch line, "presents a seemingly irrelevant idea or it may seem incongruous with respect to the main body of the joke. Or it may seem to open up an entirely new trend of thought."

The set-up and the punch have two different functions. The set-up creates expectation and the punch reveals a surprise. For instance, in the following joke, notice how the set-up causes us to expect something.



Set-up: *“The only way to really have safe sex is to abstain.”*

*Now notice how the punch reveals a surprise:*

Punch: *“From drinking.”*

In order to work, a joke has to surprise. We cannot be surprised unless we’re expecting something else. That is what a joke does. The set-up causes us to expect something, and then the punch line surprises us.

Jokes cannot be jokes without the congruous resolution of incongruity. The joke about the two patients in a mental hospital is made humorous when the doctor unexpectedly finds out what actually caused the death of Wakoli (mental patient) was Nelima, another mental patient who apparently had saved him earlier from drowning.

### **3.2.4 The Incongruity**

If there is one generalization that can be extracted from literature about humour, it is that humour involves incongruity. Incongruity is defined as a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in a joke. Its focus is on the cognitive or thinking side. Veale (2004:103-105) posits that humour and incongruity appear to be constant bedfellows-for at the most of every heart of every joke one can point to some degree of absurdity, illogicality or violation of expectation. Humour is a phenomenon that relies on incongruity. In our study therefore, the structure of jokes cannot be studied without studying the Incongruity Theory and Incongruity Resolution.

In other words, this study asks whether incongruity resolution really is a driving force in the creation of humour or merely an epiphenomenon of under specification and listener choice. Two different scripts that are opposed to each other in a special way are always related to a joke. The text of a joke is unambiguous up to the point of the punch line. The punch line is the switch from one script to another and makes the hearer realize that more interpretations of the text are possible from the beginning. The cause of laughter in almost every case is the sudden perception of the incongruity between concept and the real objects which have been thought through it in some relation and the laugh itself is just an expression of this incongruity.

The focus of incongruity is on the cognitive side. For jokes to be interpreted, the mind has to be used; hence the application of the cognitive theories. In the interpretation of jokes Relevance Theory which is a cognitive theory works together with Incongruity Theory and Incongruity Resolution Theory. Incongruity is defined as a conflict between what is expected and what occurs in a joke. The idea behind Incongruity Theory is that; we live in an orderly world, where we have come to expect certain patterns among things, their properties and events. We laugh when we experience something that does not fit into these patterns. As a matter of fact incongruity is a violation of pattern in someone's picture of how things are supposed to be. Therefore, what any individual finds incongruous will depend on what his experience has been and what his expectations are.

### **3.2.5 Ambiguity**

It has been argued that many jokes depend on the fact that the main part of the text (sometimes known as the set-up (Attardo, 1997:87) or joke body (Godkewitch, 1976:117) is compatible with

more than one interpretation, although only one interpretation may be obvious to the audience initially. The final part of the text, the punch line, then resolves this ambiguity, often in favour of less obvious meaning.

As Ritchie (1999:78–85) observes, this notion of sudden disambiguation is very wide spread within the literature. Its importance is typified by the following quotation:

Deliberate ambiguity will be shown to underlie much, if not all, of verbal humour. (Raskin 1985:113)

The following is an example of how ambiguity contributes to the funniness of a simple yet typical linguistic joke.

The following conversation took place between two teachers:

A: *“Do you allow boys to smoke?”*

B: *“I am afraid not.”*

A: *“Can they drink?”*

B: *“No, by all means, no!”*

A: *“What about dates?”*

B: *“Oh, that’s quite all right, as long as they don’t eat too many.”*

In the above joke, we presented with an exchange between two teachers, active (speaking) characters of the joke. Teacher A asks teacher B about the types of behavior the latter allows his pupils to engage in. There are three queries. The first one refers to smoking cigarettes, the second

to drinking alcohol, and the third would normally be interpreted as referring to dating girls. However, the final turn by teacher B introduces another interpretation which is enabled by the punch of the joke, roughly coextensive with eat too many. At the moment of reading or hearing the punch, the recipient of the joke backtracks and locates dates as the ambiguous string with the alternative interpretation of “kind of fruit.”

The new interpretation is invoked because the punch line introduces the concept of eating, which cannot be easily reconciled with the original reading of dates (date in the sense of “social meeting with person of opposite sex” cannot be eaten). The two interpretations are compatible with the content of what teacher A and teacher B said respectively. However the recipient of the joke, once the punch line has been processed, has open access to both interpretations: thus constitutes the joke’s ambiguity.

### **3.3 Factors Determining Interpretation of Lubukusu Jokes**

Language is the human capacity for acquiring and using complex systems of communication. Culture of a society is viewed through language. Language embodies culture, acting as its mirror. When language is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways. The Bukusu have their own way of life (culture) and their jokes will revolve around it. In the interpretation of Lubukusu jokes, this study will use gender, age and context.

#### **3.3.1 Age and Gender**

Jokes exploit different topics putting into consideration age and gender. Age and gender is an important factor determining and explaining why a joke is humorous to some people while it is not to others. There are those jokes that adults find to be humorous but to children, they are not

at all. Children tend to enjoy jokes on ritual duels like “Mchongoano.” Adults enjoy jokes which touch on issues that they are familiar with. The following joke will help in the illustration of the idea.

**(J 16)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
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<p>Teacher: Sina sibi?</p> <p>Wekesa: Khulinende khayu khakekhe engo. Ese engona khusitanda silala nende mayi ne papa. Buli musilo papa kandanga ne kandeba ali, “Wekesa olikhokona?” ese emuchiba ndi, “tawe,” ne kakhupa paka emoni ebimba.</p> <p>Teacher: “Luno musilo raro nakhureba lundi, Sila chu, okhamuchiba tawe.” Lusuku lulondakhoWekesa kecha lundi emoni yabimbile. “Eeeh! Emoni yabimbile lundi sina?”</p> <p>Wekesa: Papa kandebire lundi ali, “Wekesa Olikhokona?” ese nasila chi. Naba papa ne mayi banja khukhwisisikha, mayi aela khangu ne khuramo lukukulo.</p> <p>mayi Papa kareba mayi, “olikhowicha?” kaloma ali, “endikhonicha, newe?” Sebanyala bacha abundu wosi wosi bandekha ta. Ese naloma nandi, “ninde sesi endikho niche!”</p>	<p>What is wrong?</p> <p>Our house is very small. My parents and I sleep on the same bed. Every night my dad asks, “Wekesa are you asleep?” then I say, “No” and he slaps my face giving me a black eye.</p> <p>Tonight when your dad asks again, keep dead quiet and don’t answer. The following day Wekesa comes back with a black eye again. “My goodness why the black eye again?”</p> <p>Dad asked me again, “Wekesa, are you sleeping?” and I shut up. Then my dad and mom started moving, at the same time mum was breathing erotically and screaming. Then dad asked mum, “are you coming?” mum said, “yes I am coming, are you coming too?” Dad answered, “yes.” They don’t usually go anywhere without me so I said, “wait for me, I am also coming.”</p>
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In the above joke, children cannot find any humour in it because they really do not understand sexual terms such as, “coming.” This term is only understood by adults. Gender consideration is also critical in jokes. Jokes for women can be different from jokes for men. Some gender jokes can be stereotyping and hence biased towards either men or women. When women are alone, they tell jokes about men which elicit humour. On the other hand men will tell jokes about women.

Sick dirty jokes can be self-deprecating. They tend to make one’s spirit low. These jokes are suitable when told among adults (basing on age and gender). Sick jokes are made at the physically challenged people, while dirty jokes talk about taboos in sexual context. Among the

Bukusu, it's a taboo for a man to tell a dirty joke to women who may include his mother-in-law. Sick jokes made in the presence of the physically challenged persons are degrading. Adults can also not crack jokes with sexual context with children.

### **3.3.2 Context**

The human mind processes all kinds of information, both thoughts and utterances, by employing a “filter” of relevance to all the possible contexts within which this information can be processed. According to Penco (1999:271), context is a set of mentally represented assumptions used in processing given information. Context may include the situation or physical environment in which the utterance takes place or it includes the preceding text or discourse. Context lies behind our every action, decision or belief. It is the mental representatives of objects or situations that the hearer constructs and uses in identifying with the speaker's meaning. What accounts for context selection is relevance. We search for context that will be accessible during utterance interpretation process.

When we mentally process an utterance, we do so by employing subject-matter context. Sperber and Wilson (1995:15–16) posits that an utterance's context is:

the set of premises used in interpreting it. That context is the psychological construct, a subject of the hearer's assumptions about the immediate the world. It is not limited to information about the immediate physical environment or immediately preceding utterances: expectations about the future, scientific hypothesis or religious beliefs, anecdotal memories, general cultural assumptions, beliefs about the mental state of the speaker, may all play a role in interpretation.

The interpretation of jokes is made from its context because they are context oriented. A joke is

designed by resorting to the mind reading ability of the speaker and the hearer, in order to achieve the punch line. The speaker can predict that certain stimuli will be more relevant than others and that certain assumptions will inevitably be entertained by their audience during comprehension of the joke. The first interpretation of the joke that the audience finds satisfying in a specific context is the interpretation he/she accepts as optimally relevant. The interpretation of the joke will depend on the hearer's extraction of contextual implications. The following joke explains the concept of context.

**(J 7)**

Speaker A: *Sina sikila abandu bamali sebasima kamalesi ka asprini tawe?*

*(Why don't black people like aspirin?)*

Speaker B: *Sikila kamawanga niko, lundi kakhola ekasi.*

*(Because they are white, and they work).*

The above joke is humorous according to the context picked. This joke is told in the context of colonialism. During the time of colonialism, Western civilization was introduced in Africa. Education and the white man's medicine were some of the things introduced during colonialism. Africans (Bukusu) people hated anything to do with the white people. Aspirin which is a drug is white in colour, brought by the British who are white in colour. The Bukusu in this context didn't like aspirin because it was brought during the oppression period, even though it heals.

### **3.3.3 Culture and Jokes**



Jokes are a pervasive feature of human life which crosses cultural divisions. Sperber (1996: 32–55) speaks of cultural representations, about which he says that every culture has trends of cultural manifestations that are unique to it. The cultural dimension of context starts with the mental representations of all the individuals taken collectively and, in addition, includes the artifacts and objects of that culture. In any language, the expressions used are usually inventions of the society in which the language is spoken. The Bukusu jokes make use of Lubukusu language.

Schroeder (2005:5) defines culture as a set of accessible beliefs and assumptions which play a crucial role in the selection of context during utterance interpretations. In this regard, culture being a way of life of a people makes use of language. Through language, people communicate. Communication is based on assumptions that are relevant to us. Successful communication between human beings either within a culture or between cultures requires that the message and meaning intended by the speaker is correctly received and interpreted by the listener.

Jokes in Lubukusu emerge from the eating habits, how people earn their living, traditional ceremonies such as circumcision, funerals, songs, learning and duties shared out with families. Within the family, boys herd cattle, girls collect firewood and cook. The following joke shades light on the concept of culture and jokes.

**(J 10)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
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<p>Wakhungu kengila muoteli ne kenya khulangisia engokho, lakini buubi endi sakebulila engokho mulusungu balanga bali si tawe. Omukholi owenya khumurelela nisio alia, aloma lusungu lwongene. Wakhungu kabona owikhalile simbi nae, khusaani yewe kalikho kamaki kane, naabolela omukholi ali “nenya mawabwe!”</p>	<p>Wakhungu walks into a hotel and wants to order chicken but unfortunately he can’t remember how chicken is called in English. The waiter who wants to take his order is only English proficient. Wakhungu sees the guy next to him with a plate with four eggs on it. Wakhungu points to the plate of eggs and says to the waiter, “I want their mother!”</p>
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The above joke is told in the context of the Bukusu culture. Among these people, chicken is regarded as very important during meals. Normally it is taken with ugali. When a Bukusu person goes to a hotel, he or she prefers chicken to other meals, because culturally it is their most appreciated delicacy.

### 3.4 Ambiguity in Lubukusu Jokes

Roura (1995:10) defines ambiguity as the property of a fragment of a text which allows for two or more significantly different semantic interpretations to be arrived at by a substantial proportion of typical text recipients. A linguistic analysis of a joke will not only make it possible for the comprehension of its humour but it will also help to penetrate into the depths of language and its way of functioning.

Humour must surely have some fundamental principles. They consist of specific linguistic phenomenon, the most important being the absence of one to one correspondence between meaning and form. That is the main source of ambiguity, the most general language phenomenon underlying the majority of linguistically based jokes. The ambiguity of a phrase allows one to

interpret it in a sense different from that which was originally meant thus creating humorous effect. Not only is ambiguity desirable in linguistic verbal jokes, but special elements seem to be often present in the text of a joke that enhance, or indeed generate, its ambiguity. As much as linguistic verbal jokes often exhibit linguistic ambiguity, it is important that the clue enabling the recognition of ambiguity should coincide with the final part of a verbal joke, recognized as a punch of a joke (Oring 1989:349-364 and Attardo et. al. 1994).

Linguistic verbal jokes may turn on linguistic jokes. In the present study, such jokes may be classified according to the type of ambiguity that they involve. More than one type of ambiguity can be distinguished, in consequence yielding different types of ambiguity-based linguistic jokes.

### **3.4.1 Lexical Ambiguity**

In lexical jokes, the ambiguous strings are coextensive with lexical items in the texts of the jokes. Lexical jokes involve two words with identical phonological representations but separate meanings that coexist within the context of the joke. They could also involve manipulation of legitimate meaningful morphemes that elicit a serious and humorous interpretation. In addition, lexical ambiguity relies on homonymy, homophony or polysemy where sounds remain the same and ambiguity lies in the lexical unit or lexeme (Attardo et al., 1994:34). Below is an example of a lexical joke.

In the Court of Law

Judge: *Waibakho nende ekesi mukoti?*

*Have you ever been with a case in court?*

Boy: *Eeh, naibakho nayo.*

*Yes, off course.*

Judge: *Bolela ekoti ino ekesi yaaba ndala sii?.*

*Tell this court what case it was.*

Boy: *Yaaba ekesi emali*

*“It was a black case,” he replied quickly.*

In this joke (**J 19**), the two characters of the joke, the judge and the boy appearing on the witness stand apparently interpret the word case in the two questions of the judge as “lawsuit” and “type of bag,” respectively. Initially, it is the judge’s interpretation that is salient and exclusively accessible to the recipient of the joke. The second interpretation becomes accessible when the boy starts elaborating on the physical description of the case he was carrying on the occasion. Once the alternative interpretation becomes accessible, it creates ambiguity and thus the humour of the joke.

### **3.4.2 Syntactic Ambiguity**

Lew (1996:128) observes that on the surface, syntactic jokes depend on semantic interpretations motivated by the structural patterns of the language system. According to Attardo et al. (1994:35), ambiguity is not only of any single lexical item but is also of the sentence at the

syntactic level.

In syntactical jokes, it is the context that is responsible for humorous effect. In the category of syntactic jokes, the first participant unintentionally offers a statement or a question that can prove ambiguous and have more than one interpretation.

Jokes based on syntactic ambiguity exhibit two readings corresponding to two different syntactic representations within which a fragment of the text may be assigned two different syntactic class structures and this fact makes a difference between the two readings. Syntactic jokes play with sentence structure; sounds are the same, only one meaning exists within a certain syntactic interpretation. The following syntactic joke is taken from a library.

Stern Librarian: *Nosima, sila! abandu simbi nawe sebanyala khusoma tawe.*

*(Please, be quiet! People near you can't read).*

Small Boy: *Sikila sina, ata sebali nende chisoni tawe! Ese namanya khusoma nendi*

*kimika sita.*

*(Why, they ought to be ashamed of themselves! I've been able to read since I was six.*

In this joke, the librarian means “read” in the object deleting sense, whereas the child interprets it in the intransitive sense.

### 3.4.3 Lexico-Syntactic Ambiguity

In some cases the ambiguity of a joke may stem from a string being interpretable as either a regular phrasal unit, or as a more or less lexicalized item of a more immutable, close-knit type.

The following joke is one case in point.

*Omwirwachi kabona omundu omusabilisi owimanga akona khukhakila simbi  
niamenyile.*

*(A preacher saw a beggar at a corner of the street near his residence)*

*Esuku ndala kamuwa chisilingi emia ndala, amumonyela ali, “okhafwa kumoyo tawe.”*

*(One day the preacher gave the man, one hundred shillings and whispered to him,  
“You should never despair.”*

*Omusabilisi olia-bona Omwilwachi esuku ekindi, na amuwa chisilingi chimia tisa.*

*(Next time the beggar saw the preacher he handed him nine hundred shillings).*

*“Sino simaanisha sina?” Omwirwachi kamureba.*

*(“What does this mean?” the preacher asked)*

*Omwilwachi kabola ali, siokesia sili, “okhafwa kumoyo kakhila munane khundala.”*

*(The beggar said that, “never despair won at 8 to 1”)*

In the joke above, the preacher means never despair as an expression of who he takes to be a homeless beggar. Syntactically, on this reading, never despair is a clause. The man, who turned out to be a beggar interpreted never despair as a lexical unit being a proper name referring to a specific bull.

### 3.4.4 Pragmatic Ambiguity

Pragmatic ambiguity in jokes arises when the two interpretations of the ambiguous fragment are identical with respect to their syntactic structure, lexical content, and phonetic form, but in terms of the pragmatic function which the fragment exhibits with the two interpretations. Pragmatic function of an utterance means the way in which the utterance affects or is intended to affect the state of mind of those involved or the state of affairs. The discrimination between the intention and result is important in that it captures the distinction and potential disparity between the conceived and perceived.

The ultimate goal of bona-fide communicative interchange is to minimize disparity. In the following joke, this disparity is seen as the source of ambiguity.

*Nangila abele asinga lidirisha liesikiyo khukorofa ya tisa likoloba na-akwa.*

*(Nangila was washing the window on the ninth floor yesterday and she fell off).*

*“Wele Papa, mala asiliyo kweli?”*

*(“Oh Lord, is she alive?”)*

*“Eeh, ekhabi endayi kaa kwile mukari.”*

*(“Yes, fortunately, she fell inside.”)*

In this joke, a false inference was drawn out by the second speaker that Nangila did fall out of the window from an extreme altitude, leaving very little chance for her survival. Crucial information is being withheld by the first character, but, more importantly perhaps, irrelevant

information is given which then becomes misleading. The irrelevant piece of information is the floor number. Since Nangila fell inside, it does not matter which floor the window was on, as the distance between the window and the floor is the same on every storey. The final line of the joke, containing the punch line, clarifies what really happened within the world of the joke and introduces the alternative interpretation of she fell off the window: “fell inside” rather than “fell out of the window.”

### **(Joke)**

*The patient's family gathered to hear what the specialists had to say. "Things don't look good. The only chance is a brain transplant. This is an experimental procedure. It might work, but the bad news is that brains are very expensive, and you will have to pay the costs yourselves."* "Well, how much does a brain cost?" asked the relatives. "For a male brain, Shs. 1,000,000. For female brain, Shs. 500,000." The patient's son was unsatisfied and asked, "why the difference in price between male and female brains?" "A standard pricing", said the head of the team. "Women's brains have to be marked down, because they have actually been used."

In the above joke, the pragmatic ambiguity inheres in the doctor's statement on the prices of brains. While the character in the joke is at loss to acknowledge the rationale underlying the difference in the prices of male and female brains, the joke receiver makes a pragmatic inference based on folk presupposition, namely the gendered stereotype frequently deployed in jokes that women's brains are poorer (smaller or less efficient) than men's. The punch line sheds light on why women's brains are cheaper.



## **Summary**

In this chapter we looked at Lubukusu jokes on the basis of hidden frames of relevance. Incongruity, context, and ambiguity play important roles in the production and comprehension of Lubukusu jokes. The structure of Lubukusu jokes include; set-up, timing, and the punch line. Age, gender, culture, and context which are the factors that lead to the production and comprehension of jokes have also been analyzed. Also in this chapter, lexical ambiguity, syntactic ambiguity, lexico-syntactic ambiguity, and pragmatic ambiguity play major roles in comprehension of Lubukusu jokes.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **ELUCIDATION OF LUBUKUSU JOKES**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter we provide an explanation on how Lubukusu jokes can be elucidated basing on the Relevance Theory as proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995) and an input of incongruity and Incongruity Resolution from Forabosco (2008). In this study attempts are made to give explanations on the production and comprehension of jokes. Both functions and nature of jokes exploit incongruity. Incongruity, a very important input in a joke, leads to a punch line which is the climax of the joke.

The most popular theory of why we find jokes funny revolves around the concept of incongruity. The idea is that we laugh at things that surprise us because they seem out of place. It's funny when clowns wear outrageously large shoes, people have especially big noses or politicians tell the truth. In the same way, many jokes are funny because they involve ideas that run against our expectations. A bear walks into a bar, animals talk, and so on. But there is more to this theory than such simple forms of incongruity. In many jokes, there is an apparent incongruity between the set-up and the punch line.

#### **4.2 The Role of Incongruity**

Incongruity helps in explaining the elucidation of Lubukusu jokes. Incongruity in jokes is achieved through violation of world of knowledge of both the speaker and the hearer as mutually manifested in the context of the mind of the interlocutors (Kihara and Schroeder 2012:68).

Humour elicits laughter. The cause of laughter in jokes in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between concept and the objects which have been thought through it in some relation, and laughter itself is just the expression of this incongruity. The violations of world of knowledge of both the speaker and the hearer are brought out through the use of figurative language like metaphors, and hyperboles which are a source of incongruity. Another source of rich incongruity is in stereotypes, implicatures and explicatures.

#### **4.2.1 Incongruity Expressed Through Stereotypes**

Stereotypes are assumptions we make about an entire group based on observations of traits of some members. We attribute observations to all members of the group whether it really applies to them or not. Very often, they are racially or ethnically based. Incongruity is achieved through exploiting people's traits. These traits are not mere summaries of behavior but have underlying sets of motives and attitudes that dictate the behavior.

According to Yus (2008:131), stereotypes are beliefs that we have about other people. These can be information about their appearance, likely or unlikely behavior, medical and psychological conditions, mannerisms, goals, and motivations. In this section, we discuss the elucidation, analysis and processing of selected Lubukusu jokes in stereotypical environment. Stereotypical jokes are the type of jokes that relate to stereotypical views held by people in the community. People believe that someone has a particular character only because this is what many people believe of them. The following joke stereotypes the Bukusu men and women.

#### **(J 1) Bukusu Community**

Lubukusu	English Translation
Teacher: Wasike, nokhula wenya okhole kasi si?	Wasike, what would you like to become when you grow up?
Wasike: Ese Neny-aambe omulindi ofwala Eunifomu	I would like to be a watchman who wears uniform.
Teacher: Newe Nekesa?	What about you Nekesa?
Nekesa: Ese neny-aambe omupakasi wee-munju ofwala eunifomu.	I would like to be a maid who wears uniform.

This joke implicates that people from the Bukusu community are not ambitious at all. The stereotype used here sees people from this community as those who lack ambition for great things in life. They do not strive for greater things in life such as well paying jobs. They instead go for lesser ones such as being maids, cooks, and watchmen. It is said that most girls back in the villages yearn for employment as house helps in towns such as Nairobi when they grow up.

The following joke is about a Bukusu woman who got married to a Chinese man. Soon after, they got a baby, who passed away after two months.

## **(J 2) Funeral**

At the funeral, the Bukusu woman kept sobbing and crying:

*“NAMANYA BUSA! NAMANYA BUSA!”*

*(“I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT!”)*

So a family member pulled her aside and asked her,

*“Sina nisio abele wamanya?”*

(*“What did you know?”*)

She replied,

*“Bibindu bye ba Chainisi sebimenya khusisa sileyi ta.”*

(*“Chinese products don’t last long”*)

The joke above is realized through stereotyping the low quality of the Chinese products among the Bukusu people and the Kenyan public at large. The Kenyan market is flooded with the Chinese products: radios, mobile phones, computers, cameras and iPods which are not authentic. They are low quality products which do not last long.

The following joke stereotypes the Bukusu people on how they wrongly pronounce Kiswahili words. It is about a menu in a local hotel.

### **(J 3) IN INKGHO HOTELS**

Jai	-	Shs. 5
Japati	-	Shs. 4.50
Gugu	-	Shs. 5
Ukali	-	Shs. 30
Keki	-	Shs. 15
Mgade	-	Shs. 40

The humour derived in the joke above is realized through the problem of pronouncing Kiswahili words among the Bukusu people. The inference drawn from this joke is that the Bukusu have problems in articulating various sounds in Kiswahili words. The following table shows how words on the hotel menu have been misspelled due to wrong articulation of sounds.

Gloss	Kiswahili	Wrong Pronunciation
Tea	Chai	Jai
Chapati	Chapati	Japati
Chicken	Kuku	Gugu
Ugali	Ugali	Ukali
Cake	Keki	Gegi
Bread	Mkate	Mgade
Soup	Mchuzi	Mchusi

In the above joke, the Bukusu people write (use) ‘t’ for ‘d’, ‘j’ for ‘c’, ‘g’ for ‘k’, ‘s’ for ‘z’, in Kiswahili words, such as ‘kuku’, ‘ugali’, ‘chai’, and ‘mchuzi,’ ‘keki.’ The humour in this joke comes about when a person who is proficient in Kiswahili reads the menu.

#### (J 4) Bukusu Women

Lubukusu	English Translation
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Baakhana babukusu basima limenya lieaasi. Basima bekhale engo patala yekhucha khulia muchioteli chimbofu, pora echai ekhatambao tawe. Busuma nende engokho bilabao aaba ewe omukhasi wanyola.	Bukusu women are known to be modest. They would rather stay at home so long as there is enough tea than have you take her out to an expensive hotel. So long as there is constant supply of ugali and chicken, she is yours for keeps.
Lundi bamanyikhana khuba mubiasara bie khusals babaana. Kabala salikhanunia ta aaba kaesisie.	They are also known to be in the business of making children. If she is not breast feeding, she is pregnant.
Mulukungo, kaokoka, niye aaba treshara wenasari, sekretari we kumukanda kwe basiele. Bamanyikhana khulondekhana nende ekalikiti mwichune.	In the village, she is known as being born again. She is the treasurer of the kindergarten, secretary of the women merry-go-round and curly kitted hair is their distinctive look.

This joke stereotypes Bukusu women in a negative way. They are known to be modest and to have austerity. They cannot stand extravagance. The inference drawn is that Bukusu women are not problematic. They like staying at home and not hanging out in expensive restaurants for dinner and lunch. They are not ambitious in the sense that their lives revolve around the village. They derive satisfaction in life when they serve the community as, treasurer of the Kindergarten and secretary to the women merry-go-round. In this case, the incongruity is resolved when they are stereotyped as women lack ambition and like giving birth to many children. The implicated conclusion here is that men who marry Bukusu women should be prepared to give birth to many children and provide enough in terms of food.

#### **(J 5) A Bukusu Man**

Lubukusu	English Translation
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<p>“Onyola omubukusu ne bakhasi babili, omukhulu amenyile Ebungoma mumukunda, omukekhe amenyile naye Mombasa.</p> <p>Buli omukhasi alinende aabana bane. Omundu yuno kekomba anyole omukhongo omubukusu khukasi nio amuwe madaraka, kusudi bamuongesie kumushaara nie-aalinde efamili yewe.</p> <p>Saakhola maendeleo ta. Ekasi yewe khunywa kamalwa nende chinyama chinjosie, kasima chirekodi cha lingala ne bikhana.</p> <p>Aukakho bus khumaendeleo ke basebe.”</p>	<p>“A bukusu has two wives; first wife lives in Bungoma in the farm, second wife lives with him in Mombasa.</p> <p>Each wife has four children. He hopes to get a bukusu MD to give him promotion to ease the burden of two families.</p> <p>He does not make any investments. He only drinks and eats ‘nyama choma,’ listens to lingala music and entertains young women.</p> <p>He is amazed by the success made by the Kikuyu men.</p>
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The above joke stereotypes Bukusu men as polygamous. They marry more than one wife and give birth to several children. The incongruity in this joke is as a result of the encyclopaedic knowledge that the hearer has about giving birth to many kids and can’t take good care of them and consequences of poor investment. Instead of the bukusu man investing his earnings wisely, he entertains young women, takes beer and roast meat. He is only left in amazement by the success of Kikuyu men who are known to invest their earnings wisely. According to this joke, bukusu men are perceived to be extravagant, yet they make very little in terms of earnings. They seem to live in the world of, “tomorrow will take care of itself.”

#### (J 6)

Lubukusu	English Translation
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<p>Buli omundu kaulilakho bali sumba kimibukusu kiaria khubeiya bakhasi bakisasa. Kiasima khubeiya omukhasi khukwama mulukongo mwabwe, olitayari khumenya mungo. No-obeela khumubukusu, wiyame khulela abaana bewe bosu nende besichola. Eli raisi khumanya kabala omusecha omubukusu nakhali omwaminifu tawe. Kimiaka kirano nekiwa nakharera omwana yesi yesi wesichola, manya busa oli sumba kuno malaika nikwo. Newe nokhenya mao omukhwe keche amenye nanywe mungo, yenyekhana omanywe khufuka busuma nende murere nokhabeela khusumba yuno tawe. Nomutekhela kumuchele namwe kamaindi ne kamakanda nga siakhulia siekoloba, kanaendelee khulindilila siakhulia sie koloba</p>	<p>Everyone has had about bukusu men. They are intimidated by the modern woman. They like marrying a girl from the village who is happy to stay at home. But if you get married to the man, be ready to take care of his children from his teenage days to date. Unlike many men, you can always tell if a bukusu man is unfaithful. If he has not brought any child from an illicit affair in five years, then relax, the man is an angel. And if you don't want to have a live-in mother-in-law, learn to cook ugali and 'mrenda' before you marry this man. If you cook for him rice and "githeri" for supper, he will be waiting for dinner.</p>
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Bukusu men are portrayed as lacking ambition. They are known to be contented with what they have and that is why they are never interested in modern women. They prefer the local ones in the village. They are very specific with matters to do with diet. The implicated conclusion of this joke is that bukusu men are rigid about current times. They still strongly believe that ugali and 'mrenda' is their ideal diet and they are not ready to embrace other diets such as rice and 'githeri' for supper. That they still believe in giving birth to several children and according to them children belong to the father and not the mother; thus a Bukusu man will go after and bring home all the children he gets out of wedlock.

**(J 7)**

Speaker A: *Sina sikila abandul bamali sebasima kamalesi ka asprini tawe?*

*(Why don't black people like aspirin?)*

Speaker B: *Sikila kamawanga niko, lundi kakhola ekasi.*

*(Because they are white, and they work).*

The above joke stereotypes the attitude that the black people, bukusu included, had towards the Western civilization during colonialism. Incongruity is achieved when the African people hate aspirin which is white in colour just like that of the white man, but the medicine heals them when they take it.

#### **(J 8) Pathologist Kenya**

*Kumulambo mulala kuarerwa mumaiti ne kimunamuna.*

*(A dead body turns up at the mortuary, with a big smile on its faces.)*

*Takitari kakhola buchunguzi, na akhupila omukhongo wa polisi lusimu*

*(After autopsies, the pathologist calls the police Inspector)*

Pathologist: “*Kumulambo kuno kwomubukusu, afwile sikila alile busuma bukali  
nende engokho paka kasimbwa.*”

*(“This body is for a Bukusu man, who died of constipation after a very  
heavy meal of ugali and chicken.”)*

This joke stereotypes Bukusu men who are known to consume large amounts of food, especially if it is ugali served with chicken. The incongruity of this joke lies in the violation of world of knowledge that food kills instead of providing energy. The implicature in this joke; the Bukusu like ugali and chicken is entertained. The humorous effect is achieved through the strengthening of the stereotype that the Bukusu are gluttons.

**(J 9) Bukusu Women**

First Date: *Omuila musinema nende muoteli esiene.*

*(You take her to a movie and an expensive restaurant).*

Second Date: *Okenia basasi bewe ne mawe achinja engokho ne busuma*

*(You meet her parents and her mum makes ugali and chicken for you).*

Third Date: *Wasaka chikhu na kenya omubeisye*

*(You have sex; she wants you to marry her).*

4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: *Mwasalile babana bataru newe kumoyo kuwayo khulubeka lwekhukwasaka chikhu.*

*(You already have three kids together and hate the thought of having sex).*

The incongruity in the above joke indicates that the idea of giving birth to many children by the Bukusu women in most cases does not strengthen the relationship between the husband and the wife. In this joke, the woman gives birth to three kids within four years. The idea that the husband hates the thought of having sex is the punch line and thus the turning point in their marriage.

**(J 10)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
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Wakhungu kengila muoteli ne kenya khulangisia engokho, lakini buubi endi sakebulila engokho mulusungu balanga bali si tawe. Omukholi owenya khumurelela n시오 alia, aloma lusungu lwongene.	Wakhungu walks into a hotel and wants to order chicken but unfortunately he can't remember how chicken is called in English. The waiter who wants to take his order is only English proficient.
Wakhungu kabona owikhalile simbi nae, khusaani yewe kalikho kamaki kane, naabolela omukholi ali "nenya mawabwe!"	Wakhungu sees the guy next to him with a plate with four eggs on it. Wakhungu points to the plate of eggs and says to the waiter, "I want their mother!"

In this joke, incongruity is achieved when Wakhungu does not know how chicken is called in English and the waiter only knows how it is called in English. The punch line is achieved when Wakhungu says, "I want their mother!" while pointing at the eggs. This joke also stereotypes the bukusu people as those who prefer chicken to other meals. Chicken is synonymous with them such that even when inside a hotel, they seem to only appreciate chicken as their only preferred meal.

#### **4.2.2 Incongruity Expressed Through Explicatures**

Incongruity and explicatures when combined, helps to explain how Lubukusu jokes are elucidated at the explicature level. What causes laughter in a joke is the sudden perception of incongruity between a concept and the real objects. That is what the hearer expects turns out to be the opposite. This is a process that involves a search for maximal relevance, finding irrelevance (incongruous phenomena) and at the end deriving optimal relevance.

Rothbart (1976:84–85) posits that, incongruity which is a conflict between what a person expects and what is actually experienced is essential to all forms of humour and that incongruity may be

resolved by reconciling the incongruous elements, as in understanding the punch line of a joke. While it is controversial whether resolution of incongruity is always necessary for humour appreciation, there is agreement that incongruity and resolution are both important in the appreciation of jokes.

According to the Relevance Theory, incongruity develops as a result of violation manifested in the encyclopaedic cognitive environment of the hearer. The incongruity resolution is the realization that there is a violation of the world knowledge. The following jokes are examples that apply incongruity at the explicature level.

**(J 11)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
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<p>Sumba kulala kwacha musinyosi, kwalengelelamo ne kureba kuli, “wasee, umbeka baada ye kumuda si?” Omubeki kalola musinyosi ne abola ali, “embi chisaa chibili chiri,” ne sumba kuwao.</p> <p>Olichisuku chitaru chibira, sumba chana kwakobola lundi. Kwalengelela ne kureba.... “umbeka paata ye kumuta si?” Omubeki kalola balindile khubekwa ne abola ali, “baada ya karibu chisaa chibili,” ne sumba kuwao.</p> <p>Oli lichuma lilala libira ne kwola lundi, kulengelela musinosi ne kureba kuli, “umbeka baada ye sisa si?” Omubeki kalola musinyosi khumanya alinende babechile khubeka lichune benga, “paata ye esa ndala ne nusu,” ne kuwao.</p> <p>Omubeki kabolela omusale wewe musinyosi, “ewe, Wangwe, londa khusumba kwo obone niekucha, alafu endakhubeka busa.”</p> <p>Sise sisimbi pataye, Wangwe akobola na achakha sana. Omubeki kabola ali, “kano kafwana kamalayi, achile wae ngane kamile-ano?”</p> <p>Wangwe kamubolela ali, “munju yowo.”</p>	<p>A guy sticks his head into a barber shop and asks, “hey how long before I can get a haircut?” The barber looks around the shop and say, “ about two hours,” and the guy leaves.</p> <p>About three days later the same guy sticks his head in the door and asks.... “how long before I can get a haircut?” Again the barber looks around at the shop full of customers and says, “about two hours.” The guy leaves.</p> <p>A week later the same guy sticks his head in the shop and asks, “how long before I can get a haircut?” The barber looks around the shop and says, “about an hour and a half.” The guy leaves.</p> <p>The barber tells his friend in the shop, “hey Wangwe, follow that guy and see where he goes, I’ll give you a free haircut.”</p> <p>In a little while, Wangwe comes back laughing hystericall. The barber says, “this must be good, where did he go when he left here?”</p> <p>Wangwe says, “to your house.”</p>
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In the above joke, the encyclopaedic world knowledge of the hearer is violated. The hearer thinks that guy who comes to the barber shop really wants a haircut. The intention of this guy is on something else. The incongruity is found in the words: “about two hours” and “about an hour and a half” which is interpreted as enough time for this guy to visit the barber’s home, most likely for illicit love affair with his wife, the incongruity resolution leads to the punch line when Wangwe comes back laughing hysterically and tells the barber that the guy went to his house. It becomes apparent that any time the guy shows up at the barbers shop, his next stop is at the

barber's house. After the hearer discovers the intention of the guy who visits the barber's shop for an alleged haircut, the humorous effect comes about.

“Mchongoano” (ritual) is a type of a joke. As a form of a joke it has become very popular in Kenya. The following joke is another example that use incongruity at the explicature level.

**(J 12)**

Bali ewe omwifwi paka onyala weba esukari khukhwama mumuchehenye.

(That you are a great thief that you can steal sugar from already made tea)

In the above joke, it is impossible to steal already dissolved sugar from tea. This cannot happen in the normal world. The opponent in this joke is playfully insulted as being a great thief, because he or she can achieve the impossible by stealing dissolved sugar. The skill of the thief achieving the impossible strengthens the insult and after the hearer discovers the insult, the humorous effect comes out.

**(J 13)**

In the following joke, a girl went to introduce the man she wanted to marry, to her father.

Lubukusu	English Translation
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Father: “Khane wenya khebeisia omukoko wase, okhola kasi si?”	“So you want to marry my daughter, what do you do for a living?”
Man: “Namile busa endi musiboo. Nanya khuchaka khuenja kimilimo.”	“I just came out of prison; I will search for a job soon.”
Father: “Olisina....!!!! Waba musiboo ne olikhowenya khubeiya omukoko wase, wakosa sina?”	“Waat....!!!! You were in prison and you want to marry my daughter, what did you do?”
Man: “Nera omundu”	“I killed a person”
Father: “Kakhukosela sina?”	“What did he do?”
Man: “Kaloba ali ekhabeiya omukoko wewe ta.”	“He denied me to marry his daughter”
Father: “Ese sendi nende buubi bwosi nawe ta. Karibu mufamili musani wase”	“I do not have any problem with you,” welcome to the family son”

In the joke above, incongruity is achieved when father of the girl discovers that the man who wants to marry his daughter has just been released from prison. The reason for his incarceration was, he killed a person who rejected marriage to his daughter. The punch line is achieved when the father of the girl realizes that this man is serious and thus he may suffer the same fate if he does not allow his daughter to marry the man.

**(J 14)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
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<p>Omundu mulala kengila muoteli. Ekomputa abele eli-murumu yewe, ne aamua khurumila omukhayе wewe eimeili.</p> <p>Lakini, kaandika eadresi ekhali yo mukhasi ta, ne arumila namulekhwa abele owamile mumasika ko-musecha wewe. Namulekhwa kaamua khucheeka eimeili, sikila abele kalindile biililo khukhwaama khubalebe nende basale. Paata ye khusoma eparua chana, ne-anyira. Omwana wewe kengila murumu khangu, anyola mawe asi, na abona ekomputa esoma eli.....</p> <p>Khu: Omukhayе wase nie nasima, namanyile endi waukile sana khunyola likhuwa khukhwama khwise. Ano balinende chikomputa bafukilila orumire eparua nibo wasima. Nienola sai, na nengile murumu. Nabone buli sindu sili tayari, nakhulindile ewe wole muchuli. Endikheklusubila</p>	<p>A man checked into a hotel. There was a computer in his room, so he decided to send a mail to his wife.</p> <p>However he accidentally typed the wrong email address without realizing he sent the mail to a widow who had just returned from her husband's funeral. The widow decided to check her mail, expecting condolence messages from relatives and friends. After reading the first message she fainted. The son rushed into the room, found his mother on the floor, and saw the computer screen which read.....</p> <p>To: My loving wife, I know you are surprised to hear from me. They have computers here, and we are allowed to send mails to loved ones. I have just arrived and have been checked in. I see that everything has been prepared for your arrival tomorrow. Expecting you darling. "I can't wait to see you."</p>
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In this joke, the knowledge that the hearer has is that the man is actually sending the mail to his wife. It is also in the knowledge of the hearer that the messages to be received by the widow are condolences from friends and relatives. Incongruity is achieved when the man sends the email to the wrong person who happens to be a bereaved (widow) woman. The punch line sets in when the widow reads the mail and faints because according to her, the mail is from her dead husband who is expecting her to join him wherever he is.

### (J 15)

This joke is about a pregnant mother who sits improperly. One of her children sees her and a

conversation begins:

Boy: *“Mother, this time round you will give birth to a boy child.”*

*(“Mayi, esafari ino olebula omwana omusorili”)*

Mother: *“Why?”*

*(“Sina sikila?”*

Boy: *“I have seen beards.”*

*(“Nabone bunanwa.”)*

The world of knowledge is that an unborn baby inside the womb cannot be seen. An unborn baby inside its mother’s womb cannot have beards even if it is a boy. Boys start growing beards at around 18 years of age. Incongruity is created when the boy says, he has seen beards. The mention of the boy that, “I have seen beards,” is humorous.

#### **4.2.3 Incongruity Expressed Through Implicatures**

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986:250), implicature of an utterance could be defined as “those contextual assumptions and implicatures which the hearer has to recover in order to satisfy himself that the speaker has observed the principle of relevance. Further, they define implicature as “an extensively communicated assumption that is derived solely via the process of pragmatic inference.” Implicatures are intended contextual assumptions and so function as premises in inference process.

Implicatures lead to an interpretation consistent with the principle of relevance. A speaker expects the hearer to derive them if he wants his utterance to be relevant to the hearer. Two types of implicatures are proposed: implicated premises and implicated conclusions. Deriving an implicature from an explicature is a two step process which requires an implicated premise and

an implicated conclusion resulting to incongruity that leads to humour and punch line in a joke.

The following Lubukusu jokes are elucidated using the notion of incongruity and implicatures.

The first joke is a conversation between two interlocutors which takes place in a public toilet.

#### (J 16) Public Toilet Drama

Lubukusu	English Translation
Naaba mchoo ye mtauni, abele nie nanja kimilimo endi nembulila esauti khukhwama mchoo ekindi, “eeh! Oriena?”	I was in the public toilet and had just sat down, a voice from the next cubicle said "Hi! how are you ?"
Muchisoni, nendoma nandi, “embela.”	Embarrassed, I said, "I'm doing fine".
Ne esauti chana ereba, “nono, sina nisio khukhola?”	The voice said "So what are you up to?"
Nabola ndi, “endikhekhola nisio wesi olikhokhola!”	I said, "Just doing the same as you!”
Khukhwama mchoo ekindi yoo, “enyala necha abwenao?”	From next door, "Can I come over?"
Nengasirike, nabola ndi, “sendinende bubwangu tawe.”	Annoyed, I said “rather busy right now.”
Esauti yabola eli, “ulila, endakhupaila, aliyo omusilu mchoo elisimbi olachibanga kamarebo kase kosi.”	The voice said, "Listen, I will have to call you back, there's an idiot next door answering all my questions"

This joke is derived through the implicature that there can be a misunderstanding in a quiet place such as a public toilet especially when a person in the next toilet speaks on phone. The incongruity in this joke is achieved when one person in a public toilet cube thinks that the person in the next cubicle is talking to him. They engage in a conversation unknowingly. The one on phone thinks he is actually talking to a person on the other end of the line while the other person

in the separate toilet cube thinks the one on phone is talking to him. The assumption that people are not supposed to talk when (while) inside the toilet is not the case here.

**(J 17)**

Bali ewenywe butambi bukali, muli nende enju ye bunyasi, abefwi nebecha baloma bali,  
“mwikuleo namwe khurere chikhafu.”

(That at your home you are so poor that your house is grass thatched and when robbers come, they say, “open or we bring cows.”

The above joke is derived from the implicature that people who build grass thatched houses are poor. The exposure of the poverty and the fact that cows can bring down the roof is the insult of the joke. The assumption is that the roof offers protection but this is not the case as robbers do not need much effort to gain access into the house.

**(J 18)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
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<p>Teacher: Sina sibi?</p> <p>Wekesa: Khulinende khayu khakekhe engo. Ese engona khusitanda silala nende mayi ne papa. Buli musilo papa kandanga ne kandeba ali, “Wekesa olikhokona?” ese emuchiba ndi, “tawe,” ne kakhupa paka emoni ebimba.</p> <p>Teacher: “Luno musilo raro nakhureba lundi, Sila chu, okhamuchiba tawe.” Lusuku lulondakhoWekesa kecha lundi emoni yabimbile. “Eeeh! Emoni yabimbile lundi sina?”</p> <p>Wekesa: Papa kandebire lundi ali, “Wekesa Olikhokona?” ese nasila chi. Naba papa ne mayi banja khukhwisisikha, mayi aela khangu ne khuramo lukukulo.</p> <p>mayi Papa kareba mayi, “olikhowicha?” kaloma ali, “endikhonicha, newe?” Sebanyala bacha abundu wosi wosi bandekha ta. Ese naloma nandi, “ninde Sesi endikho niche!”</p>	<p>What is wrong?</p> <p>Our house is very small. My parents and I sleep on the same bed. Every night my dad asks, “Wekesa are you asleep?” then I say, “No” and he slaps my face giving me a black eye.</p> <p>To night when your dad asks again, keep dead quiet and don’t answer. The following day Wekesa comes back with a black eye again. “My goodness why the black eye again?”</p> <p>Dad asked me again, “Wekesa, are you sleeping?” and I shut up. Then my dad and mom started moving, at the same time mum was breathing erotically and screaming. Then dad asked mum, “are you coming?” mum said, “yes I am coming, are you coming too?” Dad answered, “yes.” They don’t usually go anywhere without me so I said, “wait for me, I am also coming.”</p>
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In this joke, the implicated premise is that sex is meant for adults and not children. This is brought out in words such as “endikhonicha” (coming). The incongruity in this joke is achieved through different interpretations of the word “coming” on one hand by parents, and on the other hand by the boy.

### (J 19) In the Court of Law

Judge: *Waibakho nende ekesi mukoti?*

*Have you ever been with a case in court?*

Boy: *Eeh, naibakho nayo.*

*Yes, off course.*

Judge: *Bolela ekoti ino ekesi yaaba ndala si.*

*Tell this court what case it was.*

Boy: *Yaaba ekesi emali*

*“It was a black case,” he replied quickly.*

In the above joke, the two meanings of the word case: bag and lawsuit respectively bring about incongruity. The incongruity in this joke is used to bring out the ignorance of the boy, who gives a different interpretation of the word case; a bag, for instance a suitcase. The meaning of the word case by the boy is derived from the implicated meaning according to him.

**(J 20)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
Wakoli nende Nelima ba-aba balwale muosipito yebabonekhe. Esuku ndala abele babira simbi nende nie baandu basokela ne Wakoli asuna mumechi alusiba. Nelima kasuna mumechi na amurusiamo.	Wakoli and Nelima were both patients in a mental hospital. One day while they were walking past the swimming pool, Wakoli suddenly jumped into the deep end and sank. Nelima promptly jumped in to save him. She pulled him out.
Ne takitari aba awa Nelima erusa ye khurula muosipito nga kabona ali amuokoe Wakoli sikila kamanya busa nono ali Nelima kaonile.	When the doctor became aware of Nelima’s acts she immediately ordered for her to be discharged from hospital as she considered her mentally stable.
Ne acha khu Nelima na amubolela ali, “Nelima, endi nende elomo endayi nende embi. Endayi sikila olikhonyola erusa ye-ekhucha engo sikila omuokoe omulwale owasio, embi sikila omulwale nio-orusisie mumechi emikilee mwipafu khurumikhilila kumushipi. Pole koo, kafwile.	She went and told her, “Nelima, I have good news and bad news. The good news is you’re being discharged since you saved a fellow patient, bad news is, Wakoli hang himself in the bathroom. Am sorry he is dead.
Nelima kamuchiba takitari ali, “sekemikile tawe, emurere mwipafu kome. Endikhenja engo asii?”	Nelima replied, “He didn’t hang himself, I put him there to dry. How soon can I go home?”)

The above joke is derived through the implicature that people in a mental hospital are not of sound mind. The receiver of this joke has to use his or her inferential ability to understand this

joke, thus deriving humour. Incongruity in this joke: Nelima who is insane saves Wakoli and later kills him by hanging creates the punch line. It's unusual (ironic) for an insane person to save someone who is drowning.

**(J 21)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
Maria: "Nafula sina sibi nende omwana woo?"	Maria: "What is wrong with your baby?"
Nafula: "Alwala, takitari kambele kamalesi ne kambolela ali, embe nengasisikha kwanja niemuwe."	Nafula: "He is sick. The doctor has given me medicine instructing me to always shake it before giving the baby."
<b>(ekoloba)</b>	<b>(in the evening)</b>
Maria: "Sina sikila omwana nalila lukali?"	Maria: "Why is the baby crying loudly?"
Nafula: Alikhalila sikila endikhemusisikha "Emuwele kamalesi bila khusisikha echupa. Nono endikhesisikha omwana nio kamalesi kali munda kosi kesisikhe."	Nafula: "He is crying because am shaking him. "I gave him medicine without shaking the bottle. So I am shaking the baby in order to shake the medicine in his stomach as well."

This joke is derived through the implicature that Nafula is ignorant. The incongruity in this joke lies in the ignorance of Nafula; she gives the medicine to the baby without shaking it, and then shakes the baby afterwards, in order to shake the medicine in its stomach. It would be impossible to shake already taken medicine which is in the stomach.

**(J 22)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
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<p>Sumba abele alinende enjala, akenda kenda mubikila khusosko. Ne abona anje we-muoteli khulupao baandike bali,</p> <p>“LIA BUSA PAKA WIKURE ALAFU OLEKHE BABECHUKHULU BOO BARUNGE”</p> <p>Sumba kwauluukha ne kumunamuna alafu kwengila muoteli, kwalangisia siakhulia sikali. Kwalia, kwekura ne omukholi akuwelesia a epili. Olikubona epili baingile sana, ne kuloma ne kuokesia khulupao anje, “ewe sowabone ta? Babechukhulu base nibobenyibwa barunge epili ino.”</p> <p>Omukholi kakuchiiba ali: Epili yino seliyoo ta, EYINO YA KUKAO”</p>	<p>A guy was roaming around the streets feeling very hungry, he then saw a sign board outside a hotel which read,</p> <p>“EAT AS MUCH AS YOU CAN AND LET YOUR GRANDCHILDREN PAY THE BILL”</p> <p>With a sign of relief he smiled and walked into the hotel, he ordered more food and ate as much as he could and the waiter gave him the bill after eating. On seeing the huge bill he smiled and pointed at the sign board and said, “don’t you see? Only my children need to pay this bill.”</p> <p>The waiter replied: This is not your bill, “THIS IS YOUR GRANDFATHER’S BILL”</p>
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This joke is derived through implicature that sometimes people misinterpret information. The incongruity in the above joke is realized through use of irony. There is irony in the words “EAT AS MUCH AS YOU CAN AND LET YOUR CHILDREN PAY THE BILL” The world of encycopaedic knowledge the hearer has that one can eat in a hotel and then have his bill paid by the grandchildren is not true. The hungry guy misinterpreted the meaning of the words on the sign board. The sign board is meant to attract customers. The punch line is achieved when the waiter gives him a hefty bill telling him that it is his grandfather’s bill. Thus he has to settle it.

## Summary

In this chapter we discussed the ability of the Relevance Theory in the elucidation of jokes. This was done in relation to the concept of incongruity. The elucidation of jokes was done through the



following levels: incongruity expressed through stereotypes, incongruity expressed through explicatures, and incongruity expressed through implicatures.

The concept of incongruity is the reason why we find jokes funny. Jokes are funny because they involve ideas that run against our expectations. In many jokes, there is an apparent incongruity between the set-up and the punch line. At all the three levels of joke elucidation, humour is arrived at through the discovery of incongruity. Context is also important in elucidating jokes. Context spells out relevance, which determines the choice speaker's utterances and the choice of the hearer's words that lead to the correct elucidation of jokes.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, conclusion for our study shall be inferred. The study set up to analyze jokes in Lubukusu to find out whether they can be interpreted and analyzed using Relevance Theory by Sperber and Wilson (1986/95). The study was conducted according to the Relevance Theory. The study focused on conducting an analysis of jokes in Lubukusu language.

Various sections dealing with aspects of jokes in a lengthy discussion were done in chapter three and four. This will assist approve or disapprove findings that some Lubukusu jokes have to be understood pragmatically; the concept of incongruity plays a role in the elucidation of Lubukusu jokes, they depend on ambiguity to elicit humour, thus the pragmatic meaning of Lubukusu jokes is brought out when using the Relevance Theory.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The study aimed to test the ability of Relevance Theory in elucidating of Lubukusu jokes. From the sampled data and the outcome of the analysis, it is discovered that the theory is adequate in analyzing Lubukusu jokes. A joke has been found to be a text that can be analyzed. A joke can be in form of; one line, question+ and answer or a short narrative. More importantly in jokes is that, for a joke to qualify as a joke, it must have a punch line.

It was discovered that jokes have different roles to play; jokes produce humour for the purpose of

entertainment, jokes are used to convey messages, through jokes, a culture of people is learnt and bad behavior can be corrected using jokes.

The elucidation of jokes has been observed to include incongruity. Incongruity is a conflict which occurs between what is expected and what is actually occurs in a joke. Through incongruity resolution, a punch line is formed which is the climax of a joke. According to Veale (2004:103–105), humour and incongruity appear to be constant bedfellows. Humour is a phenomenon that relies on incongruity.

In the third hypothesis, it is found out that ambiguity in jokes allows different interpretation from which was originally meant thus creating humorous effect. Ambiguity coincides with the final part of a verbal joke recognized as a punch line to bring out humour.

It is also clear that, during the analysis of the jokes in this study, some people find a joke to be humorous while others might not find it to be humorous. This is because the speaker picks what he or she thinks is relevant to make his/her utterance humorous while the hearer picks what he/she thinks is relevant to make the interpretation humorous. I therefore conclude that when I ventured in this study, I personally conceived that Lubukusu jokes can be understood pragmatically; the incongruity played an important role in the elucidation, analysis and processing of Lubukusu jokes and the ambiguity brings out the meaning of Lubukusu jokes pragmatically.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study helps to enlighten the study of jokes in the Lubukusu language especially for researchers who have an inspiration in indigenous languages in Kenya.

This study will also help give insights on the study of the elucidation, analysis and processing that is conducted on jokes in the Lubukusu language more so when using the Relevance Theory.

The study can also help any linguist who would like to conduct a comparative study on jokes and it will further give insights on.

This section gives insight on the significance of the study. It is a confirmation that some Lubukusu jokes have pragmatic meaning.

It was motivated by the realization that incongruity and ambiguity played a role in the elucidation of jokes.

#### **5.4 Recommendations for Further Study**

This study looked at Lubukusu jokes in general. It will also be intriguing to further study jokes in Lubukusu under different categories; children and adult jokes.

In this study, it was discovered that most Lubukusu jokes are based on stereotypes. It will be of interest to carry out future study on the relationship between jokes and stereotypes in Lubukusu language.

It will also be of linguistic interest to carry out such a study on other luhya dialects like Lulogooli, Lunyala, Lumarama, Lukabarasi, Lutachoni, Luisukha, Luwanga and Lutiriki, because in jokes, there are variables related in cultural practices and believes.

In this study there was a mention of practical jokes. We recommend future study on jokes to be

focused on practical as well as written texts.

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## Appendices

### (J 1) Bukusu Community

Lubukusu	English Translation
Teacher: Wasike, nokhula wenya okhole kasi si?	Wasike, what would you like to become when you grow up?
Wasike: Ese Nanya-ambe omulindi ofwala eunifomu	I would like to be a watchman who wears uniform.
Teacher: Newe Nekesa?	What about you Nekesa?
Nekesa: Ese nanya-ambe omupakasi wee-munju ofwala eunifomu.	I would like to be a maid who wears uniform.

### (J 2) Funeral

At the funeral, the Bukusu woman kept sobbing and crying:

“NAMANYA BUSA! NAMANYA BUSA!”

(“I KNEW IT! I KNEW IT!”)

So a family member pulled her aside and asked her,

“Sina nisio abele wamanya?”

(“What did you know?”)

She replied,

“Bibindu bye ba Chainisi sebimenya khusisa sileyi ta.”

(“Chinese products don’t last long”)

### (J 3) IN INKGHO HOTELS

Jai	-	Shs. 5
Japati	-	Shs. 4.50
Gugu	-	Shs. 5
Ukali	-	Shs. 30
Keki	-	Shs. 15
Mgade	-	Shs. 40
Mchusi	-	Shs. 5

### (J 4) Bukusu Women

Lubukusu	English Translation
Baakhana babukusu basima limenya lieaasi. Basima bekhale engo patala yekhucha khulia muchioteli chimbofu, pora echai ekhatambao tawe. Busuma nende engokho bilabao aaba ewe omukhasi wanyola.	Bukusu women are known to be modest. They would rather stay at home so long as there is enough tea than have you take her out to an expensive hotel. So long as there is constant supply of ugali and chicken, she is yours for keeps.
Lundi bamanyikhana khuba mubiasara bie khusala babaana. Kabali salikhanunia ta aaba kaesisie.	They are also known to be in the business of making children. If she is not breast feeding, she is pregnant.
Mulukungo, kaokoka, niye aaba treshara wenasari, sekretari we kumukanda kwe basiele. Bamanyikhana khulondekhana nende ekalikiti mwichune.	In the village, she is known as being born again. She is the treasurer of the kindergarten, secretary of the women merry-go-round and curly kitted hair is their distinctive look.

### (J 5) A Bukusu Man

Lubukusu	English Translation
<p>“Onyola omubukusu ne bakhasi babili, omukhulu amenyile Ebungoma mumukunda, omukekhe amenyile naye Mombasa.</p> <p>Buli omukhasi alinende aabana bane. Omundu yuno kekomba anyole omukhongo omubukusu khukasi nio amuwe madaraka, kusudi bamuongesie kumushaara nie-aalinde efamili yewe.</p> <p>Saakhola maendeleo ta. Ekasi yewe khunywa kamalwa nende chinyama chinjosie, kasima chirekodi cha lingala ne bikhana.</p> <p>Aukakho busa khumaendeleo ke basebe.”</p>	<p>“A bukusu has two wives; first wife lives in Bungoma in the farm, second wife lives with him in Mombasa.</p> <p>Each wife has four children. He hopes to get a Bukusu MD to give him promotion to ease the burden of two families.</p> <p>He does not make any investments. He only drinks and eats ‘nyama choma,’ listens to lingala music and entertains young women.</p> <p>He is amazed by the success made by the Kikuyu men.</p>

**(J 6)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
<p>Buli omundu kaulilakho bali sumba kimibukusu kiaria khubeiya bakhasi bakisasa. Kiasima khubeiya omukhasi khukwama mulukongo mwabwe, olitayari khumenya mungo. No-obeela khumubukusu, wiyame khulela abaana bewe boshi nende besichola. Eli raisi khumanya kabala omusecha omubukusu nakhali omwaminifu tawe. Kimiaka kirano nekiwa nakharera omwana yesi yesi wesichola, manya busa oli sumba kuno malaika nikwo. Newe nokhenya mao omukhwe keche amenye nanywe mungo, yenyekhana omanyeha khufuka busuma nende murere nokhabeela khusumba yuno tawe. Nomutekhela kumuchele namwe kamaindi ne kamakanda nga siakhulia siekoloba, kanaendeleo khulindilila siakhulia sie koloba</p>	<p>Everyone has had about bukusu men. They are intimidated by the modern woman. They like marrying a girl from the village who is happy to stay at home. But if you get married to the man, be ready to take care of his children from his teenage days to date. Unlike many men, you can always tell if a bukusu man is unfaithful. If he has not brought any child from an illicit affair in five years, then relax, the man is an angel. And if you don't want to have a live-in mother-in-law, learn to cook ugali and 'mrenda' before you marry this man. If you cook for him rice and "githeri" for supper, he will be waiting for dinner.</p>

**(J 7)**

Speaker A: *Sina sikila abandu bamali sebasima kamalesi ka asprini tawe?*

*(Why don't black people like aspirin?)*

Speaker B: *Sikila kamawanga niko, lundi kakhola ekasi.*

*(Because they are white, and they work).*

### **(J 8) Pathologist Kenya**

*Kumulambo mulala kuarerwa mumaiti ne kumunamuna.*

*(A dead body turns up at the mortuary, with a big smile on its face.)*

*Takitari kakhola buchunguzi, na akhupila omukhongo wa polisi lusimu*

*(After autopsies, the pathologist calls the police Inspector)*

Pathologist: *“Kumulambo kuno kwomubukusu, afwile sikila alile busuma bukali  
nende engokho paka kasimbwa.”*

*(“This body is for a Bukusu man, who died of constipation after a very  
heavy meal of ugali and chicken.”)*

### **(J 9) Bukusu Women**

First Date: *Omula musinema nende muoteli esiene.*

*(You take her to a movie and an expensive restaurant).*

Second Date: *Okenia basasi bewe ne mawe achinja engokho ne busuma*

*(You meet her parents and her mum makes ugali and chicken for you).*

Third Date: *Wasaka chiku na kenya omubeisye*

*(You have sex; she wants you to marry her).*

4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary: *Mwasalile babana bataru newe kumoyo kuwayo khulubeka lwekhukhwasaka chikhu.*

*(You already have three kids together and hate the thought of having sex).*

**(J 10)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
Wakhungu kengila muoteli ne kenya khulangisia engokho, lakini buubi endi sakebulila engokho mulusungu balanga bali si tawe. Omukholi owenya khumurelela nisio alia, aloma lusungu lwongene.	Wakhungu walks into a hotel and wants to order chicken but unfortunately he can't remember how chicken is called in English. The waiter who wants to take his order is only English proficient.
Wakhungu kabona owikhalile simbi nae, khusaani yewe kalikho kamaki kane, naabolela omukholi ali "nenya mawabwe!"	Wakhungu sees the guy next to him with a plate with four eggs on it. Wakhungu points to the plate of eggs and says to the waiter, "I want their mother!"

**(J 11)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
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<p>Sumba kulala kwacha musinyosi, kwalengelelamo ne kureba kuli, “wasee, umbeka baada ye kumuda si?” Omubeki kalola musinyosi ne abola ali, “embu chisaa chibili chiri,” ne sumba kuwao.</p> <p>Olichisuku chitaru chibira, sumba chana kwakobola lundi. Kwalengelela ne kureba.... “umbeka paata ye kumuda si?” Omubeki kalola balindile khubekwa ne abola ali, “baada ya karibu chisaa chibili,” ne sumba kuwao.</p> <p>Oli lichuma lilala libira ne kwola lundi, kulengelela musinasi ne kureba kuli, “umbeka baada ye sisa si?” Omubeki kalola musinyosi khumanya alinende babechile khubeka lichune benga, “paata ye esa ndala ne nusu,” ne kuwao.</p> <p>Omubeki kabolela omusale wewe musinyosi, “ewe, Wangwe, londa khusumba kwo obone niekucha, alafu endakhubeka busa.”</p> <p>Sisa sisimbi pataye, Wangwe akobola na achakha sana. Omubeki kabola ali, “kano kafwana kamalayi, achile wae ngane kamile-ano?”</p> <p>Wangwe kamubolela ali, “munju yowo.”</p>	<p>A guy sticks his head into a barber shop and asks, “hey how long before I can get a haircut?” The barber looks around the shop and say, “ about two hours,” and the guy leaves.</p> <p>About three days later the same guy sticks his head in the door and asks..... “how long before I can get a haircut?” Again the barber looks around at the shop full of customers and says, “about two hours.” The guy leaves.</p> <p>A week later the same guy sticks his head in the shop and asks, “how long before I can get a haircut?” The barber looks around the shop and says, “about an hour and a half.” The guy leaves.</p> <p>The barber tells his friend in the shop, “hey Wangwe, follow that guy and see where he goes, I’ll give you a free haircut.”</p> <p>In a little while, Wangwe comes back laughing hysterical. The barber says, “this must be good, where did he go when he left here?”</p> <p>Wangwe says, “to your house.”</p>
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**(J 12)**

*Bali ewe omwifwi paka onyala weba esukari khukhwama mumuchehenye.*

*(That you are a great thief that you can steal sugar from already made tea)*

**(J 13)**



Lubukusu	English Translation
Father: “Khane wenya khebeisia omukoko wase, okhola kasi si?”	“So you want to marry my daughter, what do you do for a living?”
Man: “Namile busa endi musiboo. Nanya khuchaka khuenja kimilimo.”	“I just came out of prison; I will search for a job soon.”
Father: “Olisina....!!!! Waba musiboo ne olikhowenya khubeiya omukoko wase, wakosa sina?”	“Whaat....!!!! You were in prison and you want to marry my daughter, what did you do?”
Man: “Nera omundu” Father: “Kakhukosela sina?”	“I killed a person” “What did he do?”
Man: “Kaloba ali ekhabeiya omukoko wewe Ta.”	“He denied me to marry his daughter”
Father: “Ese sendi nende buubi bwosi nawe ta. Karibu mufamili musani wase”	“I do not have any problem with you,” welcome to the family son”

**(J 14)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
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<p>Omundu mulala kengila muoteli. Ekomputa abele eli-murumu yewe, ne aamua khurumila omukhayе wewe eimeili.</p> <p>Lakini, kaandika eadresi ekhali yo mukhasi ta, ne arumila namulekhwa abele owamile mumasika ko-musecha wewe. Namulekhwa kaamua khucheeka eimeili, sikila abele kalindile biililo khukhwaama khubalebe nende basale. Paata ye khusoma eparua chana, ne-anyira. Omwana wewe kengila murumu khangu, anyola mawe asi, na abona ekomputa esoma eli.....</p> <p>Khu: Omukhayе wase nie nasima, namanyile endi waukile sana khunyola likhuwa khukhwama khwise. Ano balinende chikomputa bafukilila orumire eparua nibo wasima. Nienola sai, na nengile murumu. Nabone buli sindu sili tayari, nakhulindile ewe wole muchuli. Endikheklusubila</p>	<p>A man checked into a hotel. There was a computer in his room, so he decided to send a mail to his wife.</p> <p>However he accidentally typed the wrong email address without realizing he sent the mail to a widow who had just returned from her husband's funeral. The widow decided to check her mail, expecting condolence messages from relatives and friends. After reading the first message she fainted. The son rushed into the room, found his mother on the floor, and saw the computer screen which read.....</p> <p>To: My loving wife, I know you are surprised to hear from me. They have computers here, and we are allowed to send mails to loved ones. I have just arrived and have been checked in. I see that everything has been prepared for your arrival tomorrow. Expecting you darling. "I can't wait to see you."</p>
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**(J 15)**

Boy: *"Mother, this time round you will give birth to a boy child."*

*("Mayi, esafari ino olebula omwana omusorili")*

Mother: *"Why?"*

*("Sina sikila?")*

Boy: *"I have seen beards."*

*("Nabone bunanwa.")*

**(J 16) Public Toilet Drama.**

Lubukusu	English Translation
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Naaba mchoo ye mtauni, abele nie nanja kimilimo endi nembulila esauti khukhwama mchoo ekindi, “eeh! Oriena?”	I was in the public toilet and had just sat down, a voice from the next cubicle said "Hi! how are you ?"
Muchisoni, nendoma nandi, “embela.”	Embarrassed, I said, "I'm doing fine".
Ne esauti chana ereba, “nono, sina nisio khukhola?”	The voice said "So what are you up to?"
Nabola ndi, “endikhekhola nisio wesi olikhokhola!”	I said, "Just doing the same as you!"
Khukhwama mchoo ekindi yoo, “enyala necha abwenao?”	From next door, "Can I come over?"
Nengasirike, nabola ndi, “sendinende bubwangu tawe.”	Annoyed, I said “rather busy right now.”
Esauti yabola eli, “ulila, endakhupaila, aliyo omusilu mchoo elisimbi olachibanga kamarebo kase kosi.”	The voice said, "Listen, I will have to call you back, there's an idiot next door answering all my questions"

**(J 17)**

*Bali ewenywe butambi bukali, muli nende enju ye bunyasi, abefwi nebecha baloma bali, “mwikuleo namwe khurere chikhafu.”*

*(That at your home you are so poor that your house is grass thatched and when robbers come, they say, “open or we bring cows.”*

**(J 18)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
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<p>Teacher: Sina sibi?</p> <p>Wekesa: Khulinende khayu khakekhe engo. Ese engona khusitanda silala nende mayi ne papa. Buli musilo papa kandanga ne kandeba ali, “Wekesa olikhokona?” ese emuchiba ndi, “tawe,” ne kakhupa paka emoni ebimba.</p> <p>Teacher: “Luno musilo raro nakhureba lundi, Sila chu, okhamuchiba tawe.” Lusuku lulondakho Wekesa kecha lundi emoni yabimbile. “Eeh! Emoni yabimbile lundi sina?”</p> <p>Wekesa: Papa kandebire lundi ali, “Wekesa Olikhokona?” ese nasila chi. Naba papa ne mayi banja khukhwisisikha, mayi aela khangu ne khuramo lukukulo. Papa kareba mayi, “olikhowicha?” mayi kaloma ali, “endikhonicha, newe?” Sebanyala bacha abundu wosi wosi bandekha ta. Ese naloma nandi, “ninde Sesi endikho niche!”</p>	<p>What is wrong?</p> <p>Our house is very small. My parents and I sleep on the same bed. Every night my dad asks, “Wekesa are you asleep?” then I say, “No” and he slaps my face giving me a black eye.</p> <p>Tonight when your dad asks again, keep dead quiet and don’t answer. The following day Wekesa comes back with a black eye again. “My goodness why the black eye again?”</p> <p>Dad asked me again, “Wekesa, are you sleeping?” and I shut up. Then my dad and mom started moving, at the same time mum was breathing erotically and screaming. Then dad asked mum, “are you coming?” mum said, “yes I am coming, are you coming too?” Dad answered, “yes.” They don’t usually go anywhere without me so I said, “wait for me, I am also coming.”</p>
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### (J 19) In the Court of Law

Judge: Waibakho nende ekesi mukoti?  
Have you ever been with a case in court?

Boy: Eeh, naibakho nayo.  
Yes, off course.

Judge: Bolela ekoti ino ekesi yaaba ndala si.  
Tell this court what case it was.

Boy: Yaaba ekesi emali  
“It was a black case,” he relied quickly.

### (J 20)

Lubukusu	English Translation
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<p>Wakoli nende Nelima ba-aba balwale muosipito yebabonekhe. Esuku ndala abele babira simbi nende nie baandu basokela ne Wakoli asuna mumechi alusiba. Nelima kasuna mumechi na amurusiamo.</p> <p>Ne takitari aba awa Nelima erusa ye khurula muosipito nga kabona ali amuokoe Wakoli sikila kamanya busa nono ali Nelima kaonile. Ne-acha khu Nelima na amubolela ali,</p> <p>“Nelima, endi nende elomo endayi nende embi. Endayi sikila olikhonyola erusa ye-ekhucha engo sikila omuokoe omulwale owasio, embi sikila omulwale nio-orusisie mumechi emikilee mwipafu khurumikhilila kumushipi. Pole koo, kafwile.</p> <p>Nelima kamuchiba takitari ali, “sekemikile tawe, emurere mwipafu kome. Endikhenja engo asii?”</p>	<p>Wakoli and Nelima were both patients in a mental hospital. One day while they were walking past the swimming pool, Wakoli suddenly jumped into the deep end and sank. Nelima promptly jumped in to save him. She pulled him out.</p> <p>When the doctor became aware of Nelima’s acts she immediately ordered for her to be discharged from hospital as she considered her mentally stable.</p> <p>She went and told her, “Nelima, I have good news and bad news. The good news is you’re being discharged since you saved a fellow patient, bad news is, Wakoli hang himself in the bathroom. Am sorry he is dead.</p> <p>Nelima replied, “He didn’t hang himself, I put him there to dry. How soon can I go home?”</p>
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**(J 21 )**

Lubukusu	English Translation
<p>Maria: “Nafula sina sibi nende omwana woo?” Nafula: “Alwala, takitari kambele kamalesi ne kambolela ali, embe nengasisikha kwanja niemuwe.”</p> <p>(ekoloba) Maria: “Sina sikila omwana nalila lukali?” Nafula: Alikhalila sikila endikhemusisikha “Emuwele kamalesi bila khusisikha echupa. Nono endikhesisikha omwana nio kamalesi kali munda kosi kesisikhe.”</p>	<p>Maria: “What is wrong with your baby?” Nafula: “He is sick. The doctor has given me medicine instructing me to always shake it before giving the baby.”</p> <p>(in the evening) Maria: “Why is the baby crying loudly?” Nafula: “He is crying because am shaking him. “I gave him medicine without shaking the bottle. So I am shaking the baby in order to shake the medicine in his stomach as well.”</p>

**(J 22)**

Lubukusu	English Translation
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<p>Sumba abele alinende enjala, akenda kenda mubikila khusosko. Ne abona anje we-muoteli khulupao baandike bali,</p> <p>“LIA BUSA PAKA WIKURE ALAFU OLEKHE BABECHUKHULU BOO BARUNGE”</p> <p>Sumba kwauluukha ne kumunamuna alafu kwengila muoteli, kwalangisia siakhulia sikali. Kwalia, kwekura ne omukholi akuwelesia a epili. Olikubona epili baingile sana, ne kuloma ne kuokesia khulupao anje, “ewe sowabone ta? Babechukhulu base nibobenyibwa barunge epili ino.”</p> <p>Omukholi kakuchiiba ali: Epili yino seliyoo ta, EYINO YA KUKAO”</p>	<p>A guy was roaming around the streets feeling very hungry, he then saw a sign board outside a hotel which read,</p> <p>“EAT AS MUCH AS YOU CAN AND LET YOUR GRANDCHILDREN PAY THE BILL”</p> <p>With a sign of relief he smiled and walked into the hotel, he ordered more food and ate as much as he could and the waiter gave him the bill after eating. On seeing the huge bill he smiled and pointed at the sign board and said, “don’t you see? Only my children need to pay this bill.”</p> <p>The waiter replied: This is not your bill, “THIS IS YOUR GRANDFATHER’S BILL”</p>
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