

A SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF KIMERU KINSHIP TERMS

BY

KAWIRA JOAN FLORA

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DECLARATION

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

Signed

Date.....

Kawira Joan Flora

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

Signed

Date.....

Dr. Wachira, A.

Signed

Date.....

Mr. Atoh, F.O

DEDICATION

To

My husband Raymond Murithi

My children Denzel Munene Murithi

And

Leslie Mwendu Murithi.

Thank you for your support, encouragement and love.

God Bless.

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I owe my gratitude to everyone whose inspiration, criticisms and contributions enabled me complete this degree.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

F	Father
M	Mother
B	Brother
Z	Sister
S	Son
D	Daughter
MM	Mother's Mother
MF	Mother's father
FZ	Father's Sister
FB	Father's brother
MZ	Mother's sister
MB	Mother's brother
FM	Father's mother
FF	Father's father
DD	Daughter's daughter
DS	Daughter's son
SD	Son's daughter
SS	Son's son
BS	Brother's son
ZS	Sister's son
FZS	Father's Sister's son
FBS	Father's brother's son
MZS	Mother's sister's son

MBS Mother's brother's son
MZD Mother's sister's daughter
FZD Father's sister's daughter
MBD Mother's brother's daughter
FFF Father's father's father
FFM Father's father's mother
FMF Father's mother's father
FMM Father's mother's mother
MMM Mother's mother's mother
MMF Mother's mother's father
MFM Mother's father's mother
FBD Father's brother's daughter
FFB Father's father's brother
FFZ Father's father's sister
BD Brother's daughter
SSS Son's son's son

ABSTRACT

This study seeks to analyze Kimeru kinship terminology with a view of investigating which kinship terms are used for describing the various kinship relations. The Meru culture plays a significant role in establishing which kinship terms are used for certain kinship relations. This study also looks at the various processes used in the formation of Kimeru kinship terms and seeks to establish whether a kinship term describing the same kinship relation takes different forms. The study uses Frame Semantics Theory as proposed by Charles Fillmore (1975, 1976a). A kinship term is analyzed as a frame or a conceptual background against which a word is defined.

The project is presented in four chapters.

Chapter two discusses kinship relation and kinship terminology in general. The chapter examines the two types of families, the kinship systems, the principles of classifying kinship terms and social meanings as brought out by kinship terms.

Chapter three examines Kimeru kinship terms used for various kinship relations and the formation of these kinship terms. This chapter also provides an analysis of Kimeru kinship terms within the framework of Frame Semantics. Findings based on the objectives are also provided.

Finally, chapter four gives a brief summary of the study.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This study analyses Kimeru kinship terms in the light of Frame Semantics. Many scholars view kinship systems and kinship terminologies in various ways.

According to Radcliffe (1967:4) kinship results from the recognition of a social relationship between parents and children, which is not the same thing as the physical relation and may not coincide with it. Thus, the complete social relationship between parent and child may be established not by birth but by adoption.

Murphy (2001) says that kinship is a relationship based on the culturally recognized connection between parents and children (and extended to siblings and through parents to more distant relatives). He defines kinship terminology as a system of linguistic categories for denoting kinds of relatives.

Encyclopaedia Britannica (2014) defines kinship terminology as the system of names applied to categories of kin standing in relationship to one another.

Satarupa (2010) notes that kinship terminology is a cultural terminology that comprises words that describe familiar relationships.

From the definitions above, it is clear that kinship terms describe people who have a kin relation and therefore, for my working definition, I will define kinship terms as words that various language communities employ in addressing and referring to people who are related by blood, by adoption and through marriage.

The focus of this study is on how Kimeru on how kinship terms are distinguished. The study also focuses on the processes used in the formation of Kimeru kinship terms.'

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE LANGUAGE

Kimeru is a Bantu language spoken by Ameru people of Kenya. The Ameru people reside in Meru county and Tharaka Nithi county. The two counties are on the Eastern slopes of Mt. Kenya. Mwebia (2006) however notes that a considerable number of Meru speakers live in other parts of the country as a result of migration, land settlement and employment. A significant number occupy the Laikipia District, Nairobi, Isiolo and parts of the Kenyan Coast.

According to Fediman (1973) as cited in Gacunku (2005) the pre-Meru people who escaped from Mboa along the Kenyan Coast were known as Ngaa. Later the Ngaa entered the area now known as Tharaka and settled. However, due to intermarriage and increase in number, the earlier unity of Ngaa dissolved and they entered the era he called 'the dividing' or dispersal.

It is during this period that the Ngaa split into the current sub-tribes of Meru which represent the various dialects of Ki-meru language. They gradually dispersed, resulting in the loss of their common name (Ngaa) and identity. The various groups that emerged after the dispersal were: Igembe, who settled to the North of Nyambere ranges, the Tigania who occupied the southern slopes of Nyambene ranges, the Imenti who moved to the West into Mt. Kenya forest and the Mwimbi who moved southwards settling below the slopes of Mt. Kenya. Following their dispersal the various tribes were known by their

different names until much later. Marete (1981) notes that the common identity and name were re-established through the shared experience brought about by European colonial occupation and Administration.

In classification of Bantu languages by Guthrie (1967-71:vol 3:11-15), Meru is grouped along with Gikuyu, Embu, Tharaka, Kamba and Sengeju .All these languages forms what he calls the Gikuyu-Kamba group. Guthrie assigns code E50 in the classification. He distinguishes the six languages under this group and gives each of the six languages a code number. Gikuyu E51, Embu E52, Meru E53, Tharaka E54, Kamba - E55 and Sengeju- E56.This classification enables us to place the Kimeru language within the Bantu sub-family of Thagicu.

There are varying views amongst linguists and historians as to the exact number of Kimeru dialects. Marete (1981) recognizes five regional varieties. Ki-Tharaka, Gi-Tigania, Gi-chuka, Ki-Mwimbi and Ki-Imenti. Mberia (1981, 1993) however treats Ki-tharaka as a distinct language and not as a dialect of Kimeru. Guthrie (1967/71) assigns Meru and Tharaka different codes thus treating the two as languages that are distinct from each other. Nkubitu (1993) recognizes only four dialects of Ki-meru- Ki-Igembe, Gi-Tigania, Ki-Imenti and Ki- Mwimbi. Gacunku (2005) and Mwebia (2006) distinguish between eight distinct dialects: Ki-igembe, Gi-Tigania, Ki-Imenti, Ki-miutine, Ki-Egoji, Ki-muthambi, Ki-Mwimbi and Gi-Chuka.

This discussion presents divergent views about the dialects of Kimeru .Our present study will ignore this controversy since the question of what to consider as a language or a dialect remains controversial in linguistics. We will focus on the Muthambi variety which is the researcher's native language. We shall use data from Kimuthambi to represent the Kimeru language.

The eight dialects are represented in the two counties as follows:

Meru county- Ki-imenti, Ki-Egoji, Ki-igembe, Gi-tigania and Ki-miutine

Tharaka Nithi county- Gi-Chuka, Ki-muthambi, and Ki-mwimbi.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study is an analysis of Kimeru kinship terms using Frame semantics.It is difficult for a learner to tell what terms are used for various kinship relations. The main task of this study therefore is to investigate what Kimeru kinship terms are used in describing various kinship relations and the basis for distinguishing these terms. Frame Semantics approach will help in explaining the basis of understanding Kimeru kinship terms.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- i) To establish how Kimeru kinship terms are classified.
- ii) To identify how Kimeru kinship terms are recognized.
- iii) To establish to what extent particular Kimeru kinship terms are used for multiple relationships.
- iv) To find out to what extent a kinship concept takes different forms depending on the relationship of the person who is the centre of referent.

1.4 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

- i) Kimeru kinship terms are classified on the basis of generation, gender, relative age, cognatic principle, unilineal principle, lineal vs. collateral kin and affine vs. consanguine kin.
- ii) Kimeru kinship terms are recognized based on cultural values.
- iii) Particular Kimeru kinship terms are used for multiple relations.
- iv) There are different forms for the same kinship concept depending on the relationship of the person who is the centre of referent, but to a small extent.

1.5 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This study is a scientific investigation into Kimeru kinship terms. Scholars have studied and recognised other dialects of Kimeru especially Ki-imenti, which is considered as the standard variety, (Marete 1981). However, very little has been said about Ki-muthambi dialect. To the best of my knowledge, no study has been conducted on Kimeru kinship terms. This study is therefore useful to non-Bantu speakers, non-Kimeru speakers as well as Kimeru speakers and learners interested in learning Kimeru kinship terminology. Observations and conclusions drawn will serve as a written record for future reference for Bantu speakers.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study will be limited to Kimeru language. The study is not doing a dialect comparison.

This study is constrained by limitation in time and resources. As a result, it will not go beyond what is readily available in terms of data.

Due to these limitations, this study however, may not be treated as an exhaustive examination of kinship terms in Kimeru. The results will however be assumed to be a representation of Kimeru language.

1.7 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Affine- relationship by marriage ties

Consanguine- relationship by blood

Collateral- related by blood but not directly in the line of descent

Unilineal- parentage established either through males or females

Ego- individual designated as the starting point in describing a relationship
(Murphy 2001)

1.8 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Frame Semantics

According to Gawron (2008:2), Frame Semantics is the brain child of Charles Fillmore (1975, 1976a). Fillmore (1982, 1985) as cited in Gawron (2008:3) focuses on frame semantics as a contribution to a theory of text understanding. He further points out that a frame is a conceptual background against which a word is explained or defined. Gawron(2008:6). Frames are conceptual structures that provide context for elements of interpretations; their primary role in an account of text understanding is to explain how a text can validly leap far beyond what the text literally says.

Consider the following examples by Fillmore:

- a) I can't wait to be on the ground again
- b) I can't wait to be on the land again.

Fillmore notes that sentence (a) evokes a speaker who is in the air (on a plane) while sentence (b) a speaker who is at sea (on a ship). Fillmore would say *ground* is understood within a conceptual frame of air travel and within that, it is opposed to air, while *land* is understood within a conceptual frame of sea travel and within that frame, it is opposed to sea. *Land* and *ground* identify the same entity 'dry surface of the earth'. The two words assume different perspectives on or schematization of the same scene. Understanding the choice of words for talking about the scene requires appealing to the history of events leading up to it.

Fillmore further notes that single concepts provide the background for a set of words.

For instance, the concept of MARRIAGE provides the background for words/suffixes/phrases such as bride, groom, marriage, wedding, divorce, in-law, elope, fiancée, husband, wife, maid of honour, honey-moon, best man etc. A concept once defined may provide the background frame for further concepts. Thus DIVORCE provides background frame for lexical items such as alimony, divorce, divorce court, divorce attorney, ex-husband, ex-wife etc. The concept of alimony depends on the concept of divorce and the concept of divorce in turn depends on the concept of marriage. The dependency is definitional. Unless you define what a MARRIAGE is, you cannot understand what DIVORCE is. Unless you define what DIVORCE is you cannot understand what ALIMONY is.

In a Commercial Transaction Frame, among the large set of semantically related verbs linked to this frame are sell, pay, spend, cost and charge each of which evokes different aspects of the frame. The verb buy focuses on the buyer and goods, back grounding the seller and the money, sell focuses on seller and goods, back grounding the buyer and the money and pay focuses on the buyer, money and seller, back grounding goods. The idea is that knowing the meaning of any one of the verbs means in some sense, knowing the meaning of all of them.

In kinship relationships the concept of FATHER will provide the background for a set of words such as DAUGHTER and SON. Similarly the concept of MOTHER will provide the background for the same set of words; SON and DAUGHTER. The word son is therefore defined in the conceptual background of father or mother.

The concept PROTOTYPE is one of the most important concepts of Frame Semantics. Frames are prototypical descriptions of scenes. Fillmore illustrates the use of prototypes within Frame Semantics by an analysis of the concept WIDOW. The word WIDOW is specified with respect to a background scene in which people marry as adults, marry one person and their lives get affected by a partner's death. Prototype is understood as a fairly large slice of the surrounding culture against which the meaning of a word is defined and understood. For instance, to understand the meaning of the word breakfast, it is necessary to understand the institutions and practices of the culture in which the category exists. In this case, it is necessary to understand the practice of eating three meals a day at more or less fixed times and the meal eaten in the early part of the day is breakfast. The

conditions which define the prototype need not all be present in order for native speakers to use the word appropriately.

Defining a word in terms of frames or prototypes provides a useful approach to the boundary problem for linguistic categories. For instance, the word BACHELOR is defined against a prototype background frame rather than in terms of all the usual circumstances in which the word might be used. That BACHELOR might occur in contexts which don't match the prototype suggests that speakers are willing to extend the word's frame or create a new frame.

'Words belonging to a frame are lexical representatives of some single coherent schematization of experience of knowledge' (Fillmore 1985:223) as quoted in Gawron (2008:6).

Frame semantics makes an assumption that there is always some background knowledge relative to which a word is defined. Two ideas are central.

1. A background concept
2. A lexical set including all the words that utilize this conceptual background

Fillmore further notes that the pairing of a word with its background frame means that when we understand a word, we must simultaneously recognize the relevance of the background information within which that word plays an interpretive role. A frame is any system of concepts related in such a way that to understand any one concept, it is

necessary to understand the whole system. Therefore, introducing any one concept, results in all of them being available.

Fillmore states that a word represents a category of experience and part of the research endeavour is to uncover the reasons a speech community has for creating the category represented by the word and include that reason in the description of the meaning of the word.

Frames provide us with the means to integrate with other frames in context to produce coherent whole. Frames can be linked to other frames by sharing participants or frame elements or even being participants in other frames. Frame elements need not to be obligatory. For instance, the frame element, **wedding**, in a MARRIAGE frame is not obligatory since one can be married without necessarily having a wedding.

Petrucci (1995:279) points out that according to Fillmore (1975, 1976a), word meaning is characterised in terms of experience based schematization of the speaker's world i.e. frames. Therefore, words are defined relative to background frames or scenes of highly structured cultural and world knowledge. Understanding any element in a frame requires access to and understanding of the whole structure. Further more, in order to understand the meanings of the words in a language, we must first have knowledge of the conceptual structure or semantic frames, which provide the background and motivation for their existence in the language and for their use in discourse.

She further notes that Fillmore (1978) characterized the frame as the most central and powerful kind of domain structure, thus alluding to a frame-based organization of the lexicon. The frame provides the conceptual underpinnings for related senses of a single word and semantically related words. A word is defined in relation to its background frame and not in relation to other words. Frame Semantics describes meanings in terms of what speakers know or believe about the entities designated by those words.

1.9 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.9.1 Literature based on Kimeru Language studies

Several scholars have carried out studies based on Kimeru language. Marete (1981) in a study of Grammatical Agreement in Kimeru syntax notes that kinship terms and names referring to human beings belong to class 1/ 2 mu_____ a. Bantu nouns fall into seventeen classes. Nouns belonging to human beings belong to class 1/ 2 M_____A and class 12/ 13 Ka_____Tu. He gives the examples below.

Example:	class 1		class 2
	Mũ-ka	‘woman’	a-ka ‘women’
	Mw-arĩ	‘daughter’	a-arĩ ‘daughters’

Kinship terms that belong to class 12/ 13 are:

Class 12		class 13
Ka-ana	‘small child’	tu-ana ‘small children’
Ka-juju	‘grandchild’	tu-juju ‘grandchildren’

Class 12 /13 is diminutive.

This study is significant to the present study which examines how Kimeru kinship terms are formed. Data from this study may be vital especially in the discussion of how kinship terms form their plurals.

Gacunku (2005) carried out a study on the topic 'A Phonological Investigation of Irregularity and Variation in the Kimeru Nominal Concordial System. In her study, she notes that Bantu nouns fall into classes as reflected in the nominal prefixes that usually occur in singular-plural pairs. The class prefix is inherent in the head-noun and it is the basis by which Bantu nouns are classified. This study enhances the current study because some Kimeru kinship terms fall into class 1/___ 2 and class 12/___ 13 as reflected in the nominal prefixes Mu- (singular) ___ A-(plural) and Ka- (singular)_____Tu- (plural) respectively.

Mwebia (2006) carried a study on 'A Lexical Pragmatic analysis of Sense Relations in Kimeru'. She focuses on discussing word meaning in Kimeru and their sense relations in detail. She briefly discusses the different senses of the kimeru kinship term for wife. This is in line with the current study since she pinpoints meanings of kinship terms which are the focus of this study.

Mberia (1981) investigated consonants of Kitharaka and in (1993) he carried a study on Kitharaka Segmental morph phonology with special reference to nouns. His studies are significant to this study owing to the closeness of Kitharaka to Kimeru. Data from these studies is therefore vital especially in instances when the two languages have a similar kinship term for a particular kinship relation.

1.9.2 Literature review on kinship terminologies

According to Kuper (1967:100) the Swazi of South-Eastern Africa uses the classificatory kinship system in which a limited number of terms applied to lineal relatives are also applied to collateral relatives. For example, Uḅaḅe is applied to father (lineal) and to father's brother and father's father's brother's son (collateral). Lineal refers to relation through a direct line of descent. For instance, a man, his son and his grandson belong to the same line. Collateral on the other hand refers to a relation through blood ties but not through a direct line such as between a man and his brother or his brother's son.

He further notes that Swazi kinship terminology covers a range of five generations in all- two ascending, the contemporary and two descending. Beyond the second ascending- the grandparent generation, everyone is classified as ḅogogomkulu, and beyond the second descending- the grandchild generation, everyone is classified as as ḅantfwaḅantfwaḅami. This literature gives insight to my study because it will help me find out whether Kimeru kinship terms can be distinguished in a similar manner, that is, on the basis of lineality, collaterality and generation.

Satarupa (2010) conducted a study on kinship terminology in Lepcha. Lepcha is a language of the Tibeto Burman language sub-family under Tibeto-Chinese language family. He analyses Lepcha kinship terminology which from the point of view of linguistic structure, can be said to have elementary terms and derivative terms. According to Murdock (1949) as cited in Satarupa (2010) elementary Kinship terms are irreducible. These are words like '*abo*' father, '*amo*' mother' '*aro*' husband' etc. Derivative kinship terms are compounded from an elementary term and some other lexical element which

does not have primarily a kinship meaning. For instance *tugrik* 'son', *t^hyuk* 'daughter', *namk* 'nephew/niece' etc.

This study helps me get more insight on kinship terminologies as it will also help me find out if Kimeru also has elementary terms and derivative terms.

Fox (1967:240) points out that, different systems have different ways of developing kinship terms. For instance, in some systems, the men of the ego's parental generation on both mother's and father's side are called by the same term. In some other systems, the father and his brothers are called by one term and the mother's brother by another. Fox further explains that the second type of system is linked to marriage customs. Thus if one brother can substitute for another, then to the ego, a father's brother is a potential father. This study is beneficial to the current study as it will help in identifying what system is used in developing Kimeru kinship terms. It will also help identify the role of Meru culture in establishing kinship terminologies.

Benjamin (1999) conducted a study on 'A Linguistic and Formal Analysis of Temier Kinship Terminology.' He classifies Temier kinship terminology under classificatory and bilateral systems. Bilateral descent takes into account everyone on both the male and female side. Temier Kinship terminology is distinguished on the basis of generation level, relative age, gender, collaterality and consanguine vs. affine kin. In his analysis Benjamin uses the generative approach developed by Floyd(1964).The current study however, uses Frame Semantics for the analysis.

Geertz (1961) investigated the structure of Javanese kinship system. He points out that the basic form of Javanese terminology system is bilateral and generation. That is, the kin terms are the same whether the linking relative is the mother or father. Members of one's own generation; siblings and cousins are called by the same term and members of parent's generation are also called by the same term. This applies to all other generations. Javanese kinship terms are distinguished on the basis of age and gender. This study will set to find out whether the same principles of distinction apply to Kimeru kinship system.

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section looks at the data collection, method of data collection and data analysis.

1.10.1 Data collection

The data of this study was collected in Tharaka- Nithi county particularly Maara District where Kimuthambi dialect is spoken. The respondents were fifteen native speakers of Kimuthambi dialect of Kimeru language of varying ages, gender and educational status.

1.10.2 Methods of Data collection

1.10.2.1 A semi- structured interview

A semi-structured interview was used to gather the data.

Questions were administered orally to fifteen respondents selected on purposive judgement. Speakers of Kimuthambi dialect were considered to be appropriate for the purpose of the research hence they were deliberately selected. Informants were guided by being asked questions relevant to the study. The respondents were expected to give kinship terminologies used in describing various kinship relations. This data was written down and analyzed later.

1.10.2.2 Native speaker's intuition

Primary data was obtained from the researcher's intuitive knowledge of Kimeru kinship terminology. The researcher, who is a native speaker, speaks Kimuthambi dialect of Kimeru language fluently and therefore provided data for this study.

The data collected this way was confirmed with the data collected through interviews for clarity.

1.10.2.3 Observation method

This method involved listening to the local radio station 'Muuga' FM. The relevant utterance from the station was noted down for analysis. This data was presented to other speakers to seek their views.

1.10.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis was qualitative in nature and the data collected was analyzed within the framework of frame semantics.

CHAPTER TWO

KINSHIP TERMINOLOGIES

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the identification and explanation of Kinship terminologies. Section 2.1 gives general information about kinship terminologies, section 2.2 examines types of families, section 2.3 examines systems of kinship terminology, section 2.4 discusses principles of classifying kinship terminologies, section 2.5 examines kinship terms of address and social meaning and section 2.6 gives the summary.

2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Kinship terms are elements of meaning. They are terms that describe kin relations. For instance, the word ‘aunt’ is an English kin term that refers to Ego’s mother’s sister or father’s sister.

Saeed (1997:10) points out that knowing a language involves knowing thousands of words. The mental store of these words and their meanings is the lexicon. Saeed further notes that this lexicon is not static since we are continually learning and forgetting words.

Though kinship study falls under anthropology people use words to describe how they relate to one another. The semantics of the words, which falls under linguistics, is thus the major focus of this study. Different cultures have different labels for addressing their kin. For instance, the terms ‘uncle’ and ‘cousin’ are peculiar to English terminology, *babu* ‘grand father’ is peculiar to Kiswahili and *juju* ‘grand father’ is peculiar to Kimeru.

2.2. TYPES OF FAMILIES

Radcliffe (1967:4-5) describes two types of families.

2.2.1. Elementary family

This is a group of a father, a mother and their children. The elementary family is regarded as the basic unit of kinship structure. In Meru society most families are elementary with the father (*baba*) as the head of the family, mother (*maitu*) and children (*ana*). A male child is *nthaka* while a female child is *mwari*. The Meru people practise circumcision of boys. Traditionally, girls were also circumcised and for this reason, there is a distinction in terms for addressing both boys and girls. A circumcised male child is *nthaka* while the uncircumcised one is *muiji*. A circumcised girl is called *ngutu* while the uncircumcised one is *mukenye*. Whereas *nthaka* and *muiji* are kinship terms as in *Muiji/ nthaka yakwa* 'my son', *ngutu* and *mukenye* are not.

2.2.2 Compound family

Radcliffe (1967) points out that compound families result when a widow or widower with children by a first marriage enters into a second marriage into which children are born. This gives relationships of half-siblings, step-parent and step-child. Compound families can also be as a result of polygamous marriages.

In Meru society, compound families are as a result of polygamous marriages. These types of marriages were and are still allowed if marriages are conducted under customary law.

A man marries two or more wives who bear him children. There is no terminological distinction, thus father and mother's husband (step father) are referred to by the same term *baba*. Mother and step-mother are called *maitu* and half-siblings (same father but different mothers or same mother but different fathers) address each other as *muruaiya*

'brother' and *mwarwaiya* 'sister'. These are the same terms that are used for full siblings (same father, same mother).

2.3 SYSTEMS OF KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

According to Fox (1967: 240) an understanding of classification of kinship terminology leads to an understanding of kinship system of that culture. In English, the terms, father and father-in-law are classified separately under consanguine kin and affine kin respectively. This tells a lot about the kinship system of the English culture and what this means is that the ego's duties to these two individuals are different. Kimeru does not distinguish between these two terms.

Radcliffe (1967:6) points out that in the study of the kinship system, one has to discover what terms are used and how they are used.

The terminology used has to be considered in relation to the whole system of which it is part. There are two types of systems of kinship terminology: descriptive and classificatory.

2.3.1 Descriptive system of kinship terminology

In this kind of system, specific terms for relatives of the first and second order (father, mother, sister, brother, daughter and son) are used and other relatives are indicated by compounds of these specific terms in such a way as to show the intermediate steps in the relation. Instead of an ambiguous term such as 'cousin' a more exact compound term such as father's sister's son is used. Symbols such as FZS are used for an easier understanding of the relationship since it becomes even more difficult to describe more distant relatives.

To make this quite clear, we will use anthropological symbols for types of kin, as noted by Fox (1967:185). These are:

F= father, M= mother B=brother, Z= sister, S= son, D= daughter.

Secondary relatives are indicated by combination of these, e.g. MM= mothers mother, FZ= father's sister FZS= father's sister's son and so on.

Symbols for affine are H= husband, W= wife

2.3.2 Classificatory system of kinship

Radcliffe (1967:8) notes that Morgan (1871) came up with the classificatory system. In this system, terms which apply to lineal relatives (related in direct line of parents) are also applied to certain collateral relatives (related by blood but not through direct line). Kimeru applies classificatory system since the term *baba* refers to both 'father' (lineal relative) and father's brother (collateral relative). There is a reason why the same term is used for both father and father's brother. According to Meru customs, in the absence of one's father probably as a result of death, one's father's brother, takes care of the children. During marriage for instance, he would negotiate bride price and act as a father during the marriage ceremony. Placing two relatives in different categories, such as father's brother *baba* and mother's brother *mama* implies some difference in customary behaviour. Mother's brother *mama* unlike father's brother *baba* cannot act as a father in the absence of Ego's father.

Classificatory system thus put a large variety of kin into a few broad categories. The kin relations such as brother, sister, father's brother's son, father's brother's daughter, father's sister's son, father's sister's daughter, mother's brother's son, mother's brother's

daughter, mother's sister's son and mother's sister's daughter are all referred to by one term with the distinction of gender; *Mwarwaiya* (female) and *muruaiya* (male).

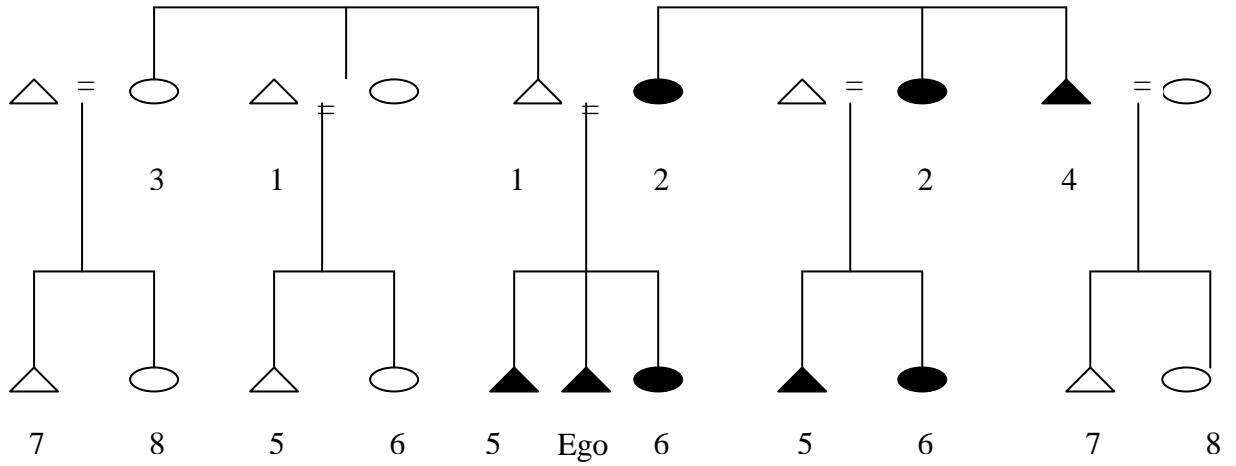
Kin terms deriving from elementary family are extended to include other kin. Notice that *mwarwayia* and *muruiya* are elementary terms for 'sister' and 'brother' respectively.

What this means is that a sibling and a child of parent's sibling are socially equal according to Meru customs. Marriage between such cousins is forbidden.

Classificatory system enables a person to apply one term to many relatives. It thus facilitates the establishment of wide- range systems of kinship

Classificatory system is similar to Iroquois system of classification. Fox (1967:19) points out that Morgan (1871) described Iroquois system as a system that designated many men, 'father', other than the actual biological father. Iroquois were organized into kinship groups based on descent in the male line. The same term is used for father and father's brother who is distinguished from mother's brother, while the same term is used for mother and mother's sister who is distinguished from father's sister. Parallel cousins from both sides of the family are lumped together with siblings, but distinguished by gender. The Iroquois kinship system is illustrated in the figure below.

FIG.1 IROQUOIS KINSHIP SYSTEM



Adapted from Radcliffe (1967:170)

Key

● - Female line

△ - Male line

= Married to

1- Father, Father's brother(FB) - *Baba*

2- Mother, Mother's sister (MZ) - *maitu*

3- Father's sister (FZ) - *tata*

4- Mother's brother (MB) - *Mama*

5- Brother, Father's brother's son(FBS),Mother's sister's son (MZS) -*Muruaiya*

6- Sister, Father's brother's daughter(FBD), Mother's sister's daughter(MZD)-

Mwarwaiya

7- Mother's brother's son (MBS),Father's sister's son (FZS) - *Muruaiya*

8- Mother's brother's daughter(MBD),Father's sister's daughter(FZD) -*Mwarwaiya*

Though in Iroquois kinship system cross cousins (7, 8) are referred to by a different term from parallel cousins (5, 6), in Kimeru, both parallel and cross-cousins are called by a similar term that also applies to brother and sister; *Muruaiya* (male) and *mwarwaiya* (female).

Kimeru kinship system uses classificatory terminology to show similarity in customary duties.

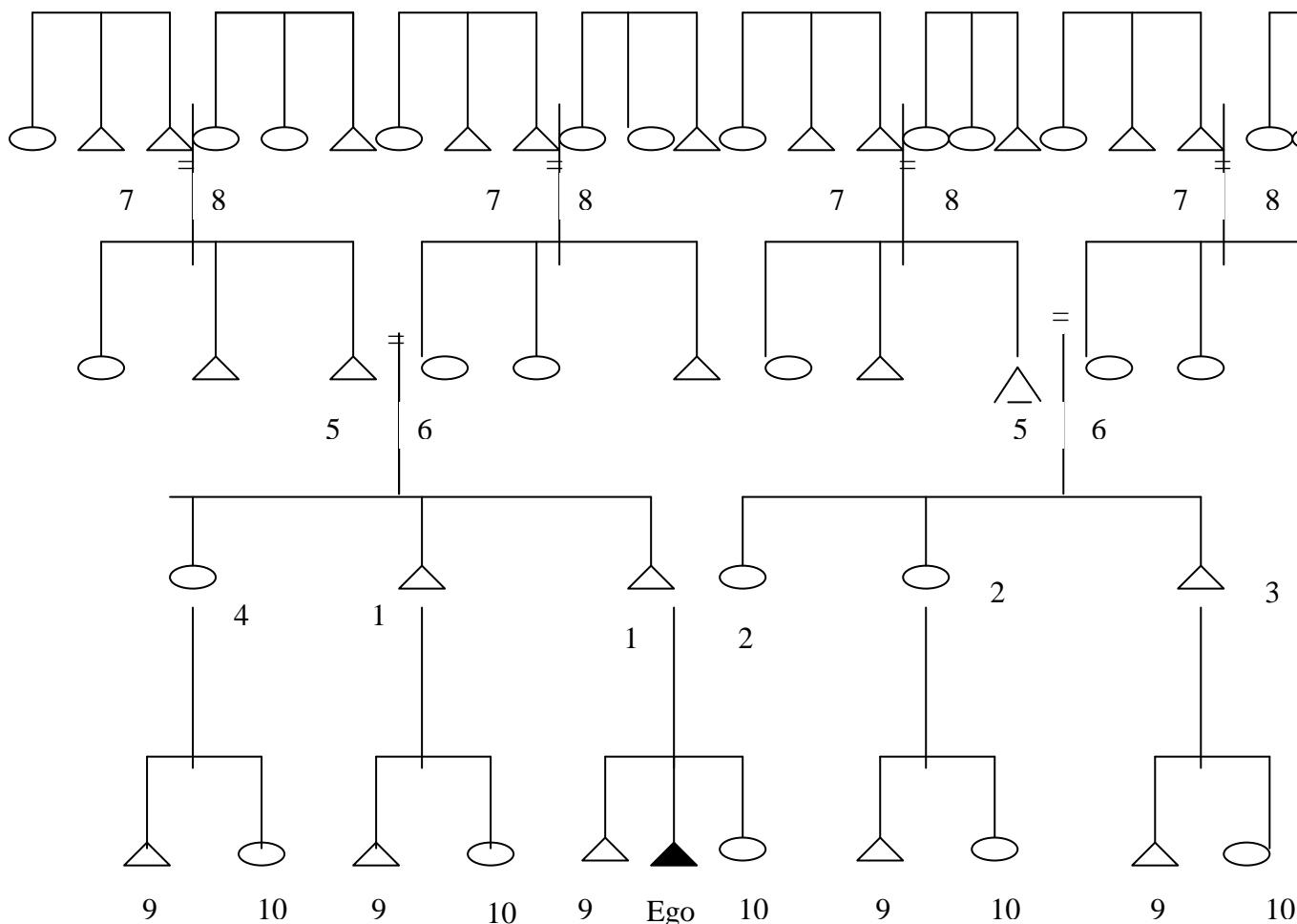
2.4 PRINCIPLES OF CLASSIFYING KINSHIP TERMS

2.4.1 Cognatic principle

Radcliffe (1967:13) points out that to define the kin of a given person, his/her descents are traced back a certain number of generations, to his/her four grandparents, his/her eight great grandparents, or still further. All descendants of his/her recognized ancestors through both females and males are cognates. At each generation that we go backwards, the number of ancestors is double that of the preceding generation so that in the sixth generation, a person will have sixty four pairs of ancestors (the great-grandparents of his great-grandparents). There must be a limit to tracing kinship this way. The Kimeru system traces up to the third generation because after this generation no terminology exists for describing the fourth generation.

The fourth generation does not count for social purposes and it is assumed that very few people live to have a relationship with a child of their great grandchild.

FIG 2.KIMERU COGNATIC TERMS



All individual in the Ego's generation are referred to as *Muruaiya* (male) brother, father's brother's son, father's sister's son, mother's sister's son, and mother's brother's son(9,) while the females are referred to as *mwarwaiya* (10) sister, father's brother's daughter, father's sister's daughter, mother's sister's daughter, and mother's brother' daughter.

In the first ascending generation, *baba* (1) refers to father and FB (father's brother), *maitu* (2) refers to mother and MZ (mother's sister), *mama* (3) refers to MB (mother's brother) and *tata* (4) refers to FZ (father's sister).

In the second ascending generation all individuals whether male (5) or female (6) are called '*juju*' FF, FM, MF, MM .i.e. father's father, father's mother, mother's father and mother's mother.

In the third ascending generation all individuals (7) male and (8) female are referred to as '*kijuju*', FFF, FFM, FMF, FMM, MMM, MMF, MFM, and MFF .i.e. father's father's father, father's father's mother, father's mother's father, father's mother's mother, mother's mother's mother, mother's mother's father, mother's father's mother and mother's father's father.

The descending generations are also recognized such that all individuals in the first descending generation are referred to as "*mwana*" child, *nthaka* 'son' and *mwari* 'daughter'. In the second and third descending generations, the terms are *kajuju* (grandchild) and *kijuju* (great grandchild) respectively.

2.4.2 Unilineal principle

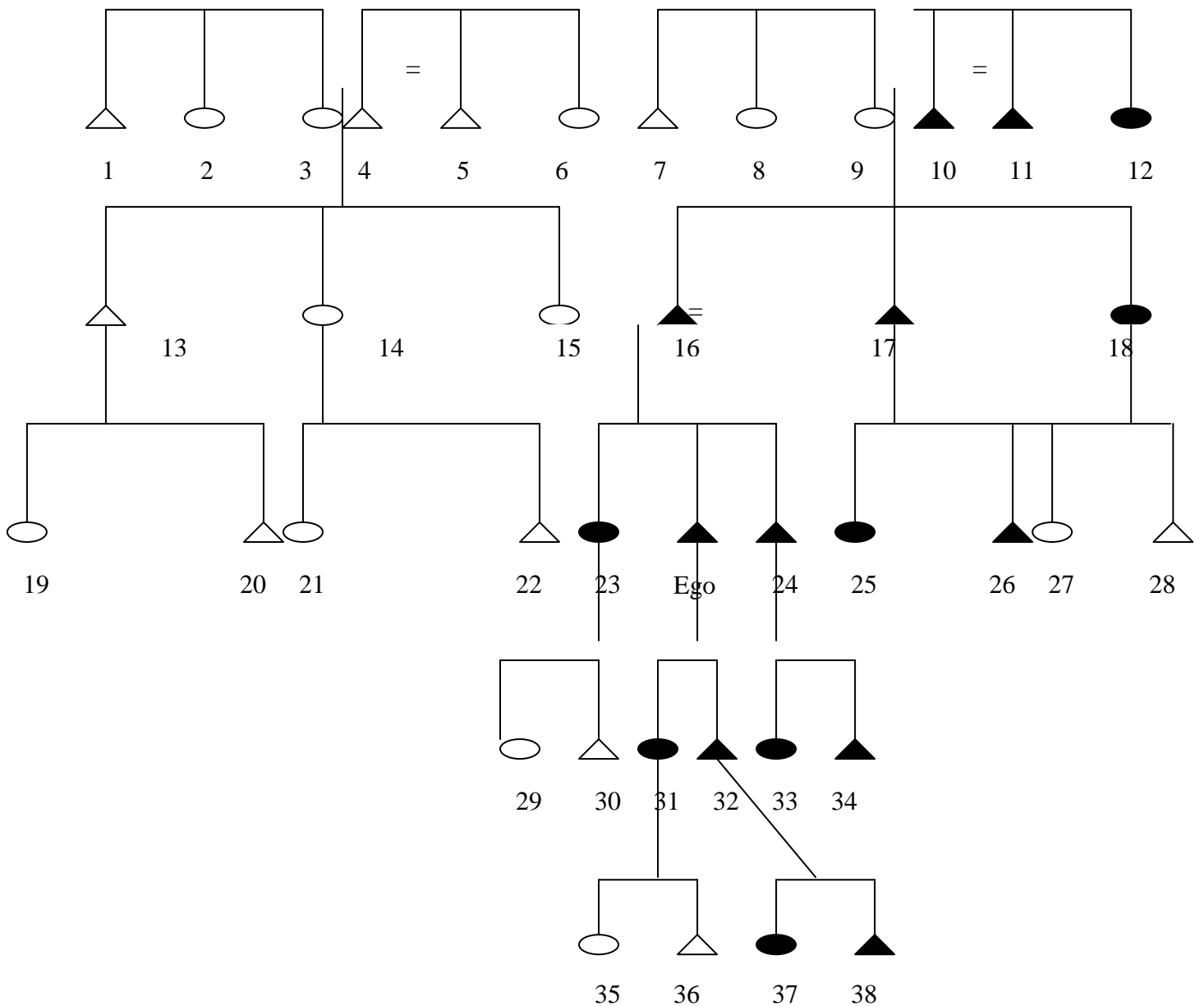
This is an establishment of parentage either through males or females. According to Radcliffe (1967:13) cognates are agnates if they are descendants by male links from the same male ancestors. In Kimeru system, emphasis is on agnatic relationship i.e. on unilineal descent through males, since female ancestress are not recognized. Surnames descend in the male line.

An agnatic lineage consists of an original male ancestor and all his descendants through males. A woman belongs to the lineage of her father but her children do not.

Kimeru kinship system is thus patrilineal in the sense that sons remain in their father's family group bringing their wives with them, so that their children also belong to the group. Traditionally, sons were the only heirs to their father's property. However, girls are now entitled to inheritance in line with the new Kenyan constitution. Girls were raised for other families.

A Patrilineal descent is illustrated in the figure below.

FIG 3. PATRILINEAL DESCENT



From the diagram, individuals who are shaded are descendants by male links from the same male ancestor (10). Ego, Ego's brother as well as their children belong to the lineage of Ego's father. Ego's sister on the other hand, belongs to the same lineage but her children do not.

In Kimeru system, a woman belongs to the lineage of her father but her children do not.

The terms used for describing patrilineal descents are:-

Muruaiya (24) - brother, FBS

Mwarwaiya (23) - sister, FBD

Baba (16, 17) - father, FB

Tata (18) - FZ

Juju (10, 11, 12) - FF, FFB, FFZ

Mwari (31, 33) - daughter, BD

Nthaka (32, 34) - son, BS

Kajuju (37, 38) - SD, SS

Since kimeru system recognises male lineage, no distinction is made between father and father's brother. Both are referred to by the same term '*baba*'. Individuals from the female line are referred to by different terms. e.g. '*mama*' is MB.

Related to this principle of patrilineal system, is the principle of lineality vs. collaterality. The difference is that in unilineal principle all relatives from the paternal side are all grouped together but in a lineal system, only relatives in the direct line of descent are recognized.

2.4.3 Lineality vs. collaterality

The lineal relationship is through father's line which groups the following terms in one line. *Ego*, son (*nthaka*), grandson (*kajuju*), father (*baba*) father's father (*juju*) and father's father father (*kijuju*). These terms are contrasted with terms for collateral relatives (related by blood but not through direct line) such as brother (*murwaiya*), sister (*mwarwaiya*), father's brother (*baba*) and so on.

Kimeru does not use this principle since father (lineal) and father's brother (collateral) are referred to by the same term '*baba*'. Kimeru uses bifurcate merging. Greenberg (1968:155) notes that the type that uses one term for father and father's brother and a second for mother's brother is called bifurcate merging.

2.4.4 Affine kin vs. consanguine kin

Consanguine relatives are those people who are related by blood while affine are those who are related through marriage. (Murphy 2001)

Kimeru kinship terminology does not show distinction in affine relatives and consanguine relatives. A son's wife and a daughter are called by the same term '*mwari*', a daughter's husband (affine) and a son (consanguine) are referred to by the same term '*nthaka*' while a mother-in-law and a father-in-law are called "*maitu*" and "*baba*" respectively, terms used to describe one's biological mother and father.

The Ameru people do not discriminate their in-laws. One's child and a child's spouse are treated equally thus, referred to by the same term. What this means, is that there are no specific terms for affine kin. A brother's wife is called '*mwarwaiya*' same term that

designates one's sister, and a sister's husband is called *muruyia*' same term used for a brother. However, whereas a woman addresses her husband's father as *baba* and mother as *maitu*, for the reason that she has come to live with them, a man uses a different term to address his wife's parents. The term he uses is *athoni* derived from the word *nthoni* which means shyness. This implies sexual shyness and for this reasons he maintains respectful distance with his wife's parents.

2.4.5 Relative age

Kimeru differentiates kinship terms on the basis of age by marking the relative age of kin with respect to the speaker. Whereas the same term for father '*baba*' also applies to father's brother, a speaker makes a distinction for father's elder brother and father's younger brother by qualifying the term with '*mukuru* 'elder' and *munini* 'younger'.

Thus:

Father's elder brother- *baba mukuru*

Father's younger bother- *baba munini*

Age distinction is applicable for father's brothers only and not for other kin types. A father's sister is referred to as '*tata*' whether older or younger.

There are specific terms for first born and last born in each generation. Age is a distinguishing factor. A first born is called '*irikithathi*' and a last born is '*kiinganda*'.

2.4.6 Gender

Among the Meru speakers, siblings, parents, parent's siblings and children are distinguished according to gender. However, no distinction is made with regard to grandparents, great grandparents, grand children and great grand children. To avoid the

confusion, a speaker uses descriptive terms *wa mantu muka* ‘of woman’ and *wa muntu murume* ‘of man’ to refer to grandmother/great grandmother and grandfather/great grandfather respectively. Therefore, grandmother is ‘*juju wa muntu muka*’ and grandfather is ‘*juju wa muntu murume*’

Gender distinction is illustrated in the table below.

Table 1: GENDER DISTINCTION

Relation	Male	Female
Sibling	Muruaiya (B)	Murwaiya (Z)
Children	Nthaka (S)	Mwari (D)
Parents	Baba (F)	Maitu (M)
Parents siblings	Baba (FB)	Tata (FZ)
	Mama (MB)	maitu (MZ)
Grandparents	Juju (FF, MF)	Juju (FM, MM)
Grandchildren	Kajuju (SS, DS)	Kajuju (DD, SD)
Great grandparents	Kijuju (FFF, FMF,MMF)	Kijuju(FFM, FMM,MMM, MFM)
Great grandchildren	Kijuju(SSS,SDS,DSS,DDS)	Kijuju (SSD,SDD DSD, DDD)

2.4.7 Generation

In an elementary family, kin are grouped into generations. There is the ego’s parents, (1st ascending), grandparents generation (2nd ascending), child’s generation (1st descending) and grandchild’s generation (2nd descending).

In Kimeru, there are specific terms for each generation. However, as Radcliffe (1967:32) points out, terms used for one generation may be applied to relatives of another

generation. *Juju*, a term which refers to father's father (second ascending generation), is used to address a son's son, or son's daughter. (the second descending generation). However the term *kajuju* is more commonly used. It has the prefix ka- attached to the root to indicate smallness.

Use of self-reciprocal terms puts relatives of different generations into one terminological category. This usage such as the one between a grandparent and a grandchild brings out affection towards the addressee and also emphasizes unity of lineage group.

There is also a single reciprocal term for one's mother and son's wife. While a mother addresses her son's wife as '*maitu*', she (son's wife) addresses her back as '*maitu*'. According to Meru custom, addressing your daughter-in-law by her name is being disrespectful. The term *mwari* 'daughter' is a general term of reference.

The term, 'my wife' *mugekuru wakwa* may be applied by a man to refer to his granddaughter. During the naming ceremony among the Meru people, a child is usually named after a close relative such as one's father, mother, father's sibling, mother's sibling or a sibling. If ego names his or her child after his mother, then his father refers to this child as "my wife". A woman also applies the term 'husband' *mukuru* to her grandson. It is therefore common in Kimeru language to have terms used for one generation being applied to relatives of another generation.

Behaviour towards relatives of one's parent's generation is distanced while there is familiarity towards a relative of one's own generation. On the other hand, a grandparent and a grandchild, though they belong to two different generations, have a joking relationship. A child seeks consolation and understanding from a grandparent when the parent becomes very strict.

2.5 KINSHIP TERMS OF ADDRESS AND SOCIAL MEANING

Social meaning according to Mashiri (2003) is understood by distinguishing it from literal meaning. Literally, kin terms are used to designate relations among relatives. However, a speaker may use a kin term of address to maintain social interaction with an unrelated individual thus acquiring social meaning. The cultural knowledge that the addressee shares with the speaker enables the address to 'interpret' the social meaning of the term.

A person may refer to an elder person, a person of father's age, as '*baba*' (meaning 'father') or a person of mother's age '*maitu*' (i.e. 'mother'). This is despite the fact that there is no relation between the two. A person of father's age may in turn refer to a person of son's age '*nthaka yakwa*' i.e. 'my son'. One makes an assessment of the addressee and comes up with what term of address to use. Calling somebody of father's age by his name is being disrespectful.

In a spiritual relationship, two ladies who are born again may address one another as *mwari waithe* which means 'sister' or 'father's daughter'. Born again men address each other as '*muruwaithe*' 'brother'. The social meaning that is brought out by use of these

terms is solidarity and commonness in faith. The terms separate those who share a common faith from those who do not.

The word '*baba*' is also used to refer to God to show that He is the father of all. The term '*mami*' borrowed from the English word 'mum' is used to address one's God-Mother. This brings out respect for the person who stood by you during baptism or confirmation or wedding.

Kin terms of address are also used in friendship. It is common among the Meru people to hear men who have grown together or have known each other for a long time address one another as *muruaia* 'brother'. This kinship term indicates respect and affection

CHAPTER THREE

KINSHIP RELATIONS IN KIMERU

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the various kinship relations in Kimeru and the various kinship terminologies that describe these relations. The chapter also examines the processes that are used in the formation of these kinship terms.

3.1. KINSHIP RELATIONS

There are several kinship relations in Kimeru which are described by various kinship terms.

3.1.1 Parents – Children relation

The Meru community recognizes the two types of families discussed in section 2.2. In an elementary family, children are referred to as *aana*, the father as *baba* and mother as *maitu*. Another native term for 'mother' is *Iya* although it is less common than *Maitu*. *Mami*, a borrowed term from the English colloquial word 'mummy' is yet another term for mother and it is the one that is mostly used by Meru speakers.

A son is *nthaka* or *muiji* depending on whether he is circumcised or not. The practice of male circumcision is therefore a determining factor in establishing the kind of kinship term to be used for a boy child. Traditionally, girls were circumcised. The uncircumcised girl was referred to as *mukenye* and the circumcised one as *ngutu*. However, the kinship term for a daughter is *mwari* whether she is circumcised or not.

In compound families there is a relationship of step-parent and step-children. There is no terminological distinction. Thus father and step-father are referred to by the same term *baba* while mother and step-mother are called *maitu*.

According to the culture of Meru people, a step-parent is given the same respect as one's biological parent. A step-child is also treated the same way as one's own child. Special terms exist for a firstborn and a lastborn. There is no special term for the children in between.

According to the customs of Meru people, a firstborn is expected to be more responsible. He or she is expected to be responsible over the other younger siblings while the parents are away. A last born on the other hand is expected to take care of his parents at old age if he is a boy.

3.1.2 Sibling relation

The two terms used for sibling relation are *Mwarwaiya* for sister and *Muruwaiya* for brother. The terms apply for full siblings (same father, same mother) and for half-siblings (same father and different mothers or same mother but different fathers). Kimeru does not make any distinction between these two types of relatives. All children, whether they are biological or step-children are treated equally.

3.1.3 Paternal Relations

There are various terms used for relatives from the father's side. The term *baba* 'father' also applies to father's brother. This is because according to the culture of Meru people, a father's brother acts as a father in the absence of the biological father. He is therefore addressed with the respectable term '*baba minini*' if he is younger than father or '*baba mukuru*' if he is older than father.

The terms used for a child of one's father's sibling are *Muruaiya* (male) or *Mwarwaiya*(female). These are the same terms applied for one's brother and one's sister. According to the culture of Meru people, one's sibling and a child of one's parent's sibling are socially equal. Marriage between such relatives is forbidden.

Juju is used for both father's father and father's mother. No gender distinction is made. There is also no gender distinction for the term '*Kijuju*' which is applied for father's father's father, father's father's mother, father's mother's father and father's mother's father.

A person will refer to a brother's son as *nthaka* and a brother's daughter as '*Mwari*'. This is because one was expected to treat his brothers children as if they were his own, hence use of the same terms used for son and daughter respectively.

Kempson (1977:85-6) points out that converse pairs is a form of incompatibility which exhibit a converse relation between the objects related. Converse pairs are found among Kinship relations. Mwana 'child' and Mujiari 'parent' form a converse pair for A is the child of B, implies B is the parent of A.

3.1.4. Maternal Relations

Several kinship terms are used for relatives from the mother's side. The term '*maitu*' which means 'mother' is used for mother's sister as well. Among the Meru people, one's mother's sister has some responsibilities over her sister's children. She is therefore accorded equal status as a 'mother' hence the term '*maitu*'. Traditionally, it was acceptable for a man to marry his wife's sister in the event of his wife's death because

it was believed that a wife's sister would show equal motherly love to the children left behind.

A mother's brother '*mama*' cannot act as a father in the absence of the real father. That is why he cannot be referred to by the same term as father '*baba*'. It is only the paternal uncle who is called by this term. The children of one's mother's brothers and sisters are called by a similar term that applies to one's brother and sister. These are *Muruwaiya* and *Mwarwaiya* respectively. One's sibling and a child of one's parent's sibling are socially equal. There would be no marriage between these cousins. If Ego regarded a parent's sibling as a 'mother' or 'father', then it followed that a cousin would be called by the same term used for a sibling. On the other hand, a person will refer to his or her sister's son as '*nthaka*' and daughter as '*mwari*'.

3.1.5 Grandparent -grandchild relation

The term *juju* is a self-reciprocal term because it is used for both a grandparent and a grandchild. However, *Kajuju* which brings out the idea of smallness is more common. Ego will refer to his/her son's or daughter's child as *Kajuju* or '*juju*' while the grandchild will still call him or her '*juju*'. As mentioned earlier, there is no gender distinction. This usage of the same kinship term between a grandparent and grandchild brings about affection towards the grandchild. It also emphasizes unity of lineage.

Juju 'grandparent' and *Kajuju* 'grandchild' are converse pairs because if A is the grandparent '*Juju*' of B then B is the grandchild '*Kajuju*' of A.

3.1.6 Husband-wife relation.

The kinship term used for one's wife is '*Mugekuru*' or '*muka*'. However, *mugekuru* portrays a positive attitude of the speaker while *muka* portrays a more negative attitude. '*Muka*' is also used to denote 'any other woman'. *Mugekuru* is more formal and it is used in introductions.

One's husband is referred to as '*Mukuru*' or '*Murume*'. *Mukuru* is a more respectable term and it portrays a positive attitude. '*Murume*' is also a general term for man.

Megukuru 'wife' and Mukuru 'husband' are converse pairs. If A is the wife 'mugekuru' of B, then B is the Mukuru 'husband' of A.

3.1.7 In-law relation

Affine kin are those relatives who are related through marriage (in-laws). Kimeru kinship terminology does not show any distinction between affine kin and those who are related by blood. The Meru people do not discriminate their in-laws. Thus, there are no unique terms for affine kin. The same kinship terms used for people who are related by blood, are the same terms used for in-laws.

3.1.7.1 Children's spouses

The term '*Mwari*' which refers to one's daughter is also used for one's son's wife. The term '*nthaka*' which is used for one's son is also used for one's daughter's husband. The children, whether biological or in-laws are treated equally and are thus referred by the same term.

3.1.7.2 Siblings' spouses

'*Mwarwaiya*' a term used for one's sister is also used for one's brother's wife while *Muruwaiya*, a term for one's brother is used for one's sister's husband.

3.1.7.3 Spouse's siblings

One's husband's or wife's sister is referred to as *mwarwaiya*, a term used for a biological sister while a husband's or wife's brother is referred by the same term used for one's biological brother. That is, *muruwaiya*.

Mwiru' is a term used for one's husband's brother's wife.

3.1.7.4 Parents-in-law

'*Maitu*', apart from referring to 'mother' also refers to one's husband's mother. A woman leaves her parents and goes to live with her husband's parents and she is therefore expected to treat her husband's parents with respect. These are her new parents and the same terms used for biological parents apply.

A man on the other hand refers to his wife's parents as *athoni* derived from the word *nthoni* which means shyness. He is expected to maintain a respectful distance with his wife's parents. '*Kanyanya*' is applied for one's daughter's husband's parents and one's son's wife's parents. It is a self-reciprocal term used by two people whose children are married to one another.

3.2 FORMATION OF KINSHIP TERMS

When some Kimeru kinship terms are used with possessive determiners (your, his and her), they take different forms from the way they appear when used with the possessive determiner 'my'. Consider the following examples:

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------|-------|---------|
| 1. | a) My father | baba | /βaβa/ |
| | b) Your father | abagu | /aβagu/ |
| | c) His/her father | ithe | /iθe/ |

- | | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|--------|----------|
| 2. | a) My mother's brother | mama | /mama/ |
| | b) Your mother's brother | mamagu | /mamagu/ |
| | c) His/her mother's brother | mamawe | /mamawe/ |

There are two processes involved in the formation of the above terms. Assimilation and Elision

3.2.1 Assimilation

Katamba (1989:80) defines assimilation as the modification of a sound in order to make it more similar to some other sounds in its neighbourhood. Voice assimilation takes place in examples

b) above. In 1(b) the word *abagu* is formed from the phrase *baba waku*, 'your father'. The first phoneme /b/ and the morpheme 'wa' are deleted, and then the two words are fused to form the word 'abaku'. Assimilation takes place when /k/ which is voiceless changes to /g/ which is voiced. Intervocalic voicing takes place when the voiceless /k/ changes to voiced /g/ by influence of the surrounding vowels which are voiced. /k/ is a voiceless velar plosive while /g/ is a voiced velar plosive. The two sounds assimilate because they are articulated at the same place of articulation.

This rule affects other kinship terms as long as they are used with the possessive determiner 'your'

- | | | | |
|----|-------------------|---------|------------|
| 3. | a) My daughter | mwari | |
| | b) Your daughter | mwarigu | mwari waku |
| 4. | a) My co-wife | mwiru | |
| | b) Your co-wife | mwirugu | mwiru waku |
| 5. | a) My grandmother | juju | |

2. her co-wife	mwiruwe	mwiru wae
3. his/her grandmother/father	ujuwe	juju wae
4. his/her in law	muthoniwe	muthoni wae

This rule does not apply to ‘baba’ and ‘maitu’ since they take totally different forms when used together with the third person possessive determiner.

His/her father ‘ithe’ and not ‘babawe’

His/her mother ‘gina’ and not ‘maituwe

The other processes used in the formation of Kimeru kinship terms are discussed below.

3.2.3 Affixation

Bound morphemes are those forms that cannot normally stand alone and are typically attached to another form. Yule (2005:63). The bound morphemes also known as affixes (prefixes and suffixes) that are present in Kimeru kinship terms are –gu (Indicating possessive ‘your’), -we (indicating possessive ‘his/her’) and a- and ba- (indicating plural). These bound morphemes are also inflectional. Inflectional morphemes never change the syntactic category of the words or morphemes to which they are attached. Fromkin et al (1993:100)

3.2.3.1. The possessive morpheme –gu

The morpheme –gu indicates second person singular possessive. Although this study is not a morphological study, its usage among other morphemes discussed in this section, helps to bring out various meanings of a single concept. Consider the following sentences

i) Huyu ni baba wakwa

This is my father

ii) *Huyu ni abagu wakwa

*This is my your father

There is a semantic anomaly in sentence (ii) because 'abagu' can only be used to designate 'your father' and not 'my father'. Here are more examples of the usage of -gu

- a) murume husband
 murume-gu your husband
- b) muiji son
 muiji-gu your son
- c) mama mother's brother
 mama-gu your mother's brother
- d) Muthoni in-law
 muthoni-gu your in-law

Not all Kimeru kinship terms will take the inflectional morpheme-gu. Terms like mukuru 'another term for husband', mugekuru 'wife', nthaka 'son' and mwana 'child' remain in the same form. They are not fused with possessive determiners and thus remain as separate lexical items. This is illustrated below

Murithi ni mukuru waka 'Murithi is my husband'

Murithi ni mukuru waku 'Murithi is your husband'

Murithi ni mukuru wae 'Murithi is her husband'

'Mukuru' behaves like the English word 'husband' which does not change form regardless of the possessive determiner it is used with. All other English kinship terms behave this way.

3.2.3.2 The possessive morpheme- we

(-we) is an inflectional suffix indicating third person singular possessive. It is applicable where the morpheme –gu is used but not in all instances. We have a few examples below

- | | | |
|----|------------|---------------------------------|
| a) | Muthoni | in-law |
| | muthoni-gu | your in- law |
| | muthoni-we | his/her in-law |
| b) | tata | father's sister |
| | tata-gu | your father's sister |
| | tata-we | his/her father's sister |
| c) | juju | grandfather /grandmother |
| | uju-gu | your grandfather/grandmother |
| | uju-we | his/her grandmother/grandfather |

There is no regular pattern since (-we) is not attached to all kinship terms to indicate third person singular possessive. It would be wrong to refer to 'his wife' as 'mugekuruwe. Though we talk of murume-gu, and muka-gu, we can't talk of 'murume-we or 'muka-we. The terms murume-gu 'your husband' and muka-gu 'your wife' have a negative connotation. When you want to refer to something negative a person's wife or husband has done and you want the spouse to know, you use these terms:

For instance:

- | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|
| i) | Mukagu agucoka kwao |
| | 'Your wife has gone back to her home' |
| ii) | Murumegu nimwaganu muno |
| | 'Your husband is very immoral' |

Since there is no regular pattern in application of the inflection suffixes -gu and -we, it means that any person learning the language must master their usage.

‘Mukuru’ behaves like the English word ‘husband’ which does not change form regardless of the possessive determiner it is used with. All other English kinship terms behave this way.

3.2.3.3 Plural morphemes (ba-and a-)

Yule (2005:67) notes that there is existence of allomorphs of a particular morpheme. In English, there are different morphs that result from morpheme ‘plural’ in the words cat +s, bus +es and sheep +Ø.

Thus –s, -es and zero-morphØ are all allomorphs of one morpheme ‘plural’.

Likewise, in kimeru kinship terms, the plural morphs Ba- and A- are allomorphs of one morpheme ‘plural’.

Consider the following examples:

Singular	plural	
Baba	ba-baba	father
Maitu	ba-maitu	mother
Mama	ba-mama	MB
Juju	ba-juju	Grandfather
Muthoni	a-thoni	in- law
Mwana	a-ana	child
Mwari	a-ari	daughter
Mu-iji	a-iji	son
Mu-ka	a-ka	wife

Mu-gekuru a-gekuru wife

There is a regular pattern which may result to a rule of pluralisation. The plural morpheme for all those kinship terms whose singular form is marked by either mw-or mu- is (a-). All other kinship terms attach the prefix ba- to form plurals. However, those kinship terms that have their singular form marked by mu-or mw-but are as a result of compounding, have their plurals marked by the morpheme (ba-). Examples:

Singular plural

Muruaiya ba-muruaiya brother

Mwarwaiya ba-mwarwaiya sister

Nthaka 'son' is the only term marked with zero-morph. It remains the same whether singular or plural.

3.2.4 Compounding

Compounding is joining of two separate words to produce a single form. Some kimeru kinship terms are formed by joining a noun, a preposition and another noun.

Example

- | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| i) | Muru+wa+iya (brother) | muruaiya |
| | Son +of+ mother | (in rapid speech) |
| ii) | mwari+wa+iya (sister) | mwarwaiya |
| | Daughter+ of +mother | (in rapid speech) |
| iii) | muru+wa+nyukwe (your brother) | muruanukwe |
| | Son+ of + your mother | |
| iv) | muru+wa+gina (his/her brother) | murugina |
| | Son +of+ his mother | |

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------------------|--------------|
| v) | mwari+wa+nyukwe (your sister) | mwarwanyukwe |
| | Daughter +of+ your mother | |
| vi) | mwari+wa+gina (his/her sister) | mwarwagina |
| | Daughter+ of+ his/her mother | |

3.2.5 Derivation

Derivation is creating of new words. One word category is derived into another. Some kimeru kinship terms, which are common nouns, are derived from other parts of speech by adding prefixes. These are ‘muthoni’ ‘in-law’ i.e. either wife’s father or wife’s mothers and ‘muka’ a general term for woman or wife.

Muthoni is derived from an abstract noun ‘nthoni’ which means, shyness. A man refers to his in-law as muthoni because he is ashamed of sleeping with their daughter.

The initial consonant in the abstract noun is lost and the prefix mu- is added to form the common noun ‘muthoni’

Muka ‘wife’ is derived from the verb ‘uka’. The prefix m- is attached hence the term ‘m-uka’. ‘Uka’ means to come. The term wife therefore means one who comes. She does not belong. Women in general whether ‘wife, daughter, sister, aunt are not permanent in a homestead. This explains why Kimeru kinship system is patrilineal .Women were raised for other families and were not entitled to any inheritance because they were not regarded as permanent members of the family. They come and go.

‘Mukuru’, husband, is derived from the verb ‘kura’ which means to grow. The morpheme Mu- is attached to the root and the last vowel changes from -a to -u .One cannot become a husband unless he is a grown up.

3.2.6 Borrowing

Yule (2005:54) defines borrowing as taking over words from other languages. Kimeru has adopted a number of kinship terms from other languages. These include *mami*, borrowed from the English word mummy (a colloquial term for mother.).The term is modified at the morphological and phonological levels so that it can fit into the language. This term is more commonly used than the indigenous terms *maitu* and *iya*.

Another kin term is *Baba* ‘father’ borrowed from the Kiswahili word *baba*. No modification takes place.

Muiritu which means daughter is borrowed from the Kikuyu language. The Kimeru term is *Mwari*. Both terms are used interchangeably.

3.3 APPLICATION OF FRAME SEMANTICS THEORY.

The Kimeru kinship terms discussed under this section can be analysed using frame semantics theory. We interpret words drawing on what we know about background frames.

The word JUJU ‘grandfather’/’grandmother’ is specified with respect to a background frame in which a person must have a son ‘*nthaka*’ who in turn must also have a son, thus a grandson ‘*kajuju*’. This explains the lineal descent. Collateral descents can also be explained from the frame of JUJU. From the cultural experience, if one is a grandfather ‘*juju wa muntu murume*’, then he must have a wife ‘*juju wa muntu muka*’, a daughter ‘*mwari*’ who from the perspective of the ego is ‘*maitu*’ and a son *nthaka* who from the perspective of the ego is *baba*. The ego in this case is *kajuju* ‘grandson or granddaughter.

The frame elements in the JUJU frame are thus: *juju wa muntu muka*, *juju wa muntu murume*, *nthaka*, *mwari*, *baba*, *maitu*, *kajuju*.

Introducing the concept MAITU results in other concepts like *mwari*, *nthaka* and *baba*, becoming available, while the term MWIRU ‘co-wife’ provides the frame for the lexical item ‘*mukuru*’ (husband). Frame semantics allows for frames with single lexical representation like in the case of co-wife and husband. The term husband is the only one that appears under CO-WIFE FRAME because for one to have a co-wife she must have a husband.

Words belonging to a frame are lexical representatives of some single coherent schematization of experience or knowledge. Thus the frame for MWARWAIYA ‘sister’ includes lexical items such as *muruaiya* ‘brother’, *mwarwaiya* ‘sister’ *baba* ‘father’, *maitu* ‘mother’. From experience, we know that for one to be referred to as a sister, there must be a father or a mother and that is why the two individuals have a sister-sister relationship or sister-brother relationship. Since Kimeru kinship system is classificatory (a single term describing several relationships), *mwarwaiya* also refers to FBD, FZD, MBD and MZD. This means more lexical items are introduced into the frame. These are *mama* (MB), *maitu* (MZ), *tata* (FZ) and *baba mukuru/munini*. (FB)

Frame semantic makes the assumption that there is always some background knowledge relative to which a word is defined. A single concept provides the background for a set of words. Thus the concept **FATHER ‘BABA’** Provides background for a set of words such as ‘son’ *nthaka* , ‘daughter’ *mwari*, ‘mother’ *maitu*, ‘father’s father/mother’ *juju*, FFF *kijuju*, FFM *kijuju*, FB *baba mukuru/baba munini*, FZ ‘*tata*’, father-in-law and step-father.

The concept BABA is thus the frame or conceptual background that provides context for elements of interpretations. In a frame based lexicon, the frame accounts for a single word and its semantic relations to other words. Abagu, baba and ithe refer to the same concept of 'FATHER'. Therefore, to understand the meaning of any of these words, it is necessary to understand the practices of the Meru culture in which the category exist.

A frame is useful in determining the meanings of words. Words are defined relative to background frames of highly structured cultural and world knowledge. According to the Meru culture, baba 'father' is defined relative to background knowledge that he has a son 'nthaka' or daughter 'mwari' who have a mother 'maitu'. They may also have children thus evoking the concept 'kajuju' (a grandchild)

The frames for the other kinship terms discussed above are as follows:

- i) MAMA (MB) provides background frame for *maitu* 'mother', *juju* 'mothers Mother/father', *kijuju* (MMM, MMF, MFM, MFF), *Mwarwaiya* (MBD) *muruaiya* (MBS) and *mwana* 'sisters child'. All these kin terms describe maternal relations.
- ii) TATA (FZ) provides a background frame for *baba* 'father', *juju* (FM, FF) *Kijuju* (FFM, FFF, FMM, FMF), *mwarwaiya* (FZD) and *muruaiya* (FZS).

From the above examples, it is clear that a concept once defined may provide the background frame for further concepts. MWANA which is defined under MAMA provides background frame for other lexical items. For one to be referred to as MWANA 'a child' he or she must have a mother '*maitu*' a father '*baba*' who in turn have parents who the child calls *juju* 'grandparent'. The frame elements for MWANA are therefore *maitu*, *baba* and *juju*.

Frame can be linked to other frames by sharing participants. All the above frames are linked together because they share the participant 'juju'. They can also be linked by being participants in other frames. Although BABA is a frame it is also a participant in the MWANA frame. In a frame, concepts are related in such a way that to understand any one concept, it is necessary to understand the entire system. Introducing any one concept, results in all of them becoming available.

Frame defines not a single relation but minimally a structure of relations. The concept of MUKA 'WOMAN' provides the background for a set of words. Thus, any lexical item that defines a female relation appears under the frame of MUKA. These are; tata, mwari, mwarwaiya, mwarigu, mugekuru, maitu, maitugu, mwarwanyukwe, mwarwagina, kajuju ga kairitu, juju wa muntu muka, gina, nyukwe. From our background knowledge and experience, we know that all these terms are defined relative to the background frame of MUKA (WOMAN/FEMALE).

The concept of MURUME (MAN/MALE) provides the background for a set of all words that describe male relations. They include baba, mama, muiji, nthaka, muruwaiya, muijigu, abagu, ithe, mukuru, muruwanyukwe, muruwagina, juju wa muntu murume, kajuju ga kaiji.

Since MUKA and MURUME are hyponyms of MUNTU (HUMAN BEING), it is quite obvious that all kinship terminologies can be defined relative to the background frame of MUNTU.

Therefore all kinship terms appear under a single frame of MUNTU. From our knowledge, any person whether male or female is a HUMAN BEING.

3.4 FINDINGS BASED ON THE OBJECTIVES

Our study sought to establish how Kimeru kinship terms are classified. We have established that Kimeru kinship terms are classified on the basis of cognatic principle, unilineal principle, relative age, gender and generation. Kimeru does not use the principle of lineal vs. collateral kin because lineal kin such as ‘father’ and collateral kin such as ‘father’s brother’ are referred to by the same term. Affine vs. consanguine principle does also not apply because Kimeru does not show distinction in affine kin and consanguine kin. The kinship terms used for consanguine kin are the same kinship terms used for affine kin.

We have established that Kimeru kinship terms are recognized based on cultural values. For in instance, the practice of male circumcision is a determining factor in establishing the kind of kinship term to be used for a boy child.

A step-parent played the same role as a parent as far as the children were concerned. He/she was expected to care for and provide for the children. Therefore, the term used for a real parent was also applied to step-parent. Children too were expected to accord them the same respect they accorded their real parents. The firstborn child and the lastborn had unique kinship terms because they held certain responsibilities. A father’s brother is called by the same term used for ‘father’. This is because in the Meru culture, he acts as a father in the absence of a real father. During marriage for instance, he would negotiate the bride price. A mother’s sister is referred to by the same term used for ‘mother’

because in the absence of a true mother, she acts as a mother. She watches over her sister's children as if they were her own. This explains why the same kinship term is used for her children as well as her sister's children. *Mwari* refers to daughter and *nthaka* refers to son. Among the Meru people, one's sibling and the child of one's parent's sibling are socially equal hence referred by the same kinship term. Marriage between such relatives is forbidden. In the Meru culture, a girl is expected to leave a parent's home and join another family through marriage. She is expected to show respect to her husband's parents and treat them the way she treats her own parents. For that reason, the kinship terms used for her parents are the same kinship terms used for her husband's parents. One's husband's siblings are referred to by the same terms used for one's siblings.

Certain kinship terms are used to describe multiple relations due to the culture expectation that certain people should have certain duties and responsibilities. For instance, a father's brother is called '*baba*' because of his responsibilities towards his brother's children. The term *baba* is used for father, one's husband's father and one's father's brother. *Maitu* is used for mother, husband's mother and mother's sister. *Mwari* is used for daughter, son's wife, sister's daughter and brother's daughter. *Nthaka* is used for son, daughter's husband, brother's son and sister's son. *Mwarwaiya* is applied for sister, brother's wife, husband's sister, father's brother's daughter, father's sister's daughter, mother's brother's daughter and mother's sister's daughter. *Muruaiya* is used for brother, sister's husband, husband's brother, father's brother's son, father's sister's son, mother's brother's son, and mother's sister's son.

We have also established that several processes are used in the formation of Kimeru kinship terms. They include assimilation, elision, affixation, derivation, borrowing and compounding. Some Kimeru kinship terms take different forms depending on whether they are used to show relation to the second person or third person.

When a kinship term is used to show relation to the second person, the morpheme (-gu) which indicates second person possessive is attached to the root. Examples:

- a) Baba ‘father’
 Aba-gu ‘your father’
- b) Maitu ‘mother’
 Maitu-gu ‘your mother’

Other kinship terms which change forms are: Juju-ujugu, mwari-mwarigu, mama-mamagu, tata-tatagu, muiji-muijigu, muka-mukagu and murume-murumegu.

When a kinship term is used to show relation to the third person, the morpheme (-we) which indicates third person possessive is attached to the root. Examples:

- a) Juju ‘grandmother’
 Uju-we ‘His/her grandmother’
- b) tata ‘father’s sister’
 tata-we ‘his/her father’s sister’
- c) mama ‘mother’s brother’
 mama-we ‘his/her mother’s brother’
- d) mwiru ‘co-wife’
 mwiru-we ‘his/her co-wife’

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we have discussed the Kimeru kinship terms that are used to describe various kinship relations and the processes used in the formation of these kinship terms. We have looked at how Kimeru kinship terms are interpreted using Frame Semantics. We have also discussed the findings based on the objectives.

CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

The chapter provides a summary of the research findings which led to the conclusions and recommendations.

4.1 SUMMARY

The study examined the various Kimeru kinship terms. Two types of families i.e. the elementary and the compound families and the various kinship terms used to describe kinship relations in these families were discussed. The study briefly described the kinship systems which are applicable in distinguishing Kimeru kinship terms. These are Classificatory and Iroquois. The principles of classifying kinship terms were a major focus in this study. They include: Cognatic principle, Unilineal principle, relative age, consanguine vs. affine kin, lineal vs. collateral kin, generation and gender.

The study also examined how Kimeru kinship terms are analysed within the framework of Frame Semantics. The semantic status of various kinship terms was examined when they occurred in a given Frame. The study also dealt with how various Kimeru kinship terms describing the same kind of relationship take different forms depending on whether they are used with the second person possessive determiner or third person second determiner.

4.2 CONCLUSION

The study was based on a Semantic analysis of Kimeru kinship terms using Frame Semantics. We set to find out how the kinship terms are classified. In chapter two, we established that kinship terms are classified on the basis of cognatic principle, unilineal principle, relative age, gender and generation. The lineal vs. collateral principle is not applicable since terms that are used for lineal relatives are also used for collateral relatives. Kimeru kinship terminology does not show any distinction between affine and consanguine relatives, hence the principle of affine vs. consanguine kin is also not applicable. In our examination of how Kimeru kinship terms are recognized, we established that the Meru culture plays an important role in establishing kinship terms. It was also established that Kimeru uses classificatory system of kinship where terms which apply to lineal relatives are also applied to certain collateral relatives. As a result, some terms are used to describe multiple relations.

Some Kimeru kinship terms take different forms depending on the kind of relationship of the speaker to the person who is the point of referent.

We established that Frame Semantics is suitable for analyzing Kimeru kinship terms. The theory may therefore be useful in analyzing kinship terms in other related languages.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

From this study, several issues require further research. They include:

- a) A comparative study of kinship terminologies with other related Bantu languages to establish if there are any differences or similarities.
- b) The study used Frame Semantics to analyze Kimeru kinship terms. We therefore recommend that future studies should be done on Kimeru verbs using the same theory.
- c) An investigation of Lexical relations in Kimeru kinship terms to establish how kinship terms relate to one another and to other lexical items.

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APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

What Kimeru Kinship term would you use to describe the following relationships?

1. One's father
2. One's Mother
3. One's father's brother
4. One's father's sister
5. One's daughter
6. One's son
7. One's mother's brother
8. One's mother's sister
9. One's sister
10. One's brother
11. One's father's brother's son
12. One's father's brother's daughter
13. One's father's sister's son
14. One's father's sister's daughter
15. One's mother's brother's son
16. One's mother's brother's daughter
17. One's mother's sister's son
18. One's mother's brother's son
19. One's husband
20. One's husband's mother
21. One's husband's father
22. One's wife

23. One's wife's mother
24. One's wife's father
25. One's husband's brother
26. One's husband's sister
27. One's wife's brother
28. One's wife's sister
29. One's husband's brother's wife
30. One's husband's sister's husband
31. One's brother's wife
32. One's sister's husband
33. One's father's father
34. One's father's mother
35. One's mother's mother
36. One's mother's father
37. One's son's wife
38. One's daughter's husband
39. One's son's son
40. One's son's daughter
41. One's daughter's son
42. One's daughter's daughter
43. One's sister's daughter
44. One's sister's son
45. One's brother's son

46. One's brother's daughter
47. One's first born child
48. One's last born child
49. One's daughter's husband's parents
50. One's son's wife's parents
51. One's father's father's father
52. One's father's father's mother
53. One's father's mother's father
54. One's father's mother's mother
55. One's mother's mother's mother
56. One's mother's mother's father
57. One's mother's father's father
58. One's mother's father's mother.

APPENDIX 2: KIMERU KINSHIP TERMS

Kinship term	Gloss
1. Mwana	Child
2. Baba	Father, father's, father's brother, husband's father
3. Maitu/ iya/mami	Mother, mother's sister, husband's mother
4. Nthaka/Muiji	Son, brother's son, sister's son, daughter's husband
5. Mwari	Daughter, brother's daughter, sister's daughter, son's wife.
6. Irikithathi	Firstborn
7. Kiinganda	Lastborn
8. Babu Munini	Father's younger brother
9. Baba mukuru	Father's elder brother
10. Mama	Mother's brother
11. Tata	Father's sister
12. Muka/mugekuru	Wife
13. Murume/mukuru	Husband
14. Mwiru	Co-wife, husband's brother's wife
15. Muthoni	Wife's mother/father
16. Kanyanya	Son's wife parents, daughters husband's parent
17. Mwariwaiya	Sister, father's brother's daughter, father's sister daughter, mother's brother's daughter, mother's sister's daughter.
18. Muruwaiya	Brother, father's brother's son, father's sister's son, mother's brother's son, mother's sister's son.
19. Juju	Father's father, father's mother, mother's father, mother's

mother

20. Kajuju

Son's daughter, son's son, daughter's son, daughter's daughter.

21. Kijuju

Great grandparent/great grandchild.