A COGNITIVE APPROACH TO THE ANALYSIS OF KIKUYU METAPHORICAL PROVERBS ON THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN USING COGNITIVE SEMANTICS THEORY

By

KARIUKI ELENAH WACHERA

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DECLARATION

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

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KARIUKI ELENAH WACHERA   DATE

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

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PROF. OKOTH OKOMBO   DATE

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DR. JANE WAMBUI   DATE

DEDICATION

To my loving husband Francisco Kabira, and my lovely daughter Gladys Nyambura. You gave me your time when you needed me most. May you dwell in God's wisdom and favour.

My dear father Kariuki Kariuki Kihoro whose love for education will inspire generations. Papa you are a true hero. And my wonderful mother Serah Wangeci Kariuki whose dedication to her family has played a pivotal role in shaping our life's journey. Mama you are a true heroine. May God be your Fortress.

To Mr. & Mrs. Dedan Karuri for being an inspiration to the family. May the Almighty God bless you.

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DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

This section deals with definition of key concepts and terms used in the study.

No	Terms/Concepts	Definition
1	Metaphor	A figure of speech containing an implied comparison in which a word or a phrase ordinarily and primarily used of one thing is applied to another.
2	Cognitive linguistics	An approach of language study which focuses on meaning. It sees language as an instrument for organizing, analysing and conveying information and meaning emerging from our interaction with the world.
3	Domain	A specific area of knowledge on cultural emphasis.
4	Cognitive Scene	Categories that speakers wish to bring into play when describing situations that are independent of the actual speech situation. For example, the phenomenon of correspondences between domains.
5	Construal	The process by which a person's experience in the world is conceived in a variety of ways.
6	Autonomy	Ability of a unit to behave independently of other units that might be construed in the same context.
7	Ontology	A set of entities presupposed by a theory.

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ABSTRACT

This study analyses Kikuyu metaphorical proverbs on women within the cognitive semantics framework to find out the way the principles of cognitive semantics theory may help us gain adequate insight into the portrayal of the woman through proverbs in the Kikuyu society. For the purposes of this study, the metaphor is regarded, as it is in cognitive semantics, as a conceptual strategy for structuring linguistic expressions to construe meaning. This implies that there exists a systematic body of data which a study may identify and examine through construal processes applied by the theory to throw some light on the meanings of the metaphorical proverbs. As proposed in Lakoff's and Johnson's theory of the conventional metaphor, the metaphor is not a property of individual linguistic expressions and their meanings, but of whole conceptual domains. That is, in principle, any concept from the source domain can be used to reveal some aspect of the nature of a concept in the target domain. Cognitive semantics theory as explained by Croft and Cruse was used in analysing the Kikuyu metaphorical proverbs on women. The most outstanding finding of the study was that proverbs form themes, and therefore a thematic presentation of the metaphorical proverbs creates categories such as: proverbs on the physical features of a woman, proverbs on women's behaviour, proverbs on the role of women in the society, and proverbs on general societal attitudes about the woman. Analysing Kikuyu proverbs using the principles of cognitive semantics revealed that appreciating their full implications takes both cultural and cognitive parameters into account, in a process that is understood as a construal operation. Further analysis revealed that the metaphor is in some cases used overtly, and in others it is at the implicit level, hidden in the complexities of a proverb. Metaphorical mapping is therefore a useful tool for revealing the source-target pairing in a metaphorical proverb, which once understood, triggers ontological correspondences which entail inference patterns of whole conceptual domains in the construal of meaning.

CHAPTER 1

1.0 Introduction

This research project presents the key components of the study including: language of the study, background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives and hypotheses, rationale of the study, scope and limitations, literature review, theoretical framework, research methodology, significance of the study and conclusion.

1.1 The Language of Study

Gĩkũyũ is a Bantu language. It is the language of the Agĩkũyũ people spoken in the central region of Kenya. Gĩkũyũ is also spoken in places such as, Nairobi, Rift valley, Coast and other parts of the country where Agĩkũyũ people are found. Gĩkũyũ language comprises several dialects which have been influenced by their geographical distribution, as there has been movement in search of land for settlement, farming and other economic activities.

Karega (1977:10-11) states that Gĩkũyũ language is divided into seven dialects. They include: Ki-Embu, Ki-Mbeere, Ki-Ndia, Gi-Gichugu, Ki-Mathira, Northern and Southern dialects.

Political and geographical factors, however, have seen the numbers reduce with Ki-Embu and Ki-Mbeere becoming full-fledged languages (Wachera 2008:1). Some researchers say Gĩkũyũ has five dialects with the following boundaries: Ki- Gichugu, spoken in Northern Kirinyaga; Ki-Ndia, spoken in Southern Kirinyaga; Ki-Mathira, spoken in

Karatina; Murang'a dialect, as the North dialect and southern dialect in Kiambu (Njogu, 1978:2).

(Ngure 2005:1) argues that determining the exact number of Gĩkũyũ dialects is an issue whose debate ranges on to date. The variations in dialects are as a result of such factors as: pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary.

I agree with the researchers who argue that Ki-embu and Ki-mbeere are full-fledged languages and not dialects of Gĩkũyũ since they have their linguistic variations that are not mutually intelligible with the five dialects of Gĩkũyũ language. The study uses the Ki-Mathira dialect, which is the language of the researcher.

1.2 Background to the Study

The study employs a cognitive approach to analyze the portrayal of the woman in Gĩkũyũ metaphorical proverbs. Most of the research in cognitive linguistics has focused on semantics (Croft and Cruse, 2004:1). So, the area studied concerns identification of metaphors in the kikuyu proverbs with the relevant construal operations which involve source and target domain of the metaphor.

The study identifies in detail what the metaphors are that structure the way the kikuyu people think about the woman. This was guided by Lakoff and Johnson's (2003:3) claim that our ordinary conceptual system is metaphorical in nature.

The concepts involved in a metaphor are referred to as source domain and target domain according to Lakoff and Johnson's theory of conventional metaphor. The central characteristic of the theory is that the metaphor is not a property of individual linguistic

expressions and their meaning, but of whole conceptual domains. The target domain is the domain the sentence is actually about, and the source domain is the domain supporting the literal meaning of the expression.

The correspondences between domains are represented in the conceptual system, and are fully conventionalized among members of a speech community. According to Lakoff and Turner (quoted in Saeed, 2003:347), metaphors allow the understanding of one domain of experience in terms of another.

Metaphor involves identification of resemblances, but that it goes further by causing a transference, where properties are transferred from one concept to another. 'Metaphorical meaning is not a special kind of meaning: It is rather, a case that metaphor is the result of a special process for arriving at, or construing a meaning' Croft and Cruse (2004:194).

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In their metaphorical proverbs, the kikuyu make such statements as:

(1) *Mutumia nĩ ihũa*
     woman be flower

What insight would the theory of cognitive semantics, with its emphasis on the mind, give us in the attempt to understand the kikuyu perception of women through the analysis of such proverbs?

Although there have been studies targeting gender in Gĩkũyũ proverbs, none of them has benefited from the scientific rigour which cognitive semantics has brought to the study of metaphors.

For instance, Njuguna (2010) has researched on manifestation of stereotypes through Gĩkũyũ figurative language which is a general approach based on a Lexical Pragmatics perspective. Mburu (2008) researched on a pragmatic analysis of a woman's talk, a case study of Agĩkũyũ women speakers. Njeri (2007) looked at a pragmatic analysis of Gĩkũyũ lexical euphemism in HIV/AIDS discourse. Wangui (2010) looked at semantic shifts in Gĩkũyũ lexeme using lexical pragmatics approach.

None of these studies focused on the analysis of the metaphor as a figure of speech to judge the relevant societal perceptions of the feminine gender in general. More importantly, none of them benefitted from the scientific rigour brought to the study of metaphors by cognitive semantics. Therefore, the main question that inspires this research is:

What would a cognitive approach to the analysis of these proverbs reveal about the thinking of the kikuyu about the feminine gender in general?

Thus, the research gap addressed in this study is based not on the body of data to be examined but on the theoretical perspectives used in examining the obtained data. In our view, cognitive semantics has the capacity to bring out a clearer perspective on how a woman is perceived in the kikuyu community putting in mind the tenets of the theory. The specific questions addressed include:

1. What are the comparisons implied in the proverbs?

2. How do the detected comparisons portray the woman?

3. How would one account for the metaphorical expressions using the theoretical parameters of cognitive semantics?

1.4 Objectives

1. To investigate the role of metaphor in Gikuyu proverbs on the portrayal of women.

2. To examine the meaning of metaphorical Gikuyu proverbs using the theoretical parameters of cognitive linguistics in the portrayal of the woman.

1.5   Hypotheses

1. Women have been portrayed negatively in Gĩkũyũ metaphorical proverbs.

2. Cognitive semantics is used to explain the portrayal of the woman in Gĩkũyũ metaphors.

1.6 Rationale of the Study

The study on the analysis of metaphorical Gikuyu proverbs on women in a cognitive approach is of great importance to other researchers in understanding their rich and diverse culture. It will help other researchers to realize that metaphor is not a property of individual linguistic expressions and their meanings, but of whole conceptual domains. That is, any concept from source domain can be used to describe the target domain.

The findings of the research will be of great help to future researchers as it will add to the knowledge not only to the Gĩkũyũ linguists and researchers, but also to other researchers in other languages as it has brought a fresh, and a new way of analyzing metaphorical expressions in language. For instance, Fillmore (1982:112) states that a speaker produces words and constructions in a text as tools for a particular activity, namely to evoke a particular understanding. Thus, it can also be used to establish whether metaphors in other languages hold the common view on the perception of women.

In this light, the cognitive semantics theory offers a solution to construal of such constructions for the purposes of meaning.

1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study focused on the analysis of metaphorical Gikuyu proverbs as they portray the woman using the theoretical parameters of cognitive semantics. It analyzes both the metaphor and the conceptual structures in only the proverbs targeting the woman in Gĩkũyũ language, either directly or indirectly.

The study, therefore, sheds light on the relationship between language, mental entities, and human experience. The analysis is on metaphor as it is used in books, and in spoken discourse. The study is limited to the central role assigned to metaphor by cognitive semantics in conceptualization of the world. The study does not give full analysis of the semantics of the language, but it is only limited to cognitive approach on the linguistic conceptualization of kikuyu proverbs on women.

1.8 Literature Review

This section looks at the relevant contributions made by other scholars and their importance to this study.

1.8.1 Literature on Gĩkũyũ Language

Various scholars have carried out research on Gĩkũyũ language but none of them has done the analysis of Gĩkũyũ metaphorical proverbs using a cognitive approach on the portrayal of women.

For instance, Mugure (2009) looked at sense relations in Gĩkũyũ using the lexical pragmatics theory. She has analyzed polysemy based on metaphorical extension, metonymy and shift in application of words, register and borrowing.

Gitau (2012) did a semantic analysis of Gĩkũyũ nouns using the semantic field theory. Her approach to semantics is that meaning properties are the aspects of a linguistic search on such a word, or sentence that contribute to the meaning of that unit. The study is of help to this research because her analysis of Gĩkũyũ nouns for their semantics sheds light in the understanding and conceptualization of the Gĩkũyũ metaphors.

1.8.2 Literature on Cognitive Semantics

Cognitive linguistics is one of the most exciting and innovative approaches to the study of language and thought, that is, to study language is to study patterns of conceptualization according to Evans and Green (2006:156). This means that, linguistic expressions are the surface realization of the conceptual structures, which is cognition.

According to Evans et al (ibid), cognitive semantics began as a reaction against the objectivist world–view assumed by the Anglo-American tradition in philosophy and the related approach, truth-conditional semantics, developed within formal linguistics. According to Lakoff (1988:125-6), the doctrine of truth-conditional meaning, meaning is based on reference and truth. Evans et al (ibid) explain in contrast to this view that 'Cognitive Semantics sees linguistic meaning as a manifestation of conceptual structure'. This means that the nature and organization of mental representation in all its diversity,

makes it a distinctive approach to language. It is thus, a modern school of linguistic thought and practice which began to emerge in the 1970s according to (Croft and Cruse 2004:1).

Some of the linguists who have made major contributions in this field of study include: George Lakoff and Mark Johnson (2003:3) who found out that there is a tight correlation between the nature of the human body and the concepts human beings are able to formulate. They state that, "conceptual system is not something we are normally aware of, we simply think and act more or less automatically along certain lines". They further stated that language mirrors human conceptualization. Therefore, language reflects patterns of thought.

Jakendoff (1993:3), argues that cognitive semantics is concerned with mental representations of the world and its relation to language. That is, lexical meaning is conceptual. In other words, meaning of a lexeme is not reference to entity in the real world that it refers to, but to a concept based in the mind based on experiences with that relation or entity. Therefore, cognitive semantics theory uses the metaphor in this study to analyse conceptual structures that are structured in linguistic expressions used as the data.

Gardenfors (1999:22-25) has identified tenets of cognitive semantics. The principle of cognitive semantics used in this study is: meaning is conceptualization in a cognitive model. The principle will be used in the explanation of how meaning is structured in linguistic expressions.

Talmy, L (2000:4), describes research on cognitive semantics as research on conceptual content and its organization in language. Talmy (ibid) sees cognitive linguistics as the framework of approaches in the analysis of a language. In this light, meaning is embodied, therefore cognitive semantics theory is used to analyse meaning of linguistic expressions, which in this case are metaphorical proverbs in this study.

Rakova (2003:18), makes an observation that the theory of conceptual metaphor, which is an aspect of cognitive semantics moved metaphor out of language into a conceptual organization. He showed how the 'classical 'theories of metaphors presuppose the notion of literal meaning and its conceptual primacy. He states that "the source of metaphoric language is in thought, in organization of our conceptual system''. In this case, Rakova (ibid) quotes Lakoff and Johnson as referring to conceptual organization as experientialism, which includes the role of the human body and sensor motor experience in shaping human cognition and language. In relation to this study therefore, it is made possible to see the metaphor as a cognitive process, a basic schema by which people conceptualize their experience with the external world (Rakova 2003:19).

Saeed (2003:348) has assumed that language is a mental faculty and that special forms of knowledge support the linguistic abilities. For instance, cognitive linguists agree with Lakoff and Johnson as quoted by Saeed (2003:344) that metaphor is an essential element in our categorization of the world and our thinking processes.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

This section comprises the cognitive semantics theory which guides this study.

1.9.1 Cognitive Semantics Theory

The theoretical framework used in this study is cognitive semantics as explained by Croft and Cruse (2004), and J. Saeed (2003). According to this theory, meanings are concepts which can be transferred from the mind of the speaker to the mind of the hearer by embodying them in forms of one language or the other. In this case, meanings are in the head. That is, semantics for a language is seen as a mapping from the expressions of the language, to cognitive entities.

Croft and Cruse (2004:1-3) describe the three major hypotheses that guide the cognitive approach to language:

a)   Language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty

b)   Grammar is conceptualization

c)   Knowledge of language emerges from language use

The first principle that language is not an autonomous cognitive faculty expresses that, 'the representation of linguistic knowledge is essentially the same as the representation of other conceptual structures' (Croft and Cruse 2004:2). They therefore posit that, the cognitive abilities that we apply to speaking and understanding language are not significantly different from those applied to other cognitive tasks , such as visual perception, reasoning or motor activity' (ibid 2004:2).

The second principle that Grammar is conceptualization by Langacker as quoted by Croft and Cruse (ibid: 3) states that 'a major aspect of human cognitive ability is the conceptualization of the experience to be communicated', and also the conceptualization of the linguistic knowledge we possess.

Croft and Cruse (2004:3), state that all aspects of conceptual structures are subject to construal. In particular, it is argued that grammatical inflections and grammatical constructions play a major role in construing the experience to be communicated in specific ways.

The third principle that knowledge of language emerges from language use means that, categories and structures in semantics, syntax, morphology and phonology are built up from our cognition of specific utterances on specific occasions of use.

These hypotheses guide this study in the sense that cognitive semantics approaches a language as a mental faculty and that linguistic abilities are supported by special forms of knowledge. In this case, for many Linguists semantics is, necessarily a part of inquiry into cognition (Saeed 2003:343).

For instance, socialization earlier done helps to structure the concepts. An example to support this is that, members of kikuyu community were socialized into regarding the woman as a lesser being. This remains in their cognition of women as members of their community. For example, in item (2), the woman is portrayed as lacking wisdom to negotiate for any gain. This is well embodied in social discourse as a way of portraying the weak nature of women.

(2)   *Mũndu mũka ndatũmagwo thirĩinĩ*
        woman not sent to collect debt

Such a proverb is an example revealing, the way kikuyu people think; women are not apt in a way as to be trusted in handling such matters of importance as require good communication skills, wisdom, and knowledge to achieve the desired results.

Cognitive semanticists take the view that we have no access to a reality independent of human categorization and that, the structure of reality as reflected in language is a product of the human mind. That is, meaning cannot be independent, but has association. For instance, a metaphor has an encyclopedic meaning in the mind, and only one is relevant depending on the concept. In the kikuyu society, for example, the socialization earlier done helps to structure the concepts in the light of the perception of the woman being the weak gender.

Meaning in cognitive semantics is based on conventionalized conceptual structures. Thus, semantic structure along with other cognitive domains, reflects the mental categories which people have formed in their experience of growing up and acting in the world (Lakoff 1987:267).

In particular, cognitive semantics gives specific attention to the metaphor. It therefore points that meaning is conceptualization, and we then must know what it reveals about the world. Among the kikuyu community, a certain proverb is known to all of them, so meaning is brought out according to the reality of environment it comes from, that is, meaning is objective.

The principle of cognitive semantics that guides this study states that meaning is conceptualization in a cognitive model, as put forward by Mark Johnson as quoted by Saeed (2003:347). Lakoff (1987: 267) claims that "conceptual structure is meaningful

because it is embodied, that is, it arises from, and is tied to, human's pre-conceptual bodily experience.

The study uses the metaphor in cognitive semantics to reveal the thinking processes of the kikuyu as far as the woman is concerned. Metaphor is defined as the understanding of one concept in terms of another according to (Katamba et al 1997:278). In this light therefore, metaphor is a structure of human understanding by means of which we figuratively comprehend our world.

Metaphor in cognitive semantics allows us to understand one domain of experience in terms of another; 'for to serve this function, there must be some grounding of some concepts that are not completely understood via metaphor to serve as source domain' as proposed by J. Saeed (2003:347). This means that, characteristics of source domain serve to conceptualize the target domain, and cognitive semantics applies this kind of approach for construal purposes.

The study used metonymy to identify the metaphor in some of the metaphorical proverbs used in this study. Metaphorical extensions were used to establish the mapping of linguistic expressions onto conceptual structures to express meaning.

According to Croft and Cruse (2004:193), metaphor in cognitive semantics is treated as a construal operation, and it involves judgment or comparisons. It involves a vehicle and a target. Metaphor involves an interaction between two domains construed from two regions of purport, and the content of the vehicle domain is an ingredient of the construed

target through processes of correspondences (ibid 193). It involves a relationship between a source domain, the source of literal meaning of the metaphorical expression, and a target domain, the domain of the experience actually being described by the metaphor, Croft and Cruse (2004:55).

Metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action, therefore, our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature according to Lakoff and Johnson (2003:3).They further state 'In most of the little things we do every day, we simply think and act along certain lines'. In this light, communication is based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting. So, language is an important source of evidence for what that system is like.

Cognitive semantics assigns a central role in thought and reason to metaphor. The locus of metaphor is not in language at all, but in the way we conceptualize one mental domain in terms of another. Cognitive semantics explains that, the huge system of everyday conventional, conceptual metaphors is a system of metaphor that structures our everyday conceptual system, including most abstract concepts and that lies behind much of everyday language (Croft and Cruse 2004).

In this light, the study follows the insight that metaphors shape the way people think, and that shared cultural knowledge is essential in the way they comprehend metaphors.

 Cognitive semantics has come to mean 'a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system.' The term 'metaphorical expression' refers to a linguistic expression that is the surface realization of such a cross domain mapping (George Lakoff as in Gibbs

1998:203). The concept in a metaphor must be context relevant and familiar to the users of the language. In Croft and Cruse (2004:194), a conventional metaphor has it that, any principle from the source domain can be used to describe a concept in the target domain, and a conventional metaphor is a conceptual mapping between domains.

For instance, Lakoff and Johnson use a formula TARGET DOMAIN IS SOURCE DOMAIN to describe the metaphorical link between the domains, and the metaphorical expression profiles a conceptual structure in the target domain, not the source (Croft and Cruse 2004:196).

The mapping between source and target domains involves two sets of correspondences, epistemic and ontological. That is, the ontological correspondences hold between elements of one domain and elements of the other domain, epistemic correspondences are correspondences between relations holding between elements in one domain and relations holding between elements in the other domain which may include encyclopedic knowledge about the domain (Croft and Cruse 2004:196). Mapping is primary, as it sanctions the use of source domain language and inference patterns for target domain concepts.

The mapping is conventional as it is a fixed part of our conceptual system. An open–ended range of linguistic expressions can tap into the same conceptual structure in both conventional and unconventional ways, and be understood immediately: a conceptual metaphor cannot be reduced to a finite set of linguistic expressions (Croft and Cruse 2004:197). If metaphors were merely linguistic expressions, we would expect different linguistic expressions to be different metaphors.

In this case, we have one metaphor. For instance, a love relationship in which love is being conceptualized as a journey. And this unified way of conceptualizing love metaphorically is realized in many different linguistic expressions.

Metaphor, as a phenomenon, involves both conceptual mappings and individual linguistic expressions (George Lakoff 1987:208). The mappings are primary and state the generalizations that are our principle concern. Small capitals like LOVE IS A JOURNEY are used to name mappings. Thus, when we refer to the LOVE IS A JOURNEY metaphor, we are referring to the set of correspondences. The phenomenon of correspondence will be illustrated using the example of:

ANGER IS HEAT OF A FLUID by Lakoff quoted in Croft and Cruse (2004:197).

Ontological correspondences

Source: HEAT OF FLUID	target: ANGER
Container	body
Heat of fluid	anger
Heat scale	anger scale
Pressure in container	experienced pressure
Agitation of boiling fluid	experienced agitation
Limit of container's resistance	limit of person's ability to suppress anger
Explosion	loss of control

Epistemic correspondences

When fluid in a container is heated beyond a certain limit, pressure increases to a point when it explodes.

when anger increases beyond certain limit, 'pressure' increases to a point at which person loses control.

Explosion is damaging to container and dangerous to bystanders.	Loss of control is damaging to person and dangerous to others.
explosion can be prevented by applying sufficient and counter pressure.	Anger can be suppressed by force of will.
Controlled release of pressure may occur, which reduces danger of explosion.	Anger can be released in a controlled way, or vented harmlessly, thus reducing level.

(Adapted from Croft and Cruse 2004:197)

The adaptation above regarding ANGER IS HEAT OF A FLUID metaphor serves to explain Conceptual mapping of source and target domain on ontological and epistemic correspondences of a metaphor. Thus, illustrates the construal scene.

For instance, characteristics in the source domain carry over to the target domain. In this metaphor, the difference in intensity between boil and simmer in reference to heated liquid carries over to indicate corresponding differences in degree of anger in to boil with anger and to simmer with anger(ibid:197).

Metaphor in cognitive semantics is discussed not as mere words but as the ontological mapping across conceptual domains. For instance, in a general principle beauty in youthfulness may be described as a conceptual system underlying kikuyu discourse as follows:

(3)   *Kĩero nĩ ũimbo nĩ kĩimbũkaga*
        Thigh be bubble. It deflates.
        'young today, old tomorrow'

In this proverb, thigh is being conceptualized as a bubble, with the implication that its beauty and attractiveness is short lived, that the young cannot remain tender and youthful

forever, that a young girl must get married at the earliest opportune moment, or altogether forfeit a lifetime opportunity of ever getting a husband. Gĩkũyũ has many everyday expressions that are based on a conceptualization of youthfulness as a bubble, and they are used not just for talking about youth, but for reasoning about it as well. In this case, the concept of a girl in the metaphorical expression is implied, hence, in this context, the bubble is conceptualized as the girl's body.

It is a principle for understanding the domain of youthfulness in terms of the domain of bubble. It is a stage of life where a youthful girl is expected to make hasty but wise decisions concerning the future, and seize life's best opportunities, for in their conceptualization of youth, the kikuyu see it as such a time when one can make or break.

The the concept of a young girl whose conceptualization is that of an impatient young person whose purpose in life is driven by destructive forces, can be described by the expression in (4):

(4)   *ũnini ũrĩ njachĩ nĩ ithiraga*
          youthfulness has impatience, it fades

This proverb could be directed to a young girl who is perceived to be in teenage crisis. In such a case, the metaphor realized involves relating one domain of experience, young girl, in terms of a very different domain of experience, impatience. The metaphor can be understood as a mapping of characteristics of source domain of impatience to a target domain of a youthful girl. The mapping is tightly structured, which involves entities in the domain of impatience corresponding to entities in the domain of a young girl. For instance, youthfulness does not last forever.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003:27) adopted a strategy for naming such mappings. In this case, the name of the mapping in example (1) repeated here as (5):

(5) *Mũtumia nĩ ihũa*
     woman be flower

When I speak of the mũtũmia nĩ ihũa (woman is a flower) mapping, I am using a set of ontological correspondences that characterize a mapping, namely:

Mũtũmia-ta-ihũa mapping (woman- as- flower mapping)

The tender body of a woman corresponds to the flower

Fleshy body of a young woman corresponds to the fresh newly formed petals.

Difficulties in a woman's life correspond to the strong sun, wind, or rough movement that makes flower petals dry up, or even turning into a fruit that is not as beautiful as the flower hence end stage.

The woman-as-flower mapping is a set of ontological correspondences that characterize epistemic correspondences by mapping knowledge about flowers onto knowledge about a young girl in kikuyu community. Such correspondences permit us to reason about women using the knowledge we use to reason about flowers. In this example of cross-domain mapping, words for beauty with short lifespan are used to describe a woman. Inference patterns used to reason about flower are also used to reason about a woman.

In the metaphorical proverb, youthfulness is compared to a flower that passes quickly. In example (5), characteristics in the source domain carry over to the target domain. In this case, there is mapping that is tightly structured.

In this case, the name of the mapping is *MŨTUMIA NĨ IHŨA* (WOMAN IS A FLOWER). This metaphor is a set of ontological correspondences that characterize a mapping, namely: WOMAN- AS- FLOWER MAPPING.

Intuitively, this proverb is in the kikuyu social discourse to influence young girls into thinking that their lives at this tender age when their bodies are so admirable can break , therefore would have no future if they boast around with their tender young bodies, thus lowering their self-esteem and become socialized as so. So, might as well be incomplete or lacking in a way. This is intended to ensure that a woman would never realize their full potential.

These expressions are referred to as 'elaborations' by Lakoff as in (Croft and Cruse 2004:197). The many challenges facing the woman in kikuyu community from the cultural perspective is a nip in the bud to the young girl who is just in search of ideal growth and identity.

Ontological correspondences of the proverb (*kiero ni uimbo):*

Container	Body
Source: Ũimbo (bubble).	Target: Kĩero (thigh)
Cute and round when immediately formed	fleshy and well rounded when young
Disappears when touched, temporal	soft, tender, and temporal
Needs air to form a bubble	needs proper feeding to maintain size.
Glittering and attractive to the eye.	Beautiful and admirable.

Epistemic correspondences

A bubble is formed from foam and the reflection of light on it makes it look cute	a youthful girl is just blooming and therefore her young body looks cute
The bubble is very sensitive to any pressure, it lasts for a short while; can burst any time.	a young girl looks tender, her youthfulness will eventually go, therefore she must be age conscious.
There must be a supportive source to Maintain the form.	Needs proper feeding for good health
It is fragile	Requires an anchor for stability and survival.

The metaphorical proverb therefore expresses the sensitivity of the youthful stage of life especially to a young girl for its brevity. It is therefore believed to be the stage of life that shapes one's future depending on how well it was experienced.

1.10 Research Methodology

This section deals mainly with the methods used in data collection and analysis in order to answer the specific questions of the study.

1.10.1 Data collection

The study used data in, *A Collection of Gĩkũyũ Proverbs in Clusters* by Gathirwa Ndaigiri (2013). The proverbs in the book by Gathirwa Ndaigiri are clustered, and collection was from the first four chapters from which I identified metaphorical proverbs

on women, whose reference is directly or indirectly. The research also relied on the intuition of the researcher for the generation of data as used in kikuyu people's discourse on women. The selection gives enough, and reliable data for the analysis in that, cognitive semantics theory has a clear position on the way it treats the metaphor as a construal operation. The choice of the book was appropriate for this study as it contains metaphorical proverbs on women which are required for the study, and also, it is a most recent book on kikuyu proverbs published in 2013.

Three native speakers of Ki-Mathira dialect (two men and one woman to avoid gender biases) aged between 50-65 years were sources of data analysis as they helped in assigning the meaning to each identified proverb and to give the appropriate translations of the metaphorical extensions in Gĩkũyũ proverbs. The choice of the three informants was based on purposive sampling as I purposely looked for three informants who are well versed with the *Gĩkũyũ* language, precisely Ki-Mathira dialect from Karatina, and who were willing, and readily available when needed for consultation to ensure accuracy, and consistency.

Being a native speaker of *Gĩkũyũ* made it easy to identify metaphorical proverbs from the *Gĩkũyũ* book on proverbs, and it was easy to tell those whose meaning is implied, those that are closely related in meaning, and those whose construal is as a result of the process of metonymic extension. The intuition of the researcher is helpful in counter checking the various meanings of the proverbs as explained by the three informants.

1.10.2 Data Analysis

After the metaphorical proverbs were identified by the researcher and their meanings assigned by the three informants drawn from Ki-Mathira dialect, and counter checked using the researcher's intuition of a native speaker, construal operations of the metaphor were used (identification of the metaphor, with its relevant conceptual source and target domain which construes the proverb by mapping the characteristics of the source domain onto the target domain) to explain the meaning of the proverbs on the portrayal of the woman.

Finally, the metaphorical expressions in the proverbs are explained using cognitive semantics theory. Each metaphorical expression is subjected to the mapping process of the conceptual structures of the source domain onto the target domain to show meaning, and application of the metaphorical proverbs on the portrayal of the woman.

This is therefore a qualitative analysis as it explored and described the phenomena behind Gĩkũyũ metaphorical proverbs on women, on a cognitive semantics approach

1.11 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study will provide a new perspective to the study of Gĩkũyũ and other languages especially in the area of metaphor. The findings of the research will add to the body of knowledge to Gĩkũyũ linguists as they will have something documented which can be used for future reference by future researchers.

1.12 Conclusion

The chapter provided background information to the study which included: The background of the language (Gĩkũyũ), the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the research, and the hypotheses that were tested. Other parts included are: the rationale, scope and limitations of the research, theoretical framework, literature review, research methodology, data analysis, and significance of the study.

CHAPTER 2

TYPES OF METAPHORICAL GĨKŨYŨ PROVERBS ON WOMEN

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data to be analyzed in this study in terms of the categories or types of metaphorical Gĩkũyũ proverbs on women. The metaphors are categorized in terms of proverbs based on: physical features, behaviour, gender roles in society, and those based on general societal attitudes on women. More categories can be realized but only the four categories are chosen for the purposes of this study. The themes formed by proverbs make the four categories the most salient.

2.2 Proverbs based on physical features of a woman

The kikuyu use proverbs denoting the physical features of women to communicate important messages to the society regarding their obligations in the community, and expectations. Through embodied experiences, the society assigns certain responsibilities to the women according to: age, social status, exposure, and so on. Hence, in various situations as are applicable, the woman is described with regard to her physical looks. This is used either to appreciate, or to castigate them. The examples outlined in this section explain the perception of the kikuyu concerning the woman with regard to the societal perceptions:

> (6)   *Kĩero nĩ ũimbo nĩ kĩimbũkaga*
>   thigh be bubble, it deflates.
>   'young today, old tomorrow'

In the kikuyu proverb, the thigh is perceived as a bubble, which is used to indirectly mean a young girl's body, with the implication that its beauty and attractiveness are short lived,

that the young girl cannot remain tender and youthful forever. For instance, the young girl must get married at the earliest opportune moment, or altogether forfeit a lifetime opportunity of ever getting a husband.

(7)   *Mbũri nĩ rũa*
        goat be skin

The goat is said to have an attractive appearance if its furry skin is firm and healthy looking in the eye of the admirer. The kikuyu use the proverb to explain the importance of the skin in that, beautiful skin conceals any bad matter that may be under the skin. In this light, the goat that is perceived as the woman as understood in discourse, is judged by the outward appearance. So, the implication is that it is not always that the attractive outward appearance represents the holistic good view.

(8)   *Mbũri ĩtũragio nĩ rũa*
        goat kept by skin

In this proverb, a goat in the kikuyu society is used to refer to the woman metaphorically. So, the perception of the woman realized in their discourse portray her as one who should only be defined by the way she dresses. The society believe that if the well-dressed woman has any weakness, then no one would see it. For that reason, it advises the women to be conscious of their dressing, as this is used as criteria to judge them.

(9)   *Nyondo irũngiĩ nĩ magambo*
        breasts standing be trouble

In their perception of the woman, the kikuyu take breasts in such a case to mean a young girl who is seen to be beautiful, tender, with a good figure, and admirable, which makes her seductive. In this study, we look at it as a youthful body. A youthful girl whose body

is admirable, rounded and fleshy is seen to cause trouble as she is very charming to men. This can cause temptation to cause fornication, generalized as trouble to any man.

(10) *Mũrurĩ ndwakaga, mũtumia no ta Mũrurĩ*
      Mũrurĩ not build, woman be *Mũrurĩ*
      'all is not gold that glitters'

The kikuyu compare the woman to *mũrurĩ* which is a forest tree with beautiful red flowers, but yields very poor timber. So, it cannot build a firm foundation, thus, it is very unreliable. It only serves decorative purposes. In this case, building being seen as the primary function of a tree portrays the woman as only meant to serve such secondary duties in the society, including: house- keeping, rearing children, and cooking. One must use strong materials to build, failure to which a building collapses. A woman is seen to only serve as an object of decoration based on her physical appearance, hence portrayed in negative light.

(11) *Mũndũ mũka ndoragagwo*
      woman is never killed
      'a woman must not be killed'

The kikuyu believe that to kill a woman is to destroy nature. She is equated to second god and therefore, it is believed that she is a life giver. So, the society believes in preserving the woman for procreation and tendering. She is also regarded as defenseless hence, she should be protected. The understanding is that, mother is supreme.

(12) *ũthaka nĩ magambo*
      beauty be trouble

Culturally in the kikuyu community, beauty is quite often judged by the physical looks of a woman. Beauty is said to be trouble that emanates from the envy in men's eyes. A beautiful wife is admirable to many men. So, he who marries a real beauty is seeking

trouble for she is said to be a playing field for men. This ideally can make her promiscuous due to such admiration.

(13) *Mũka mwerũ nĩ magambo*
brown woman be curses
'brown woman is all curses'

This proverb according to the kikuyu means that anything that one regards dearly, and in this case a brown woman, also looks attractive to many. So, a woman who earns envy brings trouble to the husband, for to sustain her, she must be protected, not only unreservedly but also jealously. This is because she causes heartache all the time for fear of losing her. In this case, the woman is culturally perceived as weak, and lacking power to stand on her own.

(14) *Mũtũmia nĩ nguo*
woman be dress

The woman in the kikuyu society is judged by the dress, that in this case means that the way a woman dresses up also reveals the way she thinks, and her approach to issues. There is a general approach used to describe the woman in terms of the perceptions influenced by cultural beliefs and the patriarchy way of life that a woman is a woman whether literate or illiterate. In this context, it is culturally believed that the intelligence that a woman may be endowed with does not count in relation to the cultural responsibilities and roles assigned to her. The approach served to condemn the woman into the cultural confines.

Despite the fact that there have been awareness movements like feminism to educate people in order to change attitude the on perception of feminine gender, only a certain percentage of positive influence on the people has been achieved.

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2.3 Proverbs based on behaviour

Proverbs based on behaviour are meant to make the woman always conscious and sensitive to her environment. That is, the way one woman conducted herself was taken as the general behaviour across the board to all women. In this case, women in the kikuyu community were perceived and treated in the same manner, based on the cultural responsibilities that were expected of them. The examples of proverbs that follow portray the kind of behaviour the kikuyu associated with women, hence reveals the way they think about them.

> (15)　*Gĩathĩ gĩtharagio nĩ gaka kamwe*
> 　　　market spoilt by one woman
> 　　　'One woman can spoil a market'

According to the kikuyu, the market place is compared to any other important social function in the community. In this case, a woman can spoil negotiations on important issues like, operations on land demarcation, communal prayers, dowry negotiations, or efforts to pacify warring factions, hence spoil the party. This explains why the kikuyu men ignored involvement of women in important societal issues. For instance, if a clan was going to war with a neighboring clan, during the planning of the attack the women were never involved. They were said to be emotional and would be easily influenced, may be carried away and disclose a well-planned strategy to the enemy.

> (16)　*Mũka ũrĩ kĩronda ainagĩra gĩtiro ihũgo*
> 　　　woman with sore dances on the outskirts
> 　　　'a guilty conscience needs no accuser'

The sore is taken to mean guilty conscience. For instance, a woman who cannot keep secrets is said to be irresponsible. If she is known to be of such character, she is rejected

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for it is an unbecoming behaviour as per the societal norms. The guilty conscience could also be taken to mean adultery, meanness, gossip, and so on. Thus, regarded as one who did not observe rules set by the society as far as the beliefs are concerned. This means that a woman was not free to mingle for it was believed that she plays an important role in influencing behaviour of the children, who meant the future of the society. The sore stands for guilt, scar or painful experience.

(17) *Mũtumia ndonagio njegeke*
      woman not shown armpit

In their socialization, the kikuyu people believed that important issues of the family were never revealed to the woman, for secrets concerning a home should be guarded against outsiders. Such issues included: barrenness, genetically acquired disorders like genes causing sicknesses, and so on. They also believed that wealth belonged to men and not to women. This perception made the woman to be left out during important clan decisions, hence was treated like a second class citizen. This also encouraged men not to disclose all their wealth, in this case cattle and goats which was the yardstick to measure wealth, so that those who lacked much were not left vulnerable.

(18) *Mũtumia nĩ mĩtugo*
      wife is behaviour

The woman was expected to be of outstanding character since her social standing counted so much on how the society judged her. The way she carried herself was of great concern because they were the caretakers of the home, and bringing up children who in turn would emulate them. So, a woman who did not conform to the societal norms of behaviour would hardly find a suitor. Submissiveness was emphasized so much, but hardly was the man's responsibility emphasized. This was also used to reveal that in the

kikuyu society, a woman was a woman no matter the potential. That is, a woman is a woman only if her character is perceived to be right as the society may dictate.

(19) *Mũtumia nĩ mũgũnda*
      woman be garden

A woman is expected to bear good fruits throughout her life just as is expected of a garden. The kikuyu therefore, appreciate a woman on the basis of what she can offer to the society, hence the interpretation of a garden in this case means source of nourishment, roots, and a sense of belonging. The society believed that a woman yields good fruits on the basis of the input done. For instance, if a woman is treated well, she becomes submissive. This portrays the woman as one who is easily affected by any external force that may stand her way, hence, lacks independence.

(20) *Mũgũnda wa mwere ũmenyagwo na ngetho*
       garden of millet known by harvest
       'One knows of a field of millet by its crop'

The woman is perceived as a garden that is known by its produce. In a garden where seeds are planted and tended, expectations are that the yields would be bountiful. For instance, traditionally,a woman was expected to bear many children for value addition, and to ensure continuity. In the modern society, she is also expected to work diligently with her hands to earn wealth for her family. So, culturally a lazy woman earns no respect, but a submissive woman is a prosperous woman.

(21) *Mũtumia nĩ itu*
      woman be sky

The kikuyu hold the view that a woman is not reliable, just like the sky which may be cloudy sometimes, other times it is sunny or even rainy.

The woman is compared to the sky, for she is believed to have mood swings that make her emotional. Emotions then could take control of her, resulting in making hasty judgments that could be destructive. This was used to deny them important social responsibilities like solving disputes, or leadership roles since they would handle them emotionally. This was a reason given by the kikuyu to justify that a woman could not be a sober leader.

> (22) *Mũndũ mũka na igũrũ itimenyagĩrwo*
> woman and sky not predictable
> 'woman, wind and fortune are ever changing'

The kikuyu perceive the woman as indecisive, hence not reliable just as the sky cannot be understood for its ever changing status. It is as well very difficult to plan ahead with regard to what a woman can achieve. This is judgment according to the way the woman is regarded as someone whose mood swings are believed to control her judgment. Therefore the conclusion is that she cannot be understood.

> (23) *Mũtumia nĩ thiri*
> woman is secret

A woman only earns good repute if she is one who can keep secrets and conducts herself with decorum with regard to her role in the society. Mostly, a woman can disclose many issues regarding a home, and this makes them to be judged in terms of how they behave when it comes to inner matters of a home. The kikuyu therefore believed that many issues in a home were not supposed to be disclosed in order to save a home from external influence which may cause disintegration, just in case so much is known about the family.

(24)   *Mũici na mũndũ mũka atigaga kĩeha akua*
         thief with woman stops worries when she dies

'One who steals in the company of a woman stops being sad only after she dies.'

According to the kikuyu, a thief who is in the company of a woman, is perceived as stupid for a woman is never known to keep secrets. He who robbed in the company of a woman will live in fear till her death for the secrets may be disclosed. For instance, this could metaphorically mean committing adultery which might cost the adulterer his life, and it serves to warn men against exposing themselves to women, for she can betray him.

(25)   *kanyoni kabariti nĩko keninaga njoya*
         bird restless finishes feathers
         'restless bird finishes its feathers in vain'

In this proverb, a woman is perceived as the restless bird. The proverb has the message implied in that, a woman who keeps moving from one place to another, or one who keeps causing trouble to others, causes trouble to herself. For instance, marrying one man after another, gossiping, stealing, and so on. Therefore, she is never known to succeed in most of her endeavors according to the societal perception. She is therefore portrayed as irresponsible in the sense that she lacks wisdom to protect herself. However, affirmative action that is already embraced in the constitution gives the woman a chance in order to give them a chance to work as their male counterparts.

2.4 Proverbs based on gender roles

Proverbs based on gender roles explain the duties that were expected of the woman in the kikuyu society. The society defined roles based on gender, which is meant to make boundaries regarding duties in a home, and serve to protect the male ego by making sure

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that a woman does not abdicate her duties causing embarrassment in a home. The kikuyu used this to preserve male dominance.

> (26) *Mũka mũkũrũ acokagirĩrwo na maithori*
> first wife returned to in tears

One way in which the proverb is interpreted is that the first wife is neglected when a man finds a younger wife. This means that a woman is able to forgive. The first wife is therefore appreciated in sorrow, just in case the younger wife metes cruelty on him or if she dies. This also means that a man only learns to cherish something that he might have been taking for granted after he is denied freedom. This proverb serves to let men know that they should not neglect old for new. However, the society here expects the woman to be forgiving by nature, thus ignore her feelings.

> (27) *Gũtirĩ njamba ya mwera ũmwe*
> no cock of hen one

In this proverb, njamba (cock) implies a man, whereas, mwera (hen) in this case refers to the woman metaphorically.This proverb explains that it was the responsibility of the man to take care of the women in the society. This for example, served to justify polygamy in the male dominated society. As supported by the patriarchy, the man needed to be comfortable in all circumstances as pertains to the role of the woman in a home. So, in the kikuyu culture the man was allowed to be polygamous for their own comfort in case a wife fell ill, was incapacitated in any way to perform her role as a woman, or if death occurred, the man would have an alternative source of attention, and someone to take care of the home. All these practices are in total disregard of the women whose presence as part of God's creation did not count much according to them. They would therefore be used to satisfy the man's ego only.

(28)   *Mũthuri nĩ kĩongo, Mũtumia nĩ ngingo*
        man is head, woman is neck

In the kikuyu community, the man is the head of the family. That is, it is the man who has the responsibility for decision making, leading the family and performing all the difficult tasks such as performing traditional rituals: slaughtering an animal, surveying communal land, settling family disputes, and making judgments. So, the woman was never expected to be heard when men undertook their responsibilities whether they infringed on the woman's rights or not. The woman had her place in the kitchen, giving birth, home care, and performing other light duties. She is not supposed to attend men's meetings or even give proposals in any situations, and this proverb only serves to put women in the cultural confines.

(29)   *Gĩa atumia gĩtĩkagio kĩarara*
        for woman agreed at dawn
        'woman's word taken only at dawn'

Among the kikuyu, women's decisions were never taken seriously; hence the man could never act on a woman's directive for they believed it was against the tradition. For this reason, men become soft on them only if they want to ask for any good turn from them, and at this point a man could take the woman's opinion to entice her.

(30)   *Mwana wa kahĩĩ ti wa kairĩtu*
        boy child is not girl child

The kikuyu appreciated the boy child more than a girl child as they believed that the boy had strength of body and power of the mind of significant magnitude as contrasted with the girl. This encouraged the boy to work diligently unlike the girl. A boy in this culture is a symbol of power, continuity, security, and source of economic stability for the community. The girl on the other hand is seen to lack power, and was therefore

considered a weakling who could not be entrusted with any important social responsibility like pacifying warring factions, prompting inactivity even when important duty called. This became a way of socialization which puts them down and never to rise to realize their full potential. However, the positive influence impacted on the society through education about the girl child has served partly to reduce such practices perceived to be retrogressive in the society.

(31) *Ũhĩĩ nĩ umagwo no ũka ndumagwo*
      boyhood ends, womanhood remains

Boy becomes man, woman remains woman in the sense that, the society looks at a boy in the light of immaturity but there is a transition stage that sees the boy change social status into manhood . However, in the kikuyu society, a woman is perceived in the same way throughout her life. In this case, they believe that a young girl can manage social responsibilities in the same way a mature woman would. In this case, the kikuyu married off their girls quite early in life believing that they can undertake family responsibilities as well.

(32) *Ũhĩĩ ti ũka*
      boyhood not womanhood

A boy may become a man and therefore matures and changes social status while woman remains a woman no matter her age, due to social gender constructs. A boy has limits with regard to the responsibilities bestowed upon him in terms of age, although they are unreliable. On the other hand, a woman does not have any definite role regarding her age, that is, whether young or old they are expected to undertake the same duties. In this light, womanhood is portrayed as something incomplete and therefore treated as a less privileged member of the society.

(33) *Atumia matirĩ rika*
women have no age group
'women belong to no age group'

An age group puts one in a particular social status. However, a woman is said to fit in any social group, and this means that the kikuyu believe that a woman can say anything to anyone which portrays them as lacking wisdom to conceal important sensitive issues of the family, like disability. This warns men against disclosing sensitive matters of a clan to a woman lest they lose it all.

(34) *Mũtumia ahuna ndathĩnjagĩrwo*
woman who has miscarried is not slaughtered for

Since it the woman who carries a pregnancy to term and gives birth to a life child who should be appreciated only. This was a ritual conducted that was done through slaughtering a goat to welcome the new baby and encourage a mother to suckle the young one to maturity. In this case, this proverb metaphorically brings to light the appreciation reserved for a successful person who accomplishes assigned tasks as expected. Therefore, in the kikuyu community, a woman never earned accolades if she did not meet expectations of the society. Furthermore, if a home lacked children the lame was put on the woman.

(35) *Mũciĩ mwega nĩ Mũtumia*
good home is wife

Every situation needs proper attention for it to benefit mankind and more so, the woman here is challenged to concentrate on her social responsibilities.

For instance, a good wife makes a good home. A home that is prosperous can only be founded on the stability, and diligence of a woman. In this case, the woman has a role to play in ensuring that all activities of a home run smoothly, which is reflected in the view

that people get in the children and the husband. Every situation needs proper attention for it to benefit mankind and more so, the woman here is challenged to concentrate on her social responsibilities. In this light, if a home did not meet certain threshold in relation to the woman's responsibilities, the lame was on the woman.

    (36)   *Ndĩthĩnjagwo nĩ aka*
                not slaughtered by women
                'goat is never slaughtered by women'

The implication here is that, in the kikuyu society, a goat was never slaughtered by the women, hence, it is the man who could only handle such matters of importance. This was exclusively a man's job. In this light, the underlying reason is known to deny her the chance to undertake important duties of a home incase she earned accolades instead of the man. So, important clan matters like dowry negotiations, slaughtering, settling disputes, going to war, were all a man's jobs.

    (37)   *Mũtumia nĩ tha*
                woman is mercy
                'women should have mercy'

In the kikuyu community, a good woman is the one who is merciful. So, one who does not show mercy is lacking in completeness. This proverb gives a positive approach to issues since; the woman holds a very important position as far as feeding the community is concerned. A woman's conduct can therefore serve to make or break the society.

    (38)   *Mũthuri nĩ gũthura Mũtumia nĩ gũtuma*
                man is to choose, woman is to conceal.

A woman in the kikuyu community did not perform any rituals, but only watched as men conducted them. Rituals of a community were conducted by men. So, she was not

expected to perform any rituals, but only be a silent observer. This means that the community believed that a woman should not slaughter an animal for sacrifice as was the custom of the kikuyu, and also was not appointed to the council of elders who were the custodians of the rules of the community. To keep the community united, such sensitive matters were handled by men. The proverb therefore served as a constant reminder to the woman not to disclose issues.

(39) *Mũndũ mũrũme arĩragio nĩ ita na mwĩrĩ mũrũngarũ*
      man weeps at warriors and a beautiful body
      'man cries on seeing warriors and also a beautiful girl'

In this case, a beautiful woman is seen to cause headache to a man, just as the war. The proverb explains that a woman could be an obstacle to a man's success. This in the light of the kikuyu culture portrays a situation where the woman is said to equal the war in that both can be impediments to the man's prosperity. If war is coming, it is coming, and on the other hand, a woman was considered a necessity in a man's life.

(40) *Mutumia ni Mũcii*
      woman be home

A home is a source of warmth, order, sense of belonging, and love. In this case, the perception is that a wise woman symbolizes a good and stable home, whereas, a foolish wife is reflective of an unstable home. For instance, emaciated children portray a lazy mother. A woman therefore had the responsibility of making a home habitable and dear to all, which meant that they would only be entrusted with such light duties.

According to the kikuyu, there would be no home without a woman, and on the other hand, the metaphorical proverb attaches an important role to the woman of taking care of

a home. In this light, badly behaved children reflect the mother, hospitality in a home makes the woman earn praises, and the prosperity of a home is attributed to the woman. So, a home that lacks warmth was meant to reflect an irresponsible woman. For a good home to be, a woman must be well in charge. So, the society uses a home as a yardstick for a responsible woman.

> (41) *Mũtumia ndaikagia ndahi ndua*
>   a woman does not dip the cup into the beer pot
>   'dipping a cup into the beer pot is a man's job'

The kikuyu proverb implies that the woman did not handle serious issues of the society, because she was perceived to lack wisdom and knowledge for the same. A woman was perceived as one who lacked wisdom to make concrete judgment over issues pertaining disputes, clan wars, and rituals. The woman was also perceived as lacking strength to handle difficult tasks, and these as defined were exclusively men's jobs.

2.5 Proverbs based on general societal attitudes about women

The proverbs based on attitude reveal the way the kikuyu perceive their women with regard to the social responsibilities, which in turn portrays the position of the woman in the kikuyu community. These proverbs defined women in a general approach, where it was taken that the attitude created toward one woman is the general description of every other woman in the society.

> (42) *Aka nĩ ngoma*
>   women are devils
>   'women are ill-willed'

This metaphor equates women to devils. The kikuyu people believe that women bring trouble to men, made their lives miserable, and were known to always bring them down.

They could not co-operate and work harmoniously with regard to their responsibilities. For instance, back biting, gossip, and disclose solemn issues. The proverb is meant to warn men against revealing all they have to the woman as they were never been known to have good intentions.

(43) *Mwarĩ mwerũ ndaragũragĩrwo*
brown girl not taken to medicineman

This proverb was taken to mean that general outward beauty is visible, and as such, among the kikuyu, some of the parameters that were used to judge beauty of a girl is the brown skin. In their perception, a brown girl did not have difficulties in finding a suitor as her beauty spoke for her. This proverb could also imply that good behaviour speaks for itself. In their cultural perspective, the kikuyu believe that a well behaved child does not lack support, however miserable he or she could be. An intelligent mind have its way no matter the challenges. Beauty in this sense is actualized in good deeds.

(44) *Ngemi ititinagio*
ululations not cut
'ululations give accolades to a winner'

The kikuyu used this proverb to portray the importance attached to the boy in the society, and that things had to be conducted right just in case any credit deserved by a boy was directed to the girl, who according to them did not deserve so much of appreciation. In this light, they give five ululations to a new born baby boy; on the other hand, they give four to a new born baby girl. So, if it is cut, it does not give proper signal for the birth of a boy is appreciated more than that of a girl. The reality is that credit

should be given where it deserves, and the male dominated society cannot allow a boy to be equated to a girl.

(45). *Nyeki ya nja ndĩrĩkaga*
grass outside not eaten

The kikuyu take grass in this proverb metaphorically to mean a girl who is mature for marriage in one of the many ways the proverb may be interpreted. This proverb is mainly directed to a young man who is perceived to be ready for marriage. It discouraged young men from marrying girls from their local village, or from their own clans since one commands respect to a stranger than to any other person known to you culturally, or for the case of lineage, cross-breeding would ensure production of better genes. This would ensure smooth live for the man. On the other hand, the girl is discussed as if she did not have much freedom of choice when it came to such matters.

(46). *Mũndũ mũrũme nĩ indo*
man is wealth

One way in which the kikuyu applied this proverb was to communicate indirectly to the women on matters concerning marriage. The interpretation was that a woman needed not mind about other factors concerning a would-be suitor, but only if a man was wealthy, that was all that mattered. In this light, the society had its own way of influencing the woman to curtail freedom of mind. The society expected the woman marry any wealthy man who proposed to her, and ignore other factors such as: handsomeness, health, background, and so on. On the other hand, the proverb encouraged hard work for men.

(47) *Mwanake wĩna indo ndoihanaga.*
wealthy man not woo

The kikuyu take this to mean that a wealthy young man will automatically be attractive to any would be suitor. Therefore, this depicted the woman as materialistic, and at the same time made women believe that beauty was not determined by outward appearance, but what counted was the hard work and the intelligence that one may be endowed with. So, this

(48) *ũratonga nĩ ta ũyũ ũraracĩrio*
becoming rich is like one receiving dowry

The bride price is culturally valued. The kikuyu believed that a girl was a source of wealth since she could be married off and earn the family a lot of riches in terms of cattle and goats. This depicts the woman as property in the cultural perspective. The dowry is taken to mean riches, and therefore a girl is seen as a source of wealth.

(49) *Nyina wa mũndũ nĩwe ngai yake ya kerĩ*
mother is second god

This means that mother is second to god. The mother- child relationship is seen as that of a human being and his or her creator. Mother gives birth to a child, therefore does the work of creation like the supreme God. The kikuyu therefore emphasizes the importance of the woman in the society, which is to ensure continuity and growth of the community.

(50) *Ndundu ya nyina na mwana ndĩingagĩrĩrwo*
friendship between mother and child cannot be interfered with

The kikuyu believe that a mother protects, and defends her child always despite the situation. In this case, a woman is said to be the adviser of the child, and is expected to guide in all circumstances as in preparing the child for the world. The community emphasizes the mother' love for the child.

(51) *kũngũ maitũ na hunyũ wake*
mother appreciated in all situations

Someone's mother remains the mother forever as one can never have more than one biological parent. The kikuyu use this proverb in order to command appreciation for the mother in all situations of life.

(52) *Mũtĩ ũmenyagwo na itunda*
      tree known by its fruit

A woman is compared to a tree that is expected to bear fruits in every season. The kikuyu therefore expected the woman to bear as many children as possible, and at the same time bring them up well for the continuity and harmony of the society. This emphasized the importance of hard, and good behaviour, and any negative result was associated with the woman. For instance, bad mannered children were perceived as reflecting the mother, and not the father.

(53) *Mũirĩtu nĩ nyakĩrũmangĩre*
      a girl is source of food
      'a girl is a source of wealth over a life time'

In the kikuyu community, dowry was paid little by little over a long period of time. The society take the girl child as property, and therefore she is seen as a source of wealth over a lifetime since the relationship created when a girl is married off is expected to last forever.

(54) *Mũndũ mũka nĩ mũrĩngĩti ũteagwo gwakĩa*
      woman be blanket, thrown away at dawn

A blanket is used to protect and shield people from cold at night in bed and it is thrown off at dawn, as it is no longer cold. The woman is metaphorically compared to a blanket in the light of her role as a wife. This kikuyu proverb depicted the woman as an object to keep a man warm in bed, as well as source of comfort as far as family responsibilities are concerned.

(55)   *Aka erĩ na karĩ rũĩ kao*
        two women and their tell-tales

The kikuyu people did not just take any report by a woman seriously; it was always

dismissed as a tell-tale until proven by credible sources. This stemed from the perception

of the society on women who were known to never give a turn to the other person as they

explained a point. Ideally people are supposed to give chances to the other party to be

heard in case of an important matter that requires sober judgment.

The woman, therefore was seen as one who had no patience, and would rush to judgment

without thorough investigation, hence, any report made by the woman had to be

subjected to scrutiny before it was adopted as truth.

(56)   Mũthuri ndanagĩrĩra mĩatũ mbere ya mũka
        man not count beehives before the wife

The kikuyu conceal a lot of vital information of the family from the woman. Since the

woman was known never to keep a secret by the society, it was believed that she could

disclose secrets to the enemy, hence cause loss or damage. On the other hand, the poor

man was protected in the sense that even though he lacked much visibly, the woman

would never know since they always thought that there was much more of wealth that

was concealed. However, the women appeared to have been content with the culturally

established way of life.

(57)   Iri kugĩrwo mbu nĩ aka ndĩricaga
        If a woman screams at a wrong doer, they do not survive

The kikuyu believed that the woman had power to bless, and/or to curse. In this light, the

proverb meant that the woman in most cases did not know how to handle sensitive

matters with the patience expected of them. For instance, if a man was caught cheating on

another woman, or stealing by a woman, they had to be disclosed hence would be subjected to the wrath of the society.

(58)   Mundu muka na kionje ni undu umwe

         woman and lame be similar

The kikuyu took the woman as one who was dependent. In their socialization, they then believed that a woman lacked freedom of mind because, the society influenced her into thinking that they lacked knowledge and power to influence others positively, or even make wise decisions that could impact on the lives of the people positively. For instance, men in the kikuyu community did not believe that a woman's income could support a family, and/or even if they earned something, they were still not independent.

(59) Mwana wa kairitu niwe nyumba ya ruriri

child girl be house of community

This proverb means that a girl child is the mother of the nation, tribe or clan. The kikuyu therefore have the perception that without women, there would be no men. Women bear life, nurse, cherish and give warmth for all human life pass through them.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the metaphorical proverbs collected as data for this study have been presented in the following categories: proverbs on physical features, proverbs on behaviour, proverbs on gender roles, and proverbs explaining general societal attitudes about women. All of them are subjective, reflecting what the male-dominated ideology of the kikuyu society propagates about women. As such,tension rages as artists try to

portray girls as passive, irresponsible, childish and unreliable, while the same girls happen to be intelligent, calculating, sensible, and responsible in relation to their brothers. In the same manner, wives are castigated for their disloyalty, hypocrisy, untrustworthiness, cunning nature and unreliability. But the same wives are also mothers who are self-sacrificing, reliable, custodian of history and culture. The tension is clear, the society loves and hates women, fears and admires them, wants to listen to them and control them. These dynamics are looked into in Kabira's Thesis (1993). But for the purposes of this study, the metaphorical proverbs are looked into as linguistic expressions, whose meaning is perceived through the tenets of cognitive semantics.

CHAPTER 3

A COGNITIVE SEMANTICS ANALYSIS OF KIKUYU METAPHORICAL

PROVERBS ON WOMEN

3.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the data on kikuyu metaphorical proverbs on women as presented in chapter 2. As explained in section 1.9, the theoretical framework used in this study is cognitive semantics as expounded on by Croft and Cruse (2004) and J. Saeed (2003). According to this theory, a metaphor involves a relationship between a (conceptual) source domain, the source of the literal meaning of the metaphorical expression, and a target domain, the domain of the experience actually being described by the metaphor (cf. Croft and Cruse 2004:54). The choice of the metaphor to depict a situation in a particular domain is based on the construal of the structure of the domain in a particular way that varies depending on the metaphor chosen.

In this study, the domain WOMAN encompasses all female human beings, including the concepts of a young girl, daughter, mother, wife, and so on.

In all the proverbs analyzed in this chapter, the analyses involve identifying the metaphorical expression in a given proverb and the relevant source and target domains which capture the community's conceptual mapping in the proverb. Starting from 3.2, the proverbs are discussed according to the categories in which they are presented in chapter 2.

3.2 Proverbs based on physical features of a woman

The kikuyu community uses the metaphorical proverbs based on the physical features of a woman to explain the reason women should not be entrusted with heavy

responsibilities, express their perception of beauty, and/or emphasize the brevity of youthfulness. Our discussion on the physical features of a woman are based on examples (6), (10), (9) and (8) repeated here as (1), (2), (3) and (4), respectively.

(1)   *Kĩero nĩ ũimbo nĩ kĩimbukaga*
        thigh be bubble; it deflates
        'young today, old tomorrow'

The conceptualization of the source and target domains in this proverb involves metonymy, the use of a word to denote a concept other than its literal denotation. In this case, metonymy denotes a woman as the thigh, and through metonymy we understand the metaphorical aspect of thigh (a woman in her prime) as the bubble. It is therefore realized that the conceptual source domain is the bubble, and the target domain is the thigh. The characteristics of the source domain mapped onto the target domain are outlined as follows:

Source domain: bubble	target domain: thigh (a woman in her prime)
Cute when formed	beautiful and fleshy in her prime
Temporal	short lifespan only in youth
Sensitive to pressure	soft and tender in her prime
Attractive to the eye	Admirable

The thigh-as-bubble mapping shows a situation where thigh is being conceptualized as a bubble, where the characteristics of the source domain of bubble are mapped onto the target domain of thigh. So, in the kikuyu community, the cognition has the implication that its beauty and attractiveness is short lived, that the young cannot remain tender and

youthful forever, that a young girl for example, must get married at the earliest opportune

moment, or altogether forfeit a lifetime opportunity of ever getting a husband.

The metaphor explains the principle for understanding the domain of youthfulness in

terms of the domain of bubble. It is a stage of life when a youthful girl is expected to

make hasty, but wise decisions concerning the future, and seize life's best opportunities,

for in their conceptualization of youth, the kikuyu see it as such a time when one can

make or break.

We understand metaphors in terms of experiences (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:20). That is,

the experiences we have in bubble is mapped to that of thigh, hence we comprehend a

young girl in terms of the bubble.

> (2.) *Mũtumia nĩ mũrurĩ*
> woman be *mũrurĩ*
> 'all is not gold that glitters'

Mũrurĩ tree-as-woman mapping is the metaphor realized in this proverb. The conceptual

source domain is the *mũrurĩ* tree while the target domain is the woman. The metaphorical

sense in the proverb is the conceptualization of the woman as the *mũrurĩ* tree whose

characteristics are mapped below:

Source domain: *mũrurĩ*　　　　　　　　　target domain: woman

Tree　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　Body

Poor timber　　　　　　　　　　　　　　weak body

Beautiful flowers　　　　　　　　　　　beautiful body

Attractive red flowers　　　　　　　　　charming body

The kikuyu perceive women as weak, very fragile, and lacking strength as the poor timber of *mũrurĩ* tree, though they are as charming as the beautiful red flowers of the tree. Unfulfilled expectations correspond to the non- gainful nature of the *mũrurĩ* tree as far as building a foundation is concerned. Its purpose is only decorative just as the kikuyu see the woman as only a decorative image.

(3)   *Nyondo irũngiĩ nĩ magambo*
         breasts upright be trouble

The upright breasts said to be trouble in the proverb have a metaphorical aspect. The breasts are associated with trouble which is conceptual. The conceptual source domain is trouble, and the target domain is the upright breasts.

Source domain: trouble	target domain: breasts
Bothers you	Attracts
A source of problems	source of problems

The relationship between source and target domain is through association, and the kikuyu use physical looks to judge. Her admiration causes trouble, as a woman's tender body and beauty are perceived as source of trouble, both to her, and to the society. Therefore, the source domain is culturally understood.

The generalization characterized here is over inference across conceptual domains. The mapping reveals the conceptualization of the young girl whose body is beautiful and attractive as trouble, in the sense that, even she herself is aware that she is an admiration to many, hence bound to cause fornication, and also she is a headache to the parents who must always be wary of her whereabouts in case of any eminent danger.

The kikuyu conceptualize the young girl as cause for trouble since she is envied. When a girl notices that she is being admired by many men she grows out of control and this is usually in the adolescence stage. Adolescence is seen as such a stage of life when the girl is rebellious, autonomous in decision making, and quite often the decisions are wrong hence, trouble for family members and herself.

This proverb is used by elders to warn mothers against their daughter's free behaviour. Lakoff and Johnson (2003:14) state that these metaphorical extensions have their basis in our physical and cultural experience.

Lakoff as quoted in (Croft and Cruse 2004:201) argues in particular, that reasoning in the target domain of metaphorical entailments is governed by the image-schematic structure of the source domain.

> (4) *Mbũri ĩtũragio nĩ rũa*
> goat is kept by skin
> 'woman is a goat, it is kept by the skin'

In this proverb, the target domain is hidden, but it is culturally understood. The kikuyu have it in their cognition that, the woman is seen in many angles, and therefore, they do not perceive the physical appearance of a woman as her true self, hence, they take her outward appearance as the skin of a goat that conceals the true sense of the content under it. So, the skin may be hiding character, sickness, sorrow, and the true nature of the woman. It may be appealing to the eye but this could be a lie.

In generalization therefore, the outward appearance, in this case conceptualized as physical looks is treated as the skin whose work is to give an appeal to the admirer. So, this proverb is used to warn that there could be more than meets the eye.

3.3 Proverbs based on behaviour

The kikuyu use the proverbs on behaviour in social contexts to make a deliberate appeal to the woman to be wary of her conduct in certain situations, since the community perceives her as one who should be a role model to others. The woman in turn is made to be conscious about her conduct since this is used to judge her in the cultural perspectives. The discussion of proverbs on behaviour of a woman here are based on examples (20), (25), (21), (15), and (16), repeated here as: (5), (6), (7), (8), and (9).

(5)   *Mũgũnda wa mwere ũmenyagwo na ngetho*
        garden of millet known by the harvest
        'one knows a field of millet by its crop'

This metaphor in this proverb is Garden-as-woman mapping, and in this case a woman is the garden of millet. The conceptual source domain is garden of millet while the target domain is the woman. The metaphorical mapping across conceptual domains is:

Source domain: garden   target domain: woman

A garden is fertile if well-tended   a woman is fruitful if well taken care of

A garden yields fruits if fertile   a woman bears children if healthy

A garden when tended gives maximum produce a woman if taken care of will be productive for family needs.

The kikuyu talk about secrets metaphorically, therefore, the features in the source domain that help us understand the target domain are the preparation, productivity, and the harvest just as would be expected of a woman.

(6)   *kanyoni kabariti nĩko keninaga njoya*
        bird restless finishes feathers
        'restless bird finishes its feathers in vain'

In this proverb, a woman is the restless bird. The target domain is only understood by members of the community, in which case, the woman as bird is understood in the cultural context. The conceptual source domain is the restless bird, and the target domain is the woman. In this case, the characteristics of a restless bird are mapped onto the woman. The woman is seen only as a bird:

Source domain	target domain
Bird	Woman
Has feathers	has beautiful body features
Chirps so much	always talking, criticizing people
Prone to dangers from predators	Vulnerable

The proverb uses this metaphor to advise women not to be restless (jumping from place to place) and losing her beauty without profit (gain).

In the proverb, the woman is perceived as the restless bird that misuses its energy and strength in doing things that add no value to their lives, hence only incurs losses. This proverb portrays the woman as one who would not prosper on their own, since they spend their energy on petty matters like gossip and this makes them waste their resources. In this light, the society perceives the woman as one who is lacks direction, which denies her the chance to be trusted with important social responsibilities.

(7)   *Mũtumia nĩ itu*
       woman be sky

The woman is conceptualized as the sky. In this proverb, the conceptual source domain is the sky, and the target domain is the woman.

The mapping across conceptual domains is as follows:

Source domain: sky   target domain: woman

Brings seasons   ever changing

Unpredictable   Unreliable

Changing weather   mood swings

The metaphorical nature of the proverb reveals the reasoning of the kikuyu as far as the expected behaviour of a woman is concerned, hence, they are judged from this perspective. In this case, they use this to justify their approach to determining the way a woman should be treated, and the limitations that govern her involvement on serious matters concerning the society. This includes: land demarcation, resolving conflict, negotiation of bride price, and so on.

Proverbs based on gender roles explain the duties expected of the woman in the kikuyu society.

(8)   *Gĩathĩ gĩtharagio nĩ gaka kamwe*
        market spoilt by one woman
        'one woman can spoil a party'

The conceptual source domain is the market, and the target domain is the matter at hand.

Source domain: market   target domain: matter at hand

issues   social responsibilities to handle

The kikuyu community uses (gaka) as diminutive, which denotes an affix added to a word to convey the meaning small or unimportant. In this case, smallness is in the mind of the speaker, and therefore, the kikuyu use the affix to reduce her status.

In this proverb, the conceptual source domain is the market, and the target domain is the matter at hand. The metaphor is used to say something about a woman, but a woman is

not part of the metaphor. The kikuyu value a woman who behaves well as opposed to a quarrelsome one who is likely to only bring shame to the family. The metaphorical expression explains the nature of the woman as one who cannot be trusted to handle certain sensitive matters of a community, like planning a wedding, or leading people into important issues as pacifying warring factions.

Therefore, any failure on communal responsibility that happens in the presence of a woman is attributed to her awkward behaviour. This serves to sideline the woman from matters of great importance in the male-dominated society.

(9) *Mũka ũri kĩronda ainagĩra gĩtiro ihũgo*
woman with sore dances on the outskirts
'a woman whose character is anti-social is barred from undertaking important social tasks in the society'

In this proverb, the metaphorical element is implicit in that its target domain is not overtly expressed, only understood from the encyclopedic cultural wisdom of the community. Thus, the woman with a sore is understood to be the woman whose character does not conform to the behavioural norms of the group, and so, she is despised in the society. So, in this case, the source domain is the sore, and the target domain is bad character, leading to the conceptual metaphor: BAD CHARACTER IS A SORE.

Source domain: sore   target domain: bad character

The conceptual source domain is the sore, and the target domain is the guilty conscience. Therefore, the conceptual mapping across conceptual domains is:

The sore corresponds to the guilt

Dancing on the outskirts corresponds to giving excuses

The metaphor is brought out to comment on the nature of a woman: when she has guilty conscience, she does not freely mingle with others for fear of being castigated. The society therefore judges the woman harshly in that she is denied even the most pleasurable of moments, like engaging in such an important social dance, just because of being perceived to contradict the societal expectations like being a gossip.

3.4 Proverbs based on gender roles

Proverbs based on gender roles explain the duties expected of the woman in the kikuyu society. Women are expected to respect their roles as dictated by the society to ensure harmony and growth in the male-dominated community. The discussion of proverbs on gender roles are based on examples (27), (36), (40), and (41) repeated here as (10), (11), (12), and (13) respectively.

> (10)   *Gũtirĩ njamba ya mwera ũmwe*
>   no cock for hen one
>   'no cock has one hen'

In this proverb, there are two conceptual metaphors: MAN IS A COCK, and WOMAN IS A HEN. The proverb in this case applies to the two concepts which have been combined to mean, that, the kikuyu justify the men's polygamous behaviour. Indeed, a woman who is seen to be in loose moral behaviour is referred to as a prostitute while a man who is in more than one relationship is said to be polygamous, hence the proverb.

The hen is only known for laying eggs and brooding chicks, and these characteristics are mapped onto the woman to define her role in the society, being that of rearing children and keeping the home. The society conceals the view that, a woman is man's property, and it is the responsibility of every man to take care of the women.

(11) *Ndĩthĩnjagwo nĩ aka*
not slaughtered by women
'slaughtering (of a goat) is not done by women'

The conceptual source domain in this proverb is goat slaughtering, and the target domain is serious societal responsibilities. The metaphor is used to depict what women should do, as well as what they should not do.

In this case, the kikuyu society restricts women from undertaking serious societal responsibilities like, solving disputes, negotiating dowry, making communal sacrifices, and so on.

The woman is not entrusted with serious matters for the kikuyu people believe that a woman is never predictable, and lacks knowledge and power to handle such issues of importance.

(12) *Mũtumia nĩ mũciĩ*
woman be home
'woman is the home'

This proverb has two alternative view as reflected in the two conceptualized metaphors in it. The first approach is:

The conceptual source domain is the home, and the target domain is the woman. The kikuyu take the woman according to the way she keeps her home. The conceptual aspect of it is that, if her husband and children are well kept and well fed, then this shows a responsible woman. On the contrary, if the children are not well kept, that is, if they are starved, dirty and not well clothed, the blame is on the woman, and not the man.

The characteristics of the source domain of home, are mapped onto the target domain of woman. A dirty home corresponds to a lazy woman

A clean home corresponds to a focused woman.

Well-fed children correspond to a diligent woman

A happy man corresponds to a responsible woman.

The alternative view of the proverb brings out a metaphorical sense in that, the expression may also mean that, a woman is the most important element in making a home. Thus, 'significance' is presented as 'being', that is:

Source domain: being   target domain: significance

The kikuyu use this to emphasize the significance of a woman in making a home, urging men not to think of having a home without a woman. This means that a woman is a woman no matter her social status for even the most irresponsible is a woman according to the society.

> (13) *Mũtumia ndaikagia ndahi ndua*
>   woman doesn't dip cup into beer pot
>   'dipping a cup into the beer pot is a man's job'

The conceptual source domain is dipping a cup into the beer pot, and the target domain is handling serious issues of society.

Source domain: dipping a cup into the beer pot   target domain: handling serious issues

The metaphor is used to express what a woman should not do (a woman is part of the proverb, which uses a metaphor).

A woman is perceived as one who lacks wisdom to make concrete judgment over issues pertaining disputes, clan wars, and rituals. The kikuyu believe that a woman does not have the strength to handle difficult tasks and these as defined are exclusively men's jobs.

The responsibilities bestowed upon them are tackling light duties like looking after children, taking care of the home, and including cooking.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003:157) since metaphor is constitutive of socio-cultural relations, then it has power to control discourse hence, cognition.

3.5 Proverbs explaining general societal attitudes about women

These proverbs portray the general attitude that the society has on women. These expressions are used to influence the woman into feeling inept to handle weighty matters in the society, and/or to protect the male-dominance among the kikuyu people. The discussion of these proverbs is based on examples (55), (53), (58), and (54) repeated here as (14), (15), (16), and (17) respectively

(14)   *Aka erĩ na karĩ rũĩ kao*
         two women and their tell-tales

The tell-tale is the conceptual source domain, and the target domain is women's concerns.

Source domain: tell-tales   target domain: women's concerns

Petty stories   trivial matter

Inconsequential   non-issue

The metaphor is on the tell-tale. A proverb may use a metaphor, but some parts of the proverb may be literal.

The kikuyu people do not just take any report by a woman seriously; it is always dismissed as a tell-tale until proven by credible sources. This stems from the perception of the society on women who are known to never give a turn to the other person as they explain a point, and in any case, they live in pettiness. They are said to magnify trivial

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issues which makes them to be dismissed in all cases. The woman, therefore is seen as one who has no patience, and will rush to judgment without thorough investigation, hence, the negative attitude of the society towards them.

> (15)   *Mũirĩtu nĩ nyakĩrũmangĩre*
>   a girl is source of food
>   'a girl is a source of wealth over a life time'

Dowry is paid little by little over a long period of time'

The conceptual source domain is food, and the target domain is the wealth (dowry).

Source domain: food   target domain: wealth (dowry)

Sustains life   source of livelihood

The conceptual structures realized here are: the correspondences that constitute the girl as source of food metaphor, which is an extension of the mapping of the characteristics of the source domain food onto the target domain wealth.

The mapping reveals the way the kikuyu take their women, and this shows that the girl child belongs to the community, hence the bride price is negotiated communally where the would-be suitor is allowed to pay it in installments over a period of time. The reason behind this is to make sure that wealth will trickle slowly over time to strengthen friendship with the in-laws. So, the kikuyu say that one who has married off a daughter cannot die of hunger.

> (16)   *Mũtumia na kĩonje nĩĩndũ ũmwe*
>   woman and the lame are the same
>   'woman and the lame are similar'

The conceptual source domain is the lame, and the target domain is the woman. It is treatable as a metaphor though a bit explicit.

Source domain: lame	target domain: woman
Dependent	dependent
Vulnerable	vulnerable

The kikuyu perceive the woman as dependent of their male counterparts. It is in their cognition that a woman cannot stand on her own, that she is not self-reliant, and her approach to issues is lacking. This condemns the woman into the social confines that deny her freedom of expression, independence, and incapable of steering her life alone. In this light, the male-dominated society does not give the woman a chance to exercise her rights as well as explore, and actualize her life.

(17)   *Mũndũ mũka nĩ murĩngĩti ũteagwo gwakĩa*
        woman be blanket, thrown away at dawn

The conceptual source domain is the blanket, and the target domain is the woman.

The characteristics of the source domain mapped onto the target domain are as outlined here:

Source domain: blanket	target domain: woman
Used as bedding	sleeps in bed
Made of thick material	a fat woman's body is admirable
Protects people from cold	source of human hope
Used to keep one warm	psychologically, a woman is a source of warmth

Woman-as-blanket mapping

The kikuyu perceive women as a source of hope, warmth, psychological healing, and fruition in general. So, such social discourse influences the mind, where a woman is taken like an object to be used only when one needs it. It is therefore the general attitude in the community that a woman should be given attention only when she is needed to undertake a certain task. The community treats her as an afterthought, and therefore condemns her into believing that she can only handle such social roles as dictated by the society.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, a cognitive analysis of kikuyu metaphorical proverbs selected from chapter 2 has been done to account for kikuyu people's understanding of the proverbs as presented in the following categories: proverbs on physical features, proverbs on behaviour, proverbs on gender roles, and proverbs explaining general societal attitudes about women. Most of the selected proverbs for analysis reflect negative portrayal of women, which reflects what the male-dominated ideology of the kikuyu society propagates about women. The next chapter discusses the findings of the work done in chapter 2 and especially the analysis in chapter 3.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

This chapter aims at discussing observations made from the work in chapter 2 and 3. In the discussion, consideration is made of the objectives of the research.

4.1 The classification of Kikuyu metaphorical proverbs

The classification in chapter 2 partly fulfills the first research objective: To investigate the role of metaphoical Gĩkũyũ proverbs in the portrayal of the woman. (The rest of this work is done in chapter 3 where the proverbs are analysed.)

A thematic presentation of the metaphorical proverbs has given the following categories:

    (a) Category on physical features of a woman

    (b) Category on behaviour

    (c) Category on gender roles

    (d) Category on general societal attitudes on women

For example, in the first category, we see a focus on the woman's physical features as in (10) of chapter 2 repeated here as (1):

    (1) Mũtumia nĩ ihũa
        woman be flower

In this case, the appealing beauty of a woman is compared to that of the flower, hence a woman is said to have short lived beauty, meaning it would quickly go, means a short lifespan.

Example (14) of chapter 2 also discussed as (2):

    (2) ũthaka nĩ magambo

The girl is made to understand that anything good she possesses and is seen outwardly, may cause her downfall. Thus, this notion reveals the thinking of the kikuyu about the women, which portrays them negatively.

Similarly, we see the society's focus on women's behaviour (type 2), gender roles (type 3), the societal attitudes towards them (type 4). These categories reflect the various ways in which the kikuyu society views women.

4.2 Application of cognitive semantics theory

The theoretical parameters of cognitive linguistics in the analysis of the proverbs to identify the metaphor revealed that it takes both its cultural and cognitive function into account. This fulfills the second objective of this study: to examine the meaning of Gĩkũyũ metaphorical expressions using the theoretical parameters of cognitive linguistics. The transfer of features from one domain to another involves cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system.

In this case, a metaphor involves a relationship between a source domain, the source of the literal meaning of the metaphorical expression, and a target domain, the domain of the experience actually being described by the metaphor.

4.2.1 A theoretical approach to metaphor takes both its cultural and cognitive approach

Some proverbs have the target domain only understood by the members of the community.

For instance (6) of chapter 3, repeated here as (3):

   (3) *Kanyoni kabariti nĩko keninaga njoya*
        bird restless it finishes feathers

Woman as bird is understood in the cultural context.

The theory has been useful in identifying the metaphorical expression in a given proverb, and the relevant source and target domain in order to construe a scene. For instance, example (58) in chapter 2 repeated here as (4):

(4) *Mũndũ mũka nĩ mũrĩngĩti ũteagwo gwakĩa*
    woman be blanket, thrown away at dawn

The cognition of the woman as blanket, with the blanket being source domain and the woman as the target domain is achieved through the theory, where the characteristics of the blanket are mapped onto the woman. Thus, the woman is taken to serve the functions of the blanket.

We found out that the woman has been portrayed negatively in the kikuyu society. This is in line with the research hypothesis (1) of this study. For instance, the woman was seen as irresponsible, which is an idea expressed in different proverbs as in:

Example (8) in chapter 3 repeated here as (5):

(5) *Gĩathĩ gĩtharagio nĩ gaka kamwe*

This proverb reveals the thinking of the kikuyu people about the women. A woman is perceived not to be equal to any serious task concerning societal responsibilities. In this case, all women are seen as inept, and therefore cannot be trusted to handle sensitive responsibilities like pacifying warring factions within the patriarchy.

Example (7) in chapter 3 presented here as (6):

(6) *Mũtumia nĩ itu*

The conceptualization of the woman as sky shows that a woman is unreliable in the sense that, she is unpredictable just as the unpredictable sky. As the weather is ever changing, so is the woman said to have mood swings. This portrays her in a negative light, the community use it to deny her the chance to be assigned important responsibilities of the society like leadership.

A woman is also seen to only serve as an object of decoration, as analyzed in (2) of chapter 3, presented here as (7):

(7) *Mũtumia ni Mũrurĩ*

This proverb portrays the woman as an object for decoration only. The *mũrurĩ* tree is only known for its beautiful red flowers, but has no other economic value for it has very poor timber that cannot be used to lay a foundation. She is therefore taken in a negative light, for she cannot be included in any important task in the society.

The kikuyu also see their women as source of food. This notion is as analyzed in (14) of chapter 3, presented here as (8):

(8) *Muiritu nĩ nyakĩrũmangire*
    a girl is source of food

The girl child is perceived as source of food in the sense that, once she is married off, the suitor is allowed to pay dowry in installments in order to have it spread out over a long period of time. This may prompt early marriages so that the parents can have a source of livelihood. Therefore, a woman is perceived as property. These observations, show that one idea can be expressed using different proverbs.

4.3 The woman in conceptual metaphor

In conceptual metaphor, the woman is not seen. In some metaphors, the target is not mentioned, but the source is used to replace the target. The metaphor is in the mind, and the conceptual metaphor is presented as:

Example (9) in chapter 3, presented here as (9):

(9) *Gũtirĩ njamba ya mwera ũmwe*

　　The conceptual metaphor is: WOMAN IS A HEN and MAN IS A COCK

4.3.1 Overt versus conceptual uses of the metaphor

We found out that in some cases, the metaphor is used overtly, and in others it is at the conceptual level. That is, a metaphor must be understood in order to understand the proverb. For instance, example (15) of chapter 3, repeated here as (10):

(10) 　　*Mũtumia na kĩonje nĩũndũ ũmwe*
　　　　woman and lame are similar

This proverb is treatable as a metaphor though a bit explicit.

　　Example (13) of chapter 3, repeated here as (11):

(11) 　　*Aka erĩ na karĩ rũĩ kao*
　　　　women two and their tell-tales

The metaphor is on the tell-tale, as in the source domain is tell-tales, and the target domain is women's concerns.

4.3.2 Number of metaphors in a proverb

In some cases, one proverb uses more than one metaphor. For instance, example (12) of chapter 3, repeated here as (12):

(12) 　　*Mũtumia nĩ mũciĩ*
　　　　woman be home

In the first instance, the source domain is the home, and the conceptual target domain is the woman. In the second metaphor, the source domain is 'being', and the target domain is significance of the woman.

4.4 Number of proverbs expressing a given societal view

Sometimes, the same comment on a woman is made using two or more different proverbs. Different proverbs may convey similar messages, and achieve the same effect as far as the woman is concerned. For instance, when one wants to show unpredictability of a woman, example (5), and (7) of chapter 3, here presented as (13) and (14) respectively may be used.

(13)   *Mũgũnda wa mwere ũmenyagwo na ngetho*
garden of millet known by harvest

(14)   *Mũtumia nĩ itu*
woman be sky

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have discussed the findings of the research based on our observations in chapter 2 and 3. In particular, the discussion highlights the following:

- Kikuyu metaphorical proverbs on women are categorized based on social perceptions of the male-dominated society.

- A theoretical approach to metaphor takes both its cultural and cognitive approach.

- Some metaphors are overt, others are implied.

- The woman in the implied metaphor is not seen, only understood culturally.

- Number of metaphors in a proverb can be more than one.

- Number of proverbs expressing a given societal view may be more than one.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This study was concerned with the cognitive semantics analysis of the portrayal of women in kikuyu metaphorical proverbs. This chapter summarizes the research findings which are in line with the objectives and the hypotheses which were tested.

The objectives were:

1. To show the portrayal of women in Gĩkũyũ metaphorical proverbs?

2. To explain the meaning of Gĩkũyũ Metaphorical expressions using the theoretical parameters of cognitive linguistics in the portrayal of the woman?

    The following were the hypotheses:

1. Women have been portrayed negatively in Gĩkũyũ metaphorical proverbs

2. Cognitive semantics is used to explain the portrayal of women in Gĩkũyũ metaphors.

    The chapter also makes some recommendations for further research.

5.2 Conclusions

In relation to Gĩkũyũ metaphorical proverbs on women, the study set out to fulfill the stated objectives and hypotheses. Chapter two demonstrated that Gĩkũyũ as a language has a variety of proverbs, which can be represented as both conceptual and metaphorical expressions. The proverbs were also categorized according to the functions of the metaphors in them as had been outlined in the objectives.

In chapter three, the analysis was done and it included identifying the metaphorical expression in a given proverb and the relevant source and target domains which capture

the community's conceptual mapping in the proverb. The metaphors captured the non-literal sense of the proverb, which made it possible for the objectives of the study to be realized.

The key observations made here were discussed in chapter four, which included the following: The role played by the metaphor in cross domain mapping in the conceptual system, through the transfer of features from one domain to another. This is done to get the relevant source and target domain as a construal scene. The metaphor involves understanding of one thing in terms of another. It could also be observed that, in some proverbs, metaphor is at the conceptual level and must be understood in order to express the proverbs.

5.3 Recommendations

A cognitive semantics analysis was the base of the study. The project was restricted to a practical analysis of Gĩkũyũ metaphorical proverbs on the society's portrayal of women. It can be recommended that similar studies be carried out in other languages to establish whether metaphors in other languages are used as construal tools to express the common view on women as done in the Gĩkũyũ metaphorical expressions.

It is necessary to carry out research on other figures of speech like polysemy and metonymy, to establish what society values they capture.

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