

ANALYSIS OF REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN LUHYA PROVERBS

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research study is my original work and that I have not submitted it to any other institution for examination.

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This project has been submitted with our approval as University of Nairobi supervisors.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my late mother, Jane Malala and my father Wilson Malala for believing in me and making it possible for me to get education.

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First, I am grateful to the Almighty for giving me the strength and endurance to complete this work. Secondly my greatest gratitude goes to Professor Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira and Dr. Jane Wambui for their supervisory role. Thank you so much for your patience and guidance that has seen me complete this work.

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ABSTRACT

This study is on "*Analysis of representation of women in Luhya proverbs,*" and is grounded on the premises of the Luhya traditional culture which is patriarchal and the need to deconstruct the wrong attitudes towards women in the Luhya community that are institutionalized and reinforced through proverbs. The study was guided by two objectives; to examine the representations of women in Luhya proverbs, and explore the possible implications of these representations in Luhya Proverbs on gender relations and women subordination. The study was guided by African Feminism and Foucault's power theory. The study employed the discourse analysis approach of Siegfried Jäger to identify the emerging themes and discourses from the proverbs. CDA approach helped to complement the African Feminist theory and Foucault's power theory. The findings of this study reveal that from the selected Luhya proverbs, women are portrayed both in the favourable and unfavourable light. Positive themes were only realized in a few proverbs on mothers who are projected as reliable, protective, selfless, providers and are worth respect. Majority of the Luhya proverbs were found to portray women as objects, commodities, untrustworthy, weak (dependence), unintelligent (c.f chapter 4). The study concludes that the ideological and power assumption contained in the majority of the explored proverbs is that power is controlled by men and that women should abide by the dominant-subordinate relationship. The study also concludes that women in the Luhya community should accept their secondary position without question. The study recommends that more scholarly work should be done on Luhya proverbs that represent the women in good light and to bring out new proverbs in speeches and publications in an endeavour to recreate new discourses. The study also recommends the need for studies to establish ways of encouraging women to develop self-affirmation and self-esteem and not to accept their subjugation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study. It presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions, justification of the study, scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background and context of the Study

The background of this study is the Luhya traditional culture, language and proverbs. Culture is part of every community. It is reflected in the livelihood of a society, and their beliefs as expressed in wise sayings, such as proverbs.

Proverbs are part of a given culture and are indicative of features of the society they originate from. The present study focuses on the representation of women in the Luhya proverbs.

In order to understand Luhya proverbs on women, it is important for us to look at the Luhya traditional community and what their culture entailed.

1.1.1 Luhya Culture

Luhya people are the third largest community in Kenya and the most dominant in western part of the country and north end of Rift Valley. They also reside in the eastern part of Uganda. The Luhya do not exist as a single homogenous group of people but rather it is a cover term for seventeen language groups including; Isukha, Idakho, Bukusu, Kabras, Wanga, Banyala, Banyole, Maragoli, Samia, Kisa, Batirichi, Marama, Marachi, Bastosto, and Batachoni (Wambunya, 2005). Apart from sharing language with varied dialects they also share common cultural traits such as marriage, circumcision, burial ceremonies and other rites of passage.

The Luhya community is patriarchal in nature. It belongs to patrician system of organization in the sub-Saharan Africa (Tamale, 2005), where the subordination of women has been expressed in language and proverbs. A study done by Khamala (2009) indicated that identity in most African societies is traced to male lineage and as such decision-making is the preserve of men. Boys and men in general are depicted as superior to women and they are the ones who are the most important in the community, women are inculcated into nurturing and domestic domains. In the Luhya culture, like other cultures in the world, social behaviors and attitudes are considered appropriate for people based on sex (masculinity or femininity). Women were inculcated to be wives and mothers during ceremonies such as childbirth, marriage, initiation/circumcision. A good wife was therefore known by her ability to give birth, bring up her family and take good care of the husband.

In this regard, men were accorded superior roles in the community, with women beings taking second place.

Luhya people had very elaborate traditions concerning food taboos, childbirth, initiation, marriage and burial rites which they have conservatively tried to maintain by resisting some aspects of Christianity and westernization (Wambunya, 2005). A case in point is whereby the community “prohibits women from eating certain parts of a chicken – the gizzard”, and the resistance activities of the Dini ya Msambwa sect.”

The Luhya practice male circumcision. Among the Bukusu sub-tribe, the initiation ceremonies are carried out two years apart, and young boys of about 14 years of age, get the go-ahead from their parents, and invite relatives and friends to their homes to witness them “face” the knife. The ceremony is a public event and the initiates are

expected to go through the operation with bravery. An initiate then becomes a member of a particular age-group.

Circumcision ceremonies are accompanied by various forms of oral literature among them songs, sayings, proverbs and oral narratives all of which are aimed at educating the initiates on the values of the community. Through these forms of oral literature, the young initiates are socialised to understand their cultural position and obligations.

Marriage is also another cultural practice that is at the centre of the Luhya community. In this community marriage involved the exchange of dowry to the girl's family. This gave a man prestige, influence and also allowed him exert his presence in society especially if he is blessed with many children.

The Luhya language has distinct words for referring to the two genders. Nangendo (1994, p.129) elaborates that in the Luhya community, for example, "when one meets a man and a woman one states that *omundu nende omukhasi* (a person and a woman). When a man dies, it is stated that *omundu* (A person) has died while for a woman, *omukhasi* (a woman) has died". The person-hood of a woman is not acknowledged in and of itself without invoking her gender. From such a narrative it is manifest that a woman is not *omundu* (a person) and that is generally accepted which reflects the patriarchal nature of the Luhya community. The gender relations in the Luhya community is thus based on male dominance (Barasa, 2017, p.158).

After looking at the Luhya community and what their culture entails, I will now look at proverbs; definitions and use in various cultures.

1.1.2 Proverbs

Wolfgang (1993, p.12) defines a proverb as “a plain and solid saying, largely known and repeated and it conveys the truth build on common sense and occurrences.” It may also help in “understanding what is desired and undesired as well as what is considered correct or incorrect in a culture.” Proverbs are easily memorized. They express, embody and symbolize the culture of a community. They also reproduce a cultural experience and an ideology in the society (William, 2003). Proverbs reflect all features of a society and communicate expectations of the community.

According to Mariana & Vogelzang (1996), a proverb is small bits of articulation used with rhetoric’s to culminate disagreements concerning human etiquette. Proverbs involve the manipulation of figures of speech, metaphors and humorous statements. “Proverbs aim to reinforce arguments by referring to what is assumed to be commonly accepted knowledge, whether or not the point is moral. Moreover, proverbs attain an amusement purpose of linguistic delight.”

According to Crystal (1997), proverbs feature prominently in interpersonal language use. He explains that “because of the general nature of the human experience; they are available in all lingual’s with resemblance in their dependence on vivid images and word amusement.

The African continent is widely recognized for its traditions and proverbs which are mostly used in oral arts. In Africa, proverbs form part of the formation of social and cultural knowledge and therefore serve as the basis for formulating ideas that govern social interrelations.

Proverbs also hold a lot of meanings, an Ethiopian saying: "*Mamma aksi dubbii gaba absa*" meaning proverbs shorten matters, best explains the role of proverbs in African

societies. In Africa, proverbs are not only used to shorten matters as suggested by the Ethiopian proverb but as a spice for the addition of taste to speech. Fasiku, (2006) contends that in Africa, proverbs are a significant rhetorical device that can shape moral opinions, beliefs and consciousness. Fasiku's thoughts are echoed by Ruth Finnegan who argues that proverbs are compressed phrases used for the expression of ideas. Proverbs help in the delivery of brief expressive remarks. This is affirmed by a Nigerian saying: "Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten"(Oha, 1999). On the same vein, Ethiopians say: "*Dubbiin mammaaksa hin qabne itto osooqidda hin qabne*" meaning a speech with no proverb is like unsalted stew. The Zulu of South Africa echo these stands by claiming that without proverbs, a language is like skeleton without flesh or a body without soul (Finnegan, 1970). Ability to mix speech with a well thought out proverb is considered wise and intelligent in Africa, claim that needs further interrogation given the ability of proverbs to sometime demean a class of individuals.

Studies have established that language in general is an essential device on the matters of gender construction and deconstruction (Baxter, 2003; Cameron, 2005; Lazar, 2005; Mills, 2008; Sunderland, 2004). Proverbs therefore, are equally, a powerful tool that can either empower or relegate a section of the populace to a secondary position in a society. There exists a substantial number of studies examining proverbs Diabah and Amfo (2015) and Mubarok (2016), Anderson (2012), Wang (2012), Lee (2015) and Hussein (2009) among others. A study by Anderson (2012) that sought to examine the way proverbs are used to characterize male and female in Northern Sweden revealed that gender hegemonic systems in support of masculine superiority and feminine subordination are found in the gender conceptions in proverbs. On his part, Wang (2012) studied sex discrimination in English and Chinese proverbs, his findings revealed that in both languages, men are considered superior and stronger than their

female counterparts implying a gender bias in both languages. These findings were confirmed by Lee (2015) in his analysis of Chinese Proverbs with an aim of establishing the images of men and women as represented in Chinese proverbs found a bias in gender depiction of women who were expected to depend on men and valued for their physical beauty, chastity, domestic roles and ability to bear sons to continue the family line.

An examination of the use of African proverbs in situating the African woman (with a focus on Akan women) in patriarchal and matriarchal systems in Africa by Asimeng-Boahene (2013) revealed that proverbs are used as devices to control positions of economic and social influence and thereby limit the participation of women to domestic spheres. In such a structure, women are relegated to depend on men, and thus occupy a weaker position both at family and societal level. His study demonstrates the reduction of women as objects of men's sexual pleasure denying them the right to their sexual pleasure by the proverbs. Similar findings were found by Diabah and Amfo (2015) whose study examined how women are represented in a number of Akan (Niger-Congo, Kwa) proverbs. Their findings showed that the Akans through the use of gendered proverbs present women with particular stereotypes.

An exploration of Ethiopian, Sudanese and Kenyan proverbs by Hussein's (2009), revealed that there exists strong intercultural and intertextual linkages between proverbs and representation of women's roles, statuses and identity, and that the linguistic resources, as found in proverbs, are used to perpetuate inequality.

Proverbs in the Luhya community are part of oral literature that contributes to the socialization process and everyday human experiences. In clan meetings and other cultural activities in Luhya, proverbs are highly regarded as a high source of language

maturity. In important sittings in the community, proverbs are seen as major tools of communication and entertainment among the people who attend. They are also used to solve disputes and conclude arguments among the members of the community.

Like in other African cultures, proverbs are common features of eloquent communication in the Luhya community and they are said to carry the wisdom of the land, and are used to reinforce meaning and express conventional truths. The Luhya people utilize proverbs to touch a wide range of human concerns and activities and concentrate themselves on highlighting the roles of men, women, and the youth. Proverbs are used in articulating different issues and consolidating the diversified views of people in an attempt to advance societal values and beliefs. They are used to cement that which protects the identity of the people of Luhya.

Proverbs in the traditional set up of the Luhya were a major or key tool/instrument used for instruction to impart knowledge, values and attitude to the young by the older generation. At the same time, proverbs are held strongly as pieces of advice concerning a recommended direction of action. This study therefore sets out to examine how the ideology of Luhya proverbs represents women and girls in the community and what this implies to their position as well.

Luhya culture and in particular the language has been hailed as a source of cultural identity and expression but at the same time, the language has been riddled with derogative remarks which potentially have oppressed womenfolk in the community.

Among the Luhya, there are different words which describe men and women differently. It is the same in proverbs that function “as instruction manuals for warning young women and girls to be submissive but encourage men and boys to be assertive.” Proverbs are components of language which portray societal expectations of different

genders and at the same time are used by men to exercise their physical power while at the same time manifesting women's physical and mental weaknesses.

There are few Luhya proverbs which describe women in an appraisal manner. Namulundah (2013) notes that patriarchy is entrenched as an ideology which defines men as natural owners of intellect, power owners and those with abilities to rule. On the other hand women are regarded as naturally submissive and without iota of knowledge on leadership hence willing to be led.

1.2 Problem statement

In most African communities, languages and proverbs have been a source of ideologies which have impacted on women in these societies (Atanga, 2012). To change the existing circumstances, an African feminist perspective helps in highlighting and revealing ways in which patriarchy functions in the oral traditions and written materials to exorcise traditions and sustain male superiority over female. While pointing out the discourses on beauty, intelligence, submissiveness, dependency, untrustworthy, objectification and commodification of women, I am able to uncover the ways in which patriarchal ideology is reinforced Tyson (2006). In this regard, this research establishes a gap in knowledge concerning proverbs, the representation and subordination of women in the Luhya community. It intends to look at proverbs to establish the discourses in relation to women. This is vital since no documented investigation has attempted to critically inspect the presentation of women as reflected in Luhya proverbs and the resultant contributions to gender relations. Although studies such as those of Namulundah (2011, 2013), have done a commentary of Bukusu proverbs and folktales no current study has attempted to show that proverbs create discourses that could impact on the position of women in the Luhya community.

Previous studies have primarily focused on, narratives, songs and folktales with less attention on proverbs and representations of women. This research then intends to fill gaps in literature by utilizing African feminist approach and Foucault's theory of power to create a social awareness of negative elements against women in the Luhya proverbs. The problem statement is thus, to establish the various ways in which women are presented in Luhya proverbs and the implications of these presentations to their positions in the community. This will entail review of the ethnical context within which they are structured.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to explore the representation of women in Luhya proverbs.

Specific Objectives

- i. To explore the representations of women in Luhya proverbs.
- ii. To examine the implications of these representations on gender relations and subordination of women.

1.4 Research questions

The guiding research question is "what is the representation of women in Luhya proverbs?"

In answering this question, the study addressed the following questions:

- i. What are the representations of women in Luhya proverbs?
- ii. What are the implications of Luhya Proverbs on gender relations and women subordination?

1.5 Scope

This paper focuses on a study of proverbs from the Luhya community. It heavily relies on a collection of proverbs by Tim Wambunya (2005), *Luhya Proverbs from Kisa, Marama, Tsotso and Wanga*. London: Luyia Publishing Company. It will also rely on other secondary sources of data, and review of documents such as journals, books and online publications.

1.6 Limitations

This study is limited to published materials on the study subject. This is a limitation since it relies on available information to address the subject under discussion.

The dynamic nature of culture and the society may not be reflected in this research – it may not paint a true picture of the Luhya community today considering the changing cultural values among the Luhya people in the wake of globalization and intermarriages.

This study is also limited by over reliance on a specific collection of proverbs by Tim Wambunya (2005) and the assumption that they are true.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Community in this thesis refers to Luhya people of Western part of Kenya.

Culture is the customs and social behavior of the Luhya people.

Women, in this study as used in Luhya proverbs refer to the entire female gender comprising of girls as well as married and unmarried women and widows.

Proverbs are short repeated sayings that express traditionally held truth or advice. They deeply touch on our lives and have been in use for generations

Patriarchy is a structure of the community where men are given the superiority where women are given none of the power. The systems and structures are created by men for their own benefit.

Gender is the social and cultural differences between men and women. The interpretation of gender in terms of masculinity or femininity mainly arises from the socialization process of individuals and the community.

Feminism involves the advocating for women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes.

Gender roles are the societal assignments and expectations of men and women in the Luhya community.

Gender inequality is the unequal treatment and position of ladies and men in the Luhya society.

Gender Relations refers to relations of men and women socially conceptualized by culture, religion or ways of thinking.

Marginalize is to treat a person as insignificant, removing them from the public space.

Gender Stereotype is the over-generalized belief about women.

1.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has introduced the study by providing the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions, justification of the study, scope and limitations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter evaluates written works related to proverbs on women in other cultures around the globe with the intent of understanding the representations of women and gender differences in communities. This entails review of the historical and ethnical context within which they are structured. This relates to understanding of culture and the social construction of gender in proverbs.

This chapter also considers the theoretical framework that forms the basis of this study by elaborating on African feminism and Foucault's theory of power in order to understand the place of language and culture in creation of ideologies in gender relations.

2.1 The Positive Perceptions of Women across Cultures

The aim of this subsection is to look out and analyze the messages contained within such women-related proverbs and sayings which operate positively for women. Studying female-related proverbs seems to provide a promising path to inquire how women have been perceived through the ages – mostly embodying negative values, as it seems – but also proves the slowly progressing change for better in stereotyping females. “Due to the rise of feminism, there is a search to find women's contributions in history and thereby, to give them their appropriate place in the community” (Kerschen, 1998: 2). Moreover, “proverbial observations about preoccupying elements of life”, shared by all societies of the world, “form an excellent starting point for a better understanding without suspicion, hostility or polarization. Concretely exploring our cultural legacies together – in a brotherly and sisterly fashion – allows us to build bridges between cultures” (Schipper, 2006: 14).

There are categories of proverbs relating to women that have positive connotations. These are undeniably categories linked to the concept of mothers and grandmothers, viewed as most respected women.

As pointed out by Kerschen (1998,53) “[...] more phone calls are made on Mother’s Day than on any other occasion during the year [...]” which could be interpreted that clearly the mother is globally put on a pedestal, set apart as the most valuable representative of womankind, and even of humankind (Schipper 2006,128). It is she, the mother who is adored and glorified as a divinity, as exemplified by an English proverb of African origin *Mother is God number two*, the Polish proverb *Czego chce kobieta, tego I Bóg chce* ‘What is wanted by a mother, is wanted by God’ and quotation *Matka, jak Pan Bóg, może kochać wszystkie swe dzieci, każde z osobna I każde najwięcej* (ZofiaKossak) ‘A mother, the same as God, can love all her children, each individually and each most’ or respective English and Persian well-known proverbs *God could not be everywhere, therefore he decided to make mothers; Heaven is at the feet of mothers* (and the Polish counterpart quotation from an unknown author *Niebo jest u stop matki*). A mother is a source of endless, unending and exemplary love (e.g. *A mother’s love will dash up from the depths of the sea* (American) *because Mother’s love is best of all* (American); *Miłość matczyzna nie starzeje się nigdy* ‘A mother’s love never gets old’ (Polish).

Universally, it is the mother who is praised for her tenderness, attentiveness to her children and impeccable selflessness, e.g. *Matka dzieci jedną jagodą obdzieli* ‘A mother will feed children with one berry’, as the Polish proverb observes, while a well-known southern African proverb states that *The child’s mother catches the knife at the sharp end* (Sotho/Tswana). Also a large number of proverbs highlights a mother’s care, solicitude or comfort in situations when help and cure is needed, e.g. *When the boy’s*

foot is broken, he finds his mother's yard (English, Jamaica); *Kiedy młoda antylopa jest głodna, matka daje jej całe mleko* 'When a young antelope is hungry, the mother gives her whole milk'; *Gdzie u dzieci matka, tam i główka gładka* 'When children have a mother, their head is smooth'. Moreover, *Mothers are incomparable*, as the proverb from Congo puts it, they are unique through their warmth, e.g. *It is warm in the sun, and nice with a mother* (Russian); *Matki dają naszemu duchowi ciepło a ojcowie – światło* (Jean Paul Sartre) 'Mothers give our spirit warmth and fathers – light' or patience and perseverance in all their efforts, e.g. *Breasts are never too heavy for the owner to run with* (Creole, Haiti); *Dobra matka więcej nauczy niż stu nauczycieli* 'A good mother will teach more than a hundred teachers'. Another well-known though rather overstated English proverb *The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world* implies that the mother's hand is powerful and influential and the proverb praises motherhood as the preeminent force for change in the world because of the ability to shape children's personalities.

The woman is further depicted positively by sayings such as *Matka jest tylko jedna* 'There is only one mother'; *I uboga matka ma złote serce* (Antoni Regulski) 'Even a poor mother has a heart of gold'. Still a few more which give glory, honour and high praise to mothers and women in general are, among others, *Nie ma słodszej jabłki niżli własna matka* 'There is no sweeter apple than one's own mother', *Świat byłby bez kobiet tym, czym ogród bez kwiatów* 'A world without women would be like a garden without flowers' or *Najpiękniejszą stroną świata jest kobieca twarz* (Zbigniew Jerzyna) 'The most beautiful side of the world is a woman's face'.

Equally, grandmothers are treated with special care and children are taught to respect them, as stressed by the Umbundu proverb *Respect your grandmother, because without her your mother would not have existed*. They are, similarly to mothers, equated and

associated with God, as explicitly illustrated by the Dutch proverb *God cannot be everywhere, that's why he created grandmother* in the same vein the Polish equivalent saying *Bóg nie mógł być wszędzie więc stworzył babcię*. What is more, grandmothers are known for their boundless love for their grandchildren, e.g. *A grandmother always thinks that she cannot do enough to show her love for her grandchildren* (Chinese); *There is nothing sweeter than a grandchild* (German) and take the place of the mother wherever needed, as highlighted in several Caribbean and Latin American proverbs, e.g. *If the child does not have a mother, let the grandmother raise it* (Creole, Haiti/Jamaica); *He who does not have a mother will have to make do with a grandmother* (Spanish, Panama/Argentina); *If you do not see your mother, go and find your grandmother* (English, Jamaica). Also, it is often stressed that grandmothers cannot refuse their grandchildren anything, e.g. *In granny's basket there is always waranawa fish* (Papiamentu). They are highly valued for their work and life experience which is at times superior to that of mothers, e.g. *Grandmother – a wonderful mother with lots of practice; Your grandmother has taught you this and you want to ask your mother?* (Baule). In relation to this, they are often helpful and useful to their family in various ways. In particular, their physical and mental support is highly appreciated, e.g. *There's no place like home except Grandma's; A grandmother is a babysitter who watches the kids instead of the television* (Welsh); *Babcia to wielofunkcyjne pogotowie rodzinne* (JózefBulátowicz) 'Grandma is a multifunctional emergency unit'.

2.2 The Negative Perceptions of Women across Cultures

Until recently, due to the male-dominated world, studies pertaining to women had been minimal or were told in the context of men's views, and thus largely excluded women from the picture of civilization's progress. As indicated by Kerschen (1998: 2), "women's folk specialties, such as needlework and weaving, were left almost

unrecorded till recent times” mainly because of a lack of female storytellers. Since they had not had their own say, the view of women portrayed in proverbs was distorted by male prejudice and pervasive bias, and the positive aspects of womanhood were ignored. Such a status quo has largely contributed to the overall negative picture of a woman, in particular all the stereotypical attributes related to the female kind (Kochman-Haladyj and Kleparski, 2011).

An example may particularly be observed in industrialised societies and in socially privileged groups by a proverb which may be held to demonstrate a slightly positive transition in the perception of women is *A career girl would rather bring home the bacon than fry it*. The proverb, on one hand, testifies to the changing position of women in the field of work and home but – on the other hand – it is laden with sexist bias because the use of ‘girl’ instead of ‘woman’ denotes the patronizing attitude towards women, giving them no respect and recognition as adults. What the proverb implies is that bringing the food home is a rejection of the expected role of housewife. This is a demonstration of how there is negative perception of women across proverbs of various cultures.

There exists a paradox in the perception of women in proverbs across the globe. A perception is propagated to suggest that girls are good but women are not, that there is a transition that occurs in girls the moment they become wives. This observation may be exemplified by means of the following proverbs coming from different cultures: *Girls are beautiful, sweet and tender; where do all those wicked wives come from?* (Russian); *All are good girls, but where do the bad wives come from?* (English, USA); *As long as she is with her mother, kind as a lamb; as soon as she has got a husband, she pulls out a long-drawn tongue* (Serbian/Croatian). Within a marriage it is the wife who is usually blamed for causing most problems, as in e.g. *When a man takes a wife,*

he ceases to dread hell (American). Consequently men are often warned against and advised in proverbs, for example, *He who has a wife has a master; When you choose a wife shut your eyes and commend your soul to God*. A large number of proverbs advise husbands to be particularly alert and careful if they marry a beautiful wife because then they are prone to be asking for trouble, as in for instance American proverbs *If you marry a beautiful blonde, you marry trouble; The wife who loves the looking glass hates the saucepan*.

In many cultures, a woman is treated as an object, to be of service to men. The role of a woman as a wife, though a noble thing is reduced to basic things as ideal and not ideal; cursory analysis of proverbs with women viewed as wives enables one to form a clear portrait of an ideal wife, which may be exemplified with the use of one proverb, namely *A good wife is a perfect lady in the living room, a good cook in the kitchen, and a harlot in the bedroom*. Impliedly, women only exists to serve men as cooks, lovers and hostesses. Besides these, she is not worthy and can only bring misery to men, as in e.g. *A bad wife is like a dreary, rainy day* (Hebrew) (see Kerschen, 1998: 22). Other universal qualities that are required from wives are chastity, devotion and zeal in female domains. She is the one who takes care of her husband, his health, needs and sex life without ever moaning and grumbling. Still other proverbs from different cultures that present women in terms of expected roles and behaviour are, e.g. *You can tell the husband of a good wife by his clothes* (Turkish/Bulgarian); *He that hath a good wife shows it in his dress* (English, USA); *Glorify your husband; glorify him with a cassava root. (Love is expressed in good food and other good deeds.)* (Yaka); *A woman who does not take care of her husband, cannot be a good wife* (Kru); *A good wife will reduce sorrows to half their size and increase fortune to double the amount* (Hebrew, Georgia/Israel).

Beyond the negative construction of a woman as a wife, the wife naturally becomes bad when her sons marry-when she becomes mother-in-law. Everywhere in the world, as pointed out by Schipper (2006: 141), *mothers-in-law are at the proverbial centre of negative in-law qualifications* because – needless to say – in-law relations are with exceptions regarded as inferior to blood relations, as expressed in the African proverb *Birth comes first, marriage follows*. A negatively coloured perception of mothers-in-law is reflected in numerous proverbs worldwide, for instance *There are as many good step-mothers as white ravens* (American); *A mother-in-law is not a relative but a punishment* (Portuguese, Brazil); *There is only one good mother-in-law and she is dead* (American); *Forty leagues down from hell there is a special hell for mothers-in-law* (Spanish, Colombia). As much as mothers are adored and praised (e.g. *God could not be everywhere, therefore He made mothers; Heaven is at the feet of mothers; There is no such thing as a bad mother*), mothers-in-law are often detested, vilified and associated with the devil and hell in proverbs (e.g. *‘More by hit than by wit,’ said the man when, throwing a stone at his dog, he struck his mother-in-law* (Danish); *The husband’s mother is the wife’s devil* (German); *Forty leagues down from hell there is a special hell for mothers-in-law* (Spanish, Colombia)). Other negative attributes ascribed to mothers-in-law are seen in terms of their usually bad relations with daughters-in-law, towards whom they feel hatred, e.g. *Always sweep where your mother-in-law looks* (New Mexico), treat like aliens, give orders and constantly meddle, e.g. *A mother-in-law is like a pig’s snout digging here and digging there* (Yaka). Moreover, mothers-in-law are unreliable, vengeful and their friendliness is suspect, as may be demonstrated with the following proverbs: *Who counts on his mother-in-law’s soup, will go to sleep without dinner* (Creole, Dominican Republic); *Never rely on the glory of a morning or the smiles of your mother-in-law* (Japanese); *The friendship of a*

mother-in-law is like dry weather in wet season (Papiamentu); *Friendship between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law only goes as deep as teeth [of the smile]* (Portuguese, Brazil).

Similarly, the attitude towards daughters-in-law is that of resentment and hatred as they are treated as intruders who join the family, often coming to live in your own house (see e.g. a Chinese proverb *A new daughter-in-law entering the house is for the mother-in-law her own funeral*). The harrowing difficulties experienced by daughters-in-law may be found in proverbs of different cultures (as expressed by, for example, a Finnish proverb *Rarely is a servant praised, a daughter-in-law never*; a Korean proverb *Good deeds of a daughter-in-law or a cat go unnoticed*; or a proverb from India *If a mother-in-law breaks a huge vessel, it is nothing; if the daughter-in-law breaks a tiny bowl, the household is ruined*). Mothers-in-law comment negatively on whatever displeases them, constantly following their daughters-in-law with critical eyes and ears (Russian proverbs *The wicked mother-in-law has eyes at the back; The evil mother-in-law has also ears at the back*). If the poor young women want to be on good terms with their mothers-in-law they need to be patient, submissive and obedient, as explicitly stated in the Estonian proverb *A daughter-in-law has a horse's patience and a dog's obedience*. Another piece of advice, suggesting a global tendency, given to daughters-in-law is expressed in the proverb existing in many parts of the world, namely *Always sweep where your mother-in-law looks* (English, USA; Spanish, Dominican Republic; Hebrew, Israel).

The other category of women related proverbs that portray a negative image of women is the category whose subject is perception of widows, which is also in most cases worldwide valued negatively, as in an exemplary Danish proverb *He that marries a widow and four children marries four thieves* (Danish; Pacific Northwest). There are

many communities where the position of women is still strongly determined by their marriage and consequently *Widows are the leftovers from dead men* (a Portuguese proverb from Brazil) without any identity or purpose (e.g. *A widow is a boat without a rudder*). It is commonly assumed that the loss of a husband means loss of status for the wife which is well expressed through the Minyanaka metaphor of the fallen tree: *The baobab has fallen; now the goats start climbing on it* (Mali). Moreover, marrying a widow is another issue which often causes nasty remarks, connected with, for instance the high cost (e.g. *He that marries a widow with two daughters has three back doors to his house*) or a lot of grief if he is compared to the first husband (e.g. *He that marries a widow will often have a dead man's head thrown into his dish; Never marry a widow unless her first husband was hanged*). In general, as indicated by Schipper (2006: 121) proverbs reflect the issues that make life most difficult for widows both because of their actual bad life situation and representation of society's stereotype that women were meant for marriage and the guardianship of a husband.

The intellectual capacity of women is also projected negatively in some proverbs, it is men who are predominantly equated with intelligence, wisdom and talents whereas women are mainly associated with feelings, emotions, lack of logic and irrationality. The stereotype of a brainless female may be illustrated by means of the following proverbs: *A woman has the shape of an angel, the heart of a snake, and the brains of an ass* (German); *Woman's intelligence is a child's intelligence* (West Africa); *When an ass climbs a ladder, we may find wisdom in women*. Furthermore, it is often emphasized that attractive women, particularly those with beautiful hair, lack intelligence, as may be shown in a number of examples from various natural languages picked at random: *A head of hair and no brain inside* (Mongolian); *Women have long hair and a short mind* (Swedish); *Though a girl's hair be long, her brain is short*

(Kalmuk); *Long hair, little brain* (Turkish). Other proverbs which emphasize no brain in beautiful women are *More beauty than a peacock, but the intelligence of a block of wood* (Mongolian); *A doll's head and an empty brain* (Polish).

2.3 The Construction of Women in Proverbs

There are many studies touching on proverbs which depict women in a negative manner. These include; Namulunda (2005), Schipper (2010), Rasul (2015), Otiso (2016) and Barasa (2017). Some of the proverbs reveal a dominance of masculinity which encourages control and oppression of women. In this regard, the socialization process reflects men as superior and entitled to negative behavior towards women. These proverbs promote differential gender relations between men and women.

However, it is important to note that women are not always negatively represented in proverbs. For example, some Zimbabwean proverbs buttress the central role of women in society. Kolawole (1997) in a study in the country cites a common proverb that goes: *Musha mukadzi*. This proverb is translated as 'Behind a successful family there is a woman.' In this regard, it is evident that "some cultures appreciate the central role played by women in the well-being of the society." However, the predominant voice in the continent is that which depicts women as playing a secondary role in the well-being of the society.

In Afghanistan, an ethnographic study about women in Pashto proverbs by Thorburn (1978) in the book *Bannu: Our Afghan Frontier* shows "clear discrimination and negative portrayal about women. The main contention of the study is that the Pashto proverbs represent women as fools fit only as playthings and slaves. The representations are inferred from two Pashto proverbs; *a woman's wisdom is under her heel*, and *a woman is well either in the house or in the grave*. The women's representation as fools

is not only seen in the Pashto proverbs. The Oromo of Ethiopia are also argued to have similar representation in their proverbs.

A study by Hussein (2005) focusing on Oromo proverbs revealed that the Oromo oral culture portrays women in general as weak, foolish, evil, unfaithful, frivolous, dependent, jealous, and seductive. These negative stereotypes make it hard for the women to air their voices in the highly patriarchal Oromo society. On the contrary, “men are depicted as being strong, masculine and able to take on the challenges of life, providing solutions were women would be unable to do so.” In this light, it is evident that proverbs continue to be used to denigrate women in the African society.

Among the Gusii community in Kenya, proverbs and other forms of oral literature have been used to subjugate women and glorify men (Otiso, 2016). Both men and women were assigned roles to which they have a duty to achieve (Otiso, 2016). The place of men and women is well defined in the Gusii community, this, place is institutionalized in the Gusii proverbs, for example, *Eero n'eya bagaka* (the living/sitting room is for men), nothing is said about the place of women in this proverb, however, it is expected that the women's place will be elsewhere and not the living room. The proverb asserts that *eero* (the living/sitting room) is a preserve of *abagaka* (adult men).

The living room is usually an important room for inviting visitors which also doubles up as a dining room. Additionally, the living room is used for conflict resolution and for negotiations. It is a taboo for women and young men to sit in the living room a symbolic den of male dominance (Otiso, 2016). This particular proverb proves beyond doubt that men are the prime decision makers and the only one capable of conflict resolution. Accordingly women are grouped together with young males and children which advance a subordinate position for women and girls. This shows that proverbs

have been used to condition the society on gendered roles, with women often being ascribed secondary roles to men.

A study by Ogot (2015) examining the pragmatics of Dholuo proverbs on women revealed that the dominant community perception of women as reflected in the proverbs are stereotypical and demeaning

On the same subject a theologian study on proverbs touching on women was done by Mwihi Nyambura (2005) referring to proverbs from the Gikuyu culture. Titled; “*A theological analysis of African proverbs about Women with reference to proverbs from Gikuyu people.*” This study also reveals negative images of women reflected in Kikuyu proverbs which the society need to re-think. The study informs that proverbs have continued to misinform the society and proposes that the requirement to act on moral and ethics to change the communities way of thinking. Mwihi (2005, p.15) gives examples of some of the proverbs which depict women as follows: "Women are like maize cobs, you eat maize and throw away the maize cob," "Women are like matatu (public vehicles), you miss one, you get another one." "No woman is ugly after 2:30 a.m."

These proverbs, often shared with some of the surrounding communities tend to promote negative sexism against women. Herein, women are seen as sex plays things to be exploited and “thrown away.”

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The interrelationship between the genders is one of inequalities. This inequity between the genders is apparent in many ways. This begins at homes when parents prefer male babies to female babies and later in education where boys are favoured to study sciences. The gap in the gender equality also manifests in offices when it comes to job

remuneration and promotions. People who support gender equality focus on the inequalities that give men more power and consideration than women.

Beasley (1999, p.3) defines feminism as “movements that focus on equalizing and protecting women rights on the political, cultural and economic field.” Hawkesworth (2006, p.27) adds that in practice, “these movements aim at achieving the usual aim of introduction, initiating and attaining political, economic, personal, and social fairness of the gender.” There are various strands and approaches of feminism.

Liberal feminism proclaims the irrelevance of the inequalities in gender and describes it in terms of culture and social subordination. Betty Friedan a liberal feminist of second wave talks about denial of equality and rights in various ways mainly education as the main field to undermine women.

Radical feminists recognize the need to reorganize society to eliminate gender inequality. Shulamith Firestone in 1970 blamed biology for women’s suppression, and identified menstruation, giving birth and breastfeeding as factors that make women depend on men. This makes both genders have inequality even in the relationships. She opposed sexual objectification of women and questioned the concept of gender roles.

Other radical feminist’s state that gender inequality comes from patriarchy. Women suppression is explained by Kate Millett (1969) in her works “Sexual Politics.” She put out that patriarchy is encouraged by the family setting where men are always given the first priority. She believed that the reason why women face social problems is patriarchy. She stated that male domination over women, is the cause of the inequality and not the social class. She continues to show that women are given minimum wages compared to the work they do and men on the other hand have taken advantage of

inequality to take all big positions in companies. That's why; many feminists are working hard to see the eradication of inequality.

This study adopts African feminism and as its guide because it considers the conditions of culture in the African society. It also relies on Foucault's theory of power because it helps in the understanding the power effect in the language of proverbs.

2.4.1 African Feminism

African feminism considers the cultural and traditional conditions experienced by women in the African continent. African feminists pay attention to the ways that patriarchy – that is, the psychological and political systems that value the male higher than the female – uses law, tradition, language, force, rituals, customs, education, language, and labour to keep women governed by men in both public and private life (Tamale, 2005).

Proponents of African feminism such as Molar (1994, p.16) says “that women in Africa face many obstacles. She discusses that African women have six mountains on their backs.” Based on Mao Tse Tung premise that “Chinese Women carry four mountains,” Molar (1994) looked at the life realities of African women, and discussed that African women carry six mountains on their backs which she addresses as; oppression from the outside – colonialism, some African cultural traditions, the backwardness of African women, men/patriarchy, race and herself.

Molar's use of figurative idea of six mountains makes visible the social realities of African women – shaped by different systems and practices of domination in internal and external dimensions. She defines tradition as one mountain on African women's back. These traditions include oral traditions and proverbs. This is in line with Asante

(1998) who says that African feminism pays particular attention to the lived experiences of the African people.

African feminism highlights and gives us more insight on patriarchy, traditions, the use of language and oral literature and the implied position of women. Based on this assumption, the negative representations of women in Luhya proverbs can be looked at through African oriented theories that show the plight of the African woman.

In the context of this study, African feminism shows the connection between proverbs and how women are presented in the Luhya community. It allows for the illustration of how proverbs intersect with reality to reinforce the subordination of women, their role, place and gender differences.

Related studies using feminist theory Namulunda (2013) has dwelt more on Bukusu narratives, folktales, folklore and the female characters involved. So far, no study has been done on Luhya proverbs and their contribution to gender relations which leaves a research gap.

2.4.2 Foucault's Theory of Power

The theory was formulated by Michele Foucault (1978, 94), the main contention of the theory is that power needs to be understood contextually, the context in which power operate, it has struggles and confrontations that transform and strengthen it (1978, 92-93). In his view, power is a web of power relations: there is no central source of power (1978, 93). Instead, the force relations that make up power are always local and multiple (1978, 93). Moreover, because these relations are unequal, they are in constant movement and thus inherently unstable. Since power comes from the force relations that are produced from one moment to the next, power "is everywhere", in the sense that it comes from everywhere (1978).

Foucault further explains his view by positioning five statements regarding power's characteristics (1978, 94). Firstly, he argues that power is not something that can be acquired, but rather is something that "is exercised from innumerable points" (1978, 94). As power is the force relations that come from everywhere, it should thus be understood as the interplay between these non-egalitarian and moving relations. Secondly, power relations are not at play outside other kinds of relationships, such as those concerned with economics or knowledge, but are immanent within these relationships. This means that the power relations are "the immediate effects" as well as the "internal conditions" of the inequalities, divisions, and instability within the other kinds of relations (1978, 94). Instead of having merely a repressive or accompanying role, power relations are productive wherever they are at play. Additionally, Foucault states that there is no direct opposition between the leaders and the subjects that is foundational to power relations (1978). They exist everywhere in society, and their effects run through all of society. To be sure, Foucault does agree that there are major dominations, but in his view these are the hegemonic effects that are maintained by the links and confrontations between different force relations (1978). Fourthly, according to Foucault, all relations of power are intentional and simultaneously non-subjective (1978). Hence, all power is exercised with certain objectives; however, this does not mean that power comes from certain sources. Instead of looking for the source of power, we should look at the tactics of power, which in the end become comprehensive systems. As such, "the logic is perfectly clear, the aims decipherable, and yet is it often the case that no one is there to have invented them" (1978, 95). Lastly, Foucault asserts that wherever there is power, there is also resistance, although this resistance is never outside of the web of power relations (1978). Power relations even depend on the multiplicity of resistance points within their network. These resistance points have

different roles with regard to power; for example, they can be its adversary, support, or handle. This means that, for Foucault, there is, as with power, no central source of resistance and rebellion. In contrast, each resistance is a specific case, and as such, can have different characteristics and stand in a different relation to the force relations (1978, 96). Moreover, because they always have a specific relation to the power network, they can only exist within this network. Foucault explicitly states that this does not mean that they are only a reaction that is “in the end always passive, doomed to perpetual defeat.” (1978, 96) Resistances are for Foucault inscribed in the web of power relations as an irreducible antithesis. It is due to this that they exist as a multiplicity of constantly moving resistance points like the force relations. Sometimes they may be small and scattered, and sometimes they may mobilise groups in a certain way as to form a rebellion or revolution. Nevertheless, the latter only happens occasionally. More often resistance points produce gaps in society that result in divisions, in regroupings, in the reconstructing of individuals. And so, similar to the web of power relations, resistances creep through the social body as a whole without being localised in a specific source (1978).

Foucault’s studies help us understand that proverbs also show categories of people in a community by the information and language they use. Proverbs have been used in many African societies in a manner that perpetuates patriarchy and one that treats women as secondary members of the society. The proverbs have somehow institutionalized and naturalized the secondary positions of women in these societies. African proverbs have thus been used to legitimize inequality. Michel Foucault's "regime of truth" best describes this legitimization: every community has a way of dealing with the truth and etiquette.

From Foucault's stand point, the regime of truth is discursively framed and reframed, thus African proverbs are discursive habits in a patriarchal system created and recreated to perpetuate female inferiority and male superiority. To the very least, one can claim that such proverbs are a patriarchal means of reinforcing the secondary position of women, and not that the proverbs that portray women negatively were a creation of men. In this system, both men and women participate both through action and discursively. The participation of women in the patriarchal discourse is through the use and maintenance of proverbs that disparage them, this they do through their role in socializing their children. The support that the subjugated offer the subjugator suggests that "our ways of knowing are forged in history and relations of power" (Hooks 30). In Foucault's truth regime, one can claim that the dominant group perpetuates their privileged position through the production of truth (Foucault). The dominant group strategically uses cultural resources and language to perpetuate their power and safeguard their legitimacy. Proverbs are symbolic social practices oriented towards social objectives. The meanings of such proverbs are configured into issues in the society, for example, an Ethiopian proverb, "Just as donkeys do not have their own kraal and thus sleep in that of cattle, women do not have their own abode and thus dwell in that of men" (Hussein). The implication of this proverb is that women should be obedient, subordinate and submissive, yet their male counterparts are superior. It is a discursively framed position of a woman supporting the perceived superiority of men over women. The discussion on representation of women in Luhya proverbs can be related to Foucault's truth regime where language and proverbs perpetuate male power and the patriarchal system.

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has evaluated written works related to proverbs on women in other cultures across the globe and has provided an understanding of the representations of women and gender differences in various communities. The chapter has also highlighted on the theoretical framework of the study by providing the tenets of African feminism and Foucault's theory of power.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology including; the study design and procedures, sources of data and critical discourse analysis.

3.1 The Study Design and Procedures

This is a qualitative study and a large amount of work was done descriptively and the analyses are in words that sufficiently back the different ideas to be elevated. Each of the proverbs as characterized could have one or more associated discourses or themes.

3.2 Sources of Data

This study involved 56 proverbs drawn from Luhya traditional culture which inform the image of women as they are depicted in such proverbs. The proverbs were majorly selected from a collection of Luhya proverbs by Tim Wambunya (2005).

Recognition of the proverbs for this study was based on notions of feminism such as;

1. Othering - the ways in which women are treated as ‘others’ or excluded by proverbs which give men priority in social, political, economical, cultural ways than women.
2. Mothering – based on the biological responsibilities and the way women are expected to give birth and stay at home to take care of the kids.
3. Gender roles - and the way women are placed in the traditionally assumed roles and treated as emotional, weak, nurturing, complying and many more.

The proverbs were clustered in accordance with the life cycle of a woman as a girl, young bride, mother, wife, widow and women in general.

These proverbs were reviewed and interpreted in regard to their depiction of women and analysed using critical discourse analysis, an approach that enables the study of domination and power in text and language. Texts from the selected proverbs were identified as fragments and strands that formed discourses and discursive knots.

Research data was also collected from other relevant secondary sources of data. This entailed the review of documents such as journals, books, newspapers, previous student papers and online publications which are related to the subject under study.

3.3 Critical Discourse Analysis

While discourse analysis is a name covering a wide range of studies concerned with usage of language and the contextual meaning of this usage, CDA is the overarching name for approaches that study domination and power in text and language in a socio-political context. It is thus critical of the power relations reflected in discourses. This critical stance is exemplified in the problem-oriented and interdisciplinary approach (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, 2). Rather than studying a linguistic unit in itself, CDA is interested in social phenomena (Wodak and Meyer, 2009, 2). As these are necessarily complex, they require a multidisciplinary approach. It is important to note that the critical stance is not necessarily negative. Instead, it refers to critical investigation of phenomena, not taking them for granted. Moreover, the critical standpoint is also aimed at the researcher's own role in society (Van Dijk, 2005, 352). This is based on a view, in line with Foucault, that scholarly discourse is inherently part of society, and as such is constructed by the relations and discourses present within that society (Van Dijk, 2005; Jäger and Maier, 2009, 36).

Moreover, since CDA is concerned with social phenomena, they are often concerned with power relations (Van Dijk, 2005). All in all then, CDA is an overarching name for

those approaches that implement discourse analysis with regard to topics about power relations. Many scholars belong to this category, each with a specific method. Moreover, the type of CDA to choose also depends on the type of topic and discourses one is analysing. One may, for example, analyse political speeches, or business documents, or, as in my case, Luhya proverbs.

3.3.1 Jäger's Critical Discourse Analysis approach

As stated, Siegfried Jäger is the leading figure of the Duisburg School when it comes to CDA. Heavily influenced by Foucault's thoughts, Jäger combined Foucault's theory with Aleksej Leontjev's activity theory (2004). Jäger's starting point for developing a CDA approach was his dissatisfaction with both traditional linguistic and social research (Langer, 1998). Regarding the former, Jäger argues that it has become "independent from social practice" (1994, 13). Moreover, he criticises linguists for aiming for goals in line with qualitative research, while applying quantitative designs (1994). Regarding the latter, he claims that social research lacks any formal method for analysing text (2004, 15).

A combination of Foucault's thoughts with the use of Leontjev's theory would thus be best (2004). Leontjev redefines the relation between the person and society, and the relation between thinking, communicating, and acting (Langer, 1998, 24-25). In Leontjev's theory, a person's social and historical background is foundational for understanding how that person acts, thinks, and communicates. In accordance, texts are considered expressions of personal and social work, of socio-historical discourses regarding a specific topic. For Jäger, all objects only have meaning insofar as humans have, at some point in time, assigned meaning to them (Jäger and Maier, 2009, 42).

In accordance, when we assign a different meaning to an object, i.e. if the discourse changes, the object changes; it gains another identity (2009, 43). All in all, then, what connects discourse and reality is the subject: through the activity of the subject the discourses become reality, though it is not through a specific intention of the subjects (2009, 45). Discourses thus function as the manifestations of the meanings of objects, by which they constitute and are constituted by reality.

3.3.2 Discourse Planes

The broadest concept central to Jäger's approach is a discourse plane. With this term he means those spheres in which discourses take place; for example, politics, education, business life, or media. Discourse planes are interconnected: what is said in politics may have an impact on what is said in the media, and vice versa. Regarding the discourse plane that is specific to this study, proverbs, Jäger justifies its categorisation as a plane in the following way. Proverbs are known to be subtle and opaque with hidden meanings. In regards to women, proverbs of many cultures have been proven to have majorly negative but in some occasions positive connotations. Proverbs can be considered uniform across cultures, and thus are a plane. The Luhya proverbs have a discourse position about women (c.f Appendix II).

3.3.3 Discourse Position

A discourse position is the "position from which subjects, including individuals, groups and institutions, participate in and evaluate discourse." (Jäger and Maier, 2009, 49) The discourse position of a proverb can be seen in the metaphorical ways they project women. For example, it may be positive or negative. The discourse position of subjects is itself formed by the discourses they are enmeshed in (2009, 49). And, in line with Foucault's theory, the subjects produce and reproduce these discourse positions as well. Regarding the discourse positions of various proverbs, people can usually indicate if a

proverb tends toward the positive, or negative attitudes towards women (2009, 50). Nevertheless, discourse positions are only homogenous in their core, and may become diffuse when concerned with less central issues (2009, 50).

3.3.4 Discursive Knots

A discursive knot is the entanglement of different strands: the way in which different themes are bound up with each other (Jäger and Maier, 2009, 47). For example, in the statement ‘a girl’s beauty may steal a cow’, the strand of a girl’s beauty is entangled with the strand of a cow. Depending on the strands, they can be entangled more or less intensively. Generally in the African proverbs and the Luhya proverbs in particular the discourse of the image of women is exemplified in statements attributing sexist or patriarchal attitudes (c.f Appendix II).

3.3.5 Discourse Strands

A discursive knot thus exists of several discourse strands, also called themes (Jäger and Maier, 2009, 47). Several discourse strands together form the larger discourse: one discourse is usually made up of a complex entanglement of different themes, like a bundle made up of different threads. The specific discourse strand analysed in this study is that of the women who are the ones targeted by proverbs (c.f Appendix II).

3.3.6 Discourse Fragments

The next element in Jäger’s method is the discourse fragment (2004). A discourse fragment is a text, or part of a text, that addresses a specific topic. Several discourse fragments on the same topic together constitute a discourse strand. Discourse fragments are normally called texts, but Jäger argues texts can address several topics, and hence contain more than one discourse fragment (2004). When conducting a discourse

analysis, one aims to analyse those fragments that are most typical of the discourse strand under study (c.f Appendix II).

3.4 Summary

In the context of this study, proverbs form the discourse planes or spheres in which different themes are analyzed because they are opaque with hidden and different meanings. Discourse positions indicate if a proverb tends toward positive or negative connotations while discourse knots represent the way in which different themes are bound up with each other. The discourse strands are the themes of discussion in the proverbs and the discourse fragment is a text, or part of a text, that addresses a specific topic arising from the proverbs (c.f Appendix II).

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter has provided the research methodology including the study design and procedures, sources of data and critical discourse analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study in line with the two objectives of the study. In this regard, the chapter is divided into two main sections. Section one examines the discourses in the representation of women in Luhya proverbs, while the second section explores the implicate representations of women. The last section presents the conclusion.

4.1 The Representation of Mothers in Luhya Proverbs

This subsection focuses on positive discourses prevalent in Luhya proverbs on women. Schipper (1991) argues that the only group of women favourably referred to in proverbs is that of mother who is presented as unique, loving, reliable and hard working. As such we look at the representations of the mother in Luhya proverbs.

4.1.1 Mother as a Provider

This can be demonstrated in the proverb *Eyisakulila ebotsa* (the hen that scratches the ground may find something to eat). Firstly, the hen as used is a metaphor for a woman who takes the responsibility to feed the family.

Secondly, the metaphor highlights the expected characteristics of a good wife as a working mother who should be economically productive. A lazy woman is not tolerated in the society. Wives in the Luhya community are discouraged from being lazy because the expectations of the community upon them are numerous. Since the society expects women to work hard and to ensure sufficiency of food supply, failure, is read to mean laziness on the part of the woman regardless of the prevailing circumstances. Says such as *Omukhasi omukara mbu: 'omuyini kwewefu'* or "*Omukhasi omutofu imbako*

yewefu” or “*Omukhasi omutofu mbu omuyini kwewefu*. The proverb means that the lazy wife says, “if only I had the hoe from my home. This proverb casts images of “lazy women” in the society. This means that lazy women are capable of making excuses for not doing their duties as required.

Wives are required to work hard and provide service to their families. Still other proverbs from different cultures present wives in terms of expected roles and behaviour are highlighted, (see Kerschen, 1998: 22). e.g. *You can tell the husband of a good wife by his clothes* (Turkish/Bulgarian); *He that hath a good wife shows it in his dress* (English, USA); *Glorify your husband; glorify him with a cassava root. (Love is expressed in good food and other good deeds.)* (Yaka).

Women are thus represented as carers/nurturers. This is in agreement with Diabah and Amfo (2014) findings which established that a woman is recognized through her ability to feed her family. The role of the woman as a provider is further implied in another Luhya proverb, *ninde bushie mama alafuka endie* which translates as I shall wait till morning for mother to cook food for me to eat. While the proverb could be used negatively to cast the image that the woman’s role is nothing but home keeping, the proverb implies that the woman holds a high place of providing food to her family.

The Luhya proverbs further imply an inherent ability of the woman to provide for her family and not requiring the support of anybody to do this. The say *Owibula amakhwana yesika amabeere* which means if you give birth to twins be ready to provide milk; and *Iyibula amakhwana yisika amabeere* meaning the cow that calves twins must also produce enough milk to feed them The proverbs show that the woman is self-enabled to provide.

4.1.2 A mother is Worth Respect

Some proverbs hold mothers with high regard and demands that the society should treat them with respect. They say, *Oularia nyina shiaria nyina owowashie* which means that (he who does not respect his own mother cannot respect another person's mother). The proverb cautions the young warning them against friends/suitors who do not show respect to other people's mothers. Other proverbs like *Oukhulisia akhupa mao nolola* or [*Oukhulisia akhupa mao niwikhale* (He who feeds you may beat your mother in your presence), also reinforce the theme of respect for mothers. Another proverb *Eshituyu shikofule shinunanga mumwana* (An old rabbit feeds from its offspring) reminds sons and daughters to take care of their aged mothers.

4.1.3 A Mother is a Selfless Giver

The study revealed that the Luhya proverbs reflect mothers as selfless beings that would go to a greater extent to sacrifice for the sake of their children. This implies an acknowledgement of the significance of mothers culturally and the social value the Luhya culture entrusts in mothers. The Luhya say *Eshia omwimani oshilia nail omwibo*, meaning one can take advantage of a mean woman and eat her portion when she is nursing a baby, shows that even when a mother is known to be mean, she would give preferential regard to the care of her baby. The selflessness of a mother is further implied by yet another say, *Iyibula amakwhana yisika amabere*, which means the cow that calves twins must also produce enough milk to feed them. This say implies that while feeding twins may prove to be a daunting task, a mother would do everything within their abilities to provide for her children. This trait makes the mother the most loving being in the Luhya culture. The love of mothers is echoed by a Polish proverb *Matka dzieci jedną jagodą obdzieli* which means a mother will feed children with one berry, further, the selflessness is expressed in an American say *mother's love will dash*

up from the depths of the sea. These imply that the mother is universally praised for her impeccable selflessness

4.1.4 A Mother is Protective

The findings of this study further reveal that the Luhya proverbs reflect mothers as protective beings. When a mother is nursing a baby, it doesn't matter how much she likes food or is mean, she would let you have her food to protect her baby. This is reflected in the proverb, *Ingokho isakulira abana bayo* meaning every hen will scratch the ground for its chicks. This proverb imply the protective nature of a mother who would go to the heights of scratching the ground to provide food for her baby. The act of scratching the ground is figuratively used to show how hardworking women can be when the lives of their children are in question. The protective nature of mothers, is acknowledged by another say *Ninde bushie mama alafuka endie* which mean, I shall wait till morning for mother to cook food for me to eat. This is a reflection of the acknowledgement children have on the protective task women play such that if they are not able to get something to fend for themselves, at least they are sure their mothers will be there for them. This findings are supported by other African says like a southern African proverb *the child's mother catches the knife at the sharp end.* The protective nature of the mother is furthered by a Jamaican say, *when the boy's foot is broken, he finds his mother's yard.*

4.1.5 A Mother is Reliable

The study revealed that the Luhya proverbs represent mothers as reliable. With the mother, the proverbs imply that children can be sure that they would be catered for. The Luhya proverb, *Ingokho isakulira abana bayo* which means every hen will scratch the ground for its chicks shows that the Luhyas have a level of certainty that the mother would go an extra mile to fetch food for her child. On the same vein, the proverbs show

the trust and confidence children have on their mothers' ability to provide for them. The reliability of a mother is not only highlighted by the Luhya proverbs but by proverbs from other cultures as well. The Polish say, *Kiedymłodaantylopa jest głodna, matka dajejejcalemleko* which means when a young antelope is hungry, the mother gives her whole milk, and *Gdzie u dzieci matka, tam igłówkagładka* meaning when children have a mother, their head is smooth. Closer home, the Congolese believes that mothers are unique through their warmth.

4.2 Institutionalization of Attitudes towards Women

Attitude is a settled way of thinking or feeling about something. It includes orientation and point from which one approaches issues or things. With regard to the status, images and attitudes to African women, African oral literature is an important carrier. This is because literature is persuasive and conveys the values of society in a persuasive and, sometimes graphic manner. Language, on the other hand, is the carrier of negative labels that are used to put women down. African proverbs institutionalize negative cultural attitudes towards women. Proverbs have been defined as the nut shell or kernel of a society's wisdom, culture, values, philosophy and worldview. Although in the contemporary world proverbs may not be an everyday occurrence in certain social settings, the attitudes these proverbs ingrain are nonetheless projected. In Africa we have proverbs that convey very negative attitudes towards women. Women are projected as unintelligent, undependable, dishonest, callous, careless, cowardly, weak, and bad tempered emotional and so on. Proverbs which portray women negatively are prevalent and are given heavier weight in African societies.

4.2.1. Women and Beauty

A number of proverbs have been highlighted to bring out the discourse of beauty in the Luhya community. These include; “*Obulayi bukhaana bukosa ing’ombe*” [One should not gamble one’s cow on youthful beauty], “*Omulayi shiabulanga imbala ta*” Even the pretty one is not without an ugly scar and “*Ikhabi ishira obukondo*” or “*Ikhabi ishira obulayi*” [Luck is better than beauty].

In the above proverbs the conception of beauty has been used as a general warning to members of the community. This can be exemplified not just the Luhya community but also in other communities in the world. In some proverbs beauty and looks are referred to cautiously. For instance the English proverb “a woman who takes care of her looks does not pay attention to her house.” In Africa, for example such Nigerian proverbs reinforce the same idea; “*the man who marries a beautiful woman and the farmer who grows corn by the roadside have the same problem*” or “*marry a woman who can cook or a man who can provide food. Don’t marry for love or beauty because love dies, beauty fades but hunger stays.*” Impliedly, if one marries for beauty, they are bound to be disappointed. Instead one should look for other values while marrying and not beauty alone. In a sense, beautiful women suffer stereotype that is unfounded, while they are just like other women with values besides their beauty.

The framing of a woman’s beauty is best explained by Foucault’s explanation of how truth regimes are discursively framed and reframed (Foucault, 1980), and in a patriarchal society like the Luhya’s it is considered true that the beauty of women is a misfortune and something not to be celebrated. This may be reinforced by the say “*Ikhabi ishira obukondo*” or “*Ikhabi ishira obulayi*” (Luck is better than beauty).

The Luhya say *Okhalola mayi nasili mukhana aloma alirarawe katibia chikhafu* implying that *a person who never saw the mother at the height of her beauty may say the father wasted his dowry*. May easily pass for a positive projection of women in the Luhya society, but a deep analysis reveals a negative connotation. The image depicted by the payment of dowry symbolizes commodification of a woman based on her beauty. Once she becomes a man's commodity as long as dowry was paid. The man is at liberty of marrying another woman should he feel that the beauty of the current woman has waned, and it will due to childbearing and continued heavy domestic chores, the once beautiful woman becomes wasted. The following proverbs also illustrate this point of view: *Omulayi akhina mumuse lulala*. Meaning the beautiful one dances in the arena once.

The proverbs therefore imply how women are interiorized exclusively with the sole aim of waging a psychological war against them. Unfortunately, in the truth regime created, both men and women discursively participate in reinforcing the proverbs. However, women also contribute by entertaining what suppresses them.

4.2.2 Women and Intelligence

The following proverbs have been highlighted to bring out the theme and discourse of women and social conception of their intelligence; *“Imbwa ibukulanga omusokonyolo kwa nyina”* [A dog squats like its mother]. *“Mwana uchenda ashila nyina amachesi”* [A child who travels surpasses his mother's wisdom] and *“Omukhasi womwana abeyeranga omwana”* The mother uses the child to hide her mistakes.

The message put across in these proverbs questions women's intelligence. It is not just in Luhya traditional community that women's intelligence has been questionable. In patriarchal societies, men uphold themselves as producers and custodians of

knowledge. Men are thus believed to hold a higher intelligence level as compared to women, and it is on this premise that the husbands are the default custodians of the family estate (Ober, 1985). A perception has been created and recreated to make the society believe that women would mess if charged with the responsibility of property management.

Schipper (2010 p41) agrees with these assertions and contends that in many proverbs men are associated with intelligence while women are associated with beauty. She sites many proverbs that depict women as brainless, for example, “a dolls head and an empty brain (Polish), women are wacky, women are vain; they’d rather be pretty than have a good brain” (English), and “Women have only half a brain” (Arabic). Women are considered to be more talkative than intelligent “a woman’s tongue is more than seven meters long (English) p47.” Women are considered unable to achieve any endeavor on their own, and are required to involve male figures. A woman is supposed to be patient and submissive at all times.

The proverb “*Mwana uchenda ashila nyina amachesi*” [A child who travels surpasses his mother’s wisdom] impliedly suggests that by mere act of travelling a child through exposure acquires a level of intelligence greater than that of his/her mother. In so doing, the mothers’ level of intelligence is not considered but automatically rendered to a lower status. While all these is happening, the proverb is silent of the intelligence of the father, presumably, the fathers level of intelligence cannot be compared to that of the child no matter how much travelling the child does. At the same time, the proverb suggests that the mother does not travel but stays back, perhaps taking care of her home. The paradox in the proverb is the lack of realization that before a woman becomes a mother, she was once a child, could she not have travelled to get intelligence? This concurs with African feminism that “in patriarchal communities men use culture and

language to perpetuate their power and safeguard their legitimacy at the expense of women.”

The derogatory treatment of women is not only seen in the Luhya culture but in proverbs of other cultures across the globe. For example, *The strength of a woman is in her tongue*), empty-headed (e.g. *Women’s wisdom arrives after the event*) toy-like creature who is faithless to the man (*A faithless wife is shipwreck to a house* (Roman)) by whom she should be ruled and to whom she belongs like property (e.g. *Handle with care women and glass; Women are like shoes, they can always be replaced* (Rajasthani) or livestock (e.g. *Never pick women or horses by candlelight*).

4.2.3 Vulnerability and Dependance

One of the basic elements that is considered to define the female gender is its vulnerability in this world where physical strength matters a lot. In a number of Luhya proverbs women are presented as being in a vulnerable position. In some of these proverbs, the absence of a male figure (widowhood) portends destruction for women.

Some proverbs marginalize women in Luhya community where women are relegated to secondary position. They are nurtured as dependants who hold second place in the community and do not have the opportunity to venture outside their homes due to restrictive culture.

“*Namulekhwa ndikhole endie?*” [Being a helpless widow, what shall I do?] is a proverb that reinforces the assumption of helplessness of women in the absence of men. This ends up legitimizing widow inheritance because women end up feeling the need to be attached to a man in order to survive in the community. Women are suggested to remain dependants so that take care of their homesteads. This can be confirmed by Bukusu proverb *omukhasi okenda arera enjala* (a woman who is never in the home brings

hunger to the homestead.) This proverb, is silent on what the woman could be doing to be absent but runs to show the negative consequences of this absence. In which case, a woman should be cautious all the time and be present in the homestead, such a proverb hinders women from being industrious and engaging in activities that could lead to them being away from the homestead regardless of the economic sense of their absence. The women are thus, to depend on men and always stay back in the homestead. In Jäger's terms the proverb has picked and reinforced one strand (hunger in the homestead), and remained silent on what the woman brings back to the homestead when she comes. It is this single picking that discursive knots are encountered implying the negative themes that are bound up with other themes in the proverbs (Jäger and Maier, 2009).

Another harsh and critical proverb among the Luhya states *Lekha okhuyiya shinga namulekhwa khubalebe* (do not wander about like a widow). This proverb indicates that widows are hopeless people who cannot provide for their families due to lack of a male figure to direct them. This translates to a 'husbandless woman is a helpless woman ready to be exploited by any man in the society'. The implication is that men are the sole providers of the families and without them, women become useless and even lose respect from fellow women and men.

The study revealed that the Luyha proverbs compromise the autonomy of women. The proverbs not only limit the independence of women but also compromise the ability of women to accumulate wealth. The Luyha proverb *Mani kamweya ni mwana nyina* meaning a bride's strength is her kinsfolk, implying that newly married women should closely associate with their kin lest she falls. In essence the woman's independence is taken away. All actions of the woman should thus be under the close cooperation of her extended family. In addition, this proverb reminds women of their responsibilities in

the farm and that they need to rally their family members to offer support. This ensures they stay close to other family members, and not advance their own agendas. The female dependence on their male counterparts is further implied in yet another proverb; *Eshibisa omusaatsawo olishilia netsimbeba*”or “*Eshiwima omusatsao olishilia netsimbeba*”or “*Eshiwima omusatsao tsimbeba tsiakhalie ninawe*. This proverb means that whatever a woman hides from her husband, she will share with rats. This proverbs discourages women from making own decisions to save anything without their husbands knowledge. This can have negative impacts on women since these women can be relied upon to do anything for the betterment of her family and self without the supervision and guidance of her husband.

4.2.4 Woman as Non-Trustworthy and Evil

The study revealed that Luhya proverbs represent women with the discourse of untrustworthy as implied by the proverb “*Imbongo ikhasi ahayirula isakula obukono*” which means that the female deer destroys her lair before departing, in this proverb, the woman (deer) cannot be trusted with her home, should it occur that she is to leave, then she would not leave a stable homestead but will ensure that she destroys the home. In yet another proverb, *Omukhasi nakhulobire akhuhamba liloko*” which means when a woman dislikes you she accuses you of witchcraft, this gives lee way for the society not to trust what a woman says, if for instance a woman points out that something is wrong, it could as well be interpreted that she only did that because she hates the thing or the person.

The proverb could further translate to the need to treat whatever comes from a woman’s mouth with caution. The mistrust is furthered in another proverb, *Omulosi aloka eyashera* meaning a witch bewitches the very cow she milks and “*Eshifuna omukhasi oshilia namayino*” meaning what a woman/wife has earned, you will not eat it in peace.

The former suggesting that a woman can cause harm even to that which helps her, therefore, even if you are of importance to a woman, be cautious with your engagement she may just cause you harm. The latter imply that women should not be let to engage in economic activities to support the family because you cannot be sure if that is their real intention, and in the event that the intention is surely for the support of the family, you will not have peace if you share in her contribution. Thus, do not trust that the woman intends well for the family when she contributes.

These proverbs present discourse strands of women as promiscuous and evil who can go any length possible to create harm to men and other people or things in the community. In the Luhya culture, '*liloko*' (also witchcraft) is a superstitious concept practiced and believed by many people. In this case, when a husband divorces a wife, the divorced wife will bewitch him (husband) so that he does not marry another woman or even sire children with the second wife. These proverbs also create acrimony among women depicting them as evil and enemies of themselves. For instance *Imbongo ikhasi ahayirula isakula obukono* (The female deer destroys her lair before departing). In this particular proverb a woman is seen as capable of bewitching another woman after being divorced by her husband and even making her fail to conceive and bare children for the husband. In addition to these are proverbs "*Mao wowashio shiakhusinga walaba*" [Another person's mother cannot wash you clean]. "*Omwana oulali owuwo shomusinga yalaba*" (You cannot wash someone's child to the parents satisfaction) which paint stepmothers negatively as people who cannot wholeheartedly take care of other women's children.

These proverbs are part of many African proverbs that viewed women as sources of evil in the society. The same view is represented by Schipper (1991) when she poses

that a number of traits are generally assigned to women in proverbs across cultures. She argues that the only group of women favourably referred to in proverbs is that of mother who is presented as unique, loving, reliable and hard working. The perception of women as sources of evil is not only limited to African proverbs and but also found in holy books like the Bible. In the book of Genesis, for example, Eve, the first woman is perceived as being the source of evil in the human generation.

In the proverbs *Ahe tsingokho tsibotsa olamitsa obule* (Where hens gather to feed you do not throw millet) and *Namususuni kaya kumunwa* - (A gossiping woman burns her mouth in the end). Women are represented as people who don't keep secrets because of their loose tongues and eavesdropping. They are talkative and gossipers. This image portrays women as untrustworthy. For this reason, women cannot be trusted with powerful positions in society because of their divisive nature. The trust of women is further questioned by the Luhya proverb especially in cases where the woman has separated with her husband. The saying, *Imbongo ikhasi ahayirula isakula obukono* meaning the female deer destroys her lair before departing. This proverb imply that a wife who has disagreed with her husband is not trusted anymore, may do something harmful, destroy the reputation of her former home. Further, the say *Etsia abebulane shiotsilonda* which means do not believe all that is claimed in family squabbles alludes to the trust issue with women. It implies that the society could easily fail to believe the women even when they are facing domestic violence since women are not to be trusted. This leaves women vulnerable and exposed to continued abuse by their husbands.

4.2.5 Constructions of Submissiveness

There is also a discourse in the presentation of women's submissiveness as depicted by the Luhya proverbs such as *Abasila mbeere baliyo* meaning those without breasts surely

exist. That relegates women to a position that make them imagine that men are the centre of their existence, and the proverb “*Owaleka owamurera yayumba nabacheni*” which means the wife who despised her husband was stranded with visitors. Implying that even the visitors had a role to ensure that a wife submits to her husband. The presentation of women in this proverbs imply that women had to remain submissive in the Luhya community. From African feminism standpoint, it can be seen that the cultural and traditional conditions experienced by Luhya women demonstrates the patriarchal nature of the Luhya cultural beliefs and values. These beliefs keep women governed by men in both public and private life (Tamale, 2005). Symbolically, this categorization of women confirms the description of Molar (1994) who while looking at the life realities of African women concluded that African women carry six mountains on their backs. Such presentation of women in the Luhya proverbs show how the African indigenous knowledge systems have been used to convey strong ideas that explained the superiority given to men and leaving women behind.

4.2.6 Woman as a Service Provider

The findings of this study have revealed a discourse that presented women as service providers by the Luhya proverbs. The say, *Ekhafu yakhaywa kumukhono yeyakalila kumunwa* meaning for lack of a hand the cow uses its mouth to scratch itself. Moreover, domestic animals were kept for labor and food. This means that they were kept for what they could offer in terms of slavery and food and raw materials afterwards. The above proverb in Luhya suggests that a woman who is childless does everything for and by herself. Children and husbands were the hands women used for support without which, she was helpless. In other words, it means that the children and husbands were the pillars a woman needed for a complete family. The meaning is also captured in the Luhya proverb *Obwikholandie bwakila engokho yeyakalila kumunwa* (for lack of a

hand the hen scratched itself with a beak) which meant for lack of a husband and children a woman was helpless. These proverbs also suggestively indicated that a married woman must bear children.

Women are also regarded as objects with reference to young brides being reminded to start producing children for their family as exemplified by the following proverbs “*Nandebula arumanga eshilenjeshie*” or “*Ouuma omwana aruma lirango*”(A childless woman sends her thigh (leg), “*Nandebula akalukha omukumba*”The barren one returns childless, and “*Olwibulo lwakhonya Wanamboka*”(Giving birth rescued Wanamboka).

A woman could do anything perfectly on her own. And to add to that matter it was advisable for a man to have more than one wife so that in case one passes on there is another one to take charge. These presentations imply that woman had to view herself as a secondary being in the Luyha traditional culture and must conduct themselves in a way that glorified their male counterparts. The woman’s wholeness was realized at marriage and confirmed by the ability to reproduce. Failure to which the woman was of no value and this related to slavery where there was a powerful bond linking the importance of a woman while reproducing and farming all together. A married woman had to produce children. In a similar view, a cooking pot produces steam. This implied that in Luhya culture, a childless woman was considered an economic liability because was giving nothing in return. The implication of these proverbs was that women must position themselves for service in the Luhya community, while their male counterparts were to be served. A clear indication of a web of power relations that is unequal and in constant movement as explained by Foucault’s (1978) power theory. From an African feminism standpoint, proverbs were used to socialize the place of women in the Luhya community as service providers.

4.2.7 Commodification of Women

The findings of this study have revealed a discourse that presented women as commodities by the proverbs. The Luhya proverb *Okhalola mayi nasili mukhana aloma ali rarawe katibia chikhafu* which means that a person who never saw the mother at the height of her beauty may say the father wasted his dowry. May easily pass for a positive projection of women in the Luhya society, but a deep analysis reveals a negative connotation. The image depicted by the payment of dowry symbolizes commodification of a woman. Once she becomes a man's commodity as long as dowry was paid. The man is at liberty of marrying another woman should he feel that the beauty of the current woman has waned, and it will due to childbearing and continued heavy domestic chores, the once beautiful woman becomes wasted. The following proverb also illustrates this point of view: *Omulayi akhina mumuse lulala*. Meaning the beautiful one dances in the arena once. The commodification of the woman is so derogative to the point of the society giving the man the liberty to beat the woman at whim, the Eyapa *nabulobe elipa nabukelema*. Which means the stick which beat the wife send away will also beat the newly married wife, speaks to that effect. These proverbs imply that women are like flowers which are beautiful but wither away within no time. The beauty of a woman is portrayed in the same sense. The Luhya, society does not spare even the beautiful ones in cases of disciplining wives. This alludes to wife battering as a norm in this society.

From an early age in the Luhya culture, the place of a woman as a wife is defined and girls are molded to fit this role, as exemplified by this proverb "*Imosi yayira mukhulundu*" (A calf grazes amongst cows). The molding of girls is a way that proverbs proclaimed strong gender ideas which show superiority. The use of language in positioning women in the society has been exemplified by the implication of the

presentation of women by Luhya proverbs as may be described by the African feminism theorists like Goheen. According to Foucault's theory of power, all power is exercised with certain objectives, and that power does not come from particular sources but through tactics as encoded in proverbs and end become comprehensive systems (Foucault, 1978).

4.2.8 Economic Contribution of Women

The results of this study have showed a discourse whereby the economic contribution of women in the Luhya community was not seen as important and of value. The Luhya proverb, *Lekha okhukoyana shinga outsia khushiro* meaning do not fumble as if you are going to the market has negative connotation towards women as informed by the fact that women were the ones traditionally associated with the market affairs, as such any work that was performed at the market was deemed negative and of no or little worth, impliedly, the economic activities undertaken by women were not seen as being of much importance in the betterment of the society. As noted by Barasa (2017), the Luhya proverbs are openly used to discriminate, oppress and subordinate women. Consequently, the socialization process reflects men as superior and entitled to unjust behavior and victimizes women. Barasa (2017) further notes that proverbs promote differential power relations between men and women. For instance; "*Omukhasi sakambila omusecha ta* (A wife does not advice a husband). This Bukusu proverb "brought forth the inferiority of women and devalued their contribution to decision making. Impliedly, women should not bother engaging in economic activities but should stay back and maintain their homes. While today women fight to change this position, their efforts have not yielded much to change the perception in a patriarchal system. This difficulty can be explained by Foucault's power theory which asserts that

wherever power is present, there is also confrontation which is never outside of the web of power relations (1978).

4.2.9 Objectification of Women

The discourse findings of this study also show that the Luhya proverbs represent women as objects. As such, proverbs were used as a control tool through which men limited and controlled women to only do the house chores. The representation of women as objects implied that the Luhya community socialized women to accept playing the object role, and in many other respects as long as they satisfy the desires of men.

As observed worldwide the view of women as objects can be exemplified in marketing. Women have been used for advertising purposes with their consent and not having any guilt for being used as such. The objectification of women has thus been socialized in the society to the point of becoming a norm. This implies that across the Luhya community, the effects of such representations also run. Foucault does agree that there are major dominations, but in his view these are the ruling effects which are maintained by the links and conflicts between different force interrelations (1978).

The presentation of women as sex object as presented by a number of proverbs reproduced by says such as *Ekhafu yabene okhama nololelela musilibwa*, meaning you milk someone's cow while watching the gate. "Milking" a cow that does not belong to you is a metaphor in Luyha which highlight illicit sex. Additionally, "watching the gate" is a metaphor that refers to the owner of the "cow" (a metaphor for woman). For this reason, the thief has to watch the gate to ensure that the owner of the cow is not around. These presentation imply that women had to live to the 'societal expectation' befitting the role of sex objects and have thus to pay attention to their physical appearance and to remain attractive.

The presentation of women as sex objects viewed from African feminism perspective imply prevalence of gender inequality among the Luhya as explained in terms of culture and social subordination. This dependence inevitably produces unequal power relationships.

4.2.10 Women were Given Negative Comparisons

The study also revealed the discourse of negative comparisons of women. For example; “*Nashikoko ashira eshilindwa*” meaning a spinster is better than a grave, stereotypes spinsters as being comparable to graves. It is worth noting that even in proverbs where animals are used (rats, deer, dogs), these animals are meant to disparage women and their achievements. This perception of women is in tandem with Jayawardena (2014) study findings which showed that generally proverbs created a negative image of women. “*Okhwibula khushira okhunia*” meaning to give birth is better than to excrete.

4.3 Possible Implications of Luhya Proverbs on Gender Relations and Women’s Subordination

The above sections have highlighted some representations of women in the Luhya proverbs that help in the examination of the place of women in this community. The following subsection highlights the implication of these representations.

Analysis of the women-related proverbs from a historical perspective finds that such proverbs tend to fall into certain patterns characterized by wit and bitter complaints. While some proverbs praise and elevate women – notably mothers – in all societies existing in the world (e.g. *Behind every successful man is a woman; Without women, men were but ill-licked cubs* (Romanian); *God couldn’t be everywhere; therefore, He made mothers*) the majority are full of overt sexism, satire and bitterness (see Kochman-Haladyj, 2012). These proverbs that may be labelled as derogatory depict a woman as,

among others, a long-winded (e.g. *The strength of a woman is in her tongue*), empty-headed (e.g. *Women's wisdom arrives after the event*) toy-like creature who is faithless to the man (e.g. *A faithless wife is shipwreck to a house* (Roman)) by whom she should be ruled and to whom she belongs like property (e.g. *Handle with care women and glass; Women are like shoes, they can always be replaced* (Rajasthani)) or livestock (e.g. *Never pick women or horses by candlelight*).

In the Luhya culture, like other cultures in the world, social behaviors and attitudes are considered appropriate for people based on sex (masculinity or femininity). Women are inculcated to be wives and mothers during ceremonies such as childbirth, marriage, initiation/circumcision. A good wife is therefore known by her ability to give birth, bring up her family and take good care of the husband. This can be exemplified by the following proverb "*Imosi yayira mukhulundu*" (A calf grazes amongst cows) where girls are advised to stick around older women in order to learn what the society expects of them when they grow up.

Maelo (2014) posits that "women are held in low esteem in the society." His study findings revealed the secondary position that women hold in society (Maleo, 2014). Women are treated as objects whose purpose is to give birth and work in the home.

Mineke Schipper (1991:2) captures the relationship between men and women by saying "the superior size and superior physical strength of men and the fact that women are the birth-givers have had far-reaching consequences for the gender history of mankind. In many ways, the male sex has made use of its physical size and power for its own gain and benefit. This ideology and socialization reinforce the confinement of women to the domestic chores

This is reinforced by such proverbs as; “*Nandebula arumanga eshilenjeshie*” [A childless woman sends her thigh (leg)]. This proverb conditions the society to see women as “child factories,” and nothing else, which undervalues them.

Luhya culture being a highly patriarchal society, the value and position accorded to men in the society devalues women and girls. The proverbs manifest that “men are accorded privileged position in society and male chauvinism is a ripe practice common in such a society” (Wasike, 2013). They contribute to the legitimization of gender inequality.

These proverbs create ideologies that marginalize women in Luhya community where women are relegated to secondary position. They are nurtured as dependants who hold second place in the community and do not have the opportunity to venture outside their homes due to restrictive culture.

In Foucault’s truth regime, one can claim that the dominant group perpetuates their privileged position through the production of “truth” (Foucault, 1980). The dominant group strategically uses cultural resources and language to perpetuate their power and safeguard their legitimacy. Proverbs are symbolic social practices oriented towards social objectives. The meanings of such proverbs are configured into issues in the society, for example, an Ethiopian proverb, "Just as donkeys do not have their own kraal and thus sleep in that of cattle, women do not have their own abode and thus dwell in that of men" (Husseini, 2009). The implication of these proverbs is that women, should be obedient, subordinate and submissive, yet their male counterparts are superior. It is a discursively framed position of a woman supporting the perceived superiority of men over women. African women are both survivors and victims of the proverb based discursive discrimination towards them by the patriarchal system.

A key theme arising from these presentations is subordination of women. The findings revealed a form of gender thinking that portrays women in nurturing and domestic domains. The findings have shown that in the Luhya proverbs women are stereotyped as homemakers, subordinates, and sex objects; the positive construction of women in the Luhya proverbs are undermined by the negative predominant representations that occur in many proverbs about women. Such a position is a clear justification of the feminist claim that in a patriarchal culture, language undermines women.

From Foucault's stand point, the regime of truth is discursively framed and reframed, thus African proverbs are discursive habits in a patriarchal system created and recreated to perpetuate female inferiority and male superiority.

A study done by Khamala (2009) indicated that identity in most African societies is traced to male lineage and as such decision-making is the preserve of men. It is through a number of Luhya proverbs that boys and men in general are depicted as superior to women and they are the ones who are the most important in the community. Through listening to these proverbs, boys and men are socialised to internalise the Luhya perceptions on the place and role of the male gender.

4.4 Summary

Based on the explanations and meanings emanating from the proverbs, it can be summarized as follows. The above Luhya proverbs on women present positive as well as negative connotations and comparisons.

Schipper (1991) stated that there is a particular group of women favourably mentioned in proverbs that is the mother who is presented as unique, loving, reliable and hard working. However, there is negative connotation and women have been placed on a

lower rank in social circles compared to men. The gender relations do not favor women. For instance; “*Omusolili omulayi neikofia yasamwana/Omusolili omulayi neshimwata shia samwana*” shows men as the ones deserving respect for successes and good behaviours of their children. This creates an aspect of male dominance since only men are shown as deserving to “earn respect” in the community.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings of the study by looking at the two objectives. It was divided into two sections. Section one examined the discourses in the representation of women in Luhya proverbs, while section two explored the possible implications of these representations on gender relations and women’s subordination.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of study findings. This is based on the research objectives namely to: to explore the representations of women in Luhya proverbs and to examine the implications of Luhya Proverbs on subordination of women. Lastly, sections on conclusion as well as recommendations are provided.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This section presents a summary of the study findings. In this study, I set out to research the portrayal of women in the Luhya proverbs and how they impact on the position of women in the community. The research questions that guided my investigations were as follows:

- i) What are the representations of women in Luhya Proverbs?
- ii) What are the implications of these representations to gender relations and women's subordination?

The study was also guided by African Feminism and Foucault's power theory. The study revealed that the Luhya present women both negatively and positively. The study found that majority of the Luhya proverbs represent women negatively. A deeper analysis revealed that there are certain categories of Luhya proverbs and representative samples within the general group of women proverbs which operate positively for the female picture, either through conveying direct positive meaning or at least valuing the female species favourably in some aspect, which is through the medium of inferred meaning. The study revealed that the Luhya proverbs that reflected women positively are

undeniably the categories of *mother*. Mothers are represented as providers, worth of respect, selfless givers, protective and reliable.

Other women-related proverbs in the Luhya language portray common female features or specific roles and situations of women that create attitudes about women. The study looked at institutionalization of attitudes towards women by elaborating on the following subtitles; women and beauty, women and intelligence, vulnerability and dependence, woman as non-trustworthy and evil, submissiveness, woman as a service provider, commodification and objectification of women, negative comparisons and negation of the economic contribution of women. The findings also reveal that even where a proverb attempts to imply positivity, it is sarcastically marred with certain negative connotation.

The findings of this study also reveal that Luhya proverbs are curved and shaped and used as instruments of subordination. Impliedly, the findings of the study are that the ideological and power assumption contained in majority of the explored proverbs is that power should be controlled by men and that women should abide by the dominant-subordinate relationship. The study also reveals that there are negative attitudes towards women as projected by the proverbs; this was revealed to be as a result of negotiation of power roles along gender lines in the Luhya community. Besides, the study also implies that women have to be socialized as objects to be used and controlled by men. The woman therefore, has to accept her secondary position in the society without question. Despite the intellectual capacity of women, the findings of this study imply that women have to assume the less intelligent position and as such not having any significant contribution to bring to the society other than reproduction and taking care of their children.

Most of the proverbs explored by this study reveal women's assumed powerlessness. By expecting women to be submissive, sex objects and service providers, the Luhya proverbs relegated the woman to a secondary position and glorified the place of men in the society as deserving services and control over women.

5.2 Conclusion

The findings of this study have revealed that women are portrayed mostly negatively but in some instances positively by the Luhya proverbs. This findings are supported by other findings (Schipper, 2006, 2010; Namulunda, 2005; Rasul, 2015; Otiso, 2016; Barasa, 2017) that analysed the portrayal of women in the proverbs of many cultures around the world. The representation of women in the Luhya proverbs symbolise power relations where men are portrayed as controllers and women the controlled.

The power relations within the Luhya proverbs, are in line with the findings of this study. The implied representations of women is majorly negative and the arguments put across to justify the difference between men and women reflect and (re)produce these power relations.

Further, the study revealed that Foucault's theory of power and African feminism theory were significant in helping us understanding how women are portrayed in the Luhya proverbs. Foucault's theory of power was specifically helpful in understanding the power relations inferred in the proverbs and hoe the relations are unequal pitching women as of lower value to the community as compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, Foucault's theory of power helped in understanding that the power relations in the Luhya society are exercised from innumerable points" (1978). The Luhya society has thus cleverly used proverbs to perpetuate patriarchy and to relegate women to a secondary position. The proverbs have in a sense institutionalized and

naturalized the secondary positions of women in these societies. The African feminism theory was instrumental in the consideration of cultural and traditional conditions experienced by women in the Luhya society. It was revealed that the proverbs have been used to foster psychological and political systems that value the male higher than the female in the Luhya society.

More than contributing to the literature, however, I aimed to highlight the representation of women in the Luhya proverbs and the implication of such representation to the subjugation of women in the Luhya community. Impliedly, the proverbs have been revealed to categorise individuals in the society in a manner that perpetuates gender inequality.

Overall the negative connotations in Luhya proverbs have represented women in ways that affect their position in the community. The representations have implications that have marginalized women in the Luhya community. These Proverbs reinforce the status quo by “consistently depicting societal and cultural norms as the analysis of tales *From Our Mothers’ Hearths: Bukusu Folktales and Proverbs* demonstrates” (Namulundah, 2005). Luhya culture offers a glimpse into the society’s structural process, communal arrangements as well as the social and material environment. Proverbs reflect the state of the whole community and various social roles. As already noted proverbs construct gender besides defining the gender roles of men and women in Luhya culture. Whereas not all Luhya proverbs are discriminative against women, most of them portray women as inferior, weak, selfish and seductive (Barasa, 2017).

5.3 Recommendations

In accordance to the finding of this study, the following are recommended:

- i. As a result of few writers exemplifying the voice of women, the study recommends that more scholarly work should be done on proverbs that represent the women in good light and to bring out new proverbs in speeches and publications in an endeavor to recreate new discourses.
- ii. The study recommends studies on ways to change the perceptions towards women, through critical conscientisation of the community, and this will help liberate women from the bondage of patriarchy.
- iii. The study recommends the need for studies to establish ways of encouraging women to develop themselves and not to accept their subordination.

This study highlights the need to consider that culture and the ideology in the oral literature of a community contributes to the position of women and gender relations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Sample proverbs

Source: Wambunya, T. (2005). *Luyia Proverbs from Kisa, Marama, Tsotso and Wanga*.
London: Luyia Publishing Company.

The woman as a girl;

1. “*Abasila mbeere baliyo*”

Those without breasts surely exist.

2. “*Nashikoko ashira eshilindwa*”

A spinster is better than a grave.

3. “*Obulayi bukhaana bukosa ing’ombe*”

A girl’s beauty may steal a cow.

One should not gamble one’s cow on youthful beauty.

4. “*Imosi yayira mukhulundu*”

A calf grazes amongst cows.

5. “*Omulayi shiabulanga imbala ta*”

Even the pretty one is not without an ugly scar.

The woman as a young bride;

6. “*Omwana neisiilo*”

A child is a pillar.

7. “*Okhwibula khushira okhunia*”

To give birth is better than to excrete.

8. *“Omwana nobuliiro”*

A child is a source of good things (food).

9. *“Omwana wamberi neshikhoyero”*

The first born child is a source of joy.

10. *“Nandebula arumanga eshilenjeshie” or “Ouuma omwana aruma lirango”*

A childless woman sends her thigh (leg).

11. *“Nandebula akalukha omukumba”*

The barren one returns childless.

12. *“Olwibulo lwakhonya Wanamboka”*

Giving birth rescued Wanamboka.

13. *“Omwana nobuunga”*

A child is a helper.

14. *“Mani kamweya nimwana nyina”*

A bride’s strength is her kinsfolk.

15. *“Olulimi luserera shilulilwo oluteshia ta”*

The language of courtship is not the same as the language in marriage.

The woman as a mother;

16. *“Eshia omwimani oshilia nali omwibo”*

You can take advantage of a mean woman and eat her portion when she is nursing a baby.

17. *“Omwibo shatira mununjiro”*

A woman who has just given birth should not touch the cooking pot.

18. *“Imbwa ibukulanga omusokonyolo kwa nyina”*

A dog squats like its mother.

19. *Opili yibula opili*

A spotted cow gives birth to a spotted calf.

20. *“Mao wowashio shiakhusinga walaba”*

Another person's mother cannot wash you clean.

21. *“Omwana oulali owuwo shomusinga yalaba”*

You cannot wash someone's child to the parent's satisfaction

22. *Obea mao okhabea raro tawe.*

Cheat your mother and not your father.

23. *“Mwana uchenda ashila nyina amachesi”*

A child who travels surpasses his mother's wisdom.

24. *“Omukhasi womwana abeyeranga omwana”*

The mother uses the child to hide her mistakes

25. *“Eshiminywi shishisakalilanga nyina ta”*

A chick does not feed the hen.

26. *“Imbako yomwana shiola nyina tawe”*

The child’s hoe cannot produce enough for the mother.

27. *“Iyibula amakwhana yisika amabeere”*

The cow that calves twins must also produce enough milk to feed them.

28. *“Owibula amakhwana yesika amabeere”*

If you give birth to twins be ready to provide milk.

29. *“Ingokho isakulira abana bayo”*

Every hen will scratch the ground for its chicks.

30. *“Nindebushie mama alafuka endie”*

[I shall wait till morning for mother to cook food for me to eat].

31. *Eshituyu shikofule shinunanga mumwana*

An old rabbit feeds from its offspring.

32. *Inula irulanga butoro*

Good health begins from childhood.

33. *Oukhulisia akhupa mao nolola or [Oukhulisia akhupa mao niwikhale*

He who feeds you may beat your mother in your presence.

34. *Oukhushira amaani anyeka mawo niwikhaale*

A stronger person abuses your mother in your presence.

35. *Oulalola nyina bukhaana mbu papa yafuba tsing'ombe*

A person who never saw the mother at the height of her beauty may say the father wasted his dowry.

36. *Oularia nyina shiaria nyina owowashie*

He who does not respect his own mother cannot respect another person's mother.

37. *"Omusolili omulayi neikofia yasamwana"*

"Omusolili omulayi neshimwata shia samwana"

A child's good conduct earns his father respect and praise.

The woman as a wife;

38. *"Eshibisa omusaatsawo olishilia netsimbeba" or "Eshiwima omusatsao olishilia netsimbeba" or "Eshiwima omusatsao tsimbeba tsiakhalié ninawe"*

[Whatever you hide away from your husband you will share with rats].

39. *"Eshifuna omukhasi oshilia namayino"*

[What a woman has earned, you will not eat it in peace].

40. *"Omukhasi omukara mbu: 'omuyini kwewefu'" or*

"Omukhasi omutofu imbako yewefu" or "Omukhasi omutofu mbuo muyini kwewefu"

[The lazy woman says, "if only I had the hoe from my home"].

41. *“Akhlayi khowashio shikhakhumala likhwe khumukongo”*

[Another man’s wife however pretty she might be cannot wash all the dirt from your back].

42. *“Ikhabisi ishira obukondo” or “Ikhabisi ishira obulayi”*

[Luck is better than beauty].

43. *Imbongo ikhasi ahayirula isakula obukono*

The female deer destroys her lair before departing.

44. *Nabukhwe buleche butesherwa inderema*

Despised in-laws are served with poor vegetables

45. *Owaleka owamurera yayumba nabacheni*

The wife who despised her husband was stranded with visitors.

The woman as a widow;

46. *Lekha okhuyiya shinga namulekhwa khubalebe*

Do not wander about like a widow.

47. *Namulekhwa ndikhole endie?*

Being a helpless widow, what shall I do?

The woman in general;

48. *Ekhafu yekamabele niyo ekwichanga mumbuko.*

The most productive cow is the one that falls in a ditch.

49. *Namususuni kaya kumunwa*

A gossiping woman burns her mouth in the end.

51. *Ahe tsingokho tsibotsa olamitsa obule*

Where hens gather to feed you do not throw millet.

51. *Ekhafu yakhaywa kumukhono yeyakalila kumunwa*

For lack of a hand the cow uses its mouth to scratch itself.

52. *Ekhafu yekamabele niyo ekwichanga mumbuko.*

The most productive cow is the one that falls in a ditch.

53. *Eyapa nabulobe elipa nabukelema.*

The stick which beat the wife send away will also beat the newly married wife.

54. *Omulayi akhina mumuse lulala.*

The beautiful one dances in the arena once.

55. *Lekha okhukoyana shinga outsia khushiro*

Do not fumble as if you are going to the market.

56. *Omukhasi nakhulobire akhuhamba liloko*

When a woman dislikes you she accuses you of witchcraft, this

Appendix II: Luhya proverbs and discourses

Proverbs as discourse planes		Discourse fragments, strands,	Discourses, discursive knots
The woman as a girl;			
1.	<i>“Abasila mbeere baliyo”</i> [Those without breasts surely exist].	surely exist	the place of men
2.	<i>“Nashikoko ashira eshilindwa”</i> [A spinster is better than a grave].	spinster, better than a grave	negative comparison
3.	<i>“Obulayi bukhaana bukosia ing’ombe”</i> [A girl’s beauty may steal a cow]. [One should not gamble one’s cow on youthful beauty].	a girl’s beauty, should not gamble	beauty, commodity
4.	<i>“Imosi yayira mukhulundu”</i> (A calf grazes amongst cows)	grazes amongst cows	gender roles
5.	<i>“Omulayi shiabulanga imbala ta”</i> (Even the pretty one is not without an ugly scar.)	pretty one is not without an ugly scar	beauty
The woman as a young bride;			
6.	<i>“Omwana neisiilo”</i> [A child is a pillar].	child , is a pillar	giving birth
7.	<i>“Okhwibula khushira okhunia”</i> [To give birth is better than to excrete].	to give birth	negative comparison
8.	<i>“Omwana nobuliiro”</i> A child is a source of good things (food).	child, source of good things	giving birth
9.	<i>“Omwana wamberi neshikhoyero”</i> [The first born child is a source of joy.]	child, source of joy	giving birth
10.	<i>“Nandebula arumanga eshilenjeshie” or “Ouuma omwana aruma lirango”</i> [A childless woman sends her thigh (leg)].	childless woman	giving birth
11.	<i>“Nandebula akalukha omukumba”</i> The barren one returns childless	the barren one	giving birth
12.	<i>“Olwibulo lwakhonya Wanamboka”</i> (Giving birth rescued Wanamboka).	giving birth, rescued	giving birth

13.	<i>“Omwana nobuunga”</i> A child is a helper.	Child, helper.	giving birth
14.	<i>“Mani kamweya ni mwana nyina”</i> A bride’s strength is her kinsfolk.	bride’s strength, her kinsfolk	dependence, submission
15.	<i>“Olulimi luserera shilulilwo oluteshia ta”</i> [The language of courtship is not the same as the language in marriage].	language of courtship, language in marriage	should persevere, submission
16.	<i>“Eshia omwimani oshilia nali omwibo”</i> [You can take advantage of a mean woman and eat her portion when she is nursing a baby].	mean woman, when she is nursing a baby	mother is protective
The woman as a mother;			
17.	<i>“Omwibo shatira mununjiro”</i> [A woman who has just given birth should not touch the cooking pot]	woman who has just given birth	nursing mother, respect
18.	<i>“Imbwa ibukulanga omusokonyolo kwa nyina”</i> [A dog squats like its mother].	squats like its mother	blaming the mother
19.	<i>Opili yibula opili</i> A spotted cow gives birth to a sported calf.	a spotted cow, a sported calf	blaming the mother
20.	<i>“Mao wowashio shiakhusinga walaba”</i> [Another person’s mother cannot wash you clean].	another person’s mother	untrustworth, evil
21.	<i>“Omwana oulali owuwo shomusinga yalaba”</i> (You cannot wash someone’s child to the parents satisfaction)	wash someone’s child	untrustworthy
22.	<i>Obea mao okhabea raro tawe.</i> (Cheat your mother and not your father).	cheat your mother, not your father	mother’s wisdom
23.	<i>“Mwana uchenda ashila nyina amachesi”</i> [A child who travels surpasses his mother’s wisdom].	child who travels, mother’s wisdom	mother’s wisdom
24.	<i>“Omukhasi womwana abeyeranga omwana”</i> The mother uses the child to hide her mistakes	uses the child to hide her mistakes	mother’s wisdom

25.	<i>“Eshiminywi shishisakalilanga nyina ta”</i> [A chick does not feed the hen]	does not feed the hen	provider, hardworking
26.	<i>“Imbako yo mwana shiola nyina tawe”</i> [The child’s hoe cannot produce enough for the mother].	child’s hoe, mother	provider
27.	<i>“Iyibula amakwhana yisika amabeere”</i> The cow that calves twins must also produce enough milk to feed them.	cow that calves twins, produce enough milk	provider
28.	<i>“Owibula amakhwana yesika amabeere”</i> If you give birth to twins be ready to provide milk.	give birth to twins, be ready to provide milk.	provider
29.	<i>“Ingokho isakulira abana bayo”</i> Every hen will scratch the ground for its chicks.	scratch the ground for its chicks.	provider, selfless
30.	<i>“Nindebushie mama alafuka endie”</i> [I shall wait till morning for mother to cook food for me to eat].	mother to cook food	reliable
31.	<i>Eshituyu shikofule shinunanga mumwana</i> An old rabbit feeds from its offspring.	feeds from its offspring.	respect
32.	<i>Inula irulanga butoro</i> Good health begins from childhood.	Good health	caring, protective
33.	<i>Oukhulisia akhupa mao nolola or [Oukhulisia akhupa mao niwikhale</i> He who feeds you may beat your mother in your presence.	may beat your mother in your presence.	respect
34.	<i>Oukhushira amaani anyeka mawo niwikhaale</i> A stronger person abuses your mother in your presence.	abuses your mother in your presence.	respect
35.	<i>Oulalola nyina bukhaana mbu papa yafuba tsing’ombe</i> A person who never saw the mother at the height of her beauty may say the father wasted his dowry.	mother’s beauty, father’s dowry.	beauty, object
36.	<i>Oularia nyina shiaria nyina owowashie</i> He who does not respect his own mother cannot respect another person’s mother.	respect his own mother	respect

37.	<p>“<i>Omusolili omulayi neikofia yasamwana</i>” “<i>Omusolili omulayi neshimwata shia samwana</i>” [A child’s good conduct earns his father respect and praise]</p>	child’s good conduct; father’s respect	father’s respect, the position of the mother
The woman as a wife;			
38.	<p>“<i>Eshibisa omusaatsawo olishilia netsimbeba</i>” or “<i>Eshiwima omusatsao olishilia netsimbeba</i>” or “<i>Eshiwima omusatsao tsimbeba tsiakhalie ninawe</i>” [Whatever you hide away from your husband you will share with rats].</p>	hide away from your husband; will share with rats	negation of women’s economic contribution,
39.	<p>“<i>Eshifuna omukhasi oshilia namayino</i>” [What a woman has earned, you will not eat it in peace].</p>	a woman has earned; you will not eat it in peace	negation of women’s economic contribution
40.	<p>“<i>Omukhasi omukara mbu: ‘omuyini kwewefu’</i>” or “<i>Omukhasi omutofu imbako yewefu</i>” or “<i>Omukhasi omutofu mbu omuyini kwewefu</i>” [The lazy woman says, “if only I had the hoe from my home”].</p>	The lazy woman	service provider, object, hardwork
41.	<p>“<i>Akhalayi khowashio shikha khumala likhwe khumukongo</i>” [Another man’s wife however pretty she might be cannot wash all the dirt from your back].</p>	Another man’s wife	untrustworthy
42.	<p>“<i>Ikhabi ishira obukondo</i>” or “<i>Ikhabi ishira obulayi</i>” [Luck is better than beauty].</p>	Luck, beauty	beauty
43.	<p><i>Imbongo ikhasi ahayirula isakula obukono</i> The female deer destroys her lair before departing.</p>	female deer	negative comparison
44.	<p><i>Nabukhwe buleche butesherwa inderema</i> Despised in-laws are served with poor vegetables</p>	served with poor vegetables	submission
45.	<p><i>Owaleka owamurera yayumba nabacheni</i> The wife who despised her husband was stranded with visitors.</p>	stranded with visitors.	submission
The woman as a widow;			
46.	<p><i>Lekha okhuyiya shinga namulekhwa khubalebe</i></p>	wander about like a widow	lacks control

	Do not wander about like a widow.		
47.	<i>Namulekhwa ndikhole endie?</i> Being a helpless widow, what shall I do?	a helpless widow	dependence, helplessness
The woman in general;			
48.	<i>Ekhafu yekamabele niyo ekwichanga mumbuko.</i> The most productive cow is the one that falls in a ditch.	most productive cow	service provider, object
49.	<i>Namususuni kaya kumunwa</i> A gossiping woman burns her mouth in the end.	A gossiping woman	untrustworthy, evil
50.	<i>Ahe tsingokho tsibotsa olamitsa obule</i> Where hens gather to feed you do not throw millet.	Where hens gather to feed	untrustworth, evil
51.	<i>Ekhafu yakhaywa kumukhono yeyakalila kumunwa</i> For lack of a hand the cow uses its mouth to scratch itself.	for lack of a hand the cow uses its mouth	service provider, object
52.	<i>Ekhafu yekamabele niyo ekwichanga mumbuko.</i> The most productive cow is the one that falls in a ditch.	most productive cow	negation of women's economic contribution
53.	<i>Eyapa nabulobe elipa nabukelema.</i> The stick which beat the wife send away will also beat the newly married wife.	stick which beat the wife	wife beating, object
54.	<i>Omulayi akhina mumuse lulala.</i> The beautiful one dances in the arena once.	beautiful one	beauty
55.	<i>Lekha okhukoyana shinga outsia khushiro</i> Do not fumble as if you are going to the market.	not fumble; going to the market	negation of women's economic contribution
56.	<i>Omukhasi nakhulobire akhuhamba liloko.</i> When a woman dislikes you she accuses you of witchcraft, this	Accuse, <i>Liloko</i> ; Witchcraft	Untrustworth, evil