

A COGNITIVE ANALYSIS OF EKEGUSII RIDDLES

BY

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DECLARATION

This project is my own original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university.

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

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ABSTRACT.

This project study, *A Cognitive Analysis of Ekegusii Riddles*, is an analysis on the classification, conception and interpretation of Ekegusii riddles. The study also sought to establish whether the Gusii culture and context play a role in the conception and interpretation of Ekegusii riddles. Anchored in the Conceptual Theory of Metaphor as its theoretical perspective, the study opines that Ekegusii riddles fall into various categories or classes. However the study classifies Ekegusii riddles according to the nature of the item or object in the answer. Accordingly, the purposeful sample of sixty riddles that were obtained from Endabaro Endabasia by Bosire and Machogu (2013) were classified into those where the answer referred to: human body, animals, plants, insects, cultural objects and natural phenomena. The study contends that the answer exists prior to the image in the riddle challenge and that in conceiving the riddle, one first identifies some salient feature in an object which forms the basis of formulating the riddle. The answer and the image are in a metaphorical relationship. Metaphorical mappings of one domain are mapped onto another domain. This hypothetical relationship is represented as A IS B and B IS A. Whereas the challenger starts working from the answer to the image in the riddle, the solver or audience has to work from the image to the answer- both the challenger and the audience are constrained by culture and context.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

1.1.1 Background to the Language

Ekegusii is one of the many Bantu languages of Kenya. According to Basweti et al (2015), Kisii and Nyamira counties are predominantly home to the speakers of Ekegusii language. Many also live in the various towns across Kenya and beyond. Akama and Maxcon (2006) and Basweti et al (2015) variously refer to Ekegusii language as “Gusii” though the word also sometimes refers to the people themselves.

According to the 2019 national census, the Gusii people are said to be 1.8 million people, with kisii county having 1,266,860 people and Nyamira with 605,576 people KNBS (2019:10). Kisii County alone for instance, was projected to have a population of about 1.3m people by 2017 according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and Kisii County government records (2013). The Gusii people are neighbours to the Luo, Kipsigisi and the Maasai, all of whom interestingly, are Nilotic speakers. The Gusii community, according to Otiso (2016) paper is a patriarchal society since it is men who form clans, inherit land and property and make most of the decisions that affect the community. Women as it were, operate at the periphery.

According to the current Guthrie (NUGL) online list, Ekegusii is classified under JE42 (Maho 2009:63). Other languages which are classified under this are Logooli JE413, Kuria JE43. Ekegusii language is to a large extent, a homogenous language. However, Whiteley (1960) and Bosire (1993) say, and rightly so, that there are two dialects: Ekerogoro and Ekemaate which are mutually intelligible. Basweti and Omoke (2018) are in agreement and adopt the two dialects as suggested by Bosire. Ogechi (2002) also agrees that indeed

Ekegusii language has two dialects. However, these two dialects are marked with slight differences in phonology and the vocabulary; for example, the speakers of Ekemaate articulate the voiceless alveolar plosive /t/ as its voiced counterpart /d/ even though in orthography, it remains the same T.

Ekerogoro dialect is considered the standard and as such is used in schools within the catchment area both as a medium of instruction as a subject in the lower grades of schools. This is in line with the Ministry of Education policy which requires that the language of the catchment area be used as a medium of instruction in the lower grades of primary schools and also be taught as a subject to those grades. Besides, the dialect is the one used in mass communication: *Egesa FM, Minto FM and Kisii FM* are some of the radio stations that broadcast in the dialect. Ekegusii language is widely used at home in the rural areas, in social gatherings and in preaching in churches. The language, just like all the other indigenous languages in Kenya, is facing stiff competition from Kiswahili and Sheng where the latter is quickly gaining popularity among the young generation (Ogechi, 2003:3).

1.1.2 Background to Ekegusii Riddles

The Gusii people have had and used riddles since time immemorial among the many other genres of language such as proverbs which are used to educate, warn, and emphasize what one is saying. For instance Otiso (2016) has done a paper where she has examined the cultural values and wisdom that are transmitted by Ekegusii proverbs. The paper demonstrates how proverbs have been used to comment on society related issues such as gender, death and other paradoxical experiences. Proverbs have a close relationship with riddles though they have not been given due attention. Songs too formed an important aspect of the Gusii folklore.

The songs were mostly used to entertain, warn ridicule as well as pass society wisdom and philosophy from one generation to another, oral narratives and so on. The riddles formed a critical component of the Gusii folklore as the main consumers of the riddles were children. Nandwa and Bukenya (1993) argue that riddles are basically meant for children. Hunt (1983) also quips that one is the way he is because of what he or she learned in the early years of development. In other words what we acquire in childhood helps shape our future lives. Furthermore, riddles are taught to young children in schools, at least in the lower classes in line with the Ministry of Education policy. This policy requires that the language of the catchment area be taught both as a subject as well as a medium of instruction to lower grades in primary schools in Kenya. Ekegusii language is the language of the catchment area to almost all the rural schools in both Kisii and Nyamira counties.

In the recent years, we have witnessed public speakers more so politicians incorporating riddles in their speeches. There is collection and documentation by different researchers and scholars of Ekegusii who have written on riddles among them, Bosire and Machogu (2013), Abuga (1997), Bosire (1993) just to mention but a few. Magachi (2015) has done work on classification, interpretation and the role of culture and context in the interpretation of riddles using the relevance theory. In my own view, she did not show how the theory she used helps in the interpretation and understanding of Ekegusii riddles, hence there is need to show how Ekegusii riddles are interpreted and understood so as to bring out the philosophy, art and culture of the Gusii people expressed in riddles. One linguistic feature of the riddles that stands out unexplored is the choice of the components of the image or question and the answer or response and how the two (image and response) correspond i.e. what informs the choice of the image in the riddle and the

response given? Consider these examples from *Endabaro Endabasia*, a dictionary by Bosire and Machogu:

Aa to! (aa to!) Response; oboterere (slipperiness)

Abana bakoiborwa nechianga (children born with clothes) response; chibando (maize)

Abaiseke mbare minto batato oyomo ataiyo titori koragera (there are three sisters in our house, when one is absent we cannot eat) response; amaiga (cooking stones) the study will through the contemporary theory of metaphor, show how the responses in the examples above are arrived at and how there is a correspondence between the riddle and the response.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

How the speakers of Ekegusii conceptualize riddles and how the riddles are interpreted has to a large extent remained unresolved. An attempt by Magachi (2015) to analyze the Gusii riddles is nevertheless conclusive. For instance, in her study, she does not show how her theory (the one she has used-Relevance Theory) helps in the interpretation or at least the theory itself doesn't conclusively do so. The study does little to show how the response predetermines the conceptualization of the riddle itself by exploring the salient features of the object/situation in the response.

Besides, the relevance theory she uses holds the view that an input is relevant to an individual when it connects with background information he has to be worth processing (see the Cognitive Principle of Relevance). Sperber (2004) argues that the mind is programmed in such a way that it automatically attends to the most relevant information. It is also to reflect on Grice's co-operative principles upon which the relevance theory is founded. More often than not, riddles are misleading or figurative Miruka (1999).

Therefore, when one hears a riddle, it does not always connect with the background knowledge he or she has about what the image in that riddle is. This would imply that upon hearing a riddle, and it does not connect with the background information of the hearer, we expect that processing of such an input would then stop, but that is not often the case. It thus needs a theory whose central tenet is that our thinking and actions are metaphorical, such as the conceptual theory of metaphor to conclusively deal with the problem of interpretation of Ekegusii riddles. This study sought to investigate and find out how Ekegusii riddles are conceptualized and interpreted and how the hearers arrive at a given response acceptable to both the riddler and the riddlee. Besides, the study explored the motivation for the choice of the specific image items that form the riddle itself. For instance, consider the example below:

Tata ogure inse n'egoti (my father has fallen with his coat). Response: ritoke (banana)

What is guiding the respondent to the answer given (ritoke)? What are some unique features of (ritoke) that correspond with the image in the riddle (tata) and vice versa?

Enyomba yane ebwate egesigisa ekemo (my house has only one pillar/post) response. Oboba (mushroom). what salient features of the mushroom has the riddler identified that relate to the house he knows in his culture and context and what is the dissonance created? It is important to note that not all the features of a house or that of the mushroom is picked for mapping purposes. The riddler has only picked one feature of the mushroom (oboba) the stem, and left the other parts. This is then mapped onto the image in the riddle itself.

Also consider this, engori yane etambe etasibe nko (my long rope that cannot tie firewood) response ebara (path). Again looking at this we see some purposive cognitive relationship of particular aspects of the path and mapping them onto some specific aspects of the rope

as well. In addition, the study tried to find out if culture and context play a role in the formation, understanding and subsequent interpretation of Ekegusii riddles.

1.3 Research Questions

Some of the research questions that this study endeavored to find answers to include the following: How does the mind find out the meaning of the riddle? How do people ever know the answer to the riddle?

- i. How can Ekegusii riddles be classified?
- ii. What strategies do the speakers of Ekegusii language employ in the conceptualization and interpretation of the riddles in a riddling session?
- iii. How does Gusii culture influence the conceptualization and interpretation of Ekegusii riddles?
- iv. What is the role of the context in the conceptualization and interpretation of Ekegusii riddles?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective

The study intends to explore and examine riddles among the Gusii people with a view of establishing how the riddles are conceptualized, interpreted. Besides, the study would try to find out how the mind ever finds out the meaning or answer to the riddle.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The following are the specific objectives of this study:

- i. To classify Ekegusii riddles.
- ii. To identify the strategies the speakers of Ekegusii language employ in the conceptualization and interpretation of Ekegusii riddles in a riddling session.

- iii. To determine how the Gusii culture influences the conceptualization and interpretation of Ekegusii riddles.
- iv. To establish the role of context in the conceptualization and interpretation of Ekegusii riddles.

1.5 Rationale

Available collections and documented scholarly materials so far indicate that there is need for studies on Ekegusii riddles as far as classification, role of context and culture as well as interpretation and conception are concerned. Finnegan (1970), Bukenya (1994), Miruka (1999), Nandwa and Bukenya (1983), Gachanja and Kebaya (2013) have all left out the aspect of how riddles are conceived and interpreted. Dundes (1964) says that riddles have all the while been studied at the periphery as they are more often than not considered a child's thing and basically for amusement. A study by Magachi (2015) has attempted to classify, interpret and establish the role of culture. Nevertheless, the study has left a gap still on the conceptualization and interpretation as well as understanding of Ekegusii riddles. For instance, she does not show the Gusii philosophy and culture imbedded in the formulation of the riddles. She does not show how the relevance theory aids in the interpretation of Ekegusii riddles. Using the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor as the model of this study, the study shows how cross domain correspondences and inferences between the image in the riddle and the response help in the conception and interpretation of riddles. This study then, is a worthwhile venture as it adds to the already existing knowledge. Besides, study of Ekegusii riddles reveals some key insights concerning the Gusii logic and whether they do involve critical and problem-solving aspects as well. Furthermore, the study once completed, goes a long way in providing useful insights to teachers and educators who deal with children as far as riddles are concerned since riddles form part of children's education. The study is also useful to other cognitive linguistics

researchers interested in Ekegusii language or generally in other Bantu languages such as Kuria, Lulugoli, Lubukusu, which are closely related to Ekegusii. Furthermore, cognitive linguists working with the neighbouring languages to Ekegusii language such as Dholuo, Maa and Kalenjin, though they are not Bantu languages will find this study useful. Anthropologists will also find this work handy especially those working on the Gusii culture and language.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

The study focused on a cognitive linguistic analysis of Ekegusii riddles. The riddles that were analyzed were derived from Endabaro Endabasia, an Ekegusii dictionary and encyclopedia, by Bosire and Machogu (2013). This being one of the key dictionaries cum encyclopedia in the language, it is most probable that the riddles it contains are representative of the entire repertoire of Ekegusii riddles. These riddles were then analyzed using the Conceptual Theory of Metaphor by Lakoff (1980). The study carried out an analysis of a purposive sample of sixty riddles from the riddle repertoire in the dictionary. This is about half of all the riddles in the book. It was hoped that this sample would satisfactorily represent the study population. Further, the study focused on classification of Ekegusii riddles, exploration of the role played by both context and culture in the formation or conception and interpretation of Ekegusii riddles and the exploration of the strategies employed by participants in a riddling session in interpreting the riddles.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Cognitive: Connected with mental process of understanding.

Mapping: A set of systematic correspondences between entities.

Metaphor: A cross domain mapping in the conceptual system.

Riddle: A question that is difficult to understand, and that has a surprising answer that you ask someone as a game.

Strategy: The process of putting a plan/something into operation.

1.8 Literature Review

In this subsection, a literature review on riddles and a review on the contemporary theory of metaphor are done.

1.8.1 Literature on Riddles

Riddles have been well documented by many a scholar. To begin with, many scholars have attempted to define riddles. For instance, Miruka (1999) calls a riddle a puzzle where common or familiar things and situations are more often than not referred to us in figurative terms for us to decode what is actually meant by the speaker in a riddling session. This study intends to show how the puzzle Miruka talks of is resolved by the riddlee in a riddling session. He goes further to show the unique characteristics of riddles where concepts are concealed and it is up to the riddlee to unravel the meaning. His definition and work was crucial to this research as this research intended to find out the strategies employed by hearers to decipher what is actually meant in a riddle. Kebaya (2013) too defines a riddle as “a word puzzle in which familiar objects or situations are referred to in figurative terms for us to work out what is meant.” How the solvers arrive at the answer remains largely unstudied.

Nandwa and Bukenya (1983) say that riddles are meant for young children, however they also point out that adults also use riddles especially for humor. Abagusii people have also not been left behind in this as they too consider riddles as primarily meant for young children. This is confirmed by the fact that riddles form part of the games played by children in the community. This study wanted to find out how the young children conceive and understand riddles. Miruka (1999) outlines the functions of riddles as entertainment, a record of a people's history, a comment on human life as well as linguistic development. This is an important assertion since it underscores the centrality of riddles in the lives of any one given people.

Hunt (1994) says that we are the way we are because of what we acquired in earlier childhood-from language, culture, environment and so on, riddles cannot be left out of this list of those things that contributed in shaping our lives especially in the very formative years of our existence. This view point of Hunt underscores the significance of this study since it shows how the Gusii culture constrains the conceptualization of riddles. Allan Dundes (1964) says that riddles have throughout been "marginalized" as a result of a myriad "misconceptions that they are mostly childish and that their core role is to entertain." The

Gusii people are of the view that riddles are mostly meant for children just like many African communities do. This is because riddles have all along been part of the games children play and are usually enacted. Finnegan (1970) shares the same opinion when she says that many scholars have not given the desired attention to riddles as they are often taken as meant for minors and childish interests. Adults rarely use riddles in their daily conversations another pointer to the kind of attitude held by the society on riddles.

Gachanja and Kebaya (2013) have also done a paper in which case they have tried to show how riddles play a critical role in the pedagogy of children in schools. In this paper, they have surveyed the use of riddles in schools more so the Gusii riddles. They claim that riddles enhance the learners' knowledge and appreciation of their environment. Partly, their work points to the role played by the context and culture in riddle conceptualization and understanding.

In oral literature, a riddle is classified as a genre of the short form and that; it more often than not follows a fixed stylistic pattern. It is prudent that the characteristics of riddles are studied from a linguistic perspective so as to make manifest the embedded richness in as far as language and Ekegusii wisdom are concerned. According to Odaga (1984) "a riddle is a short witty statement or saying but which lacks the seriousness of a proverb." Finnegan (1970) and Njoroge (1984) say that "A riddle is a statement, question or phrase that has double meaning. It can also be described as a puzzle to be solved."

Bukenya and others (1983) have in their works done a broad classification of riddles basically on their answer and the image. Accordingly, the functional approach classifies riddles according to their answers. It is also called the "denotational classification." In this study, they give examples of birds, plants, animals, utensils, furniture, and technology among some of the classifications that can be done functionally. This particular work forms part of the basis upon which my classification of Ekegusii riddles is based partly among many other classifications. Taylor (1931) has also done work on form and classification of riddles which too was used to do the classification of Ekegusii riddles that the study did.

Maranda (1971) has extensively studied and written on riddles. For instance, in one of the works where he has studied over 1000 Finish riddles, using the cognitive metaphor theory,

he argues that there is a correlation between the image in the answer and the response to be expected. He shows how cross domain mappings between the response and the image work forth and back between the image in the riddle and the response through the study and inference of a given feature in both. This is partly what this paper has to show in Ekegusii riddles using the conceptual theory of metaphor.

Aarne (1917) as quoted by Maranda (1971) underscores the centrality of the answer to the metaphor. She argues that “the answer exists prior to the metaphor. She further says that the image in the riddle has a metaphorical relationship with the response given.” Here, she is in agreement with Maranda who also points out that the response pre-exists or precedes the image in the riddle. This is one aspect that the relevance theory used by Magachi (2015) could not account for. This study found her work crucial in helping to explain how Ekegusii riddles are conceptualized and interpreted. She to some extent suggests cross domain mapping relationship between the image in the Gusii riddle and the response to be expected. Aristotle in his book “Rhetoric”, as quoted by Maranda, does draw attention to the likeness that there is a relationship between a riddle and a metaphor. He quips “good riddles do, in general, provide us with satisfactory metaphor.” Maranda (1971) is also of the same view. He affirms that a riddle ought to be taken as a particular form of metaphor.

1.8.2 Literature on Ekegusii Riddles

Many linguistics scholars have shown interest in and studied various aspects of Ekegusii language. To begin with, Whiteley (1960) who studied the tense systems in Ekegusii language, Mbori (1964) who did the Ekegusii noun phrase and Okindo (1995) who has studied the gender representation in Ekegusii proverbs. Others are Ochoke (2017) on a cognitive analysis of women metaphor as well as a host of others studying one aspect of Ekegusii language or another. This particular work by Ochoke has used the cognitive

metaphor theory to show how inferences about one domain are cross-mapped onto the reference of women among the Gusii peoples. Though working on metaphors, the work to some extent shades light to this study how the Gusii culture and stereotypes inform the choice and use of women metaphors. In the same way, the Gusii culture has a huge bearing on the conceptualization and interpretation of Ekegusii riddles.

Besides all the above literature on riddles generally, there are available works on Ekegusii riddles, among them is Gachanja and Kebaya (2013). In the study, Gachanja and Kebaya (2013) looked into the role played by riddles in the pedagogy of children in our schools using Ekegusii riddles as a case study. They do recommend that riddles ought to be infused in the teaching of learners in our schools as they contribute to language development. This gave this study the impetus to carry out this cognitive study so as to enrich what the teachers have already for the learners. Others who have done some documentation on Ekegusii riddles include Bosire and Machogu (2013) in Endabaro Endabasia, an Ekegusii dictionary and encyclopedia.

The duo have collected close to one hundred Ekegusii riddles and given their translations, though they do not show how the responses to the riddles are arrived at nor do they show how the riddles are conceptualized. There is just a repertoire of riddles (Abuga, *et al.*, and Kebaya (1987) among others. Magachi (2015) has done an attempt at the classification of Ekegusii riddles. She has also attempted the interpretation of Ekegusii riddles in the same paper.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

1.9.1 The Conceptual Theory of Metaphor

The proponents of the conceptual theory of metaphor are Lakoff and Johnson (1980). The theory has since been developed by others working in the field of cognitive linguistics such as (Lakoff, 1987; Lakoff and Turner, 1989; Gibbs, 1994 and Kovecses, 1990, 2000, 20002 and 2005) among many others. Lakoff (1993:2002) says that metaphor has been used for a long time to mean a novel or poetic linguistic expression. Over the years, metaphor retained that kind of meaning. However, Lakoff (1993) pioneered an absolutely new meaning to metaphor. He posts that everyday abstract ideas and concepts that are abstract like time, states, change, causation and so on or are indeed metaphorical Lakoff (1993). Metaphors are therefore regarded as mappings across conceptual domains. This in effect means that there are numerous cross domain mappings from our everyday lives.

Sadock (1993) says that metaphors occur independently in our language system, he goes further to say that our everyday language is metaphorical. Riddles are part of our everyday language and thus following this claim, we can say that riddles are metaphorical. Mappings are found in the mind and are channeled from the source domain to the target domain. Lakoff (1993:203) says that a metaphor is a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual system. He distinguishes this with metaphorical expression which refers to the words, phrases or sentence. He develops a mnemonic to show the mappings and how they work. "Target-domain is source – domain or target-domain as source-domain." For example, "love is a journey" where by the lovers in a love relationships are regarded as travelers, the relationship itself is the vehicle whereas the lovers shared aspirations corresponds to the destinations of travelers in a journey. The same could be said of other metaphors such as "argument as war more is up and less is down". These are conceptual

mappings used to talk of entity in terms of another. These conceptual mappings provide an answer to why words for travel for example are used to talk about love relationship. It is because we understand travel (source domain) more readily than the abstract entity of love. From a linguistic perspective, this provides evidence for conceptual cross domain mappings. This is the kind of relationship that obtains between the image in the riddle and the response. For example, “*Ekerandi kia baba getari kwoma*” (my mother’s guard that does not get dry). Response: *Enyari y’eng’ombe* (a cow’s udder). In this riddle, the image “Ekerandi” which is source domain is “Enyari” the target domain. We can clearly see that there is a metaphor at play here where there are conceptual mappings of inferences about the guard image in the riddle and the udder in the response, both of them albeit contain milk at one time or another. On hearing this riddle, the hearer calls to mind the encyclopedic entries about “Ekerandi” such as stores milk, cylindrical in shape, usually kept by the mother for storing milk and so on and then transfers these through a mapping process onto the a cow’s udder. In this way, the hearer is able to arrive at the response of “*Enyari y’eng’ombe*”.

1.9.2 The Cognitive Function of Metaphors

Lakoff (1993) cautions that we should not confuse the name of the mapping with the mapping itself. Koveceses (2010) is of the same view. He has also written on how deeply rooted a metaphor is in our everyday live. The wide usage of metaphors entails riddles as well. He has also written on the function of the metaphor. Consequently, he suggests three kinds of metaphors in line with their cognitive function: ontological, structural and orientational. Ontological metaphors usually apportion ontological status to abstract entities. This means that we think and talk of them as if they were things. These type of metaphors allow us to quantify and identify otherwise diffuse experiences. For example when one says “give me a call” or “I am pushing life” The structural metaphors on the

other hand help us to understand the target by means of the source domain. The source domain provides us with richer background knowledge to be mapped onto the target domain. Lastly, the orientational metaphors make a set of target concepts coherent in our conceptual domain. These are founded on human spatial orientations for example up-down. All these three were used in analyzing the Gusii riddles. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) also talk of metaphor being structured in terms of another. The ontological metaphors were helpful in analyzing those riddles with non-physical properties in Ekegusii language.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) claim that there is a strong affinity between the mind and the concepts people are able to create. The claim points to us that language actually reflects human conceptualization. That aside, some of the main tenets of this theory that this study exploited for purposes of analyzing riddles. One fundamental tenet is that a metaphor is a cross domain mapping across conceptual domains. The other tenet is that metaphors are part of our everyday lives as an indispensable part of our ordinary conventional way of conceptualizing the world around us Reddy (1979 Lakoff and Johnson (1980, 1993, 1999 & 2003), Kovecses (2002) all view a metaphor as understanding one conceptual domain in terms of another. The conceptual metaphor theory is an improvement from the traditional metaphor theory which held the view that some linguistic items were metaphorical or figurative whereas others were literal. In this traditional metaphor theory, “the locus of the metaphor” was the linguistic items *per se*. It follows then that prior to Ortony’s work of *Metaphor and Thought* (1979), which drastically changed the perception of metaphors; it was all along believed that all everyday language use was non-metaphorical. In addition to this, it was said that all subject matter could be understood outside of metaphors and that it was this literal plain language was either true or false as the case may be. There was also

the commonly held view that all the definitions of lexical items in a language's lexicon were none metaphorical.

As stated in the foregoing paragraph, on further research and thorough investigations, particularly after the work of Ortony (1979), Metaphor and thought, the contemporary metaphor theory came up which was a paradigm shift in which the central tenet is that "metaphor is a fundamental mechanism of the mind" which enables human beings to use what they know about their physical world and social environment to gain understanding of many other domains. In the Contemporary Metaphor Theory, it is claimed that such "metaphors structure our most fundamental understanding of experiences which are central to how we think and how we express our thoughts and in language." This has since changed the perceptions discussed above that metaphor was basically a language affair. Grady (1997), Lakoff (1980) Kovecses (2000) all agree that the conceptual metaphors are, to a large extent universal at a higher level. Even though, Kovecses (2000) points out that, metaphors can also have variations due to the influence of culture and context. I find this particular point made by Kovecses (2000) quite useful as I was out to explore out the role of culture and context in the conceptualization and interpretation of Ekegusii riddles.

1.9.3 The Main Tenets of the Conceptual Theory of Metaphor

"Metaphor is a cross domain mapping in the conceptual system. The locus of metaphor is thought, not language" Lakoff (1993). He further says that Metaphor is part and parcel of our ordinary, conventional way of conceptualizing the world around us. One's everyday behavior reflects his or her metaphorical understanding of the experiences he or she has had. Reddy (1979) also showed that the locus of metaphor is, as it were, is thought and not as was earlier thought to be language. He points out that metaphor is an intrinsic part of our ways of construing the world around us. He goes on to say that our day to day lives is

a true reflection of our metaphorical inception of the experiences. Riddles especially among the Gusii people also to a large degree reveal their way of construing the world around them- the underlying cultural philosophy.

Consequently, some of the basic concepts that are metaphorical would be said to include the following: categories which are understood in a metaphorical sense as bounded regions or containers, quantity and linear scales where more is up and less is low, the invariance principle where metaphorical mappings preserve the cognitive typology. “Abstract reasoning is a special case of imaged-based reasoning. Imaged-based reasoning is fundamental and abstract reasoning is imaged-based reasoning under metaphorical projections to abstract domains” Lakoff (1993) Simultaneous mappings are fixed correspondences that are activated and not algorithmic processes which give “inputs and outputs”. Another very crucial tenet is analogy which brings about knowledge schemas of the source domain and knowledge schemas of the target domain, for example, the generic is specific metaphor.

The metaphor entails comprehending one domain of experience in terms of another domain, quite different or unrelated. To be precise, a metaphor can be said to be a cross domain mapping from one domain (source domain) to another domain (target domain). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) say that “target domain is source domain or target domain as source domain.” The duo goes on to point out how conceptual mappings which are in effect correspondences caused by metaphoric reasoning through inferences in one domain onto another. “...metaphorical reasoning comes into play when source domain encyclopedic entries are used for target domain reasoning through the neural mappings...”

Lee (2001:7) says that “Metaphor is a prime manifestation of the cognitive claim that language and thought are inextricably intertwined...” the systematic mapping of the

source domain and the target domain show that they both share similar cultural and social features. There must be some close knit relationship between the mental image in the riddle itself and the response chosen and accepted as the right answer. Simpson (2004:41) argues that a metaphor is a process of mapping between two different conceptual domains- the source domain and the target domain. Lakoff and Johnson (1987) claim that a metaphor is pervasive and forms an essential component of our day to day lives. The net value of this claim is that metaphors are part of our everyday lives, not only in speech but also in thinking and deeds. They are found everywhere and are widespread in the activities and even the lexemes we use are metaphorical. Metaphors then should not be seen as labels but also as a way of human thinking. This forms the basis for choosing this theory as the framework of trying to understand how Ekegusii riddles are conceived and interpreted.

Lakoff and Johnson (1999) show how metaphorical reasoning works. They come up with a number of conceptual metaphors to show how we reason and perceive daily experiences: “Time is money, life is a journey, more is up, and argument is war...” among many other metaphors. For instance, in Ekegusii, when one has passed on, he is said to “otonyorire” (s/he has gone ahead of us) assuming that we are all in a journey to a given destination and that s/he has out stepped us and gone ahead of us. The metaphor at play here is life is a journey. As can be seen from this example, metaphor is crucial to thought and language as well. Thought in forms the linguistic expressions (metaphorical expressions) we choose to use so as to effectively capture what we are thinking of.

Ritchie (2013) asserts that metaphorical concepts are greatly influenced by specific cultural experiences in our surrounding or world that we operate in. This position is also supported by Lyons (1968) who contends that the language of a people is an important

component of its culture and that the language can reveal a lot about the culture of a people. This in effect helped to see whether riddles are also culture dependent. Many other researchers have also underscored the centrality of culture in conceptual metaphor, Azuma (2013) who concluded that the difference in culture affect the interpretation of any one given metaphor. This study benefited greatly from their findings and methodologies in trying to find out whether culture plays a role in the conceptualization of Ekegusii riddles or not.

1.9.4 Features of Metaphors

Lakoff & Johnson (1980:8) and Saeed (1997) have variously discussed the features of metaphors. For example, Lakoff and Johnson arguing on the systematicity of metaphors say “the metaphor does not just set a point of comparison, because the metaphor concept is systematic, the language we use to talk about them is systematic.” This would in turn mean that there is systematic mapping or correspondence between the riddle and the response as shall be shown shortly. Kovecses (2002:20) also commenting on the features of metaphors says that the source of any metaphor tends to use more concrete objects to describe a target domain which is more abstract. To conclude this literature review, Ritchie (2013) and Jackel (2002) have summarized the tenets of the cognitive theory and by extension the conceptual theory of metaphor as domain model ubiquity diachrony, unidirectionality invariance, necessity, creativity and focusing all of which may be applicable to this study in one way or another. However, this study relied heavily on the central claim that metaphor is a mechanism of the mind and that locus of metaphor is thought and not language. This is so because the language in the riddle may be misleading but by looking at the referred image and inferring the salient features one can arrive at the right response. The cross domain mappings also helped this study to show the intricate relationship and systematic correspondences between the riddle and its response.

1.10 Research Design/Methodology

1.10.1 Research Design

The study shall employ a qualitative research design for the analysis of Ekegusii riddles. Orodho and Kombo (2005) recommend qualitative analysis, especially when one is to describe a phenomenon that occurs naturally without the need of an experiment or an artificially contrived environment.

1.10.2 Study population

The study identified sixty Ekegusii riddles through purposive sampling from Endabaro Endabasia dictionary which has recorded about one hundred riddles from among the Gusii people. This is more than half of all the recorded riddles in the dictionary, which is among the key dictionaries in Ekegusii language. The corpus of riddles to be studied was sampled purposively from the riddles in Endabaro Endabasia dictionary of Ekegusii language.

1.10.3 Data Analysis

The study carried out a textual analysis of Ekegusii riddles as recorded; this was done by use of simple descriptive analysis of the data collected. This research also entailed categorization, analyzing and interpretation of data. This textual analysis of Ekegusii riddles was done by way of classifying and analyzing them using the conceptual theory of metaphor by Lakoff (1980).

1.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, the study has done an introduction to the study. The chapter contains a background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, rationale or justification, scope and limitation, definition of terms, literature review, theoretical framework and methodology. This chapter lays the ground for the subsequent chapters. It gives a summary of what the study is all about albeit in highlights. It also shows how the study was conducted among other things.

CHAPTER TWO

GENERAL INFORMATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF EKEGUSII RIDDLES

2.1 Introduction

In this section, general information on riddles and more specifically on riddles among the Gusii people is explored. The section further looks at the riddling session in Ekegusii culture, the participants in a riddling session as well as the time when riddling was done. The functions and features of riddles will also be discussed under this section. This chapter serves to give the reader of this study general information on riddles for a better comprehension of the subsequent sections. However, the main thrust of this chapter is the classification of Ekegusii riddles which was one of the objectives of this study. Different types of classification of riddles are discussed to see how Ekegusii riddles can be classified under them before settling on one classification for the riddles in Ekegusii.

2.2 General Information on Riddles

Riddles as a genre, are closely related to proverbs. Just like the proverbs, the riddles are expressed briefly. Besides, riddles too involve analogy which is also employed by proverbs to a large extent. The analogy in riddles can be seen in the meaning of the riddle, the sound, tone or rhythm. However, riddles are different from proverbs in their usage. The latter are often used to warn people, sum up a lesson, give advice and also lay emphasis on an issue. Riddles may perform some of these functions albeit in a veiled manner unlike the proverbs. Riddles also do have some resemblance to other literally expressions such as the enigma. Riddles also involve metaphorical language and have been likened to metaphors. This likeness was alluded to quite long ago by Aristotle as quoted by Maranda (1971) Aristotle says:

“...good riddles do in general, provide us with satisfactory metaphors; for metaphors imply riddles and therefore, a good riddle can furnish a good metaphor.”

From the definitions on riddles by different scholars (see chapter one) it can be said that a riddle is a question or a statement that is designed and asked or posed to test the wit and mental agility of another in a riddling session. The answer given is usually unexpected as the riddle itself is an enigma that is expressed in allegorical or metaphorical manner. Miruka (1999) refers to a riddle as a word puzzle in which familiar things are referred to in figurative language. Riddles are a form of folklore genre which in most cases has a veiled or double meaning. Most African communities, if not all have had riddles as a form of art. Abagusii community is not in any way an exception to this. Further, this study contends that a riddle is a structural unit which is made up of two parts; the image and the answer. These two parts, as it were are enacted by different performers during riddling.

The study views riddles as a form of specialized language through which a social group communicates. This is so since the coding of riddles is often culturally constrained. Riddles draw much from the immediate environment in which they are enacted. People from within the social group are expected to be conversant with the cultural truisms that are embedded in the riddle. The language of most riddles is layered (Maranda, 1971). In most cases, children who are the main recipients of riddles only operate on the surface layer of the language of riddles, thereby leaving the underlying layer to the adults. Again, the underneath innuendos are to be deciphered within the precepts of the cultural context at play.

Riddles formed an integral component of the education system of any one African community including that of the Gusii community. Riddles were one of the many ways that a community employed to impart knowledge, skills and attitudes to its younger

generations. In searching for an appropriate answer to any one given riddle, one had to scan through different aspects of societal life and his environment as well to arrive at the right answer hence expanding one's knowledge. Note worth is the fact that riddles often have a wide and varied content.

2.3 Riddles and Riddling among the Gusii

Riddles among the Gusii people, commonly known as *Ebitandawiri* or better still as *Chimbachero*, formed an important aspect of their folklore. Ekegusii riddles just like other riddles from across Africa have a varied content ranging from natural phenomena to human body attributes, animals and insects to plants and social life as well. Their responses too range within the above mentioned. This makes the riddles among the Gusii people an indispensable tool in the dissemination of the indigenous education. Indeed, riddles played a central role in shaping the youth of the society. This is true considering the wisdom and cultural norms that came embedded in the riddles. As Cole-Beuchat (1957) rightly observed, riddles to a large extent combine both recreation and education in an aesthetic way to teach a lesson.

Riddling among the Gusii people was strictly guided by set out rules and societal norms which no one dared breach. For instance, riddling was usually done in the evening after a day's work as people waited for supper to be ready. This ensured that time for work was not wasted at all. This entrenched among children the value of proper time management as well as the value of work. First, everyone was expected to have completed his chores before settling down for the riddling session.

Another instance to show how social rules governed riddling among the Gusii is the issue of age and gender. Children under the age of fourteen years were not for instance allowed to tell riddles referring to sexual organs whatsoever. This was meant to protect them in

one hand and also prevent them from uttering obscene words in the presence of elders. However those over that age were allowed to tell riddles alluding to sexual organs as a form of sex education. Here again, one had to take into consideration the gender of the audience. Boys were explicitly barred from telling riddles alluding to sex organs to girls and vice-versa. The adolescents too were forbidden from telling such riddles when in the presence of adults. This ensured that proper boy-girl respect was maintained at all times in as much as they mingled during riddling and other social functions such as funerals, weddings, initiation and so on.

Among the Gusii, it is usually the mothers, aunts and grandmothers who told riddles to young children at the time alluded to above. Children also told riddles to fellow children. Men rarely participated in the riddling session in the house as during this time they would be out with peers having a drink and discussing important family and community issues.

Ekegusii riddling observed a stylistic formula. Usually the poser began the riddle with a clearly set out opening formula by saying; *getandawiri!* The respondent or audience could then respond *teгаа!* This how it went:

Challenger: *Getandawiri!*

Riddle! Riddle!

Respondent: *Tegaa!*

Challenger: *oyokoyerosia tayetageti na oyokoyeira tari yaye.*

(The one who makes it does not need it nor does it belong to the buyer.)

Respondent: *Esaduki y'egetondo.* (A coffin)

This riddling stylistic formula, according to Maranda (1971) served to cultivate a rapport between the poser of the riddle and the respondent. This further served to establish channels of communication as well as invite the audience to participate in the riddling session. After these preliminaries, one could proceed to pose ‘*gotega*’ the riddle. The audience could then attempt to give the answer ‘*gotogora*’. If the solver gave the correct answer, then he could take the chance also to pose a riddle following the formula as set out. However, if after several attempts the audience is not able to give an acceptable answer to the riddle, the poser would supply the answer after he demands and has been offered a hypothetical token usually in the form of a village, domestic animal or some coveted leadership position.

Riddling in the Gusii community took place in one of the inner rooms used for cooking—the hearth, in the round mud-walled huts. It is instructive to note that most rural homes of the Gusii still use the hearth for cooking with some slight improvements. Riddling was done as a form of entertainment or pass time as people waited for the evening meals to cook. Occasionally though, riddling was done as a competition to test the wits and critical thinking of the participants in the riddling session.

2.4 Functions and Features of Riddles

According to Nadwa & Bukenya (1983), riddles are dialogic contests performed by two or more people. Basically, there should be a challenger and a respondent/audience. The duo, further contend that riddles are enacted. This is to say that they are performed just like plays or any other form of the performing arts. Ekegusii riddles were fundamentally for children though adults too occasionally took part in the riddling. Bukenya, *et al.*, (1994) “say that a riddle is a genre of the short-form in oral literature which is known for its fixedness...” this assertion correctly captures the nature of Ekegusii riddles as well. The

language of Ekegusii riddles is layered just as Taylor (1951) observes that a true riddle is made up of two descriptions of an object; the literal surface description and the underlying metaphorical one.

The question or challenge is usually designed to mislead the solver of the riddle or audience. This purposeful misleading, according to Aarne (1917) forms the main component or feature of the riddle. Additional information may be given as a supplementary to provide a hint of the solution expected.

Finnegan's contention (1970:426) that riddles are "of minor childish interest, for entertainment rather than for serious consideration..." is utterly incorrect when one takes a closer look at African riddles. Her assertion underrates the monumental role played by riddles in the education of the youth in any given African community, the Gusii included. Riddles provided an avenue for the young people of a community to fully take part in the social, political, economic and the entire cultural life of the community in which they grow up. On the periphery, they might appear to be of minor childish interest but deep inside, they contain poignant lessons which are combined in an aesthetic way so as to appeal to the designated audience- the minors. Miruka (1999) asserts that riddles are sources of entertainment, a record of a people's history, a comment on human life as well as an instrument for linguistic advancement. Below are some of the functions of riddles especially among the Gusii people.

Firstly, Ishumi (1980) says that riddles are like modern day psychology. One cannot be more right! Riddles help in developing logic and reasoning prowess and also stimulate children's imagination. Ekegusii riddles help children to develop their reasoning and grows their imagination as they engage in a riddling session. For illustration, let's consider the riddle below:

Abana bane babere bakora emeremo buya ko tibanya goikana ang'e (my two children work well but have never come near each other)

Answer: *ense na igoro (earth and the sky)*

The hearers, in looking for a suitable answer to this riddle, must first logically reason that siblings working well must of necessity come near each other in their daily interactions as they go about their work. However, in the riddle, the said children never come near each other! Therefore one has to summon his imagination and search for two things that work harmoniously without getting close to each other from the environment.

Ekegusii riddles also help in teaching children acceptable cultural norms, values and beliefs that have been handed down from one generation to another. Akinyemi (2015) while studying riddles among the Yoruba of Nigeria observes thus, "... as an art form, riddles perform integral social functions and have inherent messages to convey to participants about social norms." For example the riddle:

Makobiara ongosire (my mother-in-law has scared me)

Ogotogora (answer) amarwa (alcohol).

The riddle underscores the special kind of relationship that obtained between son and mother-in-law among the Gusii people. Ordinarily, one's mother-in-law was not expected to scare her son-in-law. The riddle alludes to the fact that young people should treat alcohol like their mother-in-law. Among the Gusii people young people were not allowed to consume alcohol. The value of respect for one's mother-in-law was alluded to in this riddle. The cultural norm of avoiding alcohol the way one would avoid crossing a mother-

in-law's line was also emphasized in this example. Therefore, it is palpable that riddles infused in the children acceptable cultural norms and values.

Riddles helped in the acquisition and expansion of vocabulary of the language used such as Ekegusii. The images in the riddles and their answers had varied content hence giving exposure to a wide range of vocabulary. These ranged from natural features, the human body, plants and animals as well as social life. As one scanned through all these in search of an appropriate answer, he could stumble upon and pick one or two new lexical items thereby expanding the vocabulary of the language in use. Not only did the children pick and expand their vocabulary but they also learned the various meanings of lexical items that came up for use in different riddles with different shades of meanings. This again sharpened the appreciation for aesthetic expression as obtained in the various riddles, for example the consonance in the riddle below among many other stylistic features:

Ninde aa ninde aaria (I am here and there)

Answer: *ebirengererio* (thoughts)

Ekegusii riddles assisted the young people to gain social communication skills and also helped to sensitize them on culturally acceptable etiquette. This was achieved through observation of the riddling stylistic formula as stipulated in any community and also through turn taking. From this, one learns to cooperate and share with others, how to create and cultivate a good rapport with peers and so on. Some riddles were specifically designed to discourage children from unacceptable behavior such as selfishness. The following riddle is an epitome of riddles that ridiculed selfishness:

Nchera yane ntori gosanga nonde. (I do not share my pathway with anyone)

Answer: *engoro y'eng'uko* (a mole's burrow).

Moles make burrows that they use alone and lead a solitary kind of life which was frowned upon among the Gusii, where community life and sharing were held in high esteem. Another riddle that was used to teach young children that when they are sent on an errand they must bring back a report to the sender swiftly is this one below.

Natomire abana babere bangire koirana (I have sent two children who will not come back)

Answer; *enyoni na omoengwe* (a bird and the stick thrown at it).

This riddle is sometimes used as a proverb to emphasize that one has taken too long to come back.

Ekegusii riddles helped in transmitting knowledge and skills of the indigenous education. The Gusii indigenous education was geared towards the acquisition of practical skills for life to help one function in the community. Most of the skills were learned on the job. The riddles among the Gusii people reflect to a large extent the kind of economic activity the community carried out. This is to say that the riddles were conceptualized in a way to teach children a lesson by combining recreation and education in an aesthetic way.

2.5. Summary

This sub-section has presented general information on riddles and more precisely information on Ekegusii riddles was also explored. The chapter found out that Ekegusii riddles formed a crucial component of the indigenous education of the community. Hunt (1964) argued that one is the way he is from what he acquired from his childhood. Indeed, it is the contention of this study that riddles play a cultural, communicative, educative as well as a socio-political role among the young peoples of any society. The riddling session was also discussed. It was observed that Ekegusii riddling session followed a stylistic

formula and that riddling was done in the evening after work in strict conformity with the laid down societal norms and rules. The functions of this riddling session and more so the opening formula before proposing a riddle was as well highlighted. The features and functions of Ekegusii riddles have also been looked into in this chapter. It was shown that riddles, just like other forms of African folklore performed a host of functions such as enhancing communication skills among the youth, teaching of cultural values, society norms and inculcating a system of indigenous wisdom and beliefs among the young people of the community.

2.6 Classification of Ekegusii Riddles

2.6.1 Introduction

In this section, this study will delve into the classification of Ekegusii riddles. Many a scholar working in different cultures both western and African, have tried to classify the riddles in the communities they have worked in. In their classifications, they have used different approaches, partly depending on the nature of the riddles in the culture and the orientation of the scholar. This study will adopt some of the classifications and use them to classify Ekegusii riddles and see how well they fall into place. There are numerous riddles among the Gusii people and this classification will enhance future studies on Ekegusii riddles over and above making it easier to study the riddles.

2.6.2 Different Types of Classifications

Riddles have been grouped differently by different scholar across the world. There are those among them who group riddles according to the image in the challenge part of the riddle. Lehmann-Nitsche (1911) for example classified riddles according to the latent image in the riddle. This type of classification has since that time been used time and again by others working on riddles from different backgrounds. Taylor (1951), while studying English riddles, developed this classification further and used it to classify the

riddles he collected from among the English speakers of the United Kingdom. This type of classification has its strength in the fact that riddles which refer to the same object as a latent image are often put in the same class. For instance, all those riddles that could be referring to say a natural phenomenon such as the sky are grouped together. This has the advantage of finding such riddles together at a glance for reference purposes.

Another classification of riddles that has been used to classify riddles is that which classifies riddles into oppositional and non-oppositional. The oppositional type of riddles has an element which is in opposition semantically to another element in the same riddle. For example:

Challenger: *Obokano bwane tari kobugia* (my lyre which I can't play)

Answer: *Entigatigi* (armpit)

Ordinarily, it is expected that when one plays an instrument such as the one in the riddle, it produces sound. However, in the riddle the instrument does not produce sound when the subject of the riddle, I, plays it hence the semantic opposition alluded to.

The non-oppositional on the other hand are those which are literal in or plain whereas others are metaphorical in nature. This is a structural- based classification and was first developed by Georges and Dundes (1963). Coincidentally, this structural method of classification also used the image in the riddle as its basis for classification. The answer for the riddle was of little significance to many a scholar involved in the study of riddles at this time. It was not until Aarne (1917) underscored the centrality of the answer to the riddle that other scholars started paying attention to the answer and studying it. As the words denote, there is no opposition between elements in the sentence that has the image for example:

Challenger: *Ekerandi kiane kebwate emenwa ene* (my gourd has four mouths)

Answer: *Enyari y'esimbagera* (a cow's udder)

Bukenya, *et al.*, (1983) did classify riddles broadly depending on both the image and the answer. This was in effect according to their function and their syntactic structure. The functional classification did classify riddles according to their answers. This was also referred to as the denotative type of classification. For example, all the riddles that had say birds as their answers could be grouped together while those that contain insects in their answers are equally put under one category. Those that had people in their answers could also be put in another class and so on and so on. The syntactic approach on the other hand, would categorize riddles into simple and complex depending on their syntax. As it were, a simple riddle is said to be premised on a single statement and usually needs a one word or phrase for an answer. The challenge containing the image could be a plain statement, a question, a conditional sentence or a hypothetical statement. A complex riddle, conversely, is one that the riddle image is cast on two or more sentences. Its answer too, is normally given in the form of an explanation or statement. For example;

Challenger: *Ekenanda kiane ingokeigora tige kobuga; korende omoa ogokeigora rirorio kiabuga* (my record player does not play if I turn it on; but when someone else does, it plays)

Answer: *Entigatigi* (the armpit)

Very many other linguists have classified riddles basing on the answer type. Nakane (1957), Blacking (1961) and Cole-Beuchat (1957) among others used this form of classification. Consequently, they classified all the riddles that have natural phenomena in their answers in one group such as:

Challenger: *Nyamagoro matambe otachire gwaito* (the long-legged one has stepped on our farm)

Answer: *Embura* (rain);

Riddles that had human body and its attributes in their answers were also grouped in yet another group such as:

Challenger: *Nigo akombwatia ande onsi* (s/he follows me wherever I go)

Answer: *Omorengari* (a shadow);

They also did this for riddles that had animals, insects, domestic and social life objects and plants and food in separate classes. Consider the following riddle as an example under this group:

Nyansiaboka egetiro- embeba (Nyansiaboka up a hill/ inclined plane- a rat).

Another classification of riddles also done by Georges & Dundes (1963:113) as quoted by Finnegan (1970) categorizes riddles into literal and metaphorical riddles. The literal riddles according to the proponents of the classification are easy to understand. Their language is not layered as is the case in most riddles. Young children can easily decipher the meaning from the individual constituents of the riddle. A good example of such a riddle in Ekegusii language is:

Challenger: *Ekeru inkoragera omonwa nigo ogotoratora* (when I eat, the mouth itches/suffers)

Answer: *Eyarare* (pepper).

On the other hand, the metaphorical riddles are not easy to understand and their language is layered. The young children only understand the surface layer of such riddles whereas the underlying layer can only be understood by adults in an audience. Even so, the adults

also required a lot intellectual exercise to decipher the implied meaning in such riddles.

An example that fits into this description is:

Challenger: Eyemo eyemo goika bosongo (one by one to/up to Bosongo)

Answer: obokima neching'ende (ugali eaten with beans)

Boiled beans were used among the Gusii people as stew taken along with ugali which is up to now a staple food. Children could be served such beans and advised to take one bean at a time with a piece of ugali and this formed the surface meaning of the riddle. The metaphorical underlying meaning was to encourage people to save little by little to accumulate wealth. Bosongo is the capital hub of the entire Gusii land and as a town, served as a commercial centre besides offering other services. The town was and still is a beacon of hope and prosperity among the inhabitants of the larger south Nyanza. The prosperity and centrality of the town was long prophesied by Sakawa, a famous Gusii seer, who also foretold the coming of the white man to Gusii land. Therefore, Bosongo in the riddle is compared metaphorically to prosperity or satisfaction.

2.7 Classification of Ekegusii Riddles

Generally speaking, there are many forms of classifications that can be used to classify Ekegusii riddles from the discussion in the foregoing sub-section. However, for purposes of this study, this study will adopt the functional classification as proposed by Bukenya, *et al.*, (1983). This type of approach classifies riddles according to the answer. The study proposes to adopt this classification for two reasons. Firstly, for a long time, many scholars used the latent image in the riddle for classification and ignored the answer, which they assumed was peripheral. However, Aarne (1917) as quoted by Maranda (1971) had observed as early as this that the answer pre-existed to the image in the riddle. She had further observed that the answer indeed formed the basis for the image in the riddle.

Maranda (1971) studied the relationship between the riddle and the image. She too made similar observations to those made by her predecessor, Antti Aarne. The other reason for using the functional approach to classify Ekegusii riddles is that this method is broad based and can accommodate and handle all the riddles in Ekegusii language. The other classifications, I contend that they cannot fully address all the riddles in Ekegusii.

2.7.1 Functional Classification of Ekegusii Riddles

Ekegusii riddles just like all the other riddles, are made up of two parts; one part which acts as the puzzle in the one hand and another part which is the answer. The latter part exists prior to the former and the two have a metaphorical relationship. The answers in the collected Ekegusii riddles for purposes of this study revealed that the riddles in Ekegusii language can be classified into the following categories. There are those that the answer is the human body and its attributes, animals both domestic and wild, plants and their parts, cultural objects and natural objects.

2.7.2 Human Body and its Attributes

Let us begin with those Ekegusii riddles whose answers refer to the human body and its attributes and body parts as well. This too can be sub-categorized into social and biological. The latter refer to the body parts as well as the biological processes that take place in the human body. The social aspect under this classification refers to the interactions between an individual and others. From the outset, I would like to say that such riddles created awareness about the human body and its various parts. In essence, it was what we can now equate to health education in our primary cycle of education. Consider the following for illustration of the biological sub-category.

Abana bane abaya bagokora emeremo batari goikaransa (my nice children work without resting!)

Ogotogora (answer): *amaiso* (eyes).

This riddle as mentioned above teaches children about the value and work of eyes in an implicit way. Another riddle that can be classified here is:

Boira boira korwa nyakongo (always from Nyakongo)

Answer: *amamiria* (mucus)

This riddle too highlights a lesson on body hygiene. By making reference to mucus which was a common thing that could be seen on most children's noses, the children were in a way being invited to observe cleanliness. This is obvious from the use of repetition in the adverb of frequency, "boira boira" to show vexation on the side of the poser. Other riddles that can be classified together with this are:

Kaa mong'ina ki ogotengera mwaye na koirana? –oromeme (which lady dances in her house and returns? – tongue).

Kinde aa ninde boraya- ebirengererio. (I can be here and abroad at the same time-thoughts.)

Omogondo one ikogesa obori botaichiri ikundi- etukia (I have a garden from which I hardly harvest a handful of millet-hair from the head.)

Nigo akombwatia ande onsi ase ingochia- omorengari. (s/he follows me wherever I go.- a shadow).

The social sub-category would include riddles that underscored the value of socialization albeit in a veiled way such as the following.

Sukuru komiti-Abarogi (school committee- witches/wizards)

Kaa gento ki kegosicha mambia giasichoka marogoba?- echiro (which thing flowers in the morning and sheds the flowers in the evening?- a market)

Abanto batato ngotamboka bare oroche, oyomo origereirie amache nakoyatacha, oyonde tayatacheti korende oyarorire, n'oyonde tayarochi na tayatacheti korende bonsi bambokire. (Three people are crossing a river, one sees and wades through the water; another sees the water but does not come into contact with the water while the third one neither sees nor comes into contact with the water but all of them cross the river. Answer: A pregnant woman carrying a child on her back).

All the riddles above would, according to Bukenya, *et al.*, (1983) form a class of their own. His classification in this respect also works perfectly well for Ekegusii riddles as we have seen here.

2.7.3 Animals

Following the functional classification, some Ekegusii riddles could also be classified under those that the answer refers to an animal, whether domestic or wild and their products as well. This category of riddles was used to teach the young children about animal life. The riddles helped the children identify the unique characteristics of each given animal in their surrounding since a riddle could usually pick on some salient features of an animal as the basis of the latent image in the riddle. In so identifying the features of the animals and in trying to answer or solve the riddles, the children gained vast knowledge on animals in their environment. Some of the riddles under this category include the following among many others:

Sindake ko imoyio-ensagara (like needle like knife- a lizard).

This riddle alludes to the shape of a lizard which as it were, the tail looks more of a needle whereas the body and the head have the shape of a knife. The riddle compares the shapes of a knife and a needle and maps them onto that of a lizard.

Nyasiaboka egetiro-embeba (Nyasiaboka up a hill/an inclined plane –a rat).

Enchera yane totari gosanga nonde-omong'anyi bw'eng'uko (I don't share my pathway with anyone-a mole's burrow)

Kagokwana rikuba ndimorieta-egoree he talks with a cough!- a he-goat).

Mwane tebwati gesieri-rigena riengoko (my house has no door- an egg)

2.7.4 Plants

The other group of riddles according to Bukenya, *et al.*, (1983) is that in which the answer refers to a plant. Under this category, all those Ekegusii riddles whose answer is either a crop plant or wild plant are grouped together under this, though one may decide and subdivide them into separate classes if he so wishes. Those Ekegusii riddles that expressly referred to crops were intended to teach the young people about crop husbandry. Sometimes the young children learnt some specific characteristics about different plants and the medicinal value. This enhanced the knowledge and appreciation of their environment. The net value of this was that everyone was motivated to take care of his surrounding without being told to do so. Some of the Ekegusii riddles that fell under this category include the following among others:

Abana b'omosongo baikaransete erori ime-chinsobosobo. (a white man's children sitting in a car- certain small orange fruits)

Chierusa mosanonoku-chichugu (sweet Jerusa- groundnut)

Engoko yane yabiareire amagwa ime-rinansi (my hen has laid eggs amongst thorns- pineapple)

Enyomba yane nyagesigisa kemo- oboba (my house has one pole- mushroom)

Ekeri ikoragera omonwa nigo ogotorora-eyarare (when I eat, the mouth suffers- pepper).

Tata ogure inse n'egoti- ritoke (my father has fallen in his coat- a banana stem).

Abana bakoiborwa nechanga- egetuma/ebando (children born with clothes- a maize cob).

2.7.5 Cultural Objects

The other classification under the functional classification is that in which all those Ekegusii riddles with answers referring to a cultural object could be put together. These cultural objects could range from those used in the house to carry out house hold chores to those that were used in the fields during their daily activities such as farming, herding, hunting and gathering and so on as well as those that were used for warfare and even religious purposes. The Ekegusii riddles that had answers referring to these cultural objects taught the children the rich heritage of the community apart from highlighting some aspect of their usage as well. Again, it is possible to break this classification further on into some thematic or situational contexts such as household objects, farm and so forth. The following are some examples of Ekegusii riddles under this category.

Omong'ina nyabong'ere- ribiria (an old woman with cracked soles!- a rough stone.) This kind of stone was used to thresh millet and maize.

Ntaraigota tingotenena- egunia (I can't stand up until I have eaten- a sack)

Gekoriera omonwa naende giasokeria omonwa- ekerandi (it eats and excretes through the mouth- gourd/ bottle).

Abaiseke mbare minto batato oyomo ataiyo intokoragera- amaiga (There are three sisters in our house, if one is absent we cannot eat- cooking stones).

2.7.6 Natural Phenomena

The other group of Ekegusii riddles under this classification proposed by Bukenya, *et al.*, comprises of riddles whose answers refer to some natural phenomena like the moon, stars, water, the sun and so on. These too were intended to enlighten the young children about the natural bodies as found in today's science and geography subjects in schools. Ekegusii riddles could combine this valuable knowledge with creativity and thereby enrich the learning processes as the children interacted with the riddles and amongst themselves. The following are some of the Ekegusii riddles under this category.

Etaya etari kobekwa maguta- risase. (a lamp that does not require oil- the sun.)

Nyamagoro matambe otachire mogondo- embura (the long- legged one has stepped on our farm- rain).

Abana bane babere bakora emeremo ko tibanya goikana ang'e- igoro na inse (my two children work well but they have never come close to each other- the earth and the sky).

Ara riyo toriere chinsobosobo- erioba n'eching'enang'eni (spread the skin we sit and eat chinsobosobo- the sky and the stars).

2.7.7 Insects

Other Ekegusii riddles had their answers made up of insects. Such riddles enabled children to acquire knowledge on insect life and physiology. For instance, the following riddles fell under this class.

Nyabagasa emete ime- ekegwankwa (Nyabagasa in the bush- butterfly).

This riddle refers to the behavior of a butterfly of always moving from one plant to another without settling on one given plant for long. This constant movement was frowned upon by society especially when it came to matters to do with one's moral standing hence the use of the derogative name 'Nyabagasa'.

Bobu nomoke rakini nabo agokoreria- egechuni (Bob is small but can make you cry- an insect).

Ndiii baka bosongo- ritimbo (ndiii up to Bosongo- a beetle).

2.8 Summary.

The type of classification discussed above has also been tried elsewhere by others working on riddles such as (Blacking, 1961; Nakane, 1957 and Khumalo, 1974). The merit of this method of classification is that all the riddles in a culture will fit into one class or another depending on the type of the answer. However, it is imperative to say that Ekegusii riddles can also be classified using other classifications proposed by other scholars. As stated in the foregoing sentences, all the Ekegusii riddles fit well into this classification proposed by Bukenya, *et al.*, (1983). It was also mentioned that the classification give prominence to the role played by the answer in a riddling process. Maranda (1971) says that the answer is central to the riddle and that it pre-exists long before the image in the riddle itself.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTION, INTERPRETATION, AND UNDERSTANDING OF EKEGUSII RIDDLES

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the study tries to show how Ekegusii riddles are conceptualized, interpreted and understood by those who engage in the riddling process. The study will analyze comprehension of Ekegusii riddles using the conceptual theory of metaphor by Lakoff (1980) as its basis. In this chapter, the role of context and culture will also be investigated. Some of the core questions that remain at the back of my mind are: how do the respondents to a riddle ever know the intended answer? How are the riddles conceived? Do culture and context play any role in the interpretation, conception and understanding of Ekegusii riddles?

3.2 Conception of Ekegusii Riddles

In this sub-section we want to find out how Ekegusii riddles are conceptualized. First, from the features of riddles, we observed that a riddle has two parts- the image and the answer and that these two parts are as it were recited by two different people. Aarne (1917) as quoted by Maranda (1971) says that the answer to the riddle exists long before the riddle image. She argues that since the answer exists prior to the image, it informs the conception and formation of the riddle. Maranda (1971) too agrees with this proposition when he studied the relationship between the image in the riddle and the answer.

One of the main objectives of the riddle poser is to mislead the riddle solver to a wrong answer. Miruka (1999) describes a riddle as "... a word puzzle in which familiar objects or situations are referred to in figurative terms for us to decipher what is actually meant."

Riddles have an element that is designed to lead the audience astray and yet another element that directs and hints at the possible solution. By scanning his environment, the

poser of a riddle identifies an object or situation which he studies keenly and identifies some salient feature which he goes ahead to use as the basis of forming his riddle. Before going further, it is important to say that the salient feature so identified becomes the answer to the riddle hence justifying the claim made by Aarne, Maranda and others that the answer exists prior to the image.

Next, the riddle poser while conceiving the riddle employs another strategy where the familiar object identified is now referred to in figurative terms, Miruka (1999). The challenger or poser achieves this by using metaphorical comparison and reasoning. The metaphor that underlies this reasoning is 'A is B' and 'B is A'. Domain A is spoken of in terms of domain B. This reveals a one to one mapping process of properties of Domain A to domain B and back. This metaphor entails comprehending one domain of experience in terms of another domain, often quite unrelated. Again through a mapping process, the unique feature of the item is then transferred onto another entity which in essence becomes the latent image in the riddle. Therefore, the first item or object identified becomes the source domain whereas the latent image will form the target domain. I could like to point out that the conceptualization process commences from the answer domain and proceeds to the image via a neural mapping process of some salient properties of the object that has been identified. For instance, consider the following Ekegusii riddle.

Nyansiaboka egetiro- embeba (Nyansiaboka up a hill/ an inclined plane- a rat).

In conceptualizing the riddle above, the riddler had first to study the answer which again as it were, is in the riddler's environment. It is important to note that the riddler has knowledge about the rat such as; it is destructive, disturbing, and small in size, lives in the ceiling and burrows among many other things the riddler knows about a rat. From all these things, he picks the way a rat moves up a wall of a house especially when it is scared

hence the name “*nyansiaboka*” which denotes some agility. The name was usually given to those who were seen to be swift footed. Here again we see culture playing a role in the coding of the riddle. The wall becomes the *egetiro*, a hill, whereas the rat is metaphorically referred to as *Nyansiaboka*. The encyclopedic cultural knowledge about *Nyasiaboka* and *egetiro* in the riddle are mapped onto the rat and a wall respectively at the conception stage of the riddle. The mapping or correspondences form the conceptual metaphor. Lakoff & Georges (1980) say that “in cognitive linguistics, a metaphor is a set of conceptual correspondences or mappings between two conceptual domains; a source domain and a target domain...” let us consider another example below.

Omong'ina obwate ebisero ebinge korende abana baye bakorara inse- risosa (a woman with many hides but whose children sleep on the bare floor!- pumpkin plant).

Risosa (pumpkin) was and still is a popular plant among the Gusii due to its nutritional value. The leaves of the plant are used as vegetables whereas the fruit is a rich source of nutrients to the body when eaten. The plant was almost found in every homestead among the Gusii people. This clearly shows that culture and context played a great role in the conception of riddles. The riddler who conceived this riddle picks on a few features of the plant, that is the leaves and the fruits and leaves out the other features and characteristics of the plant which we assume form part of his encyclopedic entries about the plant such as the spreading out of its vines, the stem, the roots, the seeds and many others. Through a mental mapping process, the unique characteristics of the relationship between the leaves and the fruit are mapped onto the relationship between the woman’s children and hides.

I would like at this juncture to point out that the poser of the riddle and the solver of the riddle work in an antagonistic manner. Whereas the poser of the riddle works from the answer to the latent image, the opposite is true of the riddlee as we shall see shortly. The

salient feature of this relationship that obtains between the leaves and the fruits of the pumpkin plant are then mapped onto the relationship between the woman's children and the hides in the riddle. Further, the pumpkin plant becomes the woman, the fruits the children and the leaves the hides through metaphorical reference. This metaphorical reference emanates from the conceptual metaphor underlying the reasoning. Culturally it is the work of women to put children to sleep among the Gusii as they ensure that they have something to sleep on comfortably. Therefore the reference of the pumpkin as a woman in the riddle is by no means a coincidence. The Gusii people also used animal hides as mattresses long before the arrival of the white men. Therefore the use of the hides in this riddle is something that is culture specific. This study contends that culture and context played a role in the conceptualization of Ekegusii riddles.

The conceptual theory of metaphor which in this study is the later development, the contemporary theory of metaphor Lakoff (1980), claims that metaphor is pervasive in our lives. Metaphorical reasoning underlies the conception of Ekegusii riddles. From the examples above, we can see that source domain encyclopedic entries or knowledge schemas are used for target domain reasoning through the neural mappings. This study is also of the view that Ekegusii riddles employ analogous comparisons (Horner & Westacott, 2001). They say that analogy is similarity between two entities or situations. This analogous comparison starts from a well-known case (source domain) to a less familiar case which is more abstract (target domain). In our case, the metaphor 'B is A' applies where B is the response or answer which helps in conceiving the riddle by mapping some of its properties to A which is the image in the riddle. The analogical reasoning is important in explaining the conception of Ekegusii riddles. Consider the example below.

Ara riyo toriere chinsobosobo- erioba n'eching'enang'eni (spread the skin we sit and eat *chinsobosobo*- the sky and the stars).

In the riddle above, the analogous comparison proceeds from the sky and the stars to the skin and the kind of fruit referred to in the riddle. In other words, in conceptualizing the riddle, the comparison emanates from the answer which is a known case for the riddle poser to the less familiar case of the skin and the “*chinsobosobo*,” a special kind of wild berries that were loved and eaten by children. This one other example below will illustrate this point further.

Omogaka nare nyomba chimbuche chiaye chigotara isiko- omorero ogwoka nyomba n'erioki rire isiko (an old man in the house and his grey hair roaming outside- fire in the house, smoke outside.) In conceiving the riddle, the known case is the fire and the smoke. The knowledge schemas about the items in the answer above are then compared analogously with an old man and his grey hair through a mental mapping process. Lakoff (2003) says that there exists a strong affinity between the mind and the concepts that people often create. The poser uses his ingenuity to discern the similarities between the two domains. He then crafts a metaphorical expression to capture this as in the riddles above, since language and thought is inextricable (Lee, 2001).

3.3 Interpretation and Understanding of Ekegusii Riddles

When a riddle, which is a puzzle according to Miruka (1999), has been posed, it is up to the audience to find an acceptable answer to the riddle. It is also important to point out that a riddle is a unique case of analogical reasoning. This helps the respondent to a riddle to connect the full properties of the image domain and the answer or response domain. Analogy is closely related to metaphor. This is true since the development of a metaphor heavily relies on analogy. A riddle as a metaphor conceptualizes A in terms of B. In

studying the relationship between the image in the riddle and the answer, Maranda (1971) observed that there exists a close neat relationship between the two and that a riddle in actual sense is a question that contains an answer. Following this claim, there are those scholars, among them Finnegan (1970) who claim that riddles are not an intellectual exercise. They maintain that the riddle is learned and the answer is found or discovered. This is why I think they referred to riddles as a childish affair only meant for entertainment and not for serious consideration. This sub-section looks into the interpretation and understanding of Ekegusii riddles and whether culture and context play a role in interpretation and understanding of Ekegusii riddles as well.

More often than not, the image is in a metaphorical relationship with the answer (Akinyemi, 2015). The term which makes up the image often links well with the answer of the riddle. In the preceding sub-section, we saw how a riddle is conceived and how the answer exists prior to the question or statement. Therefore this answer must be found or discovered by the audience. It is the one posing the riddle who has the final say whether an answer is acceptable or not. We have had cases where the riddler refuses answers that seem very plausible from his or her audience! This happens because the answer existed in the mind of the riddler prior to the conception of the riddle and that answer is the only one that can be accepted by the poser of the riddle, notwithstanding how plausible the others options look or are (Maranda, 1971b).

In interpreting and understanding Ekegusii riddles, the audience must first of all study the image in the riddle and call to mind the knowledge schemas or the encyclopedic entries about the image and discriminate between those that apply to other variables given by the riddler and then through a mental mapping process transfer them through analogous comparison to the answer. Let us consider the example below.

Etaya etari kobekwa maguta-risase (a lamp that does not require oil- the sun).

When this riddle is posed, the solver must first of all identify the image in the riddle which in this case is *etaya* (a lamp). The next important thing is to identify and decipher what is said about the image. Having done this, the solver then calls to his mind the knowledge schemas about *Etaya* (lamp) including but not limited to; it gives light, uses oil to produce light, enables people to see and gets extinguished. The given premise of a lamp helps the solver to narrow down to only those things in his environment that emit light. However, the fact that this lamp does not require oil enables the solver through inferences to realize that the lamp in the riddle is a metaphorical reference to the sun through analogical comparison. The solver of the riddle will achieve this by mapping the knowledge schemas about the lamp onto the sun and realize that the sun too, just like the lamp gives people light, though it doesn't require fuel to do so. Maranda (1971) calls this the "semantic fit" where there is shared meaning between the image in the riddle and the answer. She also points out that the two must display enough contrast to enable the solver get at the answer. The two items in the riddle must have shared semantic features. Lakoff (1980) say that "metaphor is a set of shared correspondences or mappings between conceptual domains..." this then means that what we have here as a riddle is a metaphor since we have a set of correspondences between the lamp and the sun in the riddle.

As a special kind of metaphors, riddles show a special kind of relationship between the source domain (signifier) and the target domain (signified). The riddle metaphors are unique in a way. In most cases the metaphor can work in two ways, that is, if A is like B in some ways through a metaphorical comparison, the B can also be like A. to exemplify this claim, let us consider the example below.

Momura ominto okwaroka naende oba omoisia- eng'iti egwesabora amagonko aye (my brother circumcises and grows the fore skin again- a snake which shades its skin).

In the riddle, the image in the question or statement is A which is B, the answer to the riddle. In the paragraph above we observed that B, the answer, can also be A, the image. The mental mappings of the correspondences between A and B work either way, starting from A to B and equally it can begin from B to A. The keep alternating positions of source domain and target domain.

In trying to interpret the riddle above, one must search in his mind the encyclopedic entries about A, the image of the riddle-my brother and circumcision, and identify the misleading element in the image. Once this is done, then the solver realizes that the riddle is not talking about a human being circumcised but that it is a metaphorical comparison of something else to 'a brother'. Using his analytical skills, the solver then scans through his cultural world for an entity being referred to metaphorically as a human being who circumcises and grows the foreskin again (my brother in the riddle). I must say here that context where the riddling is taking place and the cultural heritage of the participants plays a role in identifying the object (s) being referred to metaphorically in the riddle image. When the object is identified, then again the solver must also analyse the knowledge schemas about the image and his answer for the semantic fit referred to in a few paragraphs above. This can also be achieved through analogical comparison between what he knows about circumcision of males in relation to the identified object with a view of identifying similarities and differences. Thereafter the solver of the riddle can do cross domain mappings to whether the answer he has arrived at is plausible. I wish to say that according to Ekegusii riddling session norms, the right to reject or accept an answer rests with the poser of the riddle or the one who asked the riddle question.

We now take other examples of Ekegusii riddle and try to see how they are interpreted and understood among the speakers of the dialect.

Omogaka nyaaisio- ritierio (a bald- headed man- horning stone).

In this riddle, the horning stone is figuratively called a bald- headed man. The encyclopedic entries of *ritierio* (horning stone) which include the stone's shininess and smoothness are mapped onto *omogaka nyaaisio* (a bald- headed man) through a mental reasoning of analogical reasoning in what we referred to above as B is A. Equally, the encyclopedic entries of the bald- headed man in the riddle can be mapped on the horning stone. On hearing this riddle, the audience must infer that the riddle is not in the least referring to a man but something else in their environment. Through analytical thinking and by the help of the 'semantic fit' of shared similarities and differences, a suitable answer is identified. The Gusii people being cultivators, the horning stone was an indispensable object in every home stead as it was used to sharpen farm implements before going to work. This is to say that the choice of the answer was not by coincidence but was influenced by the culture and context.

Engori otaringe eere- echera (a rope you cannot fold- a road/ pathway).

The riddle also requires some metaphorical or figurative reasoning so as to arrive at the answer. First, the audience or the solvers must recall what they know about a rope from their experiences such as; it is flexible and can be folded, it is streamlined, it be folded into different shapes and so on. The audience then identifies the misleading element in the riddle that makes the answer to be a rope and the other element in the riddle that points to the answer- cannot fold, and then realize that the riddle is referring to something else. The audience then searches for the referent in their environment as they compare the

similarities and differences. Eventually they see that the road or path shares some features with the rope in the riddle. For instance, a road or pathway has bends or folds just like the rope. However, it cannot be bent or folded. I would like to emphasize at this point that the answer to the riddle exists prior to the riddle itself and that the answer plays a role in the conceptualization of the riddle and formulation of the image.

Abana bakoiborwa n'chianga- risiogore/ ebando (Children born with clothes- a maize cob).

The audience in a riddling session is well aware that a riddle is a puzzle or an enigma which calls for logical and critical thinking as well as analogical reasoning so as to uncover the answer. Marand (1971) while quoting Aristotle, say that a riddle is a special kind of metaphor. The image in the riddle is often stated as a metaphor. The riddles in Ekegusii also create ambiguity which arises from either the paradox, juxtaposition of different items or from the unrealistic latent image in the riddle. For instance, in the above riddle the audience is aware that children are born without clothes. Therefore when in the riddler talks of children born with cloths, the audience at once knows that he is referring to something else which he wants them to discover. To discover the answer, the solvers of Ekegusii riddle above must realize that the poser of the riddle is among other things using metaphorical language, unbelievable elements and relies on a single characteristic of the object as his focal point. What happens next is that the knowledge schemas about birth of children help the audience to do some analogical correspondence through a neural mapping process to establish the answer. The fact that the children in the riddle are born with clothes is a clue that points to the answer.

The maize cob petals are the clothes, the cobs themselves are the children born with clothes. The petals of the maize cob are metaphorically referred to as clothes since they

share some semantic resemblance. The cob, especially at the initial stages after fertilization as it develops is also referred to metaphorically as being born. Lakoff (1980) affirms to this when he says that a metaphor involves deciphering one conceptual domain in terms of another conceptual domain. In our riddle above, the source domain is ‘the children’ whereas the target domain is the maize cob. The clothes in the riddle also form part of the source domain whereas the petal leaves of the maize plant comprise the target domain.

Kovecses (2003) points out that, metaphors can vary as a result of cultural differences. The *Gusii* refer to the maize leaves as ‘*chingobo*’ a term which means or refers to clothes as well. With this in mind, one can see the hand of culture and context in the conceptualization and eventual interpretation of the riddle. The mention of children born with clothes will direct the hearers of the riddle to the maize since the maize leaves share the same lexical item with the clothes in Ekegusii language.

Nyabagasa emete ime- ekegwankwa (Nyabagasa in the bush- a butterfly).

Ekegusii riddles draw much from the culture of the speakers of Ekegusii language. This riddle is anchored in what Lee (2001:7) says. He correctly points out that “... language and thought are inextricable...” the name *Nyabagasa* is used pejoratively to mean prostituting around and that this takes place in the push! Any trace of immorality was greatly abhorred among the *Gusii* people and as such the riddle is a warning to the youth of the community against indulging in this vice. Accordingly, *Ekegwankwa* (butterfly) is not a useful insect according to the understanding of the *Gusii* people and is often despised. Therefore, the wording of the riddle reflects the mind- set of the community pertaining prostitution or immorality.

The encyclopedic entries on the connotation of the term '*nyabagasa*' are mapped onto the animal that is seen to be moving from one plant to another and often not settling on any one plant for long. The metaphor in this riddle entails understanding the butterfly in terms of '*nyabagasa*' who is the source domain and the audience has a more defined understanding of. Through analogical comparison and reasoning, the audience of the riddle above infers that whatever that is meant must exhibit the characteristics of the said image. By way of scanning through their surroundings, with the encyclopedic entries about the image at the back of their mind, they are able to find an answer that, shares in the semantic fit of the image in the riddle.

Mwane nigo yasie- engoro y'eguto (my house is ever open- an ant bear's burrow).

This Ekegusii riddle is also a special kind of metaphor, just like the others discussed above. In this one the ant bear's burrow is metaphorically referred to as a house. This in essence helps the solvers of the riddle first to call to mind the encyclopedic entries of a house as they know it. These may include things like, a place to live in, shelter from the extremities of weather and so on. The audience must then search for a house that is ever open. Since there are ant bears in the surrounding and that they make burrows which are ever open. The encyclopedic entries about the ordinary house are then mapped onto the ant bear's burrow, since it is the house or dwelling place of the ant bear. In this way, the answer to the riddle is identified. The term house which forms part of the image ties in well with the answer as I have already pointed out that just as the house is a living place for human beings, the burrow is also the living place for the ant bear. The only difference which again is important in finding the answer is that the house in the riddle above is ever open. This enables the solvers to look for this unique house that is ever open. The possessive pronoun '*mwane*' (my) is also figuratively referring to the ant bear, which

further emphasizes the ownership of the house and the fact that it is a dwelling place for some creature.

Enyomba yane nyagesigisa kemo- oboba (my house one pole- mushroom).

This riddle too refers to mushroom metaphorically as a house. The metaphor at play is comparing the structure of a house to that of a mushroom. The traditional Gusii houses were cylindrical in shape just like the shape of the mushroom. However, the point of departure for the riddle is that the house in it is unique since it has only one pole. Again we see the role of culture and context here. This riddle couldn't be used say among the Swahili or Maasai since their houses often had different shapes from the one said above. The image 'my house' is a metaphorical description of the answer as we observed earlier on. Therefore the knowledge schemas about a house are mapped onto the mushroom through the neural processes. The invariance principle of the contemporary theory of metaphor of Lakoff (1980) applies as not all the knowledge about the conceptual domain of a house are mapped onto the mushroom, neither are all the knowledge schemas about the mushroom applied to the house. For instance a mushroom is a plant, with some species being edible whereas a house is a structure to live in. Even when we consider the encyclopedic entries about the house, not all of them are mapped onto the target domain. It is only one feature that is useful when it comes to solving the riddle and that feature for this case is shape of the house (source domain) and the mushroom (the target domain).

3.4 Conclusion

In conclusion of this chapter, I would like to point out that the study established that first and foremost, answers to Ekegusii riddles exist prior to the riddle question or challenge. The study also established that the same answer plays a crucial role in the conception of the riddle. It was observed that in conceptualizing Ekegusii riddles, one studies any given

phenomena or object closely and identifies one salient feature that forms the basis of his riddle. The study also established that the image of Ekegusii riddles is stated as a metaphor. That is to say that the answer and the image of the riddle have a metaphorical relationship. Another thing that was established by this study of Ekegusii riddles is that there exists a close relationship between the Ekegusii riddle images and their answers. It was also observed that culture and context play a major role in the conception of Ekegusii riddles.

On interpretation and understanding of Ekegusii riddles, the study established that cross domain mappings between the image and the answer of the riddle take place. We saw that the image is stated as a metaphor to the answer, with two elements; one misleading and the other leading to the answer. We also established that culture and context are vital in understanding and finding an answer to the riddle. This answer, we learnt that it exists prior to Ekegusii riddles and that it is discovered or found. The proposer of Ekegusii riddles has an upper hand in accepting or rejecting an answer. Analogical comparisons and reasoning also help in interpretation and understanding of Ekegusii riddles.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a summary of this study project and serves to provide the findings of this study at a glance. The chapter also gives a summary of the conclusions derived from the study of Ekegusii riddles as well as recommendations for further studies and research in Ekegusii language and beyond.

4.2 Summary and Conclusions

For this study to be done it was observed that there was need to analyze Ekegusii riddles since the available literature revealed that not much had been achieved to this end. Most of the literature that was available consisted of a list of collections of Ekegusii riddles. This study set out to study and analyzes sixty Ekegusii riddles with the aim of establishing how the riddles can be classified, conceptualized, interpreted and understood. The study also sought to establish the role of culture and context in conception, interpretation and understanding of Ekegusii riddles. This is to say that the study sought to find out how the hearers of a riddle in Ekegusii ever get to know the answer to the riddle. The study had and used the Contemporary Theory of Metaphor of Lakoff (1980) as its theoretical frame work.

The study found out that Ekegusii riddles can be classified according to many classifications proposed and used to classify riddles from different cultures. The study established that Ekegusii riddles can be classified according to the answer thereby classifying the riddles collected according to nature of the answer. This classification was first proposed and used by Bukenya, *et al.*, (1983) and later, it has been used by many others to classify riddles. In this classification, Ekegusii riddles were classified into those whose answer referred to a plant, an animal, an insects, abstract ideas, human body,

cultural objects or natural phenomena. It was observed that Ekegusii riddles can fit into such classes among others.

On conceptualization of Ekegusii riddles, the study contends that the answer exists prior to the image in the riddle. It was established that in conceptualizing a riddle in Ekegusii, one first studies the objects or things in his surrounding closely and identifies a salient feature of that object or thing which forms the basis of conceiving the riddle. Through metaphorical reasoning and through a neural mapping process, he creates an image which forms the basis of the riddle. It is the position of this study that the answer is often in a metaphorical relation with the image. This was hypothetically represented in this study as $A=B$. where A is the latent image in the riddle and B is the answer to that riddle. In proposing a riddle, the proposer refers to the answer B, in terms of A, the image in the riddle. The study holds that the aim of the riddler is to mislead the audience so as the latter cannot easily find the answer to the riddle he has just posed. This is why the object in the answer is metaphorically referred to in conception stage of the riddle. This tied in well with the contention of Miruka (1999) “that a riddle is a word puzzle in which familiar objects or situations are referred to in figurative terms for us to decipher what is actually meant.”

As to what role is played by culture and context in the conception of Ekegusii riddles, the study contends that culture and context play a role and indeed determine the nature of the riddles in terms of the answer and the image used. Culture also determines the lexical choices used in the metaphorical references. The study found out that language and culture are intertwined and are inextricable for language is the vehicle for expressing our culture. Culture and context also underlie the metaphors that we use in our lives in our struggle to

make meaning of the world around us. This study has it that a riddle is a form or type of metaphor in agreement with Aristotle as quoted by Maranda (1971).

Pertaining the interpretation and understanding of Ekegusii riddles or finding the answer to the riddle, this study established that the answer exists prior to the image in the riddle itself Maranda (1971). This answer has to be discovered by the audience through analogical reasoning and cross domain mappings of knowledge schemas of the image (source domain) onto the answer (target domain). The study established that both the image and answer in Ekegusii riddles are pre-established and they do share a metaphorical relationship as Maranda (1971) correctly observed. In other words, a riddle is a question that has a ready and pre- determined answer. Interpretation and eventual discovery of the answer to Ekegusii riddles relies on metaphorical reasoning and correspondences between the source domain (the image) and the target domain (the answer). Analogical reasoning of comparing inferences across the two domains helps in discovering the answer to the riddle.

On the role of culture and context in interpretation and understanding of Ekegusii riddles as well as the subsequent discovery of the answer, the study contends that culture and context play a role. Our metaphorical reasoning is constrained by the culture and the physical world in which we operate Kovesces (2002). This means that we understand new phenomena in terms of what we already know and have interacted with. Indeed it is the contention of the contemporary theory of metaphor that some metaphors are culture specific.

The referents in the image as well as the answer in Ekegusii riddles are largely culture specific. In addition, the metaphorical expressions which are the surface linguistic realizations of the underlying metaphors in the mind are culturally constrained too. This in

essence means that since Ekegusii riddles rely on metaphorical reasoning for interpretation and understanding, then they too are culturally bound for interpretation and understanding. Ekegusii riddles embody the cultural heritage of the Gusii people. The study has shown that culture and context play a part in the conception and interpretation of Ekegusii riddles. Ekegusii riddles cut across all spheres of the Gusii life as was evidenced from the collected riddles. In some instances, the riddles were found to refer to some foreign phenomena to the Gusii culture. Such phenomena either found its way into the culture through colonialism or through other social interactions with neighbours to the community. This again was a signifier that culture and context have a role to play.

4.3 Recommendations of the Study

The study of Ekegusii riddles revealed that the speakers of Ekegusii language engaged in critical thinking, analogical reasoning and inferential thinking during the riddling sessions. Besides, the riddles in Ekegusii language were found to be a vehicle for linguistic development and expression.

This study would therefore wish to recommend that further studies be done with the aim of finding out how best the benefits or functions of riddles can be incorporated into our education system and more particularly, the new competence based curriculum which is currently being developed by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development so as to tap into the rich indigenous wisdom embedded in riddles across the country. This will help salvage riddles from being a forgotten genre in our culture particularly as urbanization is fast overtaking rural life. Secondly, this study used the contemporary theory of metaphor to analyze Ekegusii riddles. It is recommended that further analysis of Ekegusii riddles be done using other theories so as to bring out aspects of the riddles that the theory used in

this study was not able to address. Studies can also be done on the artistic and aesthetic features in Ekegusii riddles.

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APPENDIX.

List of Ekegusii Riddles Studied.

This section contains a list of all the riddles that were sampled for purposes of the study from Ekegusii dictionary and encyclopedia, Endabaro Endabasia by Bosire and Machogu. An English translation has been given for those who do not understand Ekegusii language. The list consists of sixty Ekegusii riddles which the study analyzed.

1. Aa to!- oboterere (Aa to!- slipperiness)
2. Abagaka baikarensete abamura bagotara- amagena aroche n'amache (Old men are seated while young men are moving around- stones in a river and running water.)
3. Abaiseke imbare minto batato oyomo ataiyo intokoragera- amaiga okuruga. (there are three sisters in our house; when one is absent, we cannot eat- heathen stones.)
4. A bana bakoiborwa n'echiaanga- chibando/ ebituma. (children who are born clothed- maize.)
5. Abana bakoragera marara- amage y'echinyoni. (children who eat while asleep- nestlings.)
6. Abana bane abaya bagokora emeremo batari goikaransa- amaiso. (my nice children who work without resting- eyes.)
7. Abana bane babere bakora emeremo buya ko tibanya goikana ang'e- inse na igoro. (my two children work well though they never come closer to each other- the earth and the sky.)
8. Abanto batato ngotamboka bare oroche, oyomo ororire amache nakoyatacha, oyonde tayatacheti korende tayatacheti n'oyonde tayarochi na tayachacheti, bonsi bambokire- omokungu ore morito oberegete omwana. (three people are closing a river; one sees and wades through the river, another sees the river but does not come into contact with the

water while the third neither sees nor touches the water!- an expectant woman carrying a child on her back.)

9. Ara riyo toriere chinsobosobo- erioba n'eching'enang'eni. (spread the skin we eat chinsobosobo- the sky and the stars.)

10. Ase inkoriera nao ingosokeria- ekerandi. (I eat and excrete through the same opening- a gourd/ bottle.)

11. Boira boira korwa nyakongo- amamiria. (always from nyakongo- mucus.)

12. Chieng'ata bw'Oroko- ekiarambe. (Chieng'ta, Oroko's wife- a wasp)

13. Chisani ibere chireng'aime- igoro na'nse (two identical plates- the earth and the sky)

14. Ekerandi kiababa getari kwoma- enyari y'engombe. (my mother's gourd does not get dry- a cow's udder)

15. Ekerandi kiane kebware emenwa ene- enyari y'engombe. (my gourd has four mouths- a cow's udder)

16. Ekero ikoragera omonwa nigo ogotoratora- eyarare. (when I eat, the mouth suffers- pepper)

17. Engoko yane yabiareire amagwa ime- rinanasi. (my hen has laid eggs among thorns- pineapple)

18. Engori otaringe eere- enchera. (a rope you cannot finish folding- a road or path)

19. Enyomba yane nyagesigisa kemo- oboba. (my house has one pole- mushroom)

20. Eratio yane intari kobugia- entigatigi. (I cannot tune my own radio- armpit.)

21. Etaya etari kobekwa maguta- risase. (a lamp that does not require oil- the sun)

22. Eyemo eyemo goika bosongo- obokima n'eching'ende. (one after another up to Bosongo- ugali taken with beans)

23. Gekogenda bokia boira- amache aroche. (it moves all day and night- water in a river)

24. Gekoriera omonwa naende giasokeria aroro- ekerandi. (it eats and excretes through the mouth- a gourd)
25. Indigererie ingotobie- riuko (look at me as I tell you- a letter)
26. Inchabe nchabe inchie goteba- riuko. (scribble me and I will go and tell/ inform- a letter)
27. Inkoagacha enyomba namenya ikong'anya natiga yasie- eguto. (I build a house, live in it and leave it open when I migrate- an ant bear)
28. Kaa gento ki kegosicha mambia ko marogoba giasichoka- echiro. (which thing flowers in the morning and sheds in the evening- a market)
29. Nachire imbwatie- eusi n'esindake. (I have gone; follow me- a needle and thread.)
30. Omong'na obwate ebisero ebinge korende abana baye bakorara inse- risosa. (a woman who has many hides/skins but her children sleep on a bare floor- a pumpkin plant.)
31. Omogaka okwomana rikori gotira- ritimbo. (an old man quarrelling as he walks along- a beetle.)
32. Ntarigota tingotenena- egunia. (I can't stand until I have eaten- a sack.)
33. Nikebwate korende tinkerochi- ekiongotiro. (I have it but cannot see it- the nape)
34. Nigo akobwati ande onsi ase- omorengari. (s/he follows me wherever I go- a shadow)
35. Nyabagasa emete ime- ekegwankwa. (Nyabagasa in the bush- butterfly)
36. Nyansiaboka egetiro- embeba. (Nyansiaboka up a plane- a rat)
37. Omogaka nyaisio- ritierio. (a bald-headed man- a horning stone)
38. Kaa mong'ina ki ogotengera mwaye nakoirana- oromeme. (which woman dances in her house and returns- a tongue.)
39. Makobiara ongosire- amarwa. (my mother-in-law has scared me- alcohol)
40. Omogondo one inkogesa obori botaichiri inkundi- etukia. (I have a garden from which I cannot reap a handful of millet- hair shaved from the head)

41. Momura ominto akwaroka naende oba omoisia- eng'iti egwesabora amagonko aye. (my brother circumcises and grows the foreskin again!- a snake shedding its skin.)
42. Nasibire etai- ekegonkoru (I have worn a necktie- a crow.)
43. Natomire abana babere bangire koirana- enyoni n'omoengwe (I have sent two children who have not come back- a stick thrown at a bird.)
44. Nchera yane tori gosanga nonde- omong'anyi bw'eng'uko. (I do not share my pathway with anyone- a mole's burrow.)
45. Niche bweka kona gokwania abageni- engi. (I alone keep on greeting visitors!- a fly.)
46. Nyabagasa emete ime – ekegwankwa.(Nyabagasa in the bush- a butterfly.)
47. Omogaka nyaisio- ritierio. (a bald- headed man- a horning stone.)
48. Sidake ko imoyio- esagara. (like needle like knife!- a lizard.)
49. Simeka simora- amagoro akogenda. (plant uproot, plant uproot!- legs taking steps when walking.)
50. Sukuru komiti- abarogi. (school committee- witches/ wizards.)
51. Tata ogure n,egoti- ritoke. (my father has fallen with his coat- a banana.)
52. Ogokwa naende oboka- omotienyi. (s/he dies and resurrects- the moon.)
53. Omosongo obwatire enyigo-egekombe/egetuba. (a white man with hands akimbo- a cup.)
54. Kamura otari nengo- esasati. (a boy with no nodes- a reeds.)
55. Eng'ombe yane ekero yatwereirwe teri gokamwa- ekebiriti. (when my cow is rained on it will not produce milk- a match box.)
56. Etera abwo naiche ng'etere aa toboyie magokoro- chindigi. (pass that way I pass this way we dress grandma- rafters.)
57. Kagokwana rikuba ndimoriете- egoree. (he speaks with a cough- a he goat.)

58.Maate aaria ebate ime nareo omong'ina okonagotenga- etinga y'amache. (there is an old woman dancing down in the valley- water-mill.)

59.Gikorwa inka nigo inde 'nchara korende gikoirana nigo inyigotete- enyongo ya roche. (I am hungry when leaving home but full when coming back home- a water pot.)

60.Omwana oiboirwe otabwatie maboko na magoro- rigena riengoko. (a child born without limbs- an egg.)