

**PROVERBIAL LANGUAGE THAT EXPRESSES POWER AND DOMINANCE
AGAINST WOMEN: THE CASE STUDY OF GĨ-GĨCŪGŪ DIALECT OF GĨKŪYŪ
LANGUAGE**

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that this study is my original work and has not been presented by another person to any other institution of higher learning.

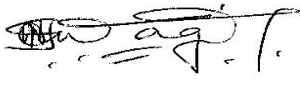


04/11/2020

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Date

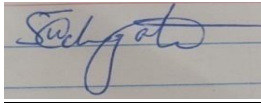
This research has been submitted for examination with our approval as university supervisors.



03-11-2020

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05-06-2021

Dr. SilvanoMūrithi

Date

DEDICATION

This study is a special dedication to the following:

My wife Beth Wambũi Njue

and

My two sons, Ian Gachanja and Christian Njogu.

Thank you God, for all your blessings to me and my family, for the strength you give me each day, and for all the people around me who make life more meaningful.

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TABLE OF CONTENT

DECLARATION.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
ABSTRACT	viii
CHAPTER ONE.....	2
INTRODUCTION.....	2
1.1 Background to the study	2
1.2 Background to the language	4
1.3 Statement of the problem.....	4
1.4 Research questions	5
1.5 Objectives of the study.....	6
1.6 Rationale of the study.....	6
1.7 Scope and limitations	7
1.8 Definition of key terms	7
1.9 Review of literature of Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect.....	8
1.9.1 Review of literature on proverbs	9
1.9.2 Relationship between metaphors and proverbs	13
1.9.3 Linguistic tools of oppression against women	14
1.9.3.1 Metaphors.....	14
1.9.3.2 Lexical items.....	15
1.10 Theoretical framework.....	15
1.10.1 Overview of the main tenets of CDA	15
1.10.1 Basic assumptions of CDA	17
1.10.2 Dimensions of CDA.....	18
1.10.2.1 Discourse – as – text.....	19
1.10.2.2 Discourse – as – discursive practice	19
1.10.2.3 Discourse – as – social practice.....	19
1.10.3 Stages of CDA	19
1.10.3.1 Description stage.....	20
1.10.3.2 Interpretation stage.....	20

1.10.3.3 Explanation stage	20
1.10.4 Constitutive concepts of CDA	20
1.11 Methodology	23
1.11.1 Data collection procedure.....	23
1.11.2 Data Analysis	24
1.11.3 Data presentation.....	25
CHAPTER TWO.....	25
LANGUAGE AS A TOOL OF OPPRESSION AGAINST WOMEN IN DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE WORLD	26
2.0 Introduction	26
2.1 Language as a tool of oppression.....	26
2.2 Language and gender	27
2.3 Language and culture	28
2.4 The nature of proverbs	29
2.5 Role of proverbs as used by the speakers of the Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect.....	31
2.6 Proverbs and power	32
2.7 Men and power.....	33
2.8 Oppressive language of proverbs in different societies across the world	33
2.8.1 Oppressive language of proverbs against wives.....	34
2.8.2 Oppressive proverbial language of mothers-in-law	38
2.8.3 Oppressive proverbial language of daughters-in-law	40
2.8.4 Oppressive language of proverbs against widows	44
2.8.5 Oppressive language of proverbs against women’s intellect.....	45
2.9 Conclusion	46
CHAPTER THREE.....	47
PROVERBIAL LANGUAGE THAT EXPRESSES POWER AND DOMINANCE	47
AGAINST WOMEN IN GĨ-GĨCŪGŪ.....	47
3.0 Introduction	47
3.1 Language of proverbs that expresses power and dominance against women.....	47
3.1.1 Language of proverbs that express dominance of men	62
3.2 Conclusion	71

CHAPTER FOUR.....	71
LANGUAGE OF PROVERBS THAT EXPRESS POWER AND DOMINANCE AGAINST WOMEN IN GĪ-GĪCŪGŪ DIALECT BY USE OF METAPHORS	72
4.1 Power and dominance against women by use of metaphors.....	72
4.1.1 Metaphors that express dominance of men.....	81
4.2 Conclusion	84
CHAPTER FIVE.....	185
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD OF STUDY	85
5.1 Summary	85
5.2 Conclusions	86
5.3 Recommendations.....	87
5.4 Contribution to the field of study.....	88
REFERENCES	89
APPENDIX 1.....	91
APPENDIX 2.....	95

ABSTRACT

The study focused on the proverbial language that expresses power against women and upholds dominance of men in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect of Gĩkũyũ language within the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis Theory, as proposed by Fairclough (1989).

It specifically investigated how metaphors and proverbs are used as linguistic tools of oppression against women. Most importantly, the study examined how context is used in proverbial language to create a power imbalance. By use of Critical Discourse Analysis Theory, these opaque structures of power and dominance were exposed.

The researcher collected the data on proverbs that express power and dominance against women from the community. This data was then counter-checked with the assistance of three informants to ensure objectivity and truthfulness, especially in proverbial vocabulary. The informants were between 60 to 70 years of age with a great command of the dialect having lived in Gĩcũgũ community much of their lives.

The study found out that in Gĩcũgũ, women have been belittled, abused, and prejudiced against. Men wisely maneuvered the proverbial language that looked harmless on the surface but in its deeper meaning, it adversely dominated their female counterparts. Opaque linguistic structures were subtly hidden in the metaphorical language of proverbs that expressed power and dominance against women. This oppressive language of proverbs against women was analyzed to move from critical to non-critical levels of discourse by using Critical Discourse Analysis theory.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Language is one of the most powerful tools which perpetuates gender imbalance. Fiske and Glick (2004), argue that some gender stereotypes show that women should only display communal and warmth traits while men should portray agentic and competence traits. This is manifested in linguistic structures in the event of discourses. As a result, language subtly perpetuates societal imbalance of status and authority in favor of men, who are ascribed to the corresponding social roles.

Grammatical and syntactic rules are designed in such a way that the terms related to the female gender are usually derived from their male counterparts. Masculine pronouns and nouns are usually used with a generic function to both males and females. Such linguistic expressions have a negative impact on making women vanish in mental representations.

Semin (2000), states that linguistic oppression of women cannot only be perpetrated through linguistic expressions but can also be perpetrated through the use of some specific linguistic tools which arouse the recipients' attentiveness to the features describing the person in question. To counter the above oppression of women by use of language, Mead (1970), notes that, "one must not doubt that a small group of knowledgeable citizens, women, can be committed and can hence change the world." "Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has".

The above quote bore fruits to the 1995 Beijing platform that advocated equal participation of women in decision making. Since then, women have formed groups to liberate themselves from linguistic oppression. There have also been scholarly attempts to illuminate the sources and dangers of such linguistic injustice. This is from the voice of the youth which is geared to restore the placement of women by giving them dignity, honor, and above all empowering them for national development. However, even if such attempts have been commended, it is significant to note that no successful and substantial development has been recorded in empowering women and youth. This is because the cause of gender bias in African cultural values has not been adequately addressed. This study reflects on this notable problem,

the pervasiveness of oppressive expressions in proverbs, and their impact on women using the Critical Discourse Analysis Theory, (henceforth CDA).

This study was motivated by the fact that in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ, some words are used during discourse to derogate women. These utterances are taken as normal aspects of references in society. A significant proportion of women do not raise any concern and they seem to accept what society has labeled them. Men on the other hand take advantage of this weakness by women and they cunningly take a superior position in the family and the society at large. Proverbs are used in speeches and texts, and they are blatantly used against women. A good example of a commonly used linguistic feature in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ is the use of the word *kĩrĩgũ* ‘an uncircumcised girl.’ Circumcision of girls was allowed in Gĩcũgũ traditional society and especially before Christianity had been established to fight the remote cultural practice which the missionaries referred to as female genital mutilation, (F.G.M). The context in which the word *karĩgũ* diminutive form or *kĩrĩgũ* argumentative form is used draws a negative image to the audience against the referent. If for example, I would say, *karĩgũ gakwa nĩ goka* ‘my uncircumcised girl has come,’ the perception in this utterance will elicit a feeling of an immature, unpleasant and unintelligent girl. This is antithetical when the word *kabĩ* ‘uncircumcised boy’ is used. The context in which *kabĩ* diminutive form or *kĩbĩ* argumentative form is used draws a positive image to the listener.

If one says *kabĩ gakwa nĩ goka* ‘my uncircumcised boy has come,’ the speaker is proud of the boy and perceives this to be a great achievement. *Kabĩ* here would represent wealth, wisdom, security, fame, and other positive attributes that relate to a boy. Sometimes you hear an old man referring to his son who is married and has a family as his *kĩbĩ gĩakwa* ‘my uncircumcised boy’ and this brings pride to both the father and the son. On the other hand, it would be very absurd when an elderly person refers to a married woman as *karĩgũ gakwa* ‘my uncircumcised girl.’ It will be very embarrassing to the referent, to the speaker, and the audience. Because of such bizarre references to the women folk, this study is meant to investigate further how women are oppressed by the use of proverbial language, by speakers of Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ.

1.2 Background to the language

According to Britannica encyclopedia, the Kikuyu also referred to as Gĩkũyũ, are Bantu-speaking people who spread across the highland area of central Kenya at the foot of Mt. Kenya. Some Gĩkũyũ speakers live in some parts of the Rift valley. According to Guthrie (1971), Gĩkũyũ people are Bantu speakers under the category of E zone, group 50, which comprises of Gĩkũyũ, Embu, Thaiso, Meru, and Kamba. Thompson (2014), established in the Ethnology that there are five major Gĩkũyũ dialects in the central region, which are Northern Gĩkũyũ from Northern Mũranga and Nyeri, the Southern Gĩkũyũ from Kiambu and Mũranga. Gĩcũgũ in Northern ĩrĩnyaga, Ndia in Southern Kĩrĩnyaga, and Mathĩra in Karatina. Ndia dialect is spoken in Kerũgoya, the largest town in Kĩrĩnyaga. This dialect is also spoken in Kangaita hills and the tea-growing areas of Kagumo. Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect which to some extent sounds like Ki-Embu, a sister language to Gĩkũyũ is spoken in Kĩanyaga, Kĩthũre, Kathũngũri, and Marigiti. The Gĩcũgũ speakers can easily switch over to the other Gĩkũyũ dialects. Mwea constituency, which is currently sub-divided into Mwea East Sub-County and Mwea West Sub-County, is an amalgam of Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ and Ndia dialects.

According to the speakers of Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect, a woman who attains a marriageable age is expected to get married and have children who are highly valued. This ensures that there is family continuity from generation to generation, Kenyatta (1971). Women who are unable to beget children are disrespected, scorned, and branded *ndata* ‘barren woman.’ If the same woman divorces her husband who might be impotent and marries another man to get children, the woman is branded *mũmaramari* ‘prostitute’ to suggest that she is an immoral person. In Gĩkũyũ, cultural practices and traditions are greatly valued and they determine their way of life. Kenyatta (1971:3), states that oral traditions were passed from one generation to another through genres like riddles, proverbs, legends, songs, myths and oral poetry.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Language has been used as a tool for promoting male chauvinism in society. It has been used to express power against women and upholding dominance of men. This oppressive language has been institutionalized in these societies by putting men into a superior position and

emphasizing the inferiority of women in discourses, Lakoff (1975). Various women liberation movements and groups such as National Organization for Women and Women Rights Foundation have come up to fight this linguistic violence against women. Their main objective is to restore the identity and dignity of women in speech and talk. While such efforts are noticeable, it is important to note that there are no adequate efforts that have been recorded to subdue this oppressive language that belittles and abuses women. This is because the causes of linguistic injustices in African culture have not been adequately been addressed. Many studies have been carried out on oppressive language between genders and the results have shown that women have been abused and demeaned. However, there are no satisfactory efforts that have been made to show how metaphors and context can be used in proverbial language to express power and dominance against women in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect. This study reflects on this salient problem in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect and seeks to find out how the language of proverbs is used to abuse women. This is by using CDA theory that makes the opaque structures of power and dominance transparent by critically examining the linguistic aspect in a proverb to show how it oppresses.

1.4 Research questions

- i. How is proverbial language used to express power and dominance against women in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect?
- ii. What is the role of context in understanding how the language of proverbs expresses power against women and uphold the dominance of men?
- iii. How are metaphors used to express power and dominance against women in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect?

1.5 Objectives of the study

The overall goal of this study is to investigate how proverbial language is used to derogate women among the speakers of Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ through the use of proverbs. In view of this, the study is guided by the following objectives:

- i. To investigate how proverbial language is used to express power and dominance against women in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect.
- ii. To examine the role of context in understanding how the language of proverbs express power against women and uphold dominance of men.
- iii. To investigate how metaphors are used to express power and dominance against women in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect.

1.6 Rationale of the study

This study revolves around the discourse analysis domain. It seeks to find out how the use of language in proverbs belittles women in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect. The use of context and metaphors in proverbial language will be examined to show how they express power and dominance between genders. This will give a better understanding of the perception of women in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ to uphold their identity and dignity.

Moreover, the study will contribute greatly to the existing records and publications. It will also advocate the need to use proverbial language positively and raise the integrity of women but not disregarding it altogether.

Since CDA refers to discourse as historical, some proverbs might not be appealing to the present generation since proverbs are passed from one generation to another. Therefore, by understanding the meaning of the proverbial language in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect, the study will highlight some of the unappealing elements in society so that they may be dealt with appropriately.

The research findings will benefit linguists and researchers by illustrating that sometimes the use of proverbial language has an underlying ideological agenda and therefore, one must critically analyze the power of words behind proverbs to unravel their hidden intention.

1.7 Scope and limitations

The study is set to investigate how language is used to derogate women. It will examine how metaphors and use of proverbs in specific contexts are used in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect to express power and dominance against women. Specifically, the study will focus on this oppressive linguistic features of proverbs and will use Critical Discourse Analysis Theory to analyze them.

Since the Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect has not been intensively and extensively studied, very few documented resources are found. Some of the few existing resources have been briefly highlighted in the review of literature in this study. This is therefore one of the major challenges that constrain this study. To get rid of this inadequacy, the researcher will rely on knowledge from the wider Gĩkũyũ language where parallels will be made in comparison to Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect.

1.8 Definition of key terms

Gender: Refers to how men and women are socially and culturally differentiated, the way they are valued, what they contribute, and how they are relied upon in society.

Ideology: This is a body of concepts, beliefs, and ideas that influence one's way of thinking both psychologically and intellectually.

Linguistic structures: Refers to linguistic tools used by speakers of a speech community which they use for interaction or communication purposes.

Stereotypes: These are generalized phrases, ideas or beliefs that are fixed in one's mind without strong base or proof.

Gender oppression: This is oppression meted against women and girls due to their sex.

Dialect: This is a regional or social variety of language distinguished by pronunciation, grammar or its vocabulary. ‘

Hegemony: This is domination of one group of people or nation over the others. In this study, it refers to the way how proverbial language influences the domination of women by men.

Text: Refers to the pragmatic use of language and linguistic structures within a given social context to define and position people in that speech community.

Discursive practice: It refers to how discourse is acted on and circulated within a culture.

Dominance: a form of social power abuse, whether legitimate or morally illegitimate control over others in one's interest often resulting in social inequality.

1.9 Review of literature of Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect

There are a few studies that have been carried out in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ and Ndia dialects. The existing work includes a study by Gatere (1996), who did a study on phonological processes of Ndia and Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialects of Gĩkũyũ language. He used via rules as stipulated by the Natural Generative Phonology in showing the different forms used in the dialect. The study shows that the phonological process involving vowels and consonants is manifested at the morpheme boundaries. He notes that the major difference between the two dialects is vowel distribution. There is the presence of diphthongs in Ndia dialect as opposed to Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect. Although there is nothing much that has been discussed about language and dominance, his study provides a significant understanding of the two dialects spoken in Kĩrĩnyaga County.

Karũrũ (2012), has done a study on the phonological and morphological adoption of loanwords from English and Kiswahili into Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect. An important finding in her study which has significantly benefited this study is the fact that loanwords in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect that do not correspond to their phonemic inventory and syllable structure are made to conform through adaption strategies to attain the preferred syllable structure. There are some proverbs within the speakers Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect that use some borrowed words. Therefore, her study provides a deeper understanding of how borrowed words are adopted phonologically and morphologically to be used in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect. Her study has also provided some useful information about the background of Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect.

Wacera (2008), investigated tone as a lexically distinctive feature of Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect. He focuses on the distinctive role of tone and particularly its lexical function in the grammatical categories in nouns, verbs, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs and prepositions. His study provides some useful knowledge of how tone is manifested in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ grammatical categories which are also used in the proverbial language of Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect.

1.9.1 Review of literature on proverbs

This section of the study is a review of some of the work which has been carried out on proverbs in different cultural backgrounds. Since 1960, women have been fighting to liberate themselves in society against prejudice by their male counterparts. Since then, there is a distinct change because many societies have reformed their language after undergoing a revolution. Language has been made equal and unbiased particularly the English language. Many linguists have tried to analyze language by investigating how women use their language, thus drawing a comparison between men and women. Lakoff (1950), is one of the most significant pioneers who has made great progress by investigating how gender and language relate. This study will examine how proverbs are used as part of language with a rich source of cultural and social reality. Proverbs spread quickly among people with a popular image and have rich importance because of their long history since they are passed from one generation to generation by a word of mouth. Although Lakoff (ibid), does not specifically investigate proverbs per se, his study provides a useful foundation about the perception of women the world over, in which this study is set.

Wang (2000), says that proverbs stem from a wide range of origin in the literary works of folk narratives, natural phenomenon and religious beliefs. She observes that proverbs originate from diverse experiences and realizations of the people and their wisdom at different times and different social backgrounds. Proverbs include oral and written ones and are a reflection of accumulation of sum total of people's experiences that are passed over from one generation to another, bringing with them profound effects on their social concepts. Therefore, following Wang's point of view and from the background of this study, the researcher has observed that many scholars are in consensus that proverbs play a significant role in manifesting the cultural outlook of the people and their personality. In addition to this, Wang (2012), worked on sex discrimination in English proverbs and their translations. She found out that women are discriminated lot in society. The present study is also set to find out if proverbs in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect reflects the same or otherwise.

Mierder (1993), investigated why proverbs are never out of season, a popular perception in modern society. His study describes how proverbs are used in contemporary society and

shows their significance in the present situations to maintain them as important features of language. His study will be of great significance to this study in showing the contribution of proverbs in contemporary society, and the context in which they are used. The use of proverbs and their context is one of the major objectives of this study.

Honneck (1997), examines how metaphors are used in proverbs during speeches. He says that metaphors are complex aspects of mental functions which are intuitively used by people during discourses. His study advocates an interdisciplinary view in explaining how people use and perceive proverbs and metaphors. He proposes the cognitive science approach in exposing the hidden meaning of the proverbs. Although this study does not use this theoretical approach but will use CDA theory, his analysis of the speeches by use of metaphors will be of great importance to this study since metaphors will be some of the main linguistic tools that will be examined in this study to illustrate oppression of women in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect.

Lawal (1997), explains how proverbs contain the richest pool of pragmatic and semantic factors whose meaning provided through them is very significant to arouse attention. He says that proverbs used in other languages have similar features which include word play, vivid images and domestic allusions. This will be of great help to this study since it will provide a useful foundation for identifying and comprehending the meaning of metaphors, word play and domestic allusions in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect.

Pante et al (2000), have studied Samburu proverbs. In his study, he uses a large background of ethnographic knowledge and general culture to gather a large collection of proverbs in which all the cultural aspects of the Samburu traditions are expressed. His work captures 803 proverbs which widely deal with several aspects of human life about the idea of God, how people relate and interact with the natural forms in the environment including water, animals, trees, birds and rain. The current study will be narrowed down to examine biased proverbial language in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect and will hence resourcefully refer to the work of Pante et al (ibid), on matters of translation and explaining how people relate amongst themselves.

Balogun (2010), investigated proverbial language that oppresses women in Yoruba, an African community. She examines Yoruba proverbial language from a philosophical point of view. Her data portrays that proverbial language violates the dignity and the rights of women, a

distinct indicator of women discrimination in Yoruba culture. Her study will significantly help this study in finding out whether the same view is reflected in Gĩcũgũ proverbs.

Crystal (1997), worked on proverbs and observed that they feature distinctively in transactional, interpersonal and ideational language use. This will benefit this study by evaluating whether the proverbs to be examined will use the three levels of language as mentioned above.

Dundes (1981), studied “Proverbs as a Wisdom of Many” by using essays on proverbs. He says that the use of proverbial language is not personal but proverbs are pithy statements that are wittily utilized to enrich a text by speakers and authors. The present study will greatly benefit from Dundes’s argument because it will examine proverbial language and the context in which it is used in a particular discourse.

Wanjohi (2001) studied a comprehensive synthesized collection of 1825 proverbs of Gĩkũyũ language in Kenya. His investigation gathered together all the known Gĩkũyũ proverbs under one roof. He also gives their overt and covert meaning and translates every proverb in English to enhance their symbolic power and their application while at the same time maintaining their brevity. His study will contribute greatly to this study since it will provide a lot of guidance to an effective translation from Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect into English without alteration of meaning. However, because this is an age of gender equality, an all-inclusive translation of the language might not be possible in an attempt to secure the authenticity of the proverbs under investigation.

Tayebi (2012), has worked on the characteristics of proverbs by using a comparative approach between the local dialect of Persia and Mesopotamian language. To some extent, this will benefit the present study by providing a deeper understanding of characteristics of proverbs in general.

Njagĩ (2013), has researched on Ki-Embu proverbs that analyze power relations between men and women and also the younger generation. He tries to investigate how language is used in proverbs to reinforce and perpetuate power imbalance among men and women, and the younger generation. He says that proverbs serve as avenues of perpetrating gender prejudice against

women and the youth in Embu County. His study provides a useful insight in understanding how women are perceived in Gĩcũgũ community.

Mwĩhia (2009), did a theological analysis of language as used in African proverbs about women from Gĩkũyũ people. She recounts that there is a need to change the perspective of the society regarding the wrong attitude against African women. In her study, she uses CDA theory to analyze the oppressive proverbs. This study benefits a lot from her study since it provides a clear understanding of the issues that are raised in CDA theory.

Dickson and Mbosowo (2014), have investigated how proverbs are used in many African communities and how they relate to women. They recognize women's role in society and suggest that women should rise and claim their rightful position in society by resisting the language used in the oppressive proverbs. This is because proverbs instill fear and portray women as ignorant, unworthy, inexperienced and unyielding. They support the view that the language used in African proverbs should be formulated to fit the changing roles in the society, hence the ancient oversimplified misconceptions about women expressed through language will become obsolete and finally antiquated. Their study has provided in-depth knowledge to this study to show how language is used in proverbs and manipulated to oppress women.

Some researchers have used metaphorical language to demean women. In his study, Aitken (1987), uses metaphors as linguistic tools of oppression. He metaphorically likens women to an ornament whose role is to beautify an object and has no much significance. He continues to say that by using metaphorical language, women have been estranged from power and in making decisions. A strong metaphorical comparison is drawn from an extract from Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, he says that a man who has no traditional title is referred to as an *agbala*, an old woman. Okonkwo the main character blames himself for acting emotionally when he kills a young boy called Ikemefuna. He admonishes himself by comparing himself with a shivering woman. He asks himself, "you are known in all the nine villages for your zeal in war, how can a man who has slain many men on battlefield fall to pieces because of simply killing a boy, Okonkwo you have become a woman indeed" Achebe (1957).

Achebe uses language here only to echo what society believes about men and women. That men are brave whereas women are cowardly. This study will use metaphors as one of the

main tools of discrimination. Aitken and Achebe have provided a strong foundation to show that metaphors are indeed some of the linguistic tools which are cleverly used by men to oppress women.

1.9.2 Relationship between metaphors and proverbs

Proverbs are classified under a special group of speech markers because they are usually used with metaphors whose expressions are used to denote something that it does not refer to suggest some similarity. They are very similar to metaphors since they are sayings whose central aim is to aid in learning either formal or informal in the family and society. Glusky (1971), observes that in some other situations, proverbs serve a similar role as a photographic image in a power point presentation. They provide an accurate verbal illustration to learn from. He adds that proverbial language is simple but picturesque.

Finnegan (1970), posits that proverbs have a deep metaphorical representation intertwined in daily tasks and challenges from an African point of view. She argues that proverbial language is highly cultural and context-bound and can only be understood in the confines in which it is spoken. Therefore, if it is spoken outside the cultural contexts, it might give an entirely different meaning. Proverbial language relies on metaphorical allusions embedded in their culture and when the cultural aspects are not understood properly, the important meaning of the proverb is lost or missed. She adds that this view can be more complicated because some proverbs can be used for other purposes.

Norrick (2014), says that metaphorical elements of proverbs are often recognized as some important parts of proverbs since they are interesting to analyze and can be interpreted in different ways. Norrick (ibid) refers to proverbs as didactic and traditional conversational oral forms which have general meaning and have potential and a free conversational turn-taking which is done by use of figurative meaning.

Meider (1985), defines proverbs as short and generally pithy statements with hidden wisdom that carries general truth, traditional views and morality often in form of metaphors that are memorable and are passed from one generation to generation. He observes that more than in other linguistic forms such as essays, news and fiction, metaphors can elicit a significant

amount of figurative meaning in proverbs. The rich content of metaphorical language of proverbs is very interesting from a linguistic and cultural perspective. Due to their richness, proverbs comprise an intriguing network of computational models of metaphoricity.

Lakoff and Turner (1989), observe that for people to comprehend metaphorical and abstract concepts properly, they must know those metaphorical categories, and also have their own experiences to form a tangible connection. They argue that proverbs are largely metaphoric, and their mapping across categories is realized through their meaning.

Fayal (2012), claims that the rich nature of proverbs in terms of metaphors make them extremely significant as linguistic tools since they can be used as an appropriate measure for a variety of metaphor-related tasks such as identification and interpretation. He also says that if there is a collection of a variety of proverbs from various languages annotated with metaphors, it would be very important for social scientists to investigate the cultural contrasts in those languages.

Wilson (2009), says that from a cognitive viewpoint, proverbs just as metaphors can be perceived as forms of speech based on socially efficient cognitive elements. He adds that proverbs offer a wide and reliable source of previously translated metaphors.

1.9.3 Linguistic tools of oppression against women

There is a repository of linguistic tools that speakers use to oppress women. These tools are wisely set to sound harmless on the surface but deeply they favor one gender at the expense of the other. This results in powerful and dominant groups ruling over the inferior groups. This subtopic will discuss metaphors as tools of linguistic oppression in this study.

1.9.3.1 Metaphors

A metaphor is a figure of speech whereby a word or a phrase is likened to an object or an idea Wales (1989). Cognitive theory suggests that metaphors assist to demystify abstract and emotive objects and ideas to become more appealing to the audience. They are used to elicit emotions that are realized as operating within some textual features which in a continuum

influence each other. According to cognitive theory, metaphors represent expressions of certain kinds of emotive effects as a way of comprehending them, hence making abstract concepts to be more concrete and realistic. Johnson (1980), asserts that metaphors help to relate concepts by assisting the audience or readers conceptualize one concept regarding others as well as showing others the aspects of the same concept. Metaphors will be used in this study as linguistic tools that oppress women.

1.9.3.2 Lexical items

Lexical classification is an important way of human cognition. Words and vocabulary transmit the imprint of society and the judgment of values in particular. They convey the connoted and also the denoted meanings. Lexical items will be analyzed by of use CDA as an analytical tool and will effectively help to expose the covert ideologies used in discourses. Widdowson (2007), says that words cannot be used in isolation but are part and parcel of grammatical patterns and vocabulary which when used in texts can be incorporated in unpredictable and complex ways. The text combines the complex and unpredictable structures within their contexts. Therefore, words can refer to their meaning conventionally and can also be used to mean a different thing depending on the context of their usage. During discourse, what people may mean might have an underlying attitude or motive.

1.10 Theoretical framework

The Gĩcũgũ people often use proverbs during interpersonal discourses and also in large social gatherings where serious issues are discussed. It is not uncommon to hear speakers in a chief's *baraza*, a preacher in the church, or some council of elders using proverbs to drive a point home. This is because proverbs summarize long speeches in a single statement and also are deemed to be more convincing and appealing to the audience. It is in such social backgrounds within this study is set.

1.10.1 Overview of the main tenets of CDA

CDA focuses on social problems. It particularly examines the role of the discourse and how it is involved in production and reproduction of abuse of power, exploitation and how domination is imposed in the society, Fairclough (1997). Social problems can range from

political violence as it happened in the Rwanda genocide in 1992, religious conflict of different faiths, gender violence or even blame game between countries among others. CDA explores and tries to uncover the epicenter of the social problem as it tries to provide a possible solution. In this study, a social problem has been identified about how language is used in proverbs to dominate the female gender. The study will therefore revolve around this notable problem and use the CDA program to expose its root cause by identifying, describing, explaining, and evaluating the proverbial language that oppresses women.

Secondly, CDA investigates the relationship between language and power. Language is an important tool that some superior groups use to wield power to themselves. This study is set to investigate how power is abused by men by using language as a tool of oppression. Whenever a proverb is used, it expresses some meaning that represents a certain perception toward a certain thing or idea. It is from this thing or an idea that a group that is represented by an individual tries to maneuver the language of the proverb to oppress another unsuspecting individual representing another group. In this study, men are said to be the dominant group who use the language of the proverbs to wield power to themselves as they exploit their female counterparts. Therefore, language cannot be divorced from power perpetrated by a group within a society because language reflects how power is manifested in an individual as well as in a group within a society.

Thirdly CDA fundamentally deals with the opaque and also transparent structural relationship of power and dominance as is manifested in language. In this case, an attempt will be made to critically examine the language used in proverbs which on the surface seem to be neutral but in its deeper meaning, it has some adverse effect on an individual within a group. CDA will be used to make the opaque or covert language of the proverb that oppresses the female gender overt or in other words transparent. The proverbial language that is complex and intricate to unravel must pass through the three stages of CDA namely; descriptive, explanation, and evaluation stages to make it transparent. It is at the explanation stage where CDA demystifies the hidden agenda behind a linguistic phenomenon whose main aim is to control, discriminate, and dominate a group of people. Sometimes people may not be very conversant with the language and may find it difficult to know the meaning of language behind discourse.

In this study, proverbs may carry an allegorical message behind their appearance since they use metaphors or creative imagery to reflect a broader truth. In this case, therefore, the CDA analyzes their opaque nature hence making them transparent or clear.

CDA has a unique method of discourse analysis. This makes it different from other methods of analysis. CDA does not only describe and interpret discourse in context but it also explains why and how discourse works as a form of social practice Dijk (1995:353). In this study, therefore, it will be very important to identify the context in which the language of the proverb is used. This is because if the proverbial language is explained without considering the context, the explanation may not be very accurate. Without context, the CDA program might find it challenging to bring in to open the linguistic aspect that oppresses women. This study will use Fairclough's (1995) model of discourse analysis which discusses extensively the three dimensions namely, the descriptive, interpretation, and explanation stages.

CDA opens up complexities and challenges dogmatism, reductionism, and dichotomies which are made self-reflective in one's research. Through these processes it makes the structure of power relations and ideologies manifest. In this light, CDA will uncover dichotomies of power perpetrated by men through the language used in proverbs.

1.10.1 Basic assumptions of CDA

CDA is a problem or issue-oriented program. Its use is relevant as long as it can successfully study a relevant social problem, Dijk (2003). This study will focus on discriminatory language in proverbs against women in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect. CDA program can be compared to a metaphor of a remedy that is used to treat a disease. Therefore, for CDA to work, there must be a social problem that would require it to search for a possible solution. Without a social problem is like prescribing some medicine to an imaginary sickness.

In addition to this, CDA focuses on the relationship between discourse and society. This is because discourse provides the raw material that society consumes. This can be analogized to a metaphor of builders of a house who use a plumb line to find out the accuracy of the builders. The same case applies to CDA which is compared to a plumb line that is used by a researcher to find out how discourse is used by the members of a speech community. Therefore,

CDA ensures that the linguistic tools used in proverbs are used appropriately without discriminating against anyone. CDA focuses on a group, however, an individual becomes the conduit in which a group is represented. Therefore, the basic understanding here is that men will represent the superior group which will use language in proverbs to derogate the weaker group who are in this case women. Having identified the oppressed group through discourse, CDA will then focus on how this linguistic violence is resisted by the members of the oppressed group through text and talk.

CDA examines the underlying ideologies that are involved in the reproduction and resistance of linguistic inequality and dominance, Dijk (ibid). In this study, CDA will reveal how proverbial language that is implicit, obscure, or otherwise not immediately obvious is related to the underlying ideologies. It will focus on how proverbial language is manipulated, legitimized, and manufactured to influence the minds and actions of people in the interest of power. CDA will attempt to open up discursive means of power and control of the mind. These influences will be confronted with critical resistance against men who are powerful group who abuse power through language.

Finally, CDA tries to devise and sustain an overall perspective of balance within groups. This is by formulating strategic proposals for the enactment and development of counter-power and counter-ideologies in the practice of challenges and resistance. In this case, therefore, oppressive language in proverbs will be evaluated in this study to show the extent they oppress women in Gĩcũgũ dialect.

1.10.2 Dimensions of CDA

This study will use Fairclough's (1995) model which is aimed at establishing and exploring the relationship between text and its social context. He says that every aspect of language is a communicative event that consists of three dimensions namely; textual, discursive, and social practice. The three dimensions of language will be the lens in which the oppressive language of proverbs will be examined in this study.

1.10.2.1 Discourse – as – text

These are organizations of concrete instances of discourse and their linguistic features. The text is the basic unit of discourse. This study will investigate linguistic tools which include; use of metaphors and proverbs as forms of texts which are used in discourses to oppress one gender over the other. This means that the building blocks of discourse are texts which serve as its raw materials.

1.10.2.2 Discourse – as – discursive practice

This discusses discourse as a feature that is produced, circulated, distributed, and consumed in society. This study will examine how linguistic tools which perpetuate gender imbalance through proverbs reach the social actors represented by an individual within a group. The proverbial language that is used in social places such as in the churches, political forums, social ceremonies among others is the conduit in which it reaches its consumers.

1.10.2.3 Discourse – as – social practice

These are ideologies and hegemonies in which discourse operates. Once a text used in discourse is distributed by the social actors and has reached the consumers, there is the societal expectation in which it must be acted upon. This will involve some make-believe cultural practices in which the mind of a group is influenced and controlled by some powerful groups who misuse their power, Fairclough (1992:93). In this study, therefore, oppressive language is used in proverbs where a possible gathering of men and women exist and they tend to be contented on the way language is used. In other words, one group is ideologically manipulated to be dominated by the other.

1.10.3 Stages of CDA

Corresponding to three dimensions of CDA, Fairclough (ibid), identifies three stages of analysis which progress from the phase of description, interpretation, and finally explanation. He claims that as one shifts from one stage to another, the nature of analysis changes. The phases

will be used to analyze every language of a proverb that oppresses one gender over the other. The three stages are explained as follows with one proverb as an example.

1.10.3.1 Description stage

This refers to describing systematically what linguistic features are there in a text. A text can be a single letter, one word, or even a phrase or strings of sentences. In this study, every word used in a proverb will be described to show their overt as well as their covert nature with the focus on the social variable of texts. Discourse in practice requires the description of the linguistic features people use during the interaction as they mutually construct an event.

1.10.3.2 Interpretation stage

The main concern here is how speakers of a language come to understand discourse on the point of their cognitive, social, and ideological resources. At this point, the use of proverbial language is interpreted putting the context in which the proverb is used into consideration.

1.10.3.3 Explanation stage

At this stage, CDA demystifies the connections between texts and the wider social and cultural contexts and demonstrates how it manipulates the interpretation of a text. This stage is critical since it is here where a social problem must be explained. One must critically examine the linguistic aspect in the proverb to show how it oppresses. For one to realize this, one must recognize the one who says it and to whom it is directed. The speakers' intention and the context in which the proverbial language is used are critical to the understanding of the meaning of the specific proverb.

1.10.4 Constitutive concepts of CDA

CDA has four central and constitutive concepts namely; discourse, power, ideology, and critique. The first constituent is a discourse that falls under the field of linguistics. Fairclough (1989), sees discourse as a process that includes in addition to the text the process of production, of which the text is a product, and the process of interpretation for the text is a resource.

When analyzing the language as used in proverbs, the elements of speech like nouns, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, among other elements are not so important. But rather, discourse is, which is viewed in a much broader perspective. Therefore, when we focus on the language of proverbs during the discourse, the cultural practices of society must be considered. This is because discourse is socially constituted and socially conditioned. This means that proverbial language is made up by society and it is the same society that decides how language is used among its people. It is from this perspective that a group of people take the advantage of the language use to build and maintain their status quo and transform the language according to the way they wish, hence bringing the issue of power where the superior group dominates the inferior one.

Another important constituent of CDA is a critique that reveals power structures and unmasks ideologies. The objects of investigation must not be perceived in terms of negative or extremely exceptionally serious social or political events, Dijk (1993). This is a common misconception of CDA objectives. This is because the word critical must not be examined in a subservient view, but rather a crucial investigation of the language should be done to challenge it and must not be taken for granted. The use of language can mystify and oppress some people or a group of people in the society, however, critique will essentially be used to make visible the interconnectedness of these people or groups. CDA produces and conveys critical knowledge to liberate the oppressed group from forms of linguistic oppression through self-reflection. Therefore, CDA will enlighten and will root out particular kinds of delusions in the language of proverbs since the oppressed group will be aware of its own needs and interests. Researchers on the other hand should be critical to portray their superior ethical standards to cater to research interests and values and make them very explicit. Likewise, this research should be made very transparent and the researcher will not need to apologize for the critical stance taken for this study.

The other important constituent of CDA is ideology. It is defined as a coherent and relatively stable set of beliefs and values, Dijk (1993). Usually, an ideology is not taken positively but it is mostly taken suspiciously. In this study, the oppressive nature of proverbs appears disguised as conceptual metaphors and analogies. The social actors implement the

hidden ideologies in their discourses. By using dominant ideological machinations in their daily life, they change the meaning of these ideologies. However, CDA helps to explain how the dominant ideologies are used and the conflicts they build in their usage.

Finally, power plays another significant role as a major constituent of CDA. Dijk (1998), defines CDA as the analysis of discourse which in essence examines power imbalance, superiority, and inequality. It is important to note that the power that will be discussed in this study is social power which is propagated by a group of people through language as used in proverbs. Individual power is not considered here. By use of CDA program, this study will primarily explore how proverbial language is abused in society to oppress women. A critical dimension of CDA is that it demystifies language as it is spoken naturally. Proverbs are spoken naturally without any influence by outside forces. In this study, CDA aims at analyzing the use of the language of proverbs of those who wield power to themselves and perpetuate prejudices. Power does not necessarily involve the use of force like police aggression against people resisting curfew imposed because of COVID 19 in Kenya in 2020, but power can be exercised to affect the minds of people. Oppressive language of proverbs is gradual and wisely set to control the minds of the unsuspecting group. CDA refers to this as a cognitive dimension of control. Needless to say that modern world power is not exercised by coercion, that is by giving threats, commands, or imposing economic sanctions, but it is rather exercised by persuasion and manipulation. According to Fairclough (1997), the main levels of CDA can be summed up as follows;

- (a) CDA focuses on social and political problems.
- (b) It examines how power is manifested in discourse.
- (c) It views discourse as historical which is understood in relation to the context.
- (d) It mediates the link between the text and society.
- (e) It expresses discourse as interpretive and explanatory.
- (f) It views discourse as a form of social practice that can make transparent the underlying power relations.

1.11 Methodology

This section will deal with the description of data, collection devices and procedures used for the administration of these devices. Analysis of data and presentation procedures will also be discussed.

1.11.1 Data collection

This research is based on Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ, a dialect of Gĩkũyũ language spoken in Kĩrĩnyaga County. The main source of data was generated by the researcher. Having been born in Kĩrĩnyaga East Sub-County, the researcher acquired a native like speaker competence in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ. The researcher made good use of this competence to generate relevant data for this study.

The researcher collected data from the community and wrote down all the proverbs that expressed power and dominance against women. As a provision of CDA, proverbs that expressed dominance of men were also collected. A total of fifty three proverbs were examined. Twenty three proverbs investigated proverbial language that expressed power and dominance against women and thirteen proverbs that expressed dominance of men. The study also examined eleven proverbs that use metaphors to demean women and four proverbs that use metaphors to express dominance of men. The researcher engaged three informants to ensure objectivity and accountability in proverbial vocabulary. The identified informants were all adults who were between 60 to 70 years of age. One from Kĩanyaga town, Kĩrĩnyaga East Sub-County headquarter, the second one from Kathũngũri the Eastern region of Kĩrĩnyaga East Sub-County and the third one from Kabare in the western region of the Sub-County. All the three informants had grown up in the places mentioned above. They all had a good command of the language. The 60 to 70 years old informants could easily interpret the language of proverbs and explain them correctly according the context in which they were used. Many proverbs in this study have been used in the past although they are still widely used today. Therefore a 60 to 70-years-old informants have deeper understanding of the proverbial language and are more exposed to a variety of proverbs than an informants from a younger generation. Njagĩ, (2013), mentions that

older people of 60 years and above use proverbs more frequently in their speeches than people below 60 years.

1.11.2 Data Analysis

After collection of the research data, every proverbial language was analyzed using the core principles concepts of CDA, namely power, dominance and ideology. The language of the proverbs was examined critically to show its hidden ideological agenda perpetuated by men to express their power and dominance against women. Most importantly, each proverb underwent the three stages as suggested by Fairclough (1989) model of Critical Discourse Analysis. These stages are descriptive, interpretation and evaluation stages. The following proverb demonstrates how every proverb was analyzed.

1. Descriptive stage

<i>Aka</i>	<i>erĩ</i>	<i>nĩ</i>	<i>nyũngũ</i>	<i>igĩrĩ</i>	<i>cia</i>	<i>ũrogi</i>
Women	two	are	pots	two	of	poison
Two wives are like two pots of poison						

Other than writing the literal meaning of the vernacular word in English as exemplified above, one requires to give a further description of the vernacular word in English for a better understanding of the proverbial language. In this proverb the word *aka* ‘women’ is a word that has a negative connotation in the context of its usage, hence its use has an ill intention towards women. The word *nyũngũ* ‘pots’ is metaphorically likened to two wives. Pots were traditional earthen wares made of a special type of clay that was used to cook food. *Igĩrĩ* also means two but this time around, it is referring back to the pots. The word *ũrogi* ‘poison’ stands for a concoction that is lethal and it kills when taken orally.

2. Interpretation stage

The CDA interprets the text in place of participants who can be swayed unwillingly by the text or placed into a particular situation because of the social values they are in. On this basis, the text needs to be interpreted relative to the processes of production and interpretation that spell out the discursive practice. The interpretation of the above proverb is that the metaphor

nyũngũ igĩrĩ cia ũrogi ‘two pots of poison’ maps onto *aka erĩ* ‘two wives.’ It is important to note that this is a very old proverb as indicated by the use of pots as the cooking vessel instead of *sufurias*. In the traditional Gĩcũgũ society witchcraft was brewed in pots. A pot that was used in this way was believed to never get cleansed of witchcraft ever again. The pots are back grounded to portray that the two wives never cease to plot evil against each other. Therefore, the two women according to Gĩcũgũ culture are seen as witches as long as they lived together to serve one man.

3. Evaluation stage

Following this argument, the evaluation of the above proverb is that the language used in it deliberately oppresses women by likening them to poison. Ideologically, women are taken as sub-humans and irrational beings who can never cease to wreak havoc against each other. It portrays women as spiteful and jealous people who can never live in harmony with each other as long as they share one same man. Male dominance and power are evident as the two women hate each other as they try to endear a single man.

1.11.3 Data presentation

Data presentation was done following the three stages as suggested by Faircough (ibid) in the analysis stage. The proverbs were interpreted based on their meaning in expressing how power and dominance is expressed against women and show their effects and contributions in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect. They were analyzed to move from critical to non-critical levels of discourse analysis in the dialect under study.

CHAPTER TWO

LANGUAGE AS A TOOL OF OPPRESSION AGAINST WOMEN IN DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE WORLD

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will mainly focus on how women are perceived across cultures. This will be important as it will open up a strong foundation on which this study is set. The chapter will also explore language as a tool of oppression, language and gender, language and culture, the nature of proverbs, the role of proverbs as used by speakers of Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect, proverbs and power, men and power, and finally the conclusion.

2.1 Language as a tool of oppression

Language reflects the face of any human society and its culture. In a patriarchal society, language is used to portray how women are downgraded and taken as second-class citizens. Derogatory language is used against women in religion, politics, culture, and even in workplaces. Wolfe (2017), observes that during a heated verbal exchange, the language directed at women is abusive and reflects unladylike sexual behavior. Words like whore, twat, slut, prostitute are used to abuse women. Women are even compared to sub-human creatures by being called words such as bitch, porker, chick, dog, and so forth. Moreover, the insults for men are largely stemmed from feminine references, for example, motherfucker, son of a bitch, cocksucker among others. Regarding the word bitch above, a woman is a bitch while a man is a son of bitch. One wonders why a man cannot be a bitch in his own right. There are many more derogatory words against women based on their behavior, intelligence, emotions and others based on work, vocations and achievements.

To understand appropriately language as a tool of oppression, one requires to critically look at its context which includes the situation in which the discourse is made, the background of linguistic structures, the intention of the speaker and to whom the information is sent. Context is the basic unit of analysis in CDA because it exposes disorders of a discourse and power structure. Texts such as words and sentences can be analyzed, but their appropriateness and relevance can only be understood by examining the perspectives of their role in the context

in which they are used. This means that the researchers must critically look at the deeper meaning of the discourse so that they can understand its contextual meaning. In this chapter, the context of the proverbial language will be critically examined to expose opaque structures of power and ideologies that oppress women

2.2 Language and gender

Studies have shown how language has been used over the years to oppress women. Women on the other hand have been fighting to liberate themselves over this linguistic violence since 1960. Since that time, there has been a distinct revolution to reform the languages of the world to make them equal and unbiased. Lakoff (1975), is one of the most important pioneers who has made great strides in studying language and gender. He mentions that although men and women belong to the same speech community, they usually use different linguistic forms which to some extent differ from one community to another.

Language plays a pivotal role in society. This is because it manipulates and orders the world we live in and therefore setting the limits of reality. It is through language that the world becomes meaningful and realistic. Human beings tend to use language to express social views and attitudes on how a class of people perceives others concerning gender and age. This is for instance in a situation where discourse is used to defame, discriminate, and stratify women as second-class human beings to their male counterparts. A peculiar characteristic of human society is that language is used to reflect how society is shaped naturally. Therefore, language mirrors the societal attitudes and beliefs of human beings.

Social activities that engender injustices are not as a result of the natural properties of language and symbols, but they are a reflection of social values and attitudes of the way people think in a particular society or culture. Usually, language is used to assist people to communicate with one another, but not to discriminate against males or females. This notwithstanding, men and women have taken different social roles through linguistic influence where gender bias begins. Women have been oppressed by the use of language at different levels of speech. Wardhaugh (2010), identifies the levels as phonological, lexical, semantic, and morphological

levels. He observes that at the phonological level, if a man pronounces words as a woman, then the pronunciation is likely to be viewed as a sign of male effeminacy. He asserts that men feel at ease when they are making a speech to the public but women feel more relaxed and comfortable when they are in private dwellings.

2.3 Language and culture

Language is not simply a means of communicating information, but it plays a critical role of fulfilling a social function (Trudgil1995). It is a vehicle of passing information that establishes and maintains relationships in society. By use of language, people express their feelings, attitudes, and backgrounds when they interact with one another. It is, therefore, through interaction and sharing of ideas that people derive information that shapes up society.

Language is a social phenomenon that is attached to the social structure and the value in society. The perception of the world may be greatly controlled and influenced by the language. Therefore, in this manner, language helps us to unlock what is in our minds and share it with others. This can be expressed through text, non-verbal or verbal cues.

Inequalities in linguistic terms significantly reflect and contribute to the unequal positions of men and women in the society, Pauwels (1998:124). The power relationship that is experienced in society is a result of how boys and girls are brought up and the roles which men and women play in society. As linguistic features, proverbs that will be analyzed in this study will derive a lot from the culture of Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ speakers and show how they contribute in reinforcing and perpetuating linguistic imbalance between genders.

Language is part and parcel of the culture where culture maintains language. This means that discourses are linked up to the society which shapes it. Society practice is an aggregate of the people who come together and mentally engage in some common endeavors. This is reflected in how a community does its things, the way people talk, their beliefs, values, and how power relations operate in society. This study will therefore derive a lot from the culture of the people to understand the oppressive nature of proverbs.

Finally, language as part of culture plays a pivotal role in linking and enforcing the way people use it to assign unbalanced values of men and women. The relationship between

language and culture is indisputably symbiotic. Culture is a result of the human mind and it is defined, perpetuated, and sustained through language.

2.4 The nature of proverbs

Proverbs stand from the epochs of history until today as some of the most powerful and effective instruments in which culture, philosophy, social morality, and values of the society are transmitted. The value of proverbs is not only found in the way they expose the thoughts of the people, but they are also models of the compact and forceful language that compel people to behave according to the principles and morals of the society, Mieder (1984). Apart from their powerful oral expressions, proverbs have proven to be of great significance that benefits the modern man. This is because those who use them and have gifts of creativity can coin them in such away that they can create new ones to avoid hackneyed structures. This is in line with the Chomskyan notion that all common native speakers of a language are capable of producing novel sentences that have never been produced before.

Proverbs provide a rich culture as well as enhancing social reality. The wisdom of society lies in the proverbs. They have a long history as they spread among people with a popular image as they are passed from one generation to another. Mieder (ibid), studied proverbs as “Wisdom of the People.” He says that proverbs cannot be personalized because these pithy structures can be a rich source of texts to speakers and writers.

Proverbs are simple truths of life that reflect the ethical and moral values of society. Not considering their beauty and the imagery used in them, they are graphic representations of truth. Proverbs express aesthetic value and delight in such a way that what they mean is often perceived and accepted as indisputable truth.

Yusuf (1997:120), says that the truth which is expressed by the proverbs is not logical, a priori, or intuitive, but it is usually an empirical truth that is based upon and derived from the people’s experiences of life, human relationship, and how they interact with the world of nature.

It is also important to note that the role of proverbs is often based on the belief that they are traditionally and truly prismatic verbal expressions of the foundation of the folk culture. In

connection to this, Seitel (1981:124), says that proverbs are short, traditional expressions used to perpetuate some social end.

Proverbs evolve with the strides made in the development and growth of society. They reflect a vast aspect of people's culture. They, therefore, precisely portray the worldview of society and lay the means of arousing, defining, exposing, and establishing the needs and expectations of the people. Proverbs, therefore, are a reflection of the linguistic reflection of the total of the societal worldview. Considering this and related views, this study explores systematically the oppression of women by use of proverbial language in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect.

Proverbs convey the truth that is based on common sense and everyday occurrences. They help in understanding what is desired and what is abhorred as well as what is considered correct in society. They are easily mastered. They embrace and symbolize the culture of the people and generate cultural experiences and ideologies of a community.

Moreover, proverbs are perceived as small bits of expressions used in rhetoric to settle disputes that concern the people's etiquette. They involve the use of figures of speech and humorous expressions. The speakers use them to reinforce arguments about what is assumed to be a commonly accepted norm, whether or not the point is moral. In addition to this, proverbs elicit an amusing purpose of linguistic delight.

Proverbs are used in all languages with their resemblance reflected in their dependence on vivid images and the humor used in them. The Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect which is a part of the wider Gĩkũyũ language is recognized for its cultural variety where proverbs are mostly used in oral arts. They form part of the formation of social and cultural knowledge which serves as a base of formulating ideas that influence the social interactions in the society.

Proverbs are important rhetorical apparatus that can mold moral opinions, beliefs, and consciousness in many societies. Finnergan (1970), observes that proverbs are compact expressions used for introducing ideas. They are precise, clear, and exact in the delivery of expressive remarks. This is emphasized in a Nigerian proverb that says, '*proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten.*' This is comparable to an Ethiopian proverb that says, '*a speech with no proverb is like an unsalted stew.*' The Zulu of South Africa also supports these stands by affirming that *a language without proverbs is like a skeleton without flesh, or body without a*

soul. Finnergan (ibid) argues that the ability to use appropriately a well-thought-out proverb with speech is considered wise and intelligent. Although proverbs are powerful tools that enrich a speech positively and empowers a certain class in society, they can also relegate a section of the populace to a lesser position in society.

2.5 Role of proverbs as used by the speakers of the Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect

Like in most African languages, proverbs are common tools that express eloquence and carry the wisdom of the race. They are also used to emphasize meaning and affirming conventional truths. The Gĩcũgũ people use proverbs that encompass a wide range of human endeavors and activities. These proverbs focus on highlighting the role of women, men, and youth.

Proverbs are used on a variety of issues and focus on diverse views of the people to advance societal values and beliefs. Indeed, proverbs cement that which safeguards the identity of the people. In Gĩcũgũ society, they are significantly used in clan meetings, dowry negotiations, and other cultural activities used in the region. They are highly identified as a rich source of language maturity. They are perceived as major structures of communication and humor among people. Most importantly, they play a significant role in settling disputes and concluding arguments of disagreeing parties.

The Gĩcũgũ speakers recognize proverbs as important tools used to impart knowledge, values, and attitudes to the younger generation by the older generation. Therefore, proverbs are taken seriously as pieces of advice that map out the recommended path of social life. This study is therefore set out to examine how Gĩcũgũ proverbs represent the view of women and girls in society and what they imply to their status.

There are only a few Gĩcũgũ proverbs that refer to women's superiority. Wango (1998), notes that the patriarchy is deep-rooted as an ideology that defines men as spontaneous owners of wisdom, power, and ability to rule over women. Women are seen as weaker vessels who should submit to men and are regarded as beings without a measure of knowledge on leadership skills, hence willing to be led by men. In line with Wango's argument, it is important to note that although Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect has been praised as a rich source of cultural identity and expressions,

sometimes, the dialect has been riddled with derogative expressions which particularly oppress the womenfolk. The use of the word *kang'ura* 'clitoris' is commonly used by both men and women and ironically, its use does not arouse any negative feeling to its speakers. This is because it has been deeply entrenched in people's minds as a normal utterance.

2.6 Proverbs and power

Proverbs are the most important yet the most neglected structures of gender discourses that discriminate against genders. Although they provide a rich resource in a community, the language of the proverbs that affect women usually devalue and violate their dignity and integrity, Bologun (2010). Most proverbs are tools of subordination and discrimination of women in many African cultural traditions. Proverbs are usually given little attention and especially those that portray women negatively. They serve as strong pathways that perpetuate male chauvinism and dominance at the expense of women. Among the African communities, proverbs have been known to ascribe power to the masculine gender.

The Yoruba culture has numerous proverbs whose language oppresses women. When one evaluates the meaning and interpretations of the metaphors used in Yoruba proverbs, it is men who stand at an advantage. Ogunwale (1998), identifies several proverbs from Yoruba that portray derogation of the female gender by men. Many of the Yoruba proverbs portray women as being absurd, disobedient, and indolent.

Women oppression in society is realized through proverbial language which directs and governs the social structure of the society. Wang (2000), claims that women are demeaned, abused, belittled, and stratified at the lowest cadre in the social stratum while men are classified high up the ladder of power. Proverbs are key resources that bring out this reality. There are stereotyped images of women that reveal a relatively high degree of misogyny which through the language of proverbs, influence the social viewpoint of the society. This view aggravates the notion that the language of proverbs is deeply rooted in society and contributes to perpetuating gender corruption against women folk. The Chinese and Greek proverbial languages echo the African view of proverbs in that they perceive men as superior to women who on the other hand have become complacent with this linguistic vice.

2.7 Men and power

Whenever women want to interact, they do it to maintain and seek support to enhance solidarity while on the other hand, men tend to socialize to secure and possess power and status, Holmes (1998). This is one of the central claims on men and women which social linguists call universal tendencies. During interaction processes, the discourses used by men and women manifest a power relationship that is built up in a society where men dominate while women take the back stage.

The style women use to express themselves during discourse has been greatly stereotyped as cooperative while men's communicative style has been overly generalized as competitive and lacking cooperative aspects. The interaction patterns of men and women demonstrate a kind of hierarchical order of power where men take the upper stage while women take the lower one. Therefore, these social discourses reflect the dominance of men in society.

Men and women interact in such a way that both have learned how to behave in a certain way where men place themselves at the helm of power while women learn to be humans who have been subjected to take a subordinate position, Wardhaugh (2002). Wardhaugh (ibid) sums up the difference between men and women and the positions they fill in society. He posits that men claim to be powerful and are said to be more authoritative hence fight to be given their rightful place in the society while women rescind to their inferior positions. This study seeks to investigate the proverbial language used in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect and show how dominance and power manifest in this society.

2.8 Oppressive language of proverbs in different societies across the world

In this chapter, proverbs from different cultural backgrounds across the world will be examined. This is important to this study since it will provide a deeper and broader understanding of how language is used to oppress women the world over. The CDA program will be used to critically analyze every proverb by describing its text, followed by an explanation and finally evaluation. CDA will also help to show where and how proverbial language is used to oppress women. In the description of the text, however, even some very obvious words to a

speaker of the English language have been done. This is mainly to fulfill the stages of analysis as a requirement of CDA.

2.8.1 Oppressive language of proverbs against wives

Kochman (2011), says that different cultures exemplify different perceptions of women who have become wives. This is because they have been overshadowed by the male-dominated society as seen in the following proverbs:

1. *When a man marries a woman, one stops to dread hell.*

This proverb originates from America. Hell is a place described in the Bible, Revelation 19:20, as a place where a fiery lake of fire burns with sulfur. It is a place of great and eternal pain. The interpretation of this proverb is that when a man is not married, he lives a peaceful life with no one to nag him. However, the moment he marries, trouble begins. A woman is compared to hell where no one would wish to go. This is because when a man marries, he finds an equivalent person who is compared to hell, that is, his wife. The ideological aspect behind the language of this proverb is to remind women about their troublesome character which they must learn to control. What they do or say must be done with utmost care lest they are compared to hell. Men on the other hand enjoy power over women as they arouse fear in them not to offend their counterparts. However, men are reminded that marrying is a choice and not mandatory, therefore they can stay without a wife and live happily and stop bothering themselves with wives who will drive them to hell.

2. *She is as kind as a lamb with her mother, but as soon as she gets a husband, she keeps on darting her long-tongue.*

This proverb originates from Serbia. The word lamb is a metaphor that refers to an unmarried girl. A lamb is an innocent, harmless, and tender animal. The phrase *darting her long tongue* stands for a noisy and irritating behavior. The proverb means that while a young girl lives with her mother, she is naïve and pleasant to stay with. But when the girl gets married and gets a husband, the girl changes suddenly and the same girl known to be very innocent and silent in her

mother's hands becomes chaotic and will never give peace to her husband. She keeps on lashing her husband with nasty words. She becomes a burden to him instead of providing comfort. The ideological agenda of the language used in this proverb is to remind women to control their tongues when they speak to men. This is a subtle expression of power and dominance of men over women.

Some proverbs caution men against marrying girls who are believed to wreak havoc on a man's life as in these proverbs:

3.If you have a wife then you are not a master.

The proverb comes from Russia. In this proverb, the word master stands for a man. The master is the head of a home and the center of power and authority. It is the master who makes major decisions in a home. The proverb means that when a man marries a wife, she overthrows the master and takes his position to become the new head of the family. She becomes the new master, taking with her all his responsibilities. Therefore, the husband becomes a stranger in his home with no say. The ideological scheme behind this proverbial language is to caution women not to go beyond their responsibilities. It arouses fear in them not to surpass men. Used in this manner, men retain their power in the family as masters and continue controlling women.

4.When choosing a wife close your eyes and commend your soul to God.

This proverb comes from America. To some extent, the proverb employs some humor. This is because it is ridiculous for one to ask God for something, yet you know that what you ask for will put your life at stake. The phrase *commend your soul to God* alludes to the great tribulations you will go through in the hands of the would-be wife. The ideological intention of the proverbial language is to illustrate that getting a good wife is like groping into the darkness whereby, when you choose a bad one, you must get ready to face untold suffering. The linguistic framework of the proverb dominates because women are chosen the way commodities are chosen in the market. This is a way of telling women that men hold the power of choice and whoever they have chosen will live under their mercy. However, wives should be taken as a blessing but not as people to be carried with the suspicion to wreak havoc to their husbands.

Some proverbs alert men who marry beautiful women because it is like beckoning trouble when you marry them, for instance;

5. If you marry a beautiful girl, you have married trouble.

This is a Nigerian proverb. The proverb utilizes paradox since instead of marrying a beautiful girl and become happy, you instead invite problems. The underlying meaning of this proverb is that all the eyes of men in society will be on this beautiful woman. Therefore, every man would like to love to seduce her. The husband will find it rough since it becomes an uphill task to keep on pestering her beautiful woman for fear of being loved by another man. This makes the life of the husband very difficult which is referred to as *trouble* in the proverb. The ideological aspect of the language used in this proverb is that the woman is being cautioned from being promiscuous. She is made to see her beauty as a source of agony instead of enjoying her God-given right of nature. Power and dominance are manifested in the language of this proverb since men can maneuver its language to castigate the beauty of a woman instead of appreciating it. The woman, therefore, hates herself for a very unjustifiable reason which she has no control over it.

6. The wife who admires herself in the mirror hates a saucepan.

This proverb comes from Yoruba people. Naturally, women like to admire themselves in the mirror and there is nothing wrong with that. A sauce pan is around a deep metal container with a long handle used for cooking food on a cooker. What the proverb implies is that women who keep on admiring themselves in the mirror have no time to cook for their husbands, in short, they are lazy. This means that the husband might be ravaged by hunger because his wife cannot cook for him. The idea behind this proverb is to ridicule lazy women and encourage them to put the interest of their men first. It is meant to blindfold them not to see themselves as important as their husbands. This is an expression of dominance by men which reflects power over women. Women should be given freedom of doing what they please to do so long as they fulfill their house chores. There is no guarantee that when she admires herself she must neglect her husband. This is a fallacy without any tangible evidence.

Language is used in proverbs to express the fact that although women do noble tasks in the upbringing of children and performing household chores, their work is reduced to nothing as illustrated in the following Canadian proverb;

7. A lady works perfectly in the living room, a good wife in the kitchen and a harlot demonstrates her art in the bedroom.

The proverb exploits the environs of a house. Different chores are done differently in different places in the house. However, the rock bottom of the proverb implies that there are some places in the house that a woman is not obliged to enjoy her right. According to *Webster Dictionary*, the word harlot means a woman who has sex for money. Therefore, referring to the expression *a harlot demonstrates her art in the bedroom* is a serious abuse of a wife. The husband is always suspicious of a woman who undertakes her bedroom duty nicely instead of appreciating it. Ideologically, the language of the proverb is set to frustrate the desire of a wife to endear her husband. Although men might enjoy the art demonstrated by the wife secretly, what she does is downplayed hence her efforts become fruitless. This expresses the power of a man over a woman because a woman is made to see herself as unimportant before the man she loves. This puts a woman in an awkward predicament as she might fear to do what she enjoys most. She fears being told that what she only knows is to serve the sexual desires of her husband at the expense of serving him elsewhere.

Sometimes a proverb may illustrate women as unpredictable and a source of trouble to her husband as exemplified in this proverb;

8. A bad wife is like a dreary, stormy day.

This proverb is used in Hebrew language. A dreary day makes someone bored and unhappy whereas a stormy day has destructive rains and winds. A bad wife is therefore compared to a combination of harsh weather patterns. Comparing a human being with such weighty words of weather draws a picture of a monster devoid of human feelings. The ideological agenda of the proverb is to arouse a woman to be cheerful and to entertain men all the time. Women will fear to be likened to such vile descriptions. Power and dominance are manifested in this proverb as a woman is kept on her toes not to offend her husband but should always endear him.

Universally, women are expected to express chastity, commitment, and zeal in all domains. A woman should take care of the husband, his well-being, his emotions, and sexual satisfaction and must not grumble or show any sadness. The following proverbs illustrate how language is used to portray women in light of their expected roles and behavior:

9. *A good wife is known by the clothes of her husband.*

This is a Turkish proverb. The phrase *known by the clothes of her husband* refers to the clothes which her husband wears. Husbands wear clothes which are prepared by their wives. This means that when men look smart, compliments will be accorded to the wife. If on the other hand, they do not look smart, the wife is to blame. The language of the proverb ideologically places women directly below men. Its language classifies women as subordinates whose purpose is to serve the interest of men. This directly portrays men's dominance over women as they (women) are to blame when men get embarrassed in public. This is an irrational blame game because men should be responsible for their elegance but should not use women as their scapegoats.

10. *A husband should even be glorified with cassava.*

This proverb is used in Benin. Cassava is the staple food of the Benin people. It makes a fine delicacy if well prepared by the wife. The husband, the main subject in the proverb is said to be glorified as a king. This expresses his powerful position in the family. The word *even* has been used to imply that apart from being glorified with cassava, there are other things to be done to him to entertain him. The proverbial language oppresses since it is the woman who cooks for him and does other things. This is an imposition of power by men as women must oblige to the demands of their husbands. Ideologically, women are made to see men as demi-gods. The language of the proverb treats women unfairly because they are used as beasts of burden who should serve men according to their wishes.

2.8.2 Oppressive proverbial language of mothers-in-law

Schippner (2006) states that mothers-in-law too are at the proverbial middle trigger of negative in-law qualifications. This is because in-law relationships are exceptionally regarded as

inferior to blood relationships. A view expressed in proverbial language from different cultural backgrounds as illustrated below;

11. The only good mother-in-law is the one who is dead.

This is an American proverb. The language of this proverb curses all mothers-in-law. Death is the last thing for a human being to wish another human being. The idea behind the proverb is to warn the son or daughter-in-law to keep off from her. The proverbial language refers to a mother-in-law and not to a father-in-law. It, therefore, oppresses women. It brings out an image of a good father-in-law who is harmless as opposed to his female counterpart. This is a gesture of empowering men as people of integrity and stature because they relate well with their sons and daughters-in-law. This is a very unfair wish to mothers-in-law because there can be fathers-in-law who can even be worse than mothers-in-law in character and relationship to their sons and daughters-in-law.

12. A mother-in-law is a punishment and not a relative.

The proverb originates from Brazil. If somebody is your relative there is a blood tie. Those who use this proverb do not see anything good in any mother-in-law. It generalizes them and just sees them as a curse. The ideological intention behind the proverbial language is to demonize mothers-in-law and refer to them as evil people. There is no proverbial language that describes men the way mothers-in-law are described in this proverb, a sign of power manifest of men. Nothing guarantees a relative to be a saint. Some relatives can be more torturous than the said mothers-in-law.

Mothers-in-law are usually abhorred, rejected and associated with evil and hell in various proverbs as exemplified below:

13. If a stone misses a mongrel it won't miss an evil mother-in-law.

This is a Danish proverb. A mongrel is a dog that is a mixture of local different breeds. A mongrel often strays and roams about looking for something to eat. Since it scavenges in other people's homesteads, whoever encounters it drives it away by throwing a stone at it. This is the stone that is said that if it misses a mongrel it won't miss an evil mother-in-law. The users of this proverb always carry mothers-in-law with suspicion. The ideological agenda of the linguistic

aspect of this proverb is to arouse fear and suspicion to mothers-in-law whenever they pay a visit to their sons and daughters-in-law. This inconveniences mothers-in-law greatly because if they would like to give a piece of advice to their sons or daughters-in-law, they may not have the confidence to do so because they have been already been suspected to be evil. This is very dehumanizing to mothers-in-law because to compare them with a mongrel is very unfair.

14. The husband's mother is the wife's devil.

The origin of this proverb is Germany. The proverb utilizes the metaphor of a devil. The husband's mother is compared to the devil. A devil is known to be very evil in many worldly religions. A devil will lie, betray, torture, humiliate, kill, and commit every evil known in the world. A devil does not have an iota of human sympathy. All the characteristics of the devil as defined above are what a husband's mother is. This proverb uses a strong derogatory word and it, therefore, abuses women. The idea behind the language of this proverb is to create a sour relationship between the daughter-in-law and the mother-in-law. Nothing evil is mentioned about the husband's father meaning that they are highly respected. The language of the proverb oppresses since it discredits women and empowers men. The oppressive words of the proverb are unfounded because there is no way the husband's mother can bring up her son well until he reaches the age to marry and all of a sudden turn into a devil when she gets a daughter-in-law. To compare a mother-in-law with a devil is therefore very inconsiderate and inappropriate.

2.8.3 Oppressive proverbial language of daughters-in-law

Schipper (2006), observes that daughters-in-law suffer adversely in the hands of mothers-in-law. This is because they see daughters-in-law as non-starters and inexperienced as illustrated in the following proverbs;

15. Ensure you always sweep cleanest where the mother-in-law looks.

The proverb originates from Mexico. The phrase *where the mother-in-law looks* stands for a sensitive matter which can arouse the mother-in-law's attention. Daughters-in-law are advised to be very cautious whenever they interact with mothers-in-law. The proverbial language aims at portraying mothers-in-law as cynics who always love to criticize. Men are not mentioned in the

proverb but are implicitly portrayed as reasonable people who will not dent their relationship with their daughters-in-law. This gives them credit and much praise as they earn some dominance in the family.

16. A mother-in-law digs here and there as the pig does with its snout.

The proverb is expressed in Yoruba language. A pig is classified as a scavenger, an animal that keeps on digging the ground looking for something to eat. Like the proverbial pig, the mother-in-law keeps on looking for trouble. She is a fault-finder who waits for the slightest provocation from a daughter-in-law to blame her. The idea behind the linguistic aspect of this proverb is to tarnish the name of the mother-in-law by showing how disgruntled she is as she keeps on poking her nose wherever her daughter-in-law is. The Yoruba speakers do not have a parallel proverb that depicts men the way women are portrayed in this proverb. This is an impression of power behind their personality as well as implying that they relate well with their daughters-in-law.

Mothers-in-law are described as inconsistent, vengeful and are always carried with suspicion as in these proverbs:

17. Never trust on mother-in-law's soup because you are likely to sleep without having eaten

The proverb hails from the Dominican Republic. The proverb uses the word *never* to emphatically warn the listener not to trust the mother-in-law. The literal meaning of this proverbial language is that a mother-in-law is not entrusted to prepare soup because she might not prepare it at all hence whoever waits for it to goes to bed hungry. The ideological agenda behind its language is to depict mothers-in-law as untrustworthy and selfish since they hate to share with their daughters-in-law. The proverbial language implies that men on the other hand are generous and selfless, a reflection of strength in their character.

18. A good relationship between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law only goes half depth of a teeth.

The proverb is used in the Portuguese language. The phrase *half depth of a teeth* implies a half-baked relationship that is questionable. The language in this proverb implies that although the relationship between the mother-in-law and the daughter-in-law can appear to be good on the

surface, there is still some sinister motive held by the mother-in-law. The relationship between a daughter-in-law and a mother-in-law is that of suspicion, deceit, and betrayal which is the ideological scheme to dent the mother-in-law's integrity.

19. If a daughter-in-law breaks a tiny dish, the household is ruined but whenever a mother-in-law breaks a precious vessel it is nothing.

This proverb is used in Korea. The words *breaks a tiny dish* might not necessarily mean breaking the dish per se, but it might stand for trivial mistakes done by the daughter-in-law. A precious vessel stands for a serious offense but not the vessel itself. The linguistic aspect of the proverb illustrates that the daughter-in-law is always admonished by the mother-in-law after she does some trivial mistakes. In other words, she is accused of perpetrating unpardonable sin. On the other hand, when mothers-in-law make a serious mistake, no one raises a finger against them but instead things go on unabated. The idea behind the proverb is to indicate how mothers-in-law can abuse power and get away with it whereas daughters-in-law suffer the consequence. The proverbial language depicts how monstrous mothers-in-law can be. However, its language oppresses since fathers-in-law too can even be more monstrous than their female counterparts yet no language of a proverb that depicts them the way women have been depicted. Men enjoy power hidden behind the language of this proverb as women are abused.

20. A daughter-in-law is not praised as a servant is.

The proverb originates from Finland. A servant is a person who is employed and is under his master or mistress. The work of a servant is to receive orders from those above them. Therefore, a daughter-in-law who can be a mistress of the house can control what the servant does. The Finnish speakers however exploit the language of this proverb and assert that a servant is more important than a mistress. Ideologically, the proverbial language is meant to belittle daughters-in-law and emphasize male ascendancy as the servant referred to in this proverb is most likely to be a male. The linguistic perspective of the proverb treats daughters-in-law unfairly since they should be given the respect that they deserve

21. Eyes are stuck at the back of the wicked mother-in-law.

The proverb has used synecdoche as a linguistic style. The words *eyes that are stuck at the back* refers to the ever-pestering behavior of a mother-in-law. This is the type of a mother-in-law who

would always want to interfere with every move the daughter-in-law makes. In other words, the daughter-in-law is denied the right of privacy. The same applies to a proverb from the same country that says, *at the back of the mother-in-law, are always suspecting ears*. This means that no word escapes a mother-in-law without her attention. The two proverbs use oppressive language against women. The proverbial language is designed to ridicule mothers-in-law who would genuinely like to know the progress of their daughters-in-law but instead, they are rebuked. Although there can be some mothers-in-law who can behave as they are described, there is nothing wrong with wanting to know what a daughter-in-law is doing. Therefore, it is not justifiable to refer to them as wicked mothers-in-law because there can also be fathers-in-law who might go to an extent of assaulting their daughters-in-law even sexually. Instead, the hidden language of the proverb approves them as reasonable people hence promoting their dominance.

In case the daughter-in-law seeks rapport and friendly relationship with the mother-in-law, then she must stoop low to express her innocence and loyalty like indicated in this example;

22. A daughter-in-law has dog obedience and horse patience.

This is a Swedish proverb. A dog is trained and taught to obey its master. If the dog disobeys the owner it is punished. Likewise, a horse is also trained to be patient so that it can serve its master in a good way. The proverb uses the imagery of a dog and a horse to illustrate the depth in which a daughter-in-law relates to her mother-in-law. The language in the proverb ideally demonstrates a very cosmetic relationship between a daughter-in-law and a mother-in-law. The daughter-in-law lives in constant fear of her mother-in-law. This implies that even if you see as if the relationship between a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law is cordial, one is being oppressed by the other. This is the relationship between a cat and a mouse. For a such relationship to survive, the daughter-in-law must pledge loyalty and demonstrate her innocence. The language of the proverb, therefore, oppresses because even if the daughter-in-law accords the mother-in-law some due respect, a wrong judgment is pronounced to the mother-in-law that she is too patronizing. Mothers-in-law are always suspected even if what they do is right.

Source of the above examples: Adler, (1991) *Women in Cross-Cultural Perspective*.

2.8.4 Oppressive language of proverbs against widows

23. If you marry a widow with five children, you have married five thieves.

This proverb is in Danish language. The proverb means that a widow is not capable of bringing up her children alone without the assistance of her husband and in case she brings them up, the children are said to be thieves. Calling the children of a person who lost her husband thieves is adding insult to the injury. It humiliates and traumatizes the widow. The ideological aspect of this proverb is to demonstrate that widows are so weak that without a man, then they are doomed to fail. This is ascribing power to men. The language of the proverb oppresses because not all widows can fail in their responsibility of bringing up disciplined children. Some can bring them up to become children of integrity in society.

24. Widows are leftovers of the dead.

The proverb is used in Portuguese language. Leftovers are remains of food that has become stale and are no longer palatable because eating it will result to food poisoning. The ideological scheme in the language of this proverb is to imply that the main meal is the husband who is now dead and the widow is the leftovers. This regards men to be more important than women even in death thus expressing their dominance posthumously. Therefore, the language of the proverb oppresses. It is indeed unreasonable to liken women to leftovers. No proverb refers to widowers who have been left by their wives as leftovers yet they have been enjoying a relationship with the deceased when she was alive. Widows should be respected as worthy members of society and left to live a stress-free life.

If the husband passes on, the status of a wife is shaken. This is expressed through a Mali as illustrated below;

25. If a baobab falls, the goats start climbing on it.

The proverb maps on the imagery of a baobab tree which is a huge tree that grows in the African savanna. The baobab represents the deceased husband. The goats stand for men who seize the opportunity of wooing the widow. Climbing denotes having some sexual relationship with her. The ideological motive of the proverbial language is that women do not have permanent owners. If the husband is not there, other men would quickly come to replace his position. This indicates

how men can quickly use their power to dominate women who on the other hand readily submit to them. The proverbial language dominates since it underrates the dignity of widows by using the obscure language of metaphors that paints their reputation negatively which is not right.

2.8.5 Oppressive language of proverbs against women's intellect

The intelligence and wisdom of women is also questioned through the use of some proverbs.

26. A woman has a shape of an angel, the heart of a snake and the brains of an ass.

This proverb originates from Germany. The woman has been compared to the imagery of an angel, the heart and a snake. The encyclopedic entry of an angel is beauty, that of a snake is evil and for an ass is foolishness. Shape refers to the physical beauty of a woman that enchants men. This is because their shape attracts them sexually. On the other hand, women are said to have the heart of a snake and thus can wreak havoc on anyone any time when provoked. Finally, the brain of an ass regards women to be foolish, people who cannot reason out as good as men. Telling a woman that she has the shape of an angel is an ideological design to exploit her sexually which is an impression of male dominance. Although men praise women in their shape, they, however, accuse them to have the heart of a snake and the brains of an ass. This devalues women and implicitly regards men. Therefore, the adjectives used to describe a woman in this proverb indicates its oppressive intention against women. Even the adjective that seems fairer, that is, the shape of an angel, has still some weird reasons behind it.

27. Women and children's intelligence are the same.

The proverb originates from Ghana. This proverb compares women with the intelligence of children. Children lack wisdom due to their young age and cannot reason out as adults. The idea behind the language of this proverb is to demean a woman to the level of a child. However, the hidden ideology behind the hidden words of the proverb is that behind the scene, there is a man who claims to be more intelligent than the woman hence portraying his dominance over her. It is not worth to compare women with children because these are mothers who carried them for nine months and nurtured them after birth. Women are grown-ups and should be given a good standing in the society where this proverb comes from.

Some proverbs emphasize that beautiful women are not brainy as exemplified in the following proverbs

28. *As beautiful as a peacock but the brains of block of wood.*

This proverb also comes from Mongolia. Peacocks are the most beautiful birds on the planet and are appreciated by everyone. However, when one tells somebody that her brain is that of a block of wood, it is a blatant insult. This is equivalent to a Polish proverb that says, *a toy's head and an empty brain*. The idea behind the two proverbs is to demonstrate how men perceive women in the manner of their thinking. It is a way of appraising their physical built but disregarding their intellect which is more precious than beauty. They accost the precious gift of wisdom to themselves thus affirming their power and dominance. The language of the proverb demeans women since there is no way a person's manner of thinking can be compared to inanimate things like a block of wood and a toy's head. To describe women this way is to dehumanize them very irrationally.

Source: Nicoleta (2015) *Culture and Gender Role Difference*

2.9 Conclusion

The chapter has shown that, indeed, women are abused, demeaned, and belittled by male-dominated society. Much worse is the fact that women are their very own enemies and are suspicious of their very cross relations especially mothers and daughters-in-law. The study has provided a good foundation to show how women are perceived across cultures and will contribute significantly to examination of the dominant language of proverbs in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect in which this study is set to investigate.

CHAPTER THREE

PROVERBIAL LANGUAGE THAT EXPRESSES POWER AND DOMINANCE AGAINST WOMEN IN GĪ-GĪCŪGŪ

3.0 Introduction

The analysis of proverbial language that expresses power and dominance against women in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ begins in this chapter. The previous chapter has analyzed power and dominance against women by use of proverbs in different cultures of the world. This chapter will analyze the linguistic aspect of proverbs by examining the context in which they are used. Wodak (2001), points out that CDA looks at subtle linguistic structures because even if it does not overtly expose the covert meaning and ideologies, it often points out some properties of pragmatics used in communication. She argues that the speaker's intention, their present mood, the opinions they express, and the attitude they have towards other participants during discourse practice are all subtly reflected in sentence structures among other things. In this study, sentence structures of proverbs will be investigated to expose hegemony, ideologies, and realms of power in discourses as exemplified in the following proverbs.

3.1 Language of proverbs that expresses power and dominance against women

Proverbial language is used by Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ speakers to demean women folk as they are used as sex objects by men.

29. *Kĩgwa* *gĩcokagia* *mũrĩo* *gĩtina* *gĩgĩkura*.
Sugarcane returns sweetness bottom growing.
As the sugarcane grows old, its sweetness goes to the bottom.

Kĩgwa 'sugarcane' is likened to a woman. The people of Gĩcũgũ are farmers and sugarcanes are widely grown. Sugarcanes are chewed raw as one sieves the juice from them. *Mũrĩo* 'sweetness' is contextually used to refer to the pleasure one derives when having sex with a woman while *gĩtina* 'bottom' is the lower part of the sugarcane where the juice of the sugarcane is said to be the sweetest as the sugarcane continues to grow. However, contextually it stands for a woman's sexual anatomical structures. The metaphor of sugarcane is used to hide the ideological agenda driven by men and it causes disrespect to women of whatever age. The interpretation of this

proverb is that usually, sugarcane is sweet but their sweetness depends on their age. A woman who reaches 25 to 30 years is regarded ripe for marriage. Therefore, the proverbial language is contextually used to trigger an emotive image to the hearer who sees it as a strategy of looking at women as objects of sexual satisfaction. It suggests that the bottom part of the sugarcane is compared to the private part of a woman hence providing men with an opportunity to exploit them sexually. This linguistic style ascribes power to young men who yearn to have sex with older women as they would like to have a taste of their ‘sweetness.’ This elicits an ugly social problem. Used in this way, the language used in the proverb oppresses since it disrespects and demeans women putting their integrity at stake.

Some proverbs use language to illustrate a strained relationship between a man and a woman who is said to be very lazy to satisfy her husband’s needs as exemplified below;

30. *Mwere wa mūka kīgūta ūbūragwa kathiga kamwe.*
 Millet of wife lazy beaten stone one.

The millet harvest of a lazy woman has only one bunch of harvest to extract grains.

A woman in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect can be identified by the use of two common nouns; *mūtumia* and *mũndũmūka*. The two nouns can be used interchangeably depending on the context of their use. However, the word *mūtumia* is used more respectably than *mũndũmūka*. The words *kathigakamwe* ‘one stone’ stand for something too little to be appreciated. The interpretation of the proverb is that the ‘millet’ *mwere* represents hard work or the effort put by a woman which encodes the ideological significance between the relationship of a man and a woman. Millet is a highly regarded crop that many households cook and is believed to boost the strength of a man if it is especially taken in form of fermented porridge known as gruel. The ability to cook some gruel or fermented porridge is one of the most vital qualifications of a good wife. Therefore, a good wife is supposed to work tirelessly to ensure that she had enough millet to ensure a steady supply of strength boosting porridge. Contextually, men express their power and dominance by ridiculing a lazy woman who might not have been capable of gratifying her husband’s sexual desire. Sexual gratification of the husband is likened to cultivating a rich harvest of millet that is vital for their livelihood. The linguistic aspect of the proverb oppresses women since they are

always blamed if their husbands do not sire children because of their weak vitality yet there is no language used in any proverb to blame them.

Proverbial language is utilized to depict how women are irredeemably lazy and cannot change their lazy behavior in their lifetime.

31. *Kīgūta kĩa mūndūrūme nīkīgūtakaga no kĩa mūndūmūka gītīgūtūkaga.*
Lazy of man changes but of woman doesn't
A lazy man changes and becomes hardworking but a lazy woman remains lazy throughout her lifetime.

The word *mūndūrūme* 'man' is purported to hold a more superior position than a woman in the context this proverbial language is used. Contextually, the proverb is used to rebuke a lazy woman, especially where men would want to hide their weakness. The main clause in this proverb emphasizes that men are dynamic and can change and improve from their lazy behavior but women are said to be irredeemable. The proverbial language tolerates and encourages laziness in men who believe that even if they are lazy, they will at some point change and become hardworking. On the other hand, a woman who might not fulfill her obligation because of some plausible reasons will be termed to be lazy and will bear the cross of failure in the family. No yardstick measures to what extent one is regarded as lazy. This means that even if a woman will work round the clock, men will always look out for some gaps which women have not fulfilled. Men, therefore, take advantage of this proverbial language to express their power and dominance over women since women are indefinitely cursed while lazy men are cushioned and given a soft landing. The ideological design behind the language of the proverb is to keep women on their toes to work hard and serve men. Women are made to believe that laziness is like a curse that will always haunt them in their lives and will follow them even to their graves.

Proverbial language is used to demonstrate how women backbite their men and betray their efforts in their struggle to make progress.

32. *Njamba ya mūndūrūme īrūdagūa nī aka.*
Cock of man fallen by women
A great man's downfall is caused by a woman.

This proverb is used to caution men to be wary of women while engaging in their relationship. The word *njamba* ‘cock’ maps out onto *mündürũme* ‘a brave man’ who is recognized by the society as an undisputed fighter. It is worth noting that this is a very old proverb that was used during intertribal wars. Many times, when warriors went to war, they would always come back home victoriously and even carrying the loot. The warriors were feared and respected by all and sundry in the society. In modern society, however, where intertribal wars no longer happen, the bravery of men is defined in terms of wealth and other achievements. This earns them recognition in the society. The ideological scheme behind the proverbial language is to contextually illustrate that although men may make progress in developing and enriching the family, the enemy is within whose agenda is to pull them down or betray them. This is because women can spend money lavishly and impoverish the man. The proverb warns men to be careful not to be carelessly seduced by women who might lead to their downfall. It is a gesture that tells women to keep off men’s affairs and should not know their secrets. This culminates in some kind of power and dominance in men. The proverb fetches a lot from the Biblical story of Adam and Eve which shows that women misled men by craftily luring them into sin.

In some instances, the proverbial language is used to portray women as people who subjugate peace and cause chaos where peace should prevail.

33. *Kĩathĩ kĩtharagua nĩ gaka kamwe.*
 Meeting spoiled by lady one
 One small elderly lady can spoil a market.

The word *gaka* is a diminutive form of an elderly woman that describes her as small, unimportant, dangerous, ugly, and tired. The proverbial language implies that whenever the small elderly lady appears in the ‘meeting’ *kĩathĩ* trouble occurs. In addition to this, the use of the word *kamwe* ‘one’ adds more weight to women's derogation. This is because the word suggests that a situation may not require many elderly ladies to paralyze a meeting but it only requires a single lady. Ideologically, men would take the advantage of this proverbial language and use it in the context where women are prevented from being involved in important societal affairs. This is because it is believed that women will bring disagreements which will eventually

cause division in the meeting. However, this is just an excuse that men create so that they can dominate women and rule over them.

According to Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ speakers, the status of a woman is determined by men who judge whether the woman is desirable or not as seen in the proverb below.

34. *Mwere mwega ãmenyagwa na maketha*
Millet nice known by harvest.
A nice millet plant is known by the harvest.

In this proverbial language, the words *mweremwega* ‘nice millet’ stand for the hidden agenda behind the discourse because they figuratively stand for a woman who is capable of bearing children. On the other hand, ‘the harvest’ *maketha* represents children and productivity on other issues of life. The passivation of the proverb enforces the ability to distinguish a nice millet from a bad one. This means that for a woman to be ranked highly, she must meet the expectations and demands of the society and if she does not, she suffers rejection and disrespect. The ideological intention of the proverbial language is to motivate women to try and impress their husbands so that they can seek favors from them. It also ridicules barren women and regards them as misfits in society. This is because like the millet plant that produces abundantly, the woman must give birth to earn recognition. Failure to get children, the woman is treated like an outcast. To the speakers of Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect the yardstick of a good wife is the ability to give birth to many children and building up a well to do family. Women are supposed to take care, nurture their children, and teach them the values and attitudes of society. If the children become unruly, the woman carries the blame. The language of the proverb reflects some male dominance since it places women below men who determine whether the harvest is rich or poor. Therefore, man is given the power to control a woman’s life. The language of the proverb alludes that even if a woman can be good in all her deeds, she is judged by her harvest.

The language of proverbs is sometimes used to dictate the mode of dressing of women and is also used to judge them by the complexion of their skin

35. *Mbũri ãtũragua nĩ rũa*
Goat lives by skin
Goats live because of their skin

The word *mbūri* ‘goat’ is used figuratively to stand for a woman in the context this proverb is used. *Rūa* ‘skin’ refers to the way women look physically in terms of clothes and their complexions. The proverbial language is used by men to judge women by the color of their skin and to dictate what they should wear. Since goats of the same age have the same quality of meat, the butcher can only judge their beauty by the quality of their skins. The hidden ideological scheme behind the language of the proverb is to remind a woman that she must be cautious to take care of her skin and complexion to attract men. This proverb contradicts another proverb that says *mūndūmūka nī mītugo* ‘a woman is her behavior’ which puts women in an awkward predicament since they do not know whether it is the color of their skin, their mode of dressing, or the behavior that will give them credit. Women of good moral standing who do what is right and are faithful to their husbands might fail the test because the color of their skin is not attractive. This is a show of power manifestation by men. On the other hand, if a woman has a beautiful complexion and good behavior, she may not gain much reputation if she, unfortunately, dresses poorly. The society believes that if a woman is attractively dressed, she can hide any weakness she has and no one can see it. The proverbial language is contextually used to advise women to be cautious in their mode of dressing and the way they look as this is a critical criterion of judging them.

Some proverbs express distrust in women and compares them with uncircumcised boys who are judged more favorably than them.

36 *.Mwia na kībī akenaga kīa rūa no mwia na mūndūmūka akenega akua.*
 Stealing with lad happy when initiated but stealing with woman happy die
 He who steals with a lad is relieved when he is circumcised but he who steals with a
 woman is relieved when she dies.

Kībī ‘uncircumcised boy’ is compared to a ‘woman’ *mūndūmūka*. The word *rūa* ‘to get circumcised’ is a rite of passage that every boy must undergo to become mature. The proverbial language uses repetition as a style. The words *mwia* ‘he who steals’ and *akenaga* ‘is relieved’ are repeated to indicate the weighty description the words are when comparing a lad to a woman. This is because the comparison built by the noun lad and woman makes the audience understand the character of a woman better. After all, a lad is often immature and childish. The proverb blatantly and arrogantly undermines the integrity of women as it ideologically stratifies them to

be at the same level as uncircumcised boys who are even regarded better off than a woman. Power and dominance are expressed in this proverb as women of whatever age are perceived as childish while behind the scene men are regarded as mature people. Contextually, the proverbial language is used in a situation where a man has committed a secret serious offense with a woman and he fears that the secret may be made open. He therefore would pray secretly for the woman to die for fear of his secret being known. This is because it is believed that women would easily disclose the secret after slight intimidation. Death is the worst curse to wish a partner who innocently believes that somebody loves her.

Proverbial language is used to portray women as dangerous people where men always carry them with fear and suspicion.

37. *Mwītwa nĩ mūdũmũka nĩ mwītwa nĩ gĩkuũ.*
Called by woman is called by death
He who is called by a woman is called by death.

The word *mwītwa* ‘to be called’ does not mean to be being called or being beckoned at by somebody, but rather, it means the force of beauty that attracts men easily. The caller is a ‘woman’ *mūdũmũka* who as a result causes ‘death’ *gĩkuũ*. The language of the proverb contributes deeply to some social concepts which subtly harm women. The use of the word death in this construction manifests the negative attitude a woman receives and treated in the community where the proverb comes from. Contextually, the proverbial language propagates the hidden ideological agenda that women are unfaithful and, in most cases, have ‘sponsors’ who promote them to be successful. A woman is said to have multiple love relationships where men compete against and even kill one another to win her soul. Men are forbidden from engaging themselves with such women who may most likely lead to their death. The proverbial language invigorates the stereotype image of a greedy woman who is materialistic and is always looking for an opportunity to entrap men into her dangerous snare. She exploits them economically, dupes them, and finally causes their death.

Proverbial language is used to make women believe that they are responsible for their children’s vile behavior as explained in this proverb.

38. *Kana ka ngarĩ gakunyaga ota nyina.*
 Child of leopard scratches like mother
 A cub of the leopard scratches like its mother.

The proverb makes use of figurative language that relates to animals. *Kana* ‘cub’ represents a child, whereas *ngarĩ* ‘leopard’ represents its ‘mother’ *nyina*. The word *gakunyaga* ‘scratches’ stands for the behavior adopted from the mother. Contextually, the proverbial language is used to demonstrate that children copy bad traits from their mothers. However, this is an ideological strategy to cover men who have failed to control the family and discipline their children and result in blaming the mother. The proverb is juxtaposed with the Bible verse from Proverbs Chapter 15: 20 which says, ‘wise children make their fathers happy. Only fools despise their mother.’ The reason why it enlivens the father and disgusts the mother is not clear. Men seize the power behind the words of this proverbial language not to care much about their children because after all when things go haywire, they have an escape route where women will shoulder the blame.

The choice of lexical items is used to illustrate how barren women are neglected and embarrassed in the society.

39. *Mūtumia angĩkũra atarĩ mwana andangĩona mũmũtabĩri maĩ*
 Woman growing without a child cannot find fetch water
 If a woman grows old without having a child, then she cannot have anyone
 to draw water for her.

The word *angĩkũra* ‘growing’ reflects to the ‘woman’ *mũtũmia*. Contextually, the language in this proverb is used by men to despise barrenness and those women who might not get children because of their old age. This is because in *Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ* a woman should get married early enough to have children who are counted as her achievement. The hidden ideological strategy is to make women who are nearing menopause to beg men to have sex with them because they desperately want children. This is to hide away their embarrassment of not having them when they were still young. This allows men to take the advantage of the proverbial words and exert power over women. No proverb raises an accusing finger to old men who did not get children because of their impotency or their ignorance, thus reflecting linguistic oppression of women.

Words are combined and carefully chosen to ridicule women who have given birth to so many children.

40. *Kũrĩ gũciara ũrũ ta kībĩa gĩgĩciara na kĩongo.*
There bearing bad like millet bearing like head
There is a situation where someone can give birth badly like a sorghum plant that breeds with its head.

Ūru ‘badly’ is a word which has been used negatively to mean that the woman has unnecessarily given birth to too many children just the same way *kībĩa* ‘millet crop’ overbears even with its ‘head’ *kĩongo*. Contextually, the proverbial language is used to rebuke such kind of women. Although children are highly regarded as a sign of wealth, having so many of them might be perceived as a sign of irresponsibility or promiscuity. The ideological scheme is to arouse fear to a woman not to get too many children because society may cast doubt about the ownership of all her children. She might be regarded as promiscuous and accused of having some of her children out of wedlock. This discourages a woman who would want to have many children. Power and dominance are expressed in this proverbial language since men who impregnate women out of wedlock will be seen as heroes for being able to penetrate somebody else’s homestead hence nobody blames them.

Some proverbs utilize negative statements to support the physical abuse of women across all ages.

41. *Gũtirĩ mwarĩki ũte ĩrima.*
No castor tree without hole
There is no castor tree without a hole.

The ‘castor tree’ *mwarĩki* stands for the woman whereas the word *ĩrima* ‘hole’ refers to a woman’s private part. Contextually, the proverbial language is meant to convince women that whether they are young or old, all are the same because they all have ‘holes’ and are therefore qualified to have sex with men. Ideologically, the proverb is used by men to disguise their insatiable appetite and wanting for small girls who might not be old enough to become wives. Young girls are lured into a relationship and are manipulated easily by men who take the advantage of the linguistic value of the proverb. This is an indication of power abuse by men.

Proverbial language is used to show that women are of lesser value than men hence are spared and not killed during the war.

42. *Mündümūka ndoragagwa*
Woman not killed
A woman is not killed.

The word *mündümūka* and *ndoragagwa* means ‘woman’ and ‘killed’ respectively. As an important tenet of CDA, it is worth noting that this is an old proverb that was used in the past during intertribal wars where one tribe raided another tribe to gain material wealth from the weaker tribe. It was therefore used in the context of war. During raids, mature men and young male children were killed while women and girls were spared. This was an ideological motive to imply that women are cowardly and cannot fight back to revenge as they are classified as the weaker vessels which have no much impact in the society. In addition to this, men purported that the roles of women were the same irrespective of whichever tribe they came from, that is of serving men. This is an indication of power and dominance expressed by the superior group. After raids women were spared and were held hostage by their adversaries and used as sex objects. Moreover, the captured women were manipulated easily into giving secrets that they knew about their men. In this way, the enemy designed a way in which men were attacked and killed after being betrayed by their very own women. Although this proverb has a positive gesture where women are let to live, it stems from an irrational ideology that women are cowardly and fearful hence can betray their people.

Some proverbs demonstrate how difficult it is to understand women and their unpredictable moody swings.

43. *Mündümūka ndamenyagirwa*
Woman unpredictable
A woman cannot be predicted.

The word *mündümūka* ‘woman’ has been used negatively in the context this proverbial language is used. Contextually, men maneuver their ideological scheme behind the proverbial language to rob women off their responsibility. This is because the proverb refers to women as unpredictable and inept and cannot be entrusted to take up leadership roles. This is an expression of men’s power and dominance. If sometimes a woman becomes successful in the absence of a man, other

men might dismiss her efforts and would say that there must be probably a man behind her success.

Some proverbs prohibit women from undertaking chores which are found to be vital in society.

44. *Mūtumia ndikagia rūbīa gītumbīnī.*
Woman cannot deep horn beer pot
A woman does not dip a horn in the beer pot.

The proverbial language is used in the context where men intend to sideline women when they are making decisions. Traditionally, the elders met occasionally to discuss some important issues that faced society. In the meeting, every participant in the discussion carried *rūbīa* ‘horn’ that was used to drink beer with. If a person became drunk, he would hardly use a horn because a horn does not have a bottom to sit in a flat place. This means that some beer would spill over if one became drunk. Women were not welcomed in such meetings and were prohibited from tasting any beer from the ‘beer pot’ *gītumbīnī*. This was because women were said to get drunk easily hence would be unable to carry on with the meeting. However, this was just an ideological strategy to bar women from handling vital and serious issues in society. Men believed that women lacked knowledge and wisdom to deal with such issues. Cunningly, men crafted the notion that difficult tasks were exclusively meant for them since women lacked strength to plough over them. They claimed to be the masters of decision making hence imposing power on themselves.

Some proverbs in Gĩcũgũ dialect are utilized to place men in a higher position than women.

45. *Ngingo ãĩkĩrũkaga kĩongo.*
Neck surpass head
The neck cannot rise above the head.

The proverb uses the imagery of the ‘neck’ *ngingoto* stand for a woman and the ‘head’ *kĩongo* to represent a man. Contextually, the negative structure has been used to portray that a woman cannot rival a man in the family. As the body parts are placed at their rightful positions, so should be a woman who should be below a man. It cautions women that they should not overshadow men. If a woman behaves in a manner that indicates she wants to outdo a man, she

finds herself on the receiving end. The proverbial language connotes that men should always dictate what a woman is ought to do. They stamp out their authority to implement every decision on behalf of women. As a result, women are dominated and are made to take subordinate positions that muzzle their voice within the family circles and in the entire society. The notion that the head is permanently placed above the neck ideologically brainwashes the women completely as they see themselves as inferior. Even if sometimes a woman might be right in her decision, the proverb sews her mouth not to express herself and is constantly reminded that she might be plunging herself in some trouble should she try to overrule a man.

The woman's inability and unreliability are expressed by negating a proverb through the use of flower imagery.

46. *Mūrūri ndūakaga, mūtumia nota mūrūri.*
 Flower cannot build woman like flower
 A flower does not build; a woman is like a flower.

Mūrūri 'flower' is a word that is likened to a 'woman' *mūtumia*. The proverbial language compares a woman with a flower that is very beautiful but provides no timber. A flower cannot build any foundation and is therefore very unreliable. As opposed to a flower, a tree trunk produces timber for building and is compared to a man who plays a primary role in the family. This is a show of power and domination by men. Moreover, the beauty of the flower seems to last just for a short period and after it dries up, no one admires it anymore. Contextually, the woman's beauty is likened to a young flower. This is because when her beauty begins to show some signs of weariness due to her age, she loses her taste and is discarded by men who will in turn search for other flowers that are attractive to them. The proverb, therefore, oppresses as it pampers a woman with external beauty that is so cosmetic and condemns her inner strength that is much important. The ideological motive of the proverbial language is to show that women are only important at some point in their lives. However, when they grow old, they are no longer recognized and can be replaced at will by their men who will always yearn for a younger and an attractive female to serve them sexually.

Some proverbs propagate the notion that women are greedy and have an insatiable appetite for sex with whomever they come across.

47. *Mūtumia ndonagua njegeki.*
 Woman not-shown armpit
 A woman is not shown the armpit.

The proverbial language denotes that a woman whether married or not should not see the armpit of a man. *Njegeki* ‘armpit’ is a part of the body that is not easily seen. It is said that if a woman accidentally sees it, it will arouse her sexual emotions and yearn to have sex with the man who exposes it. Contextually, the proverbial language is used to depict a woman as a person with an insatiable appetite for sex which ideologically depicts her as an immoral person who cannot control her feelings when provoked. She easily falls prey to her powerful and dominant counterpart, man. In addition to this, the proverb also warns men not to disclose secrets to their women because they can easily make them known by everybody.

Some proverbs promote sexual exploitation of women by drawing from natural images to show men’s superiority over women.

48. *Ngombe ãĩkũraga ãni.*
 Cow does not grow liver
 A liver of a cow does not grow old.

Ngombe ‘cow’ is imagery used in this proverb to represent the source of meat while *ãni* ‘liver’ represents the tender part of a cow that is ever soft. As the cow advances in age, its meat becomes tougher but the liver remains ever soft and tender. Ideologically, the proverbial language is used in a context where men intend to exploit women sexually. The woman represents a cow whereas her private part represents the liver. Men exploit the linguistic advantage of this proverb and use it to lure older women to have sex with them to quench their sexual desire. Men will argue that although physically a woman might look old and emaciated, her sexual part remains tasty for them. This is a manifestation of power and dominance by men.

Proverbial language in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect is used to purport the view that women can hardly keep any secret to themselves.

49. *Aka matigagwa ndundu*
 Women not kept secret meeting
 Women are not confided to.

The word *ndundu* is used exclusively to refer to a group of men, notably because of its importance. The proverb is used by men in the context where an important secret affair is being organized and women must be kept away from it. Traditionally, there were top secrets of the society which were not confided to visitors. This is reflected in the words of the proverb, *kagutũĩ ka mũciĩ gatĩbakagwa ageni* ‘the oilstone of the homestead is not to rub to the hands of strangers.’ For example, there were secrets of war, wealth, genetic diseases, and other issues in which the family and the clan generally felt that they must not be exposed to everyone. In case the need arose to have a secret meeting, the elders met and decided how to solve the conflict at hand. After the meeting, no elder was supposed to disclose the proceedings of the meeting and if any exposed then a heavy fine was imposed against him. The ideological scheme behind the language of this proverb was to estrange women from such meetings because it was said that they were not trusted to safeguard the secrets of the society. Therefore, the proverbial language dominates women. This is because women know much about their families yet they are not allowed to contribute to some delicate and important affairs. Power and dominance are expressed by men since the proverbial language is strategized in such a way that women are kept in the dark to pave way for men to plan without them. Women who are innocent and unsuspecting are treated like aliens who might bring havoc to society if they are let to know its secrets.

The use of proverbial language is used to support the view that women are people without any fixed abode and hence lack a sense of belonging.

50. *Mũndũmũka ndarĩ kwao*
 A woman has no home
 A woman has no permanent home.

The word *mũndũmũka* ‘woman’ has a negative connotation. It is made up of two words, that is *mũndu* and *mũkato* mean a ‘person’ and ‘coming’ respectively. In other words, it means a person who comes. Therefore, the word itself dominates because a woman is treated as a stranger where she gets married. The proverbial language is used in the context where men would claim to be the rightful heirs of wealth and property in the family. It shows that women have no place they can call their own. This portrays women as second-class beings whose identity has been subjugated adversely. A woman is like a wandering spirit that is neither here nor there. She is

betrayed and disowned by her very own community. This is because according to Gĩcũgũ society, a woman is expected to get married and move away from her ancestral home. Unfortunately, the place she is taken by her suitor is no better since she is never recognized and anchored as a bonafide member of the new family but she is perceived as a stranger or a newcomer. In her new family, the woman bears the blame and is mistreated if things go wrong. Treated in this manner, she has no alternative but to look up to her husband whom she solely relies on. The ideological agenda behind the language of the proverb is to bar women from inheriting property because it belongs to men. This includes the things that she has seriously worked for. It puts a woman in an awkward predicament because she cannot tell where she exactly belongs. According to my 82 years old informant, once a woman was married off from her ancestral home in the past, she was obliged to carry everything of her own and her bed was even destroyed. Moreover, where she went did not have her bed but used that of her suitor who treated her as his property. This expresses the power and dominance of men. The woman is irrationally compared to things like cows, goats, sheep, pots, forks, and so forth by her male-dominated society.

Some proverbs are used to portray women as inept, unreliable, and very gullible when sent to run an errand.

51. *Mũndũmũka* *ndatũmagwa* *thirĩnĩ*
 Woman isn't sent debt
 A woman is not sent to collect debt.

As discussed in proverb 50 above, the word *mũndũmũka* 'woman' expresses a negative connotation. *Thirĩnĩ* 'debt' does not necessarily mean debt per se but can also mean to run on some other errands. Contextually, the proverbial language is used to castigate the integrity and honesty of women since women are seen as people who cannot manage themselves hence can fail to carry out their duties as they are expected to. The proverb has several ideological implications regarding women's inefficiency. For one, women are taken as people who are very gullible and can easily be misled from fulfilling whatever they have been asked to fulfill. This means that when women are sent to collect a debt, their weak brains cannot see the tricks played by the debtor hence they fail to ask what they have been sent to collect. In short, women are

easily convinced with some few words and forget to meet their obligation. Secondly, the language of the proverb purports that women are full of gossip. The moment a woman is sent for a task, she mingles with other women and engages with useless and meaningless talks and will eventually forget the task she has been sent to accomplish hence will go back home empty hands. Thirdly, men believe that when women are sent to fulfill an obligation from a man, they might be seduced by him and engage in a love relationship hence digress from what she has been sent to fulfill! Contextually, the proverbial language is used to portray women as very inefficient to carry out some roles they are sent to accomplish. From all the three ideological perspectives, the hidden agenda is to illustrate men’s dominance and power and supporting the view that they are not as weak as women. They purport to do their duties strictly without fail as opposed to their female counterparts.

Some proverbs do not use euphemistic words hence they embarrass women through the choice of words used to construct them.

52. *Gūciara ti kūmia.*
 Bearing not defecation
 To give birth is not to defecate.

Kūmīa ‘to defecate’ is an explicit word that many Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ speakers would avoid in everyday speech since it is not euphemistic. Gĩcũgũ speakers use euphemism for body effluvia which makes the description of an explicit word less embarrassing. Contextually, the proverb is used when the child that belongs to a woman may be in danger and the woman is advised to rush and save the child since she suffered labor pains when giving birth. The proverbial language is prejudiced since there is no proverb that embarrasses men by using non-euphemistic words as it is done to women. Ideologically, women are made to believe that children are theirs when they face challenges and are expected to address the problem alone without involving their husbands. While they do all these, their husbands bask in the glory of their superiority which is a show of their power and dominance.

3.1.1 Language of proverbs that express dominance of men

Talbot (1998), says that men and women interact in such a way that both have learned to behave in a certain way where men place themselves at the helm of power while women learn

to take subordinate positions. The Language of Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ proverbs supports and accentuate male dominance and superiority at the expense of women who are demeaned and subjugated as exemplified in the following proverbs.

Through the choice of words, proverbs utilize euphemistic words to propagate the ideological difference between genders where men are given all the freedom to do what pleases them.

53. *Mbere ya arũme ãĩ mwene.*
 Front of men no owner
 Men's front does not have an owner.

The word *mbere* 'front' is used in this proverb to stand for the private parts of 'men' *arũme*. The proverb means that men's private parts have no owner. Contextually, it is used to give power to men to have multiple sex partners by proclaiming the ideology that their sexual organs have no one to claim to be theirs. Ironically, women are supposed to remain faithful to their husbands and must not stray away. If a woman is caught in the act of infidelity, she is rebuked with misogyny and is branded a prostitute, twilight, immoral, and so forth. This is unfair treatment to women since promiscuous men are let to go scot-free. Women are helpless and can do nothing to challenge the situation. This amounts to desperation and frustration of women in the hands of men who feel that they can share the love with whomever they want.

Through words, proverbs are constructed to portray men as perfect planners and free of making mistakes.

54. *Cia athuri nĩ thure.*
 Of men are ordered
 Men are perfect planners.

The word *athuri* 'men' are elderly people who command respect in society. The language of the proverb is used in the context that portrays men as perfect people who can carry out important issues in the family and society because their affairs are 'orderly' *nĩ thure*. Women are reminded that they can never be paralleled to men in organizing their affairs. This an expression of power and dominance by men. The ideological perspective is to portray women as people who simply

gossip and indulge themselves with insignificant issues instead of developing their homes with important ideas.

Proverbs are crafted ideologically to portray men as super humans who are very difficult to control but have a wise partner who contains them. This is as exemplified as in example c and d.

55. *Ngenda ndĩ ãĩagaga mũtegi.*
Dragon world lacks no hunter
There is no that roams the world that has no hunter.

The word *ngenda* is argumentatively used and it stands for an unbeatable gigantic dragon that roams the ‘world’ *ndĩ*. The dragon is said to be very hard to tame. However, there is always a person who tames it and makes it docile *mũtegi* ‘hunter.’ The words *ngenda ndĩ* stand for merciless, heartless, and violent men who feel that their authority is extremely great and unstoppable. They are callous and pompous men who believe that no one is above them other than God as they declare their self-proclaimed power. However, to make such men calm down their cruelty, they must find their match. This is a person who should wisely design her cunning ways to deal with them. The ‘hunter’ *mũtegi* in this context is a clever and creative woman who is out to contain this violent beast so that they can live together in peace. Ideologically, the proverbial language is used to remind women that they should be creative, wise, obedient, and submissive to men. They must always be vigilant and indulgent so that they can overcome the harsh nature of their husbands. Women must therefore not rest and must keep on inventing ways of pacifying men and keeping their wrath at bay. On the surface, the language of the proverb seems to favor women but deeply it disguises men’s power and dominance as women struggle to tame this ruthless dragon that roams the world.

56. *Gũti ngoma ãte mũobi.*
No devil without controller
There is no devil without the one who controls it.

Ngoma ‘devil’ in this context represents a man while *mũobi* ‘arrester’ represents a woman. Contextually, the linguistic aspect of the proverb is used to encourage a couple to live together in peace since peace is a nugget of virtue in Gĩcũgũ society. It emphasizes the virtue of patience and tolerance as it urges women to condone the character of men which is expressed as devious

and inhuman. Ideologically, the proverbial language is set to arouse fear in women when they are before men. This is an expression of power and superiority of men over women who must always be alert so that whenever the beast raises its head, it will always be controlled.

The superiority of men is expressed by demonstrating that men are in full control of everything that goes on in the family.

57. *Mũthuri nĩ kũthuranĩra maĩndũ no mũtunia nĩgũtumĩria maĩndũ.*
Man is ordering things but women hold things
A man puts his things in order while a woman remains mum.

The words *kũthuranĩra* ‘putting things in order’ and *gũtumĩria* ‘keeping the mouth shut’ are used to describe the character of man and woman respectively. Contextually, the language of the proverb is used to express male dominance as a man is recognized as the main planner and organizer in the family. A woman on the other hand is to receive orders from the man without question. Ideologically, the proverb is used to place man high above the ladder as he imposes his authority over the woman. The woman suffers in silence when faced with problems, prejudice, and blatant abuse while the indomitable and superior view of man becomes prevalent. The woman must remain indulgent and must not lament about, disgrace, absurdity, and insolence of man. She should behave like a dumb person and should shoulder the suffering silently.

Proverbs are wisely coined to show that men are capable of controlling their emotions more than women whose anger lasts for long and uncontrollably.

58. *Marakara ma arũme matĩtũraga ta ma aka.*
Anger of men last like for women
Men’s anger does not last as much as women’s anger.

Traditionally, it is the responsibility of men to control general tasks at home. Often, men reprimand children with deviant behavior and also patronize what women are supposed to do on daily basis. Sometimes, the wife and children would find themselves on the receiving end after they antagonize the leader of the family. The man swiftly moves to correct what is said to be crooked and as a rule of the thumb, what he says is followed to the letter. However, his anger is said not last for a long time and once he punishes, he forgets. Contextually, the proverbial

language is used to disguise the emotional nature of men in comparison to the emotions of women. Ideologically, the proverbial language upholds the integrity of men by protecting their ego as they are said to control their emotions quickly. Power and dominance are expressed over women as they are generally categorized to be very emotional and impressionable. As a result, women suffer silently since no one regards their feelings though what they might be trying to put across is genuine and worth being examined with the seriousness that it deserves.

Proverbial language has been used to demonstrate men's immense power and strength which is said to be unchallengeable.

59. *Kĩrema arũme nĩ kĩgariũre.*
 Task men is cursed
 That which defeats men is thoroughly tested over.

The proverb uses imagery of something that is 'so enormous' *kĩrema*, that it defeats the efforts of all men. Contextually, the proverb is used to hide the weaknesses of men and particularly when they are defeated by a certain task. The plural form of the word 'men' *arũme* is a way of defending the entire men fraternity other than singling out one man to shoulder the blame. Men proclaim themselves as people who have absolute power and strength and they believe that nothing can overwhelm them no matter how challenging it can be. The hidden ideological scheme is to cushion men from blame after being defeated by the enormous assignment of which they must give a very convincing reason to justify their failure. They will claim that the huge task has been tested over and over again in the past without success. The language is coined in such a way that it does not disclose those who tested it thus putting the audience in darkness. Dominance over women is expressed subtly because women cannot dare ask for those who tested it because after all, if all men believe it so, who are we to refute it?

Some proverbs are used to assert the notion that men should not be perceived as people with childish character but should be identified as grownups whose integrity must be recognized.

60. *Mũndũrũme tĩ kĩbĩ.*
 Mannot not lad
 A man is not a lad.

The nouns *mũndũrũme* ‘man’ and *kĩbĩ* ‘uncircumcised boy’ are used to contrast their personalities. The Gĩcũgũ people have a legend that illustrates the curiosity and clumsiness of boys. The legend teaches that generally, all uncircumcised boys lost an important metal scrap which they keep on searching for. The legend concludes that the lads only find the metal scrap when they get circumcised hence will stop being clumsy and satisfy their curiosity. The legend is used to summarize the clumsy behavior of boys wherever they go. Culturally, boys are commanded, beaten, fed, and clothed by their mothers. The ideological scheme in the proverbial language is to bring into attention to the entire society that men are independent and reliable in carrying out important family affairs. Contextually, it is used to subjectively support those who fight for masculine dominance in society and define men as absolute beings and not just people to be commanded around. Under all means, the identity, superiority, and dominance of men must be defended and restored and should not be taken as inferior, unwise, simple, and so forth. They must be recognized as people of substance who must be given their rightful place in society.

Some proverbs are used to demonstrate the superiority of men right from their very formative age.

61. *Gũtirĩ* *ĩĩ* *kabĩ* *ĩtabaragũa* *kĩongo*.
 No with baby boy roasted head
 There is no household with a male child where the head is not cooked.

ĩtabaragũais a word that refers to a process of preparing the head of a goat by first roasting it and removing the outer skin while *kĩongo* refers to a goat’s head after it has been slaughtered. The interpretation of the language behind this proverb is that traditionally, the Gĩcũgũ people slaughter a goat when a ‘baby boy’ *kabĩ* has been given birth. This is to celebrate the heroic deed of the mother. After the goat has been slaughtered, the meat is shared by the family members whereas the head and the legs are prepared and boiled to make soup which is strictly drunk by men. Contextually, the proverbial language is used to express male superiority, identity and respect right from birth. On the contrary, the proverbial language implies that if by any chance a girl child is given birth, there is a little celebration and a goat is not even slaughtered. Her mother does not get any appraisal from the family and things will go on silently. Ideologically,

this is to portray how unimportant a girl child is. As these young boys advance into becoming men, they exert power over women and continue upholding the spirit of superiority in society.

Proverbial language is used to deliberately encourage men to have multiple love affairs.

62. *Gūtirĩ njamba ya mwera ũmwe*
No cock has hen one
There is no cock that has one hen.

Njamba a ‘cock,’ is an imagery that has been used to represent a man while a woman is represented by a ‘hen’ *mwera*. Contextually, the proverbial language is used in the situation where men would justify themselves to have multiple relationships as women remain mum. The underlying ideological presumption is that men have power and unquestionable freedom to dictate to women what they want as the proverb encourages infidelity and immorality among men in society. It silences women who have no audacity to complain and correct the evil character of their husbands who use this proverb to exonerate themselves in case they stray away from marriage. This expression promotes the derogation of women folk whose meaning and potential interpretation demonstrate how masculine gender enforces their ascendance over the feminine gender.

Male superiority and power by use of negative structures to illustrate that men cannot be compared with women despite being weak in physical strength.

63. *Njamba ti ikere.*
Cock not muscles
A hero is not determined by the size of his calves.

Njamba ‘cock’ is a bird known because of its strength of fighting other cocks. Contextually, the proverbial language is used to arouse fear in women where men are thought to be are intellectually or physically weak. The Gĩcũgũ people associate heroism with men and not women. Men play vital roles in the family and the society while women undertake peripheral duties. The metaphor of the ‘calves’ *ikere* has been utilized to stand for the physical strength of the fighter. The ideological scheme of the proverb signifies that the strength of a man is not a reflection determined by his physical built and appearance but can be determined by other factors like wisdom, tact, craftiness, and handwork. Dominance in the language of this proverb is

expressed by the way men seek to protect even the weakest among them whereas no proverb protects the weakness of women. Its language dictates that even the weakest man should be honored and respected because although men might be weak physically, they are still resilient and reliable to make strong leaders whose purpose is to provide security and making important decisions.

Proverbs are used to remind the audience that men are distinct in character and strength and there is no way they can be paralleled to women.

64. *Arũme ti aka.*
Men not women.
Men are not women.

The proverb compares ‘men’ *arũme* directly with ‘women’ *aka*, which creates an ideological wall between them. It can be used in the context where women have tried to do a certain task and have been defeated while men succeed. Its language diminishes the worth of a woman and raises the strength of men who can do complex deeds where hence their power and dominance become prevalent. It cautions the audience against equating and underrating the efforts of men as well as shielding their superiority and authority. Men refuse to be seen as people with feminine behavior of inferiority as women are depicted in society.

Creative use of proverbial language is used to praise men’s perfection while affirming the fallible nature of women.

65. *Mwaki wa arũme ndũtogaga kerĩ.*
Fire of men doesn’t smoke twice
Men’s fire does not smoke twice.

The proverbial language uses the imagery of ‘fire’ *mwaki* which is used to represent efforts made by men. It exalts the superiority of men and demeans the status of women. Its words indicate that men do not miss their target in their endeavor in search of riches and making decisions. If they accidentally fail in their first trial, they cannot miss the target for the second time. The ideology here is to make a woman believe that men succeed where women have failed. If the fire of men does not fail twice, then for women it can fail indefinitely without any chance of success. The proverbial language is used in the context where women are discouraged from competing with men because they will always be defeated. This is a show of power and dominance by men. It

puts women to be second class citizens whose main role is to water and praise what men have done.

There are some proverbs whose language is loaded with words and statements with ideological schemes in which men feel more superior than women.

66. *Ndia nyama ãĩcumikagua na nyama*
Eats meat denied with meat.
An animal that eats meat is not let to salivate for meat.

The proverb is expressed in the simple present tense and utilizes a negative structure to emphasize authority in it. The words *ndĩa nyama* ‘the one that eats meat’ stand for carnivorous animals that eat meat. The words are pre-nominalized and used argumentatively to imply power and dominance of the subject who in this case is the man. The woman is figuratively referred to as *nyama* ‘meat’ which masks the ideological target of proverbial language because it indirectly refers to the sexual organs of a woman. The word *ndĩcumĩkagua* alludes to a strong want and lust for a woman. For this to happen, it depends on the way a woman presents herself before a man. For example, the way the woman walks sits, stands, and dresses to provoke the sexual desire of a man. Therefore, a man controls and dominates a woman in all mannerisms. A woman is not given the freedom to stay the way she wishes but she lives to please a man. Male ascendancy and power is reflected by the use of imagery that provides an ideological scheme used to classify female characteristics. This linguistic aspect of the proverb gives power to men to carry the yardstick in which they measure the standard in which women must hold themselves before them. Women are only taken as sexual objects to satisfy their male counterparts.

3.2 Conclusion

The chapter demonstrates that most of the Gĩcũgũ proverbs if not all depict a negative picture towards women. Proverbial language is easily learned and can be used to indoctrinate and propagate false images about women in the minds of the people in the society. The linguistic aspect of the proverb is contextually used by men to bar women from empowering themselves to contribute positively in society

CHAPTER FOUR

LANGUAGE OF PROVERBS THAT EXPRESS POWER AND DOMINANCE AGAINST WOMEN IN GĪ-GĪCŪGŪ DIALECT BY USE OF METAPHORS

In chapter three the study has focused on how language in context is used in proverbs to express power and dominance against women in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ. This chapter will analyze the oppressive language with specific reference to metaphor. CDA program and its main tenets will be used to critically analyze the language of these proverbs that oppress women. The approach will use the three stages of CDA, beginning from the analysis of text, description, and evaluation of the proverbial language. Wales (1989), says that metaphors assist to demystify abstract and emotive objects and ideas to become more appealing to the audience, however, they can be used to propagate hidden motives that subjugate the interests of the minority in the society. This is as illustrated by the following proverbs:

4.1 Power and dominance against women by use of metaphors

Proverbial language is metaphorically used to define women as spiteful and jealous hence cannot live together in peace.

67. *Aka erĩ nĩ nyũngũ igĩrĩ cia ũrogi*
Wives two are pots two of poison.
Two wives are two pots of poison.

In Gĩcũgũ traditions, marrying more than one wife was allowed. Therefore, the metaphor *nyũngũ igĩrĩ cia ũrogi* ‘two pots of poison’ maps onto *aka erĩ* ‘two women.’ As a parameter of CDA that describes discourse as historical, it is worth to note that this is a very old proverb where wares like ‘pots’ *nyũngũ* were used as cooking utensils instead of the modern vessels like *sufurias*. In the traditional Gĩcũgũ society, ‘the poison’ *ũrogi* was brewed in pots. The pot which was involved in brewing the poison was believed to never get cleansed of the poison ever again. Therefore, the proverb is mapped on the basic fact that such a vessel is cursed and condemned. The ideological scheme behind this proverb is hidden in the metaphor of pots since like the wares, the co-wives will never cease to plot evil against each other. The language of the proverb portrays women as people who cannot agree and forge a peaceful relationship if they are serving the same man. Male dominance and power is accomplished as the two women outdo each other

to win the recognition of the man they are married to. Women are regarded to be hateful and very jealous since they can never live harmoniously but always live as rivals.

The use of proverbial language is used to disregard the beauty of women and relates it to a promiscuous character through metaphors.

68. *Mwĩrĩtu mũthaka nĩ magambo.*
Girl beautiful is trouble
A beautiful girl is trouble.

The language of the proverb purports that being *mũthaka* 'beautiful' is like a curse. Instead of admiring and appreciating the beauty of the young girl, men instead concentrate on the negative aspect and refer to her beauty as *magambo* 'trouble.' It, therefore, becomes her source of pain due to the connotations it carries. The proverbial language demeans, devalues, and disrespects women in this community. Men's dominance and power are expressed in that the proverbial language has been cunningly maneuvered to castigate the beauty of the girl instead of acknowledging it. Ideologically, the proverb purports that beauty engenders promiscuity because many young men will keep on seducing the innocent girl where hence she will easily give in to their sexual demands. The woman feels dejected and will never be proud and comfortable with her physical built. The proverb demonstrates unfair indictment of beautiful feminine folk because there is no relationship between physical beauty and the evil character. It disorients and confuses since beauty and elegance are equated with promiscuity.

Some proverbs compare women with people who are regarded to be of little value in the society as seen in this proverb;

69. *Mũtumia na kĩonje nĩ ũndũ ũmwe.*
Woman and disabled are thing one
A woman and a disabled person are the same.

The proverb metaphorically compares a 'woman' *mũtumia* to a disabled person *kĩonje*. The word *kĩonje* is non-euphemistic and it draws an image of a person who is unable to do something on his or her own. It refers to a person who is both physically and mentally challenged. The words *ũndũũmwe* 'the same thing' means that there is no difference between the two because they have the same attributes. The interpretation of the proverb is that a woman is depicted as a helpless and a dormant person who can never do something on her own but requires somebody

to help her accomplish it. Ideologically, the proverbial language alludes that a woman cannot make any tangible decisions on her own. In case she brings forth her decision, it is rubbished or kept pending to wait for a man's 'superior' idea. Power is indirectly expressed by men as they are regarded as the final decision-makers. As a result, women cannot be at ease if their integrity is compromised to the extent of being compared to disabled people by their male counterparts.

Language is used in proverbs to depict women as unreliable and of questionable character as expressed by the use of metaphors in this proverb.

70. *Aka* *nĩ* *njũki*.
 Women be bees.
 Women are bees.

The proverb compares women with *njũki* 'bees' which are known in two aspects. First, they make honey and secondly because of their killer sting. The word *aka* 'women' is in the plural form and it generalizes and includes all women. The interpretation of the proverb is that although bees have both negative and positive sides, the Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ speakers cunningly transform the positive aspect of the bee into a negative aspect. They liken a bee that flies to some distant places to a woman who strays from a man and never comes back. The proverb oppresses women in that as bees which roam the world in search of nectar, so are the women who roam about in search of treasure, and should they find it, they can settle comfortably in their new home. This means that as bees that do not have a permanent home, women too do not. Ideologically, the proverb propagates the notion that women are naturally unreliable and can only incline to their husbands to satisfy their conjugal relationship. Women are regarded as covetous and this assigns them a psychological trait without any tangible evidence for it. The second aspect that bees sting and inflict pain compares them with a woman whose outrage is uncontrollable. A woman is a bombshell that explodes after a slight provocation. The ideological motive behind this linguistic aspect is to warn men that women are very sensitive and one should be cautious when handling them. Men take the advantage of the linguistic metaphor of a bee as a tool to abuse the status of women. Power and dominance of men are expressed in the proverb since men wisely design it to portray women as people with no fixed abode and also too emotional if provoked. To men, they have permanent homes and can easily control their anger.

Sometimes proverbial language is used to describe women as immoral through the use of metaphors that are used selectively in defining them.

71. *Ũcũ* *nĩ watuikĩre kĩere kĩa njĩranĩ.*
That one be become millet of road.
That one became a road side millet crop.

Ũcũ ‘that one’ is accusatory considering the context in which this proverb is used. It is used to dismiss a person as worthless and insignificant. The word *watuikĩre* ‘she become’ is used to mean that a person is completely irredeemable and beyond repair. The language of the proverb has two deep meanings which can be interpreted as follows; first, a woman is generally referred to as a ‘millet plant’ *kĩere* that grows along the side of a ‘road’ *njĩranĩ* where all types of birds can enjoy its grains. By the use of pre-nominalization, the word *ũcũ*, ‘that one’ means that it is only one woman with a certain characteristic that does not include all women. The hidden ideological scheme propagated by the linguistic value of the proverb is that a woman who is metaphorically compared to a road side millet crop can share her body with anyone who comes along without choosing. She is a public facility that can be used by anyone according to his wish. Used in this manner, the proverb triggers up a social problem where women are adversely discriminated against. Men cleverly wield power to themselves by taking advantage of this proverb because although they are not overtly mentioned in it, they are the birds who come to eat the ‘millet.’ The oppressive language of the proverb weighs on the absence of a parallel proverb that warns men against their evil behavior. The second interpretation is that according to some elders, the millet crop is likened to a morally upright woman. This is because a millet crop that grows beside a road might escape the sight of the birds which feed on millet grown in plantations, hence survive the attack. After all, it stands alone. However, the proverb still oppresses since it means that men sexually terrorize women with no one to spare save for the one who is standing exclusively apart. As the adage says, if something is out of sight is out of reach. Otherwise, given a chance man will abuse and exploit women sexually who are within their proximity.

Metaphorical language is used in proverbs to portray women as important people in the family but deeply it perceives them as beasts of burden.

72. *Mūtumia nīwe mūciĩ*
 Wife is home
 The woman is the home.

The word *mūtumia* ‘woman’ is used to represent a home in which men cunningly use it to drive home their ideological intentions. The word *nīwe* ‘is’ is used to mean that she is the only one and not anybody else that the home belongs. It is deliberately used to disguise any ill intention against her as she recognizes herself to be very important whereas she is not. The word *mūciĩ* ‘home’ literally stands for a house, children, livestock, and anything else within the vicinity of the homestead. However, contextually the word home alludes to parental love, comfort, freedom, warmth, sense of belonging, care, protection, and so on. The proverbial language in it appreciates and identifies a woman as the source and the main fountain of happiness at home. In other words, she is the family pillar. However, the linguistic aspect of the proverb is so opaque in the sense that if a home is without a woman, then it means the situation is messy, cold, and devoid of love. The ideological intention in this proverb is to mean that a woman is the only one who can light up a home because she organizes and revamps its love, warmth, and comfort. In the event of doing all this, much of her energy and time is consumed. On the contrary, instead of being praised and appreciated for what she is, she is only recognized in what she does. Men use the language of this proverb to assert their power by cunningly manipulating women and making them believe what they are not. The woman is brainwashed and made to see from the perspective of a man as she is used both physically and mentally by her male counterpart.

Some proverbs use metaphors to selectively refer to women as very unpredictable hence can change their emotions very suddenly.

73. *Mūndūmūka na ĩgūrũ matĩmenyagĩrwa.*
 Wife and sky unpredictable
 A woman and sky are unpredictable.

The word *mūndūmūka* ‘woman’ is likened to ‘sky’ *ĩgūrũ*. The interpretation behind this proverb is that just as weather patterns keep on changing, so is the woman who keeps on changing her moods. A woman can be jovial, warm, excited, social, appreciative at one time, but all of a sudden, she becomes emotional, cold, reserved, contemptuous, withdrawn, and so forth. Ideologically, the linguistic motive of the proverb is to tame a woman to control her emotions.

Men seize the opportunity of the linguistic value of the proverb to express their power in drawing the difference between women and them. It is oppressively biased against women since there is no parallel proverbial language that is used to refer to men in the same way. In some men who perpetrate physical violence, tongue lashing, admonitions, abuses, and other emotional outbursts have proverbs which only praise them. Such proverbs are intended to confirm their manliness. No one can control the weather patterns hence the same applies to women who are said to be beyond control.

Proverbial language is used to ridicule a woman who shuns a relationship with a man she interacts with who is not her real husband. This is evident as explained in the following proverb.

74. *Aka akwene nĩ ãrĩma ãriku.*
 Women of else are hole deep.
 Strange women are a deep hole.

The metaphor *ãrĩma ãriku* 'deep hole' represents a woman. The deep hole means that once you fall in it, it will be very difficult for you to get out of it. It is like an abyss. The proverb deeply means that if a man engages in an intimate relationship with a strange woman, it will be an uphill task to extricate himself from her relationship. It triggers an emotion of fear in men who are warned not to have such weird relationships. In addition to this, the proverb also means that when a woman approaches a man, she looks very harmless on the outside but very venomous in the inside. As the relationship between the strange woman and the unsuspecting man grows, the man will finally find himself in an inextricable situation. Moreover, the term *kwene* 'from somebody else' is a word that manifests power behind men. This is because a woman is perceived as property or like a domestic animal that can stray from the owner. The ideological scheme behind the above word is that a woman must have strayed from her matrimonial marriage and engaged in a love affair with another man for sexual gratification hence terming her promiscuous. Although this is a vice which must be condemned in the society, the language of the proverb generally oppresses women as there are men who are unfaithful and stray from their marriage to find other women to quench their sexual desire yet, there is no language used in any proverb to depict them as immoral. In another dimension, the term *ãrĩma* 'deep hole' may be referring to the woman's private part that suggestively means that if a man engages in sexual

intercourse with the strange woman, the man might not enjoy her comfort. This implies that the woman has been misused by other men sexually until her private part has been spoilt. This is a serious linguistic bias since nothing measures men who are promiscuous as there is for a woman.

Use of metaphors in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect regard women as personal property who should be married to serve the interest of men.

75. *Mũtumia ũmwe nĩ rĩgu wa gatema.*

Woman one is food of dysentery

One woman is the last morsel of food you take when you have dysentery.

Gatema is a dreadful disease that causes diarrhea and can eventually lead to death. The interpretation behind this proverb is that traditionally, mature men were allowed to have many wives. Usually, men who had many wives were highly regarded in the community since every woman must have had her children and a house built by her husband. This means that the husband ought to have been wealthy enough to marry and sustain the women economically. On the other hand, women were to return the favor by serving men sexually, bearing children, and providing services of the family chores to endear themselves to them. The ideological motive behind the proverb is to encourage men to have many wives because if one marries ‘one wife’ *mutumiaumwe* she might become very stubborn since she feels that she is the only one. Men cunningly wield power to themselves by manipulating the language of this proverb to arrest the stubbornness of one wife by being given a lee way to marry many wives. This way, the woman is put under constant fear of being said to be inefficient than her compatriots. Ironically, the proverb 68 in this chapter warns men not to marry many wives because they are like two pots of poison. This puts women in great confusion because whichever side they choose, they will find themselves on the receiving end. On the other hand, there is no language used in any proverb that expresses weird sentiments to men who marry many wives. In fact, there is a situation in which many men are marrying a single wife and shockingly the men say that they are comfortable in this kind of relationship. Although this has happened in Kitui County, Daily Nation, 30th Oct 2019 page 6, it opens an interesting scenario in which some communities might follow suit where the people of Gĩcũgũ are not exceptional.

Some proverbs have language that expresses rigidity of women in changing their point of view or having a second thought as demonstrated in this proverb.

76. *Kūringĩrĩria mũndũmũka ũndũ nĩta kūringĩrĩria rwenji rũkĩrega.*
 Forcing woman thing like forcing knife refusing.
 To force a woman to do something is like forcing a blunt knife to shave

This proverb is not a metaphor per se but a simile. *Kūringĩrĩria* ‘to force’ contextually means forcing a woman to do something that she does not want. Traditionally, when the hair of both men and women become undesirably long, a special ‘knife’ *rwenji* was used to shave the long hair. At times, when this special knife had shaven many heads, it became blunt and required to be re-sharpened. This proverb likens a woman to a blunt knife. However, unlike the blunt knife that was re-sharpened, a stubborn wife would not change her stand once she has made a decision. The proverb depicts the conservativeness, rigidity, and obstinacy of women. Dominance and power are expressed behind the language of this proverb because the one who forces the woman to do something is a man who has the authority to command. It is worth noting that although the knife refuses to shave, it finally does its work. Likewise, a woman is forced to do her task even if she does not want to. Ideologically, the proverb places man above the woman in terms of power and authority. What a man asks a woman to do must be done regardless the woman likes it or not since man’s decision reigns superior. However, sometimes the decision made by men is not necessarily the right one as it requires the input of a partner whose decision can be more plausible. The language used in this proverb wisely indicates that men have corrupted and seized power over women to make unilateral decisions. As a result, women have become muzzled and cannot express their feelings freely. If sometimes they contribute in decision making, it will be regarded as an offense of overstepping their mandate which might be interpreted as deliberately disrespecting men. This, therefore, makes women to be taken like kites which are blown anyhow according to the direction of the wind by men.

Some proverbs metaphorically draw a comparison between a woman and a man to ridicule a woman’s behavior as seen below.

77. *Ūcu nĩ Wanja kībĩ.*
 That is Wanja lad.
 That one is Wanja the lad.

This is a metaphor that likens ‘an uncircumcised boy’ *kībĩ* to a girl. The word *ũcu* ‘that one’ has been used negatively since it accuses and judges a person with a tone of finality. It refers to a

person that is beyond correction. *Wanja* ‘outside’ is a common name of a girl that is derived because the place the girl is given birth is probably somewhere outside in an open place. The interpretation of this proverb is that *kĩbĩ* ‘lad’ plural *ibĩ* , ‘lads’ are usually associated with a messy character. If for example boys are left to handle some fragile materials or even electronic gadgets to manipulate, they might break or destroy as they have an unquenchable desire of knowing more. In most instances, boys look clumsy and do not take caution in whatever they do. A clean boy will at the end of the day have soiled himself up and will look untidy from head to toe. Therefore, no girl would like to be likened to such boys because girls are perceived as beings with delicate personalities who must take the utmost care wherever they are. Power and dominance are manifested in the language of this proverb because boys are regarded as hardier, enduring, and resilient than girls. Ideologically, tasks that are performed by boys cannot be performed by girls because they are tough and challenging. This frustrates the efforts of girls who might like to have opportunities that are unreasonably regarded masculine for fear of being branded *Wanjakĩbĩ*. There are no words used in any proverb that ridicule the behavior of boys if they exhibit feminine characteristics. Needless to say, that there are boys who walk, speak, and engage in feminine qualities and yet there is no one who raises a finger against them.

Subtle proverbial language is used to discredit the health of well-built woman by the use of metaphors.

78. *Kĩero nĩ wimbo nĩ ũmbũkaga.*
 Thigh is bubble be deflate
 A thigh is a bubble, it deflates.

The proverb uses imagery of the word *kĩero* ‘thigh’ which contextually refers to a provocative part of a woman’s body. The word *wimbo* ‘swelling’ or ‘bubble,’ stands for something very temporary which lasts for a short period just like a bubble of water which lasts for seconds before it ‘deflates’ *nĩ ũmbũkaga*. The proverbial language implies that a young woman is considered beautiful not only because of a pleasant face but also because of the shape of her body. Men will look at women and judge them depending on the shape of their legs, the size of their breasts, hips, and thighs. This means that women who fall short of these sizes might be seen as lacking something vital that contributes to their beauty. In the language of this proverb, therefore, women with big thighs are deemed to be more attractive than those with small ones.

The hidden ideology in the language of the proverb is to remind women that their physical appearance is short-lived hence should not be proud of it since it's very temporary. This is a way of making women surrender themselves to men when they are still tender and youthful. Women are provoked to seize the earliest opportunity to get a husband because once their youthful stage passes, they will forfeit the opportunity of having a husband for a lifetime. The proverb gives men the advantage to lure young girls to have a love relationship with them when they have barely reached their marriageable age. However, at a young age, they are inexperienced and naïve to make an ideal wife. The proverbial language encourages men to marry young girls not because they want a wife but the need to satisfy their sexual desire.

4.1.1 Metaphors that express dominance of men

In *Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ* dialect of the *Gĩkũyũ* language, male superordinary is contrasted to female inadequacy and subordination through the stereotypes associated with each gender through proverbs. Wardhaugh (2002), says that men claim to be powerful and authoritative because they would want to be given their 'rightful place' in the society while women rescind to their 'inferior positions.' This is as exemplified in the following proverbs:

Some proverbs are used to boost male authority in the family and society as well as protecting their identity.

79. *Mũndũrũme* *nĩ* *mũgambo*
 Man is voice.
 A man is voice.

The word *mũndũrũme* 'man' draws an image of a person who is respected and feared in society. The proverbial language is used to portray that the way men are said to speak earn them dignity, respect, authority, and identity. The voice of a man is usually expected to be heavy, low pitched, modulated, slow, plain, deep, and commanding. Therefore, by just speaking he expresses power and authority. On the other hand, a feminine voice is usually light, shrilled, fast, and varied. The ideological intention of the proverb is to emphasize the fact that a man's 'voice' *mũgambo* is aimed at earning him some recognition as the family head. As a result, his authority must not be ignored, disputed, or challenged. It, therefore, means that the voice of a man is strong enough to make his presence felt. The proverbial language portrays an example of a man who roars at

women to diminish their status and rule over them. It empowers men to be despotic in the family and society. This is because women cannot overrule their decisions. A woman in Gĩcũgũ is a victim of tyranny and oppression through language expressed in such proverbs but they have no choice but to dance to the tune of the society

Body parts are used as metaphors to express men’s power and superiority by portraying that women are always below men.

80. *Mũthuri nĩ kĩongo mũtumia nĩ ngingo.*
 Old man is head woman is neck
 The husband is the head while the wife is the neck.

The word *mũthuri* ‘an old man’ is a person who commands respect and is entrusted to advise and mediate in the reconciliation of disagreeing parties. Although age is a factor for one to qualify as *mũthuri*, you must satisfy certain conditions to be recognized as one. Therefore, not everyone can be qualified to be *amũthuri* even if you are old enough to become one. This will depend on how you command respect in society. The interpretation of this proverb is that by saying that the man is the head, it deeply implies that he is the think tank of the family and has control of everything that happens in it. Man is warranted to punish, reprimand, reward as well as determining how finances are to be managed. This accomplishes the ideological scheme as hidden in the metaphor of the head and the neck. Examining the language of this proverb the power assigned to men is physical where the ‘head’ *kĩongo* is above the ‘neck’ *ngingo*. Contextually, the language of the proverb reminds women that they are always under men since the neck can never surpass the head and are therefore have no say in matters concerning the family. However, women are at the center stage in the upbringing and generating income to support the family. Having sacrificed a lot to sustain a family, a man intervenes and claims all the glory to himself through such linguistic channels.

Proverbial language is used to express the importance of bringing up a baby boy than bringing up a girl child.

81. *Mwanake nĩ kĩenyũ kĩa Ngai.*
 Young man is gift from God
 A young man is God’s gift to mankind.

The mention of *mwanake* ‘young man’ draws an image of a young, courageous, intelligent gentleman. The main purpose of a family in Gĩcũgũ society is to have children with the aim of maintaining the generation. Procreation is an affair of both a husband and a wife, but the one who decides the sex of the newborn is God. However, when a mother gives birth to a baby boy there is much jubilation and happiness than when a baby girl is born. The ideological intention behind the language of this proverb is to make women believe that boys are unique than girls and therefore having one is a privilege. Men proclaim that their power is God-given and it is therefore unchallengeable. Contextually, the proverb is used to demean women because it gives a baby boy a guarantee of a person who will be of great benefit in society whereas a baby girl is looked down upon. However, some men are a source of pain and embarrassment in the society since they perpetrate every form of gender violence yet no proverb describes them negatively.

Some proverbs recognize a boy child as more superior to a girl child who is perceived to be of no much value in society.

82. *Mũreri* *kĩbĩ* *nĩ* *mũreri* *mũndũrũme*
 Bringing up lad is bringing up man
 He who brings up a boy brings up a man.

To bring up children is a long and tedious process. It does not only mean to provide the food necessary for the growth but also includes investing in them by providing education and inculcating good morals. The word *mũndũrũme* ‘man’ is compared to an ‘uncircumcised boy’ *kĩbĩ*. In traditional Gĩcũgũ society to bring up a boy is more valued than bringing up a girl. This is because boys are believed to give back to the parents or guardians once they grow up. On the other hand girls are given little attention since once they grow up they are married elsewhere and will not give back to the parents. For this reason, little is done to them including denying them the right to education. Moreover, to make boys tough and resilient, they are given the responsibility of doing hard tasks and other roles that are believed to be challenging while girls are given the responsibilities of household chores like cooking, fetching firewood, and water among other lighter duties. The ideological agenda behind the language of this proverb is to emphasize the importance of the boy child. The phrase *nĩ mũreri mũndũrũme* ‘to bring up a

man' is a linguistic technique by men to ascribe power to themselves as they feel more superior than women who already seem to have accepted their status in the society.

4.2 Conclusion

Metaphors are common linguistic features used to oppress women among the Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ speakers. The superior group that dominates the inferior group wisely maneuvers the language and favors themselves by inculcating some ideological schemes to the entire society. Proverbs are deliberately clipped to disguise their oppressive nature whereas others use metaphors to make them appear more appealing to both women and men. However, after critical analysis, they are opaque linguistic structures that adversely abuse one gender.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD OF STUDY

5.1 Summary

The study set out to investigate how proverbial language is used to express power and dominance against women in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect of Gĩkũyũ language. It pursued the following research objectives:

- i. To investigate how proverbial language is used as a tool of oppression against women in Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect.
- ii. To examine the role of context in understanding how proverbial language expresses power against women and uphold dominance of men.
- iii. To investigate how metaphors are used to express power and dominance against women.

With regard to the first objective, the study indicated that women are derogated, belittled, and oppressed in Gĩcũgũ society. Most of the proverbial language in proverbs is used to create, transmit, and maintain disparity based on the difference in gender and patriarchy in the community.

The second objective was pursued by examining how context is used in the proverbial language to express power against women and uphold the superiority of men. The analysis showed that context plays an important role in oppressing one gender over the other. Ideologically, proverbial language is maneuvered by men to control women so that they can dominate and express their power over them.

The third objective was pursued by analyzing metaphors according to the requirements of CDA. The results showed that metaphors play a pivotal role in oppressing the female gender. Subtly, they are wisely used by the superior group to propagate their selfish schemes and wield power to themselves. The weaker group is made to believe that they are destined to survive under the mercy of the superior group. However, this is just a fallacy propagated by men.

The researcher collected the data that was related to the study from the community and engaged three informants who assisted greatly in the interpretation and description of the proverbial language. The proverbs were analyzed using the core principles of CDA namely, power, dominance, and ideology.

5.2 Conclusions

The study has sought to find out how proverbial language and metaphors are used as means of enacting power and dominance between genders. According to the findings of the study, proverbs and metaphors express power and dominance between genders by transferring their meaning to the listener. These linguistic features make people think differently by focusing on the ideas created by them. The transferred information encodes the information which is applied to influence people's opinions, attitudes and beliefs. The study has exposed that proverbial language and metaphors play a significant role in expressing power and dominance between genders. In addition to this, proverbial language used as diminutives, augmentatives, euphemistic and abusive words is used to convey the ideological concepts between genders.

It is also important to note that gender inequality in Africa and the rest of the world is fostered through cultural channels such as proverbs. According to data analysis in this study, proverbs have served as conduits of continued gender oppression among the Gĩcũgũ people. One of the ideological views transmitted through proverbs is the conservative aspect of women. Although not all proverbs oppress and demean women, most proverbs portray oppression. On the contrary, the male users of the oppressive proverbs perceive themselves as witty, while women referents feel distraught about them.

Traditionally, the perception of women is carried down from one generation to another by the word of mouth and this has continued in the contemporary society. Proverbial language has largely contributed to oppressing women in the family and the entire society. The analyzed proverbs encourage men to cultivate an attitude of insincerity, suspicion, carefree and secrecy which has resulted in a chauvinistic attitude among them. The analyzed proverbs demonstrate

the fact that women are dependent and the efforts of empowering them are suppressed. This is a clear gesture of promoting superiority and independence of male folk.

The fact that proverbs are rich in their pithiness and are appealing make them effective tools of perpetrating gender imbalance throughout generations. Proverbs are memorable and are widely used in the community. They, therefore, have a tremendous influence on an individual and the society at large.

Proverbs are coined in such a covert manner that their ideological perspective seems natural and full of wisdom that comes as a result of human effort. The proverbial language uses a non-violent means of asserting power against the inferior group. However, despite this negative view, the use of proverbial language remains a strong nugget of wisdom in many African societies including the people of Gĩcũgũ. Many renowned orators and artists use proverbial language to convey their message in different contexts.

Therefore, people have a responsibility to fulfill and change the perception of women in society. They should change their mindset and attitude towards one another. There ought to be practical measures to be observed by everyone to implement equality to both men and women through the life of proverbs. Women should raise their self-esteem and develop a sense of belonging. They therefore must rise and fight out all practices that dehumanize their position and identity in society.

On the other hand, men need to be sensitized on the need to understand their liberation from their wrong ideologies and misconceptions about women. For if they liberate women from the yoke of male chauvinism and patriarchy, it also means that they will free themselves from the bondage of oppression that affects both of them. This is because the oppressed person is stripped of humanity and the perpetrator of the injustice becomes an irredeemable monster.

In this case, therefore, the liberation of women struggle, their empowerment and progress in society may not bore fruits unless urgent efforts are put in place to redefine their identity and restoration of their dignity. In contemporary society, women should be empowered to overcome these ideological challenges. Among other things, the personality of women, their

weaknesses and their strengths are some of the conspicuous perceptions by the society that depict them the way they are portrayed in proverbial language analyzed in this study.

5.3 Recommendations

There is a need to investigate oppressive language against women as portrayed in songs, narratives and poems. Comparative research of proverbial language from other languages and dialects can be done to identify the similarities and differences concerning the way they treat women in society. It is also important to carry out research using other theories and establish differences and similarities in their findings. This study has used Critical Discourse Analysis Theory.

5.4 Contribution to the field of study

Gĩ-Gĩcũgũ dialect has very few documented literature. Therefore, this study attempts to document the dialect. Chapters 3 and 4 provide a detailed account of how and where the proverbial language is used to oppress women. Although proverbs cannot be reconstructed as they represent the attitude of a language group, the new proverbs in the making should be carefully coined to avoid oppressing one gender over the other, by so doing, the world will be a better place to live in.

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APPENDIX 1

(a) Proverbial language that express power and dominance against women

Kīgwa gīcokagia mūrio gītina gīgikūra.

As sugarcane grows old its sweetness goes to the bottom.

Mwere wamūka kīgūta ūbūragwa kathiga kamwe.

The millet harvest of a lazy woman has only one bunch of harvest to extract grains.

Kīgūta kīa mūdūmūrūme nī kīgūtūkaga no kīa mūdūmūka gītīgūkaga.

A lazy man ceases to be lazy but a lazy woman does not cease to be lazy.

Njamba ya mūdūrūme īrūndagwa nī aka.

A man's downfall is caused by women.

Kīathī kītharagua nī gaka kamwe.

One small elderly lady can spoil a market.

Gutiri mwariki ute irima

No castor tree that doesn't have a hole

Mwere mwega ūmenyagwa na maketha.

A nice millet plant is known by the harvest.

Aka matigagwa ndundu.

Women are not confided to.

Mūdūmūka nde kwao

A woman has no permanent home.

Mūdūmūka ndatūmagwa thirīnī

A woman is not sent to collect a debt.

Mūdūmūka ndoragagwa.

A woman is not killed.

Mūdūmūka ndamenyagīrwa.

A woman cannot be predicted.

Mūtumia ndikagia rūbīa gītumbīnī.

A woman does not deep a horn in a beer pot.

Ngingo ītīkīrūkaga kīongo.

The neck cannot raise above the head.

Mūrūri ndūakaga mūtumia nota mūrūri.

A flower does not build, a woman is like a flower.

Mūtumia ndonagua njegeki.

A woman is not shown the armpit.

Ngombe itikūraga ñni.

A liver of a cow does not grow old.

Mbūri itūragua ñ rĩa

A goat lives because of its skin.

Mwia na kibĩ akenaga kĩa rua no mwia na mũndũmũka akenaga akua.

He who steals with a lad is relieved when he is circumcised but he who steals with a woman is relieved when she dies.

Mwĩtwa ñ mũndũmũka ñ mwĩtwa ñ gĩkuu.

He who is called by a woman is called by death.

Kana ka ngarĩ gakunyaga ota ngarĩ.

A cub of a leopard scratches like the mother.

Mūtumia angĩkūra atarĩ mwana ndangĩona mũmũtabiri maaĩ.

If a woman grows old without having a child, then she cannot have anyone to draw water for her.

Kūrĩ gũciara ũru ta kibia gĩgĩciara na kĩongo.

There is giving birth badly like a sorghum plant that breeds with its head.

Gũciara tĩ kũmĩa

To give birth is not to defecate.

(b) Proverbial language that express dominance of men

Gutĩ njamba ya mweru ũmwe.

There is no cock which has one hen

Gūtĩrĩ ũ kabĩ ũtabaragwa kĩongo.

There is no household with a male child where the head is not cooked.

Mwaki wa arume ndutogaga kerĩ

Men's fire does not smoke twice.

Njamba ti ikere.

A hero is not determined by the size of his curves.

Mũndũrũme tĩ kĩbĩ.

A man is not a lad.

Kĩrema arũme nĩ kĩgariũre.

That which defeat men is thoroughly tested over.

Marakara ma arũme matitũraga ta ma aka.

Men's anger does not last as much as women's anger.

Ng'enda ndĩ ũtiagaga mũtegi.

There is no that roams the world that has no hunter.

Gũtĩ ngoma ĩte mwobi.

There is no devil without a controller.

Ndĩa nyama ndĩcumĩkagua na nyama.

An animal that eats meat is not let to salivate for meat.

Mbere ya arũme ĩtĩ mwene.

Men's front does not have an owner

Arũme ti aka

Men are not women

Cia athuri nĩ thuranĩre.

Men are perfect planners.

APPENDIX 2

(a) Metaphors that express power and dominance against women

Aka erĩ nĩ nyũngũ igĩrĩ cia ũrogi.

Two wives are like two pots of poison.

Mwĩrĩtu mũthaka nĩ magambo.

A beautiful girl is trouble.

Mũtumia na kionje nĩ ũndũũ mwe.

A woman and disabled are the same.

Aka nĩ njũkĩ.

Women are bees.

Ũcũ nĩ watuĩkire kiere kĩa njĩranĩ.

That one became a roadside millet plant.

Mũtumia nĩwe mucĩ

Woman is home.

Mũndũmũka na igurũ matĩmenyagĩrwa.

A woman and the sky are unpredictable.

Aka a kwene nĩ ĩrima ĩriku.

Strange women are a deep hole.

Mũtũmia ũmwe nĩ rĩgu wagatema.

One wife is the last morsel of food you take when you have dysentery.

Kũringĩrĩria mũndũmũka ũndũ nĩta kũringĩria rwenji rũkĩrega.

To force a woman to do something is like forcing a blunt razor to shave.

Ũcunĩ Wanja kĩbĩ

That one is Wanja the lad.

Kĩero nĩ wimbo nĩ ũmbũkaga

A thigh is a bubble, it deflates

(b) Metaphors that express dominance of men

Mureri kĩbĩ nĩ mũreri mũndũrũme

He who brings up an uncircumcised boy brings up a man

Mũndũrũme nĩ mũgambo

A man is voice

Mũthuri nĩ kĩongo

Husband is the head

Mwanake nĩ kĩenyũ kĩa Ngai.

A young man is God's gift to mankind.