A STYLISTIC AND PRAGMATIC STUDY OF KIPSIGIS PROVERBS

BY

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DECLARATION

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

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

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DEDICATION

To my parents, David and Ruth Soi who laid the foundation for my education and made this academic endeavour possible, you are the best parents in the world,

To my loving husband, Boaz who has stood by me, giving me all his support,

To our daughters Kimberly and Kayla; you give me joy,

To my two special sisters Tuta and Diana who have always been there for me when I so needed them.

To you all I say may God bless you. I love you all.

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ABSTRACT

This project presents the results of a linguistic study on Kipsigis proverbs. It was titled the Stylistic and Pragmatic study of Kipsigis proverbs. This study aimed at subjecting Kipsigis proverbs through a stylistic analysis. It also sought to find out the functions of Kipsigis proverbs in the contemporary Kipsigis society as well as establish the attitude of the Kipsigis speakers towards the Kipsigis proverbs. A questionnaire and Face to Face interview was used to collect data which was then analysed in three ways. The first was a stylistic analysis on 30 selected Kipsigis proverbs. The rhetorical devices that came out were alliteration, assonance, rhyme, personification, paradox, metaphor, allusion, analogy and ellipsis. The second analysis was Content Analysis which was done on the responses in the questionnaire aimed at establishing the functions of proverbs and the attitude of the Kipsigis speakers towards proverbs use. The findings were: that there is a varied attitude towards the proverbs among Kipsigis speakers depending on the age of the speaker and that proverbs are used for various reasons which include to advise, warn, educate, conceal a secret, correcting, settle a dispute and to pass cultural knowledge. Another finding is that the elderly members of the Kipsigis society are the ones who faithfully used the proverbs. These findings were then explained using Relevance Theory.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to Kipsigis Language and Culture

The Kipsigis people are classified under the Highland Nilotic group of people and a sub-group of the Kalenjin community. According to Sambu (2011:7), the Kipsigis people were traditionally pastoralists but due to pressure on land and high population they have been forced to live both as farmers and pastoralists. They are located to the Southern part of the Rift Valley, and as the name suggests, they are the most populous. The term 'Kipsigis' means: 'one who reproduces'.

Many of the Kipsigis people live in the counties of Nakuru, Kericho, Bomet and Narok South. Their mother- tongue is 'Kipsigis' which is used in the Kalenjin radio stations like Chamge FM, Kitwek FM, Kass FM, Radio Injili and television station like Kass TV.

The Kipsigis society is paternal with the man being the head of the family and the sole owner of the family property. The organisational structure starts in the family and is hierarchical in nature. The Kipsigis highly value the virtues of respect, truth, morality and hard work. Those who disobey rules face punishments of different degrees depending on the mistake.

In the past, every homestead had a shrine located to the East of the compound which was divided into two sides one for the men and the other for the women where they would offer their prayers just before the sun rose. They believed in a supreme being who was referred to as 'Asis Chepkochor' loosely translated as 'Sun who rises.'

The Kipsigis also practised polygamy but with the influx of Christianity a few still practice it. Those in a polygamous set up are taught to respect each other as members of the same family. The Kipsigis are organised in clans with some having special roles of blessing and others of cursing. It is a taboo for members of the same clan to get married hence such cases are very rare. The Kipsigis used to carry out raiding activities as a way of adding more wealth. These were carefully planned with the help of those who had the ability to foretell the future. If they were advised not to go, the wise ones would heed the advice. An example is that of the' battle of Mogori' in which the warriors had been advised not to go as the fortune teller had seen vultures following them but they were adamant saying the vultures were going to feed on their enemies. It is said that many Kipsigis warriors were slain in this battle.

The Kipsigis people had many rituals that were done in different occasions many of which required the slaughtering of an animal. Traditionalists still carry out these rituals in ceremonies like marriage, funerals, circumcision, cleansing and others. In these rituals, the ancestors are invited through chanting and their own beer pots are even set aside for their drinking pleasure.

Generally, the Kipsigis people are known to be secretive and of few words. Details of their rituals or plans are not supposed to reach the wrong ear and that is why many of them used a code or proverbs. A common idiomatic expression is 'ma malaat kot' translated as 'the house is not sealed' to signal the presence of strangers or people who should not hear. Another one is 'tumdonyon ma nai chi' to mean 'our secret rituals.' The

Kipsigis name for proverbs is 'kalewenoik.' A common introductory phrase when quoting a proverb in Kipsigis is "the elders said."

The Kipsigis sub-group is one of the sub-tribes of Kalenjin ethnic group. According to Seroney (2009), Kalenjin language is spoken by close to 6 million people in Kenya and a substantial number in Uganda (Sebei) and Tanzania (Datoga). He classified Kalenjin linguistic families in Kenya as Marakwet, Nandi, Sabaot, Kipsigis, Terik, Keiyo, Tugen, Sengwer, Okiek and Pokot.

Toweet (1975) classified Kalenjin Language into nine dialects: Nandi, Kipsigis, Keiyo, Tugen, Sabaot, Marakwet, Pokot, Ogiek and Sengwer. This grouping was widely accepted by the Kalenjin sub-groups.

1.1 Background to the Study of Proverbs

Paremiology, which is the study of proverbs and paremiography, which is the collection of proverbs, have attracted a number of scholars in the course of history. According to Salwa (2005), the earliest interests in proverbs began with Sumerian Cuneiform tablets followed by King Solomon who wrote 900 proverbs around 10th Century. This was followed by the writings of Aristotle who considered proverbs a survival of an older wisdom. This was followed by the Renaissance scholars like Erasmus of Rotterdam and folklorist Archer Taylor. Other folklorists like Wolfgang Mieder then took over using the earlier works as basis for their work and has written so many books on proverbs dealing with the source and origin of proverbs, the use and function of proverbs in the political scenery and so forth.

These scholars have been interested in different aspects of proverbs from the use and function to the meaning, definition and origin of proverbs. To illustrate, Archer Taylor (1931) worked on the characteristics and source of proverbs and categorized their content as well as giving their importance. Scholars like Alan Dundes (1980), E.M Albert (1972) and William Bascom (1965) have all dealt with functions of proverbs whereas E. Ojo Arewa (1983) and Archer Taylor (1931) have both dealt with the definitions of proverbs. Buchanan (1965) dealt with proverbs and their characteristics. Other scholars are Norrick (1985) who worked on the components of proverbs. The study of proverbs continues to this very day where a lot especially in Kenyan communities still has to be done.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Kenya today, communities are constantly facing influences from westernisation, advancement in technology and communication and financial world. This raises the question of the functions of Kipsigis proverbs in the contemporary Kipsigis society which is equally exposed to such changes. With education and exposure comes bilingualism and intermarriages to mention but a few. In the Kipsigis society, just like most African societies, proverbs were handed down to the next generation through the word of mouth. What then is the attitude of the Kipsigis speakers towards the Kipsigis proverbs in these ever-changing times?

Chesaina (1991) wrote a book on Kalenjin Oral literature. In this book, the author focuses on the social context, form and functions of Kalenjin oral literature. She presents Kalenjin literary materials from oral narratives, songs, proverbs and riddles. These texts

are based on the various dialects of the Kalenjin dialects. A total number of 107 Kalenjin proverbs were presented, their meanings given and their functions explained. The author also categorised these proverbs into ten groups according to their functions.

This book lays the foundation for the study of Kalenjin oral literature in general. The proverbs section is significant but the dialect used is not Kipsigis. Although there is mutual intelligibility, some words differ from those of the Kipsigis dialect. Also, the stylistic aspects of the proverbs are not dealt with.

Little work has been done on Kipsigis proverbs. Soi (1984) gave a list of Kipsigis proverbs with their meaning without showing their structure and how they are applied in a context.

To the best of my knowledge, no other work has been done on the stylistic and pragmatic aspects of the Kipsigis proverbs. This study therefore seeks to fill this knowledge gap by collecting some of the Kipsigis proverbs and analysing them in terms of their stylistic features and the functions of these proverbs in the contemporary Kipsigis society.

1.3 Research Objectives

The objectives to be achieved in this study are to:

i. Carry out a stylistic analysis of Kipsigis proverbs

ii. Examine the functions of Kipsigis proverbs

iii. Investigate the attitude of the Kipsigis speakers in Kapletundo Ward, Sotik Constituency, towards the Kipsigis proverbs

iv. Explain the difference in the use of proverbs among the various age groups of Kipsigis speakers in the said region

1.4 Hypotheses

The following are the hypotheses to the study:

i. The rhetorical devices in Kipsigis proverbs are mainly sound patterns

ii. Proverbs are no longer widely used among the Kipsigis speakers

iii. The attitude towards the Kipsigis proverb vary with the age of the speakers

iv. The difference in proverb usage among the speakers be explained using the Stylo-pragmatic model

1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study

There are many proverbs in the Kipsigis society but the scope of this study and the time available did not allow for an exhausted list. Therefore, the researcher collected 100 Kipsigis proverbs. The Kipsigis people are spread across Bomet, Kericho and parts of Narok South but this study focused on the Kipsigis found in Sotik constituency, Kapletundo village alone.

This study confined itself to the stylistic and pragmatic aspects of proverbs using a Stylo-pragmatic model as the tool for analysis. It made use of certain aspects of Relevance Theory and lexical pragmatics.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study used the Stylo-pragmatic model which combines both Stylistics and Pragmatics fields of study.

1.6.1 Stylistics

Leech and Short (1989:13) state that Stylistics as the linguistic study of style is undertaken because the aim is to explain something and literary stylistics has the goal of explaining the relation between language and artistic function. Hence the motivating question is not so much 'what' as the 'why' and 'how.' The linguist's angle is why the author chooses to express himself a particular way.

In relation to proverbs, the question will be why does a speaker use proverbs?

Lyons (1981:295) defines Stylistics 'as the study of stylistic variation in languages and of the way in which this is exploited by their users.' Finch (2000:206) defines stylistics as the branch of linguistics that applies the methodologies of linguistics to analyse the concept of style in language.

When someone uses a proverb, he or she is making a linguistic choice because what is being said can be stated in plain language. The speaker therefore wants to achieve a certain effect that cannot be attained through plain language. Hence the choice to use a proverb is a style in itself. In this regard, there are several definitions of style. First, Lyons (1981:20) states that style implies 'those components and features of a literary composition which give it individual stamp, marking it as the work of a particular author

and producing a certain effect on the readers.' This definition is also applicable to an utterance where we have the speaker and the hearers as in the case of a proverb.

Second, Crystal and Davy (1969: 9) give the four commonly occurring senses of the term 'style' as:

a) Some or all language habits of one person. Here, there is a selection of language and its linguistic idiosyncrasies which characterizes an individual's uniqueness.

b) Some or all language habits shared by a group of people at one time over a period of time, for example Augustan poets.

c) Effectiveness of a mode of expression

d) Literary language as a characteristic of 'good ,effective and beautiful writing '

For our definition of style in relation to proverbs, the second and third definitions will be relevant as this study focuses on proverb use by various groups of Kipsigis speakers. The fourth definition will not be applicable to this study because proverb use in a village setting is mainly oral.

1.6.2 Relevance Theory

As this study uses a Stylo-Pragmatic Model, Relevance Theory by Sperber and Wilson (1986/1995) was chosen for the pragmatic section. Pragmatics deals with meaning in context and is mainly concerned with issues of communication and interpretation. According to Wilson and Sperber (2002), Relevance theory may be seen as an attempt to work out in details one of Grice's central claims: that an essential feature of most human communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is the expression and recognition of intentions (Grice 1989). In developing this claim, Grice laid the foundations for an

inferential model of communication, an alternative to the classical code model. According to the inferential model, a communicator provides evidence of her intention to convey a certain meaning, which is inferred by the audience on the basis of the evidence provided hence the goal of inferential pragmatics is to explain how the hearer infers the speaker's meaning on the basis of the evidence provided (Wilson and Sperber 2002:250).

According to Wilson and Sperber (2002), the relevance-theoretic account is based on another of Grice's central claims: that utterances automatically create expectations which guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning. Grice described these expectations in terms of a Co-operative Principle and maxims of Quality (truthfulness), Quantity (informativeness), Relation (relevance) and Manner (clarity) which speakers are expected to observe (Grice 1961, 1989: 368-72).

Relevance theorists agree with Grice that utterances raise expectations of relevance, but question other aspects like the need for a Co-operative Principle and maxims, the focus on pragmatic processes which contribute to implicatures rather than to explicit, truth-conditional content, the role of deliberate maxim violation in utterance interpretation, and the treatment of figurative utterances as deviations from a maxim or convention of truthfulness. The central claim of relevance theory is that the expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are precise enough, and predictable enough, to guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning. The aim is to explain in cognitively realistic terms what these expectations of relevance amount to, and how they might contribute to an empirically plausible account of comprehension. (Wilson and Sperber 2002:250).

1.6.3 The Tenets of Relevance Theory

According to Wilson and Sperber, relevance is not only a potential property of utterances and other observable phenomena but also of thoughts, memories and conclusions of inferences. They add that the search for relevance is a basic feature of human cognition. Intuitively, an input (a sight, a sound, an utterance, a memory) is relevant to an individual when it connects with background information he has available to yield conclusions that matter to him. This may be: answering a question he had in mind, improving his knowledge on a certain topic, settling a doubt, confirming a suspicion, or correcting a mistaken impression. When an utterance is made, it has to connect with a certain context for it to achieve relevance. Context is defined as the knowledge that the interlocutors bring to the conversation. Context according to Sperber and Wilson (1995:15) is "the set of premises used in interpreting an utterance (apart from the premise that the utterance in question has been produced). It is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world.'' In addition, context combines with the cognitive environment which they define as the set of assumptions that are manifest to the individual including expectations about the future, scientific hypotheses, religious beliefs and beliefs about the mental state of the speaker. It is also the background knowledge that is comprised of all the stored information in the mind at the time of the utterance. It could consist of cultural knowledge, education, norms and values of the society, experience and so forth.

In relevance theoretic terms, an input is relevant to an individual when it is processing in a context of available assumptions yields a positive cognitive effect. A positive cognitive

effect is a worthwhile difference to the individual's representation of the world, for example, a true conclusion. They add that false conclusions are not worth having (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 3.1-2).

The most important type of cognitive effect achieved by processing an input in a context is a contextual implication which is a conclusion deducible from the input and the context together, but from neither input nor context alone. Other types of cognitive effect include the strengthening, revision or abandonment of available assumptions. According to relevance theory, an input is relevant to an individual when, and only when, its processing yields such positive cognitive effects.

According to them, relevance is a matter of degree, that what makes an input worth picking out from the mass of competing stimuli is not just that it is relevant, but that it is more relevant than any alternative input available to us at that time. What contributes to relevance also is the processing effort required. In relevance-theoretic terms, other things being equal, the greater the processing effort required, the less relevant the input will be. Therefore relevance may be assessed in terms of cognitive effects and processing effort:

According to Relevance theory humans have an automatic tendency to maximise relevance, because of the way our cognitive systems have evolved. In a bid to increase efficiency, our perceptual mechanisms tend automatically to pick out potentially relevant stimuli, our memory retrieval mechanisms tend automatically to activate potentially relevant assumptions, and our inferential mechanisms tend spontaneously to process them

in the most productive way. This is the First, or Cognitive, Principle of Relevance (Sperber & Wilson 1995: 3.1-2):

I. Cognitive Principle of Relevance

Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of relevance. This is the cognitive background against which inferential communication takes place. According to the theory, inferential communication is not just a matter of intending to affect the thoughts of an audience; it is a matter of getting them to recognise that one has this intention. It involves two layers:

Ostensive-inferential Communication

a. The Informative Intention

This is the intention to inform an audience of something. The audience has to recognise the informative intention. (Whether the informative intention itself is fulfilled depends on how much the audience trusts the communicator.) (Sperber and Wilson 2004:611).

b. The Communicative Intention

This is the intention to inform the audience of one's informative intention. According to the theory, understanding is achieved when the communicative intention is fulfilled. By producing an ostensive stimulus, the communicator encourages her audience to presume that it is relevant enough to be worth processing. This is the basis for the Second, or Communicative, Principle of Relevance, which applies specifically to ostensive inferential communication:

II. Communicative Principle of Relevance

Every ostensive stimulus conveys a presumption of its own optimal relevance.

The notion of optimal relevance is meant to spell out what an addressee is to expect in terms of effort and effect when an ostensive stimulus is communicated. Sperber and Wilson characterised optimal relevance as follows:

Optimal Relevance

An ostensive stimulus is optimally relevant to an audience if:

a. It is relevant enough to be worth the audience's processing effort;

b. It is the most relevant one compatible with communicator's abilities and preferences.

In order for an audience to achieve optimal relevance, relevance theorists suggest that the hearer should take the decoded linguistics meaning; following a path of least effort, he should enrich it at the explicit level and complement it at the implicit level until the resulting interpretation meets his expectation of relevance. This is what is referred to as the relevance –theoretic comprehension procedure

Relevance-Theoretic Comprehension Procedure

a. Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects: Test interpretive hypotheses (disambiguations, reference resolutions, implicatures, etc.) in order of accessibility.

b. Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied.

In summary, the most important aspects of Relevance Theory are the Communicative Principle of Relevance, the notion of Optimal Relevance and the Relevance-Theoretic Comprehension Strategy. These principles will be used to show how a hearer arrives at the intended meaning of the selected Kipsigis proverbs. In Relevance theory, assumptions

communicated by a speaker are categorised into two categories: 'explicature' and 'implicature'. They are discussed in the next subsections.

1.6.4 Explicature

In Relevance theory, it is assumed that the assumptions made by a speaker are categorized into 'explicature' and 'implicature.' Sperber and Wilson (1986a/95b:182) define explicature thus: "an assumption communicated by an utterance U is explicit if and only if it is a development of a logical form encoded by U."

According to Carston (2002:124), "an assumption (proposition) communicated by an utterance is an 'explicature' of the utterance if and only if it is a development of: (a) a linguistically encoded logical form of the utterance, or of (b) a sentential subpart of a logical form."

According to Carston, the distinction between explicature and implicature applies only to the assumptions that fall within the speaker's communicative intention. He adds that when the proposition expressed is also intended to be communicated, it is regarded as the explicature of that utterance. The linguistic expressions that are used and the context form the content of an explicature. Linguistic decoding generates the logical form of an utterance and pragmatic inferences must enrich the logical form of an utterance in order to yield a truth-evaluable assumption.

The inferential processes include reference assignment, disambiguation and enrichment. These enrichment processes are disambiguation, ellipses, time sequence, cause and effect, reference assignment and bridging.

1.6.5 Implicature

Implicature is defined as the logical form that is derived solely on the activation of contextual implications. According to Sperber and Wilson (1986:182) "an assumption communicated by an utterance which is not explicit is implicit (hence an implicature)."

Carston (2002:377) defines an implicature as "a communicated assumption which is derived solely via processes of pragmatic inference". He adds that the conceptual content of an implicature is supplied wholly by pragmatic inference. Hence the difference between implicatures and explicatures is that whereas explicatures are derived by virtue of semantic decoding and enrichments, implicatures involve inferences only. Take the following example:

  X plans to buy a book

  Y: Are you buying the book?

  X: I don't have money.

The inferences in the mind of Y are:

If X does not have money, he will not buy the book.

The conclusion is: X will not buy the book.

The considerations in the mind: 'If X does not have money, he will not buy a book' are called implicated premises. The mind is producing these contextual assumptions also

called implicated premises as it activates the cognitive environment looking for the most relevant interpretation on a cost-benefit basis. The conclusion like 'X will not buy a book' is called implicated conclusion. The technical term for this conclusion is contextual implication.

There are strong implicatures and weak implicatures. Consider the following examples:

A: Did you watch the 7 PM news?

B: I don't watch news.

In the above statement, the underlying answer is no, but A cannot reach the answer directly but only through the entertainment of implicated premises below:

a. People normally watch news

b. If B does not watch news, he did not watch the 7 PM news.

c. B did not watch the 7 PM news.

All the above implicatures are considered strong implicatures and they are intended by the speaker. However, the hearer begins engaging his/ her cognitive environment more and can go on spinning his thoughts about the answer "I do not watch news."

i. People normally watch current affairs.

ii. People like being informed.

iii. B does not like being informed.

iv. B is not interested in news.

v. B has other interests of his own.

vi. B is a strange person.

vii. B is ignorant.

The above implicatures are called weak implicatures. Weak implicatures are usually not intended by the speaker, they are the responsibility of the hearer.

1.6.6 Lexical Pragmatics

This section presents the main tenets of lexical pragmatics and their relevance to proverbs. According to Sperber and Wilson (2004) relevance theory accounts for the lexical processes of broadening and narrowing as they are triggered by search for relevance. These are processes that take place automatically in the human mind. Lexical pragmatics model gives a systematic and explanatory account of the pragmatic phenomena that are connected with semantics under-specification of lexical items. This theory advances the view that lexical items of a language are analysed in a systematic manner and interpreted according to a particular context. Using this theory, the researcher intends to show how figurative language used in proverbs is understood by those who use them.

The value in lexical analysis will show how lexical items in proverbs are affected by the context of the utterance. Context plays a major role in meaning as some lexical items in proverbs acquire different meaning in different contexts. The concept expressed by use of a lexical item may go beyond the concept encoded. These lexical items are subjected to the concepts and processes of Lexical Pragmatics Theory.

1.6.6.1 The Lexical Pragmatic Approach

The lexical pragmatics model comprises of two theories: lexical semantics and conversational implicature. Lexical semantics strictly refers to word meaning. It accounts for multi-word units in which case a group of words have a unitary meaning which does not correspond to the individual meaning of the words used (Kidusu, 2010:4) as cited in Koech (2013).

Conversational implicature refers to the relationship between what is said and what is meant in a conversation, Grice (1991). A conversational implicature is not therefore associated with any expression but it is usually inferred from the use of a certain utterance from the context. According to recent work in the field of lexical pragmatics (Wilson and Carson 2007), the meaning of words are frequently pragmatically adjusted and fine-tuned in context, so that their contribution to the proposition expressed is different from their lexically encoded sense.

A lexical pragmatic approach in Relevance Theory has been developed by Carston (2002), Wilson (2003) and Wilson and Sperber (2002). The main idea of their finding is that linguistically encoded meaning of a word is no more than an indication to the actual interpretation or utterance meaning. In the essence, the interpretation is not decoded but has to be inferred by a pragmatic mechanism. The understanding of any utterance, literal, loose or metaphorical, is a matter of seeing its intended relevance as specified in the relevance theoretical comprehension procedure.

According to Wilson (2003:282), Relevance Theory suggests the following to the basic questions on lexical pragmatics. It states that lexical pragmatic processes are triggered by the search for relevance, they follow a path of least effort, they operate via mutual adjustment of explicit context and cognitive effects and they stop when the expectations of relevance raised by the utterance are satisfied or abandoned.

Lexical pragmatics postulates that lexical items in a language are analysed in a systematic manner and interpreted according to a particular context. The theory combines the idea of semantics under specification in the lexicon with a theory of pragmatics. It handles issues on lexical semantics, nature of concepts, their role in communications, utterance meaning and how they are processed, as well as the development of lexical pragmatic abilities.

In lexical pragmatics, the concepts communicated by the use of words may differ from the concepts encoded in two ways: lexical narrowing and lexical broadening.

1.6.6.2 Lexical Narrowing

According to Sperber and Wilson (2004), lexical narrowing is a situation where a word is used in a more specific sense than the encoded one resulting to narrowing of the linguistically specified denotation. Narrowing increases implications and the hearer is entitled to narrow the interpretation until there is an interpretation that satisfies his expectation of relevance.

1.6.6.3 Lexical Broadening

Here a word is used to convey a more general sense than the encoded one. Broadening is triggered for the search of relevance which involves the construction of ad hoc concepts

based on information which are made accessible by the encyclopaedic entry of the encoded concept.

Wilson (2006) defines lexical broadening as the case where a word is used to convey a more general sense of meaning than the encoded one with consequent widening of the linguistically – specified denotation. The process of broadening has various types which are: Categorical extension, hyperbole, neologism, approximation and metaphorical extension. Hyperbole and Metaphorical extension are discussed.

a) Hyperbole

According to Wilson (2006), hyperbole involves a radical type of broadening which allows the communicated concept to depart from the encoded concept. People speak in exaggeration. Hyperbole sometimes evokes reactions such as anger, comic effects and interest depending on how it is used and the context it is used in. Example;

    i.   I am starved

This does not mean the person is really starving as in a drought situation but that the person is very hungry. Hyperbole is often employed in proverbs and those who understand proverbs of a language are able to recognize them whenever they are used and arrive at the intended meaning accordingly. How they do this will be explained using this theory.

b) Metaphorical Extension

This is a type of broadening which allows the communicated concept to depart much further from the encoded concept. They are figures of speech that are not taken literally. For example:

i.   'John is a lion'

ii.   'Kimberly is an angel'

The environment is used to extend the encoded concept of lion on the person John. A selection process takes place that selects the characteristics from lion to fit John according to the concept. This means that John is a very brave person.

This type of broadening is applicable in analysing the form of Kipsigis proverbs to show how metaphorical proverbs are used and understood. The researcher will show how comprehension of these proverbs requires context.

1.6.6.4 Ad hoc Concept Construction

Horn and ward (2004:617) state that the context of a concept on a given occasion of use is constructed *ad hoc* out of range of encyclopaedic information one has at his/her disposal – each of the concept resulting in a combination of assumptions from encyclopaedic memory. They add that linguistic context and the accessibility of assumptions have an effect of assumptions one will assemble for a given concept or a given occasion and these are relevance driven. *Ad hoc* concepts are not linguistically given but are made in specific contexts in response to specific expectations of relevance.

The concept of context is important in this study since Kipsigis proverbs rely on contextual clues in order to infer meaning from the non-literal language. Schroeder (2005:8) asserts that context is like the encyclopaedia about the world: it contains the values and norms of a society, the personal belief system and the cultural norms, i.e. all the knowledge that the communicators have stored in their minds at the time they enter

the conversation. She further observes that metaphors in Relevance Theory require the activation of encyclopaedic entries and works on weak implicatures. This is also applicable to Kipsigis proverbs which make use of metaphors and other figures of speech as shall be illustrated. In lexical pragmatics, metaphors are utterances which are implicatures that require contextual effects to be understood, analysed, interpreted and processed on weak implicatures.

1.6.6.5 Proverbs and Relevance Theory

This section demonstrates how Relevance Theory applies to Proverbs. The researcher intends to use Relevance Theory to show that a person uses a proverb because he intends to bring out a certain meaning. Proverbs are culture- specific hence the person employing them finds them relevant to him or her. The Theory will also be used to show that one cannot use a proverb if he or she does not understand them hence does not find them relevant. This study also will show the role of context in understanding a given proverb. The researcher therefore seeks to demonstrate how the difference in proverbs usage among the various age groups in the Kipsigis society is explained through Relevance Theory.

Relevance theory is based on human cognition showing how the human mind processes information online to arrive at the speaker's intended meaning even when the utterances are indirect. Whenever a proverb is quoted, the literal meaning may not give the meaning that a speaker intends. This theory will therefore be used to show how a listener bridges the gap that exists between the literal meaning of the proverb and the intended meaning.

Proverbs have figurative meaning yet speakers of a language employ them successfully in their conversation.

The main tenets of Relevance Theory which include Relevance, Context, and Processing Effort are applicable to proverbs. For an utterance to be relevant it should achieve cognitive effects. For a proverb to be understood, it should ignite the mind to begin looking for possible interpretations. If one does not understand a proverb, the mind will simply reject it because no assumptions are activated. In other words, it achieves no cognitive effects. Again, if the context is not appropriate, proverbs may not be used or may not be understood. Hence just like utterances in relevance are defined under context, proverbs too are made and understood when the context is right.

Sperber and Wilson (1995:15) define context as 'the set of premises used in interpreting an utterance (apart from the premise that the utterance in question has been produced). Also that it is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world. They also add that context also involves the cognitive environments which are the set of assumptions that are manifest to the individual including expectations about the future, scientific hypotheses, religious beliefs and beliefs about the mental state of the speaker.

Lexical Pragmatics approach (in particular the lexical broadening process) will be instrumental in showing how users of Kipsigis proverbs are able to understand proverbs

which contain lexical items that have figurative meaning. The researcher will also explain using this model why some speakers may not understand the proverbs.

1.7 Literature Review

This section presents literature review on proverbs as well as on Relevance Theory.

1.7.1 Literature Review on Proverbs

A number of scholars have attempted to give their definition of a proverb. Wolfgang (1993) as cited in Salwa (2005:20) conducted a survey, asking 55 non-academics to write their definitions of a proverb. He found that 'from four to twenty times in the collected definitions: a proverb is a phrase, saying, truth, morals, experience, lessons, and advice concerning life and which has been handed from generation to generation.

In regards to the definition a proverbs, there could be variations, but as Salwa (2005:22) states, there is a universal agreement about what constitutes a proverb. First, is that proverbs have existed in all languages and there is no nation without proverbs. Second, people have used them to express their understanding of their beliefs, values and their surroundings in ordinary daily conversations. Third, proverbs were transmitted by oral tradition as a result of general experiences before they were put on paper. Fifth, as part of tradition, they are effective elements that transmit human culture.

According to The Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 8th edition, a proverb is a well-known phrase or sentence that gives advice or says something that is generally true. Proverbs therefore have an element of well- known truth   and are used to advice.

Chesaina (1991) presented literary materials from the Kalenjin Oral literature. Under proverbs, she looked at 107 Kalenjin proverbs and categorised them into ten groups which include: proverbs of fate, proverbs of initiative and perseverance, cautionary proverbs, proverbs against pride and arrogance, among others. This book is very significant as it lays the foundation of the study of genres of oral literature in general. Of particular importance is how the translation of proverbs is done so as to retain the original flavour as possible.

Bukenya et al, (1997: 47), states that simple everyday conversations are sprinkled with proverbs. They add that serious political, judicial and religious discussions are conducted, and in many cases settled through proverbs. Similarly, a person who knows to quote an apt proverb can emerge come the winner in any debate or argument.This shows that for one to understand and use a proverb of a particular language one needs to be fully conversant with the language in question because proverbs are fully entrenched in the language.

Mieder (2005:19) states that proverbs have always been significant in human communication whether they are used orally or in written form. He notes that as traditional expressions of human wisdom, proverbs will still be used by generations to come. He observes that although some proverbs may not be used due to their archaic nature, some will always remain relevant to humanity. He adds that new proverbs will then be added to this category of proverbs. Mieder, who focuses on the use and function of proverbial wisdom in political rhetoric, has written many books on proverbs. He shows

proverbs are employed to suit one's political stand and the role of proverbs in bringing out changes in the society. This study will help in analysing the functions of Kipsigis proverbs.

Maima (2004) investigated the relationship that exists between the linguistic form, functions and figurative meanings of Kisamia proverbs using the Stylopragmatic model. He collected 100 Kisamia proverbs and grouped them based on their functions into cautionary, unity, kinship, social decadence, and hospitality and gender categories. This study will be significant in the study of the linguistic form and function of Kipsigis proverbs. It will also be very instrumental in the application of the Stylo-pragmatic approach to Kipsigis proverbs.

Salwa (2005) looked into educational and social values expressed by proverbs in Sudan and England. He conducted an ethnographic study on Sudanese proverbs and classified them according to their functions. This study will be instrumental in evaluating the functions of Kipsigis proverbs.

Njagi (2013) did an analysis of Ki-Embu proverbs that express power relations between genders and between ages. She investigated how the proverbs express power relations in the language in question and also examined their meaning. Moreover, the study investigates whether proverbs reinforce and perpetuate the subjugation of one gender or age group as opposed to dominance and exaltation of the other. The study used Critical Discourse Analysis Theory to show that power is indexed and expressed in Ki-Embu

proverbs. This study will be significant in looking at the functions of proverbs in Kipsigis.

1.7.2 Literature on Relevance Theory

Koech (2013) worked on the language used in selected Kipsigis songs. The study used a lexical pragmatics framework. He examined lexical items that form the nucleus of meaning and analysed its variation as perceived by the audience. The study affirmed that lexical items used in the selected songs were a transfer of meaning which acquire activation through encyclopaedic entry that work as weak implicatures in the Relevance Theory. This study is significant in the analysis of metaphorical proverbs in Kipsigis.

Karimi (2013) studies the comprehension of Ki-Embu proverbs using a Relevance theoretic approach. Karimi looks at how the hearer arrives at the figurative meaning of Ki-Embu idioms. She asserts that a significant fact about idioms is that its comprehension cannot rely on the compositional meaning of the idiom and that more contextual material has to be used to understand them. This study is significant to the study of proverbs because they share certain characteristics.

1.8 Research Methodology

In this section, the researcher presents the data design, data collection and data analysis carried out in the research.

1.8.1 Research Design

This research used a questionnaire to collect Kipsigis proverbs and to establish the functions of these proverbs in the modern society. Face to face interview was also used for the respondents who were aged 60 and above and their responses recorded in a book. This method gave more room for a general discussion on the meaning, origin and significance of proverbs.

1.8.2 Data Collection

Kipsigis proverbs were collected in Sotik region, Kapletundo Division. The researcher collected 100 proverbs from selected native speakers. This comprised of 16 respondents of different ages from 15 and above with members of both gender being equally represented. A questionnaire was administered which was aimed at collecting the proverbs and also establishing the functions of the proverbs in the society. The sample population was categorised as follows:

   i.   Category one (15-25 years)

  ii.   Category two: (26-35years)

 iii.   Category three: (36-59 years)

 iv.   Category four: (60 years and above)

The researcher targeted four people per category with both gender represented. For those in category four, the researcher used Purposive sampling so as to get respondents who are well-versed in the ways of the land. The researcher organised a visit to their homes at their convenience where face to face interview was carried out. For categories one, two

and three, a school was identified where the people in all the categories were likely to be found. The researcher liaised with the identified school's administrators so that the different categories of people were seen in different times depending on the school's programme.

1.8.3 Data Analysis

The proverbs collected were analysed in three ways. First was a stylistic analysis to bring out rhetorical devices employed. The second analysis was done using the content analysis method in order to establish the function of the proverbs in the society. This is a technique of making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying specific characteristics of messages and using the same to relate to the subject under study. It provides a qualitative picture of the respondents, concerns, ideas, attitudes and feelings.

This method made it possible for the researcher to test the attitude of the Kipsigis speakers towards Kipsigis proverbs. The criteria for gauging attitude was developed hence there were three categories of attitude namely; those who own the proverbs, those who have a non-committal attitude and those who lacked interest in them. The words that a respondent would use to describe a proverb became the unit of analysis that would determine the attitude. The researcher identified phrases such as 'proverbs are our heritage,' 'traditional way of speech,' 'important tools for elders,' and related them to their attitude towards proverbs.

In the third analysis, the findings on the functions of proverbs were explained using Relevance Theory.

1.9 Significance of the Study

Proverbs are a rich cultural heritage which can easily be washed away by modernisation if they are not preserved and passed to the next generation. This calls for their collection, analysis and documentation. This documentation will serve as a base for future research in Kipsigis proverbs or proverbs from other communities.

This study is also of importance in highlighting the current trends in proverb usage among the Kipsigis speakers. It will also serve to highlight the stylistic nature of proverbs as their rhetorical devices will be analysed.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter forms an introduction to the study. The background to the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives, the scope and limitation, the theoretical framework, literature review, research methodology and the significance of the study have been presented. This study seeks to identify the rhetorical devices found in Kipsigis proverbs and also to establish the function of Kipsigis proverbs in the contemporary society.

The theoretical framework to be employed in this study has been presented in detail. As it is a two- sided model, a stylistic analysis will be carried out in chapter three and Relevance theory applied in chapter four to explain results of the content analysis that will be done to establish the function of proverbs. In the literature review section, various texts and works which are of significant value to this study have been reviewed.

CHAPTER TWO

THE FUNCTIONAL ASPECT OF PROVERBS

2.0 Introduction

Proverbs come in few words yet they inform a lot. They can also be studied in different angles such that one can bring out many features by just using a single proverb. Proverbs are fascinating and sometimes mind trigging. They borrow much from the surrounding of the community in question. Each community has its own set of proverbs and to understand them one has to be knowledgeable on the cultural aspects of that community. Some proverbs are unique to a community but there are others that are common across cultures. Take for example the following proverbs:

English: Do not cry over spilt milk

Kiswahili: Maji yakimwagika hayazoleki

                 (Spilt water cannot be recovered)

Kipsigis: Ma kirire chego che kakopa

                 (Don't cry over spilt milk)

The meaning intended in the above proverbs is that some situations are irreversible hence once they have happened; the best thing is just to accept, learn the lesson and move on. The imagery used may be similar like in the English and Kipsigis proverbs because even though people may be from different cultures but they may be sharing similar experiences, for example, milk is found in both societies. In others, the images used could be different but they will share some properties for example in the Kiswahili proverb,

'maji' is a liquid just like milk and once spilt, there is nothing else one can do to recover it.

Proverbs come in different forms and serve different functions. However, they have one thing in common; they reflect the cultural beliefs, wisdom and superstitions of a community. They are seen to be true hence no one questions their credibility.

The origin or source of proverbs cannot be credited to a single individual as they go way back to the ancestors of a society. Proverbs spring out of different situations like historical events for example war, famine, and so forth. They may also arise out of circumstances that people go through in daily life such as sicknesses, love, conflict and so forth. Some proverbs are coined as a comment on an experience that someone goes through whereas others could be unconscious statements that are picked up and used frequently and within no time people embrace them as proverbs.

Proverbs play a vital role in a society. They are used to summarise an experience or an observation. They are also used in broadcasting stations, poetry, books and newspapers. Proverbs are also used in speeches and religious functions. In addition, proverbs are used to teach, advice and warn.

2.1 Definitions of proverbs

Proverbs are rich rhetorical devices and it is important to define them. A number of writers have attempted to give their definition of a proverb.

First is Mieder (1985: 119) as cited in Dabaghi et al (2011) who defined the proverb as 'a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals, and traditional views in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form and which is handed down from generation to generation.' Mieder adds that there are proverbs which define proverbs, such as: "Proverbs are the children of experience," "Proverbs are the wisdom of the streets," and "Proverbs are true words." According to him, proverbs contain a lot of common sense, experience, wisdom and truth, reflecting ready-made traditional strategies in oral speech acts and writings from high literature to the mass media.

It is therefore deducible from the assertion above that proverbs contain an element of truth, experience and wisdom. This is why proverbs are authoritative and attract attention. In the Kipsigis society just like most African societies, the survival of proverbs was in their usage because they were orally handed down to the next generation. This means that those who took interest in them became responsible for their existence. As a result, some proverbs may easily be forgotten and others widely used as dictated by context.

Proverbs are associated with wisdom because they show the ability of the human brain to relate ideas and events that are happening in real life. Experience come with age and that is why more often than not, adults would use proverbs that summarize a given event more than the youth because they might have gone through it or may have seen someone go through it. Hence they use them with a lot of conviction.

According to Ndubisi (2012), proverbs are cultural repositories that are particular to every group of people. He adds that the way words, elements and cultural expressions are

made and used within the context of any culture says much about the life, the people and their environment.

The definition above ties proverbs to culture and asserts that they are culture specific. The implication is that proverbs reflect the culture of a community. Several cultural aspects can be singled out in proverbs. This is because proverbs may not make sense if foreign imagery is used. Another reason is that proverbs borrow form the environment. Cultural norms and beliefs would also be incorporated in the proverbs as a way of teaching.

According to Nwadike (1977:6) as cited in Ndubisi (2012), proverbs are a rhetorical device which enhances the ability of the speaker to make a speech in a concise, figurative and enriched manner, far more than what plain and ordinary speech can do.

This shows the powerful nature of a proverb to achieve what plain words cannot do. In some situations, words may become clichés and the target audience may brush them off. In other cases, telling someone the truth of a matter plainly may be too painful and may lead to confrontation. Proverbs therefore help in taking the sting off one's words. The figurative image of the proverb will also drive the point home in a powerful way because the image will be painted in the mind hence the message will sink deeply. In addition, the effectiveness of a message depends not so much on who says it but how it is said. When oratory skills are displayed such as the use of proverbs, the audience is captivated.

Ihueze (2011:24) states that the proverb as an item of folklore enriches a language; giving in-depth meanings to words and has immense moral and cultural value. She observes that the definition of the proverb, like folklore, is not easy to come by though many people know what a proverb is and the functions. She sums up by defining a proverb as a short, generally known sentence of the folk which contains wisdom, truth, morals and traditional view in a metaphorical, fixed and memorisable form and which is handed down from generation to generation. According to her, a proverb is culturally determined and therefore what is a proverb for a group may not be a proverb for the other. This means that every group will decide for itself what is proverbial and what is not.

The above assertion generally means that there will be as many proverbs as there are different groups of people each with its own uniqueness and features as determined by the culture. It also shows that proverbs are not owned by an individual but belongs to the society and are meant to benefit all.

Odaga (1984:68) as cited in Karimi (2013) defined proverbs as wise sayings which must be interpreted before their meaning can be fully understood. He adds that every group of people has their own proverbs and uses them in their daily conversation. Also, he states that like oral narratives, proverbs touch on every aspect of the life of the people who create them. According to him, there are proverbs on political, social, educational, religious and economic issues while others have been passed down from generation to generation. He further asserts that other proverbs are new, stemming from modern and current life styles and experiences of our time.

The definition above stresses the figurative nature of proverbs. There are proverbs whose literal meaning and the intended meaning are far apart. Some proverbs also are based on historical events of which they should be familiar if those proverbs are to be understood. The imagery in proverbs too should adequately be understood so as to get the meaning of the proverb.

Bukenya et al (1997:48) define a proverb as a brief, clearly expressed figurative comment on a situation. They assert that imagery is the strongest point in proverbs as seen the ability to comment convincingly on a situation through the use of accurate figures of speech. They add that proverbs draw their images from various sources like flora and fauna, people's habits, customs, occupations and beliefs, social and political institutions and other forms of oral literature. According to them, the power of the proverb lies in the appropriateness with which the speaker applies a figurative statement to a factual situation. They give two factors which contribute to the strength of proverbs which as the choice of words in the proverb and the structure or shape of the proverb. In addition, they state that the words in a proverb are chosen because of their sound, their meaning and what they suggest. To exemplify this, they state that some words can only be found in proverbs and not in the daily use of language for example the Kipsigis proverb:

> Is ana bok?
>
> (Wax or honey?)

From all the definitions given above, key aspects of what a proverb is can be deduced. First is that a proverb contains an element of truth in it. Second, is that proverb are

cultural and come in short statements. Third is that they are figurative in meaning. Fourth, they reflect wisdom of the user. The working definition of this study therefore will be that proverbs are brief, concise and wise statements which are culturally based and have a figurative meaning. The linguistic definition of a proverb is that you cannot rely on words used in order to arrive at the meaning of the proverb. This is because the words in a proverb take a different meaning other than the one implied by the words used.

2.2 Characteristics of proverbs

Several scholars in the field of paremiology have advanced their views on characteristics of proverbs. According to Norrick (1985: 32-34) as cited in Dabaghi (2012), proverbs have certain characteristics. He maintains that proverbs are self-contained in that none of their essential grammatical units may be replaced. This distinguishes proverbs from proverbial phrases which do not have grammatical units. In addition, he states that proverbs are in statement form. Furthermore, he asserts that proverbs must be complete sentences. Finally, he states that proverbs are tradition as they are items of folklore.

The characteristic above distinguishes proverbs from statements we encounter every day in speech or in writing. Whereas words in sentences can be replaced with their synonyms, replacing words in a proverb will kill it. This is because proverbs have a fixed form.

According to Trench (1853) as cited in Dabaghi (2012), proverbs constitute three things. The first one is that of shortness such that it can be uttered in a breath. Secondly, a proverb should have sense and the third is that it should have salt; so as not to be easily

forgotten. Shortness in a proverb means that the words contained in them are carefully chosen to deliver the message effectively and also to enhance memorability.

According to Kipury (1983:148-157), proverbs are usually stated in the form of a maxim, epigram or aphorism or that they can be in the form of a poetic statement. Kipury further notes that the basic difference between a proverb and other forms of oral literature is that while some of them, like riddles, can be posed or listed in succession at a specific time in a specific context, and songs are sung during functions, proverbs cannot. She adds that it is a mark of admirable elegance in speech to be able to use the apt aphorism skilfully. Kipury further identifies the different forms in which proverbs come in. The first form is that of commonly used proverbs which are drawn from daily life. Examples in Kipsigis are:

  i. Sise mo

      (It will settle in the stomach)

  ii. Ng'om kinindet kosiir chorindet

      (An investigator is brighter than a thief)

  iii. Ma king'ore banan

      (Don't foretell of poverty)

Second are proverbs which are mere statements. Examples from the Kipsigis include:

  i. Nyanja it

      (The ear is the sea)

  ii. Ibuti teta agobo kelyek ang'wan

      (A cow falls yet it has four legs)

iii   Ma sire kwetyin kwetyin

(Two wrongs do not make a right)

The third form are proverbs which are metaphors applied to situations. For example the following Kipsigis proverbs:

i.   Kirgit muitaet

(Patience is a bull)

ii.   Ya kanyao Chesibiit

(Chesibiit(very tiny bird) is hard to nurse)

iii.   Ma kibiren tany mat

(Do not beat a cow with fire)

Fourth are quotation proverbs. These are proverbs formed from folk tales. Take for example the following Kipsigis proverbs:

i.   Kitachke sot ak makat

(The hideskin and the gourd equalised)

ii.   Ki kitechi monjoi a makas

(Mokonjoi was warned but he did not take heed)

The last form is that of proverbs created taking the already existing ones as models.

Kipury's categorization of proverbs is similar to those of Norrick in that both writers connect proverbs to tradition. In addition, both state that proverbs come in statements. Kipury classifies proverbs in terms of stylistic elements like metaphors and quotations which could be alluding to a certain folktale. In addition, she classifies proverbs into three forms of aphorisms, maxims and epigrams. According to online Oxford dictionaries, an epigram is a pithy saying or remark expressing an idea in a clever and

amusing way whereas an aphorism is a pithy observation which contains a general truth. Similarly, a maxim is a short, pithy statement expressing a general truth or rule of conduct.

From the above definitions, it is clear that the three terms are related in that they all have the feature pithy. An aphorism and a maxim have the similarities of expressing a certain truth. What distinguishes an epigram from an aphorism and maxim is that an epigram contains an element of humour.

Kipsigis examples of an epigram may include such proverbs as:

i.   Yakwaai let

     (There is a fatty behind)- Literal translation

     (The future is promising)-actual meaning

ii.   Kiame sanian koi let

     (A generous son -in-law will take care of his in-laws for a long time)

Examples of a maxim may include:

i.   Ma rie siet agenge isiriat

     (A finger cannot kill a louse)

ii.   Ma kisute sotet ko ma i teta

     (We don't prepare gourds before the cow gives birth)

Examples of an aphorism are:

i.   Ma kimondoge bendap loket

     (Do not rely on game meat)

ii.   Ngo butyi keringet teta ko ma lang'u ak buteek tugul

(When a cow falls in a ditch it doesn't come out with all the hair)

According to Bukenya et al, (1997:41) proverbs are classified under the genre of short forms in Oral Literature which include: jokes, tongue-twisters, riddles and popular sayings. These short forms are characterised by four main features. The first one is that of shortness or brevity whereby proverbs are made up of only a few sentences uttered over a brief span of time. The second is economy to mean that the short forms try to convey a great deal of information in as few words as possible. Thirdly, proverbs are symmetrical whereby most forms have a balanced and trimmed structure. Finally, is the feature of informality whereby most forms are used in relaxed or leisure situations or incorporated in ordinary conversation or discussion.

In terms of structure, the authors assert that proverbs are neatly shaped and that a good proverb rolls off the tongue with the smoothness and gracefulness of a piece of music. They add that balance is the chief structural feature of the proverb. Also, they state that a proverb normally consists of two parts, the first part is called the proposition, and the second part is called the completion. A person normally utters only the proposition, with a little introduction, and the addressee comes in with the completion as illustrated below:

SPEAKER A: Kimwa boisiek kole (The elders said)

Kibendi ban….. (walk the)…. *(Proposition)*

SPEAKER B*:* chepkoikoch (tortoise way)…. (Completion)

The whole proverb is 'Kibendi ban chepkoikoch' (walk the tortoise way) but the speakers above split it between themselves. The first speaker introduces the proverb with the common expression 'the elders said' which gives the proverb the authority of time-hallowed wisdom.

The contribution of the above categorization is that it introduces the category of short forms to cover riddles, jokes, tongue-twisters and proverbs. The writers also give the structure of the proverb as being neat and balanced as well as showing how they are quoted in a conversation. Their assertion that the short forms come in terse statements is in agreement with the classification by Norrick (1985) and Kipury (1983). However, to say that proverbs are informal as is stated above may not be necessarily true because even in making a formal speech, a proverb may be used. The writers made a generalization of all the short forms being informal which may be the case for riddles, jokes and tongue twisters but not for the proverb.

2.3 Stylistic Features of Proverbs

There are several stylistic features that are found in proverbs. These features make proverbs to stand out from plain statements and make them recognizable because of their uniqueness. According to Arora (1984) as cited in Dabaghi et al, (2011) proverbs have the features of alliteration, parallelism, rhyme and ellipsis. She also proposed some internal features of proverbs as including hyperbole, paradox and personification.

Similarly, Kipury (1983) presents features of proverbs as contrast, alliteration, rhyme, allegory and repetition. She points out that these features can only be appreciated in the original language. According to her, there could be an existence of many variations of a proverb but they will have equal authority. Furthermore she states that some proverbs contradict each other. Consider the following proverbs from Kipsigis:

➢ Kurege kapng'atat

(The mud call each other) – Literal translation

(People with similar impairments attract) –semantic rendering

➢ Ma kisase kapchi ko ma kiru

(Don't despise a homestead before you spend there)

(Do not be quick to dismiss someone before you learn about him/ her well.)

The meanings of the above proverbs seem to contradict each other because the first one is normally used to comment on a couple in which both partners have similar backgrounds like: poverty, mental retardedness and so forth. In the second proverb, people are being cautioned against despising those who seem to have a certain challenge. However, the context in which they are used may help to clarify the contradiction.

Zhang (2012) divides rhetorical devices into those that add rhythm, those that come out syntactically and those are analysed lexically. Rhythmically, he states that proverbs may contain alliteration, assonance, consonance, single rhyme and eye rhyme. Syntactically, he states that the rhetorical devices appear as contrast, parallelism, repetition, regression, anadiplosis, ellipsis, and rhetoric questions. Lexically, he asserts that proverbs are armed with devices like simile, metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, personification, paradox,

allusion, hyperbole, understatement and irony. Each of the features presented above create an effect in proverbs and highlighting these effects is important. They are discussed below:

a) **Alliteration**

This refers to the repetition of a particular sound in the first syllable of a series of words or phrases in a sentence. It makes proverbs more emphatic both in form and meaning, for example, 'forgive and forget.'

b) **Assonance**

This is the repetition of vowel sounds to create internal rhyming within phrases or sentences. It creates rhythm in proverbs making them memorable, for example, 'Good fame is better than good face'

c) **Consonance**

This is the repetition of consonants or of a consonant pattern, especially at word final. It brings about coherence and harmony, for example, 'East or west, home is best'

d) **Rhyme**

According to Zhang (2012), there are two types of rhyme: Single rhyme and eye rhyme. On the one hand, single rhyme is the repetition of the last syllable of words in a sentence, which makes the proverbial sentence a whole chain full of symmetric and harmonious beauty, for example, "Haste makes waste." and "Well fed, well bred."

On the other hand, Eye rhyme, also called visual rhyme and sight rhyme, is a similarity in spelling between words that are pronounced differently. According to him, through eye rhyme, the reader can appreciate the proverb by murmuring it. He adds that this type of

rhyme is found infrequently in Old English, for example "Words are but wind, but blows unkind."

e) Hyperbole.

This is the deliberate use of exaggeration. In proverbs, the use of hyperbole creates emphasis and sometimes humour. The other stylistic device is allusion whereby reference to well-known figures, events, mythology or folk-tales in the history of a society is made.

f) Contrast.

This is where two very different things are placed side by side. The effect is that the difference in the two items are emphasised. According to Zhang (2012) contrast is also called antithesis, which is the juxtaposition of contrasting words or ideas. He adds that contrast makes a proverb to be symmetrical in form, rhythmic in sound, and condensed in meaning, which helps to express a sense of humour, hyperbole, satire, irony, or other philosophical thoughts.

g) Personification.

This is the attributing of human traits to inanimate objects. The effect is that the item in question will be looked at in new light. Personification also adds to vividness of proverbial expressions, for example, 'Experience is the best teacher,' 'Actions speak louder than words'

There is also ellipsis. Ellipsis occurs when some essential word or phrase is omitted from a sentence or clause and can only be obtained by relying on the context. Ellipsis in proverbs occurs when certain words are left out and listeners have to rely on their knowledge of the cultural context of the proverb in order to recover the items left out. It

makes statements concise, coherent, and emphatic, for example, 'Easier said than done.', 'First come, first served.'

h) Parallelism

Parallelism occurs when two or more parts of sentences have a similar form giving the whole structure a definite pattern. This emphasizes the meaning of the sentence and also making the sentence structure well balanced, for example, 'All is well, that ends well'

i) Repetition

This is the repetition of a single word, with no other words in between. Repetition gives a proverb a concise form, as well as emphasizes the meaning. For example, 'No pain, no gain.'

j) Metaphor

This is a comparison that shows how two things that are not alike in most ways are similar in one. In a metaphor, reference is made directly.

k) Synecdoche.

This is a figure of speech where by a part of something refers to the whole thing for example, 'Many hands make light work.'

l) Paradox

Paradox refers to the use of contradictory ideas to point out some underlying truth. This makes the proverb sometimes humorous and at the same satirical.

In summary, various rhetorical devices are employed in proverbs to create vivid and emphatic effects and make the listeners think deeper than they would with plain statements. The rhetoric features make the proverbs to be concise, vivid and

memorisable. The use of these rhetorical devices may not be the same across languages. Some of them may not be common in some languages.

2.4 Classification of Proverbs

Proverbs may be classified in various ways. One of the ways as proposed in Dabaghi et al (2012) is to classify proverbs according to the type of figuration they use. This will consist of synecdoche, metaphoric, metonymic, hyperbolic and paradoxical proverbs. They are discussed below.

i) Synecdoche Proverbs

These include examples such as 'The early bird catches the worm' and 'Make hay while the sun shines.' In these proverbs, the literal meaning is quite different from the figurative meaning.

ii) Metaphoric Proverbs

This is whereby a nominal becomes metaphoric due to its interaction with another proverb constituent, or the nominal symbolizes some characteristic attribute. An example of the first category is, 'Favour will as surely perish as life' and of the second, 'Fair play is a jewel.'

iii) Metonymic Proverbs

These are proverbs which are based on association between something literally named and the thing intended. The example given is 'who has a fair wife needs more than two eyes' in which the eye stands metonymically for the 'sight.'

iv) Hyperbolic Proverbs.

These are proverbs which contain some exaggeration. Example given is the proverb "Faint heart never won fair lady" due to the existence of 'never' in it.

v) Paradoxical Proverbs.

These are proverbs in which there is a contradiction or whose interpretation entails a logical contradiction .These paradoxical proverbs have a "second interpretation". An example of paradoxical proverb is: "A man's house is heaven and hell as well"

Another way of classification is by Moosavi (2000:1-10) who asserts that what is called a proverb, parable or idiom in Persian is divided into some categories in western cultures. He adds that these categories somehow overlap. He then states that proverbs are divided into various classifications as discussed below.

a) Adage

This is defined as an old saying that has been accepted as true. An example is "look before you leap."

b) Aphorism

This is defined as a short, cleverly phrased saying which is intended to express a general truth or short explanation. For example "Experience is the name every one gives to their mistakes."

c) Apothegm

This is a short, pithy and instructive saying.

d) Axiom

This is defined as a principle that needs no proof because its can be plainly seen. For example "No one lives for ever."

e) Cliché

This refers to an idea that has been overused until it has lost meaning. The example given is 'As quick as a wink.'

f) Expression

Expression refers to a word or group of words used in a particular situation or by particular people. Expressions are divided into colloquial, idiomatic or slang expressions. The example given is 'Can of words.'

g) Idiom

This is defined as a phrase or expression that has a meaning different from what the words suggest in their usual meaning. For example: 'Have bitten off more than you can chew.

h) Maxim

A maxim is defined as a short saying that has become a rule of conduct or a brief statement of a general truth. For example, 'Smaller is always better.'

i) Proverb

According to Moosavi (2010), he defines a proverb as an old and familiar saying that tells something wise. He adds that it is frequently used and gives advice or makes a philosophical observation. Example given is 'The appetite grows eating.'

j) Saying

This is defined as a well-known and wise statement, which often has a meaning that is different from the meaning of the words it contains. The example given is: 'Waste not, wont not.'

From the above discussion, it is evident that proverbs come in different forms and make use of different figurative terms to achieve a variety of effects. In addition, we can conclude that proverbs go by many names such as aphorisms, sayings, maxims and so forth but they all carry some elements of truth and culture.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has looked into the functional aspect of proverbs. The first part presented the various definitions of proverbs by different scholars. It then looked at the stylistic features that proverbs are known for. This was followed by the various classifications of proverbs that have been proposed by different scholars. This information is important in the study of Kipsigis proverbs as it forms the basis under which they will be studied and analysed.

CHAPTER THREE

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF PROVERBS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings of data collection where by the first part of data analysis will be done. This section presents the proverbs that have been collected and selected for stylistic analysis. Out of the 100 proverbs that were collected, 30 were selected to be subjected under stylistic analysis. A full list of the collected proverbs is given in the appendix.

The interview was conducted in Kapletundo Division, Bomet County. A total number of 16 respondents aged 15 years and above were interviewed. This was categorized as follows:

a. Group one: 15-25 years

b. Group two: 26-39 years

c. Group three: 40-59 years

d. Group four: 60 years and above

The method of data collection was a questionnaire where members of each gender were equally represented in all the categories. These questions covered the two parts of the data collection. The researcher also had a more detailed discussion with four respondents aged 60 and above to seek for more clarification on the meaning and general use of the proverbs. One of them was Dr/ Rev. Koskei whose insight on proverbs as well as his experience from working closely with the elderly members of the society gave this study

a major boost. The other three respondents were equally good as they explained the history and origin of every proverb that has been analysed in this study.

3.2 Stylistic Analysis of the Proverbs

The objective of this section is to investigate the rhetorical devices of the proverbs by carrying out a stylistic analysis on the same. The proverbs have been translated into English and their meanings given. The rhetorical devices found in these proverbs will be highlighted. A total number of thirty proverbs have been selected for analysis. They are as follows:

1. Mur kimaket ak kesile

    (The hyena is still scratched even though it is dirty) – Literal translation

    Despite its ugliness, the hyena is dotted upon (by its relatives) - actual meaning

The meaning of the above proverb is that someone may be bad but the relatives will still accommodate him or her because however bad someone is, blood is thicker than water. 'kesil' is not to be taken literally as ' to scratch' but is any sign of love. This proverb is often used to encourage people who have abandoned their kin or who criticise a relative for having done a mistake that, however bad the situation, they should embrace him or her for all is not lost. This proverb is metaphorical in that the 'hyena' refers to anyone who has any form of weakness.

It also has alliteration in the highlighted sounds:

    Mur **k**ima**k**et a**k** **k**esile

This makes the proverb musical.

2. Ma me kiam soet

Did not die, was eaten by a buffalo

This proverb originated from the story of a man whose father had been killed by a buffalo and when he was asked why his father died he would say he did not die but was killed by a buffalo. This phrase eventually became a proverb and is used to mock people who always find excuses for how things are or what they have done instead of simply accepting the way things are and amending their ways. The stylistic device here therefore is allusion.

This is an example of an elliptical proverb as the referent is missing but those who know the proverb simply fill in for themselves. The missing word is 'father.' It is also paradoxical in that death by any means is still death.

3. Ma ki sarunen kororio ma

You cannot salvage a feather from the fire

The meaning of this proverb is inferred from the words used. It would be futile to try to scoop a feather that has already fallen on the fire because a feather easily catches fire. The term 'kororio' which means 'feather' is a metaphor that is being compared directly to an irreversible situation. The implied meaning is that if you want to do something, do not wait until it is too late to do so. This proverb is often used to provoke someone to do what is required at the appropriate time not when it is too late.

The internal structure of this proverb contains assonance in the sounds in bold found in the lexical term, 'k**o**r**o**ri**o**,' which gives the proverb a musical ring.

4.Wo belyon ama ie saram

An elephant though big, does not bear twins

This proverb means that even though someone is seen to be doing well in life, or has immense power, there are certain things that he or she might not do or attain. It is often told to people who expect so much of a person just because he or she is seen to have the ability to undertake anything. 'Belyon' which means 'elephant' is a metaphor that is used to refer to a powerful person just like the way an elephant is big and is able to bring down a tree or even a house due to its immense strength.

5. Ki bendi mutyo ama chei kel

   Walk slowly to prevent foot from making noise

This proverb is used to advise one who is quick to act or who wants to accomplish something within a short period. It is also used as an advice given to a child who does bad things while away from home thinking that it will not be heard at home. Bad news reaching home is what is meant by a foot producing noise. 'Kel' means 'foot.' Normally feet do not produce noticeable noise unless one has noisy shoes. 'Chei' means a resounding noise like that made by a bell, of which it is unlikely that feet can produce, especially a single foot. The stylistic device employed here is that of a hyperbole, since feet can produce just some light taps on the floor. This emphasises the message being passed across and captures the attention of the hearer.

Internally, the proverb has rhyme whereby *kibendi* rhymes with *amachei*. This makes the proverb musical and beautiful to listen to. It also makes the proverb symmetrical.

6. Kurege kapng'atat

   Mud call each other

The lexical term 'ng'atat', which is a primary noun for 'ng'atatiat' means mud. Several stylistic features are contained in this proverb. To begin with, 'kapng'atat' is a metaphor that stands for anything that is undesirable. The meaning of the proverb is that people with unpleasant traits will always be found together. Secondly, there is personification in that mud is given the ability to speak. This shows that the power that pulls bad people together is strong. Also, there is alliteration as shown in the sounds in bold:

Kurege **k**apng'atat.

There is also **assonance** in the repetition of the sound [a] in quick succession as illustrated in bold:

K**a**png'**ata**t

This makes the proverb rhythmical.

This proverb is often used to comment on people of similar behaviour (especially bad behaviour) befriending each other.

7. Ketub korutu

To bury (in soil) will germinate

The proverb above means that that which is hidden will always come out. It employs the use of an analogy. 'Ketub' which means to bury symbolises the action of concealing. 'Korut' means to germinate which symbolises the secret coming out.   Another rhetorical device is alliteration as shown in the sounds highlighted in bold:

Ketub **k**orutu

This makes the proverb musical. It also makes it emphatic both in form and meaning.

This proverb is also elliptical in that what is buried is not mentioned but inferred. The word missing is 'a secret,' like murder.

This proverb is meant to make people to be open and confess whatever wrong they might have done. As this is given as a warning people would take the heed seriously when it comes as a proverb because they are authoritative and are taken to be true.

8. Ki tindoi karik a ma ki tindoi konyan

Weapons are put aside but not eyes

In the past, the Kipsigis would walk around with weapons in readiness to combat with any looming danger be it a cattle rustler or a wild animal. However it was not allowed for one to go inside someone's hut with weapons therefore one would leave them outside before getting into the hut, hence the proverb.

The meaning of this proverb is that there are things that don't need to be said but one can just use the eyes. It is often used as an introductory phrase to explain what one has observed particularly while in someone's home.

What stands out in this proverb are the rhetorical devices of alliteration and repetition as illustrated in bold.

Alliteration: **k**itindoi **k**arik ama **ki** tindoi **k**onyan

Repetition: ki tindoi

The sound aspects above make the proverb very musical and give it a beautiful ring to it. The use of this proverb makes the person using it sound perceptive and sharp.

9. Ma name ng'wonet ye mami korotik

The poison in the arrow does not infect where there is no blood

This proverb simply means that if one is not guilty of a crime no effort to bring him or her down will be fruitful. In the past, the Kipsigis frequently went to battle against their enemies and one of their lethal weapons was the poisoned arrows. The poison is what is known as 'ng'wonet' which has been used in this proverb as a metaphor to refer to any form of blame directed towards a person. **'**Korotik' which means blood, is a metaphor which is being compared to guilt. Hence the proverb means where there is no guilt, there will be no blame.

This proverb is to quoted to encourage one who has been accused of something reminding him or her that if indeed he or she has not done any wrong, no harm shall befall him or her. However, if one is guilty, this is meant to remind him that his or her sins will catch up with him or her, since it is a fact that poison only works on blood. This proverb is lethal enough to make one confess his or her sins and this is why the elders always use it when there is a dispute especially one that will lead to one being cursed.

10. Ing'ete Kimereng Mindo

   Kimereng' wakes Mindo

Kimereng' is a very tiny animal and Mindo is a very huge one, both are found in the forest. The literal meaning here is that a tiny animal can rouse a very big one. The implied meaning is that small things should not be underestimated for they have the power to do something big. For example, the utterance of a single word may lead to a big fight. This proverb therefore uses an analogy.

11. Ingoluul Kuresiet ko titoi arek

When a cactus falls down it takes with it seedlings in the undergrowth

Kuresiet is a type of a tree that is normally found in dry areas and belongs to the Acacia family. Growing beneath these trees are their seedlings and if one of these trees falls down it will grind the seedlings.

Kuresiet therefore is a metaphor that refers to a person or an institution whereby many people depend on and if he or it comes down, these people stand to lose.

12. Mong'uchi ke kimaget somisio

A hyena does not smell its own stench

This proverb simply refers to those people who are quick to point out other people's weaknesses or wrongs forgetting that they are also imperfect. It employs the use of a metaphor in the word **'kimaget'** which means hyena to refer to people who are quick to judge yet they also 'smell bad' or have weaknesses.

The Kipsigis view the hyena as ugly, greedy and unclean. This proverb is meant to ridicule anyone who displays any sign of pride and a judgemental attitude especially if that person has a well-known weakness.

13. Weksei uruon bo ket

The shade of the tree will always come back

The proverb above is meant to warn people against doing bad things and thinking that they have been let off the hook. Just like the shade of the tree appears and disappears depending on the time of the day, things that have been done and forgotten will always

have a way of reappearing. **'Urwet'** is a metaphor that directly refers to those things that have been done especially against other people.

14. Ki ene tany kong' si ke chorei

When one wants to draw blood from a cow, he first makes sure its eyes are not seeing the

action.

This proverb means that you should always shield those you love from being hurt. The Kipsigis had a habit of drawing blood from cows that would be added to milk or be fried as a source of iron. They would first ensure the cow was not seeing what was being done by using the cow's ears to cover its eyes.

This proverb simply means that if your actions are going to hurt someone make sure you should try to do it in very gentle manner. The action of drawing blood is therefore metaphorical and is used to refer to any situation which may not be unpleasant for example announcing bad news to someone.

What stands out in this proverb is the sound aspect that comes out when it is being quoted orally. There is alliteration as illustrated below:

Ki ene tany **k**ong, si **k**e chore

This proverb also has a well-balanced structure.

15. Ibotet kiam seroi

Idling around will lead to seroi being eaten

This proverb is based on a Kipsigis narrative about a man and his wife who had only one cow. One day this couple went out idling and at the end of the day only to find out that the cow had given birth and had eaten the placenta. They ended up slaughtering their only cow to eat because it died. This cow was named seroi. The proverb therefore is an allusion to this story and is meant to warn people against idleness as it leads to depletion of wealth.

16. Chepkisas ko tatun kechame

   The One who is being despised will one day be loved

The meaning of this proverb is quite literal and is meant to remind people who despise others that one day they may come to rely on the very people they used to despise. It also applies to other contexts like in leadership where one who was overlooked may come to be the pillar of the community. It is also used to encourage one who is despised that one day things will change. It alludes to the story of a single, poor woman who had many sons but no cows. Among the Kipsigis, to be cowless is the very epitome of poverty. When the sons attained the age to marry, there were no cows to be given out as dowry so she took her sons to Maasai land and climbed up a tree. She had a very nice voice so when she began singing, the herdsmen left their cows to come and gaze at her. Meanwhile, her sons were rounding up their cows. They went back with a huge herd of cattle and thereafter she gained the respect of everyone. Hence the proverb was coined.

The rhetorical device that comes out is that of alliteration as shown below*:*

Chepkisas ko tatun ke **ch**ame

Chepkisas **k**o ta tun **k**e chame

17. Ngo samis murian kobo kot ne bo

   A rat though it smells has a home

The implied meaning here is that no matter how bad someone is, he or she will never be abandoned by his or her close relatives. This proverb is an allusion to the story of a man who once agreed with his wife to pretend that he was dead in order to gauge his brother's love for him. They put a dead rat in the ceiling and the man hid himself. When the rat began stinking the wife screamed; drawing the attention of her brother -in-law. She then asked him to go up the ceiling to get the rotting body of his brother. Without any hesitation, the brother went up the roof only to discover it was a rotting rat, hence the proverb.

This proverb is often used to evoke a sense of togetherness among close relatives or even a community.

The rhetorical devices in this proverb are:

   Alliteration: ngo samis murian **k**o bo **k**ot ne bo

   Assonance: ng**o** samis murian k**o** b**o** kot ne b**o**

   Repetition: bo

The proverb above is rhythmical and pleasant to the ear. This is because assonance strengthens the sense of rhythm in the proverb and makes it easier to memorize. Repetition makes the proverb condensed or concise in form, impressive in tone, and emphatic in meaning. It also makes the proverb coherent.

18. Mo kinemchi ke met

You cannot shave your own hair (yourself)

This proverb is used to remind one that though you might be well off, there are certain things that you might not be able to do yourself hence you will need the help of other people. It may also mean that there are things especially weaknesses that an individual may not know he or she has but other people can. In the Kipsigis culture, it is wrong to shave your hair by yourself.

The action of shaving hair is a metaphor that refers to any event in which one will require the help of other people. Assonance is also employed as illustrated below in bold:

Ma kin**e**mchi k**e** m**e**t

19. Ndo ngitei kegas

Warning should be taken heed of

In the past whenever there was any danger like enemies approaching, drums would be beaten or women would scream in order to alert the rest. If one ignored this warning, he or she would become a victim. This proverb therefore is meant to advise people to take heed of warning. It alludes to the story of a woman who had gone to visit her daughter in a faraway land. The in-laws slaughtered an animal in her honour but just when they were about to eat it, a cry was made alerting them of enemies coming. People immediately went into hiding but the woman salivating over the broth cooking decided to stay in order to take it. When the enemies entered into the hut, she lay on the ground pretending she was dead. One of the enemies decided to test this by pouring hot soup in her ear and she cried out in pain: 'Ndo ngitei kegas!'

20. Mo ki sute sotet ko ma i teta

Do not prepare gourds before the cow gives birth.

The proverb above means that you should wait until you are sure of something before you act. This proverb is metaphorical as the cow giving birth directly refers something that has been accomplished. This proverb is used to warn people who like to boast even of things they have not accomplished.

There is alliteration as illustrated below in bold:

Sute **s**otet

This makes the proverb rhythmical.

21. Mo ki sasunen karna ma

An iron rod in the fire should not be underestimated

This proverb means that we should not judge something using outward appearance. This is an analogy of the process of making tools using iron. When the iron is being melted it might appear very light and malleable but once the moulding process is done, it becomes a powerful tool. The proverb is also metaphorical in that an iron rod may represent someone or something that is undergoing a process and so the complete form is not yet out.The rhetorical devices that come out are illustrated below:

Assonance: k**a**r**na** m**a**

Consonance: **s**a**s**unen

This makes the proverb musical. Consonance makes the proverb more coherent and more harmonious.

22. Mo rirtoen boinet ne kobore, rirtoen ne ka ing'ete

The antelope does not blame who killed it, it blames who roused it

This is a proverb with a literal meaning based on a hunter who killed an antelope but he was not the one who made it come out of its hiding place. When the antelope was shot, it said he did not blame the hunter but the person who roused it from it hiding place. This proverb therefore is an allusion to that story.

This proverb is often used as an introductory phrase when one wants to cast blame on the cause of things.

The rhetorical devices in this proverb are:

Personification**:** the antelope is said to' blame' the one who roused it

Assonance**: M**o** rirt**o**en b**o**inet ne k**obo**re, rirt**o**en ne k**o**ing'ete

 The above rhetorical features make the proverb rhythmical and memorable.

23. Mo kikesu ng'omnot

Learning is not exhausted

This proverb has a literal meaning and is used to remind people that they will not learn everything at once but that learning is a continuous process. It was meant to discourage people against pride. The rhetorical devices are:

Consonance**:** mo **kik**esu

Assonance**:** ng'**o**mn**o**t

The proverb is short and concise. This makes it memorable.

24. Ng'wan ngo bo chi, anyiny ngo bo tiony

   It hurts when it belongs to man; it is pleasant when it belongs to an animal

This proverb alludes to a story of a man who once killed a monkey's baby. When the monkey came grieving, the man just brushed it off telling him he had many others. The monkey in anger took the man's baby up the tree. This is when the man began crying and begging for his child's life. The monkey laughed and told the man 'ng'wan ngo bo chi, anyiny ngo bo tiony'

This proverb is used to satirize people who seem not to notice injustices around them yet when the ones are affected, they begin crying foul.

This proverb employs assonance**:**

   Ng**o** b**o** chi, ng**o** b**o** ti**o**ny

The effect is that it gives the proverb a musical ring to it. The proverb also has a well-balanced structure making it rhythmical.

25. Aechin ta ak let

   The beginning and the end are equal

The meaning of this proverb is that the time of accomplishing something does not matter, what matters is that it is accomplished. It is meant to teach people about patience and also to remind the early achievers not to gloat or be proud.

The rhetorical device here is assonance as illustrated thus:

   Aechin t**a a**k let

This proverb is also paradoxical in that it equates the end to the beginning.

26. Ma chibe chi boban ne bo chi

A mushroom that belongs to someone cannot be uprooted by another person

In the past when mushrooms would sprout in plenty, the edible ones would be found in hidden places and the lucky person would stumble upon them. A person could even walk past it yet another could see it. Hence the literal meaning of this proverb is that fate determined one's luck to get a mushroom. This proverb is meant to remind people that no one can take that which one is destined to have therefore they should not be jealous or envious of others.

This proverb is metaphorical in that' bobat' refers to anything that one is destined to get like a job, spouse, opportunity and so forth. The proverb would then mean that no one will take what another has been destined to have.

Other rhetorical devices are:

Alliteration: ma **ch**ibe **ch**i boban ne bo **ch**i

: ma chibe chi **b**oban ne **b**o chi

Repetition: chi

This proverb sounds very musical hence its memorability.

27. Ng'eta mo

The stomach is a boy

The Kipsigis term for an uncircumcised male child is 'ng'etet' and is associated with childishness and all that comes with it. This proverb contains a metaphor whereby the

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stomach is directly referred to as a boy. This proverb is usually used to comment on times when someone serves more food than he or she can finish.

28. Ka kotok Kuna kele bo mugung'

Kuna has been discovered to be limping

This proverb is an allusion to the story of a man named 'Kuna' who had a deformed leg and because of that, no girl would agree to become his wife. He eventually found a bride by concealing his deformity. Fortunately for him, wedding ceremonies in the Kipsigis traditional society are done during the night so his secret was safe until the following day in the morning. When the bride discovered her husband is Kuna she began screaming but there was nothing else to be done since divorce was a taboo.

This proverb is often used to comment on a situation where a concealed fact comes out.

This proverb contains alliteration:

Ka **k**otok **K**una **k**ele bo mukung'

This makes the proverb very musical.

29. Mo kibelchindos kirokwo aeng'

Two sticks are not burnt at the same time

This proverb draws the analogy of two sticks being burnt in separate fireplaces by the same person, with a person who tries to accomplish two different tasks all at the same time. This proverb has a literal meaning that you cannot accomplish two tasks at the same time because the results will not be perfect. Its English equivalent is 'you cannot serve two masters.'

30. Ngo butyl teta keringet ko molong'u ak buteek tugul

When a cow falls into a pit, it will not climb up with all the hair.

This proverb means that though a cow may not get injured if it falls on a pit, some form of damage will still have been done. There is the use of a metaphor to refer any situation whereby someone has gone through an experience of which may not have visibly affected him or her, but the truth of the matter is that the person will undergo some form of change. The metaphor makes the proverb more explicit to understand and easier to learn.

This proverb is often used to comment on the effects of something and to advise people against doing harmful things.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the stylistic devices contained in Kipsigis proverbs. From this stylistic analysis, it is evident that Kipsigis proverbs contain several stylistic devices. They include sound patterns like alliteration, rhyme, assonance and consonance. These sound patterns make these proverbs to be musical, rhythmical, memorable and generally pleasant to listen to.

In the first chapter of this study, the assertion was that a speaker may choose to use a proverb for stylistic purposes. These purposes are then achieved in these stylistic features of the proverb. A speaker may want to capture the attention of the audience and one way to achieve this is by the use of a proverb because it deviates from the norm of normal use of words.

The other stylistic features included personification, allusion, analogy, metaphors, paradox, hyperbole and ellipsis. Generally, all the proverbs have a balanced structure. Each of these features makes the proverbs unique and effective as they create a vivid picture and emphatic effect in the mind of the hearer. The issues being dealt with are better understood by the use of these devices as they evoke profound thoughts among the people.

Several cultural aspects came out in the analysis of the proverbs and the people's belief system is brought out. Metaphorical proverbs used concepts that are familiar to the people for example cows, arrows, gourds, and names of wild animals including hyena, elephant, antelope and so forth.

The deep knowledge and insight exhibited in the proverbs was something that was particularly striking. The full impact of a proverb can never be appreciated until it is analysed. A notable fact is that the sound patterns contained in the proverbs disappear once they are translated. Hence they can only be enjoyed in the original language.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION OF RELEVANCE

THEORY

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the collected data which aimed to establish the functions of Kipsigis proverbs in the modern society. The questions that were asked were geared towards finding out the peoples' views, opinions and attitude towards the proverbs that would give a picture of the overall functions of the proverbs. The data was analysed using Content Analysis. The results of the findings will then be discussed using the Relevance Theory.

4.1 General Information

The interview was conducted among the residents of Kapletundo Division. The ages of the respondents varied and so did their knowledge of Kipsigis proverbs. Eight of the respondents were aged 40 and above and they are well versed in the ways of the land. They appreciate the initiative taken to learn more about Kipsigis proverbs.

4.2 Content Analysis on the Functions of Kipsigis Proverbs in the Morden Society

The research objectives were:

   i.   To establish the attitude of the Kipsigis speaker towards the Kipsigis proverb

   ii.   To find out the functions of the Kipsigis proverb in the contemporary society

4.2.1 Unit of Analysis

Individual respondent's answers to the questions asked constituted the unit of analysis.

4.2.2 Content Categories

This constituted:

  i. Attitude towards the proverb

 ii. Role of the proverb

iii. Why proverbs are used instead of plain statements

 iv. Use of proverbs by the educated members of the society

  v. Individual use of the proverb

 vi. Examples of proverbs

vii. Examples of proverbs connected to a story

viii. Relevance of proverbs

 ix. Opinion on people who use proverbs

4.3 Results of Content Analysis

After analysing the responses in the questionnaire using the method of qualitative analysis, these were the results:

4.3.1 Attitude of the people in Kapletundo Division towards Kipsigis Proverbs

The attitude of the people towards the proverb indicates a variation. The respondents in the age bracket of 15-25 years used the terms 'traditional,' 'way of avoiding confrontation,' and 'important sayings used by elders.' This group of respondents can be

said to have a non-committal attitude towards the proverbs. These respondents say that it is the old people who see proverbs as important. The picture presented by the respondents in this group is that proverbs are good, but not for them to use.

According to the respondents in the age bracket of 26-39 years, proverbs are used by the elders who are wise in order to educate the youth to embrace good morals. They see proverb use as something that is gradually losing its significance since they have now been left to the old and the politicians when addressing public rallies or barazas. The picture that comes out here is that this group consider proverbs to be important tool for the old to teach the young. This category of respondents does not own proverbs but see them as tools for the elders. Hence they are also non-committal.

The respondents of ages 40-59 believe that proverbs 'build' a society. They add that the youth are not ready to embrace proverbs because they see them as 'analogue' and a waste of time. Also, they indicated that the youth consider the use of proverbs as beating around the bush. The people in this age bracket see proverbs as a heritage from thousands of generation. Again, they feel that proverbs are important in order for the society to remain intact and should not be forgotten. The general picture presented among the respondents in this category is that they have some attachment to proverbs. Hence they uphold the use of proverbs.

Proverbs among the respondents aged 60 and above are important sayings which can be used to tie the community together. In addition, proverbs remind them of the historical events in the community that steer the present generation towards making the right

choices. According to them, proverbs are seen as the reference point in making decisions. It is almost like a spiritual guide to the members as they are seen as sacred. They add that no one can dispute the truth behind a proverb and anyone disregarding them is a fool because questioning the legitimacy of a proverb is like doubting the wisdom and counsel of the elders. For this group of respondents, proverbs are part and parcel of their lives. They view proverbs as a heritage from their ancestors which should be passed down to the next generation.

To summarise on attitude towards the proverb, there is a variation in terms of the age of respondents. The young speakers do not own the proverbs as they see them as traditional hence a non-committal attitude. The second group know the value of proverbs but state that they are for elders. The third group who are mostly of middle age have an attachment to the proverbs as they see them as a heritage. As for the elderly, they are totally for the proverb as it connects them to their past.

4.3.2 The Role of the Proverb in the Present Society.

The respondents were asked on their opinion on whether proverbs played any role in the contemporary society. The respondents in the first group all agree that proverbs had roles to play if they are used in the right context. They add that as long as the person who is being talked to using a proverb also understands, they will be effective. Furthermore, they give the contexts of public rallies, barazas, meetings and songs as situations where they have heard proverbs being used. Some of the respondents gave the theoretical uses of

proverbs which they might have been taught in school for example, to warn, educate, to advise, and to build a language.

The second group of respondents believes that proverbs play a number of roles in the modern society. First is that proverbs are used to communicate age-old insights to the young. Another one is that the elders use these proverbs to condemn any wrong doing or undesired behaviour by any member of the society or even to warn on an impending danger. In addition, proverbs are used by the speakers to display their linguistic prowess and knowledge on the ways of the land especially by political candidates who want to appeal to the older generation. Furthermore, proverbs are used to shorten what might have become a lengthy speech. Another role of the proverb according to them is that it is used to unite the people together and remind them of their common heritage especially for political self-gain. What comes out in this category is that proverbs are regarded as ceremonial, to be used in certain functions.

According to the respondents in the third group, proverbs have a number of roles. For one, the use of proverbs is a sign of leadership, a sign that is highly valued especially by the elders. They are also used to conceal information that may get to the wrong ear, for example, if there were people from other communities and the message was highly confidential, proverbs would be used. In addition, proverbs are used in meetings; political or otherwise to teach others. Furthermore, proverbs are used to compare similar experiences that might have happened in the past. Also, proverbs are used to warn people against bad and evil practices.

For the respondents in the fourth group, proverbs serve a special role in the society because they are authoritative in nature. A proverb is a voice of reason where there is confusion. It can warn, advice, correct, encourage and even restore any damage done. In other words, it is a cure all used in season and out of season. They believe that proverbs are truthful hence no one can dispute the truth. They add that once a proverb has been uttered, a wise man does not need to be told anything else. Furthermore, proverbs are a source of wisdom and those who seek to learn them also become wise. They also add that proverbs are used to conceal confidential information.

In summary, proverbs play a number of roles which include advising, teaching, warning, correcting, encouraging members of the society. They can also be used to conceal information, settle a dispute and summarise a statement. Proverbs can also be used to display linguistic prowess especially for self-gain in politics.

4.3.3 The Reasons Proverbs are used Instead of Plain Statements

The response given in this question is almost similar across the four groups. According to the first category, proverbs are used instead of plain direct statement in order to provoke someone to think deeper. Another reason is to display wisdom. In addition, proverbs are used to reach a targeted group. Also, they are used to avoid direct confrontation with the audience. The other reason is that proverbs strengthen an argument and stress a point.

According to the second group, proverbs are used by the wise to keep the un-informed guessing as to what is being said. Proverbs are also a polite way of achieving an objective

for example when you know that saying it in plain words would sound rude or may be hurting. In addition, proverbs help the recipient to internalise the message.

According to the respondents in the third group, proverbs are used to attract the attention of the listeners. Another reason is that it is more convincing to use a proverb than a plain statement especially when trying to reconcile warring parties. Furthermore, proverbs are used to hide the secrets of the community. Proverbs are also used to pass a hidden or indirect message to someone.

The reasons given by the fourth group is that plain statements can be forgotten but a proverb cannot as they are passed from age to age. Another one is that proverbs remind people of past events and so they are used to show people that what may be happening has happened in the past hence they should learn from them.

In general, the various reasons given in the different categories as to why proverbs are used instead of plain statements can be summarised as follows: To start with, proverbs help in the preservation of the Kipsigis traditional customs and values. Next is that they are a way of educating people especially the youth who are prone to disregarding the advice given to them. Another reason is that proverbs help in avoiding direct confrontation that may arise if one is told the truth in plain words. The next reason is that proverbs help in shortening the length of one's speech because they are brief and to the point. In addition, proverbs are used to draw the attention of the listener as they are indirect statements which have an aesthetic value therefore breaking the monotony of plain speech. Furthermore, proverbs are used when a speaker wants to conceal something

from a stranger. Also, they are a sign of wisdom, leadership and linguistic prowess. Finally, proverbs create a vivid picture in the mind of the listener which enhances understanding and the lesson may not easily be forgotten.

4.3.4 The Use of Proverbs among the Elite in the Society

This question sought to find out whether the elite in the society used proverbs.

The respondents had a similar opinion on this question that when context allowed, the elite used proverbs. In other words, western education does not prevent one from using proverbs in Kipsigis. A discussion with one of the respondents indicated that the elite who are 50 years and above are the ones who faithfully used the proverbs on a regular basis when the context allowed. The elite aged 40 years and below may know the proverbs but only used them sparingly when prompted to do so and when context allowed. As for the youngsters, many of them do not use the proverbs. A number of reasons were given to explain this. First is that times have changed and Kipsigis proverbs are not taught in schools because they are not in the syllabus. Parents also do not mind if their children do not pick up the proverbs because they want their children to pass in their examinations. The children too do not go beyond what the teachers teach and unless one is born and brought up in an environment that parents use proverbs, they may not learn them.

Another reason given is that of context. The elite could know the proverbs but where they are working in may not be the right place to use them. What came out is that the elite would use proverbs when they are with the elders or in a meeting where the context is

appropriate. The general picture is that the contexts under which the elite can use proverbs were increasingly becoming less and less as the contact between the old and the young was gradually decreasing.

4.3.5 Individual Use of the Proverb, Reason and the Frequency

This question was posed to the respondents in order to find out whether they as individuals used proverbs in their conversations. Their responses were varied.

The responses in the first group were that for some, they did not use proverbs often because they were in school most of the time. However some said they knew their Kiswahili and English equivalents and they sometimes used them in writing. For others, they did not see the need to use proverbs as they could express themselves in other ways.

Those in group two responded that they sometimes used the proverbs whenever in a discussion with friends at home or with family members in order to emphasise a point. Others stated that they used proverbs when conversing with the elders.

According to the respondents in group three, some of them used proverbs occasionally when giving advice may be in a special gathering or a meeting of the elders.

In the fourth group, the respondents stated that they used proverbs regularly whenever in a meeting to give advice or when putting across a point.

The general picture presented here is that respondents aged 60 and above were the ones who faithfully used proverbs in their conversation be it a meeting or even at home in a normal conversations. For the other respondents, especially groups two and three,

proverbs are used occasionally when context allowed. As for the younger group aged 15-25, their proverb use is quite minimal.

4.3.6 Examples of Kipsigis Proverbs

The respondents were asked to list down the Kipsigis proverbs they knew. This was aimed at attaining two purposes; one was to add to the list of proverbs that had been collected. Secondly was to gauge the respondents' knowledge on proverbs. One's knowledge on proverbs was determined by the number of proverbs one was able to quote and also the commonness or otherwise of the proverb.

The proverbs in the first group are common and many of them have a literal meaning. Some of these proverbs were repeated by different respondents across the four categories. This shows that these proverbs are often quoted hence they are easy to remember and also to understand. They are thus classified as common proverbs.

These are the proverbs they gave:

1)   Isopchi met

       (The head cures)

2)   Kibai chi kosich kong'

       (When a child matures, he or she begins questioning authority)

3)   Kirgiit muitaet

       (Patience is a bull)

4)   Kitindoi kariik ama kitindoi konyan

       (Arms are rested but not eyes)

5)   Ma kiyumen sasur yemaen keeb

       (We don't shelter under a wild banana then cut it down after the rains)

6)   Ibuti teta agobo kelyek ang'wan

       (A cow fall yet it has four legs)

7)   Ngo samis murian kobo kot nebo

       (A rat though rotten belongs to its owners)

8)   Ma ng'uchin ke kimaget somisio

       (The hyena does not smell its own stench/ badness)

The proverbs in the second group are a mixture of common proverbs and the uncommon ones. Many of these proverbs have a figurative meaning. As compared to the proverbs in group one, those in group two exhibited more knowledge on proverbs basing on the fact that most proverbs in group two are uncommon. Some of the proverbs are also based on Kipsigis narratives.

These include:

   i.   Kibendi mutyo amachei kel

         (Tread carefully to prevent foot from making noise)

  ii.   Kibire mat ko lo

         (Fire is put off afar)

 iii.   Kurege kapng'atat

         (People of similar backgrounds attract)

  iv.   Kiyome sanian koi let

         (Parents benefit from a generous son-in-law)

v.   Ngo samis murian kobo kot ne bo

(A rat though rotten belongs to its owners)

vi.   Kolkol ngetundo ama ame arekyik

(A lion though fierce does not eat its cubs)

The proverbs given by the third group are a mixture of common and uncommon proverbs. Some of these proverbs are based on past events which require some background knowledge before they are understood. For example, the uncommon ones are:

i.   Betut ne bo kipnyoliet ko bo

(The day of kipnyoliet is fixed)

ii.   Kimalian ko nogu

(Whoever does not take heed will face the consequences)

iii.   Kikitechi Mokonjoi amakas

(Mokonjoi was warned but did not take heed)

The proverbs given in the fourth group were many and were a mixture of common and uncommon proverbs. Some of them contain archaic words. The proverbs in this category exhibit deep knowledge of Kipsigis proverbs. Those with archaic words include:

i.   Kimalyan ko **nogu**

(Whoever does not heed to warning will face consequences)

ii.   **Teet** ki maat

(Cow gave birth to fire)

iii.   Ma kilakta ngor chebuut

(Do not put on clothes that have a caterpillar)

iv. Ma kibiren tany maat

(Don't beat a cow with fire)

v. Ma ki yamdos sorbuch ak kite

(We don't combine a coward with an uncircumcised mother)

v. Ma kirokenge **chabas** ne bo chi

(Don't use someone else' bangle to make your own)

vi. **Mokombeu** chepyoso

(A woman saves for a rainy day)

The words in bold are archaic and can only be understood by those who are elderly.

4.3.7 Proverbs Connected to a Story

This question was meant to check the respondents' knowledge of the proverbs. If a respondent could give the origin of a proverb, it indicated that he or she had a deeper knowledge than the one who did not.

Two of the respondents in group one could not give any proverb that is connected to a story while two others were able to. This suggests a variation in the respondents' knowledge of proverbs despite being of the same age bracket.

The proverbs given were:

i. Ma kisase kapchi ko ma kiru

(Do not despise a homestead before you spend there0

ii. Ma kibelchindos kirokwo aeng

(Do not burn two sticks at the same time)

In the second group, three of the respondents could not cite any proverb connected to a story while one of them did give. This indicates difference in exposure to proverbs among respondents of the same age bracket.

They include:

i.   Chepkisas ko tatun kechame

       (Whoever is despised will one day be loved)

ii.   Kitatkei makat ak sot

       (The hideskin and the gourd equalised)

iii.   Ki kitechi mokonjoi a makas

       (Mokonjoi was warned but he did not take heed)

The third and fourth groups did not have a problem in citing the proverbs connected to a story. This indicates that they have deep knowledge on the proverbs. In addition, the proverbs that were cited were not repeated in the other groups.

These proverbs include:

i.   Ndi yae ne mie iyachinike, iyae ne ya, iyachinike

ii.   Ndo ngitee kegas

iii.   Chame ndiboe ne bo koin, ko boto neng'ung'

iv.   Kibagenge ko kimnat

v.   Chepkisas ko ta tun kechame

vi.   Ko kotok kuna kele bo mugung'

vii.   Ng'wan ko bo chi, anyiny ko bo tiony

In summary, a difference in exposure to proverbs was noted among the respondents with the older respondents showing deeper knowledge than the younger respondents. Variation in knowledge among respondents in the same age bracket was noted in groups one and two.

4.3.8 Relevance of Proverbs in the Modern Society

The response in this question was almost similar. All the respondents were of the opinion that proverbs are useful. The younger respondents however were non-committal about their use of proverbs. The picture created here is that proverbs are ceremonial rather than something that occurs unconsciously in daily conversation. The older respondents stressed the importance of proverbs so that they won't be forgotten and that they are passed down to the next generation. They added that it was important for the young generation to learn proverbs in order to preserve culture and avoid taboos. They acknowledged the fact that the world has changed and that a new culture was settling in. They added that preservation of culture began with the parents who had the responsibility of teaching their children what they were also taught by their parents. Furthermore, they stressed the importance of proverbs in curbing immoral behaviour. In addition, they stated that children should be taught to appreciate proverbs at a tender age so as to make them develop the right attitude towards them.

4.3.9 Opinions on the People who Use Proverbs

Respondents across all the ages highly regarded those who know and use proverbs. They added that it is a sign of wisdom, loyalty to the culture, leadership and admirable

speaking skills. This indicates that proverbs are valued and their functions are recognized by the members of this society. Even though some of them may not use them regularly, it does not mean that they don't value them but other factors could be the reason they don't.

4.4 Discussion of the Findings

This section aimed at establishing the functions of proverbs. The questions sought to get the peoples' feelings towards the proverbs in light of the changes in the society. These questions were geared to establish the functions of the proverbs. The aspects that were identified for investigation under functions included the attitude towards the proverb, the situations under which proverbs are used, why proverbs are used instead of plain statements and the relevance of proverbs in the modern society. Individual use of the proverbs was also investigated and whether the elite used them. Respondents were also asked to list the proverbs they could remember.

What came out is that there is a varied attitude towards the proverb depending on one's age. One's attitude towards the proverb determines whether they shall use them or not.

According to the first category of the respondents, proverbs are traditional tools of speech used by the older people. The second category had similar opinion that they were traditional but they were important. The impression is that these proverbs still exist in the society because the elders use them. The elders on the other hand, expressed regret that the young generation may not be ready to embrace the use of proverbs due to changes in

the society. On the role of the proverbs, they are used in different situations to teach, warn and advise.

One factor that determines the attitude towards proverbs is the setting or the physical environment where one is brought up in. Since the Kipsigis proverbs are learnt in Kipsigis, those who are brought up in a rural set up have a head start because they are likely to understand the language. This enhances their likelihood of picking up a proverb and understanding it.

Secondly is education which brings about exposure to all sorts of modernization. Some schools especially the so called 'Academies' insist on no vernacular policy. This means that the young generation will not use mother-tongue for the better part of their school life. This factor has affected even those in the rural areas as the Academies have infiltrated everywhere. In Public schools, mother-tongue may be used but then Kipsigis proverbs are not included in the syllabus. Education also means that the youngsters are always in school even when they should be on holiday because there is tuition. This means that the contact between the old and the young has reduced. With education also comes bilingualism hence the young can opt to speak in either language when they are with their peers or even their parents. Education affects people of all age groups because after school one might get a job far from home which means most of the time he or she will be using English or Kiswahili.

The context therefore might not allow one to learn or use the proverbs he or she knows. Generally, times have changed and so have the cultural practices. Those whose way of life may not have been affected in a big way are the people aged 60 and above. Those aged 60-70 may have received formal education but the contact between them and their parents was enough for them to learn the ways of the society. The setting under which they also grew up was not affected much by westernisation as compared to those in the middle age.

Since proverbs were and still are learnt orally, their use and continuity lies on the speakers themselves. As a linguistic tool, proverbs are powerful and can be used to advise, teach, warn, correct and even curb a vice. However, their effectiveness depends on a number of factors which include context and individual interests. In the past, learning of the proverbs came almost automatically as compared to the contemporary society where a young speaker has to have an interest in them so as not to brush them aside as traditional.

In summary, proverbs are still useful in the society only that the contexts under which they can be used are becoming less. Speakers who are elderly use them faithfully as compared to the others. This is because of their status in the society. They are the ones who guide the young in the right way. They are the leaders and so more often than not, they will be the ones to advise, teach and warn. The local media like Chamge FM and Kass FM also play a role in that they feature guests who may use proverbs. Also, proverbs that are used in songs become common.

4.5 Application of Relevance Theory to the Findings

This section seeks to explain the findings of the information above using Relevance Theory. The objective of the questionnaire was aimed at establishing the functions of proverbs in the modern Kipsigis society. In seeking to find out the people's attitude, feelings, opinions and concerns towards proverbs, several questions were asked. From the presentation of the results obtained, a number of issues are highlighted and discussed using Relevance Theory.

4.5.1 Attitude, Use and Relevance of Proverbs

The findings indicated that respondents aged 15-39 generally regarded proverbs as a traditional method of communication hence they did not use them much. The respondents aged 40-59 pointed out that proverbs are important and that they used them once in a while when the context allowed. As for the respondents aged 60 and above, proverbs are a heritage from their predecessors hence they used them often for several reasons among them to teach, warn or even settle a dispute. Thus a variation in proverb usage among the different age groups was noted. It can thus be suggested that one's age determines the attitude towards proverbs. This attitude in turn determines one's readiness to use the proverbs.

The varied attitude towards the Kipsigis proverbs among the speakers can be explained using Relevance Theory by Sperber and Wilson (1986/ 95). In Relevance Theory, what is relevant to one individual may not be relevant to another one. The Cognitive Principle of Relevance states that: Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximisation of

relevance. The human brain automatically picks what deems to be relevant while ignoring other stimuli in the environment. It can be illustrated in the way in which people have different tastes for music. When a song is heard, listeners react in different ways depending on their preferences. One may increase the volume of the radio, another one may reduce it and another one may switch off the radio altogether. A number of reasons may be used to explain this for example matters of faith, age, fatigue, language and so forth but all these reasons can be explained in terms of relevance. If some stimulus is not relevant, then it may not be worth the attention.

Relevance is assessed in terms of, context, context-cognitive environment, cognitive effects and the processing effort. When putting across a message, a speaker wants to choose words that best describe what is in his mind. The hearer on the other hand expects to be told what is going to be relevant to him/her. This is the meaning of the phrase utterances raise expectations of relevance. The human cognitive system automatically picks what is relevant and ignores what is not because of the connection between context and cognitive effects.

As another illustration, if a man is walking and then he steps on a piece of paper, he might not even notice it or if he does he might simply give it a glance and continue walking. On the other hand, if he steps on money, the first reaction will be to cast a second glance to determine the value then he might stop to pick it up. This is because the piece of paper was irrelevant but as for money it was highly relevant. Therefore the brain paid attention to the money.

When it comes to the use of proverbs, the highlighted factors of context, context-cognitive environment and cognitive effects come into play. To begin with, context can be what preceded the proverb and what will follow it. It can also be the physical setting of the utterance so that the speaker considers whether it is the right setting for a proverb in terms of who is being spoken to. The speaker will consider the age, origin, sex among other factors that may affect the understanding or appropriateness of a proverb. In relevance theory, relevance under a context is emphasized.

Second, for a speaker and a listener to understand each other using proverbs, they must have a mutual cognitive environment. Cognitive environment include cultural knowledge, education, norms and values of the society, experience, belief system and so forth which the hearer and the speaker must have in common. A mutual cognitive environment is normally shared among members of the same culture. Cognitive environment will form the background with which to interpret the proverbs used. This is because proverbs borrow much from the culture of a community. The cognitive environment is what will combine with context to yield cognitive effects.

Third, is the processing effort that is required to process a given proverb. According to Relevance Theory, the processing effort required to process a given input determines its relevance hence its use. To put it simply, the processing effort is the amount of mental energy required for the understanding of an utterance. This processing effort is affected by a number of factors discussed and illustrated below:

i.   Recency of use: the more recently a word, a concept, a sound, a syntactic construction or a contextual assumption has been used, the less processing effort required.

ii. Frequency of use: the more often a word, a concept, a sound, a syntactic construction or a contextual assumption is used, the less the effort required to process it.

iii. Linguistic complexity: the more linguistically complex a word, phrase, a syntactic or phonological construction, the more processing effort it requires.

iv. Logical complexity: negative expressions such as impossible, doubt, and so forth, cause more processing difficulties.

In relation to proverbs, its recency, frequency, linguistic and logical simplicity will require a less processing effort. The reverse also holds true because proverbs come in different forms. Some have archaic words whereas others have common words. Similarly, some are logically and linguistically complex whereas others are not. In relevance-theoretic terms, other things being equal, the greater the processing effort required, the less relevant the input will be.

Finally, we have Cognitive effects. These are the thoughts that are ignited in the mind when the brain picks up stimuli. According to Sperber and Wilson (1995), an input (a sight, a sound, an utterance, a memory) is relevant to an individual when it connects with background information he has available to yield conclusions that matter to him which could be answering a question he had in mind, improving his knowledge on a certain

topic, settling a doubt, confirming a suspicion, or correcting a mistaken impression. They add that an input is relevant to an individual when its processing in a context of available assumptions yields a positive cognitive effect. A positive cognitive effect is a true conclusion, this is compared to a false conclusion which they say are not worth having. (Sperber and Wilson 1995: 3.1-2).

According to them, the most important type of cognitive effect achieved by processing an input in a context is a contextual implication**.** This is a conclusion deducible from the input and the context together, but from neither input nor context alone.

In relevance theory, an input is relevant to an individual when, and only when, its processing yields such positive cognitive effects. Also, relevance is a matter of degree, all inputs may be relevant but with different degrees hence what makes an input worth picking out from the mass of competing stimuli is not just that it is relevant, but that it is more relevant than any alternative input available to us at that time.

From the above discussion, it can then be summarized that the members of the older Kipsigis generation have a richer context and cognitive environment to understand hence use proverbs as compared to the young generation who may not be equipped in this way. This is because the setting under which the older people grew up in is different from the one the younger people are in due to modernization. The elders understand the culture better than the young because many of the cultural aspects that are reflected in proverbs were practiced in their time. This explains the reason why proverb use is prevalent among speakers aged 60 and above. They have gathered enough experience, knowledge, lessons,

and so forth to be used in comprehending a proverb. This also explains why proverbs are seen as a traditional or 'analogue' way of speaking by the young people.

To the young people, the use of proverbs may not be relevant due to the little knowledge they have on the same and the amount of mental energy the brain will need to process the proverb. The more processing effort a proverb requires, the more irrelevant it will be for them. To further illustrate this, the proverbs that were given by the first and second groups of respondents (15-39) are those that are simple, common and most of them have a literal meaning. These include:

    i.   Ma ng'uchin ke kimaget somisio;

        (The hyena cannot tell its own badness)

    ii.   Ma ki yumen sasur ye maen keeb;

        (You cannot shelter under a wild banana then cut it down after the rains)

    iii.   Kitindoi karik, ama kitindoi konyan.

        (Arms are put aside but not the eyes)

    iv.   Ma ki sase kapchi ko ma kiru

        (A homestead is not despised until you have spent there)

The examples of proverbs above can be said to require the least processing effort because in terms of recency of use, they are commonly quoted in conversations or songs. In terms of frequency, these proverbs and almost all the proverbs in group one are often used. These proverbs are also linguistically simple in that they are every day words. In terms of logical comprehension, they are easy to process.

It can therefore be deduced that the processing effort required to interpret a given proverb determines its commonness and simplicity. For the respondents in category one, they can easily remember or even understand a proverb which contains words that are familiar due to their frequency and recency as well as being logically and linguistically simple. In addition, context also helps in the comprehension process.

The next sub-section will illustrate how a proverb is processed in the mind, making use of the relevance- theoretic process. This is meant to explain why some proverbs are said to require the least processing effort, making them common whereas other proverbs require a more processing effort hence termed uncommon. The comprehension process is also meant to show the fact that a proverb can only be understood if the hearer is equipped with the background knowledge with which to understand it.

4.5.2 The Comprehension Process

The comprehension process will now be discussed. Proverbs have been given possible contexts because in relevance theory, contextual implications are obtained from the combination of both the context and the contextual assumptions.

Example 1

Context: X and Y are both lovers of the bottle and so they are drinking buddies. One day, X had to be hospitalised having taken one too many. When Y heard this, he really laughed his heart out and went telling the neighbours: 'the drunkard is in the hospital.' One of the elders heard this and gave the proverb below.

Mo ng'uchin ke kimaget somisio

(A hyena does not smell its own badness)

As a starting point, the addressee assumes that the utterance will be optimally relevant to him on hearing this proverb. In following the path of least effort, the hearer infers the meaning of the proverb from the meanings of its constituents and builds a metaphor that Y is being directly compared to a hyena. In lexical broadening a word is used to convey a more general sense than the encoded one. Broadening is triggered by the search for relevance. This will involve the construction of ad hoc concepts based on information made accessible by the encyclopaedic entry of the encoded concept. What we have in this case is a metaphorical extension. A metaphor induces the hearer to view a concept like something else hence the original concept of 'kimaget' the hyena has been broadened and used in a wider sense and transferred to someone who may have similar traits. From the cultural knowledge he activates his encyclopaedic entry of the concept 'hyena' to get contextual assumptions which may include:

i.   The hyena is an ugly animal

ii.   It has shorter hind legs

iii. It is a scavenger

iv.   It is considered unclean

v.   The hyena is all the above but does not see it

These contextual assumptions which are also strong implicatures combine with the context and a selection process takes place that selects the characteristics from hyena to fit Y. This will yield the implicated premises below:

i.   Y is like the hyena

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ii.   He is laughing at his friend yet he also drinks

iii.   He calls his friend a drunkard yet he is also one

iv.   He can suffer the same predicament

The contextual conclusions will be that:

i.   Y is equally bad or even worse.

ii.   The proverb is used to ridicule people who are quick to judge yet they also have their own weakness.

Example 2

Context**:** Jane has just been to her aunt's house where she has noted the poor condition in which they are in. Her aunt's hut is leaking and there is hardly anything to eat. The husband is always out drinking. When Jane gets back home, she is asked how her aunt is fairing on and her opening statement is:

Kitindoi karik a ma kitindoi konyan

(Arms are laid aside but not eyes)

Then she gives the report of her aunt's condition that she is struggling.

The hearer in interpreting the meaning of the above proverb takes a consideration of the context under which it has been used. His encyclopaedic entry of the concept 'karik' which means 'arms' is activated. From the cultural knowledge, the hearer knows that in the past, it was not allowed for one to get into someone's house with arms, so they were left outside. Having enriched the utterance in this way, the hearer then begins drawing contextual assumptions as follows:

i.   Eyes always take in the immediate surroundings

ii. Some things don't need to be said but just observed

iii. A lot can be learnt through perception

From the above assumptions, the hearer may draw the following contextual implication as to the meaning of the proverb:

i. An observant eye never misses a thing

Example 3

Context: Members of a church had gathered to plan how they were going to host the visitors they were expecting. It was decided that the visitors be hosted in different homes to avoid congestion in one home. Among those who volunteered was a member who seemed needy as compared to other members. When they dispersed, some women brought up the issue wondering how that member was going to manage and their conclusion was:

Ma kisase kapchi ko ma kiru

(Do not despise a homestead before you spend there)

In following the path of least effort, the hearer first enriches the utterance by adding 'poor' to 'homestead' because people normally underrate their ability. 'Spending' symbolises interacting with them or giving them a chance. The hearer then relates the enriched explicature to the context to yield the following contextual assumptions:

i. Do not be quick to pass judgement

ii. Appearance might be deceiving

The contextual implication will be that:

i. We should not doubt someone's abilities before we learn who they really are.

This proverb has a literal meaning hence a little processing effort is required to interpret it.

Example 4

Context: Luke has been living with his uncle who has been paying for his school fees. He has been helping in the farm as a way of gratitude. On completing his fourth form he went back to his home and told his father he was not going back. His father then told him:

Ma ki yumen sasur ye maen keeb

(You cannot shelter under a wild banana then cut it down when it stops raining.)

The comprehension process will be like this:

The hearer takes the path of least effort by considering the interpretations that first come to his/her mind. In her mind, the encyclopaedic entry of the concept 'sasur' is activated whose meaning is a wild banana. The entry will include:

   i.   Grows like a banana

  ii.   Has long, wide leaves

 iii.   Gives a good shelter during rain

From the above background knowledge, the hearer will begin selecting features of the above metaphor to be transferred to the referents in the context. Luke's neediness had made him take shelter in his uncle's home but now that he has finished school, he wants to cut the link with him. The uncle is being likened to 'sasuriet' which offers shelter whereas Luke is the one cutting it. Neediness is being likened to rain which brings out the

fact that it may still occur. Since metaphors work on weak implicatures, the hearer will draw contextual implications such as:

i.   Luke is being ungrateful

ii.   He does not think about the future

iii. He might still need the help from his uncle

By using the information from the context and the cultural knowledge of the plant, the hearer gets to arrive at the meaning of the proverb.

Example 5

Context**:** X arrives home and as he sits down, he says to his family:

Ibotet kiam seroi

(Idling around leads to the eating of *seroi*)

According to Sperber and Wilson (2004:615), utterance comprehension involves constructing hypotheses about explicit content as well as implicated premises and conclusions. In order to detect the proposition expressed, the listener fills in the conceptual gaps of the proverb which may be an incomplete logical form encoded by X's utterance. This will be done through the processes of reference assignment, and other pragmatic enrichment processes.

First of all, the hearer assumes that the utterance is relevant to him in accordance with the Cognitive Principle of Relevance. From his cognitive environment, he knows that this proverb alludes to a story of a family who had gone out for no particular reason only to arrive home and discover the cow had given birth on its own and eaten the placenta hence its death. Had they been at home, the couple would have helped the cow and it would not

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have eaten the placenta. The owners had no other option but to slaughter their cow after negligence as they had gone away from home. The name of the cow 'seroi' will be retrieved from the encyclopaedic entry for processing. Following the path of least effort, the hearer will begin enriching the utterance so as to get the possible contextual assumptions which may include:

i. Due to idling, the only cow had to be eaten (by the owners)

ii. The owners are to be blamed for the death of the cow

The above premises have to be related to the context of X arriving home and immediately uttering the proverb. Hence:

i. X had gone out

ii. On his arrival he quotes the proverb

From the contextual assumptions above, the hearer can then combine with the context to have the following contextual implication:

i. X is confessing that he did not do anything constructive that day

The interpretation of the proverb above requires that the hearer sees the link between what is linguistically encoded in the proverb and the issue of wandering aimlessly. The listener also needs to be familiar with the general wisdom of the proverb.

The proverbs discussed so far are generally easier to understand and use, this makes them memorable. Even for a Kipsigis speaker who claims not to know any Kipsigis proverbs, quoting one of these proverbs to him or her can still make sense with the help of context. In contrast, the proverbs that will now be discussed are those that generally require more processing effort. Consequently, these proverbs are uncommon and for some, they can only be understood by speakers who are older in age and this is the reason why they were

obtained from the respondents aged 40 and above. Most young speakers may not even attempt to comprehend some of them because the archaic and unfamiliar terms may put them off. In Relevance Theoretic terms, their interpretations may not yield any cognitive effects. These proverbs include:

i.   Yakwaai let

ii.   Ma kiyamdos sorpuch ak kite

iii.   Kimalyian ko nogu

iv.   Ma kiroken ke chabas ne bo chi

v.   Teet kii mat

Their comprehension process is discussed below.

Example 6

Context**:** B has just heard that A has joined a University to do an Engineering course. Now B also wants to join and for the same course. Hence the proverb:

Ma kiroken ke chabas ne bo chi

(Don't measure yourself using someone else's bangle)

In following the path of least effort, the hearer will pay attention to the interpretations that first come to mind and stopping when his expectation of relevance is satisfied. From his encyclopaedic entry, he will get the meaning of the word 'chabas.' From his cognitive environment, the hearer will be guided to know that this is a bangle won at one's wrist. In the past, these bangles were custom-made to suit one's hand. It was not common for one to borrow a bangle from someone else because it was not likely to fit.

Having enriched the above encoded utterance using the background knowledge in mind, the hearer will begin considering the following cognitive effects:

i. 'Chabas' is made to fit one's size

ii. Another person's bangle will not fit

iii. People have different body sizes

iv. 'Chabas' is worn at the wrist

v. Using somebody else's bangle to make your own will not be wise

From the above implicated premises, the hearer can then see the correlation between the bag and B wanting to copy what his friend is doing. The term 'chabas' is recognized as a metaphor and so the mind goes through the broadening process to achieve the following weak implicatures.

i. Ability, talent and strength varies from one individual to another

ii. Be your own self

iii. Know your strength and limitation.

iv. Live within your own means or ability

The above proverb requires that the hearer has the meaning of 'chabas' in his encyclopaedic entry. This is a term that is no longer in use since hide skins bags are no longer traditionally made hence young speakers may not know its meaning and the history surrounding it. It would therefore be very hard to relate 'ability' or 'strength' with the concept encoded in 'chabas.' This is because according to Relevance Theory, the search for relevance is based on the availability of context for the interpretation of an utterance. If there is no context, there will be no cognitive effects hence no interpretation.

Example 7

Context: A man has just been arrested for several crimes. First he was caught stealing his neighbour's maize, also he has been involved in a number of rape cases, and then he is known to be violent towards his wife and children. To add to this, he does not have any cows or goats. He sells his wife's hens in order to buy liquor.

One elder was heard lamenting,

Ma ki yamdos sorpuch ak kite

(Sorpuch and Kite are not combined.)

In comprehending this proverb, the hearer relies a lot on her cognitive environment. From the Kipsigis cultural past, she must have the concept 'sorpuch' and 'kite' in her encyclopaedic entry in order for the utterance to achieve cognitive effects. In the days when Female circumcision was practised, it was an abominable act for a girl to cry when being circumcised. If one did this, it would be the source of shame to not only her but also her family members. The term 'kite' would follow her everywhere she went and no suitor would ever come seeking for her hand in marriage. Worse than this, was if an uncircumcised girl became pregnant. If the two predicaments ever fell on a girl, that is give birth before circumcision and on being circumcised she so much as produce a sound, it would be an unimaginable pain to the girl and to the parents. This was regarded as the worst evil ever to befall a woman.

Having enriched the utterance in the above manner, the hearer can then relate the two terms with what is happening in context. What the hearer can deduce is that there is a

metaphor in use of the concepts in relation to the man. Hence she begins transferring the relevant features to the man:

   i.   The man is so many evils combined

  ii.   He is a source of shame to the family and manhood

 iii.   He is unclean

 iv.   He needs to be banished from the community

From the above contextual premises, the hearer can then arrive at the contextual implications below:

   i.   We should not add one mistake over another

  ii.   We should avoid evil

Example 8

Context: Suitors have come to a home, all seeking for a girl's hand in marriage. As only one suitor could be chosen for the girl, one of the elders tells the other suitors:

Yakwaai let

(The behind is fatty)

The context will play a major role in the comprehension of this proverb as well as the general wisdom behind the proverb. In following the path of least effort, the lexical constituents in this proverb will guide the hearer to recognize the metaphorical concept. What comes to mind is a sheep's tail that is normally very fatty and sweet when roasted. The suitors who have not been successful are being given hope that in that homestead, there are other girls who will be ripe for marriage some years to come. This contextual assumption will combine with context to yield the contextual implication that:

i.   The future looks promising.

Example 9

Context: A father had been warning his son against bad behaviour but the son would ignore him. He used to quote to him the proverb below:

KiMalian ko nogu

Whoever does not heed advice will suffer pain.

One day the son was involved in a fight and ended up in police cells where they received a thorough beating. When he returned home, he told his father that he now understood the meaning of his proverb.

In the comprehension of this proverb, the context guides the hearer to arrive at the meaning of the proverb. The contextual assumptions will include:

   i.   The son had been warned against bad behaviour

  ii.   He did not listen

 iii.   He was jailed

  iv.   He was beaten

   v.   He had learnt a lesson

These assumptions will lead to the contextual implication below:

   i.   Every bad behaviour leads to unpleasant consequences.

The translated meaning of the proverb above sounds simple and has a literal meaning. However in Kipsigis language, the lexical term 'nogu' is very hard to translate. The word itself is not common and is used in this proverb alone. The hearer therefore is guided by the general knowledge of the proverb and the context in which it is used.

Example 10

Context**:** A woman is lamenting over her wayward son who had to drop out of school saying studies were hard. Now all he does is to steal things from home in exchange of illicit brew. In her grief, she was heard saying:

Teet kii mat

 (Cow gave birth to fire)

In the comprehension of this proverb, the hearer follows a series of steps. First of all, the encyclopaedic entries of the concepts 'teet' which is stored as 'teta' meaning 'cow' and 'mat' which means ' fire,' are activated. From her knowledge of the world, the hearer knows that cows normally give birth to calves not fire; therefore she recognizes it as a metaphor. A selection process begins where the characteristics of fire are scrutinized. For example, fire is hot; hence it burns.

From her cognitive environment, the hearer knows that the first thing a cow does after giving birth is to lick its calf, wiping with the tongue the umbilical fluid until the skin becomes dry. Therefore if it gave birth to 'fire' it means every time its tongue touches the 'fire,' it is burnt.

Having enriched the above utterance, the hearer can then relate it with the context. Since the proverb is metaphorical, the son is being likened to the 'fire' hence the weak implicatures are:

   i.   He causes pain

  ii.   He is bad

 iii.   He is ungrateful

The contextual implication therefore will be that

The son, through his behaviour, has caused a lot of pain to the mother.

4.6 Conclusion

This section has shown that proverb use depends on the attitude one has over a proverb or proverbs in general. Attitude on the other hand is developed due to a number of factors. These factors are explained in relevance- theoretic terms because proverb use is a matter of human cognition hence the theory of relevance was applied. It is suggested in this study that for one to use a proverb, he or she must find the proverb relevant to him or her as stated in the Cognitive Principle of Relevance: Human cognition tends to be geared towards maximization of relevance.

In addition, the relevance of an input (in our case, a proverb) depends on the processing effort required, a contextual background needed, and cognitive effects it achieves. A combination of all these factors will determine the use of a given proverb hence the attitude towards them.

A relevance theoretic comprehension procedure was applied to some of the proverbs that were obtained from the four categories of respondents. What was evidenced is that respondents gave proverbs they were able to comprehend or that were relevant to them. The respondents aged 15-39 gave proverbs that are common and generally have a literal meaning. In relevance theoretic terms, these proverbs required the least processing effort hence they achieve a greater degree of relevance to this group of speakers. In contrast, the proverbs given by the respondents aged 60 and above are those that for the younger

speakers it would require a more processing effort making them less relevant to them. However, for the elders, these archaic proverbs may not require a greater processing effort for them because their cognitive environment enables them to process these inputs with the least effort. This explained the varied attitude towards the proverbs. When the younger group say the proverbs are traditional, they mean that the terms used could be archaic and they are not ready to spend their mental energy in trying to process them. For them, using plain words may be more relevant. From the presentation of the comprehension process, it is clear that for one to understand a proverb, his or her cognitive environment must have the background knowledge with which to process it. Context also plays a role in the understanding of the proverb.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS

5.0 Introduction

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

5.1 Summary and Findings

This study was based on Kipsigis proverbs. From the 100 collected proverbs, 30 proverbs were selected for stylistic analysis and 10 for relevance theoretic analysis. 20 other proverbs were cited as examples in Chapter Two. This study sought to achieve four objectives. The first objective was to do a stylistic analysis of the said proverbs. Secondly was to establish the functions of the proverbs. Thirdly was to investigate the attitude of the people towards the proverbs. Fourthly was to explain the difference in proverb usage among the identified groups of speakers using the relevance theory.

The study findings can be summarized as follows: To begin with, sound patterns like alliteration, assonance, rhyme and repetition were identified in proverbs that were analysed. The other stylistic devices include personification, parallelism, paradox, allusion, analogy, metaphor and ellipsis. These stylistic devices make the proverbs pleasant to listen to as well as enhancing the effectiveness of a message.

A Relevance Theoretic approach was used to explain the difference in attitude towards the proverb by different age groups of speakers. It was suggested that proverb use is all a

matter of human cognition which is relevance based. The speakers who find proverbs relevant are the ones who used them. Here, relevance was defined in terms of context, processing effort and cognitive effects. It was concluded that a combination of all these factors determined proverb use by the various age groups.

It was also noted that the examples cited in different categories of age groups indicated their comprehension of proverbs in general. From the relevance theoretic analysis of the selected proverbs in each category, proverbs were categorised as common or uncommon depending on the processing effort required to understand them. It was observed that proverbs given by respondents in the age bracket of 15-39 were generally those that required the least processing effort hence termed common whereas those given by respondents aged 40 and above were generally those that required more processing effort hence termed uncommon. In addition, for a hearer to adequately process a proverb, he or she must have the appropriate cognitive environment to use so as to yield positive cognitive effects. It was asserted that the older people generally were better equipped to process a given proverb due to their accumulated knowledge on the cultural practices, experience and beliefs of the society. This makes proverbs more relevant to them than it does to the young.

5.2 Recommendations

The study used a Stylo-Pragmatic model to analyse the Kipsigis proverbs which enabled the researcher identify both the stylistic and pragmatic aspects of Kipsigis proverbs. As no theory can exhaustively handle a given phenomenon, it is recommended that future

researchers can use other theories to analyse the proverbs like the Critical Discourse Analysis so as to get a different perspective. Also, future studies can analyse the proverbs in terms of the theme contained in them like proverbs based on specific animals, proverbs based on oral narratives and so forth. Future studies can also attempt to classify proverbs in terms of the figurative devices employed in the proverbs for example Synecdoche proverbs, metaphoric and so forth.. It is also recommended that Kipsigis idioms be studied alongside proverbs because they share certain characteristics.

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APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

Section A: Bio-Data of the respondents

(Tick where applicable)

1. What is your gender?

a) Male   [ ]

b) Female [ ]

2. What is your age bracket?

a) 15-25 years   [ ]

b) 26-39 years   [ ]

c) 40-59 years   [ ]

d) 60 years and above [ ]

Section B: Specific information

1**.** How do people in this area view proverbs?

....

2. What are the roles of proverbs in Kipsigis society? …………………………………….

3. Why are proverbs used instead of plain direct statements? …………………………..

4. Do educated people use proverbs in this area?

…………………………………………….

5. Do you use proverbs? Why?

....

6. If yes, how often and to whom?

....

7. List down the Kipsigis proverbs you

know……………...

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

8. Do you know any Kipsigis proverb connected to a story?

9. If yes, give

example(s)………………………………………………………………………………….

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

10. Do you think proverbs are relevant in this modern society? Why?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

11. What is your opinion concerning people who use proverbs?

………………………………………………………………………………………………

………………………………………………………………………………………………

KIPSIGIS PROVERBS

1. Aechin iwot ak kemei

   (Time of plenty has equal weight as time of famine)

2. Aechin ta ak let

   (The beginning and the end have equal weight)

3. Am ingo, irat ingo

   (Eat one, save another)

4. Berber chi ne mawendi kap kiruok

   (Whoever does not attend dispute settling sessions is foolish)

5. Betut ne bo kipnyolyiet ko bo

   (Something destined to happen will happen)

6. Bo chamet kariron

   (Someone's true value is tested with time)

7. Chepkisas ko ta tun ke chame

   (Whoever is despised will one day be loved)

8. Chi bo chi ko bo

   (A person who belongs to someone, belongs)

9. Ibotet kiam seroi

   (Idleness leads to Seroi being eaten)

10. Ibuti teta agobo kelyek ang'wan

    (A cow falls down yet it has four legs)

11. Ing'ete kimereng' mindo

    (Kimereng' rouses mindo)

12. Ingen tarit age tugul kesinyin

    (Every bird knows its own nest)

13. Ingolul Kuresiet ko tito arek

    (When an Acacia tree falls down, it injures the seedlings beneath)

14. Isek ana bok

    (Is it wax or honey?)

15. Isopchi met

    (The head cures a person)

16. Kagotok Kuna kele bo mugung'

    (Kuna's deformity has been discovered)

17. Ketub ko rutu

    (When you conceals it germinates)

18. Ki bendi mutyo a machei keldo

    (Walk carefully to prevent foot from making noise)

19. Kibendi kel belyon

    (Walk like an elephant)

20. Ki bire mat ko lo

    (A fire is put off when it is still far)

21. Ki ko namen ke temenio tisia

    (Wax has settled on a scar)

22. Ki pai chi kosich kong'

    (A child is nurtured to find his path)

23. Ki tindoi karik a ma kitindoi konyan

    (Arms are put aside but not eyes)

24. Kiame ko wo, kiame ko ming'in

    (Food is eaten be it little or plenty)

25. Kibokin ko aeng'

    (There are two options)

26. Kiene tany kong' si kechorei

    (A cow is shielded before its blood is drawn)

27. Kimalyan ko nogu

    (Whoever does not heed advice will face consequences)

28. Kimnatet naet

    (Knowledge is power)

29. Kirgit muitaet

    (Patience is a bull)

30. Kolkol ng'etundo a ma ame arekyik

    (A lion is fierce but it doesn't eat its cubs)

31. Kurege kapng'atat

    (The dirty call each other)

32. Kutit korurbai

    (The mouth makes millet grow)

33. Kibendi ban chepkokoch

    (Tread slowly like a tortoise)

34. Kiborunen tany ui tugul

    (Cows can be raided from anywhere)

35. Kichomio miat ak roriot

    (Pain and laughter goes hand in hand)

36. Kilokyin konyan met

    (The head is dressed with eyes)

37. Kitachke sot ak makat

    (The gourd and the hide skin equalised)

38. Kitiege kou teren

    (Let us support each other like pots)

39. Korom moet ne kirorok orokyet konyo ng'wony(The stomach that brought a crow

    down is powerful)

40. Kyome sanian koilet

    (Benefits from a generous son in law are endless)

41. Ma chibe chi boban ne bo chi

    (No one can uproot someone else's mushroom)

42. Ma kiame tany konyil aeng'

    (A cow is not eaten twice)

43. Ma kibelchindos kirokwo aeng'

    (Two sticks are not burnt at the same time)

44. Ma kibiren tany mat

(Do not beat a cow with fire)

45. Ma kiengyin moita kamet

(A calf cannot be slaughtered for its mother)

46. Ma kike chei che ma bisto

(When milking, one cannot prevent milk from spilling)

47. Ma kikesu ng'omnot

(Wisdom cannot be exhausted)

48. Ma kilenjin bunyot omon konyan

(Don't tell your enemy your eyes are aching)

49. Ma kiloktoi ingor chebuut

(Don't put on a cloth that has a caterpillar)

50. Ma kilote chito, kilote ketit

(A person is not sculptured a tree is)

51. Ma kilote ndara

(Regrets are in vain)

52. Ma kimeitoi kutit

(The mouth can save)

53. Ma kinemchi ke met

(A person cannot shave his hair by himself)

54. Ma king'ete munyas ne rue

(Don't rouse a sleeping evil)

55. Ma king'ore banan

(Don't predict poverty)

56. Ma kiparchin pangok tarit

(Don't show machetes to birds)

57. Ma kiparchin kimaget susut

(Don't show a wound to the hyena)

58. Ma kipire kiyagik

(A messenger is not beaten)

59. Ma kiribe beek ko ma am tisok

(You cannot prevent millet from being eaten by monkeys)

60. Ma kiroken ke chabas ne bo chi

(You cannot measure yourself using someone's bangle)

61. Ma kirotito sogon kateet

(You cannot tie a leaf together with a thorn)

62. Ma kisarunen kororio ma

(You cannot salvage a feather from fire)

63. Ma kisasunen karna ma

(Do not despise an iron rod in the fire)

64. Ma kisase kapchi ko ma kiru

(Don't despise a homestead before you spend there)

65. Ma kisute sotet ko ma i teta

(Don't prepare calabashes before the cow gives birth)

66. Ma kitesyin bek ele chabai

(Don't pour water on slippery grounds)

67. Ma kitesyin bek teret ko bo bek mustaita

(Do not put a lot of water when the flour was borrowed)

68. Ma kitorktoi tuga che iyaganu mureno

(There is no worry when the cows are being herded by a man)

69. Ma kiyaktai muketut

(Do not revenge)

70. Ma kiyamdos sorpuch ak kite

(Do not combine immorality with cowardice)

71. Ma kiyumen sasur ye maen keeb

(Do not take shelter on a wild banana then cut it after the rain stops)

72. Ma me kiam soet

(He did not die he was eaten by a buffalo)

73. Ma name ng'wonet ye mami korotik

(The poison will not affect where there is no quilt)

74. Ma ng'uchi ke kimaket somisio

(The hyena does not smell its own stench)

75. Ma rarechin kwendet ne mi pusa ne mi ma

(The fire that is on the store does not laugh on the ones in the fire)

76. Ma rie siet agenge isiriat

(One finger does not kill a louse)

77. Ma rirtoen boinet ne kobore, rirtoen ne kaing'ete

(The antelope does not blame the one that killed it but the one that roused it)

78. Ma sire kwetyin, kwetyin

(One wrong does not right another)

79. Ma utien moset katwalet

(The monkey does not forget how to jump around)

80. Ma wendi ririat ole ma mi teta

(The tick bird does not go where there is no cow)

81. Mo kimondoge bendap loget

(Do not rely on hunted meat)

82. Mogombeu chepyoso

(A woman safes for a rainy day)

83. Mur kimaket ak kesile

(The hyena is dirty but it is still doted upon)

84. Ndo ngitei kegas

(Warning should be taken hid of)

85. Ng'om kinindet kosir chorindet

(An investigator is wiser than a thief)

86. Ng'weng' itit kosir konda

(The ear is faster than the eye)

87. Ng'eta mo

(The stomach is a boy)

88. Ng'ok ko u akyot

(Mean as the Okiek)

89. Ng'wan ko bo chi, anyiny ko bo tiony

(It is painful when it belongs for human but painful when it belongs to an animal)

90. Ngeeny aran ko bestos morik

(When a lamb is slaughtered people do not go to work)

91. Ngo bo chi ra, ko bo chi tun

(What belongs to someone today may belong to someone else tomorrow)

92. Ngo butyi teta keringet ko ma lang'u ak buteek tugul

(When a cow fall into a ditch it does not come back with all the far)

93. Ngo samis murian ko bo kot ne bo

(A rat has its owners despite its stench)

94. Nyanja it

(The ear is the sea)

95. Sise mo

(It will be silent in the stomach)

96. Weksei uruon bo ket

(The shade will always return)

97. Wo belion a ma ie saram

(An elephant despite its large size does not bear twins)

98. Yaitiet ko u ng'atat

(Evil is like mud)

99. Ya kanyao chesibiit, ngerut ko mandaen, kinde busarek kochurut, kekul ko chut lalet.

(It is difficult treat a rice bird, when injected the syringe goes through the body, when powdered it melts, when sucked it goes through the tube)

100. Yakwaai let

(The behind is fatty)