LANGUAGE AND GENDER: A CASE STUDY IN SOCIAL SEMIOTICS OF THE LEXICON OF THE GIKUYU LANGUAGE

BY

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Language and gender: a case study in
DECLARATION

THIS THESIS IS MY ORIGINAL WORK AND HAS NOT BEEN PRESENTED FOR A DEGREE IN ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY

WANGO GEOFFREY MBUGUA

MRS. CATHERINE NDUNGO
DEDICATION

I am grateful to Kenyatta University for sponsoring me.

To my parents Hannah Njoki and Samuel Wango, and to my sister Grace Wambui who educated me and have always encouraged me.

my indebtedness and special gratitude to my supervisor, Mrs. Catherine Edungo. Her insight, comments, patience, criticism and scholarly advice were an invaluable contribution and inspiration to this work.

I also wish to register my profound gratitude, sincere appreciation to all my informants who contributed the raw data that forms the basis of this study.

Further credit is due my wife Lucy Wairimu and my daughter Annabell Njoki for their support. They have been very understanding and invaluably helpful to me which enabled to the successful completion of this study.

I am greatly indebted to my sister Grace Wambui and her husband for offering me free and comfortable accommodation and even financial support during the course of my study. Without them, life would have been impossible. Special thanks also go to members of my...
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family and friends, especially Mr. and Mrs. Peter Kihara Muthiora, who gave me a lot of encouragement and for their words of comfort which kept me going.

I duly acknowledge with gratitude the help accorded to me by Dr. Eunice Nyamasyo in the Department of English for her invaluable help right from the proposal stage up to the completion of the thesis.

Lastly, let me say that without the Grace of God, I would not have accomplished this work.
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DEFINITION OF TERMS.

**CONNOTATION**: This refers to the sense or designated meaning of a word in terms of its emotive and evaluative associated meanings and loadings.

**FEMINISM**: This is a movement that supports the principle of equality of men and women and opposes any discrimination of women based on gender.

**GENDER**: This is a socially constructed category based on sex. Gender therefore refers to those differences between men and women that are socially constructed.

**GENERIC REFERENCE**: This is a type of reference which is used to refer to a class of objects or things rather than to a specific member of a class.

**IDEOLOGY**: This refers to the body of ideas characteristic of a particular society or sub-culture. The ideology of gender refers to the opposition of feminine and masculine words in their connotations, that is, the opposition involving a "cluster of associated meanings" attached to a word (Poynton, 1989:18-19).
LANGUAGE AND GENDER: Gender is a phenomenon in which certain parts of speech, usually nouns, have grammatical markings (or inflection) to mark masculine, feminine or neuter. In languages that mark gender, classes of nouns relate these 'inflectional categories'. In natural gender, only those words which refer to something with a biological sex can be masculine or feminine. Gender therefore, is often a grammatical category to mark the contrasts: masculine/ feminine/ neuter, and is often referred to as grammatical gender.

LEXICON: This refers to the vocabulary of a language in contrast to its grammar (syntax).

SEMIOTICS: Meaning making systems, "the study of signs" (Halliday & Hasan, 1989:3-4). Remodified and considered here as the study of sign systems, that is, study of meaning in its most general sense.

SEX: A biological distinction into male or female.

SEXISM: Sexism is any discrimination against women or men based on their sex.
SEX AND GENDER: Poynton (1989:4) makes a distinction between sex and gender in which sex is identified as "identification as female or male (biological)" and gender as "identification as feminine or masculine (social)". This is the way they are treated here.

SOCIAL: This will be used here in the sense of the 'social system' that is, synonymous with culture and in the sense of a relationship between language and social structure (Halliday & Hasan, 1989:4).

SOCIAL SEMIOTIC: This is a means of interpreting language within a 'sociocultural context' in which the culture itself is interpreted in semiotic terms as an 'information system'. (Halliday, 1978:2). In this study, Gikuyu is studied in a social semiotic framework.
NOTATIONS

A - Speaker A
B - Speaker B
C - Speaker C
D - Speaker D
ED - Educated
F - Female
KWIC - Key word in context
LMC - Longman-Mini Concordancer
M - Male
UNED - Uneducated

INFORMANT GROUPS

<table>
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<tr>
<th>GROUP NO.</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>SEX</th>
<th>EDUCATION STATUS</th>
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This study examines the place and role of language in gender in a social semiotic framework. It studies the extent to which the lexicon in Gikuyu language is sexist. The study achieves this through a computer-based corpus of spontaneous conversational data between Gikuyu speakers.

The basic argument is that Gikuyu relegates females to a subordinate position in which their roles and functions are suppressed in favour of the males.

The thesis is divided into five Chapters. Chapter one is a general introduction in which the study problem is stated and the procedure used in the study is given. Chapter two contains the literature review. Chapter three describes the Gikuyu social and cultural background that helps to uncover the subtle aspects of the society as an important component to help explain the place of women in the society.

The findings of the research are presented and discussed in Chapter four. The lexis is described and interpreted in relation to gender and what has been outlined in earlier chapters. The possible causes of such a bias in word use is investigated, various
connotations observed and statistical analysis and interpretation attempted.

The last chapter evaluates the whole study including its relevance, application, implications, and suggestions for further study. We conclude that Gikuyu language needs to redefine and exclude certain terms that hamper women's development and that have created negative perceptions of the female and her image especially while promoting the male at the expense of the female.
CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1.0. INTRODUCTION

This is a study of Gikuyu language use in social interaction. It answers questions such as:

i) What do speakers of Gikuyu mean by the use of gender marked words, for example, *maraya*, 'prostitute'?

ii) What sort of connotation do such words have?

To a larger extent, it is a study in 'interactional sociolinguistics' (Tannen, 1993:5) in Gikuyu language.

In the last two decades, a lot of debate has concentrated on women's role in society and gender relations. This has resulted to the feminism movement. Feminism aims at liberating women from all types of inequalities globally. This is because development cannot be achieved without the participation of all persons including women. Consequently, the present study highlights areas of language use that have direct implications for this movement. It concurs with arguments put forward, for example, by Ortega (1990) who reckons:
If we are committed to working for a better humanity for all, we have to be aware that this is not possible so long as we are limited by the language and images we use unconsciously or by choice.

Many aspects of life affect the existing gender relations. They include: law, religion, economics, politics and, education. The role of language in shaping the image of women in society is a topic not new to many people within and outside linguistics. For example, Giles (1979:3) notes that one of the important ways in which we can influence others and can be influenced by them is through language. Feminists on their part have argued that through language, women's roles and stereotypes have been conditioned and influenced into society. Non-linguists have also questioned the tradition of language with regard to females. Elsa Tamez (1987 in Ortega, 1990), a liberation theologian, argues that language is very important and therefore, we must begin to take hold of it and discover the degree of discrimination women suffer in it. It is along these lines that Graddol and Swann (1989:132) thus conclude:

Underlying much of the discussion of language and social values is the notion of a dominant social group (male, white, middle class etc.) that is somehow able to impose its meanings on the other language users.

In language and gender studies, males are seen as imposing their meaning on females. Spender (1980:143) for example states that:
males, as the dominant group, have produced language, thought and reality.... In this process women have played little or no part.

Male subjectivity has been the source of those meanings "including the meaning that their own subjectivity is objectivity". Poynton (1989:51) on the other hand observes that:

males are simply more visible, creating the presumption that if someone is doing something it's likely to be a male unless actually specified as female.

This implies that the male is the point of reference unless otherwise stated. The present study aimed to find out whether this is true of Gikuyu.

It is the strong opinion of linguists such as Thorne et al. (1983:11) that Feminists have examined language as a symbolic system closely tied to a patriarchal social structure. They argue that language is deeply patriarchal, and the 'theft of the language' is part of women's condition of relative powerless-ness. Thus women need to rework traditional language forms in order to create women-centred language and meaning. In the present study, such meanings that need to be worked on in Gikuyu are dealt with.

Two modes of gender distinction in word classes are generally recognized: natural and conventional gender. Natural gender recognizes sex determinate inflections and suffixes that serve to create word classes whose members can then be mapped into corresponding
reference classes. Such classes are distinguished by biological sex or other metaphorical extension of biological sex. In other languages, there is conventional gender in which there are many more word classes "no two of which map well onto the seemingly natural classification of biological beings by biological sex" (Muhlhausler & Harre, 1990:228). This study sought to establish the nature of Gikuyu language in terms of natural and conventional gender. English is characterised by natural gender (Kress and Hodge, 1979; Muhlhausler & Harre, 1990) and was used as a point of reference in this study.

The study also makes a distinction between grammatical gender and semantic sex (Crystal, 1985:133). In languages such as German, there is grammatical gender in which every noun has a gender that has to be learnt separately (Muhlhausler & Barre, 1990: 228). In semantic sex, words are analysed in terms of their gender content. Grammatical gender is not a feature of English except when certain parts of the language such as pronouns are analyzed in such terms (Smith, 1985).

Gikuyu has no grammatical gender markers (Hemery, 1903; Barlow, 1960). Like English it does not have an overt category of gender that requires all lexis (words) to be identified either as masculine, feminine, or neuter but it has a covert category
revealed, for example, in personal names. Nevertheless, it has a semantic sex in which words were analysed in terms of sex/gender semantic content and/or connotations.
1.2.0. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Studies have been conducted to investigate whether the grammatical apparatus in human languages devalue women (Lakoff, 1975; Cameron, 1985; Muhlhausler & Harre, 1990). The English lexicon for example, has been said to show a sexist bias against women (Smith, 1985; Graddol & Swann, 1989; Poynton, 1989). English words for women and men, for example, are rarely parallel and several differences and inequalities reflect themselves in the (English) lexicon. It is commonly acceptable among these studies that generic ‘man’ easily refers to the male thus excluding the female. This renders language sexist.

A question that arises from such findings is, can such observations be made in other languages, for example Gikuyu? In what ways, for example, does sexism manifest itself in Gikuyu? This study focused on words in Gikuyu in relation to gender with a view to determine:

i) in what ways Gikuyu devalues women,

ii) the extent to which the Gikuyu lexicon may be said to have a sexist bias.

Cameron (1985:81-2) argues that people do not necessarily learn words from dictionaries but rather infer their meanings in particular contexts. The present study set to investigate the extent to which
the meanings in some Gikuyu words tend to crystallize sexism, that is gender attitudes of dominance and subservience that undermine the quest for equality among the sexes.

1.3.0. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The objectives of this study were to:

i) determine the extent to which lexical resources (vocabulary) of Gikuyu language reflects the ideology of gender,

ii) analyse the different evaluative loadings on words referring to women and to men exclusively,

iii) determine whether the use of words in a generic way can be resolved as gender.

1.4.0. RESEARCH PREMISES
The study was based on the following premises:

i) Some generic terms exclude males or females,

ii) Words referring to men and women have different connotations,

iii) Ambiguity of intention cannot be resolved even when the terms are understood to be used generically.

1.5.0. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
In order to redress the marginalisation of women, both women and men need to develop positive images of
females through language. It is felt that one of the areas of concern to Feminism is in language itself.

Studies conducted on the image of women (Lakoff, 1975; Ngugi, 1975; Chesaina, 1991; Kabira, 1991) leave no doubt that the woman has been portrayed negatively. The present study examined how traditionally neutral or generic words such as mundu 'person' are used. It studied the extent to which Gikuyu words relegate women and portray negative images said to be "most visible and blatant" in the lexis (Poynton, 1989:41). By studying the society's use of language in social interaction, such images reflected in language use are highlighted and recommendations made.

Lakoff (1975:46) too propagates the same argument. She notes that women experience linguistic discrimination mainly in two ways: in the way they are taught to use language; and, in the way general language treats them. This difference, she further observes, cannot be predicted except with reference to the different roles the sexes play in society. This study investigated how the language treats women in this respect besides being a contribution to other studies on language and gender.

It is hoped that the findings from this study will be of practical use to gender studies as it highlights
areas of Gikuyu language use and the treatment of women. Specifically, such findings, it is hoped, will be of academic interest in areas relating to language use and sociolinguistics as it is observed that attitudes are reflected in language use.

The choice of lexis and a study in social semiotics is noteworthy. Halliday (1978:43) views the lexicon as "the most delicate grammar". Poynton (1989:50) singles out the vocabulary (lexis) of a language as the most obvious repository of the meanings of man and woman in English. She contends that lexis is the most accessible part of language to those not trained as linguists and that it seems that it is the lexis that conveys meaning. She further asserts that other parts are less obvious ways in which lexical meanings are reinforced in the grammar of a language. She explains thus:

what lexis does is to name activities or processes, people and things associated with those activities or processes, and characteristics or attributes of those activities or processes, people, and things, in ways that are culturally salient.

The present study undertook to find out whether such a case holds for Gikuyu. That no such study had been undertaken in Gikuyu makes this study significant.

The problem under investigation can best be summed up in Masheti's words (1994:3) who reckons that:
The Bantu word 'mùndù/mùntù' is equivalent to person/human but in a good number of languages it refers to adult male.

This is only a general overview of the Bantu word in question and is not specific to any language.

Lastly, the present study promotes some insight into the existing information gap on lexis in Bantu languages in general and in Gikuyu in particular especially regarding gender.

1.6.0. SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The study analysed the social semiotics of words in Gikuyu that have human reference, namely nouns.

Although Grammar, Morphology, Syntax and Phonology do not remain unaffected by sexism and ideology, it was felt that this was beyond the scope and time duration of this study. However, as Poynton, (1989:55) observes lexis without structure is not language. In view of this, the present study related social structures like patriarchy and language structures like phrases to help ascertain the nature of the words in a social semiotic framework.

A problem arose in that the investigation was mainly concerned with a certain part of the language, the lexis. As much as selective listening of these elements of speech (lexis) was the target and
deliberate listening was done, the researcher had to deduce the necessary data from the lexicon through noting and recording all available data. This is because the words studied should be in use.

1.7.0. **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The study is based on the Social semiotic theory as exemplified and advanced by Halliday (1978) and Halliday & Hasan (1989) which concerns itself with the use of language. The social semiotic framework was taken because the social dimension seems particularly plausible, namely gender.

The Social Semiotic Theory was first developed by Malinowski (1923) and later by Firth (1935, 1950) and Hymes (1967). It was our criterion for studying words both as text and in context. This was because it has its basis in semantics and seeks to consider and identify the role that certain linguistic items, for example, in this case, words, as text or in context function in building meaning. Also, language as social semiotics is highly associated with experience, reality, interaction in language use and socially in-built processes of language use (Halliday: 1978; Halliday & Hasan: 1989; Poynton: 1989).

According to this theory, the semantic system is the meaning potential embodied in language. It is itself
the realization of a higher-level semiotic, a
behavioral system, a social semiotic. In the theory,
language is understood and related in its relationship
to social structure. The approach to understanding
language is seen to lie in the study of texts. In this
study, texts are the words in Gikuyu.

Text is defined as language that is functional as
opposed to isolated words or sentences, a semantic
refers to it as:

... the basic unit of the semantic process. At
the same time, text represents choice. A text is
'what is meant', selected from the total set of
options that constitute what can be meant. In
other words, text can be defined as actualized
through meaning potential.

It is this 'meaning potential' that is examined in
relation to the words that are dealt with in this
study.

Text and co-text are intimately related. Neither can
be 'enunciated' without the other (Halliday & Hasan,
1989:52). Included in the co-text or with the text in
the social semiotic model are other non - verbal
goings - on - the total environment in which a text
unfolds. The nature of a text, however, is such that
it is really made of meanings expressed, or coded, in
words and structures hence a text is a semantic entity
and a social exchange of meanings. In this study, both
words and their use in social context were studied.
Text is both a product and a process. It is a product in the sense that it is an output with a certain construction represented in systematic ways, and a process in the sense of a continuous process of semantic choice made in a network of further potential choices, an interactive event, a social exchange of meaning. Similarly, it is both an object and an instance. A text is (Halliday & Hasan, 1989:11-12):

a product of its environment, a product of a continuous process of choices in meaning.... if we treat both text and context as semiotic phenomena, as 'modes of meaning', so to speak, we can get from one to the other in a revealing way.

Words were studied as text and in context. This is because words and their connotations are a product of the environment. The speaker is continuously making a choice between one word and another.

In the semiotic model, this is done using the three features of the context of situation namely: the field - what is happening; the tenor - who are taking part; and, the mode - what part or role the language is playing (Halliday & Hasan, 1989:12). This was the basis of analysis of word meanings in context.

Function and meaning in the semantics are expressed in the following ways: field through experiential (transitivity, naming); tenor through interpersonal (mood, modality, person); and, mode in the textual (theme, information, cohesive relations). Poynton
(1989:56) explains 'field' as:-

portions of socially constructed experience recognized as discrete portions by means of that culture, commonly institutionalised to the extent of having a name (e.g. athletics, music) or maybe even to the extent of being identifiable as a formally constituted social institution.

Such 'names' include childbirth and wedding while 'social institutions' such as home and marriage correspond to them. This shows up linguistically in terms of the differences in relations and what is talked about or expressed by people. In turn, it determines who are taking part, who uses the word or whether it is general, and the role of language in communication and ultimately in social semiotics.

The notion of sense and reference are taken as central to the study of meaning (Hurford & Heasley, 1985). Reference indicates which things the speaker talks about (for example, persons) while sense refers to the place of an expression in a system of semiotic relationships with other expressions in the language, words for example (Hurford & Heasley, 1985:33). This formed the basis of our classification of words into generic, masculine and feminine.

Since the lexicon of a language is said to be organized into a hyponymic hierarchy with differing degrees of generality (Halliday & Hasan, 1989:80), the extent to which such generality is generic in relation to masculine and feminine relations was investigated.
For example, in Gikuyu, the general term for human (person or man) is můndů and for child/ren mwana/ciana.

Halliday’s social semiotic approach to language has a number of real strengths. First, its basis is semantics not syntactic. While not denying that syntax is an important language component, it seeks to consider and identify the role of various linguistics items in any text in terms of their function in building meaning. Second, it is not uniquely interested in written language but with the study of both written and spoken texts in that each is illuminated because of its contrast with the other. Finally, it permits useful movements across the text addressing the manner in which linguistic patternings built up meaning and the overall construction of a text.

The contribution of social semiotic to feminist language study is therefore threefold. Firstly, it has a literally criticism which enables the researcher to study the use of language in imaginative literature and female creativity. Secondly, it engulfs the theory of ‘gendered subjectivity’ (Spender, 1980; Cameron, 1985) that seeks to study whether women are alienated in language and society because they have to learn a male language. Thirdly, it is concerned with the
overall construction of sexual identity and it insists on a linguistic basis for that process of construction. This makes it extraordinarily relevant in this study. To study language using the social semiotic model is therefore to concentrate upon exploring how language is systematically patterned towards important social ends.

Thus social semiotics does not counterpose social (gender) nor the biological (sex) as two independent and reified domains of cause and effect because neither uniquely determines or defines patterned social semiotic behaviour. Instead, the theory lays a link with social theory and articulates links between semiotic forms, their uses and functions and language since language is ultimately involved in the manner in which we construct and organise our human experiences. It is a theory of social meaning making practices (Thibault, 1991:6).

In addition, social semiotics is unique in that it also strives to be a critical and self reflexive theory of the dynamics of these social meaning making practices. It is critical in that it shows how regular and systematic patterning of a text and in context function in ways that enact, maintain, reproduce or change the social semiotic system. It is self reflexive because it accounts for its own place within
the same critical perspective, that is, it defines its own relations to other social discourses, language structure, its position in the relations of meaning for example, and the interests these serve. Furthermore, it is concerned with identifying potential areas of intervention and change in the interrelations between society and language and the systems of social meaning making that constitute it. As a result, the theory enabled us to pay close attention to the ways in which word relations (both female and male) wield various forms of influence in the text of the (Gikuyu) language. The cultural ideologies emanating from the words are the ones the society has inherited as subject matter, are unquestionable, and are often acknowledged and passed on consciously or unconsciously. The theory therefore enabled us to interpret words individually and in context.
1.8.0. **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

1.8.1. **STUDY AREA**

The data of this study was collected from Githiga village, of Ikinu Location, Githunguri division in Kiambu district. Githiga is thirty kilometres from Nairobi and fifteen kilometres from Kiambu town. This area was chosen in view of the fact that it is familiar to the researcher having been brought up and partly educated there. This enabled him to select the sample and to ease any tension that may have arisen in the respondents by building confidence among them as one of them. This was necessary in order to gather data based on direct and careful observation of the way people use language in its social context (Milroy, 1980) and hence facilitate group discussions in a free and normal atmosphere for the purposes of collecting natural data. The study area is a typically heterogenous village ideal for group and unstructured interviews which would yield an appropriate representative sample.

1.8.2. **SAMPLING**

The nature of the study called for a need for natural language, that is, data that is spontaneous and unplanned (Ventola, 1979; Stubbs, 1983). This is because the words being studied should be naturally used by the respondents as they go about their
everyday activities or in normal casual conversation. It has been pointed out that the use of language, even in the most effortless and least specialised way, still possesses a social semiotic structure (Ventola, 1979; Halliday & Hasan, 1989).

To avoid bias in data collection judgmental sampling procedure was used to select the sample (Milroy, 1987). The social variables controlled and used as criteria for selection were: age, sex and education.

While sex and education were equally represented, three age brackets were identified for representation: 15-25; 26-50; and, 50+. The age bracket 15-25 consists of adolescent or young adults. Its importance in this particular study and in language and gender in general can be summarised in Poynton's (1989:5) observation that:

"we need to know what it is we are teaching our children to think and feel about themselves and about each other as female and male, and what are the means by which they have come to learn and feel thus."

Age is also an important characteristic in Gikuyu. Three major categories are recognized: children, ciana (before circumcision or below 14 years); youth composed of young women and men, airîtu na anake (before marriage); and, mature women and men, atumia na athuri (marriage and thereafter).
Milroy (1987:84) suggests that an in-depth investigation is best carried out using a small number of speakers. This is in agreement with other linguists (Labov, 1972; Trudgill, 1974) who emphasize the use of a small sample but detailed investigation and analysis of the data. In view of this, the sample in this study comprised of forty-eight informants structured as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EDUCATED</th>
<th>UNEDUCATED</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AGE</td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-25</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50+</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Judgemental sampling was adopted to enable the researcher identify informants in agreement with the sampling procedure and from different social backgrounds. Informants in the same category were the same in terms of all the three variables.

1.8.3. DATA COLLECTION AND ELICITATION

The data was collected between August and December 1995. Both primary and secondary sources were used.

a) Primary Data

There was need for a functional approach (Dittmar, 1976) in order to elicit natural speech. This entailed
the use of both unstructured interviews and group sessions. A combination of both was adopted to harmonise the data.

(i) **Tape recording**

Informers were tape recorded in group conversations in different settings. They were prompted to talk on different topics that included issues on: church leadership, education, men and women, marriage, occupations and so on (appendix iii). Their responses were recorded and the total number of words under consideration produced were then noted.

The researcher approached his respondents as both a friend and "a friend of a friend" (Boissevain, 1974; Milroy, 1980:44), that is, he is an insider in that he is a member of the speech community being studied but an outsider in that he does not take part in the discussion. In this case, the role of the researcher was to direct the discussions by encouraging the participants to talk as freely as possible. This enhanced a greater degree of informality in the relationship between the researcher and the respondents. It also enabled him to carry out prolonged observations on various topics and record large volumes of data over a considerable period in both natural interactions and group sessions created for the purpose.
To facilitate conversation, the speakers were allowed to discuss topics they were conversant with and which they enjoyed. This was to create a natural and relaxed atmosphere for the speakers to use their natural speech and create interest. A time limit of 15-20 minutes enabled the researcher to collect adequate data and at the same time to maintain the patience and interest among the speakers not to keep them for too long. A total of four recordings was done for all the twelve groups.

Recording was done using a powerful microphone to ensure that the discussion was not repeated. Care was also taken to ensure that the instruments were functional so as not to distract the group’s attention from their conversations and that all the spoken words were recorded.

(ii) Questionnaire
A respondent questionnaire was administered to all the respondents at the end of the exercise (see appendix iv, v). These contained items focussing on specific lexical items with a gender message. It was used to solicit for information which was used to countercheck the recorded information, as a stop gap.

b) Secondary Data
The field data was supplemented with data collected
from secondary sources. These included the Kikuyu - English dictionary (Benson, 1964) English - Kikuyu dictionary (Barlow and Benson, 1975) and other relevant texts. Included among them are lexical issues familiar from critiques of the English language as 'sexist' (Smith: 1985; Poynton, 1989:41) such as man/he, mūndū; woman, mūtumia; wife, mūka; and, elder/s, mūthuri / athuri.

1.8.4. DATA ANALYSIS
 Currently, one of the questions being asked by researchers in corpus based language analysis is whether African languages are intelligible to the computer and whether data obtained from such languages is accessible for analysis. Most of the uncertainties arise out of the fact that there are no specific language programs designed purposely for the analysis of African languages. Indeed, it seems more theoretical than practical that such data can be selected from an existing database and analysed. In contrast, research in English and other international languages is easily analysed using the computer. In this study however, the Longman-Mini Concordancer (Chandler, 1987) computer program was used in the analysis of the data collected.

A total of four conversations was obtained from each of the twelve groups. All these data needed to be
carefully selected and fully exploited for the purposes of the study.

With the help of two research assistants, the spoken material were transcribed and then manually keyed into the computer memory. These were printed and carefully checked to ensure that each and every word in the recording was correctly transcribed. The post-editing stage further involved reading through all the transcribed texts and correcting any and all typing errors.

Error at this stage was functional in that only incorrect spellings of words, misplaced words, or words that had otherwise been excluded were dealt with. This was with a view to having the data remain as it was originally recorded, that is, its other version. This ensured that no material was lost or ignored. The material was divided into twelve parts based upon the social variables of age, sex and education then categorised and stored in terms of the groups and sessions as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group no.</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Education status</th>
<th>Session</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>15-25</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>educated</td>
<td>1 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>15-25</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>educated</td>
<td>1 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>15-25</td>
<td>female</td>
<td>uneducated</td>
<td>1 - 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>15-25</td>
<td>male</td>
<td>uneducated</td>
<td>1 - 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This formed a machine readable version of the corpus of Gikuyu language text for this study. Its validity, it may be argued, was based on its authentic source as spontaneous natural language.

The text were left as they were, unprocessed and clean of any other codes (Sinclair, 1991). This allowed for added investigation, quick checks and verification of information already obtained or being sought. In this form, the material provided a database of Gikuyu language that could be retrieved, accessed and analysed using a computer program, the Longman Mini-Concordancing method (LMC). Nyamasyo (1992.94) defines it thus:

Concordancing is an electronic text processing technique in which a concordance programme such as the Oxford concordance programme (OCP) or the Longman Mini-Concordance (LMC), scanning through a written text, looks for every word, phrase or other specified form in the text and sorts and displays the examples together with a fixed number of characters or lines of context to the left and right.
Put simply, concordance is an index to the words in a text and gives access to many important language patterns in a text.

The LMC program, on the other hand, is a unique tool whose great strength lies in the way it handles a text by exploiting the computer's ability to handle large amounts of information very rapidly once the information is in memory. When a text in any language is loaded, the LMC provides the user with concordance lists, alphabetical word-lists and frequency word lists.

As soon as the corpus of Gikuyu language text was loaded, the LMC was used to build concordance lists, alphabetical word-lists and to prepare and provide frequency word lists as the first step in the processing of the data. KWIC (Key Word in context) was used to give us a line of context. Wildcards were also used to generate any word by using a combination of the letters of that word. Print-outs of these displays could be obtained in various forms.

The following is an example of a concordance list for the word: mūndū 'person' obtained from group 8 (M 26-50 UNED):
Concordance for "mundu" (50 lines)

Text: WAN-DAT8

joge thiku ici? Nyita haha, muguthirwo barabara. Ndari i
ini haria, riu tawe! Bata wa
a wa mundu muka ri, bata wa
akoragwo uri uri ku? Bata wa
Bata wa mundu muka! Bata wa mundu muka, uka
mundu muka, uka
galugwa wega. Nii ndig
mundu ahikanie. Ngarigagwo nginyan
mundu. Tondu onanii ndi
iria mawara? Uguo na kiboko.
Mundu tocio endaga gucomorwo nga
mundu uyu? Riu nikii? ******

mundu oime kwao, oke kwanyu, ungingi
mundu ungimunyitirira. Rikia nao.

mundu muka ri, bata wa mundu muka
mundu muka ri, ukoragwo uri uri ku?

mundu muka! Bata wa mundu muka, uka
mundu muka, uka
galugwa wega. Nii ndig
mundu ahikanie. Ngarigagwo nginyan
mundu. Tondu onanii ndi
mundurume. Mundu tocio endaga gucomorwo nga
mundu uyu? Riu nikii? ******

mundu oime kwao, oke kwanyu, ungingi
mundu ungimunyitirira. Rikia nao.

mundu muka ri, bata wa mundu muka
mundu muka ri, ukoragwo uri uri ku?

mundu muka! Bata wa mundu muka, uka
mundu muka, uka
galugwa wega. Nii ndig
mundu ahikanie. Ngarigagwo nginyan
mundu. Tondu onanii ndi
mundurume. Mundu tocio endaga gucomorwo nga
mundu uyu? Riu nikii? ******

mundu oime kwao, oke kwanyu, ungingi
mundu ungimunyitirira. Rikia nao.

mundu muka ri, bata wa mundu muka
mundu muka ri, ukoragwo uri uri ku?

mundu muka! Bata wa mundu muka, uka
mundu muka, uka
galugwa wega. Nii ndig
mundu ahikanie. Ngarigagwo nginyan
mundu. Tondu onanii ndi
mundurume. Mundu tocio endaga gucomorwo nga
mundu uyu? Riu nikii? ******

mundu oime kwao, oke kwanyu, ungingi
mundu ungimunyitirira. Rikia nao.
The actual linguistic analysis was undertaken in two categories:

1) What the word means in Gikuyu,
2) How the word was used in context.

In the analysis, discussion was carried out of the various images and implications of the words with regard to the objectives, hypothesis and within the theoretical framework.

Translation was functional. Due to the cultural implications, social semiotics was utilised to bring out the meanings. In the examples given, the material was presented in the source and target language and a free translation attempted to give the meaning intended in the original text.

In focussing on a particular lexical item, the researcher examined his own speech together with that of the respondents and used his intuition in analysing it. Graddol & Swann (1989:97) note that:

the study of meaning relies on people's intuitions about language: the intuitions of ordinary natural speakers, of researchers and those who compile dictionaries and so on that researchers use as sources. Problems arise because different people's intuitions do not always agree - and because someone's intuitions of how a word or expression should be used do not always coincide with how they actually use it.
In the face of such a handicap, the researcher elicited responses from informants to avoid prolonged use, used a questionnaire as a stop-gap device, and, compared the meaning given by other Gikuyu scholars. These were used only for clarity of information and not as sources of data.

Data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. They complemented each other and at most went hand in hand. All the words were analysed in isolation as text and then in context in a social system with a clarification of what the word meant in that context. A schema for femininity such as that used by Kress and Hodge (1979:81) that concerns itself with opposition of male to female words was used. In addition, an analysis of data in terms of ways in which lexical meanings are reinforced in the grammar of Gikuyu using the Poynton English model (1989: 50-4) was adopted.

An 'asymmetry' (Smith, 1985:47) was also drawn in regard to the word order (phrases) illustrated as:

- Múthuri na Mútumia Man and woman
- Kahīī na Kairītu Boy and girl
- Mwanake na Múirītu Son and daughter
- Athuri na Atumia Men and women

The percentage of generic/masculine/feminine words was
sought and the number of times of such occurrences. Attention was also drawn to: the number of semantically marked masculine, feminine, and generic words; masculine and feminine words used in a generic sense; and, generic words with masculine or feminine inclinations.

Analysis also included the number of words examined that have gender references. These words were analysed in accordance with the presence or absence of a number of other semantic criteria such as prestige or lack of it, negative and positive connotations (Nilsen, 1977a) and other explicit sexual connotations. Gender - indicative common nouns were listed and classified under the categories generic/masculine/feminine. The ratio of such nouns in terms of a clear overt semantic marker of masculinity and femininity was established.

Qualitative analysis was undertaken to give pointers to perspectives that needed further examination and analysis. These are summarised thus: -

1) The presence or absence of generic reference as compared to specific reference,

2) The method of presenting female and male characters, traits and nouns (words) and a comparison such as:
   a) The order of presentation,
   b) Connotations.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature review was considered in two categories: language and gender and, computers in linguistic research.

2.1.0. LANGUAGE AND GENDER

This section reviews previous studies that have looked at language and gender and their relevance to the present study.

The year 1975 is seen to have launched the field of gender and language with the publication of Lakoff (1975), Graham (1975) and Thorne & Henry (1975) which argued that there exists systematic differences in the language of women and men in terms of language use. Lakoff (1975) for example, examines language about women and men, in other words, the way language uses us (Tannen, 1993:4). This formed the basis of our study.

Many studies and investigations have since been done on the generic masculine (Graham (1975); Nilsen, 1977; Spender, 1980;). Graham (1975), established that in material written for children, the generic masculine "he", is overwhelmingly actualised or implied
masculine antecedents. What might have been generic reference at the beginning finally emerges as male. Lakoff (1975) and Spender (1980) probe meanings and messages embedded in the use of the generic reference. This was what the study did with reference to the word mündū 'person' in Gikuyu. The study is similar to theirs in that it investigated the extent to which words are generic in Gikuyu.

Mugo (1975) notes that most societies in the world have certain stereotyped images of women. Such stereotypes suggest negativism, weakness and in-born stupidity in women. She observes that since language has been instrumental in negating the image of women, the battle for women’s liberation from such absurd images has to be directed at the language. She concludes:

The biggest enemy to be reckoned with in the battle for the liberation of the abused female image is first and foremost language, its concepts implications and the whole emotive stimuli behind the actual utterances.

This calls for a thorough investigation of the languages and their contribution to such negative images. In this study, the concern was to find out whether words in Gikuyu also abuse the female image by virtue of the connotations embedded in them. The study focused on Gikuyu and on lexis in particular with the hope that such an awareness will lead to a re-definition of the lexis.
In her study, Oduol (1990) examines how Dholuo language reflects a sexist ideology. She provides linguistic evidence of this ideology as reflected in the vocabulary and expressions associated with women which have sexist preconceptions. Her study was relevant in that it contributed to our knowledge of sexist languages. Furthermore, it is similar to this study in that she dealt with fixed forms, that is, words.

Graham (1975) describes the results of an analysis of sentences in which reference to boys and men far outnumbered that of girls and women. Though this discrepancy could have been accounted as occurring due to the generic "he", a random sample of 940 citations containing "he" were found to have only 3% interpreted in the generic sense. Would this be the case, for example in Gikuyu? This is what this study did in relation to the word mūndū, 'man' or 'person' in Gikuyu.

The general acceptance among English studies is that man as male is the norm. That is, it is linguistically unmarked but marked for males. This is said to render females "invisible" (Kramer et al., 1978). However, it is also an accepted fact that writers using the generic man also often refer to the female (Graham, 1975; Miller & Swift, 1976). The bone of contention is
that man has overwhelming use in relation to the male than the female. This concurs with what this study investigated in relation to the word múndū.

Horvath (1985) in a re-graphing of some of Labov's data in terms of natural linguistic groupings asserts that sex should take precedence over class as the major speaker variable. Milroy (1987) on the same line of thought takes note of this fact and further emphasizes that this is seen as more reasonable in explaining "class differences in terms of sex, than sex differences in terms of class". Coates (1986) emphasize that linguistic studies have always excluded women. These arguments points to the need for the sexes to be equally represented and studied not just with sex as a variable but also in the way women and men use language. In this study both were equally represented and statistical and descriptive analysis done in their use of the words studied.

Milroy (1987) suggests the use of an in-depth investigation using a small number of speakers. This is in agreement with other linguists (Labov, 1972; Trudgill, 1974; Stubbs, 1983) who lay emphasis on the need for adequate rather than enormous data but detailed analysis of the data obtained. A similar strategy was adopted in this study in which the data obtained was subjected to detailed analysis to
substantiate the claims.

Ventola (1979), Milroy (1980, 1987) and Coates (1986) emphasize the need for spontaneous natural data, what Sinclair (1991:16) calls "impromptu speech", in the study of language. This study used spontaneous spoken language as its base.

Obura (1991) looks at the context of textbooks as regards the images of girls and women in a study of gender issues in education. She used both qualitative and quantitative data to examine and analyse the presence or absence of generic reference as compared to specific reference. She also studied the method of presentation of female and male characters. The present study adopted the same procedures in the analysis of words.

2.2.0. COMPUTERS IN LINGUISTIC RESEARCH

The use of computers and computer corpora is gaining prominence in linguistics (Leech and Candlin, 1986; Sinclair, 1991; Nyamasyo, 1992). This is because computers offer a basis for analysis of data. In many cases, enormous data is collected (Nyamasyo, 1992) that requires to be carefully processed, analysed and stored for future reference. In our study, enormous data was collected. This was necessary to obtain adequate data but more than that, there was need for
the data to be carefully selected, retrieved and analysed. This was done with the help of a computer.

Nyamasyo (1992) used a corpus of English to study the grammatical and lexical characteristics of the writing of Pre-University students in Kenya. In the same vein, this study build a corpus of spoken Gikuyu language data and successfully used a computer program, LMC, to access the information it required for its analysis.

Moreover, Nyamasyo (1992) argues that computer corpora are becoming more important resources for the study of English either as a native language, as a second language or as a learners language. This study is proof that computer corpus can be used to study even native African languages with the same accurate analysis as English and other international languages using the available language programs, for example, the LMC. The current available corpus in Gikuyu made limited use of words as text and in context. Yet not only did it provide a readily available computer database for the present study, it is also an important step in computer based studies of African languages.

Sinclair (1991) lays emphasis on the computers ability not only to search, but to retrieve, sort out and calculate the contents of a vast corpus of text at an
immense speed. This method was used in the data analysis to search the required words, retrieve and sort them out from the large texts. It was also used to calculate the frequency in word use, display the words and print out the necessary documents for further analysis.

Leech and Candlin (1986), Sinclair (1991) and Nyamasyo (1992) lay emphasis on the use of computers in cases involving enormous data. In this study, this was fully made use of necessitated by the fact that the data was drawn from enormous data from transcribed spontaneous spoken Gikuyu language that needed to be carefully selected and analysed. The spoken material, in terms of conversations are representative of the different groups of respondents in the study as represented in terms of age, sex and education. The corpus provided easily accessible material of over 94,616 running Gikuyu words from which authentic language samples could be isolated and studied in detail.

Sinclair (1991) singles out the spoken language for a corpus of any language as it best reflects the state of the language and is a good guide to the fundamental organization of the language. This study made use of spontaneous language data for a corpus of Gikuyu language.
Sinclair (1991) also recommends that the text (corpus) of a language should be unprocessed and clear of any other codes except those in the original text. This was done in regard to the present study. The reason for this is that different investigations view the language according to different priorities and their analytical marks are different.

Sinclair (1991) further suggests three methods of text input into the computer namely: adaptation of material already in form; use of an optical scanning machine to obtain new data; and, conversion of the data using the computer keyboard. The material could not be adopted since it was not in the computer. The optical scanning machine could not be used due to the fact that it was not available and the original material was tape recorded. Since the material was in spoken form, it was first transcribed then keyed into the computer memory manually.
CHAPTER THREE

GIKUYU LANGUAGE IN A SOCIAL SEMIOTIC FRAMEWORK

3.1.0. INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with two preliminary subjects that are crucial for a proper understanding of the Gikuyu people and the linguistic aspects being studied. Firstly, it describes the social-cultural setting of the Gikuyu. Secondly, it analyzes certain fundamental aspects in the social organization that help characterize and shape language differently among men and women.

In order to understand the place and role of language and sex in Gikuyu, it is necessary first to know the way of life of the Gikuyu people. This will help to differentiate and make clear in a social semiotic aspect, the traditional societal practices and the major distinctions that characterize this study and makes it different from those carried out in the West.

Two issues are examined:
- the historical and geographical setting,
- the major linguistic features of the language.
3.2.0. THE HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

Gikuyu is the largest ethnic group in Kenya comprising 20.78% of the Kenyan population according to the 1989 census. Of these, 49.49% are males and 50.51% females. They live in Central province of Kenya and occupy the districts of Kiambu, Nyeri, Maragwa, Murang’a, Thika, Kirinyaga and Nyandarua.

"Mukurwe wa Nyagathaga", a place in Kangema division of Murang’a district in Central province is supposed to be the cradle of the Kikuyu. They trace their origin to Gikuyu, the man. Culturally, they have gone through evolution. So has their language. Their first home was near Kirinyaga where "mwene nyaga" (creator) lived. It belonged to the father (not mother) of the tribe, Gikuyu. The creator gave the land to Gikuyu, the man. Gikuyu thanking God said (Kenyatta, 1966:3):

Oh my father, great elder, I have no words to thank you, but with all your deep wisdom I am sure that you can see how I value your glorious gifts. Oh my father, when I look upon your greatness, I am confounded with awe. O great Elder, ruler of all things earthly and heavenly, I am your warrior, ready to act in accordance with your will.

This is the first indication of a communication between God and man through language. Whatever language was used is hypothetically what must have come to be known as Gikuyu. The first man to speak such a language was presumably Gikuyu, the father of the tribe. The language and the people could then have been named in his honour, thus Gikuyu.
However, according to Kibicho (1972:71) the name "Gikuyu" is derived from the root name of the fig tree known as "mukuyu". Hence Gatheru (1964:7) calls speakers of Gikuyu, 'people of the fig trees'. Thus the suffix, "-kuyu", of the word Gikuyu comes from the word "mukuyu" (Gatheru, 1964; Kibicho 1972). In that context, the word would mean 'those who live near or in the fig trees' ("mikuyu"). According to Barlow (1960) the name "Kikuyu" was adopted by early European arrivals and from the Swahili to refer to the people otherwise the correct name of the people and their language is Gikuyu (Barlow, 1960; Kenyatta, 1961).

Nevertheless, the name Gikuyu here refers to the people, the language and their geographical location (Barlow, 1960; Kenyatta, 1961). God gave Gikuyu, the man, a wife (comes after the man) named Mumbi (creator/moulder). They lived together and had ten daughters. Later, God provided them with young men to marry their daughters (Kenyatta, 1966).

The traditional Gikuyu myth claims that the Gikuyu people increased rapidly and started to fill the land. Gikuyu granted them leave only on condition that they visit him often. They moved out and split into three groups: one moved north and east of Mt. Kenya and developed a dialect of their own - these are the Meru. The second moved to the east and south east following
the Tana - these today are the Kamba. The third and last group, the Kikuyu proper remained in the home south of Kirinyaga (Njoroge, 1971). Njoroge (1971) further advances the theory that the Kikuyu were further sud-divided into three groups: those who crossed Chania river call themselves Kabete or Karura Kikuyu; the Metumi are those who remained in Murang’a; then those who moved North are the Embu (Ndia, Embu and Gichugu); and, the Mathira or Nyeri people. This accounts for the different dialects (Mutahi, 1977).

3.2.1. **MYTH**

The myth of origin of a people plays a very important role in the interpretation of a people’s social-cultural life and in their analysis of the relationship between men and women. Myths are difficult to eradicate for they still have a strong hold over us long after they are intellectually repudiated (Spender, 1980; Kabira, 1994). The myth of female inferiority and male superiority has particularly been pervasive and hard to dislodge from society (Spender, 1980; Kabira, 1994; Masheti, 1994). Its effect spills over into the language in use.

In the Gikuyu myth of origin for example, the first man (Note, not woman) was Gikuyu and he is the ancestral father. His wife was Mumbi, the ancestral mother. Since Mumbi means creator, one would have
expected her to come before Gikuyu and to be supreme in terms of creation but this is not the case. God disclosed himself to Gikuyu. The people and their language are named after the first man. Thus they are the Gikuyu and Gikuyu is their language. It is no wonder that the first person to speak was presumably a man, Gikuyu and he spoke Gikuyu (Kenyatta, 1966:3).

The tradition describes how in their sojourn, they settled and built two huts (Wachege, 1992:7):

a) *kiaraho kia atumia na ciana* - women's and their children's hut,

b) *thingira, kiaraho kia athuri* - elder's hut, the resting place for men.

**EXAMPLE 1 (M 50+ UNED).**

(Situation: The men are having a general talk about how people lived in the old days).

A: *Airītu nyūmba, tūhī kūrī ithe.*

Girls in the house, boys with the father (in the father's hut).

Notice here that the women and children are grouped together while the men have a separate hut to themselves. In other words, the men need some privacy of their own which the women do not.

Gikuyu had ten daughters but are commonly referred to
as "nine full", due to the belief that counting people or animals would bring bad omen to the community. These are the Agikuyu clans. They needed men to marry them (could not do on their own as Gikuyu could not) and men emerged mysteriously and married them. Thus clans are named after women. Why families came to be named after the men is therefore questionable because the men came to live in the girls' homestead. The clan is the only group named after the women and attributed to females. The family, the basic social organization, is named after the man. So also are the various age-groups, homesteads and kinship ties. A group of families rooted in the same male ancestral home is called a "mbari" (kinship). Of course, it is named after the man.

3.2.2. PATRIARCHY
Gikuyu is a patriarchal society. Masheti (1994:1) defines patriarchy as "society's organization of its affairs to cater for and sustain male supremacy over women". How is patriarchy related to language?

Patriarchy is seen to account for women's oppression and male domination of society in that it gives men the opportunity to legitimately control women (Kaplan, 1976; Spender, 1980). Males define the norms, practices and acceptable behaviour and over a considerable period of time, these become the
acceptable and established traditions. Finally, the 
male perspective is the acceptable social-cultural 
perspective. Masheti (1994:1) asserts that patriarchy 
sustains itself through an ideology heavily reflected 
in language use and other social institutions. This 
can be seen in the words under consideration.

**EXAMPLE 2 (F 15-25 Ed).**
(Situation: The girls are talking generally about 
children and probe into each other's desire for 
children).

A: *Tari ṭu wee ūng'enda ciana cigana?*
  
Like, you, how many children would you prefer?

B: *Nī ing'enda kūg'a, ing'ihika ing'enda kūg'a twana*
  
I would like to have, if I were married, two
  
*twiri. Ing'aga kūhika, ing'enda guikara ūguo.*
  
children. If unmarried, I would like to stay like
  
*Itari.*
  
that. Without any.

Notice that the verb *ing'ihika,* 'if I was to get 
made,' is passive because in Gikuyu the man marries 
the woman, hence the *ing'ihika,* 'getting married.' The 
girls in this group are young educated girls whose 
language has been structured such that they understand 
they will be married and the social significance of 
being unmarried but having children. If one has a 
child and is unmarried, she is a *g'icokio,* a pejorative
child and is unmarried, she is a *gícokio*, a pejorative term literally meaning 'returned goods' or 'person'. Thus the girl would prefer to be without children rather than a *gícokio*.

The extent to which patriarchal dominance is expressed varies from one language (culture or society since such aspects are transmitted through language) to another. This can be seen in the use of language or acceptable conventions of communication. For example, in the use of phrases, generic words, words used only to refer to particular persons or as expressed in normal life activities.

**EXAMPLE 3 (F 50 + ED).**

{Situation: The women are discussing the various causes of divorce}.

A: *No na úhoro wa gútiganwo, reke njuge andú arú*  
But even in these divorces, let me say people *mena úhoro wa kwihura githuri muno. Ongorwo ni ta*  
nowadays have the habit of beating their chests (that is, they do not humble themselves). *airútu tacio,* ...

Even those girls (women)...

B: *Nake mwanake ri, ndúkiú gítúte nowe wi mbere.*  
And the young man, he feels he is way far ahead of her.
C: Ndūĩ ona tene atumia mathiaga thutha wa arūme, ta
You know even in the old days, women followed the
maitu matiatwaranaga.

men, like my mother, they never walked together.

B: Matiatwaranaga. Athuri makoragwo mbere, atumia

They never walked together. Men in front, women
thutha. Riu nao a rū, ona ūndū egūkiuga Beijing
behind. Girls of these days, even when you hear
ni equality, ūhoronwa kūiganana, rū ūguwiho.

them talk of Beijing and equality, the idea of
equality is there.

D: Mūirītu ndekūhūra mūthuri-we gīthūri.

A woman will not beat her chest in front of her
husband (will not speak rudely to her husband).

C: Nēkūrwo athīi!

She will be told to go!

A: Ini.

Yes.

B: One!

That is it!

These are educated women who would be expected to
understand that equality is not rudeness. The use of
language in this example is remarkable in two aspects:
one, the first sex to be mentioned are the girls who
are expected to humble themselves (not so the men)
while the men are seen to feel superior (the idea of
being ahead). For the women, this is condemned and in
this short discussion, such a woman will finally be thrown out of the home, an issue which these women don’t contend. Second, there is the use of other than language to suppress women, that is language in a social semiotic framework. This is seen in the way men walk ahead or in front while women follow and further emphasized by the fact that they never walked together, matiatwaranaga.

Masheti (1994) also notes other neutral terms in terms of etymology that have been gendered in language use such as elder (mūthuri, in Gikuyu) which refers to the male. Over time, they have acquired a male character to the extent that they are associated with men and their relative power. In effect, women are excluded though they are said to be included in the sense that the term is generic.

EXAMPLE 4 (M 15-25 ED).
(Situation: The boys are discussing who is a prostitute and wants to establish what is expected of a woman and a man).
A: No niwaigua rių mūthuri, mūthuri ni aģirirwo
You hear a man, a man is supposed to have made a
nigukorwo athurile.
choice/selected.
B: Nľ waigua kiugo kľu, mūthuri athu-, athure.
You hear that word, a man to sele-, select.
C: *Nake mútumia agakorwo atumírie handú hamwe.*

And the woman should be contented in one place.

D: *Agatumia handú hau agakorwo e mútumi-, múthuri*

She should be firm in one place and be quiet, with *ena umwe, na mútumia ena úmwe.* *Múmaraya ní úrí*a one husband. The man too has one wife. A prostitute *uraihaga agathii gúcaria arúme angí nakúu.* is one who goes further to looks for other men whenever.

NB. *Atumírie* means with her mouth shut.

*Múthuri* is thus a man. He is expected to have made a choice as to whom he wants to have as a wife. The woman should be firm/contented with her husband, not inconsistent. The use of language here is also remarkable in two aspects: one, the man is expected to choose a woman to be his wife while the woman should be contented. Thus she does not make a choice but the man does. Thus the man is the active participant while the woman is a passive recipient. Secondly, in the conversation among A, B, and C, obviously the phrasing is in the order [man woman]. But for D, the tendency changes to a woman. Why? This is because at first, the conversation is about man - woman and hence the order but the main issue with D is who is a prostitute who it is thought is a woman. Hence the drastic change. Thus language is purposely used to show the woman in a demeaning light.
References made to females often vary from negative associations to heavy doses of sexuality, that is, their sexual nature or characteristics. This is seen in such words as:

- **Gathirange** - A virgin girl (sexual),
- **Kiheti** - Woman past child bearing age (characteristic).

This is further illustrated in this study (4.2.0.). Masheti (1994:4) reckons that:

If references are made to females, they vary from negative association with beauty, humorous naivete, fragility, fragrance, delicacy, weakness, sweetness, and generally with a heavy dose of sexuality.

Among the traditional forms of patriarchal institution is marriage.

a) **MARRIAGE.**

Men are expected to court girls. This is reflected in the words:

- **Múhiki** - bride
- **Múhikania** - bridegroom translated as 'he who marries' and in the verb *Kúhikania* 'to marry' in that the bride is married (passive participant) and the bridegroom (active participant) marries.

**EXAMPLE 5 (M 15-25 M).**

(Situation: The boys are debating on their preference for educating children. The major argument is that one should educate a boy but a girl is also good because
an educated woman will fetch a higher bride price).

A: No ri' u tuge múiritu waku ni' umúthomithiríte wega.
   Lets say your daughter is well educated. You see
   Niwaigua múhikania onake urí' a úramúhikia
   the bridegroom who is marrying her will want that
   ngékukorwo akienda múiritu úcio múno.
   girl very much (because she is educated).

B: Na ngékukorwo ee múndú wína mbeca.
   And he will be a wealthy man.

C: No ri' u ri', múthuri, mútumia úcio ahika ri', indo
   But now, the man, that woman when she gets
   igukorwo ci' kú?
   married, where will the bride wealth go?

B: Mútumia úcio ahika?
   When the woman gets married?

C: Ii?
   Yes?

D: Kúri' wee mwene múiritu.
   To the owner of the girl.

C: Yes.
   Yes.

It is also reflected in such a word like:

Gicokio - a married woman who is rejected by
the husband. It also refers to a
woman who has given birth outside
wedlock.
(Situation: The girls want to agree as to whether a woman should take beer or not. They argue that drunkenness often leads a woman to immoral acts willingly or otherwise and one of them gives an example of a woman who was raped while drunk. The others take up the issue as one of the causes of women having children outside wedlock).

A: N'kio ngugaga nama, icokio nying' , nying' icokio, That is why I say as a matter of fact, many cirathi ciyuire micii, icokio, many icokio in many homes ...

B: Ning' n'ukuona k'inta ...
You can also see...

C: Tamba útige, g'cokio n'k'?
Hold on, who is a g'cokio?

D: G'cokio ri', nî mündu úciar'ire kwao.
G'cokio is someone who has given birth at home (out of wedlock).

C: O.K!

O.K.!

The word, g'cokio, has no actual equivalent to the male and by inflection implies that a woman cannot leave the husband. The word mündu in nî mündu úciar'ire kwao 'is someone who has given birth at home' is clearly feminine since men do not give birth and hence the term is not generic.
This is also well reflected in the words for women and men:

a)  i) Mútumia — she who shuts up
    ii) Andū a nga — outsiders
    iii) Muka — someone who has come

b)  i) Mundũrũme — a courageous person
    ii) Mūthuri — he who decides / chooses / decision maker.
    iii) Athuri — decision makers (from the term, gūthura — to choose)

Several derogatory terms are used in reference to women such as mundũ mūka.

The woman, mundũ wa nga, always on transit finally finds her place as a mútumia wa ‘wife of’ literally translated as ‘she who shuts up of’ in which she is there to be seen but not heard.

EXAMPLE 7 (M 50+ UNED).

(Situation: The men are discussing the role of women in the house).
A: Atumia nĩ andũ a múciĩ.
    Women are people of the home.
B: Ee.
    Mm.
A: Acio nĩ andũ a múciĩ.
    They are people of the home.
C: Ni andu a kumenyerera mucii.

They are people who are supposed to look after the home.

D: Toria wandikaga boy, ino yandikagwo ya muthungu

Like you employ a houseboy, the one employed by ya kuruga r, kana wee wandike mUndu mucii.

the whites to cook, or you employ someone at home.

In this example, women are seen as caretakers charged with the responsibility of looking after the home: ni andu a kumenyerera mucii, ‘they are people who are supposed to look after the home’.

Polygamy was allowed. Ironically, as much as many wives were seen as a source of wealth and prestige, they were also looked at with suspicion. This can be seen in the rich vocabulary of the words devoted to women of varying social levels or/and different social prestige. These are:

- Kang’ei - A married woman whose children are not yet married. She was not allowed to drink beer.

Compare with:

- Nyakinyua - A married woman whose children are already married. She was allowed to drink beer.
EXAMPLE 8 (F 50+ UNED).

(Situation: These women are discussing different words in Gikuyu that refer to women).

A: Njwamenya, he útiganu wa kang'ei na nyakinyua.

The words Kang'ei and nyakinyua are different.

B: Ini hatiri útiganu mūnene mūno.

Yes there is a big difference.

C: Uru ku?

What is the difference?

D: Kang'ei matinganyuire njohi mbere ya mūngi.

A kang'ei could not drink beer in public.

B: One. No nyakinyua n'mangianyuir. Nū nyakinyua

Yes. But a nyakinyua could. They were allowed.

Nyakinyua had all her children circumcised.

A: Ini no kang'ei ca. Kuoguo Kang'ei ndagirirwo

But not the kang'ei. So a kang'ei could not take anyue njohi mūngi ini. No nyakinyua no ñnyue.

beer in public. But a nyakinyua could.

D: Riu nake ngatha rī, ti mūtumia ūrīa wakendetwo

Ngatha on the other hand is the wife whom the

mūno nī mūthuri wake.

husband loved most.

C: Ngatha harī atumia ārīa othe mūthuri enao rī,

Ngatha, among the man's wives, there was one the

harī ūrīa endete mūno. Ucio tiwe ngatha.

one he loved most. That is the one called ngatha.
D: Ini. Na akoragwo ar\textsuperscript{i} wa mbere.
Yes. And this was his first wife.

B: M\textsuperscript{u}tumia wa mbere etagwo nyak\textsuperscript{a}mbi.
The first wife is nyak\textsuperscript{a}mbi.

A: M\textsuperscript{u}tumia wa mbere etagwo nyak\textsuperscript{a}mbi. Ngatha n\textsuperscript{i} úr\textsuperscript{a}a
The first wife is nyak\textsuperscript{a}mbi. Ngatha is the one he
endete m\textsuperscript{u}no. Nyak\textsuperscript{e}ga n\textsuperscript{i}úr\textsuperscript{a}a üm\textsuperscript{u}kenagia.
loved most and nyak\textsuperscript{e}ga the one who pleased him.

D: Inake nyakahang'\textsuperscript{u}?
What about nyakahang'\textsuperscript{u}?

C: Nyakang\textsuperscript{u}. Etagwo nyakang\textsuperscript{u} kana nyakahang'\textsuperscript{u}?
Nyakang\textsuperscript{u}. Was she nyakang\textsuperscript{u} or nyakahang'\textsuperscript{u}?

B: Mothe n\textsuperscript{i} make. Etagwo nyakang\textsuperscript{u} kana nyakahang'\textsuperscript{u}.
They are both the same. She is nyakang\textsuperscript{u} or
Ucio n\textsuperscript{i} mútumia útar\textsuperscript{i} mútugo.
nyakahang'\textsuperscript{u}. That is a woman who has no morals.

A: Ucio n\textsuperscript{i} mútumia útar\textsuperscript{i} mútugo m\textsuperscript{e}ga.
That is a woman who has no morals, badly behaved.

Note that the term: nyak\textsuperscript{ny}ua, is derogatory,
literally a person who drinks often, a drunkard.

Other terms in this text also referring to women
exclusively include:

Nyak\textsuperscript{a}mbi - the first wife.

Ngatha - The most respected of a man's
wives, noble woman held in higher
status than the others.
Nyakangū / nyakahang’ū - A woman of loose morals and character.

Nyakēga - the wife who pleases the husband.

Women were especially expected to be morally upright and married within the set social norms and contradictory behaviour such as sex before marriage was highly discouraged. This is seen in words like:

Gicokio - A divorced woman or a woman who has given birth outside wedlock.

Gathirange - A virgin girl.

which have no male equivalent.

EXAMPLE 9 (F 50+ ED).

(Situation: These women are talking about marriage).

A: Muiritu angihika acoke acoke kwao rĩ, ...

B: Kana ringi muiritu agire mwana kwao.

Or a girl has a child outside wedlock.

C: One. One. Etagwo gicokio.

That is it. Right. She is a gicokio.

A: Etagwo gicokio nǐguo ngwendaga kuga.

She is a gicokio, I was going to say that.

D: Na nĩ ãhoro mũnene mũno tondũ muiritu ekur̄kia

And it is a serious matter because once a girl kūhana ãguo, ndanḡona mwanake ūkūmūria.

is in such a state, she would not find a prospective suitor.
C: Tene nĩ moragio nĩ athuri.
   In old days, old men could marry them.

B: Nongana mundũ wĩna atumia erĩ kana atatu
   Only a man with two or three wives can marry
   ūngũoya magũru athiĩ akorie muirũtu ta ucio.
   such a girl.

A: Ini tondũ ti muirũtu gathirange.
   Yes because she is not a gathirange (virgin).

C: Gathirange nĩ muirũtu cua nawe.
   Gathirange is a virgin.

D: Gathirange nĩ muirũtu ūtarĩ athiĩ na mundũ.
   Gathirange is a virgin, a woman who has never had
   sexual intercourse with a man.

   That is what I was about to say. Gathirange is a
   virgin (female).

B: Naniĩ ngwendaga kuga atirĩrĩ, gĩcokio nĩ
   I wanted to say that it was possible for a
   kĩngũonire mwene. Nĩkũri maahikaga na mahikaga.
   gĩcokio to get married. Some were married and
   still get married today.

A: Nĩtuge rĩmwe na rĩmwe. Kūringanaga na mûnyaka
   Lets say sometimes yes. It depends on her luck.
   Wake. Tondũ mwanake haca ndangũmügũra.
   A young man would not marry such.

D: Gĩcokio gĩkũgũrwo ūndũ ûmwe na muirũtu
   Is the brideprice for a gĩcokio the same,
gathirange?

the same for the other (gathirange)?

C: Aca nawe. Ndangfurwo ūndũ ūmwe.

No. They wouldn’t fetch the same brideprice.

B: Atiriri, okorwo ūthē ūthē angamwendirie na

For example, the father could have married her

hinya. Tondū n’akiona mūgūri rī, angkirega

off by force. Having got an aspiring suitor,

gūthi atia?

how dare she refuse to get married?

A: Uria kuri riri riri, ithe wa gıcokio, ndanggūmira

What there is, the father of a gıcokio cannot
ta ūria ūngĩ wa mùiritu gathirange. Mùirītu wake

demand too much nor be stubborn for fear the girl

kai atekuregwo.

the man might decide otherwise.

D: Ogetha gıcokio gıkĩ gıthĩ.

So that the gıcokio can go.

C: Ogetha gıcokio gıkĩ gıthĩ, i kiehere múcĩ.

So that the gıcokio can go, leave the homestead.

B: Mùirītu agirirwo ū kūhika ti guikara kwao.

A girl should get married. She should not remain

at her parental home, unmarried.

A summary of example 9 reveals that a woman who gave

birth outside wedlock was a social stigma and the

contrary was encouraged. A girl was expected to be an

apt pupil of her society and not bring ruin and shame
by improper conduct such as getting a child outside wedlock. Such, the example reveals: rarely get married and if they do the suitor is an old man with two or more wives; she fetches only a little brideprice unlike the virgin; she is not the pride of her father: *ndang’igungira* 'the father can neither be forceful in asking for a brideprice nor afford to be stubborn'; and, if she rejected a prospective suitor, she could be forced to marry him. Marriage was very crucial: *müritu agırirwo nî kûhika ti gûikara kwao*, 'a girl should get married. She should not remain at her parental home, unmarried'.

b) BIRTH, INITIATION AND OTHER RITES OF PASSAGE

Children are a most valued asset and are highly treasured in many African societies and Gikuyu society is no exception. Procreation was and is considered essential in marriage. All women and men strive and desire to have children. But this must be within limits and restrictions set by the society. Children sustain the community, prove the fertility of the woman and are a source of wealth and prestige. This is clearly reflected in the language.

**EXAMPLE 10** (M 50+ UNED).

(Situation: The men want to define the word *thata*, barren).

A: *Thata nî mûndû...*
Thata is a person...

B: Nǐ mútumia útarí mwana. Nǐ mútumia útarí mwana na
Is a woman without child. A woman who has no
múthuri útarí mwana. Mündú úrìa útarí mwana.
child and a man without a child. A childless
person.

C: Acio ti thata. Gikuyú tene.
Those are thata (barren). Old Gikuyu.

D: Tondú erì makìnyitana rì, üyu ndanagūra mútumia
Because both have come together, this one did not
amenywo ti thata. Iì akìgùre üngì aciare ciana.
remarry to prove he is not barren or give birth
Makìrùgama erì rì, tikuga erì nì thata cierì.
with another woman. It means they are both
barren.

B: Matingítwo kiugo kìu makìiguaga tondú nì, nì
They would not be called that word within earshot
kiugo kìuru.
because it is a bad word.

Though the word: thata, 'barren' is generic, it has an
obvious inclination to refer to the female, an obvious
bias that implies that fertility or lack of it is
associated with women.

Essentially, both sexes were desired but, of course,
boys were preferred. This is seen in the use of words
and phrases. Right from birth, the Gikuyu boy child
was more valued than the girl and well revered/preferred. The boy child was given five ululations and while girl child received four. This is because as a patriarchal society, it bestows higher status to men than women. This is evident in such words as:

- *Nyina wa airtu* - a woman who has given birth to girls only (mother of girls).
- *Nyina wa ihju* - a woman who has given birth to boys only (mother of boys).

and in the preference given to males in relation to females in the use of phrases (see 4.5.0.).

c) RELIGION

Patriarchy is maintained in the continued use of words in social interaction oblivious of any connotations. Unless the words are re-examined, explained, and people are sensitized to the nature of gender bias they contain, change will not come. Patriarchal bias is an in-built mechanism often sustained in the most natural ways of life as seen in, for example, religion.

EXAMPLE 11 (M 15-25 UNED).

(Situation: The boys are debating the issue of who should be a church leader or elder. They obviously
agree that he should be a man and give reasons for this).

A: Onawe ūngįririkana na harįa kirįkanįro-inį

If you remember even in the Bible, it is said hakįritwo mutumia arutirwo he müthuri.

that the woman came from the man.

B: Ini he müthuri.

Yes from the man.

C: Mm.

Mm.

B: Kwoguo ndagįrirwo nį gūkorwo maiganaine nake.

So she is not supposed to be equal with him.

D: Ningį ri, ndagįrirwo nį gūkorwo akįhe müthuri

Also, she is supposed to give due respect to her gįtįo, tondū nį rūbaru rwake. Kana atįa?

husband, because she is a part of him, his rib.

Isn't it?

C: Nįma!

That is true!

A: Mm.

Mm.

B: Hau nįma.

That is very true.

Religion and myths associated with it are used to propagate the ideology of male superiority and female subjectivity in society. Though church elders are supposed to be both female and male, it is obvious
that the word mūthuri 'elder' is generally male and any woman who gets that title has been elevated to be in male status. For example, mūthuri wa kanitha 'church elder', which is normally the preserve of men. Thus the word is masculine other than generic as the following example shows.

**EXAMPLE 12 (M 50+ ED).**

(Situation: The men are discussing the role of men and women in society. Then one of them asserts that in religion, the term refers to both males and females).

A: *Athuri a kanitha nĩ hamwe na athuri na atumia.*

Church elders are both men and women.

B: *Ini ari a mumenyagiri ra kanitha.*

Yes those who look after the welfare of the church.

C: *Mm.*

Mm.

D: *Athuri nĩ arũme ti atumia.*

Elders (men actually) are men not women.

C: *Uhoronĩ wa kanitha rĩ, athuri nĩ arũme na* 

In church activities, elders (or men) are men and women.

A: *Hau nĩma.*

That is true.

B: *Kiugo kũu athuri rĩ, gĩtendaga mũno kuonania*

The word athuri, tends more to mean males. But
Aruume. No atumia ni makoragwo maturanirwo ho women are included among the church elders. Harir athuri a kanitha. Kuoguo makoragwo mari So church elders are both men and women, aruume na atumia. men and women.

Notice the obvious preference to use the phrase [male female] in this context and in that order, by all the four informants. This is accounted for by the fact that the word muthuri (plural, athuri) is bestowed on the males. Women only come into that meaning contained in the word by virtue of their association with the males.

Wachege (1992:19) strongly argues that the male sex of a child was an indispensable condition for future elderhood. The male and not the female was the obvious elder. In Gikuyu athinjiri Ngai, ‘men who used to slaughter the animals meant for sacrifice and to conduct the same ceremony’, were male. These were not ordinary men but those who no longer had sexual relationship with their wives for this relationship was believed to defile the man.

3.3.0. **MAJOR LINGUISTIC FEATURES**

Gikuyu is genetically grouped among the North Eastern Bantu of subfamily of languages (Tucker & Bryan, 1957)
and typologically in A category according to Heine (1976) based on a concordial feature alongside a nominal class system.

Barlow (1960) gives the following four dialects of Gikuyu: Southern dialect, Mathira, Ndia, and Embu. He notes that differences exist to warrant Embu being treated as a separate though related language to Gikuyu (Barlow, 1960:253). Mutahi (1977) on the other hand divides the southern Mt. Kenya dialects into seven different groups namely:

Ki - Embu
Ki - Mbeere
Ki - Gichugu
Ki - Ndia
Ki - Mathira
Northern dialect
Southern dialect
and says that they are historically related.

This study however deals with nouns. Nouns are words that identify persons or objects. A noun names a person, place, thing or an idea. The study is concerned with nouns that name persons.

In the analysis of nouns in Bantu languages, two features are usually distinguished: class and number. According to Hemery (1903:1), the noun in Gikuyu falls
in nine classes. Nouns referring to human beings belong in class 1 - 'rational beings', and such begin with: M-; Mu-; and, Mo- which form their plural by changing into a- such as:

Mūciari - 'Parent', Plural aciari.
Mūndū - 'Person', Plural andū.

The noun in Gikuyu does not reflect for case. There are two numbers: the singular as in mūndū 'person' and the plural as in andū 'persons'. Nouns are often derived from verb stems by means of the nominal and terminal vowels. Terminal vowels that are most important in the formation of nouns are: a, i, o and u. The meaning of the nominal prefixes have not been determined with certainty (Barlow, 1960:78). Barlow (1960:83) for example reckons that nouns whose derivation is not traceable to verbs must have been derived from verbs no longer in use. Other nouns are however formed from adjectives, other nouns and "at will" (Barlow, 1960:83-4).

Nouns in Gikuyu have a diminutive and an augmentative form (Hemery, 1903:3). The diminutive is formed by the prefix: ka- and tu- to the noun for singular and plural respectively as in:

Mūndū, person: Singular, kamūndū, small person.
Plural, tumūndū, small persons.

and the augmentative by prefixing ke- (singular) and
i- (plural) to the noun as in:

Mundu, person: kimundu, a huge person
imundu, huge people.

Using this information, it was therefore possible to select a lexical item and the forms in which it occurs from the data base. For example maraya 'prostitute':
singular, mumaraya; plural, maraya; diminutive, kamumaraya; augmentative, kimumaya. A wild card for the word: maraya, prostitute taken from group 3 (F 15-25 UNED) is shown below:

Concordance for "*maraya*" (23 lines)
Text: WAN-DAT3

Like in other Bantu languages, there is no gender marking in Gikuyu as observed by Hemery (1903) and Barlow (1960). Gender however, according to Barlow (1960) can only be expressed by the use of different words and not by inflection. For example, kairitu 'girl' and kahii 'boy'.

Barlow (1960:100) notwithstanding notes the existence of what he calls the "feminine particle" : "nya" commonly prefixed to names of women. He gives two examples, namely: nyamwiru and nyaguthii (definitions not given). He further notes other instances notable among them:

Nyaciara - wife's mother-in-law.

Nyakambi - the wife married first.

He concludes that they seem to have a feminine significance. This linguistic phenomenon is investigated in this study (See 4.8.0.).
4.1.0. **INTRODUCTION**

This analysis is based on the Halliday (1978) and Halliday & Hasan (1989) theoretical models. They emphasise that the general field of meaning is a vague expression if left unelaborated for any kind of meaning can be taken to constitute a relation.

To establish the relation meaning that obtains between the words and the consecutive pairs relating to women and men semantically, the study limited itself to the notion "general field of meaning" using the three sense relations namely: synonymy, antonymy and hyponymy. Whenever two lexical expressions stand in any of these relations, a cohesive tie is established. Hasan (Halliday & Hasan, 1989:80-81), adds meronymy and repetition of lexical items to these relations.

In synonymy, the lexical items are said to be identical though this does not imply a total overlap of meaning. For example, *mutumia* and *muka* 'woman'. In antonymy, the lexical item have oppositeness of meaning between members of co-existential tie. For example, *mutumia* 'woman' versus *mundurume* 'man'. Hyponymy on the other hand refers to a relation that
holds between a general class and its subclasses. The item, superordinate, therefore refers to the general sub-class whose items are known as hyponyms. For example, the superordinate for all the words used for the study is human nouns and all the nouns are its hyponyms. Meronymy refers to a part, the whole relation that exists between a superordinate and its parts (co-meronymns).

Repetition of lexical items creates a relation in that each repeated occurrence of the lexical units encodes a similar experiential meaning (Halliday & Hasan, 1989:81). Repetition of lexical items was also useful in this study because only that lexical item or its synonym and not antonyms can replace it to establish a relation between the item and others occurring in context depending on whether it is generic, masculine or feminine. This may be illustrated by the following example:

**EXAMPLE 13 (F 15-25 ED).**

(Situation: The girls want to know exactly who is a prostitute).

A: If maraya nūū? (Who is a maraya (prostitute)?)

B: Maraya?

Maraya (prostitute)?
C: **Maraya nî mûndû ...**

Maraya (prostitute) is a person ...

D: **Nîwamenya, mumaraya nî mûndû úrîa rîngî, mûndû**

You know, a prostitute is a person who, a person who drinks beer so as to take advantage.

B: **Mûndû úrîa wîyagîire bata.**

A person who has no self-respect.

C: **Mûndû wîyagîire bata.**

A person with no self respect.

A: **Mûndû úrîa úrathîi na arûme. Akeagîra bata.**

A person who moves with men. Has no self worth.

D: In turn, one mbeca.

In turn, to get money.

B: **Akendia mwîrî wake nîgetha acoke one mbeca.**

Sells her body so that she can get money.

A: **Na maiyuire mbaa.**

And they are very many in the bars.

C: **Na nîo, airîtu nîo marendia mbaa.**

Girls/women are the ones selling in bars.

The words múndû, 'person' and maraya / múmaraya 'prostitute' have been repeated here. The words have a feminine inclination and refer to women / females. These relations helped us to study the relations between the words and whether they are masculine, feminine, or neutral. Table 4.1. groups items according to these criterion.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENERIC</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
<th>MASCULINE</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ciana</td>
<td>Children</td>
<td>Awa</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gītharia</td>
<td>Adulterer</td>
<td>Baba</td>
<td>Father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaana</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Guka</td>
<td>Grandfather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kīmaramari</td>
<td>Hoodlum</td>
<td>Irigi rīa thome</td>
<td>Boy-child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maraya</td>
<td>Prostitute</td>
<td>Ithe</td>
<td>Father of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mumo</td>
<td>Young person</td>
<td>Kahī</td>
<td>Small boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūciari</td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td>Kahūni</td>
<td>Small boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūkūrū</td>
<td>Old person</td>
<td>Kamwana</td>
<td>Young boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūndū</td>
<td>Person</td>
<td>Kanda</td>
<td>Gentleman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūthuri</td>
<td>Elder</td>
<td>Kīnhī</td>
<td>Uncircumcised boy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwana</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Kīumbani</td>
<td>Man who seduces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Njamba</td>
<td>Warrior</td>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>Uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thata</td>
<td>Barren person</td>
<td>Mūhikania</td>
<td>Bridegroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūkoma thi</td>
<td>Womanlike</td>
<td>Mūkoma thi</td>
<td>Womanlike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūkūrīra riika</td>
<td>Old unmarried man</td>
<td>Mūndürume</td>
<td>Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūndürume</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mūriu</td>
<td>Son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūrū</td>
<td>Son of</td>
<td>Mūrū</td>
<td>Son of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūrūme</td>
<td>Husband to</td>
<td>Mūtíthe</td>
<td>Old man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūthuri</td>
<td>Male/Husband</td>
<td>Mwanake</td>
<td>Young man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyamūrīo</td>
<td>Children (named after paternal kin)</td>
<td>Thoguo</td>
<td>Your father</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMININE</td>
<td>GLOSS</td>
<td>FEMININE</td>
<td>GLOSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
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<td>----------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cúcü</td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
<td>Nyakangū</td>
<td>Loose woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gakenia</td>
<td>Cheerful woman</td>
<td>Nyakēga</td>
<td>Pleasing wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathirange</td>
<td>Virgin</td>
<td>Nyakīambi</td>
<td>First wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gīcokio</td>
<td>Divorcee</td>
<td>Nyakīnyua</td>
<td>Old married woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gīthūmba</td>
<td>Children (named after maternal kin)</td>
<td>Nyarari</td>
<td>Beautiful woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kairītu</td>
<td>Young girl</td>
<td>Nyina</td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kang'ei</td>
<td>Young wife</td>
<td>Nyina wa airītu</td>
<td>Mother of girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kārendi</td>
<td>Young girl</td>
<td>Nyina wa ihī</td>
<td>Mother of boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kīheti</td>
<td>Old woman</td>
<td>Nyūkwa</td>
<td>Your mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kīrigū</td>
<td>Uncircumcised girl</td>
<td>Tata</td>
<td>Aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maitū/Mami</td>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>Wanja Kahī</td>
<td>Tomboy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūguna Kwene</td>
<td>Girl child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūhiki</td>
<td>Bride</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūirītu</td>
<td>Unmarried woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūka</td>
<td>Wife of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūka wa ihī</td>
<td>Immoral woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūndū mūka</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūndū wa nja</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūtumia</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwarī</td>
<td>Daughter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ngatha</td>
<td>Favourite wife</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyaciara</td>
<td>Mother-in-law</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyagacū</td>
<td>Secondary wife</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyakahang'ū</td>
<td>Loose woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Since the lexicon of a language is said to be organised into a hyponymic hierarchy (Halliday & Hasan, 1989:80) with different degrees of generality, the extent to which such generality is applicable in relation to the words was studied. For example, the general word for 'person' in Gikuyu is mūndū and for a 'promiscuous person', it is maraya.

4.2.0. SEXISM IN LANGUAGE

Linguists concerned with language, gender and sex have often raised the general question: can language have a sexist bias? If so, what are the effects of this? (Bodine, 1975; Miller and Swift, 1976; Graddol and Swann, 1989). Others have argued that language is not neutral (Whorf, 1976; Spender, 1980; Thorne & Henry, 1975). Rather than language being a vehicle which carries ideas, it is by itself a shaper of ideas and the programme for mental activity (Cameron, 1990). Language cannot of course be disassociated from meaning. This study set out to examine the extent to which Gikuyu language has sexual bias.

Often, a distinction is made between sex and sexism (see definition of terms). Biological sex and cultural sexism in Gikuyu can be distinguished, for example, in personal names such as Wanjiku (girl's name) and Kamau (boy's name). But, a promiscuous person is a 'prostitute', maraya or mūmaraya and the use of such
a word must not rest on the inclination that any of the sexes is more promiscuous than the other (in Gikuyu, mūmaraya makiriya ya mūmaraya uria ungi). Similarly, there is no mūndū ‘human’ than another, male or female. Notice here we are not talking about statistics on who practices prostitution more among the sexes than the other, people’s opinions and beliefs or population statistics. This is the word as text or in context. This is where the use affects the meanings and implications that come with it.

Yet linguistic inequalities have been shown to relate to social inequalities and practices (Graddol and Swann, 1989; Poynton, 1989). In Gikuyu, the social-cultural practices and conventions of usage make such terms as gicokio, difficult to excuse sexism from such a tag. This is because the verb, hika to marry, has a corresponding: güte - literally throw away, which can be translated as divorce, in the language. (notice the literal translation and its absurdity).

Graddol and Swann (1989:98) discuss at length these linguistic distinctions, that is, bias in the structure of a language. The lexicon is the abstract system, they note. Their discussion is in agreement with other linguists (Smith, 1985; Poynton, 1989) and the fact that even dictionary compilers need to agree on the meaning of a word. This implies that there is
a particular meaning associated with a word as text, though the interpretation or use in the system may differ. In our study, word as text and in context correspond very well, that is, the text and the context or what Graddol and Swann (1989:98) call system and use.

Four criteria are used to classify sexism in language namely:

a) Exclusion/silence - when the actions, achievements and contributions of women are omitted and/or ignored.

For example, in the use of such words as;

*Mündü wa nja* (literally a person from outside) an outsider.

*Mükä* - one who comes, stranger.

These terms refer to a woman even after being married. She will always be seen as an outsider.

**EXAMPLE 14 (M 26-50 Ed).**

(Situation: The group is having a general discussion on men and women).

A: *I' hau uguo wagweta andu a nja rî, andu aya* There you have mentioned women, why are they referred to as outsiders?

B: *Tondü nî mündü, nî mündü wa nja.* Because, she is, she is an outsider.
C: Andú aya metagwo andú a nja... 
These people are called outsiders...

A: Metagwo andú a nja níki?
Why are they called outsiders?

D: Kúringana na Gakúyu karía njú kanini, andú aya a
From the little Gikuyu I know, these people are
nja metagwo a nja, na múándúé ndakúigwo, called outsiders, and help me if I don’t get it
tondú ní gúka mokaga magakora nyúmba.
right, because came to the home/house.

C: Ií níma.
That is true.

D: We ní múki.
She comes.

B: Ní múki, we ní wa gúka.
She comes, she has come.

C: Na níko ona múndú rí, múándúume, múándúume tariu
And that is why a man, a man, a man like
múándúume taniúguo rí, no ndimúhikie.
a man like myself can marry her.

The word múndú wa nja (plural, andú a nja) is derived
from two words: múndú, ‘person’ and nja, ‘outside’. 
Thus the combination makes ‘person from outside’, ‘an
outsider’ / ‘stranger’. Múka on the other hand is
derived from the verb: úka, ‘come’, gúka, ‘to come’
and múka is ‘someone who has come’. Obviously, such a
person does not belong. This marks the woman from the
man/male (the other people) who belong and makes her stand out as an outsider, a stranger. In Gikuyu as among all other people, outsiders are often viewed with suspicion and hence women are no exception in this case. Thus in Gikuyu, all the major decisions were made by the men in their hut, thingira, and passed on to the women in the 'house', not in the house where the outsider was.

Silence does not necessarily mean that women are usually silent nor does it indicate an inability on their part to use language (Cameron, 1990). Rather, it is in a way a reflection of the society’s culture in which women are excluded from daily life seen in such other Gikuyu words as:

Mutumia – Literally, one who shuts up.

Mundu maka – one who comes, an outsider.

Notice the earlier example (14) in which one of the men concludes by saying that anyone like him can marry the woman. In effect, she belongs to no one in particular but the husband, any man.

The word mutumia is derived from the word kina.

EXAMPLE 15 (F 50+ UNED).

(Situation: The group is discussing women in general).

A: Mutumia?

Woman?
B: Mutumia gítúmi gí a gwí tuo múírí tu ... 
Woman, the reason for her to be called a girl...

C: Mutumia rí, ní ní dicíragia ni gútumia, ní tondú 
Woman, I think its because of her silence because 
mútumia agíkaimbúra hitho! 
for a woman to reveal a secret!

D: Tondú hitho ya gwake, ndangíarutire nja. 
Because the secrets of her home, she could not 
reveal.

B: Ndangíamirutire!
She couldn’t reveal them.

D: Ona kúngíkorwo níkíyí.
Under any circumstances.

C: Ti gügítumiria maündú. Ona kúngíkorwo níkíyí. O 
Its because of her silence. Whatever it is. Every 
kaündú karí a ona. Arí hitho, níkí o etagwo 
small thing she sees. She is secretive, that is 
mútumia. Tondú we túündú twa gwake, ti wa kumia 
why. Because she guarded the secrets of her home, 
nakúu nja. 
she would not reveal them.

The word mútumia is derived from the verb: tumia, 
'shut up'. Women were expected to be docile and 
passive, to be silent. This rather contrasts with 
múthuri, derived from the verb: thura, select, to 
select/decide and hence one who selects or decides, 
decision maker.
b) Subordination/naming and representation - in which the females are defined and seen through a relationship to male rather than as independent individuals. For example; 

*Mütumia wa* (wife of). This means wife to someone, obviously a man.

Cameron (1990) calls it "women spoken about". In this perspective, the society adopted linguistic habits and ideas which continue to have covert significance in the culture but based on the culture.

**EXAMPLE 16 (M 15-25 Ed).**

(Situation: the group is discussing children when one of them suggests that one can marry but fail to have children).

A: *No ñwamenya, no ūhikanie na ūhikie mütumia thata*

   But you know, you might marry a barren woman

   *mwage kūg̩a ciana.*

   and fail to have children.

B: *Nakuo gwik̩ete at̩irir̩...*

   But the situation is like this ...

C: *At̩ thata?*

   Barren?

A: *Ini.*

   Yes.

D: Yes!

   Yes!
C: Ingāhikia thata atīa?
   How would I marry someone barren?
B: Ātī thata?
   Barren?
   You cannot know. You can’t tell.
C: Ndūngimenya atīa?
   How would you fail to know?
C: Nūkūmenya. Obvious, nīndirī thata.
   You would know. Obviously I am not barren.
D: Tūraiga uhoro wa mūtumia.
   We are talking about the woman.
B: Tūraiga uhoro wa mūtumia.
   We mean the woman.
A: Nī mūtumia ūgūkorwo e thata tiwe.
   It’s the woman who is barren not you.

The way of talking about things reveals the attitudes and assumptions which we might as well consciously disown only much later as revealed in this example. It is women who are barren, not men.

The society has propagated the ideology that only women can be barren and thus the idea has been inculcated in language that only women can be barren. For example, in the use of such a word like thata, barren (Table 4.2).
TABLE 4.2: FREQUENCY WORD LIST FOR THE WORD THATA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THATA</th>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>43</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both male and female irrespective of their educational background or age tended to use the word to refer to the female though males used the word more in this respect than females (32:20).

c) Degradation - in which the female is described only in stereotyped roles with less than her full range of human interests, traits, abilities and capabilities.

For example;

Gakenia (Literally one who makes someone happy, cheers you). This refers to a woman who cheers up the husband, makes him happy.

Nyakiega A woman who is well behaved, pleasing to her husband.

Lack of children for example is seen as a marked feature for females but unmarked for males confirmed by the use of the word thata, barren (Table 4.2.). For a woman, it is assumed to be the norm.
EXAMPLE 17 (M 26-50 ED).

(Situation: A woman (same age bracket and education) has just joined the men who are busy discussing causes of divorce. One of the reasons cited is barrenness on the part of the woman. She picks up from there (marked W in this instance)).

W: Nawe ka n'mu kwaria uhoro wa atumia matari
You people can really talk about childless women, ciana, no atumia matagaga ciana?
is it only women who fail to have children?
A: Ati?
What?
W: No o mathataga?
Only women are barren?
B: Atumia?
Women?
W: Ii?
Only?
C: Eeh!
Eeh!
C: Obvious.
Obvious.
W: Who said?
Who said?
D: Hau tutingariria. Hau, hau ri, taru muthuri
That is not debatable. There, listen here, by the agakinya wa kuhikia muiri tu ri, mwanake
time a man reaches the stage of marrying a lady, he,
by the time he marries, he must have had many children outside there till he knows the many he can get. Then he has a lady who cannot bear children. Would he not know its the woman who is amiss?

A: Niekumenya!
He would know!

B: Ini.
Yes.

D: (sarcastically) Ata, no atumia magaga ciana! What, only women fail to have children!

B: andu, arume aigana uigte matekug'a How many people, how many barren men have you heard of that don't get children?

A: Atar hinya muno. It is very difficult.

C: hinya. Its next to impossible. It is difficult. It is next to impossible.

B: No tugusupport mwarimu. tugu support hau. But we will support the teacher there. We will Eeh, kur arume matagaga ciana. support that. Indeed, there are men who cannot father children.
C: I (faintly).
   Yes (notice this is very reluctant).

B: No ngwiciria tiaingi ta atumia. Ndainaigua arume.
   But I think they are not as many as the women. I have heard of men.

A: One among hundred!
   One among a hundred!

Notice this is a group of educated males who should be well conversant with the biological mechanism of birth. There is the obvious use of the word múndú to refer to the male and also the social life of the community in which the man is free to go with several women before he finally marries: mwanake agigakinya wa kūhikia mūritu nambite kūhurunja... 'a man by the time he marries he must have had many children'. In a social semiotic framework, this is contrasted with the woman who is expected to be a 'virgin', gathirange which has no male equivalent. Notice also their reluctance to accept that the man can be barren seen in the sarcastic remark: atia, no atumia magagaciana! (What, only women fail to have children!); the final admission that this is most bizarre, one among a hundred!; and, the concluding remark: no gwiciria tiaingi ta atumia (but I think they are not as many as the women). This conforms to the use of the word thata, barren in Table 4.2 above.
d) Distortion - in which females are described with an emphasis on their appearance and stereotypical behaviour such as talkativeness, immaturity and emotionality or society’s general feelings.

For example:

*Muka wa ihíi* (Literally, a wife of uncircumcised boys) a woman who sleeps with uncircumcised boys.

*Nyakangü / nyakahang’ú* - immoral woman.

These are words given to a woman who misbehaves grossly, an insult to ill-mannered women (not men). In this regard, women’s images are distorted to suit the circumstances: if she is good or well-behaved and befriends the husband, she is a *nyakíega*; divorced, a *gícokio*; misbehaves and has loose morals, a *nyakangü / nyakahang’ú*; if she is allowed to drink beer, she is a *nyakínyua*, if not a *kang’ei*. She always carried a tag.

The distortion in the meaning embedded in such seemingly innocent words like *nyakínyua* and *nyakíega* though prestigious is noteworthy. *Nyakíega* is derived from the noun: *kíega*, good. *Nyakínyua* is derived from the verb: *nyua*, drink. A *nyakínyua* is literally a drunkard. The two words imply that women are expected to be good to their husbands and not to over-indulge in drinking. Not the men (the two words have no
equivalents). These terms, though ostensibly complimentary, are attributes of and weakness in women with a pejorative tinge.

Even such other common characteristics such as jealousy and envy are especially associated and attributed to women, at times assigned to their biological inadequacies.

**EXAMPLE 18 (M 26-50 ED).**

(Situation: The group is discussing husband-beating and wife-beating. One of the men cites an example of a woman who often beats her husband. The men are now trying to find out why the woman has such anger).

A: *No ni r*, atumia nyonaga n*ō* marigagwo. Tondù But for me, I feel women are ignorant, because mutumia angimenya ndakheagwo ciana n*ī* thata r*, if she knows she can’t have children and is aroria múthuri k*ī*? Ka*ī* atangireka ahikiririo. barren, why quarrel with the husband? She should Múthuri úyú arehe mútumia ūng*ī*. let him marry another wife. Let the husband marry someone else.

B: *Mm.*

Mm.

A: *No arugage wega ota mútumia wake.* But she would cook for him as good as his wife.
Barren women are seen to have a lot of bitterness attributed to their biological inadequacy.

Thus the semiology is built in the language. Depending on the semiology type, the respective portion of the gender expression that appear in the language varies. The cultural importance of the opposition of gender in language varies in a parallel expression. Opposite of sex is more likely to be used with nouns referring to females thus making it more important in the opposition of gender and a greater likelihood of use and less masculine nouns and nouns with a generic reference.

4.3.0. PARADIGM: GENERIC, MALE AND FEMALE

A further analysis of the data in this study focused on whether words in Gikuyu language possess a clear and overt semantic marker of masculinity, femininity or generic aspects (Smith, 1985:37).
# TABLE 4.3.1: A CROSS TABULATION OF ITEMS IN TERMS OF THEIR STEREOTYPING AND SOCIAL DESIRABILITY

## a) GENERIC ITEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESIRABLE FOR BOTH</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
<th>PRESTIGIOUS (positive)</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ciana</strong></td>
<td>Children</td>
<td><strong>Ciana</strong></td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gītharia</strong></td>
<td>Adulterer</td>
<td><strong>Kaana</strong></td>
<td>Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kaana</strong></td>
<td>Child</td>
<td><strong>Mūmo</strong></td>
<td>Young person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kimaramari</strong></td>
<td>Hoodlum</td>
<td><strong>Mūciari</strong></td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maraya</strong></td>
<td>Prostitute</td>
<td><strong>Mūkūrū</strong></td>
<td>Old person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mūmo</strong></td>
<td>Young person</td>
<td><strong>Mūndū</strong></td>
<td>Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mūciari</strong></td>
<td>Parent</td>
<td><strong>Mūthuri</strong></td>
<td>Elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mūkūrū</strong></td>
<td>Old person</td>
<td><strong>Mwana</strong></td>
<td>Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mūndū</strong></td>
<td>Person</td>
<td><strong>Njamba</strong></td>
<td>Warrior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mūthuri</strong></td>
<td>Elder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mwana</strong></td>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Njamba</strong></td>
<td>Warrior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**UNDESIRABLE FOR MALE** None

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXCLUDES MALES</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maraya</strong></td>
<td>Prostitute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thata</strong></td>
<td>Barren person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXCLUDES FEMALES</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mūndū</strong></td>
<td>Person (often male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mūthuri</strong></td>
<td>Elder (refer to male)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Njamba</strong></td>
<td>Hero/Warrior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESTIGIOUS (positive)</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mundu</strong></td>
<td>Person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Muthuri</strong></td>
<td>Elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Njamba</strong></td>
<td>Hero/Warrior</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NO PRESTIGE (negative)</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maraya</strong></td>
<td>Prostitute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thata</strong></td>
<td>Barren person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TABLE 4.3.2: A CROSS TABULATION OF ITEMS IN TERMS OF THEIR STEREOTYPING AND SOCIAL DESIRABILITY

#### b) MASCULINE ITEMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DESIRABLE FOR BOTH</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
<th>UNDESIRABLE FOR MALE</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mündü</td>
<td>Person</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kihii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Múthuri</td>
<td>Elder</td>
<td></td>
<td>Múkoma thí</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Njamba</td>
<td>Warrior/hero</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESTIGIOUS (positive)</th>
<th></th>
<th>NO PRESTIGE (negative)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awa/Baba/Ithe</td>
<td>Father</td>
<td>Kihii</td>
<td>Uncle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guka</td>
<td>Grandfather</td>
<td>Múkoma thí</td>
<td>Womanlike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwanake</td>
<td>Young man</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irigi ría thome</td>
<td>Boychild</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kahi/Kahúni/Kamwana</td>
<td>Boy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanda</td>
<td>Young man</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kíumbani</td>
<td>Man who seduces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>Uncle</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Múhikania</td>
<td>Bridgegroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mündürūme/Múthuri</td>
<td>Man</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Múriu/Múrū</td>
<td>Son</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Múrūme</td>
<td>Husband</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Múthee</td>
<td>Old man</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyamúrio</td>
<td>Children named</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoguo</td>
<td>Your father</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Nyamúrio               | Children named  |                        |           |
| Thoguo                 | Your father     |                        |           |
### TABLE 4.3.3: A CROSS TABULATION OF ITEMS IN TERMS OF THEIR STEREOTYPING AND SOCIAL DESIRABILITY

c) **FEMININE ITEMS**

**DESIRABLE FOR BOTH SEXES**  
None.

**UNDESIRABLE FOR FEMALE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gakenia</strong></td>
<td>Cheerful woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gicokio</strong></td>
<td>Divorced woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Githumba</strong></td>
<td>Children named maternal kin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kang’ei</strong></td>
<td>Young wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>K’heti</strong></td>
<td>Old woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kirigü</strong></td>
<td>Uncircumcised girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Muguna Kwene, girl child</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Muka</strong></td>
<td>Wife of Muka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Muka wa ihii</strong></td>
<td>Immoral woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nyakangū/Nyakahang’ū</strong></td>
<td>Loose woman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**WITH PRESTIGE (positive).**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cucu</strong></td>
<td>Grandmother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gakenia</strong></td>
<td>Cheerful woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gathirange</strong></td>
<td>Virgin girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kairitu/Karendi</strong></td>
<td>Young girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mami/Maitu/Nyina</strong></td>
<td>Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Muhiki</strong></td>
<td>Bride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Muiritu</strong></td>
<td>Unmarried woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Muka</strong></td>
<td>Wife of Muka</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mwarī</strong></td>
<td>Daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mutumia/Mundū wa nja</strong></td>
<td>Woman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Gakenia** - Cheerful woman  
**Gicokio** - Divorced woman  
**Githumba** - Children named maternal kin  
**Kang’ei** - Young wife  
**K’heti** - Old woman  
**Kirigü** - Uncircumcised girl  
**Muguna Kwene, Girl child**  
**Muka** - Wife of Muka  
**Muka wa ihii** - Immoral woman  
**Nyakangū/Nyakahang’ū** - Loose woman  
**Cucu** - Grandmother  
**Gakenia** - Cheerful woman  
**Gathirange** - Virgin girl  
**Kairitu/Karendi** - Young girl  
**Mami/Maitu/Nyina** - Mother  
**Muhiki** - Bride  
**Muiritu** - Unmarried woman  
**Muka** - Wife of Muka  
**Mwarī** - Daughter  
**Mutumia/Mundū wa nja** - Woman  
**Mundū mUKA** - Woman  
**Mundū wa nja** - Woman  
**Mutumia** - Wife/woman  
**Nyagacū** - Secondary wife  
**Nyakéguna** - Pleasing wife  
**Nyakinjua** - Old woman  
**Nyina wa airitu** - Mother of girls  
**Nyina wa ihii** - Mother of boys  
**Wanja Kahii** - Tomboy  
**Nyukwa** - Your mother (as an insult)  
**Ngatha** - Favourite wife  
**Nyaciara** - Mother-in-law  
**Nyagacu** - Secondary wife  
**Nyakambhi** - First wife  
**Nyakega** - Pleasing wife  
**Nyakinyua** - Old Woman  
**Nyina wa ihii** - Mother of boys  
**Nyarari** - Beautiful woman  
**Nyukwa** - Your mother  
**Tata** - Aunt
WITHOUT PRESTIGE (negative)  GLOSS

Gicokio  Divorced woman
Githumba  Children named maternal kin
Kang'ei  Young wife
Kiheti  Old woman
Kirigū  Uncircumcised Girl
Muguna Kwene  Girl child
Muka wa ihii  Immoral woman
Nyakangü/Nyakahang'ū  Loose woman
Nyina wa airitu  Mother of girls
Nyūkwa  Your mother as an insulting word
Wanja Kahii  Tomboy
Tables 4.3.1. to 4.3.3. show the seventy two words derived from the study data.

The study describes an analysis of seventy two words chosen from Gikuyu language according to these semantic criterion.

Feminine words outnumber masculine ones by 35 to 24 (also Table: 4.1). Masculine words with positive connotation (prestige) such as mūthuri, ‘man’ (male) are more frequent than feminine ones for the same by a ratio of 21:23. However, feminine words with negative connotations (no prestige) such as nyina wa airitu ‘mother of girls’ and mūka wa ihî ‘wife of boys’ outnumber masculine negative words by a ratio of 12:3. (Tables: 4.3.2 and 4.3.3.) in spite of the number of masculine / feminine words.

A slightly larger number of overtly marked masculine words is noted (Table 4.3.1) that are sometimes used in a generic sense. They include: mûndû, ‘person’; mûthuri, ‘elder’; and njamba, ‘hero’/‘courageous person’. A smaller number of overtly marked feminine words used in a generic sense such as maraya, ‘prostitute’ and thata, ‘barren’ are also noted. However, the feminine words have no prestige (negative) unlike the masculine ones which have prestige (positive) when used.
TABLE 4.4. WORDS SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORDS</th>
<th>NO. OF WORDS</th>
<th>PRESTIGIOUS (Positive)</th>
<th>NO PRESTIGE (Negative)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GENERIC</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MASCULINE</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEMININE</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.0. GENERIC MAN

Words marked for masculinity (for example, mündū 'person' or 'man') that are used in a generic sense have attracted many studies (Bodine, 1975; Graham, 1975). This is because nouns can have the function of allowing us to refer to a class rather than a subclass. Linguists argue that the term "man" means male and evokes male imagery (Miller and Swift, 1976; Stanley, 1977; Spender, 1980). They argue that by so doing, males have taken the foreground while females are blurred in the background.

The term: mündū is easy to test as to whether it is generic, feminine or masculine. By substituting a term for male or female with the word: mündū, one can test if the term is applicable to the activities of human beings, to females or males (Spender, 1980:156).

EXAMPLE 19 (M 50+ UNED).

(Situation: The men are making a distinction between maraya 'prostitute' and kũmbani the male equivalent).
A: Maraya nìta mútugügi.
   A prostitute is like a tramp.

B: Urìa mìndù aceraga nì andù aceeri múno.
   The way a person goes visiting they move about a lot.

C: Na kwenda arùme aingì.
   And they love many men (male).

B: Na tì wa mìndù mürùme ûmwe.
   And she does not belong to one man (male).

D: Nake mìndùrùme nìekwenda mútumia hahaha, enake
   The man too wants a woman here, he has another
   Kiambu, enake nakùu Limuru.
   in Kiambu, another in Limuru.

A: Ucio nì múmaraya.
   That is a prostitute.

D: Ucio nì maraya.
   That is a prostitute.

B: Ini.
   Yes.

C: Kìùmbani tene rì, kìùmbani rì, nì mìndù warì
   Klùmbani long ago, klùmbani, was a good man
   mwega, múthaka.
   handsome and admirable.

D: Mìndù múthaka.
   A handsome man.

B: Mìndù múthaka.
   A handsome man.
C: Rũ mũndũ ūyũ rũ, akerirĩrio.
   This person, was admired/desirable.
A: Akendwo.
   He was liked.
C: N̄ekwendeka.
   He was liked.
B: Airītu rũ, n̄ mekũmwenda mũno tondu n̄ mũndũ
   Ladies liked him very much because he was
   mũtheru na mũthaka. Rũ akendwo, ūyũ n̄ ekũmwenda
   smart and handsome. He was liked, this one liked
   na akendwo n̄ ūngĩ, na akendwo n̄ ūngĩ, rũ mũndũ
   him and another, and even others, that person
   ūcĩo etagwo kũmbani.
   was a kũmbani.
D: Na ningĩ rir̄a mathĩ nȳimbo in̄ ekũina na,
   And when people went dancing, he would dance, if
   akorwo n̄ ta mũgoiyo egũkunyuo n̄ andũ aingĩ.
   it is mũgoiyo (a type of dance), he would dance
   with different women.
C: N̄ air̄itu aingĩ. Egũkunywo n̄ air̄itu aingĩ.
   By many ladies. He will be pinched away of by
   Tondu n̄ mũndũ mwega, na mũthingu na mũhoreri.
   many ladies. Because he was a good person (man),
   honest and humble.
A: Kũmbani ar̄, n̄ kuga n̄ mũndũ mwega mũno.
   Kũmbani was, it is to say a very good person.
   N̄ mũndũ mũthaka. N̄ mwega, mwega na mũtugo. N̄
   A handsome person. He is good, of good behaviour.
mūndū smart. Iī mūndū mūthaka ukūriririo.

A smart person. A handsome person, admirable.

Endagwo nī ūndū wothaka na mūutugo mwega.

admired. He was liked because of his beauty and good manners.

C: Mūndū ucio nī arī mūtugo, nī mūndū wī mūtugo

This person had manners, a person with good mwega. Ona e mūruitu.

manners. Even if a lady.

B: Mūndūrūme nīwe, kūmbani nī kīa mūruitu?

A man is, is kūmbani a lady?

A: Kūmbani nī mūndūrūme.

Kūmbani is a man (male).

D: Kūmbani nī mūndūrūme. Ti mūruitu. No ombaga

Kūmbani is a man. Not woman. But he would airītu.

befriend girls.

B: Na kūmbaga airītu.

He befriended girls.

In this long text, one would be led to believe that the men are describing a ‘person’, mūndū. But in actual fact, mūndū in reference to the word kūmbani is ‘male’. This is contrary to the earlier part of the text in which mūndū and andū are feminine with reference to the word maraya, ‘prostitute’. The notable difference is that one has positive prestige kūmbani ‘a good and admirable person’ who it is
clearly stated is male and befriended females and the other has negative prestige maraya, 'a tramp and promiscuous person' who cannot do with only one man.

If "man" does mean one of the sexes, there is a violation of semantic rules when the term is applicable to activities that are unique to either of the sexes, especially when the social prestige attached to both is different.

Tables 4.5 and 4.6 display the results of the investigation of this phenomenon.

**TABLE 4.5: FREQUENCY WORD LIST FOR THE WORD MUNDU**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUNDU</th>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>420</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>713</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TABLE 4.6: FREQUENCY WORD LIST FOR THE WORD ANDU**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ANDU</th>
<th>GROUP</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>448</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>483</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Out of a total number of 713 occurrences in the use of the word *mundu*, 'person' in the study data (483 *andu*, its plural) 220 (448 for *andu*) were generic, 73 (10 for *andu*) were feminine and 420 (25 for *andu*) were masculine. Both males and females tended to use the word *mundu* for masculine and *andu* as generic.

Thus we conclude that *mundu* (unlike the plural *andu*) makes males linguistically visible and females linguistically invisible.

Equally true and pertaining to the same fact are the words *muthuri* 'elder' (and its plural, *athuri*) and *njamba* 'hero' / 'warrior' which are generic but refer to the male. This is examined further in Tables 4.7 to 4.9 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 4.7: FREQUENCY WORD LIST FOR THE WORD MUTHURI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MUTHURI</th>
<th>GROUP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10 11 12 T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>-  -  -  -  -  -  -  4  -  -  -  -  4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine,Male</td>
<td>31  71 19 81 30 10 35 32 16 19 36 49 429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>-  -  -  -  -  -  -  1  -  -  -  -  1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>31  71 19 81 30 10 35 32 21 19 36 49 434</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The word *njamba* is derived from *úcamba*, courage / firmness, a hero. That it refers to men and excludes women would seem to imply that only men possess such characteristics and not women. This is confirmed by the fact that women were not part of the general population as seen in other words such as *mūka* and *andū a nja*, or were passive, *mūtumia*. This ideology is further revealed in the Gikuyu proverb:

*Njamba ya mūndūrūme ĭgūithagio ni aka.*

A hero's downfall is brought about by women.
Linguists such as Spender (1980) have argued that this makes the world male until proven otherwise and thus automatically excludes the females, making them invisible unless confirmed.

4.5.0. **WORD ORDER/ PHRASES**

Another database used in this study to determine the degree of sexism and gender bias in Gikuyu language is by analysis of word order/phrases in the text samples in the study.

Gender biased phrasing has an adverse impact on a large segment of society especially when it gives prominence to certain persons and not others (Smith, 1985; Poynton, 1989). Word order is but another asymmetry in which the representation of women and men in language is reflected, that is, in the order of representation given to both when referred to together (Smith, 1985:47). There seems to be a particular order of representation given to females and males when they are referred to together. In many cases, it seems procedural to use the order [male female] and not [female male] (Smith, 1985; Graddol & Swann, 1989).

The most common [female male] and [male female] pairings in Gikuyu were studied and their frequency in use.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF PHRASE</th>
<th>NUMBER OF PHRASES</th>
<th>FREQUENCY (IN OCCURRENCE)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[FEMALE MALE]</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[MALE FEMALE]</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of 50 phrases with [female male] [male female] pairings studied, 26 were [female male] while 24 were [male female]. This would seem to suggest that such pairings do not favour any of the sexes.

However, the contrary is true in actual (normal) language use as evident from Table 4.10 in that [male female] pairings far much outnumber [female male] pairings by a ratio of 178:41 (81% : 19% respectively). Thus the pairings are in favour of the male.

Though little has been studied in terms of the social and psychological significance in the order of word pairs, it is a known fact that women often come second (Smith, 1985). This was found to be true in this study. Studies in language and gender have argued that the connotation of other ordered word pairs such as good - bad, rich - poor, life - death, white - black validates the need for an evaluation of such pairings.
This is because it would seem to signify to the reader or listener that females have less status or importance than males and that males are more valued (Smith, 1985). Besides, there is no reason linguistically whatsoever why any cannot come before the other if they are equal.

**EXAMPLE 20 (F 15-25 ED).**

(Situation: The girls are discussing who is a prostitute).

A: **Kuoguo ona mūmaraya no akorwo e mūtumia kana**

So a prostitute can be a woman or a

*mutūri?*

man (male)?

B: **Erī.**

Both.

C: **Erī. Gūtīra ūtangītuika.**

Both. There is none who can’t be.

D: **Nī maheni mau. Mūmaraya nī mūtumia ni ūrīa njūī.**

That can’t be. A prostitute is a woman, that is what I know.

A: **Onaniī. Njūī nī mūtumia.**

Even me. I thought it was a woman.

Notice here the use of the phrase [woman man] so unconsciously. What is unique about it is that the discussion involves prostitution which the girls (note their age bracket and the fact that they are educated)
see as a woman’s domain. Hence when referring to [male female] [female male], they see the phrase in a [female male] term due to the images embedded in their subconscious minds.

**EXAMPLE 21 (M 15-25 ED).**

(Situation: The boys are discussing their preference for children).

A: *Ni i ingienda kahi*.
   I would prefer a boy.

B: *Kairitu*.
   A girl.

C: *Kahiri na kairitu*.
   A boy and a girl.

D: *Kahiri na kairitu*.
   A boy and a girl.

A: *Kahiri na kairitu. Ke tuge ni waciara kahiri na*.
   A boy and a girl. Let’s say you have a boy and a girl.

C: *I*.
   Mm.

A: *Kwa mutino rii, kahiri gakue*.
   By bad luck, the boy dies.

C: *I*.
   Mm.

A: *Utigwo na kiri, na kairitu*.
   You will be left with what, with a girl.
This discussion, unlike the other one (Example 20), seeks information on children. From the onset, it's clear that the first boy would prefer a boy child and the second a girl child. Both sexes are on equal standing. But the third and fourth boys would prefer a boy and a girl in that order. Even the first boy picks up the phrasing later. The main issue raised after this is, what would happen if the boy died (wouldn't it also be possible for the girl to die?). It seems the girl will be left which seems really sad. For D, if the boy died, you would be left with a boy! For C, the major issue is what happens to your property, can she be the heir?

The preference thus given to the boy is well reflected in the language. According to the Gikuyu culture, boys are the natural heirs of the parents property and they continue the family line while girls are seen as sojourners. This is because the girl gets married and leave the parent's homestead. This is also noted in
another discussion as shown in the following example.

**EXAMPLE 22 (M 50+ UNED).**

(Situation: These old men are talking about their preference for children).

A: **Muthemba ini wa mündürúme rī, mūthuri, mündū**

On the side of man, a man, a man

gite kahī rī, nī akenaga mūno.

when he has boy/son, he is very happy.

B: **Tondū kahī**...

Because a boy...

C: **Kahī nīko keragwo nīko irigi rīa thome.**

A boy is the one called irigi rīa thome (hedge of the homestead).

D: **Getagwo irigi rīa thome.**

He is called irigi rīa thome.

A: **One nīko irigi rīa thome.**

Oh yes he is the irigi rīa thome.

C: **Kairītu nako, gatiendtowo mūno.**

The girl, was not that much preferred.

B: **Mūirītu nī wagūthi.**

A girl/lady will go.

D: **Mūirītu nī múguna kwene.**

A girl/lady is a múguna kwene (benefactor of outsiders).

B: **Etagwo múguna kwene.**

She is called múguna kwene.
A: Ini. Tondú we n'y waguthi.
   Yes. Because she will finally go.
C: Ahike athi.
   She will get married and leave.

Irígi r'í a thome literally means 'the fence surrounding
the homestead' ('hedge of the homestead'), the boy
while múguna kwene literally means 's/he who brings
good/benefit to another home' ('benefactor of
outsiders'), the girl child. Obviously, the two words
are contradictory other than synonyms. One belongs to
the home (boy), while the other one does not (girl),
one is preferred and not the other; she is a passer-
by.

Implicit in the word order has been the belief that
males come first or that this is the natural order, a
point which (Spender, 1980) highly refutes. This
concept of natural precedence of the males to females
has gained ground and in most languages, Gikuyu
included, the word order in favour of the male seem to
be the norm as evident from the following (fourteen)
phrases studied:

- Anake na airítu: Young men and women
- Ariú na arí: Sons and daughters
- Arúme na atumia: Men and women
- Athuri na atumia: Men and women
- Baba na maitú: Father and mother
Only three seemed to be in favour of the female. These are:

- Čucū na guka  
  Grandmother and father
- Mūhiki na mūhikania  
  Bride and bridegroom
- Mwarī na mūriū  
  Daughter and son

The reason why čucū (grandmother) seems to come before guka (grandfather) can be found in the culture of the language. Grandmothers were preferred to grandfathers. They told stories to the children as they sat by the fire and cooked for them. Grandfathers on the other hand usually rested in their huts 'thingira', a confine of men where only boys were admitted for advice and rarely women. Though male children liked the company of their mother and sisters, this was highly discouraged. The grandfathers also told stories of war and heroism in contrast to the fables told by the grandmother.
The phrase *mũhiki na mũhikania* is only but a phrase in that one is active, *mũhikania*, 'bridegroom' and marries the 'bride', *mũhiki* (passive). In Gikuyu, the man married the woman, they did not marry each other. Therefore, the phrase does not in actual fact bestow any status to the woman.

Lastly, though *mwari na muriũ* does give preference to the [female male] relationship, its plural, *ari na ariũ* is the opposite. In any case, boys were preferred to girls. Thus as argued earlier with regard to the phrases, they obviously favour a [male female] pairing.

Linguists concerned with language and gender studies have argued against such a "natural" order for the simple fact that males seem to be the most dominant, important, prominent, the greater sex, superior, the worthier gender, and, the norm. By implication, it would mean that in their communicative competence, people would find the opposite order to be unacceptable, a fiction rather than a linguistic fact.

Thus this syntagm that diminishes women has an adverse impact on a large segment of society and gives prominence to some sections of society.
4.6.0. SEMANTIC DEGENERATION

A detailed analysis of pairs of synonyms drawn from the study data reveal that several items with feminine and masculine equivalents do not (and at most at all) connote the same meaning.

Such terms were studied in Gikuyu. Table 4.11 shows items with feminine and masculine equivalents.

Each of these pairs in Table 4.11 are synonymous in terms of their role, status, and function. However, from the foregoing discussion, it is clear that in actual sense and in semantic degeneration, they are not synonymous (synonyms) to such pairs in English such as: lord - lady; patron - matron; king - queen; and, bachelor - spinster. In Smith's (1985:48) words:

none of the feminine terms in the list connotes the same degree of strength to male connotations.

Let us look at some of the following pairs drawn from the same Table 4.11:

- *Githumba* versus *Nyamūrio*
- *Mūguna kwene* versus *Irigi ria thome*
- *Kīheti* versus *Mūthee*
- *Maraya* versus *Kīumbani*
- *Mūthuri* versus *Mūtumia*
### TABLE 4.11: ITEMS WITH FEMALE AND MALE EQUIVALENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awa/baba</td>
<td>Mami/maitū</td>
<td>Father/Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guka</td>
<td>Cūcū</td>
<td>Grandfather/Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irigi rīa thome</td>
<td>Mūguna kwene</td>
<td>Boy/Girlchild</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ithe</td>
<td>Nyina</td>
<td>Father/Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kahii/kahūni</td>
<td>Kairītu</td>
<td>Small Boy/Girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanda</td>
<td>Karendi</td>
<td>Gentleman/Lady</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kīhīi</td>
<td>Kīrīgū</td>
<td>Uncircumcised Boy/Girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kūmbani</td>
<td>Maraya</td>
<td>Man who seduces/Prostitute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>Tata</td>
<td>Uncle/Aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūhikania</td>
<td>Mūhiki</td>
<td>Bridegroom/Bride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūkoma thī</td>
<td>Gīcokio</td>
<td>Womanlike/Divorce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūndūrūme</td>
<td>Mūtumia</td>
<td>Man/Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūriū/mūrū</td>
<td>Mwarī</td>
<td>Son/Daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūthee</td>
<td>Kīheti</td>
<td>Old Man/Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūthuri</td>
<td>Mūtumia</td>
<td>Husband/Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mūthuriguo</td>
<td>Mūkaguo</td>
<td>Husband to/Wife of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwanake</td>
<td>Mūirītu</td>
<td>Young Man/Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyamūrio</td>
<td>Gīthūmba</td>
<td>Children named after</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyina wa ihīi</td>
<td>Nyina wa airītu</td>
<td>Paternal/Maternal kin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoguo</td>
<td>Nyūkwa</td>
<td>Your Father/Mother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
113

a) *Githumba versus Nyamurio*

Githumba refers to those children named after the mothers’ relatives. Its derived from the verb: *thumba* which Benson (1964: 535) defines as: to "sponge on, earn favour by working or performing manual tasks". Thus the word stands for someone without a homestead who hangs around other people’s homes, an idler, a lover, or a squatter (in Gikuyu called a *mūhoi*, (plural, *ahoi*) literally, a beggar, beggars). This by implication means that the children so named are hangers-on, they have no home. *Nyamūrio* on the other hand has a positive connotation. It is derived from the word, *mūrio*, someone asked for and implies someone being asked for. It is welcoming, an invitation not a rejection. Thus it has some positive prestige while *gīthūmba* has negative prestige.

b) *Kiheti versus Muthee*

*Kīheti* refers to a woman past child bearing age. It is derived from the verb: *heta*, "shorten, tuck up clothes, cut trim" (Benson, 1964:148). A *Kīheti* is someone who tucks up clothes, a woman. *Mūthee* refers to an old man. He is respected and it is not defined (needless to say) whether he is past childbearing age or not. *Mūthee* is prestigious as old age was associated with wisdom and honour while *kīheti* is negative.
c) Maraya versus Kiumbani
The word maraya seems to be borrowed from Swahili. It also seems to be derived from the Gikuyu word; raya, tall/long. Whatever the case, it refers to a promiscuous person and should be generic rather than feminine. Kiumbani is derived from the word: ümba, to mould, to create. Benson (1964:553) defines it as "attract, fascinate, captivate, ravish, charm, enchant, be in love with, court, make love to, have amorous relations". Kiumbani refers to an admirable handsome man. Thus kiumbani has positive prestige and maraya negative prestige.

d) Irigi ria thome versus Muguna kwene
Irigi ria thome literally means the hedge of the homestead. It is derived from rügiri, 'fence' and hence irigi is the security of the homestead. It refers to the boy child. Muguna kwene on the other hand refers to a person, Muguna, benefactor, who only is of benefit to another home, kwene other than their own. This is the girl child who was expected to be married. She could settle and live anywhere. A boy/son on the other hand is firmly rooted in his home, he is inextricable. One is prestigious and the other is not.

e) Muthuri versus Mutumia
As already pointed out, the word mutumia is literally translated as she who shuts up, and refers to the
woman while *mūthuri* is he who decides / chooses / makes the decision, 'decision maker'. One is passive, *mutumia* and she was not expected to do anything other than that which is already decided for her by the decision maker, *mūthuri*. Even in old age, the man continued to be a *mūthuri*, 'elder' or *mūthee*, 'old man' while the woman became a *nyakinyua* when all her children were circumcised and a *kiheti* when she no longer could give birth. That is why the word *mūthuri* 'elder' tends to portray the males rather than the generic word it is (Tables 4.7 and 4.8).

The system of word use is so well built in the language that when words are studied in a social semiotic framework, the parallelism for example between the words: *maraya* and *kiimbani* is revealed in that a man who has another woman other than his is said to have *kiumbana* (attracted another woman other than his own), while 'a promiscuous woman' is a *maraya*. Both of them are the same but the terms are different.

It is also noteworthy that there is a generic word in Gikuyu that refers to a promiscuous person namely: *gūtharia*. *Gūtharia* is derived from the word: *tharia* rub, to erase. A *gūtharia* is literally a person who erases his or her marriage bond. It refers to a person who commits adultery, an adulterer. Both *Kiūmbani* and
maraya refer to an adulterer but using different terms with obvious distinct social connotations based on sex.

Even such innocent pairs such as: thoguo versus nyūkwa ('your father and mother') have an obvious bias in that nyūkwa is also used as an insulting word: nyūkwa, and not thoguo.

Table 4.12 further investigates feminine and masculine items in terms of their stereotyping and social desirability, that is, positive and negative prestige. It also gives a summary of the items with or without prestige and their equivalent or lack of it.

There are no pairings for most of the stereotypical feminine items (Table 4.12) with or without prestige. Notable among them are:

- **Mūka wa ihįį** - Immoral woman
- **Nyakangū / nyakahang’ū** - Loose woman.
- **Nyaciara/ nyaciarawe** - Mother-in-law.
- **Nyina wa ihįį** - Mother of boys.
- **Nyina wa airįtu** - Mother of girls.
### TABLE 4.12: SUMMARY OF ITEMS IN TERMS OF THEIR STEREOTYPING AND SOCIAL DESIRABILITY (POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PRESTIGE)

#### a) POSITIVE PRESTIGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Equivalent</th>
<th>Female Equivalent</th>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Awa/baba</td>
<td>Mami/maituí</td>
<td>Father/Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guka</td>
<td>Cúcú</td>
<td>Grandfather/Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ithe</td>
<td>Nyina</td>
<td>Father/Mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kahũ/kahṹni</td>
<td>Kairĩtu</td>
<td>Small Boy/Girl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kanda</td>
<td>Karendi</td>
<td>Young Man/Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mama</td>
<td>Tata</td>
<td>Uncle/Aunt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muhikania</td>
<td>Muhiki</td>
<td>Bridegroom/Bride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mundurũme</td>
<td>Mutumia</td>
<td>Man/Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muriu/murṹ</td>
<td>Mwarĩ</td>
<td>Son/Daughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mùthuri</td>
<td>Mùtumia</td>
<td>Husband/Wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mwanake</td>
<td>Mùrirṹtu</td>
<td>Young Man/Woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoguo</td>
<td>Nyûkwa</td>
<td>Your Father/Mother</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### NO MALE EQUIVALENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>*Gakenia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gathirange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Ngatha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Nyaciara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Nyakũmbi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Nyakĩega</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nyakĩnyua</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyarari</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Nyina wa ihṹ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### NO FEMALE EQUIVALENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gloss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Irigĩ ri thome</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kũmbani</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mùthee</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nyamúrio</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* * *
### b) NEGATIVE PRESTIGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEMALE EQUIVALENT</th>
<th>MALE EQUIVALENT</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Wanja kahĩ</strong></td>
<td>*<strong>Mũkoma thĩ</strong></td>
<td>Tomboy/Womanlike</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kĩrĩgu</td>
<td>Kĩhĩ</td>
<td>Uncircumcised Girl/Boy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NO FEMALE EQUIVALENT**

| Mũkũrĩra riika | Old unmarried man |

**NO MALE EQUIVALENT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gĩcokio</th>
<th>Divorced woman</th>
<th><em>Gĩthũmba</em></th>
<th>Children named after maternal kin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kang'ei</td>
<td>Young wife</td>
<td><em>Kĩheti</em></td>
<td>Old woman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mũka</td>
<td>Wife</td>
<td><em>Maraya</em></td>
<td>Prostitute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mũndũ wa nja</td>
<td>Woman</td>
<td><em>Mũguna kwene</em></td>
<td>Girl child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyagacũ</td>
<td>Secondary wife</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyakahang'ũ</td>
<td>Loose woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyakangũ</td>
<td>Loose woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyũkwa</td>
<td>Your mother</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mũka wa ihĩ</strong></td>
<td>Immoral woman</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*<strong>Nyina wa airĩtu</strong></td>
<td>Mother of girls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### N.B.

* Favours the male (none favours the female).

*** Has female overtones.

** - ** Has male overtones.

** Has corresponding female equivalent (negative).

* - * Has corresponding male equivalent (positive).
What is most puzzling about these words especially mūka wa ihī (literally, a woman of uncircumcised boys) is why the woman would be called so especially taking into consideration that boys were more revered than girls.

It is also important to note that boyhood (uncircumcised or circumcised) is a transient stage which is only human and therefore nothing evil or unbecoming about it. Men with feminine tendencies are called mūkoma thī. It is interesting to note that it is natural for women to lie on their back during coition but this act is seen as negative when applied to men. Hence the word has negative prestige when applied to men.

Attention is also drawn to another only negative male word with no equivalent: mūkūrīra riika. Mūkūrīra is derived from: kūra ‘grow’ and kūrīra, ‘grow up in’. A mūkūrīra riika is literally someone who grows up in his age group (riika), a man (not woman) who has outgrown his age yet remains unmarried.

Unlike men who have age groups, women had no age groups. Hence the proverb: atumia matiri riika. Women assumed the age group of their husbands. Rather, it refers to a person who has outgrown his age group which is no offence and is redeemable.
Feminists argue that once a word or term is associated with women, it often tends to acquire negative semantic connotations (Schulz, 1975; Miller and Swift, 1976; Eakins and Eakins, 1978).

Table 4.13 below shows that maraya, 'prostitute' is seen as feminine rather than generic.

**Table 4.13: Frequency Word List for the Word Maraya**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARAYA</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Gikuyu, this is also true for the following words as shown in example 23 below:

*Mūka wa ihū* - (Literally, woman of uncircumcised boys) an insult.

*Nyakangū / nyakahang'ū* - A woman of loose moral character, badly behaved.

*Nyina wa airitu* - Mother of girls.

*Nyina wa ihū* - Mother of boys.
EXAMPLE 23 (M 50+ UNED).

(Situation: These old men are discussing different names in Gikuyu included among them mūka wa ihīi, nyina wa ihii and nyina wa airitu).

NB. Note that mūka wa is literally translated as wife/woman of and ihīi are uncircumcised boys.

A: Mūka wa ihīi nake ...

And woman of boys ...

B: Gūtiri mūka wa ihīi, no nyina wa ihīi.

There is no woman of boys, only mother of boys.

C: Ihī eho!

No there is!

B: Wa airitu?

Of girls?

D: Mūno mūka wa ihīi.

More woman of boys.

A: Tiga mūka wa ihīi, nyina wa ihīi.

Leave woman of boys, mother of boys.

B: Ona nyina wa airitu mūno.

Even mother of girls more.

D: Mūka wa ihīi eho.

Wife of boys is there.

C: Mūka wa ihīi eho.

Wife of boys is there.

D: Nyakangū mūka wa ihīi! Nī mitugo. Kai atarī

Nyakangū wife of boys! The manners. Its the mītugo.

bad manners.
A: Riu agatuo nyakangū. 
She was nicknamed nyakangū.

B: Nyakahang’ū. 
Nyakahang’ū.

C: Mütumia útarí mútugo. 
That is a woman with no manners.

D: Nyina wa ihíí nake ena ihíí theri. 
Mother of boys had only boys.

B: Ní kwaga kairítu. 
Its lack of girls.

D: Ní mútumia utarí kairítu. 
A woman without a girl child.

C: Nyina wa airítu nake ndakíríí kahíí. 
A mother of girls did not have a boy.

B: Riu úyú úngí ní kúrumwo. 
This other one is being insulted.

A: Múka wa ihíí? 
Wife of boys?

B: Ini. 
Yes.

D: Ní kúrumwo ararumwo. Ní kúrumwo ararumithanio na 
She is being insulted. She is being associated 
ihíí. Tondú ihíí ní ciaríí mene. 
with uncircumcised boys. Because they had no 
manners.

B: Tondú ihíí nicio itarí mútugo. 
Because uncircumcised boys had no manners.
Because boys had no manners, she is insulted with them.

Those are insults. That is to be insulted.

4.7.0. PEJORATION AND AMELIORATION

The study also analysed the different evaluative loadings of words referring to women and men and their status (positive or negative). A detailed analysis revealed that words referring to men and women have different connotations (section 4.6.0.).

The theory that linguistic elements form pairs or sets is called markedness (Cameron, 1985). It places great stress on contrast as a principle of linguistic structure. Studies in language and gender have questioned the natural order of the male as norm (Stanley, 1977; Spender, 1980; Cameron, 1985). This is because the rule operates on the premise that the standard for normal human is male (unmarked) and any other is a deviation from the norm (marked). Status is derived from the standard male and positive or negative classifications erected from it.

In languages with grammatical gender such as German, masculine feminine and neuter are mere labels for
formal properties of words and do not reflect word meaning. Not so in languages with natural gender like English. Cameron (1985:63) observes that 'African Bantu languages' have nothing that could be called gender but rather they have natural gender. A detailed analysis of the Gikuyu words from the study data shows that Gikuyu has natural gender. This is further revealed in the study of words with gender markings.

The term used to denote a semantic change whereby a word acquires a debased or obscene (negative prestige) reference is pejoration and its opposite is amelioration (positive prestige). Attempts have been made to show that once a word shifts into the female sphere, it is negative, that is pejorated. The opposite is not the case. This is because words are marked for female (negative). The process does not operate in reverse (Schulz, 1975; Miller & Swift, 1976; Spender 1980).

The only variable in this case is that of sex but it is very crucial to the semantic system in a social semiotic framework. This is because it employs double standards.

Schulz (1975) documents this seemingly semantic rule and gives a suitable example in English that corresponds very well with Gikuyu, between the
corresponding pair: 'old man', mûthee versus 'old woman', kîheti.

In English, it is inaccurate and an intended insult to call a man an old woman. But to call a woman an old man is just a mistake! In Gikuyu, it would be disastrous to call a man 'an old woman', kîheti. This is because kîheti is not just an old woman but past child bearing age who keeps on tucking in her dress, heta. It is negative. A mûthee, 'old man' is simply that. It is also bestowed with prestige. To call a woman a mûthee would be a case of mistaken sexual identity; to call a man kîheti would be a terrible insult.

This would seem to imply that masculinity is the unmarked form (norm). This is based on the assumption that the world is male unless proven otherwise. Femininity is the marked form, the otherwise, a deviation from the norm. Cameron (1985:57) summaries it thus: femininity is masculinity inverted.

The following words with female-males inclinations drawn from the study data (see Table 4.12) have been further analysed:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
<th>FEMALE</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Ngatha</em></td>
<td>Favourite wife</td>
<td><em>Ḡthūmba</em></td>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nyaciara</em></td>
<td>Mother-in-law</td>
<td><strong>Mūka wa ihī</strong></td>
<td>Wife of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nyakēga</em></td>
<td>Pleasing wife</td>
<td>**<em>Nyina wa airītu</em></td>
<td>boys (immoral woman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nyakīnyua</strong></td>
<td>Old woman</td>
<td><strong>Nyinawaihī</strong></td>
<td>Mother of girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Nyina wa ihī</em></td>
<td>Mother of boys</td>
<td><strong>Wanja kahī</strong></td>
<td>Tomboy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
<th>MALE</th>
<th>GLOSS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nyamūrio</strong></td>
<td>Children named Paternal kin</td>
<td>*<strong>Mūkoma thī</strong></td>
<td>Womanlike</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N.B. * Favours the male (none favours the female).  
** Has female overtones.  
*** Has corresponding female equivalent (negative).  
** - ** Has male overtones.  
*** - ** Has corresponding male equivalent (positive).  

Out of the twelve items, only two refer to the male. Nyamūrio which is prestigious refers to children of both sexes who are named after the man’s relatives and hence its prestigious. Notable in this reference is its antonym, ḡthūmba which has negative prestige by virtue of the fact that the children (both sexes) are named after the woman’s relatives. Mūkoma thī is a derogatory term for a man who behaves like a woman. Though negative, it has female connotations in that it
tends to imply a womanlike man.

Five of the female items presented above are prestigious while five are not. Nyaciara / nyaciarawe refer to the wife’s mother-in-law, the husband’s mother. This has an obvious male bias. Similarly, a nyakega is a woman who pleases the husband while ngatha is the one he loves most. Nyina wa ihii is a woman who gives birth to boys only. All these words have prestige because of their male overtones and the opposite is the case where applicable. For example, a woman who gave birth to girls only, nyina wa airitu was not bestowed with prestige and a woman with unbecoming behaviour is a wanja kahi, a woman who behaves like boys.

Nyakinyua though derogatory, literally a person who often drinks, a drunkard, has undergone a semantic shift. Although it refers to a drunkard, it has some positive prestige attached to it in that it refers to women of a particular social status, those whose children are circumcised. Such women were allowed to drink beer in public as a mark of prestige. But here again, drinking of beer is a male domain hence the women so accepted are in male preserve territory and hence the subsequent positive prestige.
In Gikuyu society, women with masculine tendencies have no admiration and such are referred to as wanja kahii. In spite of the fact that boys are preferred to girls, ihii, 'uncircumcised boys' are often ill-mannered and lack of manners is associated with them. Women who engage in sexual acts with boys are equally associated with them, muka wa ihii (which has male overtones indicated by ** - ** ) an expression which has no equivalent. However, it is notable that circumcision is an initiation stage which the boys finally accomplish with corresponding acceptable behaviour and change expected of them. There is no notable change in the woman to indicate such effective change. Nyagacu on the other hand refers to the secondary wife. She is just there. Surprisingly, polygamy is viewed with prestige on the part of the man.

4.8.0. THE PREFIX 'NY.A.'

Benson (1964:337) refers to 'nya' as an extra prefix that is associated with specifically feminine names and terms. According to Barlow (1960:100), it is probably derived from nyina, 'mother'. Further analysis of the data in this study focused on whether the prefix is affixed to feminine terms. This may be observed from the following words with the prefix nya drawn from the study data:
Nyaciara - term of address used by a woman to refer to her mother-in-law.

Nyaciarawe - Her mother-in-law.

NB. Note who uses these words and to refer to who.

Nyagacū - A man’s secondary wife.

Nyakahang’ū - Woman of loose moral character.

Nyakang’ei - Diminutive for kang’ei.

Nyakangū - Woman of loose moral character.

Nyakįambi - A man’s first wife.

Nyakįega - A well-behaved woman, one who befriends the husband/man.

Nyakįnyua - Woman past child bearing age whose children are circumcised and married and was allowed to drink beer.

Nyamūrio - Children named after the man’s relatives.

Nyarari - Beautiful woman.

Nyina - Mother.

Nyina wa airįtu - Woman who has given birth to girls only.

Nyina wa ihū/ anake - Woman who has given birth to boys only.

Nyũkwa - Mother, your mother (also insulting in certain contexts).
Out of the fifteen words noted, only one, *nyamūrio*, refers to the male/masculine. Even then, the word has only a male inclination in that it refers to children of both sexes named after the man’s akin. Thus it is possible to conclude, on the basis of these examples that the prefix is associated with feminine terms.

4.9.0. CONCLUSION

This chapter has focused on the analysis of words as text and in context. Naming which is essentially a matter of lexis (Poynton, 1989:12) involves a choice of one word as different from another. For example, from the data used in this study, Gikuyu has a naming system in which children named after the man’s parents and relatives are called *nyamūrio* (prestigious). Subsequently, following children are then named after the woman’s relatives. These are called *ithūmba* (negative prestige). This is a choice. A name is a title. A name identifies a person. It is also a symbol which stands for the unique combination of characteristic and attributes that define a person as an individual (Smith, 1985:38). Thus when a Gikuyu speaker makes a choice between any of the words or chooses to use a particular phrase, the speaker often makes a choice as different from another.
5.1.0. FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study sought to examine language in relation to gender in a social semiotic framework by analyzing certain Gikuyu words with a gender content.

The main group of words studied in this project are nouns. Nouns are one of the most important basic element of speech. In the analysis of words as text and in context, the study found out that Gikuyu language possesses clear marking for feminine, masculine and generic aspects. In the preceding chapter, it was noted that both sexes tend to use these words in the same way. Such perpetuates sexism in language and maintains the status quo thus propagating the wrong concept that the two are different and especially validates the male as of greater importance and value and the female as of lesser importance.

Certain Gikuyu generic words exclude women and men. Words referring to women and men have different connotations, both negative and positive, and prestige. Even when certain terms that exclude either sexes are understood to be generic, the ambiguity of
intention cannot be resolved since certain terms exclude either sexes as text and in context.

Consequently, certain masculine and feminine terms have equivalents while others do not. When viewed in a social semiotic framework, this reflects an ideology of gender in which certain social aspects are seen with a gender bias, a fact that is reinforced by the prominence given in word order and which shows the extent to which Gikuyu language is sexist. Also, feminine and masculine terms have different evaluative loadings referring to their respective gender. Notable among them are the number of words with positive prestige referring to either sex as compared to words with negative prestige.

The method adopted for this study has been both analytical (descriptive) and quantitative (statistical). It is analytical in that statistical and descriptive data has been used to support the argument that language relegates women to a subordinate position. The study is qualitative in that authentic data is used to substantiate all claims.

In order for women to contribute effectively towards building a positive image for themselves in Gikuyu society, the language needs to be redefined. A number of issues have been raised. One is in regard to Gikuyu
social (cultural) life traced to its patriarchal social system. Notwithstanding, women occupy a subordinate place in this system and are socialized to accept their place. This observation has emerged from the study’s analysis of actual words as text and in context. It has been observed that the language propagates the societal values which have been normalised. It may be the case therefore that there is need for change in society and in language. In this view, we conclude that the language need to be redefined.

While research into this topic will no doubt contribute to language, discourse, and sexist discourse (Poynton, 1989; Cameron, 1990; Tannen, 1993), it does hopefully represent an inevitable departure from a simple pursuit of knowledge. In particular, it makes clear certain language and social aspects from which the social semiotic framework of Gikuyu society is based on. Work dwelling on women and those undertaken by women or men on language or other aspects of society must reflect in Cameron’s words (1990:3) "to a greater or lesser extent, the influence of feminism ... and foreground issues of gender difference and male dominance in society". That is, such studies should also strive to redress the balance. Recommendations made in respect of this study have taken this into consideration.
Lexis plays a significant role in meaningful communication especially among the laymen who are not trained as Linguists. The choice and use of lexis should therefore be taken seriously especially the semantics and the connotations embedded in each word either as text or in context. This, it may be argued, may be a significant step towards improving language, not just for its own sake, but for the sake of fairness to all social groups.

Issues raised here are therefore of importance to all members of society and should not be confined to feminism, feminists and to research. In particular, they should be of particular concern to parents, educators, and to the media because they are the primary agents of society in the socialization of children into these institutionalised and propagated attitudes. Children learn their initial categories from parents and educators. The media continues to propagate the same at the advanced stages and beyond. Children hear and read words and they eventually internalise them. These words become their words and the attitudes embedded in them are adopted as the social norm.

To feminists, the issues raised should be used as a basis to press for reforms in such institutions as the publication of books and national broadcasts (Gikuyu
is broadcast on the Kenya Broadcasting Station Vernacular service, Gikuyu, for six hours from Monday to Friday making a total of thirty hours).

To researchers, more research should be undertaken in Bantu, Nilotic, Cushitic and Para-Nilotic languages with the aim of investigating and correcting such imbalance if any. For as is argued in this study, there is need to know what it is we teach our children to think and feel about themselves, about each other and others, and use the means by which they learn so to improve such attitudes. This is because lexis being the most accessible part of language to both the linguists and the non linguists, and taking into consideration that it is lexis that carries meaning (Poynton, 1989) needs to be redefined to avoid any bias among social groups and, or the sexes in any given society. This is also taking into consideration the fact that the use of a text involves certain choices and not others (Halliday & Hasan, 1989).

5.2.0. RECOMMENDATIONS

Gender marking and gender bias in the texts of Gikuyu language is a predominant feature (chapter four). Notwithstanding, it may be recommended, on the basis of observations in this study data that markedness in which the generic word is marked for either of the
sexes should be done away with and should not arise as both sexes are equal.

Gender neutral terms such as mündū which have been found not to be neutral due to their inclination towards the male should be used less frequently for someone whose sex is known.

Speakers should make clear the choice between such words as maraya / múmaraya when referring to someone such as:

Mündürüme múmaraya - male prostitute
Műtumia múmaraya - female prostitute

When talking about someone, the sex should be explicit. Words without a corresponding pair should be sparingly used especially when they are derogatory to avoid sexual bias.

Fitting Linguistic terms should be used in place of the more derogatory terms. For example, in English ms is recommended in place of miss and mrs. and wait-person instead of waiter /waitress are marked for female. In Gikuyu for example, ciana/mwana 'child/ren' should be used instead of githumba and nyamurio which have a sexual bias.
The use of fixed phrases should be checked. For example, in English man and woman is interchangeable with woman and man (Smith, 1985).

The study does acknowledge efforts made by others in relation to language and gender. For example, it reiterates Oduol’s (1990) recommendation that:

People should therefore pay particular attention to the kind of language they use in relation. They should be aware that the language will establish (identify) their ideological stance, that is, beliefs, values and attitudes. That the meaning of whatever they say will be derived from the actual choices that they make in using languages (since it is not entirely random) in view of how the choice is related to the "context in which they speak, the goal or purpose of the talk and what beliefs and values are implicated".

This is true of people in influential positions, in the media (radio and newspapers), parents, adults, and publishers in the choice of words, co-occurrence of phrases and use of expressions, for example, [mūtumia na mūthuri] [woman and man]. Words with sexist connotations and sexual bias that perpetuate inequality such as maraya, prostitute, imply an ideological choice and hence should be avoided.

The social organization has been woven to support and substantiate male superiority and female inferiority. For this reason, there is need for a reconstruction of beliefs and values to dislodge this prejudice and lay it to rest.
5.3.0. **SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY**

This study was concerned with the analysis of the Gikuyu lexicon in order to determine the extent to which it reflects gender. Further research in other areas such as syntax, phonology and grammar need to be carried out.

The researcher observed that in Gikuyu language, woman is often a passive receptor of many actions in relation to the active male as evident in the types of words in the noun class focused on in this study. It is suggested that more research should be carried out in regard to the usage of verbs and in the morphology of the language.

There is need to study Gikuyu textbooks just as has been done in English and other languages (Obura, 1991). The study only offers a description of noun words as part of the general description of Gikuyu that relies on natural data. It also offers a basis of study of other language structures using the corpus, for example grammar. The data in this study has been used to stress on the need to let language define itself, what Sinclair (1991:123) calls language reflexivity, that is the capacity of language to talk about itself. This should be the way to describe
language and research ought to be carried out in this direction on other languages.

There are a number of applications to the kind of analysis presented in this study. First, it is possible, using the study data, to make a comparison of actual dictionary meanings and normal language usage using the analysis. Thus the analysis can be used to improve the wording of a Gikuyu dictionary. Secondly, for the lexicographers, alternative words and expressions (phrases) in Gikuyu should now be considered bearing in mind exactly how they are similar or different. Also, people can be sensitized to the nature of gender bias words contain.

5.4.0. CONCLUSION

Language is in many ways sexist. The text samples used in this study of the Gikuyu language have shown the language to be no exception. This has been looked at from a social semiotic framework.

The study data was used essentially to study nouns. Nouns are the most basic and commonly used elements of speech. They are very popularly used in common speech. People therefore need to be sensitive and sensitized to the nature of gender bias words contain.
A gender study often involves the treatment of a language family. Hence the relevance of this study goes beyond the analysis of Gikuyu and the claims made from the analysis may apply to a number of other Bantu languages. This is because the words gathered occurred in Gikuyu conversations where the bulk of the sentence structure is much the same as in many Bantu languages. Also, Bantu languages are said to have a natural gender (Cameron, 1985:63). Thus the results gathered are very likely typical of other Bantu languages. It is hoped that such an attempt at studying these and other languages will expose sexism in language with a view to making change where needed.

The analysis adopted in this study also constitutes a radical change from general semantics to the social semiotics which is more dynamic, sociolinguistic and more experiential and language use oriented. Investigations conducted along these lines have resulted in an ultimate description of a more cultural but linguistic nature. This should be the way to describe any language, that is, language in use.

The use of a corpus has shown that there is a lot to learn about language using the computer than it was possible to imagine years ago. It reveals the detailed analysis possible using the computer and the application of computers to study language corpora.
does reveal new facts which need to be built in our
description of languages, for example, Gikuyu.

In conclusion, the study has been an attempt to
contribute to the universal struggle for the equality
of all persons. The study is not exhaustive and it is
hoped that other studies will be tackled by other
scholars and researchers in this and related fields of
study.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


LIST OF WORDS USED IN THIS STUDY

\textbf{Awa} - Father.

\textbf{Baba} - Father.

\textbf{Ciana} - Children.

\textbf{Cúcú} - Grandmother (diminutive: singular, gacúcú; plural, túcúcú).

\textbf{Gakenia} - A woman who makes the husband happy, a woman who cheers the husband.

\textbf{Gathirange} - A virgin girl.

\textbf{Gicokio} - Divorced woman (plural, icokio).

\textbf{Githaria} - Adulterer.

\textbf{Githūmba} - Children named after the wife's relatives, both male and female children named after maternal kin. (plural, ithūmba).

\textbf{Guka} - Grandfather (diminutive: singular, kaguka, plural, tuguka).

\textbf{Irigi rīa thome} - Male child, a boy, hedge of the homestead.

\textbf{Ithe} - Father of.

\textbf{Kaana} - Child (plural, twana; augmentative, kāana).

\textbf{Kahii} - Small boy (plural, tūhii).

\textbf{Kahūni} - Small boy (plural, tūhūni; augmentative kīhūni).
Kairètu - Young girl (plural, tuirètu).
Kamwana - Small boy (plural, tumwana).
Kanda - Young man, bachelor, gentleman (diminutive, gakanda).
Kang'ei - Married woman whose children are not yet circumcised (diminutive, nyakang'ei).
Karendi - Young girl, lady (plural, turendi).
Kiheti - Old woman past birth bearing age (plural, iheti; diminutive, kaheti).
Kihii - Uncircumcised big boy (plural, ihii).
Kîmaramari - Hoodlum, a shady character, ill-mannered person.
Kîrigû - Uncircumcised girl (diminutive: singular, karigû; plural, irigû).
Kûmbani - A man who seduces many women, a charming man who is attractive to women, a successful seducer, a man with a concubine (plural, ciumbani).
Mama - Maternal uncle.
Mami/maitû - Mother, my mother.
Maraya - A promiscuous person, a prostitute. Another word that means the same is mûmaraya (diminutive: kamûmaraya; augmentative, kimûmaraya).
Mumo - Young circumcised people (both sexes).
Mûciari - Parent (plural, aciari).
Mûguna kwene - Girl child. Literally a person who benefits another’s home. This refers to
someone who is actually of little or no benefit to the self or those close to him or her but is of utmost benefit to others.

Mūhikania - Bridegroom.

Mūhiki - Bride.

Mūirītu - Young [initiated] unmarried woman (plural, airītu).

Mūka - Woman/wife of (plural, aka).

Mūka wa ihī - Woman of bad morals or loose character, badly behaved, who accepts uncircumcised boys as lovers.

Mūkoma thī - A man who behaves like a woman, womanlike.

Mūkūrīra riika - A man who has grown old and remains unmarried, a person who has outgrown his age (mūrera mariika, senior bachelor).

Mūkūrū - Old person.

Mūndū - Person (plural, andū).

Mūndū mūka - Woman (plural, aka).

Mūndūrūme - Man (plural, arūme).

Mūndū wa nja - Woman (plural, andū a nja).

Mūriū - Son (plural, arīū).

Mūrū - Son of (plural, arīū).

Mūrūme - Husband to.

Mūthee - Old man (diminutive, gathee; augmentative: githee).
Mùthuri - Male, husband, elderly male, elder (either sex) (plural: aṭhuri; diminutive: singular, gathuri, plural tùthuri; augmentative: singular, gî thai ā, plural, ithuri).

Mùtumia - Woman, married woman (plural, atumia; diminutive: singular, gatumia, plural tùtumia; augmentative: singular, gî tumia, plural, itumia).

Mwana - Child.

Mwanake - Young initiated man (plural, anake).

Mwarì - Daughter of (plural, aarì).

Ngatha - Most loved woman amongst a man's wives, respected and most noble and held in esteem above others.

Njamba - Warrior, courageous and brave person, hero.

Nyaciara - This is a term of address used by a woman to refer to her mother-in-law.

Nyaciarawe - Her mother-in-law.

Nyagacù - A man's secondary wife (second, third).

Nyakahang'ù - Woman of loose moral character, badly behaved, slut/slattern.

Nyakangù - Woman of loose moral character, badly behaved, slut/slattern.

Nyakambì - A man's first wife.

Nyakęega - A woman who is well behaved, who befriends the husband/man and treats him
well, pleasing wife.

Nyakinyua - Woman past child bearing age, whose children are circumcised and was allowed to drink beer in public.

Nyamurio - Children named after the mans' akin.

Nyarari - Beautiful woman, extremely beautiful woman.

Nyina - Mother.

Nyina wa airitu - A woman who has given birth to girls only (mother of girls).

Nyina wa ihii - A woman who has given birth to boys only (mother of boys).

Nyikwa - Mother, your mother. It is also used as a terrible insult (a fighting word: nyikwa!).

Tata - Aunt.

Thata - Barren person.

Thoguo - Your father.

Wanja kahii - Tomboy. A girl/woman who has behavioral tendencies like a boy (plural, wanja tuhii).
LIST OF INFORMANTS

Agnes Njeri
Ann Ndegwa
Ann Wambui
Bernard Mburu
Boro Muchori
Catherine Kihonge
Charles Kimani
Charles Ndichu
Daniel Kihara
Duncan Mutura
Elizabeth Nyambura
Eunice Ng’endo
Eva Kamau
Evans Ngugi
Geoffrey Gacuiri
Geoffrey Maina
Grace Nyambura
Grace Waiganjo
Hannah Njoki
Jane Gathoni
Jane Muthoni
Jane Wanjiru
Jeremiah Waweru
John Njoroge

John Waweru
Johnson Mboro
Joseph Ndegwa
Joseph Ngigi
Joyce Kiarie
Lucy Nduta
Lucy Wangari
Margaret Kabura
Margaret Wanjiku
Martha Nyambura
Mary Njoki Kung’u
Monica Nyokabi
Monica Wambui
Moses Mbugua
Paul Gitau
Paul Gikang’a
Paul Waithiru
Peter Kamau
Peter Karichu
Samuel Kamau
Serah Wambui
Tabitha Mbiyu
William Mutura
Wilson Goko
GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDES

TOPICS

- Wedding/marriage
- Occupation
- Children and childbirth
- Education
- Divorce
- Church Membership and leadership
- Men and women
APPENDIX (iv)

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear friend,

The following questionnaire is meant to help me obtain information on Gikuyu as used by the speakers. Kindly answer the following questions to help me obtain the information needed. Please also note that the information given will be used only for the purpose of research and will be treated as confidential.

Thank you for your participation.

a) PERSONAL DETAILS

1) Name _______________________

2) Age:
   a) 15-25 __
   b) 26-50 __
   c) 50+ __

3) Sex:
   a) Male __
   b) Female __

4) Highest level of Education
   a) Primary __
   b) Secondary __
   c) College __
   d) University __
   e) Any other(Specify) _______________________

b) WORDS

1) What is the Gikuyu word for:-
   i) Man __________
   ii) Woman __________
   iii) Person __________
   iv) People __________
   v) Father __________
   vi) Mother __________
   vii) Parent __________
   viii) Elder __________
   ix) Man Elder __________
   x) Woman Elder __________

2) By what title do you address your:-
   i) Father __________
   ii) Mother __________
iii) Your friend’s Father ______
iv) Your friend’s Mother ______

3) What is the Gikuyu word for
i) Prostitute ______
ii) Male prostitute ______
iii) Female prostitute ______
iv) a promiscuous person ______

4) What do you call:-
   i) A man who is divorced ______
   ii) A woman who is divorced ______

5) What do you call:-
   i) A man who is not married ______
   ii) A woman who is not married ______

6) What do you call:-
   i) A woman who has given birth to:
      a) Boys only ______
      b) Girls only ______
   ii) A man who has:
      a) Boys only ______
      b) Girls only ______

7) What do you call:-
   i) A person who is barren ______
   ii) A woman who can’t give birth ______
   iii) A man who can’t father children ______

8) What do you call:-
   i) A man who is living single ______
   ii) A woman who is living single ______

9) What do you call:
   i) A man who is circumcised ______
   ii) A man who is not circumcised ______
   iii) A woman who is circumcised ______
   iv) A woman who is not circumcised ______

10) What do you call:-
    i) A small boy ______ b) A small girl ______
    ii) A Beautiful girl ______ b) Handsome boy ______
    iii) A Beautiful lady ______ b) Handsome man ______

11) What do you call a child/children:-
    i) Named after your mother’s relatives ______
    ii) Named after your father’s relatives ______

12) What do you call:
    i) A tough man ______
    ii) A tough woman ______

13) What do you call:
    i) A man who works in a bar ______
    ii) A woman who works in a bar ______

c) PHRASES.

1) You are in a meeting attended by people of different ages and sexes. How would you separate them in terms of age and sex?

________________________________________

________________________________________
2) A couple has visited your home. You don’t know their names because they are newly wedded. How would you request them to come forward to be seen by your friends?

3) You are walking with your parents/children when you meet your friend with his parents. How would you introduce them to one another without saying their names?

4) Coming from your grandparents’ home, you meet your father who is going there. Tell him you found no one except his brothers and sisters.

5) Your church has built toilets for all persons of different sexes and ages. How would you specify which toilet is for who?
KURI WEE MURATA,

CIURIA ICI CII HAHA NI CIAKUHOTITHIA KUMENYA MAKIRIA UHORO UKONIE RUTHIOMI RUA GIKUYU. HAKIRI UGUO-RI, INGIKENA MUNO UNGICOKIA CIURIA ICI WEGA TA URIA UUI RUTHIOMI RUU. NGWENDA UMENYE ATI MACOKIO MAKU MEKUHUTHIRUO NA NJIRA YA GITHOMO NA TI NA UNDU UNGI ONA URUKI. UHORO URIA UKUANDIKA NI WA HITHO.

NI NGATHO NIUNDU WA UTEITHIO WAU.

NGAI AKURATHIME MUNO.

1. Riitwa :

2. Miaka 15-25 ( )
   26-50 ( )
   50 na makiria ( )

3. Ukinyitie githomo giaku ha? _______________________

4. Witaga aciari aku atia uteekumeta riitwa _______________________

5. Witaga aciari a murata waku atia _______________________

6. Witaga ari maciaraniirwo na aciari aku atia? _______________________

7. Mundu matiganite na mwendwa wake etagwo atia? ________
   i) Mundurume ______________________
   ii) Mutumia ______________________

8. Mundu utetwo ni muthuri wake etagwo atia? _______________________

9. Mundu matiganite na mutumia wake etagwo atia? _______________________

10. Mundu uhuraga umaraya etagwo atia? ______________________
   i) Ee muthuri ______________________
   ii) Ee mutumia ______________________

11. Mundu wina ciana cia airitu theri etagwo atia? ________
    i) Ee muthuri ______________________
    ii) Ee mutumia ______________________

12. Mundu wina ciana cia tuhii theri etagwo atia? ________
    i) Ee muthuri ______________________
    ii) Ee mutumia ______________________

13. Mundu utari mwana etagwo atia? __________
    i) Ee muthuri ______________________
    ii) Ee mutumia ______________________

14. Mundu mukuru umwitaga atia? ______________________
    i) Ee mutumia ______________________
    ii) Ee muthuri ______________________

15. Ciana iria ituitwo kwaa mami wanyu ciatagwo atia? _______________________

16. Ciana iria ituitwo kwaa baba wanyu ciatagwo atia? _______________________

17. Mundu utari muruu etagwo atia? ______________________
    i) Ee muiritu ______________________
    ii) Ee mwanake ______________________

18. Mundu muruu etagwo atia? ______________________
    i) Ee muiritu ______________________
    ii) Ee mwanake ______________________

19. Mundu muthaka etagwo atia? ______________________
    i) Ee muiritu ______________________
    ii) Ee mwanake ______________________
20. Mundu njamba etagwo atia?  
   i) Ee mundurume  
   ii) Ee mutumia  

21. Muruti wira mbaa etagwo atia?  
   i) Ee mundurume  
   ii) Ee mutumia  

22. Wi mucemanio ini ukitwo ni andu a mithemba mingi anyinyi ona anene. Urenda matigane kuringana na miaka na riika. Ungimera atia?  

23. Andu mekunyitithanagio uhiki nimokira gwaku. Ndumoi maritwa. Ungihota kumeta atia nigetha umamenyithanie na aria mekuo?  

24. Mwina aciari aku kana ciana ciaku mugithii gucera. Ni mwagomana na murata waku. Ungimuira atia kuonanaia acio ni aciari aku kana ni ciana ciaku utekumuira maritwa macio?  

25. Uma gucerera aciari aa aciari aku. Ni mwagomana na ithe waku agithii kuo. Ungimuira atia matiri kuo no aria maciaraniirwo nao na ciana ciao mekwo?  

26. Kanitha wanyu niurakire cioro cia andu oothe. Ungiandika ibao atia cioro-ini icio utigithukanitie andu acio oothe kuringana na miaka yao na kuringana na muciarire wao?