KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
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GENDER BIAS IN THE LANGUAGE OF WEDDING SONGS: A
CASE STUDY OF WEDDING SONGS IN MAGUMONI
DIVISION, THARAKA NITHI COUNTY

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other University.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved husband Clarence Nyaga, my sons Titus Mandera, Fidelis Kaaria, Harrison Kirimi, Maxwell Mwiti and my daughter Rosemary.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am specifically thankful to my supervisors Dr. Phyllis W. Mwangi and Mr. Victor Omasaja for their dedication, scholarly advice, excellent and wise counsel during my preparation and writing of this dissertation. This is because if it were not for their suggestions, dedication and efforts I would not have made it.

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Other thanks and appreciation go to Mukami and Kawira who assisted me in typing and formatting my work. Finally I sincerely acknowledge and appreciate the contribution of everyone who made my work a success in any way for as they say: "Kiara kimwe gitiuragaga ndaa"

(One finger cannot kill a louse)
ABBREVIATIONS

C.M.T – Conceptual Metaphor Theory

D.O – District Officer

K.I.E – Kenya Institute of Education
DEFINITION OF TERMS

Feminism: The belief that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men.

Gender: In feminism theory generally, socially constructed male/femaleness as opposed biological male/femaleness which is sex. Traditionally It refers to being male or female. Today it is used more frequently than sex as it is more specific.

Gender roles: These are responsibilities and activities men and women are expected to undertake in the home, workplace and in the community.

Gender stereotype: This is a fixed expression, opinion or belief which is applied to a group or an individual within a group. An example of Gender stereotype is that women belong to the Kitchen or that boys are better than girls in community activities.

Sexism: The unfair treatment of people, especially women because of their sex.

Image: A mental picture or idea of somebody or something.

Masculinity: Traditionally masculine characteristics were seen as being strong, powerful, dominant, and courageous as well as having the ability to make decisions.

Metaphor: A word or phrase that is used in an imaginative way to show that something or somebody has the same qualities as another. It may be interpreted as the dream work of language whose interpretation reflects as much on the interpreter as on the originator.

Patriarchy: A society's organization of its affairs to cater for and sustain male dominance over women.
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ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate gender bias in the language of wedding songs in Magumoni Division Meru South District. Images that portrayed gender bias were the focus. Two social variables of age and gender were investigated to find out how they influence people’s perception on gender bias in the society. Using purposeful sampling we selected suitable respondents from the Meru community. We tape recorded selected wedding songs, identified images that depicted gender bias and subjected them to the opinion of the respondents. The images were analyzed using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). There are five sections in the dissertation. There is an introduction, literature review and theoretical framework, data analysis, research methodology, summary and conclusion. The study reviewed that there was gender bias in the Meru community. Both men and women are discriminated in one way or another. Therefore the study added useful information to sexism and language in the society.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Language and gender has been an area of interest to many linguists. Cameron (1990) is of the view that language is a tool that human beings use to express themselves. Many studies have been conducted on language and gender bias in the society. Lakoff (1975) notes that women experience gender discrimination in the way language is used to portray them. This form of discrimination only becomes manifest when one considers the roles the sexes play in the society.

Other linguists dealing with language and gender have investigated language to find out if it has a bias and how it impacts on the people using it. Both men and women may be perceived differently in the traditional community. The society ensures that through language men and women are given roles which affect their future community development and aspirations in life. This is the core concern of the study.

In many communities songs are considered very important tools of communication. According to Miruka (1999), songs refer to the verbal expression of feelings, ideas and thoughts using clear language. Since songs are poetic in nature, they employ figurative language that is rich in images.

Songs are an essential part of life in many communities (Kipury 1983). These songs may be sung spontaneously depending on the occasion. Nandwa and Bukenya (1994:85) note that songs occupy every stage of African traditional life. We have birth, naming, circumcision, marriage and funerual songs. We also have songs
that are found in folk narratives. Nandwa et al (2008:71) point out that songs in narratives help to emphasise the message the narrator wants the audience to grasp. They are used to invite the audience to attention.

According to Kipury (1983), songs reflect a people’s philosophy, beliefs and sometimes their political development and social values. She further notes that since the Maasai are pastoral people, they base their ideas around their immediate surrounding. Their imagery is therefore drawn from the pastoral setting and so they sing about colours, shapes, the behaviour of cattle, their sizes and shapes of their horns.

In most traditional societies, marriage ceremonies were accompanied by singing of nuptial songs. Miruka (1999) presents a wedding song entitled,” Nyagumbe”. The song focuses on the domestic duties of a wife. In this Luo community, marriage places certain domestic responsibilities on the women. These include cooking meals that must be acceptable to the husband.

Among the Meru, traditional gender roles were clearly stated. The society was patriarchal. The man was the head of the family and also owned property. Apart from rare instances, the social institution which dealt with legal matters was controlled by men. Women were expected to be obedient to their husbands. Women were not allowed to argue with men or to take revenge directly even if they were wronged by their husbands.

In the traditional society, marriage among the Meru was celebrated after the initiation of both boys and girls. A boy identified his wife to be and informed his father who then sent a relative to the girl’s home. The father of the girl responded by taking a gourd of beer to the boy’s home as a sign of acceptance of the marriage
The traditional dowry was in the form of cows and other presents like a cask of honey, a ram and a he-goat. The bride was given presents depending on what both parents could afford to give. Songs were sung to celebrate this glorious occasion. They educated the audience on the norms of the society. For instance, intermarriage between relatives was considered a taboo. The message was passed through the use of metaphors in the wedding songs.

According to Steen (2007), metaphor is clearly one of the areas where cognitive poetics may benefit from cognitive linguistic enterprise. He is of the view that metaphor may be approached as some form of mappings across two conceptual domains which include source and target domains. He further states that cognitive linguists make a distinction between the linguistic expression of the underlying conceptual domains and cross-domain mappings that take part in the mind. These mappings make it possible for people to understand metaphors.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), metaphors are understood through a systematic mapping between topic and context. Whenever a metaphor is used, people automatically access the relevant conceptual mappings in the brain so as to arrive at the correct interpretation. Thus, understanding of metaphors requires enough knowledge of the topic and the conceptual domains that are attributed to them.

The current study is aimed at analyzing the metaphorical language used in wedding songs. Marriage in many communities places certain domestic responsibilities on both men and women that are acceptable to the ethos and norms of the society. This reality was reflected in the images used in the Meru wedding songs that are still sung today. Our concern was how the society interprets these images.
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The study sought to investigate whether, according to men and women of different ages, the language in Meru wedding songs is discriminative in terms of gender roles. The main concern was the way in which sexism manifests itself in the language of wedding songs. As a result, the study examined the extent to which images in the songs may be said to portray gender bias. Values portrayed in the songs that are based on negative attitudes towards both men and women could only be identified through a critical study such as this.

Despite the numerous studies carried out based on language and gender, little, if anything, had been done to analyze the problem associated with gender bias as portrayed in the language of wedding songs in the Meru community, hence the need to carry out the study.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following were the objectives of the study:

(i) To identify images that make reference to gender roles in Meru wedding songs.

(ii) To determine how the images are viewed across the variables of age and sex.

(iii) To account for the images in Meru wedding songs using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (C.M.T).

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study aimed to answer the following questions.

(i) What images make reference to gender roles in Meru weddings songs?
(ii) How are the images viewed across the variables of age and sex?

(iii) To what extent can the images be accounted for in the Conceptual Metaphor Theory?

1.5 RESEARCH ASSUMPTIONS

The study was based on the following assumptions:

i. The images in Meru wedding songs reflect gender roles.

ii. The images are viewed differently across the variables of age and sex.

iii. The images in the language of the songs can be accounted for by the Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

1.6 JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY.

Although other scholars may have addressed the issue of wedding songs in other communities, we felt that gender bias portrayed by the images used in the songs had not been addressed in the Meru community.

Language is a weapon used by the powerful to oppress the subordinate (Cameron, 1985). The researcher is of the view that the images in the songs are a powerful tool through which gender bias is portrayed and perpetuated.

According to Kasomo (2006:96), the significance of a study spells out the benefits that will be derived by the study when its findings are reported. The findings from the study add to a body of knowledge in sexism and language use as it points out instances where the Meru wedding songs portray discrimination against both men and women in the society. The study adds useful awareness on gender bias to the community and the society at large.
1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATION.

The study falls in the field of cognitive linguistics. It focuses on songs in the wedding among the Meru community. The main concern in the study was to indentify and analyse images that portray gender bias.

There are many types of songs depending on the occasion. We have birthday play, praise ,leisure, war, political, religious funeral and wedding songs. However for the purpose of this study we were only interested in the wedding songs of the Meru community. Although wedding songs are many only five secular songs were chosen for the study.

Although there were other issues in the songs, the study narrowed down to images used in the songs that portrayed gender bias.

According to the records in the office of the District officer (DO) Meru is a region in the Eastern Province of Kenya that is subdivided into many districts. They include: Meru South, Maara, Imenti South, Meru Central, Tharaka North, Tharaka south, Tigania East, Tigania West, Igembe and Buuri.

However the study targeted Meru speakers drawn from Magumoni Division, Meru South District in Tharaka Nithi County. This community borders Chuka town to the North, Embu District to the South, Mt Kenya Forest to the west and Igambang’ombe Division to the east. The number of respondents was determined by the nature and setting of the study.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section reviews previous studies that have examined language and gender that are related to this study. This review helped in understanding and investigating the research problem. It involved examining documents such as books, magazines, journals and dissertations that had a bearing on the study being conducted. The review is divided into the following sections: language gender and education, sexism in language and review on metaphors.

2.1.1 Language, Gender and Education.

Kitetu et al, (1997) studied dialogues in text books. He concluded that classroom dialogues can act as role models through gendered demonstrations and role play. He noted that there are implications of imbalanced dialogues in the classroom, especially in mixed sex classrooms. If the number of speech roles was not proportional in both sexes, there may be gender bias. That means the group with fewer chances of speech roles had no voice hence could not express its ideas appropriately as participants since they were not represented accurately.

This is applicable to the current study as far as gender bias is concerned.

Obura (1991) also studied the portrayal of girls and women in Kenyan primary school texts. Her findings indicated that girls are still unrepresented and stereotyped as being subordinate to men. Nkinyangi (1984) also investigated gender portrayal in the Kenyan primary schools. He discovered that women are stereotyped as domestic
workers while men own property and work out of the home. Although the present study is not based on a school setting, it nevertheless shares the concern of gender discrimination.

According to K.I.E core module (2001: 189), the attitude of teachers and expectations about male and female pupils may be portrayed in statements such as:

"Girls are not as bright as boys."

"Boys are better in sciences and mathematics than girls."

"Girls simply don’t work as hard as boys."

This shows that people’s attitude towards gender roles and abilities may be portrayed in their language through statements such as the above. In the same module, gender discrimination is shown in the use of the pronoun “he” or “man” to denote both male and female. This means that people’s way of thinking, opinions and attitudes can be expressed through language.

This applied to our study in that the study intended to investigate people’s attitudes towards the images in the songs. That is if they think the images are discriminative as far as gender roles were concerned.

2.1.2 Sexism in Language

Communicative competence is concerned with how girls and boys learn how to speak appropriately in a given society. Edelsky (1976) investigates how children perceived stereotypes of male and female language and how those perceptions might influence them. He observes that parent’s way of speaking to their children may encourage gender bias. This is where they learn to speak like boys and girls.
Trudigil (1973) researches on the linguistic differences that exist between men and women. He discovers that linguistic sex varieties arise because language as a social variable is closely related to social attitude. Men and women are socially different in that society lays down different social roles for them and expects different responsibilities from them. It may be argued therefore that the kind of gender socialization that boys and girls undergo makes them develop certain attitudes and behaviour related to gender which could be reflected in the language they use.

Edelsky's (1976) and Trudigil's (1973) studies are related to this study in that both of them deal with gender bias. However, they differ in that this study is concerned with the language of people who have already acquired language unlike Edelsky's that deals with boys and girls who are in the process of acquiring language. Trudigil (1973) researches on linguistic differences between men and women. That means this study is different from that of Trudigil in that it examined gender bias in the responsibilities and gender roles that were identified in the images in the wedding songs and not linguistic differences in the speech of men and women.

Many linguists have conducted studies on gender bias in the society. Among them are Kabira (1991) and Lakoff (1975). Lakoff (1975) notes that women experienced gender discrimination in the way language is used to portray them. She notes that this discrimination cannot be foreseen except in consideration to the roles the sexes play in the society. This was relevant to the present study because it was aimed at examining whether the language in the songs discriminates in terms of gender roles.

Other linguists who have studied language and gender have investigated if language has a bias and the consequences this may have on the individuals using the
language. Some of these linguists include: Wango (1998), Bodine (1975), Miller and Switch (1977). Cameron (1990), is of the view that rather than being a vehicle which carries ideas, language by itself is a shaper of ideas and the programme of mental activity. Therefore it is through languages that human beings express themselves.

According to Wango (1998), gender bias is portrayed in the way sexism manifests itself in the language. He observed that the achievements and contributions of women may be downplayed through language because women are portrayed as being dependent on men. He noted that females are stereotyped in their roles and portrayed with less human traits and abilities. He further noted that Gikuyu language relegates females to a subordinate position in which their roles and functions are suppressed in favour of males. All these portrayals are a form of gender bias in the society’s general feelings and attitudes that are based on language.

Although the current study is similar to that of Wango’s, it differs from it in that it employs the Conceptual Metaphor Theory unlike that of Wango that uses the Social Semiotic Theory. Again, while his is on Gikuyu language, ours is on Kimeru.

Chesaina (1991-) carried out a case study and found women portrayed as voiceless individuals who have little intelligence and therefore have to be totally dependent on men. In the study, boys are seen rescuing their sisters and mothers from danger. Girls play a passive role in hostile and social surroundings. Ogres in these communities (Kalenjin and Masaai) go after girls and women but not boys or men. This is a form of gender bias in the society which was the main issue in this study.

According to Coupland and Jawork (1997), titles and forms of address, part of the lexicon and grammar can also portray gender bias which in turn can reinforce
sexual divisions and discrimination. Coupland and Jawork further notes that “society” holds certain beliefs about men and other relative status. Language has evolved to reflect those beliefs, roles and norms which constitute gender as a social construct. Thus, there was need to carry out this study to find out if the images in the songs portray the same form of bias in the Meru community.

Spender (1980:17) is of the view that words that refer to women assume negative connotations even where they state the same state or condition as it does for men. Spinster and bachelor are words used to refer to unmarried adults. However, when these words are marked for males they are positive while when marked for females they are negative. The only variable is that of sex that is used for semantic purposes. Schulz (1975a), notes that the relationship between sex and semantics is not occasional and not confined to examples like spinster or bachelor. It extends to all words that are marked female. She takes an example of man and woman and says that no insult is implied if you refer to a female as an old man. It is not correct but the assumption is that of mistaken identity. However this is not the case if you call a male an old woman. It would still be incorrect but the assumption is that you intended to insult. Schulz further states that while male titles have retained their original positive meaning, female titles have “been down graded.” She cites an example of the male title lord which preserves its initial meaning whereas lady no longer labels women of high rank. Lakoff (1975) cites a case for lady having become a term of insult but only relevant for American usage.

Lakoff (1975: 30) further notes that whereas metaphors and labels are likely to have a wide range of reference to men, the same metaphors and labels are likely to assume sexual connotations when used to refer to women. Lakoff (1975) quotes an
example of the word **professional.** Such a term whether used in reference to men or women, should be parallel semantically. However, when the sex changes, so too does the meaning. Consider the following discourse.

(a) He's a professional.

(b) She's a professional.

Lakoff (1975) comments that if the hearer does not know the subject of the discourse, he/she would assume in (a) *he* would be used to refer to a doctor, a lawyer or other professions. But the conclusion in (b) would be different, rather the first assumption that most speakers of English seem to make is that *she* is a prostitute *figuratively speaking.*

Spender (1980) is of the same view when he notes that language is our means of manipulating reality. In the structure of language and its use we bring our world into realization. One of the ways in which we can make sense of our male dominated world is predictable in that the male represents the positive while the female necessarily represents the negative.

It was in this view that the current study was embedded. The basic concern in this study was however not exactly the same as that of Schulz's (1975), Lakoff's (1975) and Spender's (1980) as it was aimed at investigating the images in the songs.

Cameron and Coates (1988) have a collection of wedding songs in the Gujarati society. According to this section of Gujarati society, marriage and marriage rites are used to explain the role of women in this particular community. One song compares daughters to cows and sees them as a symbol in Hindu folk lore of long suffering and tolerance, going whenever they are led and encouraged to be a shadow of their husbands.
The present study was related to that of Cameron and Coates (1988) in that they investigated language and gender in terms of bias against women. However, the current study differed in that it was concerned with investigating the extent to which the language in Meru wedding songs is discriminative in terms of gender roles. Both men and women may be perceived differently in the traditional community. The society ensures that men and women are given different roles which affect their future community development and aspiration in life.

Yet another source that touches on songs is Loliyong (1972). He presents a lament wedding song among the Basoga community. Girls at the marriage ceremony of a colleague think of the trials she will find there, the harsh in laws that will bully her, the tasks she is to encounter and the insults she will get for any faults. The present study sought to find out if in the Meru community the image of one sex is enhanced by the language while the other is devalued or diminished.

2.1.3 Review on Metaphors

Since the study is based on images, a review on metaphors is of vital importance. Searle (1979) points out that if you hear someone say, “Sally is a block of ice” or “Sam is a pig” you may assume that the speaker does not mean what he says literally, but he is being metaphorical. Sally is not being quantified over blocks of ice at all. The utterance is not literal because sally is not a block of ice.

On the other hand Sacks (1979) notes that metaphor is the dream work of language and like all dream work, its interpretation reflects as much on the interpreter as well as the dreamer since it is the work of imagination. Kovecses (2002) notes that metaphor is a figure of speech in which one thing is compared to another. By saying
one is the other as in, “he is a lion” or as Encyclopedia Britannica puts it, metaphor is a figure of speech that implies comparison between two unlike entities as distinguished from simile, an explicit comparison signaled by words like or as. For example “James is a lion in the fight” means James and the lion have something in common, namely their courage and strength.

The above review is related to the present study in that the theory used was based on metaphors. However, it is important to note that the images that were investigated were identified on the bases of gender roles and not general metaphorical statements as the ones cited above.
2.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

Some of the theories advanced in cognitive Linguistics are discussed in this section. They include the following:

- Conceptual Blending Theory by Fauconnier and Turner (2002)

In any scholarly work, the approach adopted in analyzing the study largely depends on the focus and concern of the study. That means a scholarly work of this nature has to be based on a specific theoretical framework. The study is derived from cognitive linguistics. Important cognitive linguists include Mark Johnson and George Lakoff (2003) who are the proponents of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT). The study used this theory.

Cognitive linguistics is the study of the relationship between language and human mind. In this school of linguistics accounts of language that explain human mind are provided. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003) language use must be explained with reference to the underlying mental processes.

There are other theories related to Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson (2003). Among them include: Conceptual Blending Theory by Fauconnier and Turner (2002) and Relevant Theory by Sperber and Wilson (1995). According to Fauconnier and Turner (2002), Conceptual Blending Theory is a theory of cognition. In this Theory elements and vital relations from diverse scenarios are "blended" in a sub-conscious process. This process is known as conceptual blending and is assumed to be of use to everyday thought and language. Insights obtained from the blends constitute the product of creative thinking. However it is important to note that this
theory is based on ideas advanced by Lakoff and Johnson (1993). Therefore we did not use it as we preferred to go to the source.

In Relevant Theory by Sperber and Willson (1995) implicit inferences are taken into account. The theory is of the view that the hearer /reader or audience will search for meaning in any given communication situation and having found meaning that fits their expectation of relevance, processing stops. In this conceptual model, the author takes into account the context of the communication and the cognitive environment between the speaker and the audience. The speaker must say enough to communicate what he/she intends relying on the audience to fill in the details that they did not communicate.

However, since the study is concerned with metaphors that apply figurative language, Conceptual Metaphor Theory is the most appropriate for the study. As already indicated this is advanced by Lakoff and Johnson (2003). In cognitive linguistics Conceptual Metaphor Theory refers to the understanding of one idea or conceptual domain in terms of another. According to this theory, metaphors are not simply literally devices but something active in understanding the very basis of language. Metaphors organize our experience uniquely, organize that experience and create convincing realities. Metaphors commonly mean saying one thing while intending another, making implicit comparisons between things linked by common features, perhaps even violating semantic rules.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003:3), the concepts that govern our thoughts are not just matters of intellect. They also govern our everyday functioning. These concepts structure what we perceive, how we get around in the world and how we relate to other people. Thus our conceptual systems play a central role in defining
our everyday realities. Most of the things we do everyday largely relies on our conceptual system that we are not even aware of. The only way to find out those realities is by looking at language. Since communication is based on the same conceptual system that we use in thinking and acting, language is an importance source of evidence for what that system is like.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003:53) further notes that human thought processes are largely metaphorical. For example, linguistic expressions such as “time is money,” “time is a moving object,” “ideas are food,” “or theories are buildings” are not literal. These expressions are figurative. That means that metaphors are active in understanding our everyday experiences. We therefore use metaphors to group areas of these experiences. Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 53) argue that metaphor is in fact a fundamental property of everyday use of language. Hence metaphor is linked to the notion that different ways of thinking about a particular phenomenon are associated with different metaphors.

Gentner and Bowdle (2001), argue that metaphors establish mappings between concepts from domains of knowledge. For example, in the metaphor “the mind is a computer” an abstract entity is described in terms of a complex electronic device. Metaphors are major sources of conceptual change. That means metaphors cannot be interpreted directly, rather the hearer must go through an interpretation process.

According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003: 44-45), the conceptual domain may be any coherent organization of human experience. The mapping between conceptual domains correspond to the neural mappings in the brain. These include the source and target domains.
The source domain is the domain from which we draw metaphorical expressions. For example, “love is a journey”, “time is a moving object”, and others. On the other hand, the target domain is that conceptual domain that we try to understand. For example, “love is a journey”. We try to link a journey with love so as to come up with the understanding of the metaphor. Many elements of the target concepts come from the source domain. Therefore to know a conceptual metaphor is to know the set of mappings that applies to a given source-target domain. The semantic (literal) category of the concept is automatically derived in the form of source-to-target mappings that the conceptual metaphors provide.

Lee (2001) is of the opinion that metaphor is in fact a prime manifestation of the cognitive claim that language and thought are intertwined.

This theory is the basis for analyzing the images that were identified in the Meru wedding songs. This is because they are used figuratively. Consider the following part of a Kimeru wedding song.

**UTIGATUE GICHUMA**

Ona akuringa utigatue gichuma iii
Ni mathiga ma riko magukububana x2
Muiritu muthaka ta riu a riki uma iii
Ni mathiga ma riko magukububana x2
Chai ya kirauko niweu ukaruga ii, nuntu riu
Ugutuika mutumia x2
Ona ngu o cia muthuri, niweu ukabura ii x2
Niuntu riu ugutuika Mutumia.

**TRANSLATION**

If you are beaten, do not break the metal iii,
It is the firestones that are hitting each other x2
A beautiful girl like sunrise!
It is the firestones that are hitting each other x2
You are responsible for preparing breakfast, because you are now a married woman x2.
You will be washing your husband’s clothes x2.
Because you are now a married woman.
In this song the “muiritu” (woman) is being warned against revenge. The “Metal” and “Firestones” are metaphors, but let us first consider the literal meaning. “Do not break the metal” literally means the ordinarily breaking of metals in real life situation. The same is the case with “it is the firestones hitting each other” in the process of cooking. Hence the metal and firestone could be “the source domain.”

A closer look at the above metaphors “if you are beaten do not break the metal (Gichuma)” and “firestones hitting each other” (mabiga ma riko magikububana ) entails that words/phrases or even sentences have meanings depending on contexts, speakers and knowledge of the topic of the discourse. Let us consider the image of the “metal” in “ona akuringa utigatue gichuma” meaning, “if you are beaten do not break the metal”. This may be interpreted to mean what is likely to happen between husband and wife when they disagree. The woman is warned against taking revenge if she is beaten by her husband because that is a common occurrence in family matters (firestones hitting each other).

According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), metaphors create meaning. Conceptual systems are projected to a more abstract domain (target). The structure of the source domain is preserved whereas the target domain is reflected in the structure of the source domain.

Going back to the metaphor of “mathiga ma riko’ (firestones) hitting each other and “Metals breaking” (chuma igituika) male dominance is evident in the society which in turn depicts gender bias. Therefore the Conceptual Metaphor Theory acted as a guide to help in interpreting findings.
CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section presents the research design, variables, site of the study, sampling techniques, sample size, data collection and data analysis.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design is descriptive. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006: 70), a research design can be defined as the structure of research. It holds all the elements in the research together. Orodho (2003) is of the view that a descriptive study involves collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. This method was suitable for our purposes because the study aimed at collecting information about people’s attitude and opinions on the images in Meru wedding songs.

3.3 VARIABLES

A variable is a factor or characteristic of interest that a researcher would like to handle, observe or manipulate in the research (Kasomo, 2006). In this study, two variables were used. These were the variables of age and gender.

3.4 SITE OF THE STUDY

Data was collected from Magumoni Division, Meru South District, Tharaka Nithi County in the Eastern Province of Kenya. This community borders Chuka Town to the north, Embu District to the south, Mt Kenya forest to the west and
Igambang’ombe Division to the east. This area was chosen because the researcher is familiar to it as she was brought up and educated there. This enabled her to select the sample and gain the confidence of the respondents since they took her as one of them. According to the records in the office of the District Officer (DO), Magumoni Division has six locations. They include: Magumoni location with a total population of about 6000 people, Thuita 7000, Mukuuni 8000, Mwonge 5000, Kabuboni 4000 and Rubate 3000 making a total population of about 33,000 people.

3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUES AND SAMPLE SIZE.

Purposeful sampling was used in the study. As mentioned earlier, the social variables were age and gender. Two age brackets were used, the younger and the older. The younger group included respondents between the age of 30 and 45 years. The older group was 65 years and above. Again respondents who were sampled were those who were considered to be proficient in Kimeru language. That means other tribes who were living in this division were not sampled as they were not fully proficient in Kimeru language to be able to respond as required.

Among the six locations only Magumoni location was chosen to represent the whole division. This is because almost the same songs, the source of our data are found in all the locations. Even the respondents were chosen from Magumoni location.

According to Kasomo (2006:31) a sample size depends on factors such as the number of variables in the study, the type of research design, the method of data analysis and the size of accessible population.
24 Respondents were involved in data collecting as indicated in the table below.

**TABLE 3.1 SAMPLING FRAME**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE BRACKETS</th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger</td>
<td>30 - 45</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Older</td>
<td>65 and above</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
<td><strong>12</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The other sampling involved wedding songs. The researcher viewed wedding videos and attended live wedding ceremonies with the aim of sampling the songs. At first, ten songs were sampled. Two were from the videotapes whereas eight were tape recorded from live wedding ceremonies. Since not all the songs had images that portrayed gender bias, five secular wedding songs that had images that were likely to depict gender bias in the Meru community were sampled.

**3.6 DATA COLLECTION**

As already mentioned, songs were the source of data. A tape recorder was used to capture some of these songs. Other songs were obtained from videos. However, when tape-recording background noise made it difficult to obtain proper sound in some songs as a result, the researcher had to move closer to the participants during tape recording. After tape recording, the researcher identified the images in the songs and then presented them to the respondents to find out if in their view the images were discriminative along gender lines. This was done through interviews. In preparation for the interview, the researcher explained the problem being investigated.
to enable the respondents to comprehend what was expected of them. This involved face to face conversation with the informants.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

After data was collected, it was organized, coded and descriptive analysis made. Each image was analyzed using the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Information gathered from each respondent is summarized and a report written. The conclusion was drawn from the findings.
CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents metaphors found in selected Meru wedding songs and analyses their interpretation. It demonstrates how language is used in songs to depict gender bias in these songs. The songs are analyzed sequentially according to the order in which they follow in the appendix section.

The first step concerned the identification of metaphorical expressions in the songs. These are expressions which employ coded language. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003) metaphors are understood through a systematic mapping between topic and context. Therefore knowledge of metaphors requires enough knowledge of the topic and the conceptual domains that are attributed to them. From the source domain we then move to the target domain which in our case is only present in the conceptual structure of the metaphors.

In the analysis, the views of the respondents regarding the interpretation of metaphors are discussed. These views are presented in bar graphs and are used to draw conclusions.
4.1.1 METAPHORS IN THE SONG MWAROCIA (MY SISTER) IN APPENDIX 1A

In this song, the bride is being referred to as a sister. Among the Meru, a sister is expected to perform various duties in the home. These include domestic duties such as fetching water, cooking, feeding the domestic animals like cows and helping in the general cleaning of the home compound.

According to the older respondents, both males and females, the song is informing the bride on the various roles that she is expected to play after marriage. They are the same as those of sister in a home. However, some of the younger respondents, especially the females ones, claimed that some of these beliefs were only relevant in the traditional society and not the present one. The younger male respondents sided with the views of the older group.

In the song, we have the following images: *rureme* (tongue), *kiama* (miracle), *mukanda* (rope) and *kathegu* (gourd). Starting with the tongue, the bride is advised on the need to sweeten her tongue, “uthongomie rureme, mwarocia” (sweeten your tongue my sister) so that “mukuru agonage ngono cia mwekuru wake” (your husband can tell stories of his wife). A closer look at the image of sweetening the tongue takes us back to the source domain of this metaphorical expression. Something sweet has a pleasant taste. The sense organ responsible for taste is the tongue. If we want something sweet we add sugar to tea, eat ripe bananas or sweets. A meal that has a very pleasant taste is also said to be sweet or delicious.

From the metaphorical expression, “uthongomie *rureme* mwarocia” (sweeten your tongue, my sister) we not only have a cross-domain mapping in the conceptual structure of the metaphor but also indirect language use (tongue) which have to be
resolved by nonliteral comparison. The bride is depicted as performing the action of sweetening her tongue. Just as something sweet pleases the tongue, a married woman is supposed to talk in a way that pleases others so that her husband speaks well of her. The choice of the tongue is appropriate since it is involved in speech production. Most of the older respondents, both men and women, said that the bride is being advised on the need to control her talk. The younger male respondents said the same as well as younger women.

We have the image of the "miracle" "kiama kia muka mwarocia" (the miracle of a wife my sister). We know of miracles being performed by magicians. For a miracle to take place some form of supernatural power has to be used. Just as a magician accomplishes extraordinary things like juggling many balls in the air without dropping any, that is the same way a wife is expected to put extraordinary effort to accomplish all her duties and to ensure that her home runs smoothly.

Thirdly, there is the image of a "rope" "wiukie gakanda mwarocia" (take a rope my sister). Among the Meru, ropes are used to tether animals such as cattle, goats or sheep as they graze, carrying firewood or carrying fodder for domestic animals. The bride is therefore being informed about the duties that await her as a wife. Thus a rope is a symbol of all the above domestic duties that the bride is expected to do after marriage. She is not only expected to be active but also perfect in her domestic chores

"Kiama kia muka mwarocia" (the miracle of wife, my sister) "wikie gakanda mwarocia" (you take a rope my sister)

Then there is the image of a "gourd" "wikie kathegu mwarocia" (take a gourd my sister). In the Meru community traditionally a gourd was used to fetch
water from the river and keeping gruel (fermented porridge). To date a wife who is able to make gruel from pounded flour (with mortar and pestle) is said to be an experienced wife who will be able to feed her husband properly. This porridge is said to have all the necessary nutrients required to make one healthy. Therefore the bride is being informed on the need to ensure that when she gets to her new home, she feeds her husband properly. This is not only preparing delicious meals but also a balanced diet to keep her family healthy.

Concerning the metaphors in this song, all the respondents, regardless of age and gender, expresses similar views as shown in the figure below.

**FIGURE 4.1 METAPHORS IN THE SONG MWAROCIA (MY SISTER)**

From the above figure all the younger men, older women and younger men were of the view that the metaphors in the song were portraying gender bias against women. This is due to the fact we are not informed in the song about the responsibilities and duties of the man (bridegroom). The question arises as to whether the man will just sit and watch as his wife performs all the domestic duties. However, the remaining 66.7% of the older men differed with everyone else. According to them there was no
bias since the roles portrayed by the metaphors in the song were the duties that a wife is expected to accomplish after marriage.

4.1.2 METAPHORS IN THE SONG GAKA NI KAGIMBI (THIS IS A FINGER MILLET) IN APPENDIX 1B.

In this song the bride is being referred to as finger millet. “kagimbi” (finger millet) is therefore used in the song as a metaphor. In real life situation, finger millets are tiny grains which when planted produce in plenty. In the song, we have the following linguistic expressions.

“Gaka ni kagimbi kaumbitwe na nguo”
(This is a tiny grain of finger millet that has been covered in clothes)

“Kaumbitwe na nguo” (it has been covered in clothes)

“Gaka ni kabeu kaumbitwe na nguo”
(This is a seed that has been covered in clothes).

As already indicated the bride is referred to as finger millet that has been covered in clothes. When a seed is planted, it sends its outer covering before germinating. This outer covering is the one that is being referred to as “clothes” in the song “kaumbitwe na Nguo” (it has been covered in clothes). This is the source domain. Finger millets cannot be covered in clothes like human beings. The song is informing the bride and the audience of the future role that the bride is expected to play after marriage. The same way “finger millet” (kagimbi) produces plentifully when planted, she is also expected to bring forth many children. She will have to undress when conceiving and
when giving birth "finger millet" sends its outer covering before germinating. Here the finger millet is the source domain and the woman is the target domain.

Let us now turn to the words "nikatheuke ta ngwaci" (let it spread like sweet potatoes). In this expression, which is in form of a simile, the bride is said to spread like sweet potatoes. Similes and metaphors can be dealt with together because they both speak of one thing in terms of another. However, in a simile, the relation is made clear by the use of the words "like" or "as" whereas in a metaphor the two source and target entities are fussed. To plant sweet potatoes, a small cutting is used. After taking root, it spreads far and wide producing many sweet potatoes. Likewise the bride is expected to produce many children. Among the Meru, after marriage the couple is expected to produce children the soonest possible failure to which gossip may spread about their misfortune.

Lakoff and Johnson (2003) argue that metaphors create meaning depending on context, audience and topic. Hence the above cited metaphors i.e. "kagimbi" (finger millet), "kabeu" (seed) "ngwaci" (potatoes) and "nguo" (clothes) could be interpreted as belonging to the source domain. This is because conceptual systems from the source domain are projected to a more abstract domain (target) so as to come up with the literal meaning of the metaphors. This information is presented in the following bar graph.
FIGURE 4.2 METAPHORS IN THE SONG *GAKA NI KAGIMBI* (THIS IS A FINGER MILLET)

![Graph showing response percentages for different groups.](image)

From the above figure 100% of the older and younger men and 66.7% of the older females felt that this is a form of gender bias against men because they are also involved in the production of children. According to the younger women the song is informing the audience and the bride of the role the bride is expected to play after marriage which is the target domain. The younger women and 33.3% of the older women said there was no bias.

However, it is important to note that this song is sung by people from the bride’s side. The men and most of the older women argued that it appears as if the only person who matters in the production of children is the woman whereas the truth is that man has a major role to play too. The last stanza talks about the need to respect and pray for the bride (Kagimgi). It therefore appears as if she is the only one who need God’s help.
4.1.3 METAPHORS IN THE SONG, NIMONUE MUCII (SHOW ME THE HOME) IN

APPENDIX 1 C

This song is sung by people from the bride’s side when they are at the gate of the bridegroom’s home. This is done at the reception after coming from the bride’s home. Linguistic expressions that are symbolically used in the song are as follows: “barua niakinyire ntigacokere mwirigani?” (did the letter arrive so that I don’t go back at the gate?) “nintemerwe kibaro, ndege ino nigarukira ku?” (clear the field, where will the aeroplane turn?, ) “mburagia ta nguku ikiburiria twana” (I scratch like chicken, scratching for its chicks) “mucii uria munene, ndege nigarukira kuu?”(The big home, where will the aeroplane turn?) “mubiki tiwa muchezo” (The bride is not a joke).

From the above we can extract the following images: barua (letter), Ndege (aeroplane), mburagia ta nguku (I scratch like chicken) and tuciu (chicks). Starting with the “letter” it is evident from everyday use of language that a letter is intended to convey a certain message from the source to the receiver. The receiver of the message is expected to react according to the intended message. The “letter “ in the song is used symbolically. Among the Meru, a boy identifies his wife to be and informs his father who then goes to the girl’s home together with other close relatives to ask for her hand in marriage. If they are successful a message is brought back to the boy and his relatives. Marriage negotiations then begin and a day for the wedding is set.

This process can be equated to the way a letter communicates a message from the source to the receiver (target). As a result the letter in the song is directed to the in-laws from the bridegroom’s side. They are being asked whether they are aware of
the bride who is joining their home or else they go back at the gate? The “letter” is an image in the source domain while the arrival of the bride at the groom’s home is in the target domain. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003:13), metaphorical concepts can be extended beyond the ordinary literal ways of thinking and talking into the range of what is called figurative or fanciful thought and language.

Second is the image of “aeroplane” in the line, “nintemerwe kibaro ndege ino nigarukira ku?” (clear the field, where will the aeroplane turn?). The song is comparing people to an aeroplane. Aeroplanes normally fly in the air and have designated landing sites. However, when an aeroplane approaches the landing site, it slows down such that it lands systematically. In the line, “gukinya gukinya, ndege ino nigarukira ku?” (step by step, where will this aeroplane turn?). In the contemporary society a plane is considered a prestigious mode of travel and people are comparing themselves to it. A plane cannot just land anywhere hence a runway is needed. They want a “landing site for their aeroplane”. The singers need lots of presents because the bride is considered a very special person, the same way a plane is prestigious. It is important to note that it is a custom in the Meru community for the people from the bride’s side to sing at the gate of the bridegroom’s home until money and other cultural gifts are given in order for them to enter the compound. It is from here that they are shown where to sit at the reception the same way an aeroplane lands at a landing site.

Regarding interpretation all the respondents, except 50% of the younger women were of the view that the song is praising the bride which is a form of gender bias against men.
Moreover, there is the image. “Mburagia ta nguku ikiburiria twana”, (I scratch like chicken scratching for its chicks). Chicken lay eggs which may hatch into chicks. Immediately the chicks are hatched, the mother (hen) has the responsibility to scratch the ground in search of food for her chicks. In isolation, the above metaphorical expression has no meaning at all, since it is not normal for people to scratch the ground like chicken. However, in the context in which it is uttered it makes sense. We know there is a bride and a bridegroom. The people singing are from the bride’s side. Hence it is evident that they are singing about the bride.

The parents and relatives of the bride are saying that they laboured to bring up their daughter (bride) the same way a chicken labours (scratches) to bring up its chicks. Hence they expect continued care of their daughter after marriage. The bride is also expected to look after her children the same way the “chicken” looks after its “chicks”. Therefore “chicken” and chicks are images of the source domain while the bride and the parents are in the target domain.

The older males and females as well as younger males respondents wondered whether the man (bridegroom) has not been brought up the same way the girl (bride) has been brought up. Lakoff and Johnson (2003) argued that the most fundamental values in a culture will be evident in a metaphorical structure of the most fundamental values in a culture. Some of these values like the ones cited above are deeply embedded in the culture. Our values are not independent but correspond to roles and systems that form the metaphorical concepts that we live by.

From the views of the respondents we have the following percentage figures. 100% of the older men, older women, younger men and 50% of the younger women said there
was gender bias against men. The other 50% of the younger women said there was no bias. These percentages are shown in the bar graph in the below.

FIGURE 4.3 METAPHORS IN THE SONG *NIMONUE MUCII* (SHOW ME THE HOME)

![Bar graph showing responses of different groups](image)

4.1.4 METAPHORS IN THE SONG *UTIGATUE GICHUMA* (DO NOT BREAK THE METAL) IN APPENDIX ID.

In the song, "muiritu" (bride) is warned against "gutua gichuma" (breaking the metal) since it is the "mathiga ma riko" (firestones that are hitting each other) *chuma* (metal) and *mathiga ma riko* (firestones) are metaphors of the source domain. Let's consider the meaning of "do not break the metal". Literally, or in real life situations, we know it is not possible to break a piece of metal no matter what is used. The song is therefore advising the bride (muiritu) on the expected behaviour towards her husband. She (bride) is being warned against taking revenge towards her
husband no matter the circumstances. Just as you cannot break a piece of metal it is a taboo for a woman to take revenge on her husband.

The woman is not expected to do anything (retaliate) even if she is beaten because that is a common occurrence in a family “mabiga ma riko magikububana” (firestones hitting each other).

A keen interpretation of the metaphorical expression, “mabiga ma riko magikububana” (firestones hitting each other) entails that words/phrases or even sentences have meaning depending on context, speakers and knowledge of the topic of the discourse. Firestones are used to position a pot or a sufuria when cooking. From time to time the stones are adjusted to accommodate the different sizes of sufurias. In the process of doing so, the firestones may come into contact and hit each other. Likewise, in marriage it is possible for husband and wife to disagree in family affairs. “mabiga ma riko magikububana” (firestones hitting each other).

Moving into the target domain, we may deduce from the above expressions that a woman is not expected to either question or do anything as a way of revenge. She is supposed to be passive because the man is the head of the family.

Another linguistic expression that is metaphorically used in the song is “chai ya kirauko niweskaruga nati na kaua ni na chocolate” (you will prepare tea (breakfast), not with coffee but chocolate.). Among the Meru, most people grow coffee in their farms. When it is harvested, some people, especially the poor who cannot afford to buy coffee from the shops, prepare home - made coffee locally. They usually dry it in the open sun and grind it with stones until it is ready for use. On the other hand, those who are able to buy their coffee or other beverages like chocolate buy from the shops. Thus, in the rural setting particularly among the poor chocolate is
considered a superior beverage to home-made coffee because it is expensive. Therefore the bride is being advised on the need to be careful when preparing meals. Since she will be responsible for cooking for her husband, she is expected to prepare choice food to please her husband. Ordinary flat food can therefore be equated to the source domain while specially prepared food can be equated to the target domain.

Now let us move to the metaphorical expression, “nguo cia muthuri niweu ukabura nati na kipande ni New Blue Omo” (you will wash your husband's clothes not with bar soap but New Blue Omo). A bar soap is cheaper than the detergent called Omo. The woman (bride) is not only expected to cook the best food (not with coffee but chocolate) but also to have very high cleaning standards when she gets married. All the respondents except 67% of the older females said these are responsibilities of the girl (bride) after marriage which could be interpreted as the target domain of the language.

In the song, there is also the image of keys: “nimbirirwe kanyanya arete rubunguro nyomba ya mwana ikuona muruguri” (tell the in-law to bring the keys; the house of his son has someone to open) Keys are used to open doors that are closed. The “keys” in the song are used symbolically to denote ownership in her new home. The parents of the bridegroom are being informed in the song that their son has someone to take care of him. Before marriage the bridegroom (son) was in the hands of his parents but now he has someone to take care of him. He is now a grown up man (muthuri) who should be given a chance to take care of his family.

All the older and younger males as well as younger females felt that the song dealt too much on the responsibilities of the woman (bride) leaving those of the man (bridegroom) which in turn depicts gender bias against women hence male dominance
in the society. However, a few of the older women argued that towards the end of the song, we are informed that the man (muthuri) should be given room to take care of his family since he is now a grown up man although it is not clear what the responsibilities of a married man (muthuri) are in the song unlike the woman’s (bride) which are clearly stated. However, a larger percentage of the respondents concluded that the song portrayed male dominance especially in the first stanza which talks about “chuma ikirebuka, na mathiga ma riko magikububana” (metals breaking” and firestones hitting each other) . The responses are captured in the following bar graph.

**FIGURE 4.4 METAPHORS IN THE SONG UTIGATUE GICHUMA (DO NOT BREAK THE METAL)**

![Bar Graph](image-url)
4.1.5 METAPHORS IN THE SONG, HUYU NI MWANA (THIS IS THE CHILD) IN APPENDIX 1 E

In the song the parents of the bridegroom are being informed that they have willingly been given a child by the in-laws. The following metaphorical used expressions are used:

“negwe mubikania ruru ni rubaru” (You, the bridegroom, this is a rib)

“ mubiki ii ii giki ni gitugi kiria wethurira “ “(The bride! The bride! This is the pole that you have chosen). The rib and pole are used in this song as metaphors. From the literal meaning of the word “rib”, we know that it is a part of the body. The bride in the song is referred to as a “rib”. This, however, is used symbolically to mean that she is part and parcel of husband’s life, just as a rib is part of the body. In the bible, it is said that man was made to sleep and a “rib” was got from his body and fashioned into a woman. Hence the song is informing the man that the bride (rib) should be treated as part of his body. Nobody would wish to harm any part of his/her body. Therefore the man should treat his wife fairly after marriage the same way he would wish to be treated.

Then we have the image of gitugi (pole) in the song in the line “mubiki ii ii giki ni gitugi kiria wethurira na nkoro yendete” (The bride! the bride! This is a pole that you have chosen with a willing heart). In the traditional setting, poles were used to either fence the compound or lay the foundation of houses. A home or a compound that has a fence is assured of security since outsiders have no access to what is inside. Secondly, a house that has a strong foundation will last long since it is strong. The literal pole could be seen as the source domain of the image “pole” As for the target domain, we may deduce that the bride is being informed that the man “pole” is the
security provider in the home.” He is the head of the family, a “pole” that is used to lay the foundation of the family without which the family is likely to fall.

As earlier stated, Lakoff and Johnson (2003) state, that metaphors are understood through a systematic mapping between topic and context. Consider the following statement. “This is a pole”. Out of context the statement may not communicate much in the absence of the literal pole. However, within a certain context the audience automatically accesses the relevant conceptual mappings in the brain so as to arrive at the intended interpretation (target domain).

In the same song, the bride is warned against failing to respect her parents-in-law for failure to give them food may result in a curse. The bride is not only expected to respect her husband (pole) but also his parents. The bride is being prepared for the tough tasks she is expected to perform after marriage.

Coming to the interpretation of the images, all the older and younger females as well as younger males felt that the song portrayed gender bias against women in the community. This is more so referring back to the “rib” and “pole” discussed earlier. According to them, the image of the “rib” denotes the subordinate role that the woman (bride) is going to play after marriage. Since she is only part of the man then he is going to be superior in the home which is a form of male dominance in the society. This information from the respondents is shown in the following bar graph.
From the above bar graph, we note that 100% of the females as well as younger males felt that the song portrayed gender bias against women. 16.7% of the older males said the same. Only about 83% of the older males differed in that they argued that there was no bias since the song simply adheres to the Meru customs.

Looking at the analysis carried out in this chapter, it is evident that most of the older men see no bias in the roles ascribed to women. This is an indication that these men are not willing to move with the changing time. Since we are living in a dynamic society people would change their attitudes to accommodate the changes that are taking place in the society. This is more so because most of the older men felt there was a bias when the images in “kagimbi” (finger millet) song had most women who felt there was a bias against men.
CHAPTER 5

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. SUMMARY

This research which was carried at Magumoni Division of Meru South District in Tharaka Nithi County was an investigation of gender bias in the language of wedding songs: a case study of wedding songs in Magumoni Division.

The main research instrument was audio-recording. Songs were audio recorded and transcribed. The transcribed songs were then analyzed. It was found that gender bias was evident in the Meru Community. Both men and women are discriminated in one way or another. In the face to face interviews respondents reviewed their concern on gender bias in the Meru Community. They argued that there was a need for people in the society to think about the implications of the messages that they deliver to the audience in everyday use of language.

In relation to Conceptual Metaphor Theory (C.M.T) it was found to be a very effective theory in the interpretation of data in cognitive linguistics. This is because in this school of linguistics accounts of language that explain human mind are provided and not all theories would have been able to interpret the findings in the study. Hence the theory was very useful in data analysis.

5.2 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has reviewed that there was a gap that needed to be filled. There is need to carry out awareness campaigns to sensitize all stakeholders and the community at large on the implications of gender bias in the society. This will help to minimize
discrimination against both men and women in the community as far as gender roles are concerned. Since we are living in a dynamic society, language use especially in wedding songs should be revisited to accommodate the changes in the society. Marriage is an important stage in life. Our view is that an indepth study be carried out in other communities to find out if the same happens there.

5.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study focused on gender bias in the Meru Community. It was mainly dealing with how men and women are discriminated against. There were certain areas that were beyond the scope of this study which would have been of use if studied. This was due to the fact that the study focused on the rural setting. It would be necessary to find out what happens in an urban setting.
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1.A: TRANSCRIBED SONGS

MWAROCIA

Mwarocia iii mwarocia weetu
Muthenya wa umunthi mwarocia wee
Ni muthenya munene mwarocia wee
Muthenya wa kugurua mwarocia wee
Utuike mwekuru mwarocia wee
Mwarocia iii mwaroia weetu x2

Mwarocia iii mwaroia weetu
Wona wakinya mwarocia wee
Kwa mukuru waku mwarocia wee
Utigatuike ndemi mwarocia wee
Uthongomie rureme mwarocia wee
Mukuru agonage ngono mwarocia wee
Cia mwekuru wake mwarocia wee
Mwarocia iii mwarocia weetu x2

Mwarocia iii mwarocia weetu
Kiama kwa muka mwarocia wee
Wiukie gakanda mwarocia wee
Wiukie kathegu mwarocia wee
Kibiu gia kurima mwarocia wee
Mwarocia iii mwarocia weetu x2

Mwarocia iii Mwarocia wetu
Menyarera mukuru mwarocia wee
Menya utuika kiguta mwarocia wee
Kiguta kia muka mwarocia wee
Kia muka iii x2

MY SISTER

My sister! Our sister,
Today my sister,
Is a great day my sister
The day to get married my sister
To become a wife my sister
My sister! Our sister! x 2

My sister! Our sister,
When you arrive my sister
To your husband my sister
Do not become disobedience my sister
Sweeten your tongue my sister
Your husband to tell stories
Of his wife my sister
My sister! Our sister x2

My sister! Our sister,
The miracle of a wife my sister
You take a rope my sister
You take a gourd my sister
A panga for weeding my sister
My sister! Our sister x2

My sister! Our sister!
Take care of your husband!
Do not become my sister
A lazy wife my sister x 2
1. B GAKA NI KAGIMBI

Gaka ni kagimbi, ka mwana wetu iii
Kaumbitwe na nguo, nikathii gatambe ii
Gaka ni kagimbi, ka mwana wetu ii
Kaumbutwe na nguo x2

Kanyanya nukwigua ii,  
gaka ni kagimbi  
Ka mwana wetu ii,  
kaumbitwe na nguo  
Nikamenyererwe gaka ni kagimbi ka mwana wetu,  
Kaumbitwe na nguo  
Katheuke kutheuka, ta ngwaci,  
gaka ni kagimbi ka mwana wetu,  
Kaumbitwe na nguo

Gukinya gukinya ii gaka ni kagimbi ka mwana wetu, 
Kaumbitwe na nguo  
Kabewe gitio iii gaka ni kagimbi ka mwana wetu,  
Kaumbitwe na nguo x2

Aciari mukwigua ii gaka ni kagimbi ka mwana wetu,  
Kaumbitwe na nguo  
Gaka ni kabeu ii ka mwana wetu,  
Kaumbitwe na nguo x2

Mbucite kiendaga ii gaka ni kagimbi ka mwana wetu,  
Kaumbitwe na nguo,  
Murungu agatethie iii  
gaka ni kagimbi ka mwana wetu  
kaumbitwe na nguo x2

THIS IS FINGER MILLET

This is finger millet of our child  
That has been covered with clothes  
Let it go and spread  
This is finger millet of our child  
That has been covered with clothes x2

Is the in-law hearing?  
This is finger millet of our child  
That has been covered with clothes  
Take care of it,  
This is fingers millet of our child,  
That has been covered with clothes  
Let it spread like sweet potatoes  
This is finger millet of our child  
That has been covered with clothes x2

Step by step,  
This is finger millet of our child  
That has been covered with clothes  
It should be respected  
This is finger millet of our child  
That has been covered with clothes x2

Are the parents hearing?  
This is finger millet.  
Of our child,  
That has been covered with clothes  
This is a seedling of our child  
That has been covered with clothes x2

I came willingly  
This is a finger millet of our child,  
That has been covered with clothes  
God help it,  
This is a finger millet of our child  
That has been covered with clothes  
God help it, this is the finger millet of our child,  
That has been covered with clothes.
1.C NIMONUE MUCII
Nimonue mucii nkuria,
Nimonue mucii ntigacokere mwirigani,
Nimonue mucii nkuria
Barua niakinyire,
Barua niakinyire
Ntigacokere mwirigani,
Nimonue mucii nkuria x2

Nintemerwe kibaro,
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Mucii uria munene ii
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Gukinya gukinya,
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Muthenya munene ii
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?

Rukemi nirugwe ii,
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Mucii uria munene ii
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Mubikanja nukwona ii
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?

Tumite magumoni ii
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Mucii uria munene ii
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Iretete kibeo ndege ino nigarukira ku

Mburagia ii mburagia ta nguku
Mburagia ta nguku ikibubirira twana
Mburagia ii mburagia ta nguku
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?

Mubiki tiwa muchezo
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Kanyanya nukwiga
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?

SHOW ME THE HOME
Show me the home, show me the home
So that I don’t return at the gate
Did the letter arrive? Did it arrive?
So that I don’t return at the gate
Show me the home x2

Clear the field, where will this aeroplane turn?
The big home, where will this aeroplane turn?
Step by step, where will this aeroplane turn?
A Great day, where will this aeroplane turn?

Say ululations!  Where will this aeroplane turn?
Is the parent of the bridegroom hearing?
Where will this aeroplane turn?
Is the bridegroom hearing?
Where will this aeroplane turn?

We have come from Magumoni
Where will it turn?
The big home, where will it turn?
Bringing a prize, where will it turn?
Where will this aeroplane turn?

I scratch I scratch like chicken
Scratching for its chicks
I scratch like chicken scratching for its chicks.
Where will the aeroplane turn?

The bride is not a joke
Where will the aeroplane turn?
Is the in-law hearing?
Where will the aeroplane turn?
1.C NIMONUE MUCII

Nimonue mucii nkuria,
Nimonue mucii ntigacokere mwirigani,
Nimonue mucii nkuria
Barua niakinyire,
Barua niakinyire
Ntigacokere mwirigani,
Nimonue mucii nkuria x2

Nintemerwe kibaro,
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Mucii uria munene ii
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Gukinya gukinya,
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Muthenyua munene ii
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?

Rukemi nirugwe ii,
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Mucii uria munene iii
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Mubikania nukwona ii
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?

Tumite magumoni ii
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Mucii uria munene iii
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Iretete kibeo ndege ino nigarukira ku

Mburagia ii mburagia ta nguku
Mburagia ta nguku ikibibirira twana
Mburagia ii mburagia ta nguku
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?

Mubiki tiwa muchezo
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?
Kanyanya nukwigua
Ndege ino nigarukira ku?

SHOW ME THE HOME

Show me the home, show me the home
So that I don’t return at the gate
Did the letter arrive? Did it arrive?
So that I don’t return at the gate
Show me the home x2

Clear the field, where will this aeroplane turn?
The big home, where will this aeroplane turn?
Step by step, where will this aeroplane turn?
A Great day, where will this aeroplane turn?

Say ululations! Where will this aeroplane turn?
Is the parent of the bridegroom hearing?
Where will this aeroplane turn?
Is the bridegroom hearing?
Where will this aeroplane turn?

We have come from Magumoni
Where will it turn?
The big home, where will it turn?
Bringing a prize, where will it turn?
Where will this aeroplane turn?

I scratch I scratch like chicken
Scratching for its chicks
I scratch like chicken scratching for its chicks.
Where will the aeroplane turn?

The bride is not a joke
Where will the aeroplane turn?
Is the in-law hearing?
Where will the aeroplane turn?
1. D ONA AKURINGA UTIGATUE GICHUMA

Ona akuringa utigatue gichuma iii
Ni mabiga ma riko magukububana
Muiritu muthaka ta riu rikiuma iii
Ni mathiga ma riko magukububana x2

Chai ya kirauko niweu ukaruga ii
Ni tondu riu ugutuika mutumia
Nati ya kaua ni ya chocolate
Ona ngu ci a muthuri niweu ukabura ii
Ni tondu ugutuika mutumia
Nati na kibandi ni New Blue Omo x2

Cucucu cucucu ntkumienda ii
Ni tondu riu ugutuika mutumia
Ngombe iri mucii niweu mutwiri ii
Ni tondu riu ugutuika mutumia x2

Mbirirwe kanyanya arête rubunguro
Nyomba ya mwana ikuona muruguri
Ni tondu riu agutuika muthuri
Na karugi na karugi arête rubunguro
Nyomba ya mwana ikwona muruguri x2

DO NOT BREAK THE METAL

If you are beaten do not break the metal
It is the firestones that are hitting each other
A beautiful girl like sunrise
It is the firestones that are hitting each other x2

You are responsible for preparing breakfast
Because you are now a married woman
And not with coffee but chocolate
You will wash your husband’s clothes
Because you are now a married woman
Not with bar soap but new blue omo.x2

Gossip gossip, I don’t want
Because you are now a married woman
You will feed the cows at home
Because you are now a married woman x2

Tell the in-law to bring the keys
The house of her son has someone to open
Because he is now a married man
Quickly, quickly, bring the keys
The house of your son has someone to open.x2
1.E HUYU NI MWANA

Negwe kanyanya huyu ni mwana.
Uruga wanenkerwa ni nthaka yendete
Kanyanya iii iii huyu ni mwana
Uruga wanenkerwa ni nthaka yendete x2

Negwe mubikania ruru ni rubaru
Ruria withurira na nkoro yendete
Mubikania iii iii ruru ni rubaru
Urwaamukire naningi umutie x2

Nagwe mubiki,
Giki ni gitugi kiria withurira
Na ngoro yendete
Mubiki iii iii giki ni gitugi
Ukiamukire naningi umutie x2

Na ningi mubiki mama ni aciari
Maria wanenkerwa ni mubikania andete
Mubiki iii iii mama ni aciari
Umamukire na ningi umatietie
Warega gutia ura na kirumi
Nawe mubiki waruga irio
Utikaime aciari
Nikenda urathimwa
Mubiki iii iii waruga irio
Utikamaime nikenda urathimwa x2

THIS IS THE CHILD

You in in-law this is a child
That you have been given by your son willingly
in-law! In-laws! This is a child
That you have been given by your son willingly x2

And you the bridegroom,
This is a rib that you have chosen in a willing heart.
The bridegroom! The bridegroom!
This is a rib you accept her and you respect her x2

And you the bride,
This is a pole that you have chosen in a willing heart.
The bride! the bride!
This is a pole you accept him and you respect him x2

Again the bride, these are the parents
That you have been given by the
bridegroom willingly
The bride! The bride!
These are the parents you accept and respect them.
If you don’t respect there you will be cursed
And you the bride,
When you cook food give to your parents (inlaws)
Do not deny them so that you will be blessed x 2
A.2: INTERVIEWS.

The researcher identified the images from the tape recorded songs after which the researcher asked the respondents what the images meant and if in their view the images were discriminative along gender lines or not.

This bio-data from respondents was recorded after which they were involved in face to face conversations.

For instance:

"ona akuringa utigatue gichuma"

"if you are beaten do not break the metal".

1. What in your view does “break the metal” represent in the song?

2. In your opinion is this image discriminative in terms of gender roles?

3. If so how is it discriminative?

The respondents then explained their opinions on the images. That is if it was biased against men or women.

This form of interview guide is used in all the images that were identified in the songs. This information was used to draw conclusions in the study at the end when writing the report.