KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS

A MORPHO-SEMANTIC STUDY OF KIPSIGIS TOPONYMS

BY

KIRUI ROBERT KIBET
C50/23477/2011

A RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL
OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS OF KENYATTA
UNIVERSITY

APRIL 2016
Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signature

KIRUI ROBERT KIBET
REG.NO.C50/23477/2011

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

Signature

DR. PHYLLIS W. MWANGI
Department of English and Linguistics,
Kenyatta University.

Signature

DR. RUTH W. NDUNG’U
Department of English and Linguistics,
Kenyatta University.
Dedication

To my dear family, my dear wife Emily, children; Sam, Michelle and Peter who have been my prop at all times.
Acknowledgements

To the following goes my most sincere gratitude:

God, the pioneer and perfector of my faith and all the good things in my life.

Dr. Mwangi, you were a great teacher and a model to me. Your patience in going through one draft after another of my work was immeasurable. Your patience is espoused in your belief in the word of God in Isaiah 40:31.

Dr Ndung’u, your instructions were full of insight. I can’t thank you enough for all those times you took a break from your busy schedule to tirelessly go through my drafts. May God continue blessing you.

All MA lecturers and the support staff in the Department of English and Linguistics in KU, I wish to thank you so much. I also wish to thank Kenyatta University for according me the opportunity to study there.

My family, you have been a source of inspiration to me. My wife and children kept reminding me that I was yet to accomplish my mission each time they asked “when are you going to graduate so we celebrate your graduation?” To them I say, ‘The ox may be slow but the hoe is patient’. Thanks to my father Joash and mother Rose who have inculcated in me the essence of resilience and determination. To my siblings Emmy and Vincent for your support, I am greatly indebted to you.

Last but not least, I unreservedly bear the responsibility for errors of omission or commission that this research may have.
Abstract

This study focused on the morpho-semantics of place names in the Kipsigis dialect. The study had three objectives, which were: to describe the morphological processes involved in the formation of names in Kipsigis, to establish the extent to which Kipsigis toponyms were formed through systematic processes and lastly to analyze different meanings evident in Kipsigis toponyms. The study used a descriptive research design. The data was in the form of place names. Fifty six toponyms were sampled purposively from a roll of administrative units in sub-county commissioner’s office in Bomet Sub-County. Based on Generative Morphology, the morphological structures of the sampled names were described and the percentage of frequency of occurrence of each process was captured in pie-charts. Twelve respondents were interviewed for meanings. A semi-structured interview was used to obtain the meanings of the names. The data was analyzed in terms of the meanings evident. The findings were that the names exhibit certain morphological processes, both, systematic and idiosyncratic. Systematic word formation processes were prominent. The examples the systematic word formation processes were: affixation, compounding and conversion while under idiosyncratic processes we had avoidance of word formation. The study also found out that all Kipsigis toponyms bear denotative meanings. In addition, some carry connotative meanings. The study made pertinent recommendations, one of which is that when naming places or institutions, those responsible should consider the semantic implication of such names. The study also suggested areas for further studies.
# Table of Contents

Declaration .......................................................................................................................... ii

Abstract ............................................................................................................................... v

List of Tables ......................................................................................................................... x

List of Figures ......................................................................................................................... xi

Abbreviations ......................................................................................................................... xii

Definition of Terms ............................................................................................................... xiii

CHAPTER ONE ....................................................................................................................... 1

1.0 Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 1

1.1 Background of the Study ............................................................................................... 1

1.2 Statement of the Problem ............................................................................................. 5

1.3 Research Objectives ...................................................................................................... 5

1.4 Research Questions ...................................................................................................... 6

1.5 Research Assumptions .................................................................................................. 6

1.6 Rationale of the Study ................................................................................................. 6

1.7 Scope and Limitation .................................................................................................... 7

CHAPTER TWO .................................................................................................................... 8

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ........................................ 8

2.0 Introduction ..................................................................................................................... 8

2.1 General Studies on Meaning ....................................................................................... 8

  2.1.1 Denotation and Connotation ............................................................................... 11

  2.1.2 Naming .................................................................................................................. 11

  2.1.3 Morphological Processes ...................................................................................... 13

  2.1.4 Naming in African Communities ....................................................................... 16

2.2 Theoretical Framework ............................................................................................... 17

  2.2.1 Introduction ........................................................................................................... 17
2.2.2 Generative Morphology ................................................................. 17

2.2.3 Social Semiotics Theory.............................................................. 18

CHAPTER THREE .................................................................................. 20

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .............................................................. 20

3.0 Introduction .................................................................................... 20

3.1 Research Design ............................................................................. 20

3.2 Site of the Study ............................................................................ 20

3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size ......................................... 20

3.4 Data Collection Procedures ......................................................... 21

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation .................................................... 22

3.6 Ethical Considerations ................................................................... 22

CHAPTER FOUR .................................................................................... 23

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION ............................................ 23

4.0 Introduction ................................................................................... 23

4.1 Morphological Analysis ............................................................... 23

4.1.1 Affixation .................................................................................. 23

4.1.1.1 Prefixation .......................................................................... 23

4.1.1.2 Suffixation .......................................................................... 27

4.1.1.3 Toponyms with Multiple Affixation .................................... 29

4.1.2 Compounding ............................................................................ 30

4.1.2.1 Morpho-Semantic Transparency and Opacity of Compounds ........................................ 32

4.1.3 Conversion ................................................................................. 32

4.1.4 A Toponym Formed from Clipping ............................................ 33

4.1.5 Avoidance of Word Formation ................................................ 34

4.2 The Prevalence of Morphological Processes .................................. 34
4.2.1 Prefixation ................................................................. 34
4.2.3 Multiple Affixations .................................................. 36
4.2.4 The Representations of all Morphological Process ............. 37
4.3 Semantic Analysis ........................................................ 38
  4.3.1 Denotative Category/Primary Meaning .......................... 38
  4.3.2 Connotative Meanings .............................................. 42
    4.3.2.1 Toponyms Associated with Historical and Religious Events ....................................... 43
    4.3.2.2 Toponyms Used Stylistically/Metaphorically .......................... 43
    4.3.2.3 Toponyms Associated with Eminent Personalities .................................................. 44
    4.3.2.4 Toponyms with Negative Associations .................................................. 44
4.4 Chapter summary ....................................................... 44
CHAPTER FIVE ........................................................................ 45
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 45
5.0 Introduction ................................................................. 45
5.1 Summary of findings ..................................................... 45
5.2 Conclusion ..................................................................... 46
5.3 Recommendations ........................................................ 46
5.4 Areas for Further Studies ............................................... 46
REFERENCES ......................................................................... 47
APPENDICES ......................................................................... 51
  Appendix A1: Semi-Structured Interview ................................ 51
  Appendix A2: List of Administrative units in Bomet Sub-County .... 52
  Appendix A3: Purposively Sampled Toponyms .......................... 55
  Appendix A4: Toponyms with Prefixes .................................... 57
  Appendix A5: Toponyms with suffixes ...................................... 58
Appendix A6: Toponyms with multiple affixation ......................................................... 59
Appendix A7: Toponyms formed from avoidance of word formation process ...... 60
Appendix A8: Toponyms formed from compounding ................................................. 61
Appendix A9: Toponym formed from clipping ............................................................. 62
Appendix A10: Map of Bomet Sub-County ................................................................. 63
Appendix A11: Nacosti Permit .................................................................................. 64
Appendix A12: Nacosti Research Authorization .......................................................... 65
List of Tables

Table 4.1: Toponyms derived from names of plants, especially trees.................40

Table 4.2: This is a category that draws its names from names of animals and birds.................................................................41

Table 4.3: This table contains a category of toponyms drawn from farming.........41

Table 4.4: Descriptive toponyms and those on physical feature....................42

Table 4.5: This category contains names formed from activities and others states...42

Table 4.6: Miscellaneous category.........................................................43
List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Respondents.................................................................22

Figure 4.1: Prevalence of different prefixes........................................36

Figure 4.2: Prevalence of different suffixes........................................37

Figure 4.3: Prevalence of each of the sub-categories of affixation.............38

Figure 4.4: Prevalence of all morphological processes.............................39
## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adj</td>
<td>Adjective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CN</td>
<td>Common noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GG</td>
<td>Generative Grammar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GM</td>
<td>Generative Morphology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Noun</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PN</td>
<td>Personal name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SST</td>
<td>Social Semiotics Theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WFR</td>
<td>Word Formation Rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V</td>
<td>Verb</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Definition of Terms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affixation</td>
<td>A word formation process that entails prefixation and suffixation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hydronymy</td>
<td>A study of names of water bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrematonomy</td>
<td>A study of names of hotels and restaurants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connotation</td>
<td>Social-cultural and personal association of the sign.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semiotics</td>
<td>Meaning making system that relates to signs and symbols, especially spoken and written.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signified</td>
<td>A concept or meaning carried by a word or a name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signifier</td>
<td>The form that a sign takes; in this study it is a name.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Semiotics</td>
<td>A system of interpreting language in a social-cultural context in which the social-culture itself is interpreted in semiotic terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toponyms</td>
<td>Place names.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction
This section covers the preliminaries to the study namely: background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, research objectives, research assumptions, rationale of the study and scope and limitations of the study.

1.1 Background of the Study
An article like “The Battle for Naming Rights” appearing in the Daily Nation of July 21st, 2012 where residents of Eldoret (in Kenya) disagreed over names given to some of their hamlets is not a new phenomenon but a replication of what was experienced in the naming of newly created administrative units in Kenya. Yet another contention on why use this name and not that, was reported in Lagos, Nigeria, on May 30th, 2010 when students of UNILAG University protested over the change of their university name by the government, from UNILAG to Mashood Abiola to commemorate one of their heroes. The students said the old name was their source of pride (www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18271406). This, to a linguist, evokes a puzzle in one of Shakespeare’s Drama:

“What’s in a name?

That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet,”

(Shakespeare, W. Romeo and Juliet, II, ii, 43.)

The Daily Nation of 26th February 2013 carried an article titled: Nyakemincha Buries the Ghost of its Namesake. It had it that Nyakemincha is a school that tailed in the 2011KCPE in the whole republic. Coincidentally, the name means, ‘tail’ in Ekegusii. On the same, Citizen News of 30th December 2011, 19 hours GMT reported that the parents wanted this name changed expeditiously. The station further asked, “What’s in a name?” The response was, “a lot” or “nothing”. To the parents, the former is definitely the case.
What was of interest to a linguist was whether a name bore so much meaning so that it could cause misunderstanding among the users of that name. The Nairobi Hospital in Kenya bore the name: **King George the IV Hospital** during the colonial period but the name was changed after independence. This may imply that, had the colonial name remained, it would have carried a negative association with the much abhorred colonialism, hence the decision to change it.

Like most other words, place names are as a result of some kind of word formation process(es). Bauer (1983) posits that any discussion on word formation implies that there is a word and that at least some words are formed. Crystal (1987) observes that names people give to their surroundings have many aspects that achieve linguistic recognition which include meanings and derivations. Linguistic studies of Onomastics have by and large sought to unravel questions on name formation, the phonological aspects thereof and, equally important their meanings.

While Kipsigis readers enjoy a dictionary titled Kalenjin – Kalenjin Dictionary in which 90% of its words are in the Kipsigis dialect (Toweett, 1979), The Kalenjin Bible and The Kalenjin Hymn Book are in the Nandi Dialect, owing to colonial language planning which overlooked many dialects of Kenyan languages in favour of a few. Therefore, suffice it to say that any additional literature on Kipsigis dialect ups the vitality needed by such a dialect. Therefore studies like this one can help add to the needed wealth of literature on Kipsigis dialect.

Kipsigis is a Nilo-Saharan dialect of the Kalenjin language. It is classified as a tonal language. Towett (1979) observes that it has the following dialects: Nandi, Terik, Kipsigis, Marakwet, Keyo, Pokot, Tuken, Sebei and Kony. Most of these dialects correspond to the respective sub-tribes of the Kalenjin tribe. Kalenjin language cluster is spoken by 4,967,328 speakers (2009 Population and Housing Census report). Chesaina (1991) notes that these dialects are mutually intelligible and it is cardinal to further note that they occur in a geographical continuum thus: the nearer any two dialects, the higher the mutual intelligibility. For instance, Kipsigis and Nandi dialects have higher mutual intelligibility because of their geographical proximity unlike Kipsigis and Kony dialects that are far apart.
There are diverse theories on historical origins of the Kalenjin people also known as Mnyoot by older Kalenjins. Chesaina fronts the most popular one which traces them to either Egypt or Sudan (a hot country). They travelled southwards, passing through Mt. Elgon and later on, the different sub-tribes settled in different parts of the geographical Western Kenya.

The Kipsigis are the southernmost of the Kalenjin people. They heavily inhabit the current administrative counties of Kericho and Bomet but they also live in parts of Nakuru, Nandi, Uasin Gishu and Narok counties.

Linguistically, this study falls in the domain of morpho-semantics and it aimed to investigate the morphological processes involved in formation of Kipsigis toponyms and further, the extent to which these names carry meaning. Lyons (1977) observes that we can trace the history of linguistic speculation back to the sacred stories of creation and that the basic semantic function of words is that of naming. Adam gave names to living creatures and that the name given to a living creature became its name. This is one account of the origin of meaning. Lyons further states that names have been a subject of controversy to linguists, as to whether they have sense or not. What is widely accepted is that they have reference but not sense.

Burge (1994) observes that for the last eighty years there have been considerable disagreements on issues surrounding proper names. Searle (1983) disclaims that, at first sight, nothing seems easier to understand than the use of proper names and that when there is an object and its name and it is said the name stands for the object he, therefore asks what ‘stands for’ means. Another position is taken by Brittanica Online Encyclopedia which contends that one of the most important elements of the naming process concerns meanings and associations of names. A toponym like Jerusalem denotes or refers to a name of a town in Israel. The issue is whether Christians would give further associations (like a holy land) besides its denotative meaning. Tulwap Ng’etik, to the Kipsigis people, not only refers to a hill in Kericho District but is also commemorative of a great circumcision event the Kipsigis boys underwent on the hill before they parted ways to settle in different parts of the now Kipsigis land.
Crystal (1987) observes that it is now a widely held view that *meaning* is not some kind of entity separate from the language any more than meaning of for example *length*. When we say an object has so much length, it does not mean that there is an abstract property of length that exists independently of the object. This is to say the meaning a name has, depends on the context of its usage and we should not consider the meaning of a name independently of its referent and other associations. Simply put, the meaning of a word is derived from its usage in a particular context. If somebody asked a young person whether when they come of age they would want to live in Runda or Kibera, the response could be denotative or connotative. The meanings of the two names may not be limited to their denotative but could also bear other associations of the names. For instance, that they are of different classes, suburban and humble estates respectively (literal and modified occurrence of a proper name). The varied assertions by various linguists, as illustrated above can be further illuminated by studying the semanticity of place names (and in this particular case, Kipsigis ones).

Plag (2003) posits that languages differ remarkably in their morphological make up. This means that different languages employ different morphological processes in the formation of their words. Bauer (1983), for example, discusses more than six processes involved in formation of English words and asserts that conversion is the most productive of all since there do not appear to be morphological restrictions on any forms that undergo conversion. He further asserts that any discussion on word formation implies that there is a word and, secondly, that at least some words are formed. Halle (1973) posits that “not all words of a language can be derived by means of ‘regular’ and general rules but instead there exists numerous exceptions in a language” (p.4). It became necessary therefore that such a contention was accorded further linguistic exploration.

It is claimed, by Mphande (2006) for example, that the most elaborate and dominant morphological process is affixation. Morphology derives one lexeme from another. For instance *Kiptenden*, a Kipsigis toponym meaning ‘a narrow ridge’, is derived from the stem  {tenden}  which is an adjective by adding  {Kip-}, a nominalizer prefix. Sometimes derivation occurs without an overt affix as in, spy (v) and spy (n).
The Kipsigis word *kaitit* is an adjective which means ‘cold’ but has been derived to mean a place in Bomet County therefore, it becomes a noun.

Jensen & Jensen (1990) observe that while conversion is evident in both English and French, in the latter it is not straightforward as in the former. There are other processes besides affixation like compounding, conversion and unpredictable formations (like word manufacture). They observe that one process may be well defined in one language but not in another, citing the case of inflection which is clear in English but problematic in French. Bauer (1983) asserts that the vast majority of compounds in English are nouns with noun + noun compounds forming the largest sub-grouping. Haspelmath (2002) points out that what one language expresses morphologically may be expressed by a separate word in another language or even left implicit in another. This means that different languages differ in terms of morphological operations involved in word formation. In the light of this, it was necessary to find out how Kipsigis place names are formed.

**1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The maze in the study of place names, just like all other names, has been whether these names carry meanings as asserted by social semioticians like Halliday (1978) or that they are just referents/signifiers as observed by semiotic linguists like Pierce (1940) who contended that form was divorced from meaning. Lyons (1977) says that the linguistic status of names has been the subject of controversy among linguists concerning if the names have sense. He observes that it is widely accepted that they have reference but not sense. From the onset, the researcher suspected that Hallidayan position was the correct one as far as Kipsigis place names are concerned. However, only a study such as ours could confirm this.

Place names are words like other words in a language and Bauer (1983) asserts that some words can be attributed to word formation processes. It was of interest to this study to find out the truth of this claim in relation to place names in Kipsigis.

**1.3 Research Objectives**

This study was guided by the following objectives;
1. To identify and describe the morphological processes involved in the formation of Kipsigis toponyms.
2. To establish the extent to which Kipsigis toponyms are formed through systematic morphological processes.
3. To analyze the different types of meanings evident in Kipsigis toponyms.

1.4 Research Questions
This study sought to answer the following questions;
1. What morphological processes are involved in the formation of Kipsigis toponyms?
2. To what extent are Kipsigis toponyms formed by systematic morphological processes?
3. What are the different types of meanings carried by Kipsigis toponyms?

1.5 Research Assumptions
The study was based on the following assumptions;
1. That there are certain morphological processes involved in the formation of Kipsigis toponyms
2. That Kipsigis toponyms are mainly formed through systematic morphological processes.
3. That Kipsigis place names carry different types of meanings.

1.6 Rationale of the Study
While some linguistic studies existed on the Kalenjin language, little had been done on the morpho-semantic domain. Toweett (1979) did an in-depth study on the phonology and morphology of the Kalenjin language. In some sections of the work, he handles verbal morphology. This study was to complement Toweett’s by shedding further light in the area of the morpho- semantics of place names. It sought, for instance, to establish the extent to which the deverbalisation groupings he comes up with are applicable to Kipsigis place names. This study, therefore augmented the few linguistic resources available.
Meyerhoff (2006) observes that language planning increases the vitality of a language (dialect) at the expense of others. Owing to colonial policies of language planning, the Nandi dialect was chosen for orthographic purposes. The Kalenjin Bible and the Kalenjin Hymn Book are in the Nandi dialect. The Kipsigis dialect therefore has little literature available in it. This study aimed to contribute to such literature, thereby increasing the vitality of this dialect.

Choosing names for new administrative units and religious units had not been taken seriously before by those in authority. The units or institutions had arbitrarily been given names, resulting in unnecessary controversies among residents of such places, who may have had issues with such names. This study can shed light to administrators when considering official names for places (institutions) so as to choose ‘neutral’ or acceptable ones.

1.7 Scope and Limitation

This study was limited to a morpho-semantic analysis of Kipsigis names, thereby leaving out the phonological aspect which is also important. This was so to avoid too wide a scope. Besides, the morpho-semantics aspect is under-researched in Kipsigis studies.

This study was on the Kipsigis dialect which is one of the many Kalenjin dialects. The other dialects may or may not share the same principles in terms of the morpho-semantics of place names. Kipsigis was chosen because the researcher has native speaker competence in it.

Kipsigis has a very systematic way of naming people, but this study did not delve into that. It instead limited itself to the morpho-semantic aspects of toponyms so as to constrain the otherwise vast scope. This study hence, did not handle other areas of onomastics like hydronymy, oronymy, chrematonomy.

Lastly, this study was confined to Bomet Sub-County. This is because no study so far has established that Kipsigis has sub dialects. As such, the findings can be generalized to the other districts where Kipsigis is spoken.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This section presents a review of, firstly, general studies on meanings, secondly, studies on denotation and connotation and thirdly studies on naming. Moreover, this review concerns itself with morphological processes in word formation as well as the theoretical basis of the study.

2.1 General Studies on Meaning

Halliday and Hasan (1989) observe that “there have been confusing myths that have tended to dissociate language from meaning, form from function or form from context and the meaning so that the critical role of language in the building of meaning is simply overlooked” (p.5). They consider language as a social semiotic and a resource for meaning, centrally involved in the process by which human beings construct and change the nature of social experience. They assert that meaning is realized in language in the form of text which is thus shaped or patterned in response to the context of situation in which it is used.

Lyons (1977) observes that “languages evolve as systems of meaning potential or as sets of resources which influence what the speaker can do with language in particular social contexts” (p.39). He views language as a set of interrelated systems with each system containing a set of options from which a speaker selects according to the meaning he wants to make. This therefore means a toponym (a text) can be interpreted differently depending on what meaning one wants to make out of it.

Moving back to earlier developments in the semantic discipline, Lyons (1977) observes that meanings of linguistic expressions are commonly described in terms of the notion of signification. He observes that Pierce (1940) comes up with ten different classes of signs among them symbols, signs and indices. He says that a symbol is whatever is transmitted along some channel of communication and can be interpreted by the receiver by encoding some message. He further observes that symbols rest upon conventionality and arbitrariness of the relationship between sign and its signification. ‘Tree’ in English, ‘mti’ in Kiswahili, ‘ketit’ in Kipsigis has
different forms but none is more appropriate to signify the object *tree*. However, onomatopoeic words are exceptions in terms of arbitrariness but still an onomatopoeic word in one language may not have an onomatopoeic equivalent in another language yet the words in both languages serve the purpose of signification.

Saussure (1983) observes that “at least the form of the signifier is not determined by what it signifies. Languages differ in how they refer to the same referent” (p.76). Of more relevance to this study was his assertion that there is nothing at all to prevent the association of any idea whatsoever with any sequence of words. This study, therefore hoped to find out whether place names had other associations apart from denotative meanings.

The meanings of most words are complex, composed of more general components. The meaning of a lexical item is analyzed by identifying its components and the way in which these components are combined (Lobner, 2002, p.125). In a sense the process of semantic analysis is the reverse of the process of composition by which we determine the meaning of a complex expression (toponym) on the basis of its components. In this light therefore, the question of morpho-semantic transparency comes in when dealing with compound words.

Crystal (1985) says that semantics aims to establish the properties of meaning in a systematic and objective way with reference to a wide range of utterances and languages possible. He asserts that the meaning of a word should not be sought in isolation of what it refers to; simply put, a word in itself does not carry much meaning. This captured one of the motivations of this study; that was, seeking to establish various meanings of given place names.

Lyons (1977) corroborates this view by noting that “communication would be improved and clarity of thought facilitated if it is realized that the relationship between a word (a place name in this case) and things is purely derivative and non-causal relationship resulting from their association in the mind of the speaker and the listener” (p.77). This takes us away from the danger of treating words as conventional rather than inadequate symbols for things. This study therefore sought different informants’ views of possible meanings carried by specific place names.
Chandler (2003) observes that there is no natural connection between the sounds of a language and what they signify. So whatever name you give a thing, it is its right name. Language determines reality rather than reality determining language. Language does not reflect reality but constructs it. We can use language to say what is. We come to know the world through whatever language we are born into. This arbitrary aspect helped to account for the scope of interpretation (and the importance of context).

Signs have multiple rather than single meanings. Within a single signifier we may refer to many signifieds. For instance, Kenyatta University (a signifier) has many signifieds among them: Main Campus, Ruiru Campus and City Campus. Still, one signified may have many signifiers as is the case with synonyms. This exposition by Chandler (2003) provided a window through which meanings ascribed to toponyms could be viewed.

Chandler (2002) echoes the age old thought that “as a species, we are driven by a desire to make meanings” (p.13). He further argues that signifying systems are not socially or historically arbitrary. Natural languages are not arbitrarily established like the Morse code. The arbitrary nature of sign (word) does not make it socially neutral. He illustrates that red is for stop in traffic lights but also carries relevant associations with danger. With its social use within a system every sign acquires associations. The relationship between signifier and signified is dependent on social and cultural conventions.

Billington, Strawbridge, Greenisdies, (1992) corroborate Chandler (2002), who says that language is a system of a code or a sign for something which stands for a symbol of something else. For one to pass some meaning, a group must share the meaning (e.g. members of a certain community) because the connections between the signs, objects and ideas which they signify are arbitrary. This study hoped to find out the different interpretations the different groups in the community give to certain toponyms. Saussure (1983) further adds to this when he likens a sign to the game of chess, noting that the value of each piece depends on its position on the chessboard. This would later explain the varied interpretations of meanings of the same word by different respondents.
2.1.1 Denotation and Connotation

Lyons (1977) observes that there has been an endless debate on the definition of denotation; he however calls it ‘reference’. The denotation of a lexeme refers to the relationship that holds between that lexeme and things, places, properties, processes and activities outside the language system. All lexemes have denotation, but denotation is just one part of a wider and more complex relationship which holds between language and the possible set of worlds. Connotation is defined as a socio-cultural and personal association (ideological, emotional) of a sign. Denotation is a relation that applies in the first instance to lexemes and holds independently of any particular occasions.

Leech (1984) observes that connotations are relatively unstable; they vary considerably according to culture, historical period and the experience of an individual. He further observes that connotative meaning is intermediate and open ended in the same way our beliefs and knowledge about the universe are open ended. Any characteristic of a referent identified objectively or subjectively forms part of the connotative meaning and entails the communicative value a word has over and above its purely conceptual meaning.

2.1.2 Naming

The semantic value of an expression (name) is determined by the speaker’s intention together with features of context. The vocabulary of a language plays an important role as a window into the universe of knowledge of its speakers and their view of the world around them. This study hoped to view the world of meanings in Kipsigis place names as seen by the Kipsigis speakers of Bomet Sub County.

Linguistic signs are not totally arbitrary since a word is not accidental or random. A signifier may constitute well formed combinations of sounds which conform to existing patterns in a language. To prop this, some compounds are made from the meaningful signs. For instance, Dead Sea is a toponym made up of two meaningful signs dead and sea. Also, signifying systems may not be socially or historically arbitrary, in that a name of a place for instance Kigari in Embu County may to a native speaker connote the early missionaries from Kigali, Rwanda to the area.
residents. Towards this end, the study had to look into the history of a name when respondents alluded that a name has historical meaning.

Burge (2004), in his article ‘Reference and Proper Names’, wonders why there is no theory on proper names yet they seem to present a straightforward, uncomplicated example on how language relates to the world. He critiques the traditional view that had it that proper names are constants; this is to say that they are singular terms meant to pick out a unique object and that they lack internal semantic structure. They do not seem to describe the objects they purportedly designate as definite descriptions do.

Burges opposes this traditional view on the grounds that proper names can be used not just on singular/literal form but also in metaphorical forms. The sentences below serve to show that proper names can be used in a special way to create different senses. The proposed study seeks to establish whether Kipsigis place names have special uses (apart from literal) hence different senses.

i. Napoleon was adept at espionage
ii. Our general is a Napoleon

Proper names convey information or attribute characteristics to the named objects. When a speaker uses a particular name, he or she carries that names attributes. Most of the proper names that a person is capable of using at a given time will be true of more than one object.

Names in a given culture or society do acquire more or less associations. This laid a basis for the study to find out whether indeed toponyms had associations. Ullman (1962) says that names play such an important role in human relations that they are often endowed with magic potencies and surrounded by elaborate superstitions and taboos.

The Bible has place names replete with meanings as espoused in WebBible Encyclopaedia

- Bethel refers to a place in Central Palestine that means Gate of God.
- Zion refers to one of the eminences in Jerusalem and also means sunny or height
• Babylon means *confusion* while Galilee; Jesus’ home means *circuit*.

These Biblical names serve to motivate researchers to search for meanings of any other yet –to- be- studied toponyms. This is where this study comes in.

### 2.1.3 Morphological Processes

Morphological processes in this study fall under the theoretical framework of generative grammar and, particularly, generative morphology. Generative Morphology has set of word formation rules (WFRs) which enable a competent person in a language make predictions on possible words of a language. For instance, a competent Kipsigis speaker has an intuitive set of rules that will inform him on whether a word is well or ill formed. These intuitive rules enable him/her to form or decompose infinite number of words. A number of linguists have developed models of generative morphology in which word formation takes place in the lexical component of the grammar. The WFRs are useful in this study since through them one may come up with categories of word-formation processes such as affixation, compounding and conversion which are classified as ‘regular’. For those words that don’t filter through WFRs, they are classified as ‘irregular’ categories and referred to as unpredictable formations as Aronoff (1976, p. 20) explains. Under irregular categories, we have clipping, acronyms, word manufacture and mixed formations. He further stresses that morphology is autonomous and shouldn’t be seen as an appendage of syntax and phonology but as a system of its own. He provides evidence that the word must also be considered as a minimal sign (morpheme) for morphology.

There are two approaches to the study of morphology; morpheme based and word based. Aronoff (1976) argues against the morpheme concept. He points out that many morphological processes seem to apply to words rather than to morphemes. He says it is not always possible to take the morpheme as a sign; that is, as a unit of meaning. Sometimes we must recognize meaningless morphemes which nonetheless combine to form meaningful words. Examples include:

- *Perceive*  
  *deceive*

- *Conceive*  
  *detain*

- *Receive*
The stems, however, are morphemes and not meaningless morphs since they undergo distinctive allomorphy. For example, from {–ceive}, we get adjectives like receptive, deceptive, perceptive and nominalizations like reception, deception and perception. A prefix like re- and a stem like {–mit} may seem meaningless morphs yet upon combining them, a meaningful word is obtained (remit, that means to send). The proposed study will benefit from Aronoff’s argument because firstly, some processes like conversion and compounding take place at word level. Secondly, derivation at this level is able to take place without violating the well-formedness of a language for example in Bantu it allows basic verbal suffix to end a word though it is meaningless. Below is an exemplification of word-based morphology.

**Kipsigis toponyms**

a) Kapkikorwet

b) Kaptien

The stems {kikorwet} and {tien} means {thorn} and {dance} respectively. Each takes a nominaliser (for place) ‘kap-’ as a prefix to form a place name.

Bauer (1983) puts forth regular processes that are common in English Word Formation and supposedly many other languages. These are affixation, conversion, and compounding. Among the examples he put forth, none is drawn from a Nilotic language hence the need to study this Nilotic language. Affixation, to start with, has these sub-categories: prefixation, suffixation, infixation and circumfixation. The latter two are rare or non-existent in many languages. Circumfixation is a morphological process whereby an affix made up of two separate parts surrounds and attaches to a root or stem. Infixation is a morphological process whereby a bound morpheme attaches within a root.

This study limited itself to prefixation and suffixation as they were evident in the Kipsigis dialect. Affixation may or may not be class changing, as illustrated below with the suffix –et.

\{Cham\} (love) v > chamyet (love) n = class changing

\{kering\}(hole) n > keringet (a toponym referring to a division in Nakuru District). N here is not class changing.
An affix can be said to be productive or non-productive. It is productive when it can generate new words. Kap-, for instance, seems a very productive prefix meaning place. Kapobama may, (to Kipsigis speaker) mean USA and Kabarnet to mean the farm or place of Mr. Barnet.

On the contrary, Frank (1999) did a research on noun formation in Nuer, a Nilo-Saharan language, spoken in Sudan and Ethiopia. He found out that suffixation is the most productive (regular) process and that ninety percent of Nuer nouns are formed from irregular processes. This study was different for his data was nouns in general while in this the data is specifically toponyms.

Plag (2003) asserts that when derivation occurs without an overt affix, it is called zero derivation or conversion. Burgei (adj) in kipsigis means warm but undergoes conversion to be Burgei, referring to a place name in Bomet County. Bauer (1983, p.226) makes an important contention that this process is an extremely productive way of forming new words in English, since it has no restrictions on forms and form classes undergoing conversion. The only restriction, however, is blocking of derived nouns. An example is a derived noun like refusal which will not be converted to a verb if the verb means exactly the same as refuse from which refusal is derived. Therefore a lexeme may or may not undergo conversion. This study aimed at investigating whether conversion was equally productive in the formation of Kipsigis toponyms.

Compounding can be classified in several ways: by form classes of items that make the compound; by semantic classes; by presumed underlying syntactic function and so on. This brings us to morpho-semantic transparency. Under this analysis, a compound word is decomposed based the following parameters: if both members are transparent (door-bell), head member is transparent (straw-berry) and when both members are opaque (red-neck). Transparency comes about when components of a compound word can be easily understood to give the word’s meaning (Dressler, 2005). There are many ways in which compounds may be formed in English. These include, n+n, v+n, n+v, v+v, adj+n, phrase compounds, rhyme motivated compounds and so on.
The study hoped to look into morphological processes available for toponym formation in Kipsigis dialect. Further, it sought to determine which among them was predominant. This was in line with Szymanek’s (2005) observation that there are universal tendencies in that some morphological processes like suffixing are exceedingly widespread while others like vocalic change are less common.

2.1.4 Naming in African Communities

Mphande (2006) asserts that among many African cultures, a name tells a lot about the individual it signifies, the language from which it is drawn and the society that ascribes it. He further observes that a name may indicate linguistic structures found in the language, the position of the name bearer in society, the collective history and experiences of the people. He contends that names are the most meaningful lexicon in the vocabulary of any language. This study benefitted from Mphande’s in that it sought to establish the possible meanings ascribed to Kipsigis toponyms so as to verify if his finding is applicable to Kipsigis dialect.

All Bantu languages have elaborate and overt morphological and derivational semantic processes for naming. He further asserts that derivation is very distinctive feature in Bantu languages. He also states that noun or verbal conjugation is very a common source of deriving meaning in Zulu language of Southern Africa and in the Ngoni language the deverbalisation process contributes immensely to the name formation process. Toweett (1979) also notes that deverbalisation is used in the Kalenjin language in formation of names but does not talk of the extent to which this happens. An example is the verb Kones which means, “to talk slowly” and this stem is deverbalised by taking a suffix like Kip- to form a personal noun. He notes that the same process can be used in the formation of toponyms.

Toweett (1979) delves deep into the phonology and morphology of the Kalenjin language. He divides Kalenjin verbs into two depending on the affix that a stem takes. This study benefitted from Toweett’s in the area of morphology in that his classification of inclusive and exclusive singular or plural nouns was used though with different titles, definite and indefinite nouns. This study therefore, draws part of its classifications of morphological processes from Toweett’s study. However, it goes further to demonstrate more processes involved in noun/ toponym formation.
Malande (2006) did an in-depth morpho-semantic study on Luloogoli (a Bantu language) anthroponyms. The study established that there is a relationship between morphology and semantics. It asserts that morphology provides bases, roots and morphemes to which semantics assigns meanings. This study benefited from Malande’s since drawing from its findings, it also endeavored to establish the relationship between how a toponym is formed and the meaning it bears. This study also borrowed in the methodology of categorization and analysis of data. His study however, did not look at the prominence of different morphological processes involved in the formation of PNs. Malande’s data was from a Bantu language while this draws from a Nilotic language. Moreover, this study differs from Malande’s in that it studied toponyms and not PNs.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Introduction

This section presents two theories that were used in the research and gives the rationale for the choice of the theories.

2.2.2 Generative Morphology

Bochner (1992) observes that a good morphological model is one that can lead to prediction of the formation of a word rather than insisting on listing individual words or morphemes in a grammar. This prediction is brought about by a rule system that gives predictable results. One such model is Generative Morphology whose basic tenet is that a speaker has tacit rules that make it possible to distinguish between well formed and ill formed words. To illustrate, Kap- in Kipsigis is a place nominaliser. Therefore if someone said to a competent speaker; Kap + Talamea (Lord Dalamere’s estates), that speaker would know it is a certain place being referred to, even if he/she has never heard of it before.

Morphology entered the domain of Generative Linguistics in 1970s with Halle (1973) and Aronoff (1976) being its main contributors. Generative Grammar seeks to provide an explicit, formal theory of language structure. It comes up with rules that represent a native speaker’s tacit knowledge of their language. Such grammar is expected to
provide a representation of all the grammatical expressions in a language. In this study, the researcher and the respondents were deemed to have tacit knowledge which was used in the decomposition of toponyms so as to show their formation.

Competence is a person’s underlying (subconscious) linguistic ability to create and understand or form words, including those s/he has never heard before. To illustrate this, every time the Kenyan Government allocated land to Mau Forest evictees (who are Kipsigis speakers), they came up with names for their new villages. For instance, Kaplelach, which means a place for the new generation. –Lel- is the root and it means ‘new’, -lelach is the base and kap- a prefix.

Competence allows a native speaker to recognize words that belong to a given language and those that do not. It is this premise that gave basis to this study to analyze toponyms given that a native speaker has tacit knowledge on how words are formed in his/her language. The researcher, who is competent in the dialect identified Kipsigis toponyms from borrowed ones and categorized the processes used to form them as regular or irregular. Apart from this theory’s functionality on morphological analysis as shown before, it also assigns denotative meanings. However, it does not address connotative meanings hence the need for a second theory that fully captures meanings.

2.2.3 Social Semiotics Theory

The Social Semiotics approach addresses the key question on how people make signs in the context of interpersonal relations to achieve specific aims. The Social Semiotics Theory is attributed to Malinowski (1923). He dealt with translation, where he was keen on conveying meaning from one language to another without mimicking the original language and being unintelligible but giving a rather extended commentary, one that places a text in its living environment. In this sense a word is looked at in a very pragmatic sense. The SST has since been influenced strongly by Halliday (1978) in which he brought forward the premises of, first, the functional perspective of language which entails ‘the meta-functions’ and secondly that language is a system of options and meaning potential. This is further refined in the work; Language Context
Halliday and Hassan (1989) assert that Social Semiotics takes the meaning making process to be more basic than the system of meaning-relations (as is the case in general semiotics). Social Semiotics examines semiotic practices, specific to a culture and community for the making of various texts and meanings in various situational contexts. For instance, Chandler (2003, p.4) observes that one may call a given structure *home* and the same structure to another person may be referred to a *hovel*, depending on one’s economic orientation. This theory views meaning as not permanently fixed but still it asserts that possible meanings attributed to a certain text (name) are limited. This is because different categories of interpreters constrain meaning potential by favoring some interpretations of a text over others. Kisii Town has synonyms, Kisii and Bosongo. Users of the name, therefore, choose the synonym to use depending on the meaning they want to communicate. The former is normally used for accommodation or inclusion purposes while the latter (Bosongo) is for exclusion.

Social Semiotics takes into consideration the relationship between the text and its context of the situation. Here it brings about what it terms as determinants of a text: field, tenor and mode.

*Field* is the general sense of what the text is about or the ongoing activity. *Tenor* is concerned with the personal relationships of the participants in a text. This means that different sections of participants in a community will attribute different meanings to a text depending on how they perceive it, either positively or negatively. *Kamaeech*, for instance, is a descriptive toponym of a hamlet in Bomet Sub County which means ‘never dawning’. The residents recently changed the name to *Kagoech* which means ‘it has dawned’. The earlier name, they said, was ominous and had brought them problems. *Mode* is the particular part that the language is playing in the interactive process. In this study it was the written mode since names were drawn from a roll. This theory was used to analyze the meanings of toponyms that the respondents came up with. The assumption was that a text (in this case a toponym) largely doesn’t have meaning in itself but depends on the user or field in which it is in.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction
This section covers the research design, study area and sample size, sampling techniques, data collection procedures, data analysis and presentation and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design
Descriptive research enables a researcher to describe the characteristics inherent in a population. It also allows him/her to categorize the population and explain on the categories formed. In this study, the formation and meanings of toponyms were described based on the categories they fell into. This design was also used since it gave a chance to the researcher to explore the possible attitudes that the informants had towards Kipsigis toponyms. Since it lends itself to descriptive statistics, this design allowed the calculation of frequencies of phenomena and the tabulation and description of data.

3.2 Site of the Study
This study was carried out in Bomet Sub-County, Bomet County since, but for two urban centres, Bomet and Silibwet, the region is virtually populated by Kipsigis speakers. Kipsigis naming patterns are dominant in the area hence data obtained was heterogeneous to the entire Kipsigis dialect. Apart from this, the researcher hails from the area and therefore this facilitated the identification of reliable informants and data elicitation.

3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size
Milroy (1987) suggests an in-depth investigation using a small number of reliable speakers. Moreover, she notes that language tends be more homogenous than other types of behavior and require less data since too much of it tends to exhibit repetitive characteristics and increases data handling problems. Out of the total 67 names of administrative units drawn from a roll which has administrative units in Bomet Sub County, purposive sampling was used to obtain the names to be studied. Therefore, the name of the Sub County and those of divisions, locations and sub-locations were
studied. However, those that repeated themselves and those borrowed and had not been nativized were omitted. Kombo and Tromp (2006) state that the power of purposive sampling lies in selecting information rich cases for in-depth analysis related to central issues being studied.

The researcher targeted twelve respondents with the following desired characteristics: knowledgeability, accessibility, diversity and representativeness. The researcher through the snowballing technique, was able to reach out to the twelve respondents from the few initially known to the researcher. Though not variables gender and age were considered in the sampling, so as to bring out diverse responses. Going by what is in the law, the youth were those respondents of between 18-35 years. For institutional memory, respondents aged sixty and above were chosen. The two cohorts of respondents, half of whom were male and the other half female (as illustrated below), supplied the meanings of the sampled toponyms.

Figure 3.1: Respondents

3.4 Data Collection Procedures
Data needed for the study was in the form of place names. As already mentioned in the sampling section, these were drawn from Report Returns document accessed from Bomet Sub-County Commissioner’s office. A semi-structured interview (ref. appendix A1) was used to collect data on the meanings of the toponyms. This instrument was appropriate when seen in the light of Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) who asserts that it allows respondents to give wider responses which in-turn give an insight into feelings, background, hidden motivation, intuitions, interests and decisions of respondents.
3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

This study used the purposive sampling technique to come up with 56 toponyms from an administrative units roll in Bomet Sub-county. The researcher, guided by Generative Morphological Theory, categorized and described the names based on different morphological processes involved in their formation. To attain the second objective, the percentage of frequency of occurrence for each process was calculated and put in pie-charts. From the meanings obtained from the respondents, denotative and connotative categories were established and categorized according to Crystal (1987) while appreciating that no single theory clearly distinguishes them. In the study, denotative will be taken to mean primary or universal implication. Under connotative, the associative meanings of each toponym were sought. Associative meanings are those affected by context, background, time and cultural realities of users of a language. They also include stylistic ones. Data obtained was organized into themes and generalizations were made.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethics is about transparency and responsibility. In this study therefore, permission to be interviewed was sought from the informants. They were made to appreciate the importance and confidentiality of the findings of the study so that they could readily cooperate.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction
This chapter outlines morphological and semantic analysis of the Kipsigis toponyms. The data was analyzed at three levels. Firstly, we presented the analysis of morphological processes. This was followed by the analysis of the frequency of each morphological process which was presented in pie-charts. Lastly, we presented the analysis of meanings carried by the toponyms.

4.1 Morphological Analysis
A preview of the morphological data indicated that most toponyms were derived from other words through different word formation processes. In this study, these processes were affixation (which entailed, prefixation, suffixation and multiple affixation), compounding, clipping and avoidance of word formation. We looked at each in turn.

4.1.1 Affixation
This is the morphological process in which an affix is attached to a root or a base. Many languages have prefixes and suffixes, but they differ in the way they deploy these morphemes (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2011). Affixation is evident in Kipsigis. This study addressed itself to three types of affixation evident in the dialect namely:

i. Prefixation
   ii. Suffixation
   iii. Multiple affixation.

4.1.1.1 Prefixation
This is a morphological process whereby a bound morpheme is attached to the front part of a root or stem (Fromkin, Rodman and Hyams, 2011).

This study established that nine cases of the toponyms are formed through prefixation. Firstly, we looked into the toponyms formed from prefixation of common nouns. Under this category, there were those that are class maintaining and they account for six out of the nine cases of prefixation. However they form a different word within the
same lexical category. *Kap-* is a nominalization prefix in Kipsigis which means “place of or home of” as illustrated below:

1. **Kapsimbiri**

   The place name *Kapsimbiri* can be decomposed thus:

   *Firimbi* is word borrowed from Kiswahili and nativized to become *sirimbit*.
   
   Kap- (prefix) + sirimbit (noun) > kapsirimbit.
   
   kapsirimbi \(\rightarrow\) metathesis \(\rightarrow\) Kapsimbirit
   
   -t at the end of the word is ellipted.

   It is worth noting that prefixation occurs after a morpho-phonological process called metathesis. Metathesis is a phonological process in which two, usually adjacent, sound segments, interchange positions (Masamba, 1996). *Simbiri*, is a metathised form of the word *sirimbit* which means a whistle. *Sirimbit* was borrowed and nativized from the Kiswahili word *firimbi* which means ‘a whistle’. One possible explanation of metathesis here is that, the toponym resulted in repeated speech errors where residents would mis-pronounce the place name especially because the word was foreign to the dialect. It is worth noting that the Kipsigis dialect does not have /f/, the nearest sound is /β/ which does not occur word initial but in medial position. Its speakers therefore approximated the sound /f/ to /s/, meaning that *firimbi* becomes *sirimbit*.

   Colonial headmen would blow whistles to call for meetings at the place and therefore people termed it as *Kapsimbiri* which means “a place of the whistle”.

2. **Kapng’etuny**

   *Ng’etuny* is a noun which means ‘lions’. The root *ng’etuny* takes the prefix {Kap-} to form a place name.

   Kap- (prefix) + ng’etuny > Kapng’etuny

   The denotative meaning of *Kapng’etuny* is a place known for lions possibly because the place has a river which was once thickly covered by trees. Therefore, it is highly possible the forest was inhabited by lions.

   Secondly, there are those place names that are formed from personal nouns and also class maintaining. There’s a universal phenomenon where speakers of a language
name places after great personalities. For instance, Alexandria City is named after Alexander the Great. Kipsigis is no exception to such name formation trends. In the dialect a personal name may or may not take the spatial marker Kap- (a prefix). For instance, Kap + Kenyatta means a place in Ngata, Nakuru County where Kenya’s first president owns a piece of land. The place is named after him because Kenyatta was a prominent personality. An instance from the data is:

3. Kabisoge

Isoge is a Gusii personal noun and it is a name of a re-known land owner in Kipsigis land who had his origins from the Abagusii community. His home location was therefore named after him.

\[\text{Kap- (prefix/ spatial marker) + isoge} \rightarrow \text{kapisoge.}\]

In some natural languages when some consonants appear between vocalic sounds they become voiced. This is referred to as **intervocalic voicing**. /p/ in the toponym is therefore realized as /β/. Observe this Kipsigis toponym that illustrates intervocalic voicing:

4. Kabungut.

Further examples of intervocalic voicing are evident as shown below:

\[\text{Kuur “call” keguur “to call”}\]
\[\text{Keer “see” kegeer “to see”}\]

There is a name forming process which is class changing which accounted for three cases. Toweett (1979) observes that Chep- and Kip- are typically Kipsigis nominalizers that mean “one of” when used in the formation of the personal names. Chep- is a prefix of Kipsigis maiden names while Kip- is a prefix attached to the names of males who are yet to be circumcised. However, a preview of the meanings of these prefixes showed that they do not indicate gender when used in forming toponyms.

5. Chemaner

Che- is a prefix.

Ner (v) is a root and means ‘to grow fat’

\[\text{Ma- is a negative marker}\]

\[\text{Che +ma+ner} \rightarrow \text{Chemaner}\] is therefore a toponym that denotes, at one level, ‘a location’ and at another, “not to grow fat”. The addition of the prefix che- makes a noun.
The place is not known for thin people but there is the likelihood that the livestock in the area at one time in history were emaciated.

6. **Chepkitwal**

   *Kitwal* (v) is an infinitive and it means ‘to jump’.

   Chep- + kitwal>*Chepkitwal* is a place name that denotes a sub-location and again “to jump”

It was evident therefore that the gender aspect of the prefixes is not manifested.

Deverbalization is evident in the formation of the two toponyms above. This happens when verbs take affixes to form new words which belong to a different class. This process therefore is class changing.

There is a basic phonological process called **deletion** that is involved in the formation of some of the toponyms above. This is a process in which a segment is removed from a word. Below are some examples.

- Chep + maner > Chemaner (a place name meaning ‘a place of not growing fat’)
- Kap + maech > Kamaech (a place name meaning ‘a place that never dawns’)
- Kip + mutai > Kimutai (a personal name)

From the above exemplification suffice it to observe that /p/ is deleted when it precedes /m/. This is because both are: /bilabial/ and therefore they are difficult to pronounce back to back so one has to be deleted and in this case it is /p/.

This entails that if you were to form a new place name for example meaning the place of *Moi* (personal name beginning with M), you would omit /p/ before combining the prefix *Kap-* with the root *Moi* hence a new toponym *Kamo* and not *Kapmoi*. This shows **productivity**.

7. **Chelulot** is an example of a toponym that is formed from an adjective and therefore is class changing as seen below.

   - *lulot* means slopy (Adj)
   - *Che* is a prefix
   - *Che + lulot* forms the toponym Chelulot (N)
The addition of the prefix *Che-* to the base *lulot* changes the class from an adjective to a descriptive place name.

### 4.1.1.2 Suffixation

From the data, fifteen toponyms formed through suffixation were identified. We first looked at nominal suffixes involved in the formation of Kipsigis place names. Toweett (1979) observes that \{–*et*, -at, -ot, -it\} and \{–*t*\} are nominalizing affixes that are used to form exclusive singular nouns (esn) however, this study considers them as showing indefiniteness.

8. **Bomet**

*Bom-* is the root form of a Kiswahili word, *boma*. The word was borrowed and nativized by adding \{–*et*\} suffix to make it a toponym. It is worth observing that the vowel \<-a> is ellipted and replaced with \<-et> to make it conform to the vowel harmony principle which requires vowels with related features to be in close proximity (Massamba, 1996, p. 94). /ə/ in Bom- and /e/ in the suffix are both mid-high vowels as opposed to /a/ which is a low spread vowel. *Bomet* is a place that means “a stable”.

It was observed that all the borrowed Kiswahili common nouns ending with the suffix \*-a* through deletion would lose \<-a> and take the nativizing suffix \<-et> as illustrated below.

- **Duka** - a Kiswahili word for ‘shop’
- **Duket** - Kipsigis word for ‘shop’
- **Tinga** - a Kiswahili word for tractor becomes *tinget*

9. **Silibwet**

*Silib-* is the root and denotes an indigenous tree whose scientific name is *dombeyaguetzine*. It takes the \<-et> to form a place name. Silibwet denotes not only a market place but also an administrative unit.

10. **Mogoiywet**

*Mogoiy-* is the root and refers to a sycamore tree. It takes \<-et>, the definiteness affix, to form a toponym. It was observed that a stem extender \<-w-> is interposed between the root and the suffix. A stem extender is an empty morph that is interposed between the root or base and the affix (Katamba, 1993).
The same phenomenon is evident in the following data:

*Sigowet* whose root is *sigo* since its plural is *sigonik* which means ‘thorny’ shrubs.
*Singorwet* whose root is *singor-* since its plural is *singoronik.*

11. *Emityot*

*Emit* is the root and it refers to *Olea Africana* (olive tree). –y- is the stem extender and –ot is the suffix.

12. *Mengit*

*Mengon-* that sheep
*Mengit-* sheep (isn)
*Meng-* is therefore the root.

To form a place name it took -it suffix

Towitzt (1979) posits that the suffixes {–o, -a, -an, -en} and {–on} are used to form inclusive singular nouns referring to ‘each’, ‘any’ or ‘every’ within the same group or class of species. This study, however, observes that the suffixes show definiteness.

The following are toponyms formed by adding these suffixes:

13. *Mugango*

*Mugang-* is a base and it means a cooking stick in the Kipsigis dialect and Ekegusii. The name owes its origin to indigenous Gusii speakers and specifically one called Mesene who was generous enough to host male initiates from the Kipsigis community during every initiation season. Mesene was so hospitable and used to host the boys undergoing circumcision. The place therefore earned the name *Mugango* probably because of a lot of cooking for the initiates every other circumcision season.

14. *Suswondo*

The base of this toponym is *Suswon-* -d- is a stem extender. *Suswon-* is the stem that means *grass.*

Suswon +d+o> Suswondo.

*Suswondo* is another case of descriptive place name since it refers to a place thickly covered by grass. Another example of a toponym with a stem extender is –d- as seen in: *Meswon + d + o* becomes *Meswondo.*
Insertion is yet another phonological process that is involved in the formation of toponyms with –o and –a suffixes. A palatal approximant [j] is inserted after a close front unrounded vowel [i] but before a close back unrounded vowel. Here are some examples:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Kapsioi + o} & \rightarrow \text{Kapsioy} \\
\text{Kapl + o} & \rightarrow \text{Kapliy + o} \rightarrow \text{Kapliyo}
\end{align*}
\]

There are Kipsigis place names that take the suffix –a as shown below:

Tegan + d + a \rightarrow Teganda.

Sonoi- is a stem and it means beads.

-\text{a} is the suffix

The cases of toponyms with –ik suffixes are:

15. Chepkositonik.

\text{Chepkositon}- is the base and not the root since it has undergone derivation by acquiring the prefix \text{Chep-}. \text{Chepkositon} means coly bird. It is important to note that the prefixes \{\text{che-}\} and \{\text{chep-}\} are variants of the same morpheme. The prefixation of \text{Chep-} is the first morphological operation to take place before the suffixation of -ik. Without these two morphological processes, the root by itself (-kositon-) cannot make a toponym.

16. Kongotik

\text{Kong’ot-} is the base and it means ‘to outwit’. The addition of –ik suffix to the verbal/verb phrase deverbalizes it and makes it a noun.

4.1.1.3 Toponyms with Multiple Affixation

Katamba (1993, p.52) defines multiple affixation as ways in which complex words are formed by creating bases which contain several derivational morphemes. He gives an example of contra+dict+ory, where ‘dict’ is the root.

Kipsigis is replete with toponyms formed by taking more than one affix. This study isolated eleven toponyms formed through multiple affixation from the data.
17. Kaproret

Roret is a noun that means ‘harvested maize fields’. This noun takes a prefix kap- to form a place name.

Kap- + roret > kaproret

This toponym is decomposed thus;
Kap + ror + et
Prefix + root + suffix

Ror-, the root, in itself cannot make a place name in the dialect. Rather, it undergoes the first morphological process of hosting the suffix –et to form a toponym. At this point it can be said to be a place name but the next process of prefixation makes it even more of a toponym since it takes a spatial morpheme Kap-. The meaning brought forth by the two morphological operations is:

Kap- (a place of) + ror (seed nursery/ harvested maize fields) + et (indefiniteness marker). The prefixation brings out the sense that: it is a place of harvested maize fields. The place name also carries a historical connotation of a place which was commonly known for harvested maize fields. These communal fields were used to demonstrate improved farming methods in the 1970s.

18. Kiptulwo

Kip- (a prefix, a spatial marker) + tul (root that means hill) + o (isn suffix)
As in the case above, the root tul cannot make a toponym before first taking the suffix then secondly the prefix.

19. Chepng’aina

Chep- (a prefix) + ng’ain (root= sand) + -a (definiteness suffix). The prefix Chep- changes the root from a common noun to a proper noun. The suffix –a, gives it the sense of indefiniteness.

4.1.2 Compounding

Bauer (1983, p.20) defines a compound as a lexeme which contains two or more stems.
**Lelkatet** is a compound which can be decomposed thus:

*Le* means *white* and *kat-* is the root and it means ‘thorn’
-***et*** is an indefiniteness suffix, also indicating number.

Compounds are subject to morphological processes. The words/stems in a compound may or may not retain a meaning similar to their meaning as isolated words. This means that the meaning of a compound can be compositional hence predictable like in a *catfish* which means a fish having whiskers like a cat. However, sometimes this is not the case as seen in *blackboard* which may be a white wall. The lack of predictability can be due to semantic drift where over time the actual meaning of a word/name has changed as exemplified below:

20. **Kiplelji**

*Le*- is a stem/word which means white or new. It combines with *ji* which means ‘person’ (*chi* in typical spoken form) to qualify it. The next operation is that it takes *Kip-* the nominalizing affix which qualifies it to be a place name.

This toponym means ‘the place of white person’ mostly to elderly respondents possibly because of their institutional knowledge. *Le* has undergone a semantic shift to mean ‘new’ settlers not necessarily white settlers. This is **semantic shift.** Semantic shift is regarded as one of the word formation processes. It happens when a word takes on a new meaning by shrinking or extending the scope of their reference. *Le* in the light of this means ‘white’ and ‘new’ (native) settlers. Its associative meaning is looked at in detail later in section 4.3.3

It should be noted that most Kipsigis toponyms are endocentric (headed compounds). Moreover, like most English words, these words have their head to the right as demonstrated in the examples below. *Ji, beiyon, katet* and *mo* are heads and appear to the right. Further, it is apparent that three of the four toponyms formed through compounding are ADJ + N.

**Kiplelji**

*Kip-* (prefix) + *lel* (white, ADJ) + *ji* (person, N)

21. **Koibeyon**

*Koi* (long, ADJ) + *beiyon* (water, N)
22. *Kichurmo*

*Kichur* (to romp, V) + *mo* (calf, N)

### 4.1.2.1 Morpho-Semantic Transparency and Opacity of Compounds

Dressler (2005, p.272) defines transparency as the clarity of meaning of a member of a compound to the compound and opacity as when a member fails to bring out its meaning in a compound. He comes up with four degrees of morpho-semantic transparency.

i. Transparency of both members for instance ‘moonlight’ which means light emanating from the moon.

ii. Transparency of the head member and opacity of the non-head for instance ‘straw berry’.

iii. Transparency of non head member and opacity of the head for instance ‘jail bird’.

iv. Opacity of both members for instance ‘hum-bug’.

In the light of the four parameters above, the Kipsigis compounds toponyms in this study all fall under the first category. Below is the exemplification.

*Kichur + mo* means ‘to romp’ + ‘a calf’

*Lel + kater* means ‘white’ + ‘thorn’

*Koibeyon* means ‘long’ + ‘water’

*Kiplelji* means ‘white/new’ + ‘person’

Since all the above compounds (toponyms) are descriptive, it is true to say each non-head member describes the head member. For instance *Kichurmo* describes a lush plain where calves would ecstatically run. *Koibeyon* tells of a river with a fall. Suffice it therefore to say that for each compound, both members are transparent.

### 4.1.3 Conversion

Words that are formed without modifying the form of the input word that serves as the base are said to have undergone conversion (Bauer and Valera, 2005, p.22). It is the syntactic position that the word occupies which tells the class a word belongs to. Here are examples:
The following toponyms are formed as a result of conversion.

Menet

*Menet* means clayish (Adj) but as a toponym it remains *Menet.*

23. **Tegat**

*Tegat* has one of its meaning as the participle ‘built’, therefore it is a verb. But as a toponym it becomes *Tegat* a noun meaning a built up place.

24. **Kaitit**

*Kaitit* means *cold* therefore it is an adjective. *Kaitit* (N) has been used to name an administrative unit in Bomet District. The essence of the naming here is descriptive; it tells of the chilly weather conditions.

25. **Burgei**

It is derived from the adjective *burgei* which means ‘warm’. The meaning is denotative in nature since it refers directly to the weather condition of the place.

### 4.1.4 A Toponym Formed from Clipping

Clipping, also known as truncation, refers to the process whereby a lexeme (simple or complex) is shortened, while still retaining the same meaning and still being a member of the same form class (Bauer, 1983, p.233). One case was found in this study. As for English, clipping typically happens to letters on the right side of the word, while Kipsigis it happens on the left side. *Walisaik*, which means tree branches, changes to *Aisaik* because of clipping. ‘W’ has been clipped and this is called **fore-clipping.**

*Walisaik* was the original name of the place and it meant the long narrowing parts of the tree trunks that were used by the community to build the first primary school in the vicinity. After clipping of ‘w’ it becomes *Aisaik*. However through ellipsis ‘l’ is lost and what remains is *Aisaik*, the documented toponym.
4.1.5 Avoidance of Word Formation

Bauer (1983), who quotes Aronoff (1976, p.35), observes that word-formation rules are always optional. This means that it is always possible to avoid using a process of word formation. This can be done by providing a description rather than the name. A clear example is William Shakespeare’s home town called Strut Upon Avon Shire which means a road across a river.

26. Kwenik ab ilet

Kwenik ab ilet means ‘firewood of the lightning’.

While this word has the suffix –et, the long phrase qualifies it for this category. It is a toponym.

4.2 The Prevalence of Morphological Processes

Bauer (1983) asserts that productivity is that property of a language which allows a native speaker to produce an infinitely large number of sentences (in this case toponyms), many of which have never been produced before. Even though this definition on productivity has been contested on the basis that we do not have to use frequency to gauge productivity (Bauer, 2001, p.57), there is no clear way of determining it. In fact, he urges that the discussion goes on. In this study therefore we used frequency of occurrence of a process or a morpheme to determine productivity.

4.2.1 Prefixation

Prefixation was apparent in 12 toponyms out of the 56 sampled cases. The prefix Kap-, which means ‘a place of’ or ‘home of’, was the most prevalent of all the prefixes. It carries 7 out of the 12 cases which amounted to 58%. Currently, Kap- is the most productive way of forming toponyms. A productive affix is one which can be used to conveniently produce new words whether or not its prevalence rate is high. At a given time each language will have some highly productive, less productive and even moribund suffixes.

Che- followed with three cases which is 25%. Next was and kip- follows with 2 cases, making 16.6%.
4.2.2 Suffixation

This was the process that carried the largest number of Kipsigis toponyms, with 17 out of the 56 sampled cases.

It was observed that suffixation in the Kipsigis dialect is not as productive as the prefix Kap- in the formation of place names. Frank (1999), in his study on noun formation in Nuer, a Nilotic language spoken in South Sudan, made the observation that suffixation is the most productive process. However, the study did not state to what extent suffixation is involved in the formation of toponyms. Below is a figure showing the prevalence of suffixes in Kipsigis.
4.2.3 Multiple Affixations

By multiple affixation, we meant toponyms that were formed both through prefixation and suffixation. This process was evident in the formation of Kipsigis toponyms and accounted for 13 cases out of the sampled 56 toponyms. When this was looked at in comparison with other categories under affixation, suffixation was the most prevalent with 17 cases followed by multiple affixation with 13 cases. Prefixation was the least prevalent with 12 cases. The figure below summarizes the observed prevalence in affixation.
4.2.4 The Representations of all Morphological Process

Affixation was the most dominant with 42 cases out of the 56 cases and stood at 75%. There were 5 cases of avoidance of word formation process making 8.9%. Compounding had only 4 cases which accounted for 7.1%. This is contrary to the prevalence of compounding in some languages like German which is said to be famous in its compounding tendencies in forming words. Conversion had 4 cases.

The least prominent process was clipping with one case. These categories are regarded as irregular or non-systematic word formation processes. This told us that irregular processes were neither prevalent nor productive. This contrasts the study by Frank (1999) which notes that 90% of Nuer nouns are formed from irregular processes. He nevertheless observes that these processes are no longer productive. We captured all the morphological processes in the following pie chart.
Figure 4.4: Prevalence of all Morphological Processes

4.3 Semantic Analysis

This section outlines semantic analysis of the sampled place names. It looks at the denotations and connotations of meanings. Further, morpho-semantic transparency of the toponyms is addressed. A table is used to present the categorized denotative meanings. Connotative meanings are identified and described.

4.3.1 Denotative Category/Primary Meaning

Denotation is the first ordinary meaning which is not affected by contexts or emotional overtones associated with the act of communication. The denotative meaning of a word constitutes a major part of the shared system of a language for all speakers. This study put the sampled toponyms into levels and the second denotative level has been classified into further categories.
Table 4.1: Toponyms Derived from Names of Plants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Toponym</th>
<th>First level denotative meaning</th>
<th>Second level denotative meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kapkikorwet</td>
<td>A sub-location</td>
<td>A thorny shrub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Silibwet</td>
<td>A market /sub-location</td>
<td>Dombeya guetzine (indigenous tree)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kapsebet</td>
<td>A sub-location</td>
<td>Nabutonia microcalyx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Singorwet</td>
<td>A sub-location</td>
<td>giant tonnulum (hedge)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Siwot</td>
<td>A location</td>
<td>stinging nettle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kapkimolwa</td>
<td>A location</td>
<td>a wild fruit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kapsimotwa</td>
<td>A market/location</td>
<td>baobab tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Teganda</td>
<td>A location</td>
<td>bamboo(isn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Tegat</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>bamboo(esn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Goitab silbwet</td>
<td>A sub-location</td>
<td>a tree on the rocks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Emityot</td>
<td>A sub-location</td>
<td>Olea Africana (olive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Singorwet</td>
<td>A location</td>
<td>a shrub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Lelkatet</td>
<td>A sub-location</td>
<td>white thorns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Sibaiyan</td>
<td>A sub-location</td>
<td>tree branches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Aisaik (walisaik)</td>
<td>A sub location</td>
<td>part of a tree trunk that narrows towards the tip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Kapkoros</td>
<td>An industrial area, a location</td>
<td>a shrub used for ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Mogoiywet</td>
<td>Sub-location</td>
<td>Fig tree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This was the most prominent category. It is highly possible that most of the places earned their names based on the plants that abound in the area. However, some like Kapkoros and Aisaik tell of plants or trees used in the places for sacred rituals and construction activities respectively. As can be observed, most of the names refer to trees.
Table 4.2: Toponyms Derived from Names of Animals and Birds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Toponyms</th>
<th>First level denotative meaning</th>
<th>Second level denotative meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kapng’etuny</td>
<td>A sub-location</td>
<td>A place of lions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chesoen</td>
<td>A location</td>
<td>A place known for buffaloes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chepkolon</td>
<td>A sub-location</td>
<td>Red ants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mengit</td>
<td>A location</td>
<td>A ram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kapsigirio</td>
<td>A sub-location</td>
<td>A place known for donkeys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Cheboin</td>
<td>A location</td>
<td>A place of impalas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kipreres</td>
<td>A sub-location</td>
<td>A place for bats</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Chepkositonik</td>
<td>A location</td>
<td>Coly bird</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is the second largest category of denotatives. These names were assigned to these places to describe the presence of these animals and birds in large numbers considering the fact that most parts of Bomet Sub County were forested until the late seventies.

Table 4.3: Toponyms Drawn from the Farming Domain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Toponym</th>
<th>First level denotative meaning</th>
<th>Second level denotative meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kabungut</td>
<td>A location</td>
<td>A garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kaproret</td>
<td>A sub location</td>
<td>A field of harvested corn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Bomet</td>
<td>A town, county</td>
<td>A stable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The places above draw their meanings from farming activities in those places.
### Table 4.4: Descriptive Toponyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Toponym</th>
<th>First level denotative meaning</th>
<th>Second level denotative meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kiptulwa</td>
<td>Sublocation</td>
<td>A hilly place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chamamer</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Not growing fat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Koibeyon</td>
<td>A location</td>
<td>Long/streaming water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Chepngania</td>
<td>Sub location</td>
<td>A place of sand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kapsoiyo</td>
<td>Sub location</td>
<td>A place of pipes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>suswondo</td>
<td>Sub location</td>
<td>Grassland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Menet</td>
<td>Sub-location</td>
<td>Place of clayish soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kaitit</td>
<td>Sub-location</td>
<td>A chilly land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Burgei</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>A warm area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ng’omwet</td>
<td>Sub-location</td>
<td>A land of laterites</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Kiptenden</td>
<td>Sub-location</td>
<td>A narrow ridge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 4.5: Toponyms Formed from Human Activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Toponym</th>
<th>First level denotative meaning</th>
<th>Second level denotative meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chepkitwal</td>
<td>Sub-location</td>
<td>to jump (verbal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kapliyo</td>
<td>Sub-location</td>
<td>To rage (verbal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kimargis</td>
<td>Sub-location</td>
<td>To embellish (a traditional bowl)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kitoben</td>
<td>Sub-location</td>
<td>To view (verb)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kiromwok</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>To scoop it (verbal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kapkisiara</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>To cruise through</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kichurmo</td>
<td>Sub-location</td>
<td>To romp a calf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tegat</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Built</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above places were named from human activities that were common there. This phenomenon is not unique to this region alone but is worldwide. An example is Waterloo, a city in Belgium named after Napoleonic war activities.

**Table 4.6: Miscellaneous Category.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Toponym</th>
<th>First level denotative meaning</th>
<th>Second level denotative meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sonoiya</td>
<td>Sub-location</td>
<td>Personal name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kabisoge</td>
<td>Sub-location</td>
<td>PN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kapsimbiri</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>A whistle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Mugango</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>A cooking stick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kabusare</td>
<td>Sub location</td>
<td>Herbal medicine (in ash form)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kong’otik</td>
<td>Sub location</td>
<td>People who outfox</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kiplelj</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>New or white people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kapliyo</td>
<td>Sub-location</td>
<td>Rage</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.3.2 Connotative Meanings**

Leech (1981, p.18) says that connotative meanings are relatively unstable and they vary considerably according to culture, historical period and the experience of an individual. He further observes that connotative meanings are open ended just as our knowledge of the universe. Any characteristic identified subjectively or objectively forms part of connotative meanings.

Gebre (2010) observes that the Aari people of Ethiopia used names to express their collective history; shared life experiences major events and their environments. In this study it was evident that names bore associative/connotative meanings and that they express history, shared life experiences and memorable events of the Kipsigis as shown below.
4.3.2.1 Toponyms Associated with Historical and Religious Events

These are names that the respondents attached some colonial or religious semantic value to. To begin with, *Bomet* is associated with colonial times when chiefs used to reign; they set aside a stable for stolen cattle. The stolen cattle would be kept there till their owners were established. As a result, an urban centre grew and earned the name *Bomet* meaning a *stable*. As for *Kabungut*, it has the connotation on the early agricultural show farms intended to teach local farmers modern ways of farming. The place was therefore named ‘garden’. *Siwot* invokes memories of the presence of missionaries among the respondents since the early Roman Catholic missionaries settled there and set up learning institutions and a hospital.

*Kiplelji* is derived from the compound *lel + ji*. *Lel* is a synonym of both ‘white’ and ‘new’. ‘*Ji*’ means ‘person’. *Kiplelji* connotes the white settlers who were farmers in the White Farmers Highlands. It also connotes the ‘new’ African settlers who took over the farms. Both cases, according to the researcher, are valid since white and new African settlers inhabited the land. This captures one of the tenets of Social Semiotic Theory that connotative meanings may be unstable based on such factors as respondents and time contexts. This phenomenon is called *semantic shift*.

Lastly, *Kapkoros* means a shrine and is associated with the place where Kipsigis people went to offer sacrifices and petitions to their gods.

4.3.2.2 Toponyms Used Stylistically/Metaphorically

*Mugango* means “cooking stick” and in the Kipsigis community, cooking is a gender role for the women. Consider this sentence:

i. Jane is going to Mugango.

The sentence above carries two meanings; firstly, that Jane is going to the place named *Mugango* and secondly, that Jane is getting married (‘to be cooking for the family’).

*Kipyosit* stylistically means ‘to age’. *Kabungut* metaphorically means ‘to inter’. For instance: ‘Mandela has gone to *Kabungut*’ may mean he has been interred (usually the deceased in the community are interred in one’s garden).
Kapsimotwa, which refers to the largest open air market in Bomet County, has been taken to connote ‘to sell’. When one, for instance, says that his cow belongs to Kapsimotwa he/she means that they are on sale. This is a stylistic use of the toponym. Kamaech, which directly translates to ‘never dawning’, connotes backwardness or people who have not seen ‘the light’ of development or modernity.

4.3.2.3 Toponyms Associated with Eminent Personalities

Sonoiya is an administrative unit named after a chauffeur of Kenya’s first president, who was called Arap Sonoiya. Because of his earlier exposure to modernity, he donated land for the construction of a school that was named after him. Kabiso ge is named after an early settler called Isoge who resided in that place. Isoge was famed for his industriousness.

4.3.2.4 Toponyms with Negative Associations.

Some names elicited negative associations from the respondents depending on the meaning of the name itself or the activities the place is known for.
Kamaech – lack of dynamism/conservatists. This negative association has made the locals seek to change the name to Kagoech which means, ‘it has dawed’ though it is yet to be recognized officially.

Kapkimolwa was a border line between the Maasai and the Kipsigis and both communities in the past practiced cattle rustling. This made the place be associated with battles resulting from cattle rustling. The negative association was common with the elderly cohort since they lived in the cattle rustling times unlike the youth who did not experience it.
Kapliyo means ‘a place of rage’. It is so named because like Kapkimolwa, it is a land bordering two communities which used to fight over rustling.

4.4 Chapter summary

In this chapter, we analyzed Kipsigis toponyms in the light of the morphological processes fronted by Bauer (1983). Further, the prevalence of each morphological process was established. Finally, we looked at the denotative and associative meanings of the toponyms.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter covers a summary of findings based on the objectives that guided the research, the conclusions drawn and the recommendations.

5.1 Summary of findings

The study had three objectives. In the first one the study sought to establish the morphological processes involved in the formation of Kipsigis place names. This study established that like other words, toponyms are formed through word formation processes and most of which are systematic. These are affixation (prefixation, suffixation, multiple affixation), compounding, conversion, clipping and avoidance of word formation.

Affixation is the most prevalent process and under it, the prefix *Kap-* was ascertained as the most productive affix in the formation of the toponyms but suffixation is the most prevalent process in the formation of Kipsigis toponyms followed by multiple affixations then prefixation. The only idiosyncratic/ irregular word formation processes found are clipping and the avoidance of word formation process. These processes were very minimally used.

Finally, the study established that all Kipsigis place names have denotative and connotative meanings. It emerged that some places were named after the physical features present, others after names of animals and birds and others after activities that took place in the area. Connotative meanings such as ‘modernity’ were positive and others like ‘never dawning’ were negative.

It was also observed that morphology and semantics have a relationship in the formation of Kipsigis toponyms in that morphology provides the free and bound morphemes while semantics assigns them meaning.
5.2 Conclusion

A toponym is a word like any other and is therefore involved in word formation process. It is important to note that different languages involve different word formation processes in the formation of their words and the prevalence of each process varies.

5.3 Recommendations

Since names were ascertained to have either positive or negative connotations, those in society charged with the responsibility of naming places, institutions should be sensitive to the linguistic aspects that could be continued from choices of words.

5.4 Areas for Further Studies

Finally, here are some suggestions for further research.

1. The research recommends the establishment of morphological processes involved in the formation of place names in other dialects of the Kalenjin and even in other languages.

2. It also suggests that a morpho – phonological study of place names be carried out in this dialect since phonology is an important aspect in the formation of words.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES

Appendix A1: Semi-Structured Interview

Respondent’s details

Name____________________________________

Age 18-35  □  60 and above  □

Sex  Male  □  Female  □

From the list of names below

1 Are you familiar with this name? Yes  □  No  □

2  a. Do you think the name is formed from another word?

       b. If so, which one?

3. What does this name mean?

4 What comes to your mind at the mention of these names?

5 a. Do you know how the name came about?

       b. If so, explain.
Appendix A2: List of Administrative units in Bomet Sub-County

1. Kabungut
2. Bomet
3. Silibwet
4. Sigowet
5. Siwot
6. Teganda
7. Emityot
8. Singorwet
9. Sibaiyan
10. Aisaik (Walisaik)
11. Mogoiywet
12. Suswondo
13. Mengit
14. Ng’omwet
15. Mugango
16. Kong’otik
17. Sonoiya
18. Kaproret
19. Kitoben
20. Kapsimbiri
21. Chepngaaina
22. Chepkositonik
23. Kapngetuny
24. Kapsebet
25. Kapsoiyo
26. Tegat
27. Menet
28. Kapkikorwet
29. Chemaner
30. Kapsimotwo
31. Chesoen
32. Kimargis
33. Kapliyo
34. Chepkolon
35. Chepkitwal
36. Kapkimolwo
37. Kapkisiara
38. Kaitit
39. Burgei
40. Ngomwet
41. Kamaech
42. Chelulot
43. Ngainet
44. Kiptendet
45. Kabusare
46. Kwenik-ab-ilet
47. Kabisoge
48. Goitab Silibwet
49. Kiromwok
<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>50.</td>
<td>Kapkoros</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51.</td>
<td>Kiplelji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52.</td>
<td>Kichurmo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53.</td>
<td>Kapsigirio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54.</td>
<td>Koibeyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55.</td>
<td>Kipreres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56.</td>
<td>Kiptulwo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57.</td>
<td>Lelkatet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58.</td>
<td>Cheboin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59.</td>
<td>Tenwek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60.</td>
<td>Bomet Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61.</td>
<td>Bomet East</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>62.</td>
<td>Longisa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>63.</td>
<td>Masese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64.</td>
<td>Kembu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65.</td>
<td>Township</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66.</td>
<td>Nyangores</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67.</td>
<td>Kibira</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix A3: Purposively Sampled Toponyms

1. Kaproret
2. Kitoben
3. Suswondo
4. Kipyosit
5. Bomet
6. Silibwet
7. Kapsimbiri
8. Chepgaina
9. Kabungut
10. Chepkositonik
11. Kapng’etuny
12. Kapsebet
13. Kapsoiyo
14. Tegat
15. Menet
16. Kapkikorwet
17. Sibaiyan
18. Kapsimotwo
19. Chesoen
20. Kimargis
21. Kapliyo
22. Mogoywet
23. Chepkolon
24. Chepkitwal
25. Sigowet
26. Siwot
27. Kapkimolwa
28. Kong’otik
29. Kapkisiara
30. Ng’omwet
31. Kamaech
32. Chelulot
33. Kaitit
34. Kiptenden
35. Teganda
36. Kabusare
37. Mengit
38. Emityot
39. Kwenik-Ab-Ilet
40. Sonoiya
41. Singorwet
42. Aisaik
43. Kabisoge
44. Goit-Ab-Silibwet
45. Mugango
46. Kiromwok
47. Kapkoros
48. Kiplelji
49. Kichurmo
50. Kapsigirio
51. Chemaner
52. Koibeyon
53. Kipreres
54. Burgei
55. Lelkatet
56. Cheboin
Appendix A4: Toponyms with Prefixes

1. Kapsebet
2. Kapng’etuny
3. Chepkolon
4. Cheboin
5. Kipreres
6. Kiptenden
7. Chemaner
8. Kapsimbiri
9. Chepkitwal
10. Kabisoge
11. Kapkoros
12. Kabusare
Appendix A5: Toponyms with suffixes

1. Kabungut
2. Bomet
3. Silibwet
4. Sigowet
5. Siwot
6. Teganda
7. Emityot
8. Singorwet
9. Sibaiyan
10. Aisaik (Walisaik)
11. Mogoiywet
12. Suswondo
13. Mengit
14. Ng’omwet
15. Mugango
16. Kong’otik
17. Sonoiya
Appendix A6: Toponyms with multiple affixation

1. Kaproret
2. Kapkimolwa
3. Kapsigirio
4. Chepng’aina
5. Chelulot
6. Kiptulwa
7. Kipyosit
8. Kapsoiyo
9. Kapkisiara
10. Kapliyo
11. Chepkositonik
12. Kapsimotwo
13. chesoen
Appendix A7: Toponyms formed from avoidance of word formation process

1. Kwenik- Ab- Ilet

2. Goit- Ab- Silibwet

3. Kamaech

4. Kimargis

5. Kiromwok
Appendix A8: Toponyms formed from compounding

1. Lelkatet
2. Kiplelji
3. Koibeyon
4. Kichurmo
Appendix A9: Toponym formed from clipping

1. Aisaik
Appendix A10: Map of Bomet Sub-County
Appendix A11: Nacosti Permit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
MR. ROBERT KIBET KIRUI
OF KIYATA UNIVERSITY, 49-20400
HAS BEEN PERMITTED TO CONDUCT
RESEARCH IN BOMET COUNTY
ON THE TOPIC: A MORPHO-SEMANTIC
STUDY OF TOPONYMIES.

FOR THE PERIOD ENDING
30TH APRIL 2012

Applicant's Signature

CONTRACT

1. You must report to the County Commissioner and
the County Education Officer on site area before
embarkation on your research. Failure to do so may
lead to the cancellation of your permit.

2. Government officers will not be interviewed
without prior appointments.

3. No questionnaire will be used unless first
approved.

4. Preservation, finding and collection of biological
specimens are subject to further permission from
the National Commission for Science, Technology
and Innovation.

5. You are required to submit a final and
comprehensive copy of your final report.

6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to
modify the conditions of this permit including
its cancellation without notice.

Director-General
National Commission for Science,
Technology and Innovation

RESEARCH CLEARANCE
PERMIT

Permit No: KACOSTI/16/3564/3583
Date of Issue: 30th April 2012
Fee: Ksh 1,000

CONDITIONS: see back page

64
Appendix A12 : Nacosti Research Authorization

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Ref: NACOSTI/P/16/83562/9395

28th April 2016

Robert Kibet Kimi
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “A Morpho-
semantic study of toponyms,” I am pleased to inform you that you have been
authorized to undertake research in Bomet County for the period ending 19th
April, 2017.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner and the County
Director of Education, Bomet County before embarking on the research
project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit two hard copies
and one soft copy in pdf of the research report/dissertation to our office.

DR. STEPHEN K. KIBIRU, PhD.
DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Bomet County.

The County Director of Education
Bomet County.