MOTIVATION, MORPHO-PHONOLOGICAL

PROCESSES IN *EGESEMBESA* ARGOT AMONG

EKEGUSII-SPEAKING MALES OF WESTERN

KENYA

BY

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Declaration

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

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We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision as university supervisors.

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Dedication

To my dear parents, Mose and Bwari, with deep gratitude.

Abstract

This study was an analysis of the morpho-phonological process that helps achieve secrecy in *Egesembesa*, an argot among *Ekegusii*-speaking males of Western Kenya. The study also investigated the motivation of the use of this argot. The objectives of this study were to: find out why *Ekegusii* male-speakers use *Egesembesa* instead of *Ekegusii*; identify the morphological processes that nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives undergo to achieve the argot; and identify the phonological structure of nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives in *Egesembesa*.

Descriptive design was adopted in this study. The target population was *Ekegusii*-speaking males of age 15 and above. Purposive sampling and snowballing were the sampling procedures used. The work was based on lexical phonology and structural functionalism theories

Questionnaire and tape-recording were the instruments of data collection. The former captured information about motivation for use of the argot and also its morphological form while the latter captured the phonological aspects of the argot. Frequency tables and descriptive analysis were the instruments of data analysis. The following findings emerged: *Egesembesa* speakers are motivated by social factors to use the argot instead of *Ekegusii*; *Egesembesa* is achieved through the processes of infixation, suffixation, vowel transfer, and syllable swop. Other processes are; syllable shift, syllable retention and

syllable deletion and replacement. The argot distorts *Ekegusii* phonotactics, hence secrecy is achieved and kept among speakers.

This study concluded with a highlight of the morpho-syntactic, phonological, semantic and sociolinguistic significance of the argot. It recommended that, linguists put more interest in research on *Ekegusii*. Secondly, that pedagogic texts writers for lower primary factor the findings of this research to make them relevant in this (*Ekegusii*) dynamic linguistic situation.

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List of abbreviations

Adj   : adjective

Adv : adverb

C   : consonant

eb-   : *ekegusii* N class

ege- : *ekegusii* N class

N   : noun

Ngm : negative marker

Ob   : object

Pl   : plural

Pt   : past tense

redupl: reduplicated

Sing   : singular

SOV : subject, object, verb

Subj: subject

SVO : subject, verb, object

Tm   : tense marker

V   : vowel

Vb   : verb

Operational definition of terms

Abagusii :   the people who speak the Ekegusii language.

Argot :   A secret linguistic code used among a group of people of similar interests,

engaging in similar activities, often, illegal. In this work, it is *Egesembesa*.

Among the speakers, it is also known as, *Ekegusii ekiegarori, Ekenyoika,*

Ekenyosia. In this work, *Egesembesa* is the term used throughout, except

in the background to the study, to refer to this *argot. Argot* in this work

specifically refers to a secret language used by *Ekegusii*-speaking males.

Ekegusii and *Egesembesa* words and other technical words are written in

italics this thesis.

De-stress: Remove stress from a stressed syllable in a word.

Egesembesa : See *argot.*

Ekegusii: The language people who live in the Kisii region speak, also *Kikisii.*

Gusii :   People who speak *Ekegusii*; the geographical territory the *Ekegusii*

speakers occupy in western Kenya.

Kisii :   the main and oldest town of the people who speak Ekegusii; the language

the *Abagusii* people speak.

Motivation: Reason prompting an action or behaviour. In this work, the reasons for
the use of *Egesembesa.*

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the study

Ekegusii is the language of the *Abagusii* people of the Kisii Central, Kisii South, Nyamira North, Nyamira South, Gucha, Gucha South, Masaba, Masaba North, Borabu, Nyamache, Kenyenya, Marani and Manga districts of the formerly larger Kisii District of Western Kenya. The language is more commonly known as Kisii. Its proper name is /ekeɣusii/. It is spoken by the /aβaɣusii/, (Cammenga, 2002).

Akama and Maxon (2006) call the language *Gusii* and say that it is one of the major Bantu languages that is spoken by the *Gusii* people of Western Kenya. *Abagusii's* main occupation is agriculture. They are bordered by the Kipsigis to the East, the Maasai to the South East, the Kuria to the South and the Luo to the West.

Guthrie (1971) confirms that *Ekegusii* is a Bantu language and groups it as E 42 together with Kuria E43 and Lulogooli E41 in Group 40 of Zone E to which most Kenyan and Ugandan Bantu languages belong. According to Keragori (1995), the factors that determine the grouping of the *Abagusii* among the Bantu are mainly their culture and language. Of the Bantu languages, *Ekegusii* is closest to the Luhya dialects and the Kuria language of Western Kenya and the Kikuyu, Kamba, Embu, Mbeere and Meru languages of Central and Eastern Kenya. Akama (2006) states that the *Abagusii* do not share a boundary with any Bantu community. Instead, they are sandwiched between Nilotic-speaking communities – Luo, Kipsigis and Maasai.

It is noted that the prefix /*eke*-/ is a singular *Gusii* reference to language formation of all ethnic communities such as *Ekegusii* and *Ekegere* (Luo language, Whiteley 1960) The *Ekegusii* reference to the plural of ethnic languages is marked with the prefix /ebi-/ e.g. *Ebisongo* (Englishes).

Whiteley (1965) observes that *Ekegusii* has minimal dialectal variation, if any, although he acknowledges considerable borrowing of Luo, Swahili and English words. However, Bosire (1993) identifies two main dialects: *Rogoro* and *Maate.* He notes that the differences between the two dialects is phonetic and lexical, the phonological difference being the realization of the alveolar plosive /t/.

Studies on *Ekegusii* are somehow urgent, according to Cammenga (2002), because the language is under heavy pressure of Lwoo, a Nilotic language that is dominant in the whole of Nyanza area, and Swahili that is gaining more and more terrain as the East African Lingua Franca, particularly among intellectuals. He further states that the new sociolinguistic development is to the detriment of *Gusii* in so far as it is more and more ousted from the public domain and subject to massive linguistic influence from Lwoo and Swahili.

The foregoing background reveals, among other things, the fact that *Ekegusii* is a relatively homogenous language throughout the thirteen districts where it is predominantly spoken. The significance of this revelation to this study was that data

would be collected from any sites / locations in the thirteen districts without affecting the findings, on account of dialectal variations.

There is, in *Ekegusii*, an *argot*, variously called *'Egesembesa', 'Ekenyosia', 'Ekenyoika', 'Ekegusii ekiegarori',* commonly spoken by males, which may be an echo of Wilhelm Von Humboldt's (in Lehmann 1967:3) words that, "…there can never be a moment of true standstill in a language just as little as in the ceaselessly flaming thoughts of men. By nature, it is a continuous process of development…" or, still, like English, *Ekegusii*, "…is living, changing, flexible…" (Burton, 1984: 2). Trask echoes the same fact, "Every language that people use changes constantly." (1994:1).

Sociologically, the use of such a language / code, instead of using *Ekegusii*, is deviance, which Mueller and Kendall (2005:98) define as, "any behavior, belief or condition that violates significant social norms in the society or group in which it occurs" This study attempted to describe the linguistic structure of this argot. The study also established the motivation of its use, bearing in mind the fact that "… Every language has its own special ways of making words. If the words of any message spoken or written do not behave in the ways required by that language, the message cannot make sense."(Burton, 1984:2). But the argot usually negates this premise.

Bitutu (1991) notes that *Ekegusii* belongs to the SVO group of syntactic typology. When subject/ object is a pronoun, the order of occurrence changes so that we have SOV, but all morphologically bound so that it is a word order change. E.g.

Agakebuna   (He/ She broke it)

A- Subj ;   *ga*-Tm*;*   *ke*- Ob;   *buna* –Vb

The *argot* alters this order of occurrence in individual words, making the message therefore passed incomprehensible to other *Ekegusii* speakers who do not know the argot. In ordinary *Ekegusii* discourse, this (SVO) is the usual pattern of simple declarative clauses. The argot does not alter this order. It instead alters syllable combinations in individual words, making them inconsistent with *Ekegusii* phonotactics, but consequently achieving secrecy.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Researchers and scholars have variously written on *Ekegusii*. They have documented research findings on: a comparative study of *Rogoro* and *Maate* dialects; phonology and morphology of *Ekegusii*; morphological typology of *Ekegusii*; totems of the *Ekegusii*; a comparative study of *Ekegusii* and Kikuria; syntactic analysis of the simple sentence in *Ekegusii*; *Kisii* proverbs; analysis of *Ekegusii* metaphors; *Ekegusii* morpho-phonology; the tense system of *Gusii* and a practical introduction to *Gusii*. However, the research problem addressed in this study was that, despite the existence of *Egesembesa argot*, little had been done to analyze its linguistic structure as well as establish the motivation of its use.

This study, established the motivation of use of *Egesembesa*. It also analyzed the *argot's* morpho-phonological structure. We note here that secrecy is achieved through morphological and phonological processes which are manipulated for the *argot*.

1.3. Objectives

The objectives of this study were to:

a) Find out why *Ekegusii* male speakers use *Egesembesa.*

b) Identify the morphological processes that *Ekegusii* nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives undergo in achieving *Egesembesa.*

c) Identify the phonological structure of *Ekegusii* nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives in *Egesembesa.*

1.4. Assumptions

This study was undertaken with the following assumptions;

a) There are specific factors that motivate *Ekegusii* male speakers to use *Egesembesa*.

b) *Ekegusii* nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives undergo morphological processes to achieve the argot.

c).*Egesembesa* alters the phonological structure of *Ekegusii* nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives.

1.5. Research Questions

The following were the research questions in this study;

a) What factors motivate *Egesembesa* speakers to use it instead of *Ekegusii*?

b) What morphological processes do *Ekegusii* nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives undergo to achieve the argot?

c) What is the phonological variation between nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives in *Egesembesa* and *Ekegusii*?

1.6. Significance of the study

The significance of this study is varied. Firstly, it would be a framework on which further study of *Egesembesa* would build; studies on syntax, origin and currency of the argot will be based on the findings of this work. Secondly, it would generally add to information on languages in Kenya and specifically on *Ekegusii* as a dynamic and changing language.

It would further help the *Abagusii* to know what is said in the *argot* and why it is so said and help them develop interest to seek to know better about their language. This study has exposed features of one of their items of culture i.e. their language. Finally, it would be added information on African linguistics.

1.7. Scope and limitations of the study

A comprehensive study of a language would include a study of its; phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics and discourse structure. Note that *Egesembesa* is as a result of other linguistic processes such as, vocabulary manipulation borrowing and coinage, but this study focused on only two linguistic processes namely; morphological and phonological manipulation, which are processes basic to achieving the

argot. In addition, a study of morphological and phonological study would allow an in-depth study. On the other hand, motivation was studied because, socially, most linguistic behaviour is motivated.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The literature review in this work is in three categories; general related studies on language, studies and research on *Ekegusii* and definitions of core terms in this study. This section concludes with a highlight of the theories upon which this research was based.

2.2. Review of related literature

2.2.1. General related studies on language

Mathews (1991) says that in describing a language, all four varying facets-sounds, constructions, meanings and forms of words have to be given due attention. Egesembesa, like any linguistic phenomenon, would demand no less. Its every facet, demands due attention. This study was centred on its sounds and forms of words.

Trudgil (1983) says that it is known from linguistic research that in many societies, the speech of men and women differ in some cases, the differences are quite small and are not generally noticed; they are probably taken for granted in the same way, as, different gestures or facial expressions. For instance he says that it has been found that women's vowels are more peripheral than men's. This though, is in English. Even so, this fact, was not ignored in this study because some aspects in language cut across languages. In a way, Trudgil justifies this research which described an argot used by *Ekegusii*-speaking males.

2.2.2. Studies and research on *Ekegusii*

Scholars, some of whom are *Ekegusii* speakers, have written variously on *Ekegusii*. Nyarangi's (2006: iii) observation, "Language is one of the strengths of a particular people. If a tribe will never use the language, that language will not exist" Nyarangi would be alluding to the possibilities of language death unless there is deliberate and consistent use. His observation is a support to this work in this sense: people need to know their language first before they could use it. This work was an attempt to make *Ekegusii* known.

Whiteley (1965) notes in the introduction, "This work is prepared primarily for those who want to use the language in the course of their work". His work provided useful data to this study on Ekegusii noun, verb, preposition and adjective. Osinde (1989) deals with the morpho-phonology of *Ekegusii*, on the major consonant processes. His work, like that of Gesare (1992) provided data to this study on morphological and phonological aspects of *Ekegusii* which are twisted in the *argot*.

Mboga's (1988) work is on the structure of the simple sentence in *Ekegusii*. Broadly speaking, his work was relevant to Egesembesa, the argot analyzed in this study, in the sense that the analysis in this work outlined the syntactic significance of the *argot*. Bosire (1993) studies the two main dialects (Rogoro, Maate) of *Ekegusii*. His phonological and morphological analysis of the dialect was data useful to this study, given that these are the aspects altered in *Egesembesa*, which was our study. Ondari's (2000) is about

Ekegusii metaphors, a work that shares, basically, the background and methodology with this work.

Cammenga's (2002) is, perhaps, the most detailed work on *Ekegusii* morphology and phonology. It provides useful information on derivational and inflectional processes in *Ekegusii*. Further, it deals, in depth, with *Ekegusii* consonant, vowel sounds and its supra-segmental aspects. It largely contributed to this study, for, morpho-phonological characteristics of *Ekegusii* word are the ones twisted to achieve the *argot*.

2.2.2.1. *Ekegusii* sound system

The standard *Ekegusii* orthography consists of five primary vowels, namely:

> *a, e, i, o* and *u.*

Examples of words where these occur are as follows:

> *a*, in *tata*   (father)
>
> *e*, in *esese* (dog)
>
> *i*, in *titi*   (piggy back)
>
> *o,* in *omote*   (tree)
>
> *u,* in *kura*   (scratch ground). (Akama and Maxon,2006).

However, in spoken pronunciations, usually, more vowels are heard in words of *Ekegusii* as follows;

> *esese* (tuberculosis)   vs   *esese* (dog)

$$ig\ddot{y}r\ddot{y} \text{ (yesterday)} \qquad vs \qquad igoro \text{ (up, sky)}$$

$$eng\ddot{y}r\ddot{y} \text{ (God)} \qquad vs \qquad engoro \text{ (hole)}$$

$$\text{-}mra\text{(germinate)} \qquad vs \qquad \text{-}mera \text{ (swallow)}$$

Besides primary vowels, some *Ekegusii* words also contain secondary vowels in their pronunciations, as shown below:

-basa (elope)   *-baasa* (skin (Vb) a slaughtered animal

-bera (boil)   *- beera* (stay at a place)

-sika (respect)   *-siika* (put beer to ferment)

-soka (adorn)   *-sooka* (go out, get married)

-kura (scratch ground) *-kuura* (scream)

-mra (germinate)   *-mna* (lick)

-tÿra (thrash)   *-tÿÿra* (transpire)

Thus when both the primary and secondary vowels are counted, the *Ekegusii* sound system has an inventory of 14 vowels (i.e. seven vowels are basic while the remaining ones are long vowels).

In most standard pronunciations of *Ekegusii,* the language has several consonants. Akama and Maxon (2006) also state that the following English consonants do not exist in *Ekegusii* word pronunciations: b, c, f, h, j, l, q, v, v, x and z. They however note that although consonant /b/ appears in standard *Gusii* orthography, it is usually pronounced as /β/ e.g. in the words:

baba   [*βaβa*] (mother)

baracha [*βaraca*] (stay still)

It is also rare to find a long frequency of vowels in a continuous cluster in *Gusii* word formation. Thus as the illustrative *Gusii* words used above show, *Gusii* vowels usually cluster with consonants. There are, however, exceptions to that orthographical rule. E.g.

eura   (intestinal contents)

oara   (variety of black night shade weed)

oroanga (type of skin disease)

On sound order, Akama and Maxon (2006) say that most *Ekegusii* words usually follow the typical Bantu consonant-vowel order. Thus, there is no *Ekegusii* word that ends with a consonant and as a consequence any *Gusii* word borrowed from other languages usually undergoes an assimilation process and a vowel is added at the end of the borrowed words. E.g.

school   *esukuru*

motorcar   *omotoka*

book   *ebuku*

Ekegusii syllabic structure

A syllable must contain a vowel (or vowel-like) sound, Yule (1996). The commonest syllable type in language also has a consonant before the vowel, often represented as CV. The basic element of the syllable are the onset (one or more consonants) and the rime.

The rime consists of the vowel, which is treated as the nucleus, plus any following consonant(s), treated as the coda. Whiteley (1965) states that *Ekegusii's* possible syllable structure is;

Syllable structure	Example	Gloss
CV	e.g. in *ma*	(Emphasis) e.g. close fast
CVV	e.g. in *kae*	give
VCV	e.g. in *ita*	kill
VCVC	e.g. in *tama*	flee
CVVCV	e.g. in *sieka*	close (Vb)
VCVCV	e.g. in *oroko*	piece of firewood
CVCVVCV	e.g. in *tarioka*	not only that
VCVCVCV	e.g. in *okogoro*	leg
VCVCVCVCV	e.g. in *ekegokoro*	elbow

This information on *Ekegusii* sound system is basic to this research; the alterations that operate on *Ekegusii* words to make *Egesembesa* secret affect the sound combination rules. (see section 4.7.6.)

2.2.2.2. *Ekegusii* morpho-syntax

The *Ekegusii* language is highly agglutinative (Bitutu 1991, Akama and Maxon 2006) i.e., most words, typically, consist of a basic root followed by one or more affixes and each affix represents a specific grammatical category of meaning. E.g.

Omari a-ka-mw-anch-a omwana.

Omari 3S-PST-3S-like-IND CL1-child   Omari liked the child.

N-in-koor-e   eme-remo   eye.

STAB-1S-finish –FUT   CL4-work this   I will finish this work.

Akama and Maxon (2006) observe that as is the case with most other agglutinative languages, both the subject and object are expressed through the use of sound morphemes on the verb terminology that is implied within a given phrase and /or sentence. The alterations affecting *Ekegusii* words to achieve secrecy in *Egesembesa* alter the morpho-syntactic structure of *Ekegusii*. For this reason, this section was significant to this work.

2.2.3. Meanings of core terms

The following section defines the core terminologies of the subject of this study.

2.2.3.1. Motivation

Motive, from which motivation is derived, has the following synonyms in Webster (1973): spring, impulse, incentive, inducement, spur, goad; all denoting a stimulus inciting or prompting a person to act or behave in a definite way. Richards et al (1995) calls motivation the factors that determine a person's desire to do something. In biological science, motivation refers to the stimulus that prompts a particular response /

behaviour. For instance, clustering and coiling (in plants) and hibernation and aestivation (in animals) are motivated reactions.

In this study, motivation means what prompts *Ekegusii* male speakers to use *Egesembesa* instead of *Ekegusii*. Some scholars have indicated that some linguistic behaviour is motivated by social factors. For instance, Mencken (1980:702) says, "…slang, (a linguistic deviation from norms, like the argot in this work), is created in a spirit of defiance and aiming at freshness and novelty." Yule (1996:239) observes; "…Two people growing up in the same geographical area, at the same time, may speak differently because of a number of social factors…Speech is a form of social identity and is used consciously or unconsciously, to indicate membership of different social groups or different speech communities". Finally, Finch (2003) notes that language is human made and that the process of inventing, never stops.

With the foregoing in mind, this study sought to, in addition to finding out the *argot's* mopho-phonological structure; establish what prompts *Ekegusii* male speakers to use *Egesembesa*: would it be, like slang, a wish to defy *Ekegusii's* established speech norms or an aim to sound fresh and novel, or yet, a way of indicating membership of a different social group? Or, is *Egesembesa* a response to a wish to invent or an intention to remain secret? This study sought to find out the motivation. In this sense, then, was the word motivation used in this work.

2.2.3.2. Morphology

Katamba (1993) defines morphology as the study of internal structure of words. Todd (1987) calls it the study of morphemes which are the smallest significant units of grammar. It is one of the levels of linguistic study the others being phonology, syntax and semantics. Structurally, words are made up of morphemes. The elements that build this structure are roots, affixes, stems and bases. There is a theory, lexical phonology, which claims (see section 2.3.2) that there is a symbiotic relationship between the rules that build the morphological structure of a word and the phonological rules responsible for the way a word is pronounced. Matthews (1991) calls morphology a branch of linguistics concerned with the study of forms in different uses and constructions. It avails the linguist to deal with the internal structure of words. Yule (1996: 75) calls it, briefly, "the study of forms." Some of the words that are a subject of study in morphology enter a language through various channels. Some of the sources of words in a language include coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending clipping and derivation.

Morphemes

Busman (1996) describes a morpheme as the smallest meaningful element of language that, as a basic phonological and semantic element cannot be reduced into smaller elements. According to Traugot and Pratt (1980) it is the smallest unit forming the bridge between sound and meaning in language and they are as important in linguistic analysis as words. They further state that every morpheme in a language has a characteristic phonological make up and restrictions on the position it can occupy with respect to other morphemes, e.g. the English plural morpheme '-s' occurs only after the noun.

Words may consist of a single morpheme and are called monomorphemic, e.g. 'man', while others can have more than one and they are called polymorphemic, e.g. 'dislike' with two morphemes i.e., dis + like. (Horsey 2001). Traugot and Pratt (1990) observe that most morphemes have a meaning, but few are simply carriers of other meaningful events e.g. 'did' in the sentence 'He didn't come' serves no function other than to carry the past tense. Morphemes are significant in this work because *Ekegusii* morphemes / words are the targets of transformation processes (see section 4.7.5 of this thesis) for *Egesembesa* to achieve secrecy.

2.2.3.3. Phonology

Thorne (1997) defines phonology as the study of the sound system of a particular language and its specific organization. It considers distinctive patterns of sound so that general statements can be made about a language system. Its focus is on the function of sounds, that is, their role in expressing meaning. Because of this, it is sometimes called functional phonetics. Phonology is more interested in the way in which different sounds or phonemes change meaning.

Catford (1994) notes that phonology is concerned with how sounds are organized into systems and utilized in languages. He further states that phonetics and phonology are inter-dependent. Phonology depends on phonetics, for; the latter provides insights that enable one to discover what sound features are linguistically utilized. In addition,

phonetics supplies the terminology for the description and classification of the linguistically relevant features of sounds.

Roach (1991) distinguishes phonology from phonetics by stating that phonetics is the comparatively straight forward business of describing the sounds that we use in speaking; phonology is the study of the abstract side of the sounds of language. Todd (1987: 13) says "phonology involves two studies: the study of the production, transmission and reception of speech sounds , a discipline known as '*phonetics*', and the study of the sounds and sound patterns of a specific language, a discipline known as *phonemics*"

Phonemes

A phoneme is the smallest unit at the level of sound. Phonemes can be defined as significant sounds in a specified language. It is those distinctive features of sound that function to signal differences in the words of the language. These are features of the spoken language. Each language has its own set of phonemes and so there are no universal phonemes. Conventionally, phonemes are identified by being placed within slashes- / / (Crystal 1985). Just like morphemes, phonemes hold an important position in this work; the syllable re-arrangement processes in *Egesembesa* affect phonemes (see section 4.7.6).

Phonotactics

Phonotactics of a language refers to the constraints on the sequence or position of phonemes in words in that language. Such constraints are part of every speaker's

phonological knowledge of their language. The constraints operate on units larger than the single segment, or phoneme – the syllable. Yule (1996). When syllables are re-arranged (as in Egesembesa, see section 4.7.4), it is the phonotactics rules that are flouted.

2.2.3.4. *Argot's* related linguistic codes

Jargon

Jargon is a technical vocabulary associated with a special activity or group and it helps to connect those who see themselves as 'insiders' to exclude 'outsiders'. (Yule 1996).

According to Burke and Porter (1995), jargon is a word found in French in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and in English a little later. It was used to refer to unintelligible speech, a sort of gargling in the throat: in other words, mere 'gibberish' or 'gabble'. By that time the word had spread to Italian (and it was known as *gergo* or *zergo*), Spanish (and it was known as *jerga, jerigonza*) and Portuguese (and it was known as *gerigonca*).

As it spread it came to refer to the language of the underworld, a kind of slang which helped to keep the activities of beggars, thieves, confidence tricksters and so on secret from ordinary citizens. It was an 'anti-language' of a counter-culture, or a marginal language for marginal people. There was a series of synonyms for this language of the underworld. In Spanish, it was called *germania*. It was also called Calo, the language of the Gypsies. In Portuguese it was *calao,* in German *Rotwelsch*, and in French, in the year 1600 as *argot* or *baragouin, blesquin or narquois*). In Italian it was *furbesco*, after its primary users, the rogues. In English, from the late sixteenth century onwards, a common

term was 'cant'. Jargon is technical vocabulary associated with a special activity or group and it helps to connect those who see themselves as 'insiders' in some way to exclude 'outsiders' (Yule 1996).

 In the eighteenth century, it described the various kinds of lingua franca which enabled different language groups to communicate. In other European countries there was a similar widening in the meaning of the term 'jargon' and its synonyms, revealing an increasing awareness of the variety of technical terms and forms of slang used by different social groups. Burke and Porter observe that, 'it seems that small face-to-face groups are necessary to the formation of private or semi-private languages' (Burke and Porter 1995: 8).

Slang

Mencken (1980) says that slang appeared in England, in the 18th century, as a synonym of cant, a special vocabulary used by any set of persons of low or disreputable character. It was a synonym of *argot*. The boundaries of slang, cant and *argot* are not clear today.

 He defines slang as language of a highly colloquial type, considered as below the level of standard educated speech and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some special sense. He says that slang originates from the underworld. But today television, movies, newspaper columnists, jazz musicians, teenage pseudo-hoodlums, novelists, short-story writers, sociologists and linguists, pipe words from the criminal sub-cultures into the speech and writing of the dominant culture.

Mencken says "slang… is, in fact, the most powerful of all the stimulants that keep language alive and growing, and some of the most pungent and valuable words and phrases in English … have arisen out of its bilge." (Ibid: 706).

Akmajian et al (1990) say slang has the following salient features:

a. Slang is part of casual, informal styles of language use. The term slang has traditionally carried a negative connotation: it is often perceived as a 'low' or 'vulgar' form of language and is deemed to be out of place in informal styles of language.

b. Slang changes quite rapidly. Slang terms can enter a language rapidly, then fall out of fashion in a matter of a few years or even months.

c. Slang is often associated with a particular social group, and so there is teenage slang, underworld (criminal) slang, the slang of the drug culture, and so on. So, slang is a kind of jargon, and its use serves as a mark of membership and solidarity within a given social group. To use outdated slang, is to be hopelessly 'out of date' and to be excluded from an 'in-group'.

Slang is sometimes referred to as vernacular, and some forms of slang fall under the term 'colloquialism', referring to informal conversational styles of language.

Sheng

Sheng, defined as an acronym for "Swahili-English slang", is a hybrid linguistic code believed to have evolved in Nairobi in the 1960s and 1970s. Its evolution and use is

attributed to factors ranging from language contact to inadequate knowledge of standard languages, identity, obfuscation of meaning and cognitive efficiency among others. (Githinji, 2006). "Its dominance in the urban areas puts it at par with similar codes such as Camfranglais in Cameroon, Town Bemba in Zambia, Urban Wolof in Malawi and Tsotsitaal or Flaaitaal in South Africa…" (Githinji, 2008: 114-115).

Sheng defies classification categories such as pidgin, creole, slang or jargon. It though exhibits features characterizing all these categories. It is believed that Sheng began in the poor residential areas of Nairobi's Eastlands, before gradually spreading to other poor residential areas of Nairobi and its environs. Today, Sheng has become the characteristic linguistic phenomenon of Nairobi and other multi-ethnic urban areas in Kenya. (Githinji, 2006).

Sheng embodies Swahili morpho-syntax but English and Swahili are the most prominent lexical donors. Githinji (2008) states that the youth use it as an 'identity marker' and that some criminals use it as a secret code. Some of the lexicalization processes in Sheng are; reversing of syllables, truncation, coining, borrowing and semantic expansion. (Ogechi, 2005). On lexicalization processes, Githinji (2006) adds affixation, compounding, clipping, arbitrary coinage, syllable inversion and initialization. The detail on these codes was vital because this information was used to draw relationships with *Egesembesa* (see chapter 4).

2.2.3.5. Argot

Webster (1973) says that the synonyms of *argot* are; cant, jargon, slang, dialect, lingo, vernacular and patois. The term *argot* has French roots. According to Ager (1990), *argot*, pronounced /a:gou /, was applied to any specialized jargon used by a particular group who carry out specific activities e.g. conscripts, school pupils or by those involved with horse racing. It is also used to refer to the language associated with the criminal classes of France up until the beginning of the 20th century. It was the secret lexicon of the underclasses who lived in specific closed ghettos. The areas where the people who used *argot* spent much of their lives were inaccessible to outsiders, especially the forces of law and order.

Its special lexicon is grafted to the syntax of French, the language of the dominant social group. It was used to limit communication between the different speech communities; thereby preserving the autonomy of the under- and criminal classes. Speakers intentionally kept knowledge of their language from those who were not part of their community. Originally, *argot* (derived from *les argotiers*), was a secret language invented in 1628 by robbers in the city of Paris, in order not to be understood by police spies. Today, it means a special language, parallel to standard French. All French people, it is said, know or use some *argot*. For the speakers, *argot* is an "in-group marker". (Ager, 1990).

Under the strictest definition**,** an *argot* is a proper language, with its own grammar and style. However, such complete secret languages are uncommon, because the speakers usually have some public language in common on which the *argot* is largely based. *Argots* are mainly versions of other languages with a part of its vocabulary replaced by words unknown to the larger public. For example, the word is used to describe systems such as *Verlan* and *Louchebem* which retain French syntax and only apply transformations to individual words (and often only to a certain subset of words, such as nouns, or of semantic content).

Many of the words making up the lexicon of *argot* are technical words used to denote precise referents related to the professional lives of the criminal classes but there are also a number of what Guiraud (1985:32), in Ager (1990), calls "*termes effectifs*", words referring to feelings, attitudes and value-judgements. Words in the French *argot* were formed by transforming either the meaning of an existing word, or from a common association between different referents, as is the case for many of the words for money, which have their origins in different words for bread. Other words were formed by transforming the shape of existing words, adding syllables or changing the order of syllables. Mencken (1980) says *argot* is synonymous with 'Lingo'.

The Wikipedia (2010) cites Victor Hugo who described argot in his novel, *Les Miserables*, as the language of the dark; the language of misery. Brucen Sterling (cited in Wikipedia), defines *argot* as, the deliberately hermetic language of a small knowledge clique, a super-specialized geek cult language that has no traction in the real world. It is

also defined as a secret language used by various groups-including, but not limited to, thieves and other criminals- to prevent outsiders from understanding their conversations.

Grady Ward (cited in Wikipedia 2010) says *argot* consists of a specialized vocabulary which is used by a small, insular group of people, often taking the form of a clique. In a very insular group, the resulting *argot* can be incomprehensible for people outside of the group, thus creating a very clear "us and them" division. Ward also says that argot is meant to be deliberately alienating, and can often be derisive and derogatory. Many marginalized groups use language which is heavily weighted with *argot* to highlight their differences.

Ward's other words for *argot* are; Aesopian language, babel, Greek, babble, cant, cipher, code, cryptogram, double Dutch, garble, gibberish, gift of tongues, glossolalia, gobbledygook, jargon, jumble, lingo, mumbo, jumbo, noise, patois, patter, phraseology, scatology, scramble, secret language, slang, taboo language, vernacular, vocabulary, vulgar language. Other associated terminologies are; dialect, idiom, parlance, partois, terminology, doublespeak, fuzzword, mediaspeak, localism and abracadabra. Others are; balderdash, banality, bombast, bunk, buzzwords, cliché, drivel, hackeneyed term, insipidity, shoptalk, slanguage, stale language, trite language, twaddle, colloquialism, idiosyncrasy, chatter, jabber and jive. In our case, it is Egesembesa.

2.2.3.6. Common features of jargon, slang, sheng and *argot*

These linguistic codes share remarkably. There is a lot of overlapping as to the meanings, uses and linguistic forms of these codes. The following features are however characteristic of the four. They:

a. are secret codes

b. are informal means of communication

c. are 'in-group' markers

d. are used by specific groups of people

e. are parallel to main languages

f. are incomprehensible to the uninitiated

The contribution of the foregoing studies on jargon, slang, sheng and argot are very significant. *Egesembesa* is a code parallel to *Ekegusii* and the above details are valuable in drawing comparisons. In addition, the details left a gap to be filled; the motivation and morpho-phonological processes *Ekegusii* undergoes to achieve secrecy in *Egesembesa*.

2.3. Theoretical framework

2.3.1. Introduction

This study has phonological, morphological and lexical aspects. Study of argot too has a sociological dimension. As such, the following theories had a bearing on it. Generative phonology (Chomsky and Halle, 1968); Natural generative phonology (Hooper, 1976); Autosegmental phonology (Goldsmith, 1976); Lexical phonology (Kiparsky, 1982; Halle and Mohanan, 1985; Kaisse and Shaw, 1985; Rubach, 1985; Pulleyblank, 1986). These

theories seem to be a build up of concepts across years up to Lexical phonology. For the sociological aspect, Structural functionalism was applied.

2.3.2. Lexical phonology

Lexical phonology, an off shoot of attempts to expound on Chomsky and Halle (1968), recognizes the fact that morphology affects the phonology of a language. In lexical phonology, the lexicon is recognized as a central component of the grammar which contains idiosyncratic properties of words and morphemes and regular word- formation and phonological rules. It is assumed that word-formation rules of the morphology are directly paired with phonological rules grouped together at various levels. The output of each morphological rule of that level is applied to it. One of its claims is that both inflectional and derivational word formation processes can be displayed on a series of linked levels.

The rules of morphology and phonology applying within the lexicon are essentially cyclical; rules are made to apply in a cycle, first to the root, then outward to the outer layer of affixes nearest to the root, and then again outward to the outer layer of affixes. The word, in this theory, can be likened to an onion with the root of the word as the core and level 1 as the inner layer, level 2, as the outer layer and post–lexical phonology, as the skin on the outside. So during a derivation, there is a constant cycling of data through the interlocking phonological and morphological rules at each level.

Pulleyblank (1986) says, of lexical phonology, thus;

a. At each level, morphological rules are paired with phonological rules.

b. Lexical rules are cyclic; the output of each set of word-formation rules is submitted to the phonological rules of that level. Lexical rules, only apply to words formed as they pass through the lexicon to which they apply.

c. The ordering of levels determines the sequencing of morphological process in word formation; level 1 rules precede level 2 rules; lexical rules precede post-lexical rules.

d. The output of each lexical stratum of derivation is a word.

e. The inventory of lexical items of a language is the output of the morphological and phonological rules of the different levels put together.

f. Post lexical rules are not cyclic.

g. A sharp distinction is drawn between lexical and post-lexical rules. The former have access to the word-internal structure, are structure preserving, cannot apply across word boundaries, apply cyclically and have exceptions; the latter have none of these properties. Note that (a) to (g) above are broken in Egesembesa.

Overall, lexical phonology posts the idea that, any alteration of the morphological form of a word, provokes a corresponding alteration of the phonological form of that word; derivational and inflectional processes trigger these morpho-phonological changes. Lexical phonology was relevant in this study because;

a. It deals with the morpho-phonological characteristics of words which is the subject of this study.

b. *Egesembesa* affects the morphology of words. This, according to this theory, alters the phonological forms of words.

2.3.3. Structural functionalism

According to Macionis (2000), proponents of structural functionalism believe that deviations come from the formation of norms and values which are forced by institutions. According to its key proponent, Emile Durkheim (1858- 1917), deviance is a necessary element of social organization. Durkheim further claimed that there is nothing abnormal about deviance and stated that deviance performs four essential functions as follows;

a. Deviance affirms cultural values and norms. As moral creatures, people must prefer some attitudes and behaviours over others. But any conception of virtue rests upon an opposing notion of vice. There can be no good without evil and no justice without crime. Deviance, then, is needed to define and sustain morality.

b. Responding to deviance clarifies moral boundaries. Durkheim observed that by defining some individuals as deviant, people draw a boundary between right and wrong.

c. Responding to deviance brings people together. People typically react to serious deviance with collective outrage. In so doing, Durkheim explained, they reaffirm the moral ties that bind them.

d. Deviance encourages social change. Deviant people push a society's moral boundaries, suggesting alternatives to the status quo and encouraging change. "Today's deviance" said Durkheim, "can become tomorrow's morality". (Macionis 2000: 135).

Structural functionalism was relevant here because the *argot* under study is a deviation from the norms of *Ekegusii* language. *Egesembesa* is not "normal". It deviates from the rules of syllable combinations in *Ekegusii* to achieve secrecy (see section 4.6).

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

This chapter gives a brief account of how the research was conducted. It states the research design used, the location of the research, the population and sampling procedures. It also highlights research instruments used and data analysis procedures adopted.

3.2. Research design

The research design in this study was descriptive design. Its major purpose, according to Kombo and Tromp (2006), is description of the state of affairs as it exists. Orodho (2003) says that descriptive survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Orodho and Kombo (2002) say that it can be used when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of education or social issues. It was used in this work to collect information from respondents on the motivation of use and on how they alter words morphologically and so phonologically to achieve secrecy in *Egesembesa*.

3.3. Location of the study

This study was carried out in the *Ekegusii*-speaking districts of the formerly larger Kisii District (see page 1). The study was carried out here because the area is home to the largest number of *Ekegusii*-speaking people in Kenya.

3.4. Target population

The targeted population was *Ekegusii*-speaking males of age 15 and above; there was no upper limit. This is a category that have had enough exposure to *Egesembesa*. In addition, at 15, boys have been circumcised and thoroughly socialized in their language. Their competence in language could suffice a study.

3.5. Sampling and sample size

The sampling design used in this study was purposive sampling because *Egesembesa* is used by males and of a particular age category. Gall, et al (1996), say that the goal of purposive sampling is to select cases that are likely to be 'information rich' with respect to the purposes of a qualitative research. While males of below age 15 could speak the *argot,* they could not speak it as much as those of age 15 and above. It is during seclusion period, after circumcision, that the males are thoroughly socialized in their culture. Boys undergo circumcision at around this age.(Nyang'era 1999).

Purposive sampling was supplemented with snowballing. Respondents were found by asking *Ekegusii* speakers to identity those they knew speak the *argot.* These speakers then helped identify others who speak. Because *Ekegusii* does not have significant dialectal differences, a sample of 30 respondents was chosen for this study. The targeted sample were those resident in any of the *Ekegusii*-speaking districts and socialized in *Ekegusii* and *Egesembesa.*

3.6. Research instruments and data collection

The research instruments used in this study were questionnaire and tape recording. The phonemic section of the questionnaire was worked out using the recorded pronunciations of the argot forms. To obtain data on the morphological alterations in nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives in *Egesembesa*, words (of varied number of syllables) of the above classes were given to speakers to rewrite in *Egesembesa*. Words outside the four word classes above were also given for purposes of drawing relationships. The researcher and research assistants assisted those who could not write.

The researcher filled in the phonemic equivalents of the morphologically altered words. It was easy because *Ekegusii* is the researcher's first language and secondly, the altered forms were recorded for purposes of accuracy.

3.7. Data analysis

Analysis of data was by simple descriptive analysis and by use of frequency tables. The analysis was on the morphological and phonological structure of *Egesembesa*. It was also on the motivation of use of *Egesembesa*. Data analysis involved;

    i.   Analysis of the morphological structure of the words in *Egesembesa*.

    ii.   Analysis of the phonological structure of the words in *Egesembesa*.

    iii.   Collecting and weighting the factors cited for motivating speakers to use *Egesembesa* to establish the most common factors.

    iv.   Outlining the morpho-syntactic, phonological, semantic, and sociolinguistic significance of the *argot*.

<div align="center">**CHAPTER FOUR**</div>

4.0. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the data, the analysis and the interpretation of the findings.

4.2. The age of respondents

Because age is a significant variable in linguistic studies (Yule, 2006), the questionnaires were distributed in a way to cover, in the sample, the males aged between age range 15 and 55 (and above). Table 4.2., shows the age ranges between those who responded and their respective percentages.

Table 4.2. The age of respondents.

Age range	Frequency	% Frequency
15-25	11	36.67
26-35	2	6.67
36-45	6	20
46-55	3	10
56- and above	8	26.67
Total	**30**	**100**

From Table 4.2., 36.67% represented male of age 15 and 25, while 6.67% represented males of 26 and 35 years of age. A 20% of the sample were of the age 36 and 45; a 10%

age 46 and 55 and a 26.67% were age 55 years and above. Although this study was not about dialectal variations, the age difference representativeness would help reveal any possible age difference variability, in the usage of this argot; a fact critical as a basis for further research on this *argot.*

4.3. The speakers of *Egesembesa*

Part of this research was to confirm who the main speakers of this *argot* are. Table 4.3. shows responses obtained on who the main speakers of *Egesembesa* are.

Table 4.3. The speakers of *Egesembesa*.

Speakers of *Egesembesa*	Frequency	% Frequency
Boys and men	29	96.67
Girls and women	1	3.33
Total	**30**	**100**

From Table 4.3., 96.67% of the respondents indicated that the *argot* is spoken by boys and men, while a 3.33% indicated it is spoken by girls and women.

4.4. Those from whom speakers acquired *Egesembesa*

The researcher also wanted to establish those who teach / taught the speakers of the *argot* according to sex and age. Table 4.4. (a) and (b), shows the responses obtained from the field.

Table 4.4. (a) Those from whom speakers acquired *Egesembesa* according to sex.

Teacher of *Argot*	Frequency	% Frequency
Male speakers	29	96.67
Female speakers	1	3.33
Total	**30**	**100**

From Table 4.4. (a) above, 96.67% of the speakers acquired it from male speakers, while 3.33% acquired it from female speakers.

Table 4.4. (b) Those from whom speakers acquired *Egesembesa* according to age.

Source of *argot*	Frequency	% Frequency
Younger speakers	1	3.33
Agemates	11	36.67
Older speakers	18	60
Total	**30**	**100**

From Table 4.4. (b), those who acquired it from younger speakers accounted for 3.33%, while those who acquired it from age mates accounted for 36.67% of the speakers. Those who picked it from older speakers represented 60%.

4.5. Why *Egesembesa* speakers speak it

This study also sought to find out why the speakers of the *argot* choose to speak it instead of *Ekegusii*. The various reasons were cited by each of the speakers. The reasons given against the number of times they appeared and their percentages are shown in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5. Reasons for the use of *Egesembesa*.

Reason	Number of times	% age
To communicate secrets	29	96.67
For in-group identity	26	86.67
To exclude unintended audience	18	60
To hide intentions	16	53.33
To insult	10	33.33
To hide obscenities	7	23.33
To talk about people in their presence	2	6.67
To pass time	2	6.67
To amuse those who don't know it	1	3.33
To conceal identity	1	3.33

From Table 4.5., 96.67% of the *Egesembesa* speakers speak it to communicate secrets amongst themselves, while 86.67% speak it as an in-group marker. Another 23.33% of the speakers speak in order to hide obscenities. Another 60%; 53.33%; 33.33% speak it to exclude unintended audience, to hide intentions and to insult respectively. Some 6.67%

1

of the speakers speak it to discuss people in their presence as well as to pass time, while a final 3.33% speak it to amuse and to conceal one's identity.

4.6. The morpho-phonological processes employed to achieve secrecy in *Egesembesa*

Egesembesa, an *argot,* is not everyone's variety / dialect; it is as a result of *Ekegusii* undergoing a linguistic process to achieve a unique form to exclude the unintended and those who do not know it. This section presents data on the morpho-phonological processes involved. It is noted that the processes affect the formal pattern (morphologically and therefore phonologically) of *Ekegusii* language, an effect that helps achieve intended secrecy. *Ekegusii* monosyllables, disyllables, trisyllables and polysyllables undergo various transformations to achieve secrecy and lock out unintended audience.

4.6.1. *Ekegusii* monosyllables

Table 4.6.1. (a). shows a list of *Ekegusii* monosyllables, their *Egesembesa* equivalents and a gloss.

Table 4.6.1. Ekegusii monosyllables.

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa* **form**	**Gloss**

A	*a*	refusing; saying no
Aa	*aa*	here
Ee	*ene*	yes; response to call for females
Oo	*oo*	response to a call for males
Gwa	*gwa*	exclamation of wonder
Ma	*ma*	fast (as in, hold firmly)
Mo	*mo*	onomatopoeic for sth falling
Nki	*nkini*	what?
Pi	*pi*	completely
Sa	sa	signal for dog to go after
Ti	*tigi*	emphasis for sth very dark
Yaa	*aya*	age set name for males
Taa	*ata*	*pour*

From Table 4.6.1., most forms remain intact. However, there is introduction of new graphemes and final vowel transfer, as in;

Ee which becomes *ene*:   a process, a kin to infixation,

Ti which becomes *tigi*:   a process, a kin to suffixation and,

Yaa and *taa*, which become, *aya* and *ata*, respectively.

It is noted that both; *aya*, which means 'these' and, *ata*, which means 'break',

are existing *Ekegusii* forms.

4.6.2. Ekegusii disyllables

Tables 4.6.4. (a), (b), (c), (d), show changes affecting disyllables.

Table 4.6.2. (a). Disyllables category 1.

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa* **form**	**Gloss**
Ata	*taa*	break (Vb)
Anga	*ngaa*	refuse (Vb)
Ana	*naa*	mow (Vb)
Eba	*bae*	forget
Ega	*gae*	mimick

Disyllables in Table 4.6.2. (a) undergo initial vowels transfer process; initial vowels are

put at the end of the word in question. Some of the new forms, however, are existings.

E.g;

Taa, which means pour (Vb).

Naa, is a clause meaning, I/She/He gave.

Bae, also a clause means, Give them.

Table 4.6.2. (b). Disyllables category 2.

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa* form	Gloss
Baba	banya	grand mother
Mama	manya	mother
Sese	sege	name of a woman
Tata	tanya	father
Titi	tigi	piggy back
Yaya	Yata	no

The words in Table 4.6.2. (b) are reduplicated syllables. The second syllable is deleted and replaced by a different syllable. Part of the new forms in this group of words, are existing *Ekegusii* words;

Manya, means know,

Sege, proper noun, a man's name,

Yata, clause, meaning, It broke.

Table 4.6.2. (c). Disyllables category 3.

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa* **form**	**Gloss**
Mose	semo	proper name for males
Rito	tori	leaf
Rema	mare	dig
Kaga	gaka	suppose that
Bono	nobo	now
Bake	keba	few (of people)
Bosio	siobo	in front
Rabia	biara	cut grass(Vb)
Togia	giato	praise (Vb)
Tobia	biato	ripen e.g. bananas
Randia	ndiara	preach
Kiamia	miakia	give
Tieria	riatie	sharpen
Biaria	riabia	make cow calf down
Tiania	niatia	make somebody vow
Riora	rario	divine (of divination)
Siora	rasio	do sth as first person
Kiebe	bekie	forget it
Siara	rasia	spill (water)
Tiana	natia	vow

In table 4.6.2. (c), the disyllables, undergo syllable 1 / 2 swop; the second syllables take the first position and vice-versa. Like some monosyllables and disyllables above, this group gives rise to quite a number of existings;

Semo, name used to refer to a man with whom you have married from the
same family

Tori, meaning, you are not

Keba, cut, especially, meat or circumcise by cutting a part of the
body, especially the clitoris

Biara, which means give birth

Natia, which means make somebody castrate

Table 4.6.2. (d). Disyllables category 4.

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa* **form**	**Gloss**
Eria	*arie*	that one
Ebio	*obie*	those ones
Egia	*agie*	mimick
Otia	*atio*	warm sth by a fireside
Igaa	*agai*	here
Inkaa	*ankai*	here at home
Ikia	*akii*	bring down from

The process that the words in Table 4.6.2. (d) undergo is initial / final vowel swop. A number of *Egesembesa* forms, however are existings;

Atia, means split (Vb), especially firewood or rocks,

Arie, clause, meaning, He/She eats,

Obie, clause, meaning, Give them, when 'them' is in the word class "eb-",

Agie, clause, meaning He/She scratches, especially where one feels an itch,

Agai, an exclamation.

4.6.3. Ekegusii trisyllables

Tables 4.6.3. (a) and (b) show the processes trisyllables undergo.

Table 4.6.3. (a). Trisyllables category 1.

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa* form	Gloss
Ritoke	*ketori*	banana
Chinsinyo	*nyonsichi*	ends (N) e.g of the earth
Takuna	*nakuta*	chew
Bokong'u	*ng'ukobo*	hard / fast
Kereki	*kireke*	which one?
Mosoti	*tisomo*	proper noun, male's name
Rangeria	*riangera*	call
Sigikia	*kiagisi*	rub
Tinyeria	*rianyeti*	clean by rubbing against sth
Monyokia	*kianyomo*	chase
Genderia	*riandege*	drive(of vehicle) for
Egesio	*siogee*	luck
Omokia	*kiamoo*	hard work
Omosie	*siemoo*	sugarcane
Imokia	*kiamoi*	carry
Ebirio	riobie	foodstuff

The trisyllables in Table 4.6.3. (a) undergo the process of syllable 1 / 3 swop, retaining the middle one. The resultant *Egesembesa* forms are only *Ekegusii* potentials.

Table 4.6.3. (b). Trisyllables category 2.

Ekegusii	Egesembesa form	Gloss
Amase	asema	cut dry grass(N)
Abanto	antoba	people
Esegi	egise	war/fight
Etana	enata	a region
Isiko	ikosi	outside of house
Imara	irama	be best maid of
Itana	inata	beat/ kill each other
Onchoka	okancho	turn; be converted
Obara	oraba	proper male name
Umora	uramo	pour
Eng'ondi	ending'o	sheep (Sing)

The category in Table 4.6.3 (b) achieve secrecy in *Egesembesa* by syllable 2 / 3 swop. The first syllable is retained. The *Egesembesa* forms in this word category are mainly *Ekegusii* potentials.

4.6.4. Ekegusii four-syllable words

Tables 4.6.4. (a), (b), (c), (d) show the processes affecting four-syllable words.

Table 4.6.4. (a). Four syllables category 1.

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa* form	Gloss
Egesaku	*egekusa*	a tribe
Ekeng'wanso	*ekensong'wa*	a sacrifice
Omong'ina	*omonang'i*	an old woman
Omogaka	*omokaga*	an old man
Omomura	*omoramu*	a young man

The four-syllable words in Table 4.6.4. (a) undergo the process of syllable 3 / 4 swop, while syllable 1 and 2 are retained. The *Egesembesa* forms are mainly *Ekegusii* potentials.

Table 4.6.4. (b). Four syllables category 2.

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa* form	Gloss
Chindengari	*chingarinde*	shadows
Rinyabwari	*ribwarinya*	sweet potato
Chimbachero	*chicheromba*	sayings
Mokoyone	*moyoneko*	sister/brother in-law

The words in Table 4.6.4. (b), undergo the process of syllable 2,3,4 shift; syllable 2 takes the fourth position, syllable 3 takes the second position, syllable 4 takes the third position, syllable 1 is retained. The new word forms are mainly potentials.

Table 4.6.4. (c). Four syllables category 3.

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa* **form**	**Gloss**
Mekameka	*kamekame*	shine(Vb) redupl
Bekabeka	*kabekabe*	put(Vb) redupl
Mogamoga	*gamogamo*	spare (Vb) redupl
Rerarera	*rarerare*	cry (Vb) redupl

For the words in Table 4.6.4. (c) secrecy in the argot is achieved through a syllable 1 / 2 and syllable 3 / 4 swop. The new forms are mainly Ekegusii potentials.

Table 4.6.4. (d). Four syllables category 4.

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa* **form**	**Gloss**
Moserere	*morerese*	kick ball to
Ritororo	*riroroto*	heifer
Titorara	*tirarato*	let us not sleep

The process the words in Table 4.6.4. (d) undergo to achieve secrecy is syllables 2, 3, 4, shifts.

i)   Syllable 1 retains its position,

ii)   Syllable 2 takes the fourth position,

iii)   Syllable 3 and syllable 4 take the second and the penultimate positions respectively.

4.6.5. Polysyllables beyond four syllables

The following are *Ekegusii* polysyllables, their *Egesembesa* equivalents and a gloss.

Table 4.6.5. Pollysyllables beyond four syllables.

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa form*	Gloss
Ekenyerere	*ekererenye*	thin (of things; of N class ege-)
Integerere	*intererege*	listen to me
Tagochongeria	*tagongeriacho*	don't joke with
Basambererie	*basareriembe*	weld for them
Basang'anerie	*basarieneng'a*	mix for them
Omosangererekano	*omosarerengenoka*	a gathering

.

For 5 syllable words in Table 4.6.5., the morpho-phonological process is;

Syllables 1 and 2 retain their positions,

Syllable 3 takes the last position,

Syllable 4 takes the third position and,

Syllable 5 takes the penultimate position.

For 8-syllable words, the process is;

Syllable 1, 2, 3, retain their positions;

Syllables 4, 5, 6, shift positions; the fourth taking the sixth position, the fifth takes the fourth position, the sixth taking the fifth position. Then the last two syllables swop their positions; the eight taking the penultimate position and the seventh, the final position. None of the resultant words in the polysyllables produces existing *Ekegusii* words.

4.7. Discussion of findings

4.7.1. The speakers of *Egesembesa*

The findings of this research confirmed that *Egesembesa* is a code spoken by males. However, it was also revealed that the argot is almost spilling over to female speakers, a fact suggested by a 3.33% of speakers who indicated that the argot is spoken by girls and women. This fact suggests the possibility that *Egesembesa* may be undergoing a sociolinguistic change and that it may no longer continue to be defined as a male code. This could further point to the fact that a secret code is solely spoken among a group of substance abusers or those engaged in illegal clandestine activities.

The fact that *Egesembesa* is transcending the male territory is further reinforced by the findings (see section 4.5.) of this thesis. From Table 4.5., 6.67% and 3.33% indicated that they use the argot to pass time and to amuse respectively. With today's formal education in formal public institutions with both male and female learners, *Egesembesa* may have, with time, acquired other uses and users. If in such settings it is used to pass time and to amuse, then it may have excited interest to learn, including, from female *Ekegusii* speakers.

4.7.2. Those from whom speakers acquired the Egesembesa

Speakers of the argot acquired it from, mainly male speakers (see Table 4.4. (a)). A minor percentage indicated they acquired it from female speakers. The female percentage, however small, points at a sociolinguistic fact; due to unlimited sociolinguistic contexts to which *Egesembesa* may have been exposed to, it may have started losing on the original uses of *argots* i.e. usage among persons defined strictly by specific social factors.

On the question of age, those who picked *Egesembesa* from younger speakers were fewest, accounting for 3.33%. Age mates and older speakers represented 36.67% and 60% respectively. This points to the fact that older speakers usually socialize the young and on this code, adults would be playing a greater role in having younger males acquire it.

4.7.3. Why *Egesembesa* speakers speak it

From the information in Table 4.5., *Egesembesa* serves particular social needs and on this fact, it compares largely with jargon, slang and sheng, all secret linguistic codes. (see section 2.2.3 of this thesis). It is interesting to note from the findings that *Egesembesa* is, in one way, used to disclose identity and to hide it in another way. The morpho-phonological processes make it incomprehensible to those who do not know it; the same processes are a way of revealing that an individual is part of the 'in-group'.

Egesembesa which borrows heavily in form from *Ekegusii* has a complex formal system, a fact suggested by a 6.67% of speakers indicating that ,in addition to other uses, they use it to talk about those who do not know it, even in their presence. This suggests that the morpho-phonological processes involved in *Egesembesa* speech are ingenious and not random alteration of the form of the parent variety *(Ekegusii).*

The ingenuity of *Egesembesa* is further suggested by the fact that speakers can communicate secrets (96.67%); hide obscenities (23.33%); exclude unintended audience (60%); hide intentions (53.33%) and insult (33.33%) their fellow *Ekegusii* speakers without them (the *Ekegusii* speakers who do not know the argot) noticing. The morpho-phonological processes in *Egesembesa* are, therefore, conscious processes functioning uniquely in a linguistic process. This is the same ingenuity that characterizes sheng (Ogechi,2005).

4.7.4. The morpho-phonological processes employed in Egesembesa

Egesembesa, an argot, is not everyone's variety /dialect; it is as a result of *Ekegusii* undergoing linguistic processes to achieve a new form meant to keep unintelligible what a speaker says. The processes affect *Ekegusii's* formal system which keeps whatever is said incomprehensible. *Ekegusii* words undergo various syllable / morpheme transformation processes, depending on the number of syllables and or morphemes in those individual words. The following are the processes based on numbers of syllables in individual words.

4.7.4.1. Processes in monosyllables

A basic syllable structure in *Ekegusii* would be V or VV or CV or CVV (Whiteley 1965). Monosyllables do not undergo any complex processes (see Table 4.6.1) to achieve secrecy. There could be two possible reasons for this scenario:

a. Being monosyllabic, they have no other syllable with which to, for instance, swop positions like disyllables (see Table 4.6.2. (a), (b), (c), (d)).

b. Most monosyllables are function words and by virtue of their function in sentences, they may not prevent communication of secret information. Their frequency in clause structure can permit passage of secret information.

Some though undergo processes of infixation and suffixation, transformations that make obfuscation of what is said possible (cf Githinji 2006). The two processes (infixation and suffixation) give rise to *Ekegusii* existings. One would imagine that the existings may betray intended secret information. This is not possible because the resultant existings are

argot in structure not synonyms of the altered *Ekegusii* forms (see the meanings of *Egesembesa* forms of *ee*, *ti*, *yaa* and *taa* in section 4.6.1.). Further still, the context of occurrence of the existings will deny a possibility of leaking intended secret information. So, whether words are monosyllabic, communication of secret information is possible despite the fact that they do not undergo complex morpho-phonological processes in *Egesembesa.*

4.7.4.2. Processes in disyllables

Disyllables in *Ekegusii* take varied structures (see Tables 4.6.2. (a), (b), (c), (d).). This variation seems to bring about the slight differences in the processes that operate on them in order to achieve secrecy in *Egesembesa.* Some undergo initial vowel transfer (e.g. *ana* becomes *naa.*) while reduplicated syllables undergo deletion and replacement (e.g. *baba* becomes *banya*). Others undergo syllable swop (e.g. *rito* becomes *tori*) and another category undergoes an initial / final vowel swop (e.g. *eria* becomes *arie*).

These processes disrupt the morpho-phonological provisions for meaning making in *Ekegusii* resulting into forms that in *Ekegusii* are meaningless. A salient feature of disyllables is that most of them give rise to quite a number of *Ekegusii* words in daily use (also called existings in this thesis). These (as observed in section 4.7.4.1.) is a rich means of shrouding messages in secrecy, for, whenever used, context denies a literal interpretation of their meaning. In *Egesembesa* discourse, any word heard as if it is in *Ekegusii* has this explanation: Its semantic meaning is different from what the speaker is saying because its morpho-phonological form is altered.

4.7.4.3. Processes in trisyllables

Trisyllables take the forms shown on Tables 4.6.3. (a) and (b). Some words in this category undergo the process of syllable 1 / 3 swop. The other one undergoes syllable 2 / 3 swop. It is conclusive to say that syllable swop governs trisyllable transformations meant to make *Egesembesa* incomprehensible. A new trend in trisyllables is that the resultant forms are mainly potentials. Potentials satisfy intentions to keep communication secret; no *Ekegusii* speaker can infer meaning of such forms as *nakuta, kiagisi, kiamoo, egise, uramo*.

4.7.4.4. Processes in four syllable words

Four syllable words mainly undergo syllable shifts / swops. One category shifts syllables 3 and 4 (e.g. *egesaku*), a second one shifts syllables 2, 3, 4 (e.g *chimbachero*, cf with *moserere*), a third one swops syllables 1 / 2 and 3 / 4 (e.g. *bekabeka*). (see Tables 4.6.4. (a), (b), (c), (d).).

In four syllable words, the resultant forms are mainly potentials, an instrument of secrecy. It seems that the longer the word, the more complex the processes operating on it, the more obscure it becomes in *Egesembesa*. This is the obscurity the 'in-group' members seek.

4.7.4.5. Processes in words beyond four syllables

In this thesis, 5 and 8 syllable words were considered. The processes of syllable shifts / swops alter words in these two categories (see section 4.6.5 for details). Polysyllables undergo multiple processes to achieve secrecy. There is predictable retention of the first

few syllables, and the number of the first syllables retained depends on the total number of syllables in a word; the more the number of syllables in a word, the more the number of the first syllables retained. No words in this category are existings, only potentials. The potentials help pass secret information because they have already altered the morpho-phonological provisions available to *Ekegusii* speakers to construct meaning.

The processes of achieving secrecy by word syllable manipulation in *Egesembesa* share with processes in Sheng. According to Ogechi (2005), reversing of syllables and truncation are processes basic to achieving secrecy in Sheng. For Githinji (2006), other processes exploited by Sheng speakers to make their speech obscure include; affixation, clipping and syllable inversion, processes inherent in *Egesembesa.* The French *argot* too shares remarkably with *Egesembesa*. Some of the processes involved in hiding meaning in the argot are transformations affecting individual words (see sections 2.2.3.4. and 2.2.3.5. for details on Sheng and the French *argot*).

Some contrasts however exist between Sheng and *Egesembesa:* in Sheng there is use of initialization, clipping and semantic expansion (Ogechi 2005, Githinji 2006). The other secret linguistic codes (slang, jargon) do not share a lot in common with Sheng and *Egesembesa* on morphological processes affecting single words. These two mainly employ daily words in a special sense (see section 2.2.3.4.).

The fact that *Egesembesa* compares this much with other extensively researched on secret linguistic codes, should excite interest from African linguistics researchers. Such interest, it would be expected, will lead to research on other linguistic aspects of *Egesembesa*.

All the syllable re-arrangement processes in all manner of *Ekegusii* words confirm the claims of lexical phonology. Because the processes affect word morphology, the phonology is too affected. This is the channel of achieving secrecy for the *Egesembesa* speakers.

4.7.5. The morphological structure of nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives in *Egesembesa*

This study presumed that *Egesembesa* adopts different morpho-phonological forms for nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives. Table 4.7.5. is a list of words used to show morphological structures of nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives.

Table 4.7.5. Morphological structure of words.

Word/class	*Egesembesa* form	Gloss
Nouns		
Mose	*semo*	proper N, male name
Ritoke	*ketori*	banana
Chindengari	*chingarinde*	shadows
Verbs		
Ata	*taa*	break
Kaga	*gaka*	suppose that
Takuna	*nakuta*	chew
Adverbs		
Aiga	*gaia*	here
Bono	*nobo*	now
Rimo	*mori*	once
Adjectives		
Bibere	*rebebi*	two (noun class eb-)
Bake	*keba*	few (of people)
Ekemwamu	*ekemumwa*	black (of thing)

From this list, and in reference to the syllable analysis done earlier, it is evident that nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives do not adopt specific forms in *Egesembesa* as different word classes. The syllable re-arrangement in achieving secrecy in the argot affects the forms, notwithstanding the word classes. If a word is a noun or adjective or other, and has

the syllable structure CVCV (where the second syllable is not syllable one reduplicated), the process they will undergo is syllable swop e.g.

>*Mose* (N), becomes *semo*
>
> *Kaga* (Vb), becomes *gaka*
>
>*Bono* (Adv), becomes *nobo*
>
>*Bake* (Adj), becomes *keba*

All undergo the same process syllable 1 / 2 swop. This applies to other words with different numbers of syllables. If a word has two syllables, whatever its part of speech, it will undergo the same distortion to achieve secrecy in the *argot*.

The same applies, too, for phonological changes that occur as a result of morphological distortion despite the part of speech. The syllable shifts, syllable swops and syllable deletions, affect the phonotactic conditions attached to the construction of existing *Ekegusii* words.

4.7.6. The phonological structures of *Ekegusii* and *Egesembesa* forms

The following words will be used to depict the differences in structure between *Ekegusii* and *Egesembesa;*

Table 4.7.6. (a). Phonological structure of Ekegusii and Egesembesa.

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa* form	Gloss
Nki	*nkini*	what?
Eba	*bae*	give them
Tata	*tanya*	father
Riora	*rario*	divine(Vb)
Sigikia	*kiagisi*	rub
Obara	*oraba*	proper (N)
Bekabeka	*kabekabe*	put (redupl)
Integerere	*intererege*	listen to me

According to lexical phonology theory, alteration of morphological structure of words alters the phonological forms of the affected words as stated elsewhere in this work. Although the argot in this study does not exploit the two processes, derivation and inflection, per se, to achieve secrecy, phonologically, the argot has a different phonological structure from *Ekegusii.* This is in the following aspects;

a)Phonotactics: The *argot* in this study alters the phonotactic rule (see section 2.2.3.3.) in *Ekegusii,* producing inconsistent *Ekegusii* forms. E.g. if the following syllables must make sense in *Ekegusii*, then the ordering in a word must follow a rule.

     ro, to, ri, ro.

To make meaning in Ekegusii, the order must be;

ri, then *to*, then *ro,* then *ro*.   It becomes;

ritororo   which refers to heifer.

Any deviation in ordering will make the resultant form phonotactically non-compliant, and so the form will be meaningless in *Ekegusii*. It must, however, be noted that the *argot* does not just distort syllables; what forms *Ekegusii* words take in *Egesembesa* are largely dictated by the number of syllables in that word. Having systematically re-ordered the syllables, meaning is lost in *Ekegusii* but created in the *argot*

b)Phonemics: *Egesembesa* exploits the same phonemes as *Ekegusii*. The difference comes in phonemic combination, of course, meant to achieve secrecy. E.g.

ta,   *na,*   *ku,*

for the word chew, Ekegusii combines them in the order;

ta,   *ku,*   *na.*

Egesembesa will have the order;

na,   ku,   ta.

But it must be noted that the argot relies on *Ekegusii* vocabulary for it to form its own vocabulary. It is the difference in phonemic combinations between *Ekegusii* and *Egesembesa* that brings the difference. For the argot speakers, altered phonemes achieve secrecy.

c)Syllables: The *argot* in this study has no marked difference in the matter of syllables. The same syllables are exploited, but in a distorted manner, a distortion meant to pass secret information. For instance, to say;

'cut'

In *Ekegusii* is,   *'kenya'*

In *Egesembesa*, it is *'nyake'*

The difference here is in the ordering. But an *Ekegusii* word must first exist. We could say that *Ekegusii* words are the raw materials for the 'manufacture' of *Egesembesa* vocabulary.

d). Stress and intonation: On stress and intonation, *Egesembesa* retains the stress points, which therefore, stresses fresh syllables. This fact does not alter the intonation pattern of *Egesembesa* in connected speech. E.g. the stress points in the following words are on the first syllable.

Table 4.7.6. (b). Stress placement in Egesembesa.

Ekegusii word	*Egesembesa* form	Gloss
'kora	'rako	do
'takuna	'nakuta	chew
'mokoyone	'komoneyo	my in-law

Therefore, *Egesembesa* nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, have a typically different phonology from *Ekegusii*; a difference that makes it easy to pass secret information

4.8. Theoretical Significance of *Egesembesa*

This study was based on some theoretical framework. The specific theories informing this study were;

    (a) Lexical phonology

    (b) Structural functionalism

4.8.1. Lexical phonology and *Egesembesa*

From the foregoing, it is clear that *Egesembesa* distorts the forms of *Ekegusii* words either by syllable shift, syllable swop, syllable deletion and replacement, syllable retention, vowel transfer, infixation and suffixation.

The relationship between *Egesembesa* and lexical phonology is two-fold;

(a) *Egesembesa* confirms the claims of the theory. The argot alters the morphological forms of works (and therefore phonological forms); a fact that is core in lexical phonology.

(b) *Egesembesa* deviates from the theory. Lexical phonology is centred on the derivational and inflectional processes - both new word forming processes. Whatever the morphemes in a derivation or in an inflection process, are meaning-carrying elements. For example, in English they could be;

Plural forming e.g. -s in boys.

Past forming e.g. -ed in talked.

In *Egesembesa*, the elements mainly affected are rarely morphemes. In fact, *Egesembesa* displaces syllables in spite of their meaning - in case of any. For instance the syllables;

Se, in *sese*

To, in *rito*

No, in *bono*

Mia, in *miamia*

do not bear a particular meaning except that joined to other *Ekegusii* phonotactically

compliant syllables, they produce *Ekegusii* words.

But this fact does not completely contradict this theory. Words like the following have

syllables that are morphemic;

Ti to rara

Ngm   Subj   Vb
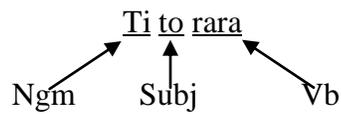
in *Egesembesa* it is;

Ti   *rara*   *to*

Ngm   Vb   Subj
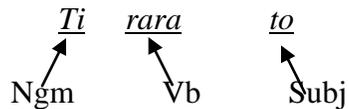
This shows transfer of meaning-carrying elements just like in English;

Boy-boys. ('s' is a plural-forming morpheme)

Lead-Leader. ('er' is a noun-forming morpheme)

The difference, though, is that in *Egesembesa*, morpheme / syllable shifts operate majorly within words not specifically prefixes, or suffixes. *Egesembesa* then confirms the theory, in one way, and contradicts it in another.

4.8.2. Structural functionalism and *Egesembesa*

Structural functionalism believes that deviations come from the formation of norms and values forced by institutions. Aickin J, (1963, quoted in Yule, 1993) says "no tongue can be acquired without grammatical rules..." In other words, *Ekegusii* language too has rules. *Egesembesa* flouts these rules of proper speak. In a bid to remain secret, *Egesembesa* breaks the *Ekegusii* phonotactics rule. In this way, *Egesembesa* confirms the claims of this theory. The argot deviates from *Ekegusii* that has rules that govern meaning formation. *Egesembesa*, a deviation, confirms that *Ekegusii* has norms of proper speech. According to Durkheim (Macionis 2000) then, it would be supposed that *Egesembesa* may, possibly, occupy a larger sociolinguistic significance, in the course of time.

4.9. Linguistic significance of *Egesembesa*

4.9.1. Morpho-syntactic significance of *Egesembesa*

Ekegusii is a highly agglutinative language and most words typically consist of a basic root followed by one or more affixes and each affix represents a specific grammatical category or meaning. Accordingly, the subject and object are expressed through the use of bound morphemes on the verb terminology that is implied within a given phrase and or sentence. (Akama 2006).

But, this is the reality that *Egesembesa* distorts. On single / individual morphemes, what is affected is morpheme / syllable order, hence spelling distortion which makes *Egesembesa* incomprehensible and secret. On multiple-morpheme words equivalent to a clause, e.g.

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa* form	Gloss
Agakebuna	*aganabuke*	He /she broke it;

the distortion, though at word level, is clausal. In the word '*Agakebuna*', are morphemes functioning as subject, tense (marker), object and verb;

a Subj (Sing)

ga- Tm (Pt)

ke- Ob (Sing)

buna- Vb

Egesembesa does not, however, distort morpheme order in clauses with independent morphemes, e.g. in,

Mose, butora emete, which means, *Mose*, cut trees.

Each word in the above clause is distorted within itself, leaving *Ekegusii* syntactic pattern intact (cf. pg. 4)

On multiple-morpheme *Ekegusii* words, and when the subject / object of a clause is a pronoun, the order of occurrence of clause constituents ignores the usual SVO word order. The order is instead SOV as it is shown below;

Ekegusii	*Egesembesa* **form**	**Gloss**
Agakebuna	*aganabuke*	he/she broke it
Bakamoura	*bamouraka*	they robbed him/ her
Titorara	*tirarato*	let us not sleep

These three words will undergo the following syntactic transformation in *Egesembesa.*

Ekegusii **clause**
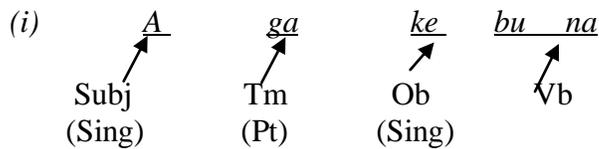
(i)

A	*ga*	*ke*	*bu*	*na*
Subj	Tm	Ob		Vb
(Sing)	(Pt)	(Sing)		

Egesembesa **clause**

A	*ga*	*na*	*bu*	*ke*
Subj	Tm	Vb syllables		Ob
(Sing)	(Pt)	swopped		(Sing)

Ekegusii clause

(ii)   *Ba*   *ka*   *mo*   *ura*

        Subj   Tm   Ob   Vb
        (Pl)   (Pt)   (Sing)

Egesembesa clause

            Ba   *mo*   *ura*   *ka*

        Subj   Obj   Vb   Tm
        (Pl)   (Sing)   (Pt)

Ekegusii clause

(iii)   *Ti*   *to*   *ra*   *ra*

        Ngm   Subj   Vb

Egesembesa clause

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$$\underset{\text{Ngm}}{\nearrow} \textit{Ti} \qquad \underset{\text{Vb}}{\nearrow} \textit{ra} \quad \textit{ra} \qquad \underset{\text{Subj}}{\nearrow} \textit{to}$$
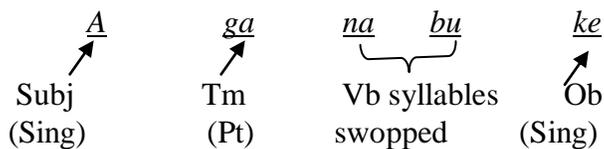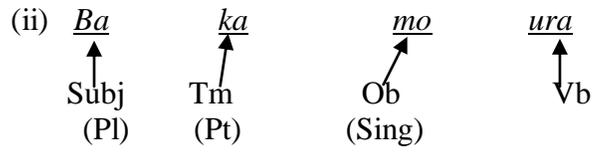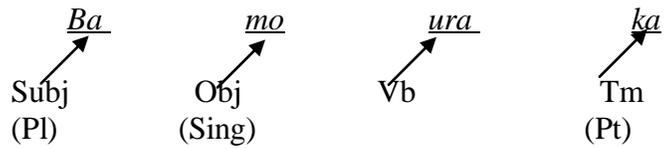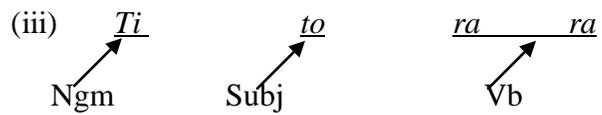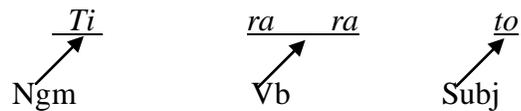
From the illustrations above, the distortion affecting single-word clauses is characterized by;

(i)   Displacing the object to somewhere else in the word.

(ii)   Shifting the verb position in the word.

(iii)   Distorting the morphology of the verb by syllable swop.

These processes completely obscure the argot from comprehension by *Ekegusii* speakers.

4.9.2. Phonological significance of *Egesembesa*

4.9.2.1. Phonotactic significance

The process that helps achieve the *argot* in this study, basically distorts the rules of syllable combination that makes communication in *Ekegusii* possible. This, then produces potential *Ekegusii* forms; meaningless to *Ekegusii* speakers, but meaningful to those who have learnt the *argot*. For instance, the following forms are only potential *Ekegusii* words, but in *Egesembesa*, they are existing lexical items, full of meaning.

Table 4.9.2.1. Phonotactic changes

Egesembesa form	Gloss
Tigi	(emphasis) e.g. pitch dark
Ankai	here at home
Raki	quiet (Vb),imperative
Urame	meet (Vb)
Nakuta	chew
Omonang'i	woman
Tirarato	let us not sleep
Basarierembe	weld for them
Tagongeriacho	do not joke with

The forms above meet the conditions of correct phoneme combinations to form syllables, which, combined with other syllables, can form existing *Ekegusii* words. The problem with them is that the consequent combinations are inconsistent with *Ekegusii* phonotactic rules; all of them, therefore, are potential *Ekegusii* words, but existing *Egesembesa* vocabulary. The inconsistence, for the speakers of the *argot*, is an instrument used to achieve secrecy.

4.9.2.2. Phonemic significance

Bosire (1993), states that in the phonemic inventory of *Ekegusii,* there are twenty segmental phonemes shared by the two main *Ekegusii* dialects. Further, there are a core seven vowels and their long equivalents making them total to fourteen.

Egesembesa does not affect this reality. Instead these, in their syllable forms, are the ones shifted; deleted, swopped, distorting *Ekegusii* phonotactics; hence secrecy and incomprehensibleness is achieved in *Egesembesa.*

4.9.2.3. Syllabic significance

Egesembesa does not alter *Ekegusii* in the matter of syllable structure (See Ekegusii syllable structure in section 2.2.2.1. of this thesis). What happens is that a syllable is shifted, deleted or swopped within a single word. Such processes distort *Ekegusii* phonemic combinations to achieve secrecy in the argot, but the syllabic combinations (in the argot) are typically *Ekegusii*.

4.9.2.4. Stress and intonational significance

Hayes (1980) states that the syllable is at the heart of phonological representations. It is the unit in terms of which phonological systems are organized. He also says that it is a purely phonological entity. Stress (which Hayes calls 'a matter of greater auditory significance') and intonation affect syllables. In *Egesembesa,* the syllable shifts that affect syllables should automatically affect the stress pattern. But this is not the case. Instead, the stress points remain, thus 'de-stressing' *Ekegusii's* stressed syllables and 'stressing' fresh *Egesembesa* syllables. This fact is salient in disyllables with the CVCV

structure. These are categories that follow the syllable 1 / 2 swop, to achieve the *argot*. Trisyllables and other polysyllabic forms which retain the initial syllables, and have primary stress falling on the first syllables, retain that primary stress. For instance, the following words in *Egesembesa*, have their primary stresses on the first syllable;

'Tiga- 'gati

'Kora- 'rako

'Takuna – 'nakuta

'Minyoka –'kanyomi

These are compared with stress placement in the following trisyllables and polysyllables;

'Etana – 'enata

'Isiko – 'ikosi

'Egesaku – 'egekusa

'Titorara – tirarato

'Tagochongeria – 'tagongeriacho

This explains the fact that *Egesembesa*, from a distance, sounds like ordinary *Ekegusii*. *Egesembesa*, therefore, retains *Ekegusii* intonation pattern. This does not in any way make it easier to comprehend because, the distortion of *Ekegusii* phonotactics, makes it completely incomprehensible to, even, duly socialized *Ekegusii* speakers.

4.9.3. Semantic significance of *Egesembesa*

Semantics deals with meanings of words and phrases. Every unit of language be it a phoneme, a morpheme, a syllable, a word is meaning-laden. Whatever the unit of language derives meaning by conforming to the morphological and phonemic provisions of that language. If any slight rule is breached at the most primary level e.g. at phoneme or at morpheme combinations, meaning is lost; whatever the resultant form will be meaningless.

Egesembesa interferes with the rules of syllabic and morphemic combinations and, therefore, distorts *Ekegusii* meaning completely. For instance, the following, characteristically, *Ekegusii* words, are meaningless, but meaningful in *Egesembesa*.

> *Nkini*
>
> *Rasio*
>
> *Ketori*
>
> *Nyonsichi*
>
> *Saberare*
>
> *Omoreriamere*
>
> *Nyang'ening'ena*

Egesembesa therefore interferes with the basic rules that make meaning possible, even when the words have a semblance of *Ekegusii.*

But, on the other hand, it is this interference with the rules of combination of linguistic units to bring out meaning in *Ekegusii,* that builds meaning in the *argot*. It is interesting that the "words" above are fully meaningful in *Egesembesa*, but very strange to an *Ekegusii* speaker who has not leant the *argot*.

On the question of semantics, *Egesembesa* completely distorts *Ekegusii* meaning (by rendering *Ekegusii* words meaningless by distorting the syllable / morphemic combinations) and through the same distortion, new meaning is created. The intention to remain secret, to abuse, to speak obscenities is therefore achieved.

4.9.4. Sociolinguistic significance of *Egesembesa*

Language exists to serve social needs. A very primary use of language in society is communication. But in addition to communication, *Egesembesa* serves other social functions. From the respondents in this study, it;

(a) Is a means of sharing secrets without fear of being understood. In fact 96.67% of the respondents indicated they use it to communicate secrets.

(b) Is a means of bonding for speakers. Yule (1996) supports varied language use according to such factors as age, social class, education, sex. In this study 86.67% of the speakers indicated that they use the argot to identify themselves with peers. A common language among speakers is a sign of belonging.

Like any language, therefore, *Egesembesa* satisfies pertinent social needs of its speakers. But the process through which the *argot* achieves this, is through deliberate and systematic re-arrangement of the formal structure of the parent variety (*Ekegusii*).

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the main findings and the conclusion. It also gives recommendations and suggests areas for further research on *Ekegusii*.

5.2. Summary of the main findings

The following are the main findings from this study;

Egesembesa speakers are motivated to use the argot instead of using *Ekegusii*. The motivations are a need to;

Communicate secrets without being understood by other *Ekegusii* speakers.

Identify oneself with peers.

Exclude unintended audience.

Hide intentions.

Insult.

Hide obscenities.

Talk about people in their presence.

Pass time.

Amuse those who don't know the argot.

Conceal identity.

Egesembesa has a morphological as well as a phonological structure and rules governing the process of syllable re-arrangement that help achieve intended secrecy. A word,

depending on its syllable structure, subscribes to specific re-arrangement processes that make the *argot* incomprehensible to non-*Egesembesa* speakers.

All classes of words, depending on the number of syllables building them, conform to definite distortion processes involving, at least, any one of the following;

    (a)   Infixation

    (b)   Suffixation

    (c)   Syllable swop

    (d) Syllable shift

    (e) Vowel transfer

    (f) Syllable retention

    (g) Syllable deletion and replacement

There is, therefore, no particular process distorting a particular class of words as supposed in the objectives of this study. But it was noted that, what process alters words to achieve secrecy in *Egesembesa* is determined by the number of syllables in the words and the words' syllabic structures. Whatever the process that operates in any given word makes the *argot* incomprehensible to *Ekegusii* speakers who do not know the *argot*. *Egesembesa* has notable, morpho-syntactic, phonological, semantic and sociolinguistic implications.

Egesembesa nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjectives, typically, have different phonological forms from *Ekegusii,* a quality that helps in making it incomprehensible to those who do

not know it. The research achieved its objectives; the motivation of use of the *argot* was established and the processes that words undergo to achieve the intended secrecy in the argot found out.

5.3. Conclusion

This study reaffirmed that *Egesembesa* is motivated sociolinguistic behaviour. Use of *Egesembesa*, instead of using *Ekegusii* by *Ekegusii* male speakers, is motivated by pertinent social factors (see Table 4.5.). Further, the study confirmed that *argots*, (and *Egesembesa* too); be they jargons, slang, cant, lingo, are not random and unpredictable sociolinguistic behaviour. The processes that create them are, instead, characteristically linguistic, deliberate and systematic. *Egesembesa* achieves secrecy through predictable morpho- phonological processes operating on *Ekegusii* words.

This study has contributed to knowledge about *Ekegusii* as a language and *Egesembesa* as an *Ekegusii argot*. It is work that lays a background for further study on *Ekegusii*, and specifically on this *argot*.

5.4. Recommendations

Language plays a significant role in the socio-cultural, economic, political and educational aspects of a people. Following the findings of this research and bearing in mind that *Ekegusii* speakers in Kenya are more than 2 million in number, this researcher recommends; that linguists put more interest in research on *Ekegusii*. Secondly, that pedagogic texts writers factor the revelations of this research (on the current trends in

Ekegusii language) whenever they prepare language teaching materials for lower primary pupils who, according to policy, are supposed to learn / be instructed in the language of the catchment area. This would make such texts relevant in *Gusii's* dynamic linguistic situation.

5.5. Areas for further research

The findings of this study, project considerable linguistic implications. The researcher suggests a comparative study of *Egesembesa* and Sheng. According to Ogechi (2005) and Githinji (2006, 2008), there could be relationships on motivation of use of both codes and their lexicalization processes.

There is also need of study of other possible processes of achieving secrecy in the *Egesembesa*, for, this research researched only, on morpho-phonological processes. These other processes could include borrowing and coinage, processes basic in Sheng (see Githinji 2006). Finally, it could be significant to carry out a study on the emergence, currency and possible existence of *Egesembesa* varieties.

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APPENDICES

1.1. Questionnaire for speakers of *Egesembesa*

Questionnaire No………

As part of the requirement for the award of a postgraduate degree, I am carrying out a research in the *Ekegusii*-speaking districts whose title is: "Motivation, Mopho-phonological Processes in *Egesembesa* Argot among *Ekegusii*-Speaking Males of Western Kenya." The findings will add information on the *Ekegusii* language. Please answer the questions below.

<u>**SECTION A**</u>

i.   What is your age? Tick as appropriate. Between; (a) 15-25 (b) 26-35 (c) 36-45 (d) 46-55 (e) 56 and above

ii.   What is your first language?_____

iii.   You know *Egesembesa* (the secret language among *Ekegusii* speakers) who speak it? Tick as appropriate;

    a) Boys and men

    b) Girls and women.

  i)   From whom did you acquire *Egesembesa*? Tick the correct choice in (a) and

    (b) according to age and sex.

    a) i) A younger speaker,

       ii) An age mate,

       iii) An older speaker.

    b) i) A male speaker,

       ii) A female speaker.

ii)   In the following space, state why you use *Egesembesa*.

i)

ii)

iii)

iv)

v)

vi)

vii)

viii)

ix)

SECTION B

State the *Egesembesa* equivalents of;

Ekegusii	Gloss	Phonemic transcription	*Argot* form	Phonemic transcription
Ata	break			
Rito	leaf			
Rise	a plant			
Mose	a proper name			
Iso	your father			
Tata	father			
Riko	fireplace			
Ekegusii	Gloss	Phonemic transcription	Argot form	Phonemic transcription

Ekegusii	Gloss	Phonemic transcription	Argot form	Phonemic transcription
Ritoke	banana			
Egesaku	tribe			
Ekengw'anso	sacrifice			
Omosubati	a sister (sibling)			
Riakworo	place			
Chinsaana	forest			
Okoamereria	argument			
Ekemogamogia	a plant			
Okwemurunga nia	complaining			
Sarasaria	spoil (rpt)			
Omong'ina	woman			
Chinsinyo	ends			
Chindengari	shadows			
Ekerambauti	strong wind			
Anga	refuse(Vb)			
Aiga	here			
Aria	there			
Ng'oora	slowly			
Bwango	fast			
Bokong'u	hard			
Ekegusii	**Gloss**	**Phonemic transcription**	**Argot form**	**Phonemic transcription**

Igoro	yesterday			
Bono	now			
Kera	always			
Rimo	once			
Eba	forget			
Ekenyerere	thin (thing)			
Omobe	bad (person)			
Bibere	two			
Bake	few (people)			
Bonsi	all (people)			
Kera	each			
Kereki	which			
Omoremereria	patient (person)			
Omuya	good (Person)			
Ekenene	big (thing)			
Rema	cultivate			
A	Saying, no.			
Aa	here			
Ee	yes			
Oo	response to a call for males			
Ekegusii	**Gloss**	**Phonemic transcription**	**Argot form**	**Phonemic transcription**
Gwa	exclamation			

Ma	fast (Adv)			
Nki	what?			
Pi	completely			
Sa	signal to dog to go after sth			
Ti	emphasis for sth dark e.g, pitch dark			
Yaa	age set name for males			
Taa	pour, out of a container			
Ng'a	that			
Gete	-body e.g.in somebody.			
Ororo	there			
Naende	and			
Biria	those ones,in word class -eb			
Ekegusii	**Gloss**	**Phonemic transcription**	**Argot form**	**Phonemic transcription**
Rabia	cut, esp. grass			
Togia	praise(Vb)			

Randia	preach			
Monyokia	chase			
Imokia	carry			
Onchoka	turn			
Tagochongeria	don't joke with			
Tiana	vow (Vb)			
Takuna	chew			

Thank you so much.