

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS

**THE NATURE OF HOMONYMOUS AND POLYSEMOUS RELATIONS IN
EKEGUSHI**

BY

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts of Kenyatta University.**

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DECLARATION

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

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DEDICATION

To my parents Birita Nyarinda and Samuel Aunga who made great sacrifices to put me through school and to my loving wife Janet and children Arnold, Ian and Sandra who accorded me full support and relentless encouragement throughout the period of my studies.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze homonymous and polysemous sense relations in Ekegusii. The two sense relations are problematic and confusing as seen from the studies conducted in the Indo-European family of languages like English. The study is based on the premise that the two sense relations are also problematic in Ekegusii, an African Bantu language spoken in Kenya. The research objectives are: to identify and explain Ekegusii words that have more than one meaning; to determine the extent to which polysemous words can be distinguished from homonymous ones in Ekegusii and lastly, to establish the extent to which polysemy and homonymy in Ekegusii can be accounted for within the Sense Relations Theory. The literature review provides insights from related studies on meaning, sense relations and in particular on homonymy and polysemy. The Sense Relations Theory forms the theoretical framework used to account for the data. In methodology, the study adopted a qualitative research design which outlines how the research was conducted. The study was carried out in Nyamira County in Kenya where there are Ekegusii native speakers. An interview schedule was used to collect information from 20 elderly native Ekegusii speakers of between 50 and 70 years of age who were chosen using judgemental sampling technique. Their intuitions about the relatedness or otherwise of words with more than one meaning were captured and analyzed within the Sense Relations Theory. The study findings revealed that there are Ekegusii words with multiple meanings; some of these words are as a result of the process of borrowing. Drawing a distinction between homonymous and polysemous words, sometimes, can be very difficult. The study, therefore, concluded that the two terms are confusing and ambiguous. The study contributes to the field of lexical semantics and so related studies may find the information it provides relevant for reference. The information gathered could also enrich Ekegusii semantics and make a contribution to the teaching of the language in rural primary schools where the language is used for instruction.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the preliminaries of the study are dealt with. The background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, research assumptions, scope and limitations, justification and rationale are presented.

1.2 Background to the study

This is a lexical semantics study which looks at the nature of homonymous and polysemous sense relations in Ekegusii. According to Guthrie (1964), Ekegusii, whose speakers are called Abagusii, are labeled zone E42 narrow East African Bantu language group, occupying the southern section of the cool and fertile western highlands of Kenya. They are a Bantu tribe who broke-off from the rest of the sub-equatorial Bantu brothers by migrating southwards to Lake Victoria from Mount Elgon as the rest moved eastwards to the central highlands of Kenya. They are encircled by tribes of an unrelated language family, that is, Nilotes. The Luo came between them and Lake Victoria while the Kipsigis and Maasai tribes border them on the east and southeast respectively. The only closely related tribe is Abakuria on their south, though separated by a corridor of the Luo tribe. According to the 2009 Kenyan National Population and Housing Census, Volume 1 of the Central Bureau of Statistics, Ekegusii is spoken by about three million people spread over 3 districts: Nyamira, Gucha and Central Kisii, collectively known as Gusii. The Abagusii make up approximately 6% of the Kenyan population. Ekegusii has two dialects: Rogoro and Maate (Bosire, 1993).

According to Palmer (1981), semantics is a relatively recent branch of linguistics which appeared in the late 19th century. It has been defined variously by different writers. Fasold and Connor-

Linton (2006) view semantics as a discipline that focuses on the literal meanings of words, phrases and sentences; it is concerned with how grammatical processes build complex meanings out of simpler ones. Palmer (1981) sees semantics as a technical term used to refer to the study of meaning and since meaning is part of language, semantics is part of linguistics. He states further that semantics deals with uncovering the knowledge of the meanings of words and sentences and revealing their nature. Lobner (2002:1) points out that meaning is always the meaning of something and that it is the inner or true interpretation or symbolic or true value of something. He notes that words have meanings, as do phrases and sentences. Therefore, meaning can be said to be the sense or significance of a word, sentence or symbol. Another scholar, Stokhof (2002), views semantics as an empirical discipline which constitutes meaning as its object of enquiry. The empirical domain is said to consist of intuitions of individual speakers of a language, about meanings of words, expressions and classes thereof, and about meaning relations. Polysemes and homonyms, the focus of the present study, likewise constitute word meaning.

Semantics has two main branches: one is formal semantics, also called sentence semantics, which deals with how components of a complex expression interact and combine; two, lexical semantics, which is also referred to as word meaning and it deals with meanings stored in the mental lexicon (Cruse, 2000). The latter is the concern of this study.

Saeed (1997:53) posits that the traditional descriptive aim of lexical semantics has been to:

- (a) Represent the meaning of each word in a language.
- (b) Show how the meanings of words in a language are interrelated.

Saeed further states that the meaning of a word is defined in part by its relations with other words in the language. The semantic relations are central to the way speakers and hearers construct meaning. These relations, which hold between lexical items, are called lexical relations or sense relations. The different sense relations which exist between different linguistic units are: Synonymy (lexemes sharing similar sense), antonymy (lexemes with senses opposed to each other), hyponymy (sense of one lexeme included in the sense of another), meronymy (relationship between part and whole), metonymy (a relationship where one entity stands for another associated entity), homonymy (unrelated sense of the same word) and polysemy (related sense of the same word). The concern of this study is to examine the lexical ambiguities presented in homonymy and polysemy in Ekegusii, a Bantu language.

Polysemy and homonymy are true examples of lexical ambiguity in any language. Natural language is an integral part of our lives which serves as the primary vehicle by which people communicate and record information. It has the potential for expressing an enormous range of ideas, and for conveying complex thoughts. Because it is so integral to our lives, we usually take its powers and influence for granted. In general, people are unaware of the ambiguities in the language they use because they are very good at resolving them using context and their knowledge of the world.

According to Keith (1986), something is ambiguous when it can be understood in two or more possible ways or when it has more than one meaning. If the ambiguity is occasioned by the arrangement of words in a sentence or clause, it is called structural (syntactic) ambiguity. If it is in a single word, it is called lexical ambiguity. He notes that lexical semantic ambiguity occurs when a single word is associated with multiple senses. Lexical ambiguity can refer to both homonymy and polysemy. This is what this study focuses on.

Hirst (1992) argues that many English words have more than one meaning and any natural language system must be able to disambiguate words with multiple meanings. He posits further that there are 3 types of lexical ambiguity: polysemy, homonymy and categorical ambiguity, which refer to the words whose syntactic category, may vary. For instance, the word, *reject*, can be a verb meaning *to refuse* or a noun meaning *something that is not desired*.

Pustejovsky (1995) gives a detailed account on how polysemy is problematic to lexicographers in English. He says that lexical ambiguity involving polysemy and homonymy is one of the most intractable problems facing language-processing studies and it is at the core of research in lexical semantics.

Richards (1993:240) observes that our languages are cornerstones of who we are as a people. Language loss is part of a much larger process of loss of cultural and intellectual diversity in which politically dominant languages and cultures overwhelm indigenous local languages. This situation is worse if the latter are not in print.

Indeed, a survey of the literature available shows that studies on lexical semantics based on African indigenous languages are not as many as those on the Indo-European family of languages. Further, it is evident that there is hardly any work on semantics in Ekegusii, a Bantu language in Kenya. This study will seek to fill this gap.

In Ekegusii, studies have been carried out in the following areas: tense and aspect (Omondi, 2005) and (Whiteley, 1960), the morphology of Ekegusii in Natural Generative Morphology (Osinde, 1988), the determiner phrase within the Minimalist Programme (Basweti, 2005), and

the phonology and morphology of Ekegusii reduplication with the Optimality Theory (Mecha, 2006). However, no scholarly work has been done in semantics. A systematic study in sense relations in Ekegusii will open up research in other areas of semantics.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Studies in lexicography reveal that there has been a great controversy among lexicographers, especially in trying to distinguish between homonymy and polysemy. This is because the two sense relations cause a lot of confusion. Saeed (2003:65) observes that the decisions on whether to treat a lexeme as a polyseme or a homonym are not always clear-cut. To start with, Speakers may differ in their intuitions, and even worse, historical fact and a speaker's intuition may contradict each other. It is hoped that the study may reveal interesting patterns of identifying homonymous and polysemous lexemes, present new challenges in their analysis and possible ways of distinguishing between them.

An attempt has been made in Indo-European languages to distinguish between homonymy and polysemy, but not much has been done on Ekegusii semantics. In English, it has been observed that verbs tend to be polysemous and nouns homonymous. There is need for a study of the two sense relations in a Bantu language such as Ekegusii to find out if this is the case. This study seeks to identify and analyze the nature of polysemous and homonymous sense relations in Ekegusii in view of the Sense Relations Theory.

1.4 Research objectives

The research sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify and explain Ekegusii words that have more than one meaning.
2. To determine the extent to which polysemous words can be distinguished from homonymous ones in Ekegusii.
3. To establish the extent to which homonymy and polysemy in Ekegusii can be accounted for within the Sense Relations Theory.

1.5 Research questions

The research questions were:

1. Which words in Ekegusii have more than one meaning?
2. To what extent can polysemous words be distinguished from homonymous ones in Ekegusii?
3. To what extent can homonymy and polysemy in Ekegusii be accounted for within the Sense Relations Theory?

1.6 The research assumptions

The research assumed that:

1. There are Ekegusii words which have more than one meaning.
2. Homonymous and polysemous words in Ekegusii can be distinguished to some extent.

3. Homonymy and polysemy in Ekegusii can be accounted for by the Sense Relations Theory.

1.7 Scope and limitations

This study focused on Ekegusii semantics, an area of linguistics that has not received much attention from researchers. The study narrows down on the identification and analysis of homonymous and polysemous sense relations in Ekegusii using the lexical semantics approach.

This is a synchronic study (study of the lexemes as they are at the time).

There are many other sense relations like antonymy, synonymy, meronymy, hyponymy, metonymy, homonymy and polysemy, but the study limits itself to polysemy and homonymy.

This is because distinguishing them is problematic. The study will look at categorematic words; that is, words with descriptive content or sense. These are nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives.

The study will, however, narrow down to Ekegusii nouns and verbs because they are regarded as basic units of meaning and they are the majority in any language (Hirst, 1992).

The study limited itself to a sample of 20 informants drawn from Abagusii speakers sampled to portray gender parity picked from Gusii land, competent in the language and well equipped with the required data for the study.

Ekegusii is a tonal Bantu language, but tone will not be considered because the scope will be too wide. The issue of tone can be taken up by another study.

1.8 Justification and rationale

The existing studies conducted on Ekegusii have mainly dealt with phonology, syntax, morphology and sociolinguistics. The researcher noted that there is little academic research in the field of semantics. As noted earlier, the language has no dictionary. It is hoped that the study will provide some insight into the existing information gap on lexical relations in African languages in general and in Ekegusii in particular. The homonymous and polysemous lexemes it will analyze could provide useful data for the making of an Ekegusii dictionary.

Language learning is seen by linguists as learning the uses of language and meaning potential associated with the language. Since meaning potential is determined by word choice, a study on the relationship between homonymy and polysemy is therefore important in broadening one's vocabulary.

The information gathered will be a source of reference to linguists, who may be interested in understanding the semantics of Ekegusii, especially in the area of lexical semantics.

The information gathered will also be useful to sociolinguistics, the study of language and society. It is hoped that the study will make the Abagusii and other speakers interested in Ekegusii better communicators in terms of the use of diction.

The syllabus designers in the Ministry of Education may find the study useful as it could help in the preparation of relevant materials in Ekegusii to be used in schools in Gusiiland where mother tongue is the medium of instruction in the lower primary.

Media houses will find the information useful especially the native FM stations of Ekegusii like Radio Star, *Egesa* and Kenya Broadcasting Station, Kisumu branch. These stations have played a great role in promoting the language.

The data collected could form a useful point of departure for many areas of language research. It, for instance, could help in comparative study to determine how similar or different Ekegusii semantics is to other Bantu languages in Kenya and Africa in general.

Our study is a continuation of the many earlier studies based on English. As observed by Lehiste (1970), English has been the most extensively researched language and there has been a slight tendency to assume that what holds for English is true in general. There is need therefore to apply the proposed analysis to languages other than English. Our study contributes to this venture by applying the Sense Relations Theory to description and analysis of the Ekegusii lexical semantics.

Finally, from the information gathered, writers could be encouraged to publish relevant literature in Ekegusii. Such literature could include: teaching and learning materials for schools, journals, story books and newspapers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this section, we review general related studies on meaning, the sense relations of homonymy and polysemy, distinctions between them and the theoretical framework.

2.2 General studies on meaning

Keith (1986) observes that the meaning of a word is its use in the language. This meaning can be revealed by whoever coins it by defining it formally or it can be figured from the context of use. He identifies three kinds of meaning: sense; the property of meaning in abstract categories such as a sentence, phrase, lexeme and morpheme, denotation; the use of sense in speaking of some particular world and utterance meaning; what the hearer rationally determines that a speaker intends his meaning to convey. He stresses further that sense is central in determining other kinds of meaning. This study will be looking at sense as the property of meaning in Ekegusii lexemes.

Halliday (1978:43) views the lexicon as the most delicate grammar worthy studying. Pyton (1989:50) singles out the vocabulary of a language as the most repository of meanings. Palmer (1996) adds that lexis is the most accessible part of the language to those not trained as linguists and that lexis conveys meaning. He asserted further that meaning is associated with words and sentences by the language system, and not the meaning associated with utterances made by speakers on particular occasions. He calls this kind of meaning *sense*. This is also a study in meaning in the Ekegusii lexicon, a Bantu language.

Kempson (1977) concurs with Palmer by stating that there may be disagreement about the fine details of the meaning of words 'around the edges,' found in the everyday use of language but all words are understood by speakers as having an indispensable hard core of meaning. For example, the meaning of 'cat' includes that of animal, the meaning of 'adult' excludes the meaning of child, the meaning of 'kill' is related to that of dead in such a way that anything killed is necessarily dead. The meanings of lexical items are stated in terms of their entailments. This means that every lexeme and sentence is conventionally associated with at least one meaning. This study assumes also that an Ekegusii word has at least one meaning but is interested in those that have more than one meaning.

Malande (2006) carried out an onomastics study of Luloogoli personal names; Luloogoli is a dialect of Luhya, a Bantu tribe from the western part of Kenya. Malande dealt with the morphological and the semantic composition of the names in view of the Social Semiotic and The Generative Morphological Theories. He analyzed the semantic attributes of Luloogoli personal names connotatively and denotatively and established that the names are both semantically and morphologically motivated. However, this study deals with homonyms and polysemes. It will benefit from Malande's work in terms of methodology.

Murianki (2007) studied and documented kinship terms in Gichuka and Ki-Igembe dialects of Kimeru, a Bantu language in Kenya. He assessed the degree of convergence and divergence of the terms between the two dialects, examining their impact on communication among speakers. It was a qualitative research which employed The Sense Relations and The Componential Analysis Theories. The present study will benefit from Murianki's work in the methodology and theoretical framework.

Mwangi (2008) investigated connotative and collocative meanings of lexical items in Gikuyu factoring in the social variables of age, gender and context. She employed The Social Semiotic and Componential Analysis Theories to establish whether there are functional and lexical aspects in lexical items. This study is different because it will examine the nature of homonymous and polysemous relations in Ekegusii. Nevertheless, this study will benefit from Mwangi's work on methodology.

Gonzolo (2004) pointed out the contributions that the sense relations of polysemy and homonymy accord the improvement of word net in respect to information retrieval and computer applications. By annotating Word Net with a typology of polysemous and homonymous relations, the researcher realized the full potential of word net as a defacto standard for lexical resources in computational applications. In this study, homonymous and polysemous relations will be identified and analyzed in Ekegusii.

Graddal and Swan (1989:97) posit that the study of meaning relies on people's intuition about language; the intuitions of ordinary natural speakers, researchers, lexicographers and so on, which researchers use as sources. Problems arise because different people's intuitions do not always agree and because different peoples' intuitions of how a word or expression should be used do not always coincide with how they actually use it. The present study will benefit from this because it will rely on native speakers' intuitions about meaning in getting the meanings of the target words and determining whether they are homonymous or polysemous lexemes and draw a distinction between them.

2.3 Studies on homonymy.

According to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics, a word or phrase is ambiguous if it has more than one referent, it can be used to name more than one kind of thing. Where the referents of the ambiguous term are in no way similar, the referent term is said to have different homonyms. For instance, *trunk* in the sense of *elephant nose* is homonymous with *trunk* in the sense of *suitcase*.

Cann (1993) focuses on the ambiguity that occurs when an expression is associated with two or more unrelated meanings as in where the word *punch* may be interpreted as a drink or as an action. He calls the lexemes whose word forms have this quality or condition homonyms. He defines homonymy as the state or quality of a given word having the same spelling and the same pronunciation as another word, but with a different meaning as in *race* 'the tribe' and *race* 'the running contest'. He adds that homonymy occurs when two concepts, A and B are expressed by the same symbol. For example, both a financial institution and an edge of a river are expressed by the word, "bank" (the word has two senses).

Kempson, (1977) states that homonymy is the state or quality of sounding identical, whether spelled identically or not as *bear* and *bare*. He further expounds that it is the relation between two words that are spelled the same way but differ in meaning.

Another lexical semantist, Lyons (1991), defines homonymy as lexemes with different meanings that happen to have the same sound form or spelling. Ideally, homonyms agree in all points that make up a lexeme except in meaning. This study will benefit from the above definitions, especially Lyons' works, when it comes to the identification of homonyms and other words with more than one meaning in Ekegusii.

Palmer (1996), in his study of homonymy in English, distinguishes between homographs and homophones. He says that homographs are words with unrelated meanings spelt the same way but pronounced differently. For example, *lead* the metal and *lead* the past tense of *led*. On the other hand, homophones are words with unrelated meanings written differently but pronounced in the same way as in the words, *tail* and *tale*.

Lobner (2002) gives a slightly different distinction from that of Palmer; he classifies homonymy into two types: absolute homonymy (also called total homonymy) and partial homonymy. He defines total homonymy as a lexeme with two unrelated meanings but sharing the same grammatical categories and properties. An example is *sole* the bottom of a foot or shoe and *sole* a kind of fish. On the other hand, Partial homonymy is where two lexemes with unrelated meanings coincide in some but not all of their grammatical forms. Examples include the verbs *lie* (*lay, lain*) and *lie* (*lied, lied*). This study will only consider total homonyms.

Allan and Kuiper (1996) argue that homonymy occurs when two quite different words accidentally have the same form. The words could be having identical phonological form but the native speakers know that these words are two different lexemes and not one lexeme with two senses. This study will benefit from this definition.

Some lexicographers acknowledge the same classification and even go further in their analysis. Among them are Kasheeva and Anthrushna (1999) who posit that the word homonym comes from the Greek words “homo” which means “the same” and “onoma” which means “name”. They state further that that homonymy has four sources, namely: phonetic change, borrowing, word building and split polysemy. The sources and the etymological information will not be considered here because this study is synchronic.

Greenbaum (1996) defines homonymy as distinct words that happen to have the same form. When two lexical items are pronounced the same but are spelt differently they are called homophones. For example, the words *altar* and *alter*. When two lexical items are spelt the same but pronounced differently they are referred to as homonyms. An example is the word *lead* which, depending on the pronunciation, can mean a heavy metal or to be ahead. He states further that homonyms are considered coincidental in a language, and might even be considered a defect. They may introduce ambiguity without any compensating advantage. This happens in Indo-European languages. This study will investigate if the same applies in Ekegusii.

2.4 Studies on polysemy

According to The Linguistics Encyclopedia, a polysemic word is an ambiguous word that has two referents, which are nevertheless clearly perceptible and similar in some respect. The word comes from Greek origin, *poly* which means 'many' and *sema* which means 'sign'. It is therefore, the capacity of a word or phrase to have multiple meanings.

Greenbaum (1996) views polysemy as that aspect of a lexeme having multiple meanings. One meaning is thought of as literal or basic and others as extended meanings that are derived from the first. Polysemes are essential in language for they immensely reduce the number of words we need to learn and store in our memory. He asserts further that the most frequent words tend to be the most polysemous in any language. This study will seek to establish whether the same applies in Ekegusii or not.

Kearns (2000) describes a polysemous lexeme as one that has two or more distinct but related meanings. He says further that polysemy is a kin to ambiguity. For example, the senses of the word *fork* cluster around two main centres; the shape of the letter Y (fork in the road, a fork in a

tree or tree branch), and a tool with sharp tines. The two senses are related by a loose similarity of shape. This shows the existence of more than one semantic specification for the same lexical item. This study will benefit from this definition in the identification of polysemes in Ekegusii.

Allen (1986) defines polysemy as a lexical relation where a single linguistic form (that is, a single phonological word form belonging to a single lexical category, such as a noun or a verb) has different senses that are related to each other by means of regular shifts or extensions from basic meaning.

Lobner (2002) agrees with the above definition of polysemy when he says that a lexeme constitutes a case of polysemy if it has two or more interrelated meanings, or meaning variants. Each of these meaning variants has to be learnt separately in order to be understood.

De Stadler (1989) adds that a polyseme is a word or phrase with multiple related meanings. Tailor (1991) improves the definition by pointing out that a word is judged to be polysemous if it has two senses of the word whose meanings are related. It is also the association where one word has two or more distinct but related meanings (One form with multiple related meanings). These definitions will help this study in the identification and analysis of the polysemes and other words with multiple meanings in Ekegusii.

Palmer (1990) asserts that the test of polysemy is through relatedness and word etymology. Etymological information is the lexicographer's knowledge of the historical derivation of words. Relatedness is how close the meanings are (which is very subjective). He says that if two senses of the same word do not seem to fit, yet, seem related, then it is likely that they are polysemous. This study is synchronic and so it won't rely on etymologies.

Lobner (2002) suggests a lexical conception of polysemy where words in one lexical context can be used in a different form in related context. An illustration is a word that can be used both as a noun and a verb with or without a change in stress. In a sentence, *they pro 'ject that the 'project will cost a lot of money*. The first *project* is a verb and the second one is a noun.

Wierzbicka (1996:244) argues that the lexicographers will do well to reckon always with polysemy because it is problematic and will cause one to undertake very deep analysis of the words' meanings. He adds that lexicographers, when writing dictionaries, often posit a great deal of unjustified polysemy and also frequently fail to recognize polysemy which is really there. He acknowledges the fact that polysemes are single lexemes and are treated as single entries in a dictionary.

Lyons (2005:59) points out that generally a polysemous lexeme will have the following characteristics: one, a lexeme has the same origin (etymology) but different meanings, two, the difference in meaning is regular and predictable, three, the other meanings are related to the central meaning or core meaning especially where we have metaphors with transferred meanings, four, a polysemic word will naturally have a variety of synonyms each corresponding to one of its meanings, five, it will have a set of antonyms, and finally, a lexical polysemy is a sense relation within a syntactic category (that is, a lexical category does not cut across syntactic word class boundaries). For example, in the following sentences, the word *school* belongs to the syntactic category noun, and although it has a slightly different sense in each expression, all these expressions have the same etymological history.

(a) The school is in Koinange Street (building).

(b) The boys love their school (the institution).

- (c) The school will go on strike next week (the pupils).
- (d) Schooling abroad is hard for anyone (opportunity for learning).
- (e) The Prague School of Linguistics (a group of linguistic scholars propagating a particular theoretical approach).

According to Lyons, in the above illustrations, the word “school” is therefore, polysemic. The current study will seek to find out if Ekegusii polysemes will behave the same way without considering word etymologies because this is a synchronic study.

Lobner (2002) argues that the kinds of meaning shifts to be observed during interpretation in context are also involved in polysemy. He proceeds to point out that in many cases of polysemy, meaning variants are interrelated by way of metonymy, metaphor or differentiation. Metonymy is where one entity is used to stand for another associated entity or a substitution for a word referring to an attribute for the thing that is meant. For example, in Kenya, using *the Freedom Corner* (a section of Uhuru Park in Nairobi) for Wangari Maathai, a great environmental conservationist, freedom fighter and a Nobel peace laureate. In metaphorical use, a word or phrase is applied to an object or action that it does not literally denote in order to imply a resemblance. For example, the word *mouse* literally means a rodent and metaphorically can refer to a computer machine accessory; hence, it is a polyseme. Differentiation use is where a lexeme may have a meaning variant that applies to a special case of what the basic meaning of the lexeme applies to. For example, *car* denotes some sort of vehicle but nowadays it specifically refers to an automobile. It is hoped that the information in this study will provide a useful base for the current study.

Fraith (2002) gives a slightly different view as to how polysemy is treated by lexicographers. He argues that dictionaries are not meant to explain language from a theoretical point of view: all they do is offer a snapshot of usage at one particular moment. Studies in polysemy, on the other hand, usually rest on one of two hypotheses: Either on a literal meaning from which the other meanings are derived or a core meaning with specific senses triggered either by the context or by rules. This study will seek to find out if such a case holds in Ekegusii polysemy.

Parent (2009) examines polysemy and its effects on second language learners, giving it greater emphasis and concern than it is normally accorded in pedagogical research. Arguing against a reliance on the dictionary to determine the number of senses a given word has, the study begins with a thorough exploration of the concept, both from diachronic and synchronic perspectives, by contrasting it with the related concepts of homonymy and monosemy. The *British National Corpus* is consulted for data and it demonstrates that instances of a word that may appear as discrete units of meanings actually form a single, unified usage. This study is only concerned with synchronic aspect.

According to Parent (2009), there are two varieties of polysemy. The first of these is 'lexical metaphor,' in which there is a clear literal metaphoric divide between uses and the second is 'vicariant polysemy' in which senses are discrete but not synchronically explainable by metaphor. This study is interested in lexical metaphor. He argues that there are two approaches to the study of polysemy: diachronic and synchronic. Diachronic refers to the study of the growth of change in the semantic structure of a word or how a semantic structure of a word has developed from a primary meaning to the present polysemic state, that is, with derived meanings springing from the original meaning. This study is interested in the second approach, which is synchronic, and

refers to the comparative value of the individual meaning and the interrelation between the central meaning and the secondary meanings.

Parent (2009) further points out that there are two processes leading to polysemy: radiation and concatenation. Radiation is the process by which the primary meaning stands at the centre while secondary meanings radiate from it in every direction like rays. Concatenation is the process where each of the later meanings is related to the preceding one like chains. This study is going to benefit from this research in terms of the definitions and approaches to the study of polysemy in Ekegusii.

2.5 Distinction between homonymy and polysemy.

Lyons (2005) states that there exists a lexical ambiguity, one which depends on homonymy and the other on polysemy. So, homonymy and polysemy constitute lexical ambiguity: the same lexical form having different meanings. He further adds that, whereas homonymy is a relation that holds between two or more lexemes, polysemy (multiple meanings) is a property of single lexemes. The words involved in his study were categorematic words (words which generally have the most recognizable or identifiable sense when considered in isolation). These words are nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. To avoid too wide a scope, this study will examine only nouns and verbs since they are the majority of words in any language.

Hirst (1992) who carried out a study on lexical disambiguation acknowledged that there is lexical ambiguity of homonymy and polysemy in English. He suggested that generally, verbs tend to polysemy while nouns tend to homonymy, though, of course, there are many homonymous verbs and polysemous nouns. He argued that for word sense disambiguation, one should have knowledge of context, a mechanism to find associations between nearby words, a mechanism to

handle syntactic disambiguation cues, a mechanism to handle selectional restriction reconciliation negotiations between ambiguous words and finally, inference. Our study will benefit from this especially when it comes to the methodology and analysis of the data collected.

Nightingale (1999) studied homonymy and polysemy in Japanese verbal alternations. He investigated the Degree to which Japanese verbal alternations can be related synchronically. He provided a polysemous and homonymous analysis of the verbs which appear in simplex and conjunct forms using a conjunctive *te* form. He developed his analysis using Head Driven Phrase Structure Grammar (HPSG) and Pustejovsky's Generative Grammar Theory. He concluded that some degree of homonymy and polysemy was seen to hold between simplex and conjunct uses of Japanese verbs. Our study will be a bit different because it is broader for it will investigate homonymous and polysemous relationships in content words, specifically nouns and verbs in Ekegusii. The studies will also differ in terms of the theoretical framework and approach.

Another scholar who studied lexical ambiguity is Kalolina (2009). She investigated lexical ambiguity processing of isolated lexically ambiguous words in Second Language (L2) by fluent Polish-English Bilinguals. The study was a departure from the many studies focusing on the first language. He used the cross-linguistic factor through cognate homonymous stimuli. Metonymic polysemy was found to drive the sense relatedness advantage. A lot of cognate effect appeared regardless of the number of meanings. This study is different in that it focuses on the first language and the approach will also differ.

Fraith (2002), in his study of homonymy and polysemy in English, observes that homonymy and polysemy are two well-known semantic problems. For instance, *bank* in *river bank* and *bank of England* are homonymous: they share no meaning whatsoever since they function as two totally

unrelated words. *River bed* and *hospital bed* seem to be somehow semantically linked and are therefore a case of polysemy. He emphasizes the fact that dictionaries list polysemes under one entry and homonyms under several, although there are marked differences between dictionaries. He adds further that semantic theories tend to explain homonymy and polysemy in terms of metaphor and metonymy, or in terms of a subsuming cognitive element with specific meanings triggered by the context or by rules.

Frath (2002:57) captures the dilemma that the lexicographers face in their treatment of lexical ambiguity. He notes that dictionaries consist of out of context words and that some dictionaries lump homonyms together and others separate polysemes, which may be an indication that the boundary between polysemy and homonymy is not clear cut. In other words, if you hear (or read) two words that sound (or are written) the same but are not identical in meaning, you need to decide if it's really two words (homonyms), or if it is one word used in two different ways (polysemy). He emphasizes that the only real way we have of telling the two apart is by applying our judgement. He argues further that there are no tests that can tell them apart in a foolproof manner. Due to that confusion, it means that one of the following options holds:

1. Different speakers treat the word differently. It might be one word for me but two for you.
2. We are dealing with two homonyms, but there is enough overlap between them.
3. We are dealing with one word whose different uses are relatively far enough apart.

The confusion of whether to treat a lexeme as a homonym or a polyseme in Indo-European languages is actually what triggered this study. Our study will seek to find out whether such

confusion exists in Ekegusii and suggest how they could possibly be distinguished from an African Bantu Language.

Lyons (1990, 550) posits that there are only two ways of distinguishing between homonymy and polysemy: word etymology and relatedness and unrelatedness of meaning. Etymological information (lexicographer's knowledge of the historical derivation of words) is employed by linguists and lexicographers to come to decision about Homonymy and polysemy. For homonymy, the lexemes in question should be known to have developed from what were formally distinct lexemes in some earlier stages of the language. This study is synchronic therefore not interested in etymologies of words.

According to Lyons (1990:550), the second area of distinction between homonymy and polysemy is unrelatedness versus relatedness in meaning. He argues that traditionally linguists and lexicographers use this criterion in drawing the distinction between homonymy and polysemy, and it is the only synchronically relevant consideration. It is about the native speaker's feelings that certain meanings are connected and that others are not. He asserts strongly that relatedness of meaning appears to be a matter of degree and it has yet to be demonstrated, so, the descriptive semanticist should take into account of the native speakers' intuitions of relatedness of meaning in deciding between homonymy and polysemy. This study is going to benefit from Lyon's work because it will rely on the native speakers' intuitions about meanings, relatedness and unrelatedness of the polysemous and homonymous sense relations to draw a distinction between them.

2.6 Theoretical Framework.

This section discusses the theoretical framework on which the study is based. The study is based on mainly the Sense Relations Theory as postulated by Gottlob (1892) and expounded by Lyons (1986, 1990, 1991 & 2005), Keith (1986), Kempson (1977), Palmer (1986, 1996 & 2000), Lobner (2002), Pustejovsky (1980 & 1995), Cann (1993), Katz (2004), Cruse (1986 & 2000) and Davis & Gillion (2004).

According to Davis and Gillion (2004), in semantics, there are three types of theories: theories of reference which account for truth and falsity conditions, theories of meaning that attempt to account for such things as intensional contexts, intentional discourse, analyticity, synonymy, entailment, anomaly, semantic redundancy, polysemy, homonymy, antonymy and meaning inclusion; they appeal to such notions as sense, meaning, semantic marker and lexical entry, and finally, mixed theories that give a unified account of phenomena that fall within the range of reference and meaning theories. The Sense Relations Theory, the focus of this study, falls under meaning theories.

The Sense Relations Theory was first associated with the Germany philosopher and mathematician Gottlob Frege in his 1892 paper *Ober Sinn Und Bedeutung* (on sense and reference). According to Frege, sense and reference are two different aspects of the meaning of at least some kind of terms. The sense of a term is the way in which it refers to the object. He argued further that a word's sense is one of the meanings of a word. The sense of a proper name is whatever meaning it has, when there is no object to be indicated. He posited that sense is the cognitive significance or mode of presentation of the referent. The sense of an expression is that wherein the mode of presentation is contained.

Frege's view of sense has been expounded on by other scholars, among them Katz (2004) who accepts the Fregean view that linguistic expressions have sense above reference but rejects the view that Fregean senses are reference determiners. He argues that sense should be explained without reference; that is, the notion of sense should be non-reductive. He asserts that sense is that aspect of grammatical structure of words and sentences that is responsible for their sense properties and relations of ambiguity, redundancy, hyponymy, antonymy and synonymy among others. This account differs from the Fregean one in that sense determines sense properties and relations but does not determine referential properties and relations. The Theory of Sense is thus independent and autonomous. Consequently, notions such as meaningfulness and ambiguity should be explained merely in terms of sense. Furthermore, the account of an expression having or missing a sense, or an expression having the same sense as another expression, must be given purely in terms of senses and their morphological structure.

According to Katz, sense is a primitive notion upon which entailment relations are based. To him, a theory of sense concerns itself only with intra-linguistic properties and relations of words and sentences. This is the view that this study is based on.

Sense relations fall under lexical semantics and are a sub-class of the wider class of relations of meaning studied by semantists. According to one of the proponents of this theory, Lyons (1990), semantics is a term which refers to the study of meaning in so far as it is systematically encoded in the vocabulary and grammar of the linguistics of natural languages. The sense of a lexeme is the product of the sense relations that hold between it and other lexemes in the vocabulary of the language. Lexical semantics studies how and what the words of a language denote. Words may denote things in the world, or concepts, depending on the particular approach to it. The units of meaning in lexical semantics are lexical units. Lexical semantics is concerned with the

identification and representation of the semantics of lexical items, that is, the study of content word meanings as opposed to the meanings of grammatical (function) words. Lexical semantists are, therefore, interested in the open classes of nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs (Pustejovsky, 1995).

Another proponent of this theory, Cruse (1986), observes that the theory seeks to use lexemes (family of lexical units) in place of words in explaining meaning and sees a lexical unit as the unit of a lexical form that carries a single sense meaning.

Kempson (1977) explains that the sense of an expression or word has its place in a system of semantic relationships with other expressions of a language. Lexical sense involves relationships among word senses which are readily available. The sense of a lexeme is the product of, and indeed can be identified with, the sense relations that hold between it and other lexemes in the vocabulary of the language.

The lexical relations (patterns of association that exist between lexical items in a language, also seen as the tenets of this theory) that the Sense Relations Theory covers are: homonymy which means unrelated senses of the same word. For instance, in English the word *bark* refers to the noise made by a dog and the outer part of a tree. Synonymy refers to sharing a similar sense. In English, for example, the words *reject* and *refuse*, are almost similar in their senses. Polysemy is another concept which refers to related senses of the same word. For instance, the English word *eat* in the Kenyan context could have many related senses; *swallow food*, *take a bribe or misappropriate funds*. Antonymy refers to senses opposed to each other. For example, in English, the words *dead and alive* are opposite in their senses. Meronymy refers to the sense of between part and whole, where the part is called meronym and the whole, a holonym. In the case

of *hand and finger*, hand is the holonym and finger is a meronym respectively. Hyponymy refers to the sense of one word being included in the sense of another. Here the umbrella term is referred to as the hypernym or super-ordinate term and the one that is under is referred to as hyponym. For example, *mango and orange* are hyponyms of the term *fruit* which is a super-ordinate term or hypernym. The last concept is metonymy which refers to a relationship where one entity stands for another associated identity. For example, somebody with an abnormally big head could be referred to as *head*. These relations are given a detailed discussion by the proponents of this theoretical framework (Cann, 1993), (Palmer, 1996), (Lyons, 1995), (Kearns, 2000), (Cruse, 1995), (Hurford & Harseley, 1983), (Kempson, 1977) and (Pustejovsky, 1995).

This study focuses on words with multiple senses (homonymy and polysemy) which are ambiguous and problematic as noted by, among other linguists, Wierzbicka (1996:185). He pointed out that the question of polysemy and homonymy cannot be ignored in the investigation of conceptual systems reflected in the lexicon of different languages of the world.

The sense relations theory is useful in the identification and analysis of homonymous and polysemous sense relations in Ekegusii. For instance, it informs the study that the term *bwatia* which is a verb in Ekegusii with two unrelated meanings: (a) to follow and (b) to warm something like water. The two meanings have nothing in common in terms of meaning, but have the same pronunciation and spelling hence the word is a total homonym. In an Ekegusii dictionary, it would be given two lexical entries. The term *saba* is another verb in Ekegusii with more than three related senses (a) ask, (b) pray and (c) seduce somebody. The meanings have something in common, *ask*, can be taken to be the core meaning. The other two meanings are related in that, pray, is to ask God for something, while to seduce is to ask for a sexual favour. These meanings can be said to stem from the core meaning *ask*, hence, secondary or derived. In

an Ekegusii dictionary, lexicographers would treat it as a single lexeme; therefore, it is a polyseme.

In this chapter, we have looked at the related literature that informs this study and the theoretical framework used to account for the data. Next, we examine the research methodology used.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The study focused on identifying and analyzing homonymous and polysemous sense relations in Ekegusii. Having reviewed related literature and examined the theoretical framework on which the study is based, we now turn to the methodology employed in this study. This section outlines the research design, area of study, study population, sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection processes and data analysis and presentation procedures the study adopted.

3.2 Research design

The research adopted a qualitative research design. This study sought to describe phenomena that occur naturally without the intervention of an experiment or artificially contrived treatment (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989). Homonymous and polysemous words in Ekegusii were sought from Gusii land where there are native speakers and described. A qualitative research design also entails analyzing information in a systematic way in order to come to some useful conclusion and recommendations as opposed to scientific studies that call for quantification of data for analysis purpose (Mugenda, 1999). Qualitative research is fit for this study because as Seliger and Shohamy (1989) note, it is useful whenever an investigator is concerned with discovering or describing language phenomena in its natural context. This study analyzed homonymous and polysemous sense relations in Ekegusii, a Bantu language.

3.3 Area of study

The researcher collected data from Ekegusii native speakers. The respondents were drawn from Ikonge village, Keera Sub-location of Charachani Location, Nyamaiya Division in Nyamira District. Ikonge is approximately 340 kilometres from Nairobi and 20 kilometers from Nyamira town. The researcher preferred this area because he was brought up and partly educated there and there is also no dialectal difference among the speakers. The researcher was able to select the sample with ease and to interact with respondents by building confidence among them as one of them because he is also an Ekegusii native speaker. This was necessary in order to gather data based on direct and careful observation of the way people use language in its social context (Milroy, 1980).

3.4 Population and sampling

The study population would have potentially entailed all Ekegusii speakers. However, this would have been too large, and therefore the study limited itself to 20 informants proficient in the native language comprising adults of between 50 and 70 years of age, born and brought up in Kisii. The people targeted were peasants not having much that could have removed them from the village and by the virtue of their occupation, their language had not been influenced by outsiders. These are also referred to as the immobile rural folk because they don't travel a lot (Trudgill, 1973). They were chosen from the many using judgemental sampling technique, taking into account the variable of gender to avoid bias. Judgemental sampling allows a researcher to use cases that have the required information that is in line with his or her objectives of the study (Milroy, 1987). The informants included 10 men and 10 women. This small sample was chosen in order to allow for in-depth investigation and analysis of data (Trudgill, 1973).

The researcher identified a researcher assistant to guide him to suitable respondents and help in the recording of the respondents' intuitions about meanings of the lexemes given. The list of 20 words which were subjected to the respondents were sampled by the researcher using judgemental sampling on the basis that they had more than one meaning. The other 80 words with multiple meanings were sampled from the many generated by the respondents in the field by using stratified random sampling. The number of the targeted sense relations and word classes in each category were determined after doing the sampling. In total the researcher had 100 words with multiple meanings to analyze.

3.5 Research instrument

The study utilized an interview schedule (see appendix 1) where the respondents were subjected to the same questions and grouped according to the variable of gender. The interview schedule had open ended questions which permitted a greater depth of response which in turn gave an insight into the feelings, background, hidden motivation, intuitions, interests and decisions of the respondents (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). The interview schedule had a list of polysemes and homonyms which the researcher had identified. The respondents were required, using their intuitions and memory, to say if the words had multiple meanings, describe the meanings, say if the meanings were related or not and generate more examples of words with multiple meanings.

3.6 Data collection and elicitation

Primary data sources were used. The researcher, being an Ekegusii native speaker, identified words with multiple meanings in Ekegusii using his memory and intuition about meaning. The list contained 20 words. The rest were generated in the field by the respondents. The interview method was used whereby the researcher came face to face with the subjects using an interview

schedule (Seliger and Shohamy, 1990). The list (see Appendix1) was presented to the respondents who were equally proficient speakers of Ekegusii to provide the different meanings of a given word and then said if the meanings were related or not. Then the respondents generated more examples of words with multiple meanings in Ekegusii. The data was recorded by the researcher and the researcher assistant for accuracy.

3.7 Data analysis and presentation

The data collected was non-numerical (words) which was analyzed qualitatively. After identifying the lexical items under consideration (homonymous and polysemous lexemes), the data was transcribed and translated into English. The analysis of data was discursive, that is, the researcher identified, delimited and sorted the relevant segments of the information, calculated percentages and represented the information in pie charts, then, drew logical deductions in relation to the behavior of the analyzed data. The words and their multiple meanings were sorted out as given and explained by the respondents. The researcher then synthesized the meanings accordingly and wrote the summaries for each particular item.

Based on the information from the summaries of meanings for each word, a distinction between homonyms and polysemes was made. By focusing on a particular lexical item, the researcher examined the informants' intuitions and his own to decide where a lexical item fell.

Lastly, the analyzed data was subjected to the tenets of The Sense Relations Theory to gauge the extent to which the theory could have accounted for polysemy and homonymy in Ekegusii.

Having looked at the research methodology used, we will deal with the data presentation, discussion and analysis in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter deals with the presentation, discussion and analysis of the data. First, a brief section on the treatment of homonymy and polysemy in this study is presented which is followed by a detailed discussion on words with more than one meaning in Ekegusii. A section on distinctions between homonymy and polysemy in Ekegusii follows. Last comes, homonymy and polysemy in Ekegusii and the Sense Relations Theory.

4.2. The treatment of homonymy and polysemy in this study

The data that was collected from 20 competent Ekegusii native respondents comprised 300 words with multiple meanings (see appendix B). Basing on the Sense Relations Theory, the words were classified into homonyms and polysemes by the researcher. There were 80 homonyms and 220 polysemes. The polysemes were identified by the criteria that they have related meanings and that one meaning was thought of as literal meaning and the others as extended meanings that are derived from the first (Greenbaum, 1996).

On the other hand, homonyms were identified on the basis that they are ambiguous words whose different senses are far apart from each other and not obviously related to each other in any way (Hurford and Hearsley, 1989).

From the list of words, there are those that the respondents found problematic to classify whether the meanings are related or not and there are those whose status they agreed on unanimously.

The controversial ones will be explained first then the explicit ones follow later. Tables and pie charts are used to aid the presentation of the responses obtained.

4.3 Words with more than one meaning in Ekegusii

Words with more than one meaning are said to be ambiguous and there are two types of lexical ambiguity: homonymy and polysemy (Brendon and Davis, 2004).

4.3.1 Homonymy in Ekegusii

Two or more words are homonyms if they either sound the same (homophones), have the same spelling (homographs), or both, but do not have related meanings. In other words, if you hear (or read) two words that sound (or are written) the same but are not identical in meaning, then you know that this is homonymy.

Lobner (2002) and Lyons (2005) distinguish between two types of homonymy; absolute homonymy (also called total homonymy) and partial homonymy. Partial homonymy is where two lexemes with unrelated meanings coincide in some but not all of their grammatical forms. . They defined total homonymy as a lexeme with two unrelated meanings but sharing the same grammatical categories and properties. They argue that total homonymy will satisfy the following conditions:

1. They will be unrelated in meaning;
2. All their forms will be identical;
3. The identical forms will be grammatically equivalent.

Two lexemes that are said to share grammatical category and grammatical properties, the set of grammatical forms, sound form and spelling are total homonyms. Examples of absolute homonymy in English are: *sole* meaning bottom of foot or shoe and *sole* meaning a kind of fish; *light* meaning opposite of dark and *light* meaning opposite of heavy.

This study concentrates on total homonymy in Ekegusii. The data given by the respondent satisfies the above conditions. The study examines the implicit homonymous nouns first and then looks at the explicit ones later.

4.3.2 Homonymous nouns

In this section, we start by discussing homonymous nouns which were controversial.

Example 4.1

Rigena is a noun with three meanings, a stone, an egg and a hailstone. The first two meanings, according to the respondents, are not related. The third meaning, hailstone, is related to that of a stone. Among the Abagusii, hailstones are specifically referred to as *amagena ye embura*, meaning “stones of the rain” because of their shapes. A stone and an egg elicited different responses from the respondents. There were some respondents who felt that there is a connection between the first two meanings because some stones take the shape of an egg; therefore, the word should be treated as a polyseme. Others felt that there is no connection between the two meanings. A bigger percentage of the twenty respondents, using their intuitions about meaning, felt that it is a homonym. This situation is echoed by Graddal and Swan (1989) who posit that the study of meaning relies on people’s intuition about language—the intuitions of ordinary natural speakers, researchers, and lexicographers, which researchers use as sources. Problems arise

because different people's intuitions do not always agree and because different peoples' intuitions of how a word or expression should be used do not always coincide with how they actually use it.

Those respondents who felt that the word is a polyseme were 8, representing 40%, while those that said it is a homonym were 12, representing 60%. The percentages are presented in figure

4.1

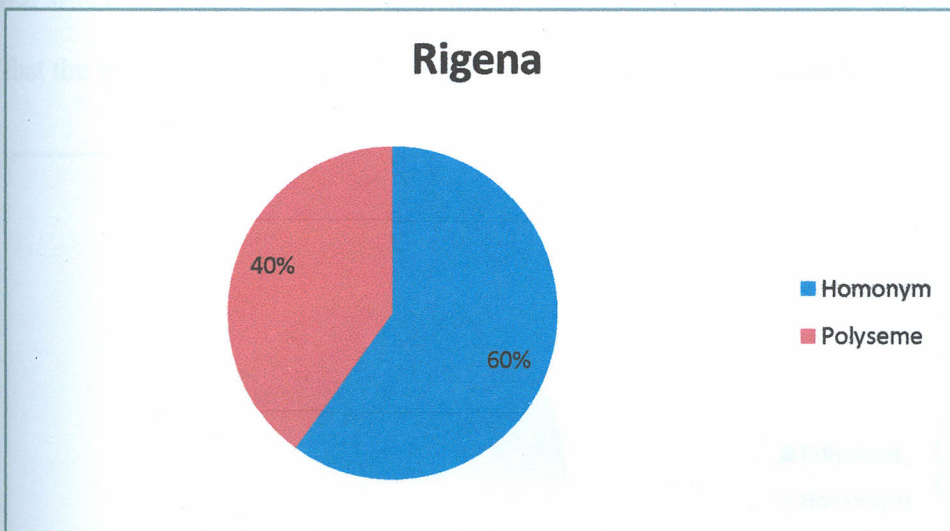


Fig.4.1 Respondents' classification of *rigena*

From the pie chart above, we can see that the majority of the respondents felt that the word is a homonym. We also felt that the word is a homonymy because there are clear differences in meaning. Whereas the stone is associated with hardness, takes no particular shape, and is rough, an egg, on the other hand, is associated with fragility or delicateness, has an oval shape and is smooth.

Example 4.2

Riige refers to a termite or the young one of a bird. The categorization of this word was also disputed. Some respondents it as a homonym and others treated it as a polyseme. The native speakers who treated it as a polyseme argued that the young one of a bird and a termite have a conceptual connection of smallness. The majority of the respondents did not see any connection, arguing that despite the similarity in size, they are different creatures. Out of the 20 respondents 15, which represent 75%, felt that the word is a homonym, while 5, which represents 25%, felt that the word is a polyseme. The figure below summarizes the findings.

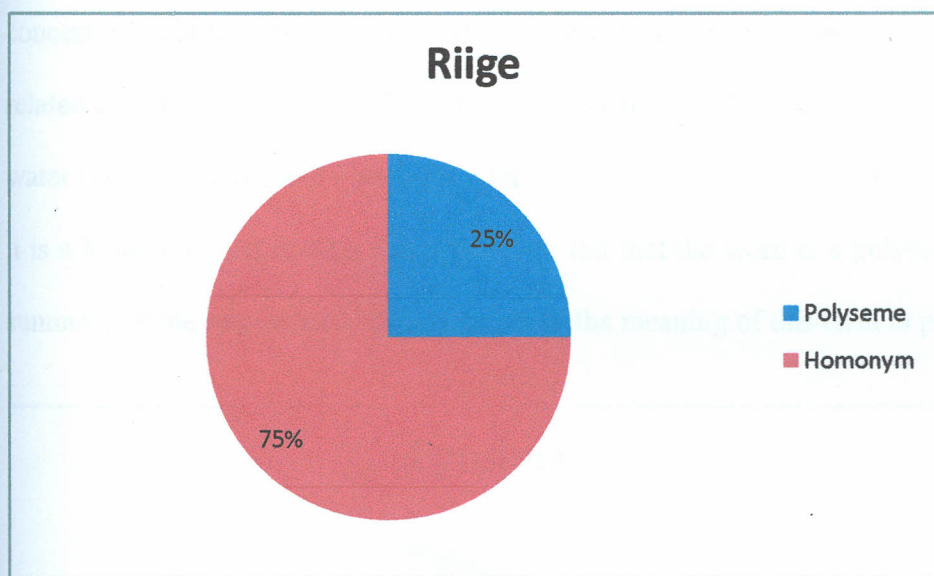


Fig. 4.2 Respondents' classification of *riige*

From figure 4.2, we can see that majority of the respondents felt that the word is a homonym.

Fraht (2001) says that when a word denotes two or more objects, then we tend to surmise some link between them. If the objects are examined and there is no degree of resemblance, the meanings are said to be homonymous. We felt that *riige* is a total homonym because a termite is

associated with destruction, smallness, hard work and cooperativeness. This is evident when they attack dry wood; they destroy it completely within a very short time despite their size. On the other hand, the young one of a bird is associated with immaturity, dependency and harmlessness because they are fed by their mothers.

Example 4.3

Egesima is a noun which either means a V-shaped stick or a well. The status of this word was contested. Some respondents felt that it should be a homonym because a well is a hole dug for the purpose of providing water. Whereas a V-shaped stick is part of a plant and that there is no conceptual relationship between them. Other respondents argued that the two meanings are related in that a V-shaped stick is used traditionally for showing where there is the presence of water (where a well should be sunk). Out of the 20 respondents, 12, who represent 60%, felt that it is a homonym and 8, who represent 40%, felt that the word is a polyseme. Figure 4.3 gives a summary of the respondents' intuitions about the meaning of this term in percentage form.

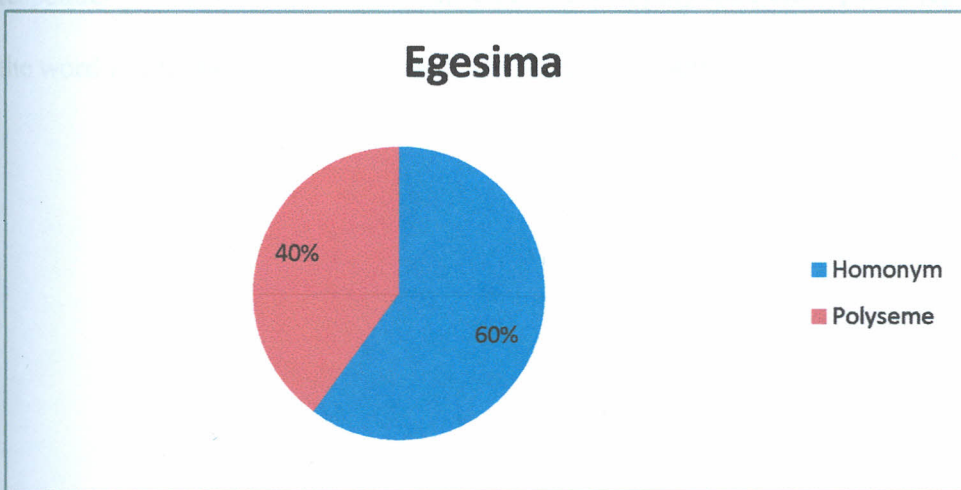


Fig.4.3 Respondents' classification of *Egesima*

From the above chart, we can see that the majority of the respondents felt that the word is a homonym. On close interrogation, we also realized that the V-shaped stick has other functions among the Abagusii. It is associated with the function of trimming fences and also herding cattle. A well has the sole function of providing water for use and there was a particular V-shaped stick from a particular tree used by experts to track a potential well the water where a well. For this reason, we felt that the two senses are independent hence, homonymous.

Example 4.4

Esojera is yet another Ekegusii term with two senses. The first sense is malaria (a disease) and the second sense is algae in water. There was a feeling from some informants that the meanings are related in that somebody suffering from malaria vomits algae like substance. Other informants felt that there is no conceptual connection between the two meanings because malaria is a dangerous disease associated with death. On the other hand, algae are associated with water that is stagnant. The majority of the respondents felt that the word is polysemous. Out of the 20 respondents, 11, who represent 55%, felt that it is a polyseme and 9, who represent 45%, felt that the word is a homonym. Figure 4.4 summarizes the findings.

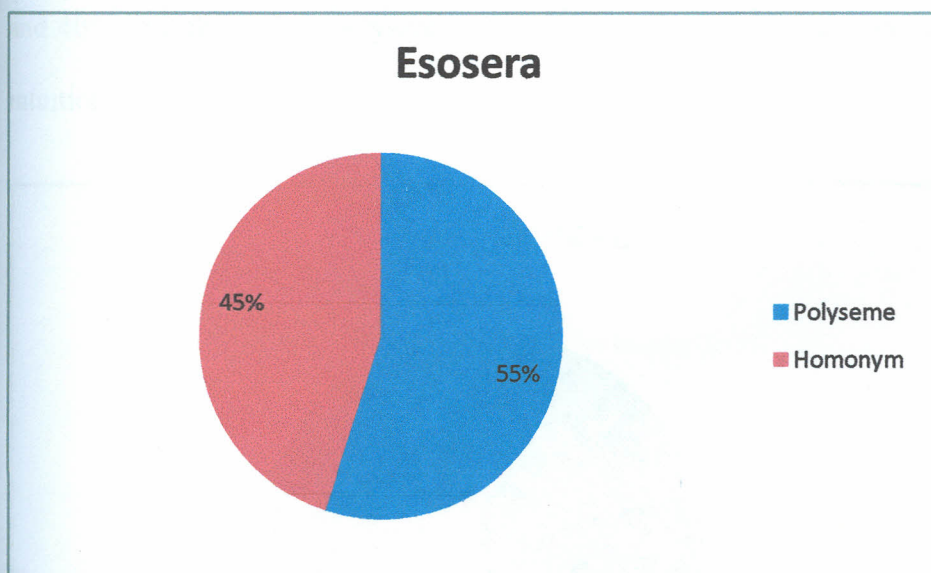


Fig. 4.4 Respondents' classification of *esoseru*

Figure 4.4 illustrates the point that majority of the respondents felt that the word is a polyseme. The researcher over-ruled them because of the simple fact that whereas malaria is a dangerous disease caused by mosquitoes, algae are green substances found on the edges of stagnant water. We also felt that there are no clear, regular and predictable connections where we have a core meaning and a derived meaning. This word was therefore treated as a homonym.

Example 4.5

Amase is a noun meaning the animal intestine, dry cleared weeds and the stinging nettle (a plant). The three meanings have no conceptual connection among them. However, some informants felt that the first two meanings are related, hence polysemous because the animal intestines are meant to be eaten by humans and dry cleared weeds are also ready to be "eaten" by fire, so both have the element of being consumable. 60% of the respondents felt that the word is a homonym

and 40% said that it is a polyseme. The pie chart below gives a summary of the respondents' intuitions.

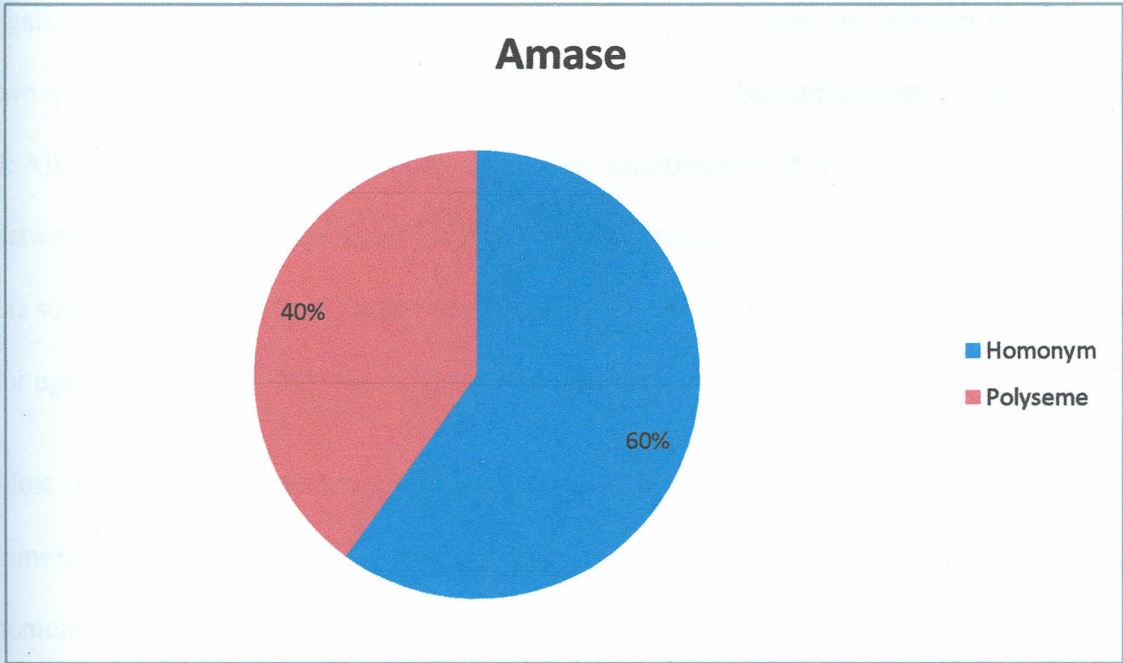


Fig. 4.5 Respondents' classification of Amase

Figure 4.5 shows that majority of the respondents felt that the word is a homonym. We sided with the group that argued that intestines are part of an animal and are edible by human beings. But dry weeds are dead plants which are used as firewood and when they are left to rot they become manure. The third meaning, that of a stinging nettle, denotes a plant which, when rubbed on one's skin, produces a very itchy sensation.

The next group of homonymous nouns was not controversial hence termed as explicit homonymous nouns.

Example 4.6

Amagoko is yet another term which has two meanings: the crust that forms when food, especially ugali, is being made. The two senses have no conceptual connection between them. Sometimes two quite different words accidentally have the same form but are unrelated in meaning (Kuiper & Allan, 1996). The native speakers, using their intuitions about meaning, could not get any link between the senses that the word denotes. The crust which forms on the sides of the inner side of the sufuria occurs purely because of maybe over-cooking or too much heat. This crust, especially for ugali, is a delicacy to some children. On the other hand, hands are parts of a human body.

Most of the documented homonymous words above are original Ekegusii words, having the same spellings and pronunciations but with two different meanings hence absolute or total homonyms (Lobner, 2002). We also have a few examples of borrowed domesticated homonymous nouns. A word may have had one meaning originally in Ekegusii but after contact with another language, for example, English or Kiswahili, it acquired another unrelated meaning coincidentally. This being a synchronic study, the words are treated as homonyms having two unrelated meanings. The following are examples:

Example 4.7

The word “*obosani*” is an example of a word with an element of borrowing. The original meaning is **friendship** but the second meaning, **plates**, is alien because Ekegusii didn’t have a word for plates. There were traditional plates called *ebiee* which were made out of sisal. How the plates which were brought by the Europeans came to acquire the name “*obosani*” – small plates, can possibly be explained by the fact that Ekegusii, being a Bantu language, has borrowed the term from Kiswahili and nativized it from *sahani* to *Obosani*. This process must have involved

the addition of the prefix 'Obo-' meaning **small** hence, *obosani*, **small plates**. Friendship is a relationship of closeness between human beings and plates are objects for serving foods. We felt that there is no any degree of conceptual link or resemblance between the two meanings. This reinforces the point that homonyms are considered coincidental in a language, and might be considered a defect (Greenbaum, 1996).

Example 4.8

Another such word is "ensa". Before the coming of the Europeans, the word had one meaning. It referred to the bundle of tied grass used for thatching huts. After the coming of the Europeans, the word acquired another meaning from the Kiswahili word *Saa* which means a **watch** or an **hour**. The Abagusii added "e" Ekegusii prefix for naming and customized it to *ensa*. The two senses are not related. The word thus became homonymous.

Example 4.9

Chimbata is yet another word borrowed from the Kiswahili word *bata* and nativized into Ekegusii by adding *chi*, which is a plural prefix morpheme. In Ekegusii it means **hinges**, and the **ducks** (a type of bird). In Ekegusii there was no word for ducks or hinges. Even in Kiswahili the word has these two unrelated meanings. It was borrowed from Kiswahili and nativized into Ekegusii. Hinges are metals used to hold the door firmly to the door frame. Ducks are types of domesticated birds which are very untidy.

Example 4.10

Endege is another borrowed word. In Ekegusii, it refers to a **central pole** used for the construction of traditional huts. In Kiswahili, the word *ndege* however refers to a plane or a bird.

Ekegusii, being closer to Kiswahili, borrowed the word and made it *endege* because it lacked a name for the mysterious flown object. 'E' an Ekegusii prefix for naming objects, and animals was added hence '*endege*'. Some respondents were of the idea that the central pole is strong just like a plane is mysterious and strong, hence a homonym. We felt that a central pole for constructing traditional huts is strong, long, immobile and is a tree. A plane or a bird are associated with movement and have wings, hence the word is homonymous.

Example 4.11

The word '*egesero*' refers to Abagusii **traditional skins and hides bedding**. The second meaning is a **certificate**. The second meaning could have come much later because the Abagusii had no certificates (there was no formal education). It is possible that it was derived from the proverb in Ekegusii that goes, " *oyo obwate gesero takoborwa boraro* ' meaning one with a hide (traditional bedding) cannot fail to get some place to sleep. With the introduction of formal learning, it came to mean that if one has a certificate (*egesero*) he or she can never fail to get a job (*oboraro*) or eat well, hence *egesero* acquired the second meaning to refer to a certificate. However, Abagusii have another word *esatibigeti* for a certificate which is nativized from English. *Egesero* is a metaphorical meaning. Although some Ekegusii linguists argue that it ought to be treated as a polyseme because both can be said to have a similar shape. We maintain that whereas a certificate can give one a job and is proof that one has acquired formal education, on the other hand, bedding is meant for sleeping hence it is a homonym.

We have been looking at homonymous nouns. In the next sub-section, we examine the homonymous verbs.

4.3.3 Homonymous verbs

There is also homonymy in Ekegusii verbs as illustrated by the examples that follow.

Example 4.12

Koranda means to **spread** (like the way a pumpkin plant does or spreading of rumors or news) and to **plane** or to **smoothen** timber (like what a carpenter does). The second meaning is relatively recent because traditionally there were no carpenters. The process could have acquired the second meaning from the Kiswahili word *randa* which is a tool used for planing timber surfaces. In Ekegusii, it is nativized to '*eranda*', by adding the prefix 'e'. The act of spreading is associated with increasing in size. On the other hand, to smoothen timber is making it finer hence, it is a homonym.

Example 4.13

Geesa is a verb in Ekegusii which either means to **stay overnight without sleep/ keep vigil** or to **add**. Keeping vigil, according to the Abagusii culture, is done when a person has passed on. Members of the family gather at the compound of the deceased to mourn immediately when he/she is declared dead and at least a day after burial. Christians also have this practice whereby they gather to spend a whole night, not to mourn, but to worship and meditate. The second meaning, to **add**, which has the impression of increasing in number, has no association with the first meaning. Therefore, this is a homonym.

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Example 4.14

Aga is associated with two senses in Ekegusii: one being **to weed** (e.g. millet) and the other **to hang** (e.g. throw a stick on to a tree so that it dangles from there). The two meanings are not related. Whereas weeding is removing unwanted plants, to hang is associated with holding on to something or being suspended. This is therefore a total homonym

The next set of words deals with homonymous verbs with three meanings. We start with the one that appeared controversial according to the respondents.

Example 4. 15

'*Kubia*' is an Ekegusii verb that is also ambiguous for it has three meanings, one being **to cool** something that is hot (e.g. water or porridge), the other being **to postpone**, (e.g. going for a journey) and the last meaning is **failure to hatch** (e.g. when as a hen that is brooding does not hatch all the eggs). Some respondents felt that the three senses are related. The proponents of this view argued that cooling something hot, postponing a journey and a hen that does not hatch all the eggs share the concept of postponement. Other respondents could not see the connection between the three senses. Of the 20 respondents, 70%, of them treated the word as a homonym and 30%, felt that the word is a polyseme. Figure 4.6 gives a summary of the findings.

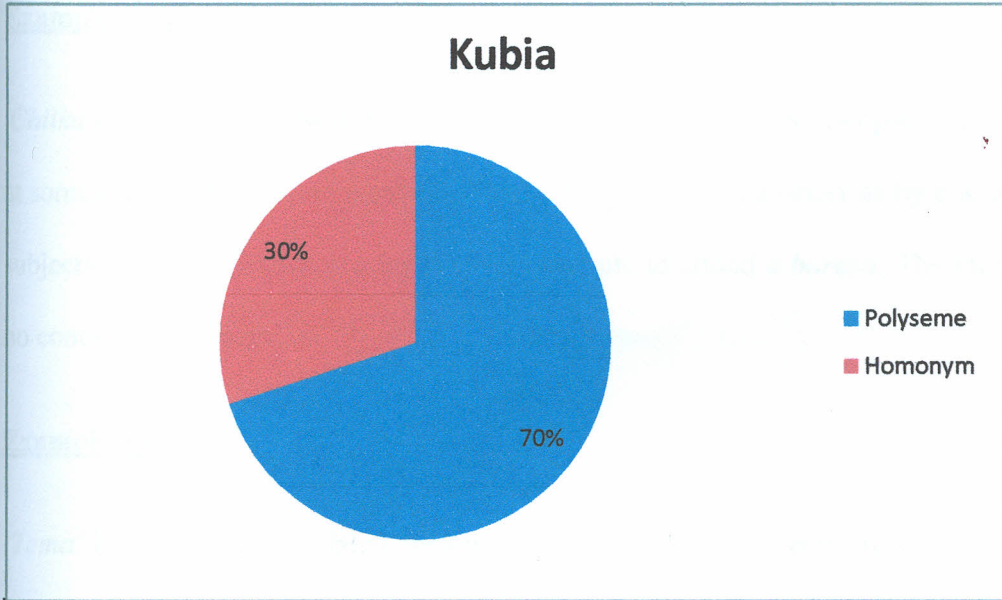


Fig. 4.6 Respondents' classification of *kubia*

Figure 4.6 shows how the respondents treated the word. The majority felt that the word is a homonym. The researcher felt that the three senses can be seen as being independent. When one postpones a journey it means that it will be accomplished later, but when a hen does not hatch some eggs, it means that these eggs are spoilt and wasted. Cooling something hot is also a sense of its own because when one calls something hot like water for bathing or a hot drink, it is making it better for use. So, the three senses are not related hence, it is a total homonym. In an Ekegusii dictionary, the three meanings would therefore be given separate entries. According to Lyons (1985), homonyms are treated as separate words in a dictionary

The homonymous verbs that follow were considered explicit in terms of classification by the respondents.

Example 4.16

Chiika is another word with three meanings which are: **to invite people** (e.g. to a feast), **to aim** at something (e.g. by using a catapult) and finally, **to give an order** as by one in authority to the subjects. This applies when a leader orders people to attend a *baraza*. The three meanings have no conceptual connection.

Example 4.17

'*Tema*' has also three unrelated meanings. The first is **to drive cows to a grazing ground** or to a **river**, and the second is **to harvest mushrooms**. In Ekegusii culture, it was considered a lucky charm to come by mushrooms and harvest them. The last meaning is **to cut something** (e.g. a banana or a tree) **using a sharp object** (e.g. a panga or an axe). One can argue that the last two meanings involve some kind of harvesting. But then, harvesting has a different word in Ekegusii, *kogesa*. Among the Abagusii trees are not harvested but cut. We therefore felt that the three meanings are not related.

Example 4.18

The word '*chora*' has three unrelated meanings: **to pick up something** (e.g. from the ground) , **to draw using a stick** , pen or even a piece of chalk and **to sort out** (e.g. sorting out beans mixed with maize) . The three meanings are independent. We cannot establish the core and the derived meanings therefore, the word is a homonym

Example 4.19

Nacha has the meanings: **to cut** (e.g. meat or a tree), **to accuse someone before a higher authority for wrong doing and to pass a verdict/ judgement.** According to some respondents, cutting something and passing judgement are related. We feel that the three senses have no conceptual connection among them. Cutting involves using a sharp object to divide something. Giving a verdict is making a decision thus bringing a case to an end. Accusing one before a higher authority is seeking redress when one has been wronged.

So far, we have dealt with homonyms and seen that it is not easy to decide whether the meanings are related or not. We now turn to polysemes.

4.4. Polysemy in Ekegusii

Kearns (2000) describes a polysemous lexeme as one that has two or more distinct but related meanings. He says further that polysemy is a kin to ambiguity. For example, senses of the word *fork* cluster around two main centres; shape of the letter Y (fork in the road, a fork in a tree or tree branch, a forked tongue, forked lightning etc), and a tool with sharp tines. The two senses are related by a loose similarity of shape. This shows the existence of more than one semantic specification for the same lexical item.

Lobner (2002) concurs by saying that a lexeme constitutes a case of polysemy if it has two or more interrelated meanings, or better; meaning variants. Each of these meaning variants has to be learnt separately in order to be understood. A polyseme is a word or phrase with multiple related meanings. A word is judged to be polysemous if it has two senses of the word whose meanings

are related. It is also the association where one word has two or more distinct but related meanings. (One form with multiple related meanings).

4.4.1 Polysemous nouns

In this sub-section, we discuss polysemous nouns, starting with the controversial ones before going on to those that were considered explicit by the respondents.

Example 4.20

Egechege refers to a naughty person or a wart (a skin disease manifested in form of a growth on the skin surface). Some respondents felt that there was some conceptual connection between the two in that a wart can also be troublesome on the skin just like a naughty person. Others argued that there is no obvious connection between the two meanings. Due to the controversy, percentage scores were worked out to find out the exact number of those who said that it is a homonym and those who saw it as a polyseme. Out of the 20 respondents, 14, (70%) felt that it is a homonym, while 6, (30%), felt that it is a polyseme. Figure 4.7 summarizes the findings.

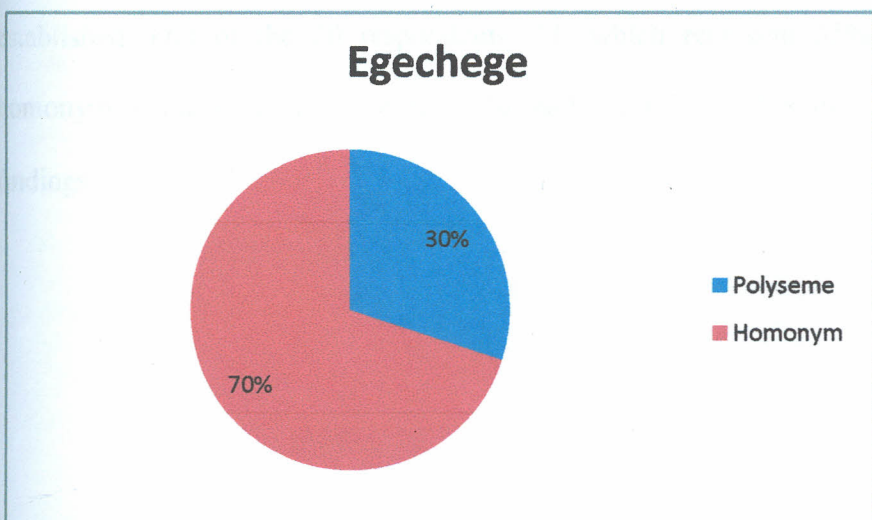


Fig. 4.7: Respondents' classification of *egechege*

The chart shows that most of the respondents felt that the word is a homonym but they were over-ruled by the researcher. A polysemous lexeme has two or more interrelated meanings or meaning variants. Each of these meaning variants have to be learnt separately in order to be understood (Lobner, 2002). We felt that the word is a polyseme because a naughty person troubles people and does anything in order to get noticed. Similarly, warts also trouble because once they appear on the surface of the skin, they don't disappear easily.

Example 4.21

Ekemincha refers to a tail like that of a cow or uncircumcised boy's reproductive organ. Using their intuition about meaning, some respondents felt that there is a conceptual connection between the two meanings. They said that an uncircumcised boy's organ can also be seen as a form of a tail and that both dangle. Others argued that there is no connection between an uncircumcised boy's reproductive organ and a tail because in the Kisii culture, a circumcised man's organ has a different name, *emboro*. Those saying that it is a homonym added that the organs are found on different creatures and that the core meaning of the word could not be established. Out of the 20 respondents, 11, which represent 55%, felt that the word is a homonym, while 9, which represent 45%, said that it is a polyseme. Figure 4.8 summarizes the findings.

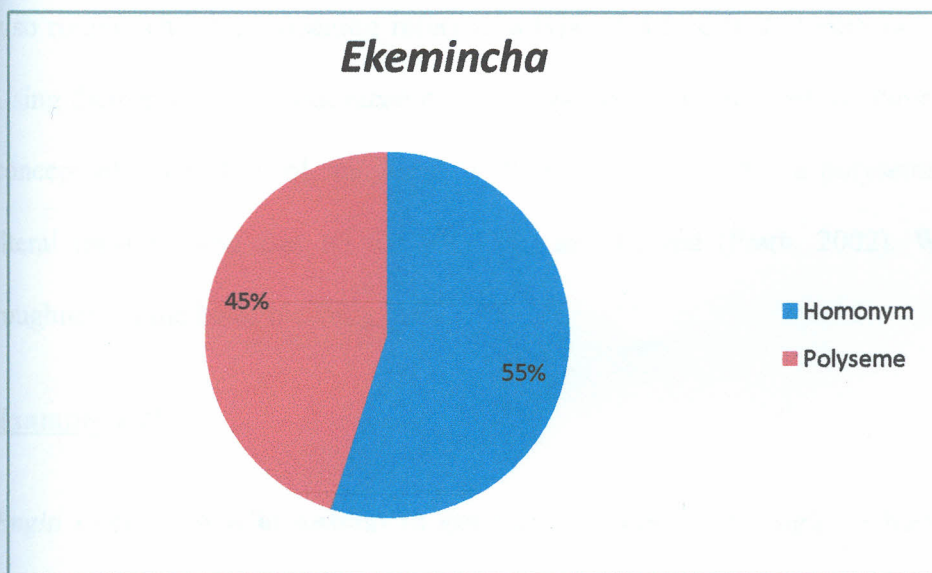


Fig. 4.8: Respondents' classification of *ekemincha*

Figures 4.8 illustrate that the majority of the respondents felt that the word is a homonym but they were over-ruled by the researcher. We felt that the word should be a polyseme because both of the organs dangle and their shapes are almost similar. Also both are appendages. Their functions could be different but the word is more of a polyseme than a homonym. Looking at the collected data, this word was identified by almost all the respondents as having more one meaning. This reinforces the point that the most frequently used words tend to be the most polysemous in any language (Greenbaum, 1996).

The discussion that follows comprises polysemous nouns which were considered by the respondents as explicit.

Example 4.22

Embare is a noun having three related meanings; that is: **an unruly person, very course flour** and **a type of a bird**. One who is unruly has the characteristic of being rough. Course flour is

also rough. The third meaning refers to a type of a bird that is very noisy so it is also rough. Using their intuitions about meaning, the respondents agreed that the three meanings have some conceptual connection of roughness. Following the tenet that a polysemous word possesses a literal meaning and that all the meanings are derived (Frath, 2002). We can conclude that roughness is the basic meaning here.

Example 4.23

Engiti refers to a **wild animal in general** or a **snake**, although we have different names for different snakes like *enyaronyansi*, (a green snake) and *rirubi*, (a puff udder) among other snakes. The Ekegusii native speaker has to be specific as whether they are referring to an animal or a snake. This will depend on the context. Both the wild animals and snakes are harmful, therefore the two meanings can be said to be related., We felt that this relationship is meronymical, which refers to the relationship between part and whole (Cruse, 1995)). In this case, a wild animal is the whole and the snake is the part but it adapts the name of the whole. This underscores the relatedness.

Example 4.24

In Ekegusii, the word '*enda*' can be said to have two meanings. The first meaning is a **stomach** and the second meaning is **pregnancy**. The respondents argued that a stomach is the home of food and the same stomach extends when a woman is expectant. The first meaning is the central one. The second meaning, pregnancy, comes out of the first meaning hence it is peripheral. The two are related because in pregnancy there is the protrusion of the stomach. This word was also identified by the majority of the informants. This points to the fact that among the Abagusii,

children are cherished and they also eat a lot. This proves the point that most commonly used words are the most polysemous in any language (Greenbaum, 1996).

Example 4.25

Embori has a core meaning of a **goat** and the second meaning is a **stupid person**. The respondents felt that a goat, in Gusii land, is considered not to be a very intelligent animal and is associated with humility and can be slaughtered without complaining hence having a connotative meaning of being stupid. We felt that the first meaning is the core, since the second meaning can be said to come from the first meaning thus making the second metaphorical.

Example 4.26

Eriso is a polysemous word which has the core meaning of an **eye**. The second meaning stems from the first; that is, **someone who can be depended upon** or a **leader**. An eye is a very essential part of the body, for without eyes, one cannot perform most of the functions associated with the sense of sight. A sighted person (**one with eriso**) leads a blind one just as a leader leads others. Both share the concept of leadership.

Example 4.27

Rikembi also has two related meanings. The central meaning is a **thief**, someone who waylays another one so as to steal his or her property. The second meaning, that of a **prostitute**, stems from the first one because a prostitute does something that is illegal just like a thief. Both senses share the concept of doing something that is against the law. Both like operating under the cover of darkness and just as a thief steals somebody else's property, a prostitute also sometimes takes away other women's men.

Example 4.28

Entetere has two meanings, the core and indigenous one being a **seed**. The second meaning is a **tablet**. This can be said to have come later because tablets came with the Europeans, and it is because of their resemblance to seeds that the Abagusii named them *chintetere*. The two senses share the concept of size and shape. Hence in an Ekegusii dictionary, the word could be given a single entry.

Example 4.29

Oborito is another word with two meanings. The first is **something heavy** (like a piece of luggage) and the other is **pregnancy**. Luggage can be said to be the core meaning. The other meaning is peripheral because when a woman is expecting, the Abagusii assume that she is carrying some luggage (a baby). The two senses share the concept of weight.

Example 4.30

Another word that is borrowed and associated with several related meanings is '*risasi*'. The word is borrowed from the Kiswahili word *risasi* meaning a **bullet**. In Ekegusii, it can mean **batteries** (e.g. for a radio or torch), a **bullet**, a **wise person** and a **man's reproductive cell (sperm)**. All the four senses have a conceptual connection of swiftness. A bullet is associated with swiftness, for by the time one hears the sound, the target has already been hit. A sperm cell is equally swift as it swims with its tail to hit its target (the female cell) for reproduction. A wise person is also seen as being swift in terms of quick thinking and getting solutions to problems. Batteries are also swift in transmitting current, thus making a radio produce sound or a torch light. From the

above many related meaning of the word 'risasi' shows that in polysemy the implied meanings are regular and predictable (Lyons, 2005).

The next group of polysemous nouns are borrowed from English and are nativized into Ekegusii with their meanings.

Example 4.31

Ekombiuta is a noun borrowed from the English word, **computer**, meaning a modern gadget which performs duties faster than man. The naming Ekegusii prefix "a" was added. The word now refers not only to a computer but also to the brain. The two senses are related because the brain works very fast just as a computer does. The two have a conceptual connection of thinking fast. The word is therefore a polyseme

Example 4.32

Ebasi is yet another borrowed word from the English word 'bus'. The word has two related senses in Ekegusii; it means **a bus** and **an iron box**. The two senses are related in that a bus (type of a vehicle) and an iron box have the same block shape. The bus is the core meaning and the iron box is the peripheral meaning. The word is therefore polysemous.

Having looked at polysemous nouns, we turn to polysemous verbs in the next sub section.

4.4.2 Polysemous verbs

This sub-section looks at polysemous verbs, starting with those considered controversial.

Example 4.33

'*Buruga*' is an Ekegusii verb which is also ambiguous. It has two meanings, one being **to weed crops** (e.g. maize, beans or millet) and the other **to stir something** (e.g. ugali or uji or tea) when cooking. Some respondents felt that it should be treated as a polyseme because both senses contain the concept of an action and that weeding and stirring are related. In both, the stirring is meant to achieve a certain positive effect clear the crops of the weeds so as to grow healthy and make the fluid substance thicken to the desired consistency. We also, using our intuitions about meaning, could not establish an obvious conceptual connection between the two meanings and that one can't easily pick the core and the peripheral meanings. This is not surprising given that it is not always clear whether one is dealing with polysemy or homonymy in a particular instance (Kuiper & Allan, 1996). Out of the 20 respondents, 11, which makes 55%, said that the word is homonym while 9, which gives us 45%, felt that it is a polyseme. Figure 4.9 summarizes this findings.

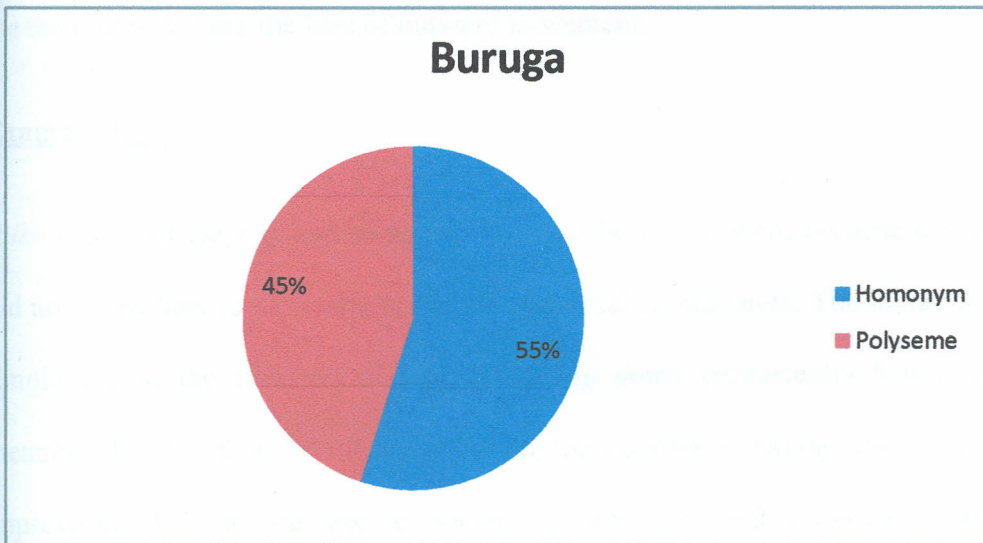


Fig. 4.9: Respondents' classification of *buruga*

Figure 4.9 shows that the majority of the respondents were in agreement that the word is a homonym but we over-ruled them because we felt that both involve an action of disturbing something that is still or settled. The action of weeding and stirring a liquid are almost similar. The core meaning is stirring a fluid substance and weeding is the derived meaning. The word therefore is polysemous.

Example 4.34

The word '*soka*' means **to get out of** (e.g. a room), **to get married** or **to be unfaithful**. Getting out of some place is the literal meaning and the other two meanings are transferred meanings. The Abagusii culture is chauvinistic in that it is the woman who moves out of her parents to live in the man's home. The act of moving out '*gosoka*', therefore refers to the woman being unfaithful in a marriage, if a woman is unfaithful, she is said to be going out metaphorically, since he or she is leaving the matrimonial bed. However, the act of a man straying is seen as normal because men are generally permitted to have more than one sexual partner. We felt that the three senses share the idea of outward movement.

Example 4.35

Riika means **to employ** and **to write**. This is a borrowed word because traditionally, Abagusii did not know how to write and there was no formal employment. The literal meaning is to write. Employing in the Ekegusii context is **writing down** permanently hence it is a transferred meaning. We felt that the two senses share the concept of having along lasting impression or impression. Writings are seen as something permanent and a source of reference in future. Likewise, employment is seen as a long lasting engagement that secures one's future.

Example 4.36

Rara is a polysemous word which has the meaning of **to sleep** and **to die**. To sleep is the core meaning. Dying in the African context is euphemistically referred to as sleeping forever. This is therefore a transferred meaning. The same applies to the word '*timoka*' whose first meaning is **to rest** and the second is **to die**. In the African context, when one dies, he/she is said to have rested for good. Using our intuitions about meaning, we felt that both senses share the concept of being at peace without being bothered. Both involve lying in a reclining position and getting away from the hustles of this world.

Example 4.37

The word '*bokia*' has several related senses; it means to **re-plough a farm** which to an Ekegusii native speaker is the core meaning. One transferred meaning is **to awaken someone** whereby the act of rousing someone from sleep is compared to the act of re-ploughing a farm. The other one is the **act of reminding one of something forgotten**. The infinitive form is '*kobokia*'. We feel that the three senses share the concept of disturbing something that is still or peaceful. When a farm is re-ploughed, the soil, plants and other microscopic organisms are disturbed. When one is roused from sleep his/her blissful world that is devoid of worries is disturbed. When one has wronged another person and then there is a passage of time, the wronged person will forget the wrong. But if the person is reminded of the thing, it will rekindle the old memories of ill feelings and hatred. The three meanings share the concept of disturbance. This is therefore a polyseme.

Example 4.38

Bereka has the sense of **carrying on the back** as happens when one is carrying a baby or heavy luggage. '*bereka*' can also refer to **the flowering of a maize plant**. This is evident when a maize plant starts producing or forming a cob. It is like the maize plant is carrying some weight. The third sense is **carrying rumors from one person and place to another**. A person spreading rumors is seen metaphorically as carrying some load. The three senses share the concept of weight being carried at some place. The meanings are related, hence making the word, a polyseme.

Example 4.39

Koyia has the sense of **getting burnt and incurring a loss**. Getting burnt is the core meaning and incurring a loss as in business is a transferred meaning. When one incurs a loss in business, it means that he/she is hurt financially. Similarly, burning has implications of being hurt. The connection between the two is that they share the idea of destruction, hurt and experiencing some anguish.

Example 4.40

Another word is '*tindia*' which means **to make drunk or to tire**. **To make drunk** is the literal meaning and **to tire** is the transferred meaning. The link between the literal and the transferred meaning is that, when one has taken traditional alcohol, he/ she becomes weak, dull, sluggish and staggers, some cannot even walk or work especially after consuming too much. In the same vein, when one is tired, he/she cannot work effectively because and the mental faculties are impaired. The two have the connection of lethargy. The word is therefore a polyseme.

Example 4.41

Misa in Ekegusii refers to **getting dark** or **to dying**. When it gets dark, there is no light and the sense of sight is impaired. Getting dark also signals the end of the day and a time to rest from the hassles of the day. In the same way, when one is dead, he/she cannot see. Also dying brings to an end one's life and ushers in a time of rest from the hassles of life. In darkness, many sinister and mysterious things happen. In the African context, death is also mysterious; nobody understands what really happens when one is dead, people are kept in darkness. In this case, getting dark is the central meaning and to die is the implied meaning. The two senses are connected in terms of lacking light. In an Ekegusii dictionary this term would be given a single entry.

As we have seen from the preceding examples, in Ekegusii, as in other languages, polysemous words have a literal or core meaning and other transferred or metaphorical meanings. These peripheral meanings are said to stem or shoot from the main meaning. Next is a group of words which were mentioned frequently by the respondents.

4.4.3 Frequently used words

In the course of collecting data, certain words were mentioned a lot by the Ekegusii native speakers. These groups of words were grouped together.

Examples 4.42

During the collection of data, certain words featured most as given by the respondents. Words like: *rimisu* which refers to **smell** or **rumour**, *abusa* has a core meaning of **cleaning** and a peripheral meaning of **finishing**, *enda* which means a **pregnancy** and a **stomach**, *egete* which

means, a **stick**, **number one** and a **male reproductive organ**, *endagera* which refers to **food** or a **bribe**, *ramokia* which means **to open one's eyes** and **to be wiser**, *saria* which means **to spoil** or **to erase**, *ruga* which means **to cook**, **to get married** and **to annoy** among other words. Surprisingly, all these words turned out to be polysemous because they have related meanings where one is the core and others metaphorical or peripheral. The peripheral meanings are also regular and predictable (see appendix B & C). These stressed the fact that frequently used words are polysemic (Greenbaum, 1999).

Next we examine how polysemy can be distinguished from homonymy in Ekegusii.

4.5 Distinction between polysemy and homonymy in Ekegusii

Lyons (1990) defines homonymy as a lexeme with several different senses and a polyseme as a lexeme with several related senses. The first distinction is relatedness or unrelatedness of the senses. If a word has two meanings which are unrelated, that word is a homonym. In Ekegusii, for example, the word '*egechege*' refers to a wart and also to somebody naughty. The two senses are not related in any way. Alternatively, if a word has two related meanings, then it is a polyseme. To illustrate, the word '*omonene*' in Ekegusii, refers to God which can be taken to be the central meaning. The other meaning is big. God is considered to be almighty. If a person is called '*omonene*' he/she is being exalted like God. It also implies that the person is powerful in terms of wealth, body size and may be the mental abilities. The second meaning can be said to be an associated meaning or peripheral meanings. Lyons (1990) argues further that relatedness and unrelatedness is the only synchronically relevant consideration, which co-relates with native speaker's feelings that certain meanings are connected and others not. The Ekegusii native

speakers were able to use their intuitions about meaning in trying to distinguish between homonyms and polysemes, but still they were problematic.

The criterion of relatedness or unrelatedness, however, has been criticized. Lyons (1990) argues that the relatedness or unrelatedness of meaning may be a matter of degree. It may be demonstrated or not. There are cases where the intuitions of native speakers about relatedness of meaning differ. In Ekegusii, for example, the native speakers differed on whether to treat the word '*buruga*' which means **to stir** and **to weed** as a polyseme or a homonym. The actions seem related but they are done on different things, stirring is done on liquids and weeding is a farming procedure. Another word that was controversial is *engende* which refers to either a **bean** or a **clitoris**. Some respondents felt that there was an obvious connection between them because of their shapes. Other respondents argued that there was no relationship between the two senses. They asserted that one is a cereal plant and the other is a body organ. We felt that the word is a polyseme because in Gusii land there were no beans. When they were eventually brought by the white man, the Abagusii might have noticed the close resemblance between their shape and that of the clitoris and given the former the same name as the latter.

The second mode of distinction between homonyms and polysemes is using the etymological information. This is the lexicographer's historical knowledge of the derivation of words. According to Lyons (1990), in the case of homonymy, the lexemes in question might have developed from what formally were distinct lexemes in some earlier stage of the language. This being a synchronic study, the researcher had very little etymological information about the Ekegusii words sampled since the language has no known etymological dictionary.

However, the researcher identified a few words classified as homonyms and polysemes which were borrowed from other languages and nativized. This is due to the interaction with other languages and also the spread of the new technology. In Ekegusii, for example, the word 'endege' refers to the **central pole** used in the construction of traditional huts or a **plane**. The second meaning came with the Europeans and nativized from the Kiswahili word 'ndege' meaning plane. Ekegusii, lacking a name for the plane, borrowed the Kiswahili word and made it *endege* meaning a **plane**, therefore, becoming a homonym.

Another word that is borrowed and associated with several related meanings is 'risasi'. The word is borrowed from the Kiswahili word *risasi* meaning a **bullet**. In Ekegusii, it has several related senses: it can mean **batteries** (e.g. for a radio, watch or camera), a **bullet**, a **wise person** and a **male's reproductive cell (sperm)**. All the four senses have a conceptual connection of swiftness in movement.

Yet another distinction is the use of the test of ambiguity. This is where the different meanings implied are tested within one sentence; a co-ordination test may be employed. This test is used to identify homonyms in which case the meaning is manifest but, for polysemes, the meaning will cause confusion and be distorted. Consider the following:

Omonto orwarete amaru tarikonywa amaru.

Translated as, *a knee sufferer should not drink alcohol.*

Here, the two meanings for *amaru*, **alcohol** and **knees**, come out clearly and distinctively. It is believed that the Abagusii traditional brew, *amaru*, has a very strong effect on people who take it

for it weakens the knees. *Amaru*, is thus a homonym. When it comes to polysemes, it is hard to determine the exact meaning implied by the statement. Here is an illustration.

Oborito bwagure

Oborito as discussed in section 4.29, can mean **something heavy** or **pregnancy**. *Bwagure* means it has fallen. Here this sentence is still ambiguous. It can mean, there is a miscarriage or something heavy has fallen.

One can also get the relationship between meanings by use of a metaphor, where a word appears to have both a literal and one or more transferred meanings. Intuitively, it is clear which the literal sense is. Such a word is a polyseme. In Ekegusii, for example, the word '*tuguta*' means to **throw away** or **bury**. The Ekegusii native speaker will use his/her intuitions about meaning and say that, **throw away**, is the literal meaning and **bury somebody** is the transferred meaning. Throwing something away means that the thing being thrown is useless. Likewise, the act of burying a dead person has the same implications because a corpse is of no value to the living. The two meanings have a connection of disassociating with a reject.

This section has dealt with the distinctions between homonymy and polysemy in Ekegusii. The next section will examine the applicability of the Sense Relations Theory to polysemy and homonymy in Ekegusii.

4.6. Homonymy and polysemy in Ekegusii and the Sense Relations Theory.

The Sense Relations Theory is a theory of meaning which deals with intra- linguistic properties and relations of words. It accounts for the sense relations of metonymy, antonymy, synonymy, hyponymy, homonymy and polysemy among others. Meaningfulness and ambiguity are

explained in terms of sense. This demonstrates clearly that homonymy and polysemy in Ekegusii which is part of the wider sense relations can be accounted for by the Sense Relations Theory

The Sense Relations Theory helped in the identification (see appendix B), description and analysis of the data. However, it is inadequate in that it does not manage to fully distinguish between the two senses. The native speakers, using their intuitions about meaning could not agree on the status of some terms. Controversy between the two senses could not be avoided because the distinction between the two senses is problematic and confusing, a situation echoed by Kuiper & Allan (1996).

The confusion is stressed by Graddal and Swan (1989) who posit that the study of meaning relies on people's intuition about language: the intuitions of the ordinary natural speakers, researchers, and lexicographers and so on which researchers use as sources. Problems arise because different people's intuitions do not always agree, and because different people's intuitions of how a word or expression should be used do not always coincide with how they actually use it.

The figure that follows gives a summary of words with multiple meanings as collected from the respondents (see appendix B).

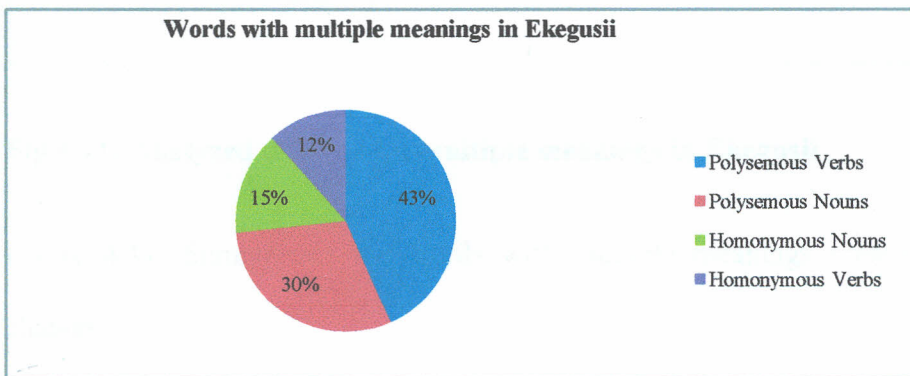


Fig.4.10. Summary of words with multiple meanings in Ekegusii

Figure 4.10 shows that a total of 300 words with multiple meanings were collected from the respondents. Basing on the sense relations theory, the words were classified into homonyms and polysemes. There were 220 polysemes and 100 homonyms. Out of the 220 polysemes, were 130 verbs representing 43%, and 90 nouns representing 30%. Out of the 100 homonyms, 45 representing 15%, were nouns and 35 verbs representing 12%. This brings out the fact that verbs tend to be polysemous and nouns tend to be homonymous.

The researcher then did a stratified random sampling to come up with 100 words with multiple meanings, 50 homonyms and 50 polysemes. In each group are 25 nouns and 25 verbs. These were the words presented for analysis in this chapter (appendix C).The figure below gives a summary.

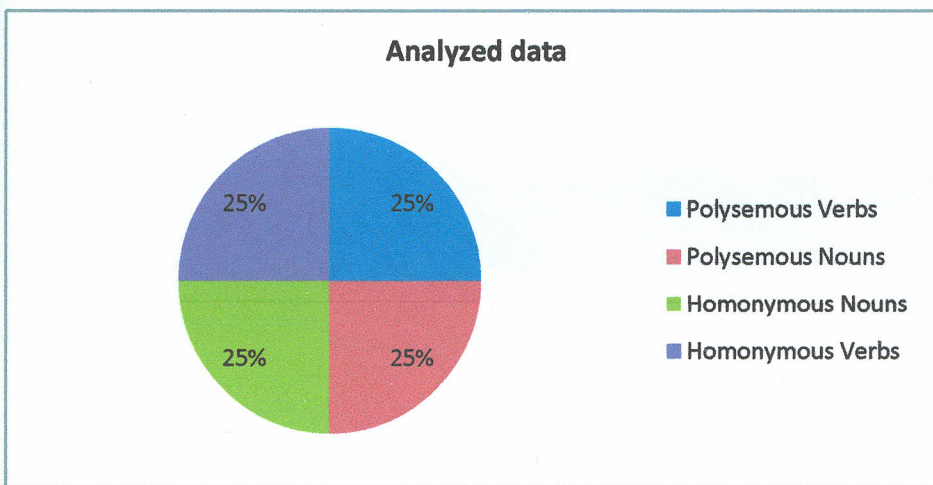


Fig.4.11: Analyzed words with multiple meanings in Ekegusii

Figure 4.11. Summarizes the words with multiple meanings presented for analysis in this chapter.

In this chapter, we have presented and described words with more than one meaning in Ekegusii. We have seen that some have two and others three meanings. It has emerged that some of the meanings are related while others are not. Finally, we have seen that the Sense Relations Theory can be applied to homonymy and polysemy in Ekegusii. The next chapter deals with the findings of the study, conclusion, recommendations and areas for further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we highlight the findings and conclusions of the study followed by the recommendations regarding the use of the sense relations in the areas of the study and finally, we suggest directions for further research.

5.2 Findings of the study

The study sought to identify and explain Ekegusii words that have more than one meaning, determine the extent to which polysemous words can be distinguished from homonymous ones in Ekegusii and finally, to establish the extent to which homonymy and polysemy in Ekegusii can be accounted for within the Sense Relations Theory.

The result of our investigation reveals that to a large extent, the assumptions of the study are confirmed. In Ekegusii, words with multiple meanings exist. (See appendix B). Out of the 300 words with multiple meaning collected from the respondents, 274, representing 91.3%, have two meanings each, 25, representing 8.3%, have 3 meanings each and 1, representing 0.3%, has 5 meanings.

Greenbaum (1996) postulates that homonyms are considered coincidental, few and are a defect in any language. This study has confirmed this to an extent. Out of the 300 words with multiple meanings collected from the respondents, 80 turned out to be homonyms and 220 polysemes but this categorization was not without controversy (see appendix B).

The study also shows that the frequently used words in Ekegusii tend to be more polysemic than the less frequently used just as in the case in other languages (Greenbaum, 1996). For example, the term *amache*, has the literal meaning of **water**. The other extended meanings are: **urine, alcohol, male reproductive fluid and beer**. All these meanings have one thing in common: they are liquids. Water is commonly used and without it there is no life. No wonder it was able to attract several references from the respondents.

The study has revealed that sometimes it is not easy to distinguish between homonymy and polysemy. In the course of the research, the respondents, using their intuitions about meaning sometimes, could not agree on whether a word was a polyseme or a homonym. This prompted the researcher to use the criterion of relatedness and un-relatedness, metaphor, ambiguity test and the general knowledge of the sense relations in order to make a decision.

Homonymous and polysemous words in Ekegusii can be distinguished to some extent. The Ekegusii native speakers, using their intuitions, were able to identify words with multiple meanings and the relationships between them. This further proves that homonymy and polysemy in Ekegusii, which is part of the wider sense relations in lexical semantics, can be accounted for by the Sense Relations Theory because the notions of ambiguity and meaningfulness are explained in terms of sense Katz (2004).

In Ekegusii, we have some homonymous and polysemous words borrowed either from Kiswahili or English. In the case of homonymy, a word may be borrowed into Ekegusii but in the process of borrowing and nativizing it, it acquires another meaning similar to that of another word already in existence. A case in point is the word *ensa*, which means **a bundle of tied grass and a watch or time**. As explained earlier, the second meaning comes from a Kiswahili word *saa*

which is nativized into Ekegusii. Therefore the word is homonymous. A word like *ekombiuta* is borrowed from the English word, **computer** to mean a machine and the brains. The word is polysemous because the computer is said to work like the brain.

In this study, we have also established that in Ekegusii, there are more polysemes than homonyms and that verbs tend to polysemy and nouns tend to homonymy (see figure 4.10).

From the data collected there were more polysemous verbs than any other group.

5.3 Conclusion

In this study, we have established that there are words with more than one meaning in Ekegusii. We have identified and explained words with more than one meaning in Ekegusii, drawn a distinction between them and shown that the Sense Relations Theory can largely account for homonymy and polysemy in Ekegusii.

The study also confirmed that the two concepts are confusing, problematic and ambiguous.

To conclude, we may say that the objectives of our study have to a large extent been realized.

5.4 Recommendations

In view of the findings of the study and the conclusion reached, it emerges clearly that more research is needed in this area in order to augment the scanty information available on Ekegusii semantics. This will add insights into the already existing ones on how word meaning is conceived in linguistic communication.

To this end, varied and relevant literature needs to be published and made available in Ekegusii specifically and in other native Kenyan languages in general.

Linguists should take the trouble of coming up with an Ekegusii dictionary which does not exist at the moment. An Ekegusii dictionary should try to distinguish between homonymy and polysemy in its entries.

5.5 Areas for further research

Research needs to be undertaken to establish how tone brings about changes in meaning in homonymous words in Ekegusii, something that was outside the scope of this study. Since Ekegusii is a tonal language, the influence of tone should be studied in detail. In Ekegusii, for example, the word *igoro* means **yesterday** and **up** when tone is taken into consideration. It is hoped that such a study would produce interesting results.

A study on other sense relations like antonymy, synonymy, metonymy, meronymy and hyponymy should be carried out. This study has covered only content words, specifically nouns and verbs. A study should be done to cover other content words like adjectives and adverbs.

A study should be carried out on other Kenyan Bantu languages like Kikuyu, Kikamba, Kimeru, Kiluhya, and Mijikenda among others to establish how similar or different the sense relations of homonymy and polysemy are.

Our study on meaning is far from being exhaustive. Research on how many meanings a word has and how these meanings are differentiated and described has been the staple question of linguistic philosophy and semantics since the period of traditional grammar. Lyons (1986) remarks that it is not easy to say how many meanings a word has as a casual reflection might

suggest. Since the lexical level of meaning has always been the starting point for semantic study and theorizing, the lexical semantist has a fertile ground of investigating the lexicon exhaustively in order to bridge the gap between referential and non-referential elements of significance.

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**APPENDIX A:
INTERVIEW SCHEDULE**

Respondent's particulars

Name -----Sex -----

Age -----Place of Birth -----

First Language Spoken -----

Other Languages Spoken (if any) -----

(Respondents are to provide the different meanings of the words below and say whether the meanings are related or not).

A. i) What are the different meanings of this word?

ii) Are the meanings related?

Rigena

Tema

Bwatia

Romia

Mera

Koranda

Gambera

Egesima

Esani

Amaru

Ita

Soka

Sira

Saba

Nacha

Eeri

Enchogu

Endagera

Omonene

Oborito

(i). Give more examples of words with multiple meanings

(ii) What are the different meanings of each?

(iii) Are the meanings related?

**APPENDIX B:
COLLECTED DATA FROM 20 EKEGUSHII NATIVE RESPONDENTS**

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| 1. <i>Eriogo</i> | - | 1. Poison
2. Medicine |
| 2. <i>Omokia</i> | - | 1. Vain
2. Tail |
| 3. <i>Ekebande</i> | - | 1. Identity card
2. Piece of something (soap) |
| 4. <i>Riige</i> | - | 1. Young one of a bird
2. Termite |
| 5. <i>Korera</i> | - | 1. In-laws
2. Take care |
| 6. <i>Richara</i> | - | 1. Confused person
2. Big fingernail |
| 7. <i>Ebasi</i> | - | 1. Bus (vehicle)
2. Iron box |
| 8. <i>Eyanga</i> | - | 1. Cloth
2. Refuse\deny |
| 9. <i>Omoko</i> | - | 1. Tree type
2. In-law |
| 10. <i>Embisi</i> | - | 1. House worker
2. Cows peas |
| 11. <i>Twania</i> | | 1. Excrete
2. Not full |
| 12. <i>Engiti</i> | - | 1. Snake
2. Animal |
| 13. <i>Egori</i> | - | 1. Score
2. Goal posts |
| 14. <i>Ekebwe</i> | - | 1. Wild dog
2. Instrument for sucking blood in traditional treatment |
| 15. <i>Risabore</i> | - | 1. Saga (vegetable)
2. A big cane |
| 16. <i>Egekondo</i> | - | 1. Monkey
2. Wild pumpkin |
| 17. <i>Esosera</i> | - | 1. Malaria
2. Fungi in water (green sticky fungi in water) algae |
| 18. <i>Omokubinyongo</i> | - | 1. Herbs for treatment
2. Rainbow |
| 19. <i>Okonywa</i> | - | 1. Drinking
2. Score a goal |
| 20. <i>Koigamera</i> | - | 1. Lean on
2. use for shelter |
| 21. <i>Amasasi</i> | - | 1. Bullets
2. Batteries
3. Male reproductive cells |
| 22. <i>Gochabera</i> | - | 1. Decorate |

23. *Omonanda* - 2. use for beating (stick)
1. Crush
24. *Ebiranya* - 2. Fence
1. Canes
25. *Chimbuni* - 2. Traditional medicine (shields against enemies)
1. Dry coffee berries
26. *Obotu* - 2. Ostrich
1. Seeds
27. *Omobira* - 2. Bluntness
1. Ball
28. *Chimbata* - 2. Rubber band
1. Ducks
29. *Amatunda* - 2. Hinges
1. Results
30. *Amagari* - 2. Fruits
1. Big vehicles
31. *Amatanga* - 2. Spaces between lines (in a maize farm)
1. Funeral
32. *Ebirore* - 2. Pedal for a bicycle
1. Window panes
33. *Ekerasi* - 2. Spectacles
1. Glasses
3. Mirror
34. *Etaoni* - 2. Class room
1. City\town
35. *Enda* - 2. Crotchet
1. Pregnancy
36. *Embori* - 2. Stomach
1. Stupid person
37. *Eroro* - 2. Goat
1. Desert
38. *Amagoro* - 2. Getting nothing
1. Legs
39. *Obooro* - 2. Support
1. Slept over ugali
40. *Ebate* - 2. Gentle person
1. Get things easily
41. *Eriso* - 2. Valley
1. Leader
42. *Eriogi* - 2. Eye
1. Sound
43. *Egioka* - 2. Something unwanted
1. An insect
44. *Risase* - 2. Harshness
1. Beautiful person
2. Sun

45. *Risasi* - 1. Wise person
2. Battery
46. *Esibwori* - 1. A king
2. Proud person
47. *Egete* - 1. A stick
2. Traditional medicine
48. *Ekebacho* - 1. False
2. Secret place
49. *Rikembi* - 1. Prostitute
2. Thief
50. *Enkoro* - 1. Heart
2. Upper part of a tree
51. *Omonene* - 1. Big
2. God
52. *Enyomba* - 1. House
2. Clan
53. *Sunyora* - 1. Beat
2. Pluck feathers
54. *Erongori* - 1. Porridge
2. Alms
55. *Ekeraka* - 1. Patch
2. Shot (ball)
56. *Omogoye* - 1. Umbilical cord
2. Rope
57. *Entetere* - 1. Tablet
2. Seed
58. *Omobuko* - 1. Bag
2. Pocket
59. *Oborito* 1. Pregnancy
2. Heavy luggage
60. *Omwoge* - 1. Sharp
2. Wise
61. *Riiko* - 1. Dirty
2. Abuses
62. *Obokomu* - 1. Hard times
2. Funeral
63. *Engiti* - 1. Animal
3. Big person
64. *Omobere* - 1. Body
2. Copse
65. *Ogoto* - 1. Ear
2. Upper part of mushroom
66. *Egori* - 1. Score
2. Limit
67. *Omworokigwa* - 1. Apostle
2. Student

68. *Ensw* - 1. Fish
2. Respected person
69. *Omwando* - 1. Inheritance
2. Blessings
70. *Omoremo* - 1. Subject
2. Work
71. *Nyunyunta* - 1. Kiss
2. Cause pain
72. *Erangi* - 1. Color
2. Menstrual
73. *Egesusu* - 1. Wise person
2. Rabbit
74. *Soka* - 1. Get married
2. Get out
75. *Riika* - 1. Write
2. Employ
76. *Aka* - 1. Polish
2. Give a bribe
77. *Rara* - 1. Die
2. Sleep
78. *Tuguta* - 1. Throw away
2. Burry
79. *Monyoka* - 1. Run
2. Diarrhea
80. *Timoka* - 1. Die
2. Rest
81. *Igota* - 1. Satisfied
2. Be pregnant
82. *Eroro* - 1. Getting nothing
2. Deserts
83. *Bereka* - 1. Pregnant
2. Carry on your back
84. *Sibia* - 1. Kill
2. Clean
85. *Mera* - 1. Forgive
2. Swallow
86. *Rimia* - 1. Blow light off
2. Kill
87. *Bugia* - 1. Blow something
2. Tell
88. *Tera* - 1. Talk to somebody who is not interested
2. Sing
89. *Ribia* - 1. Seal
2. Wait
90. *Gasia* - 1. Give more milk
2. Say more which bites

91. *Rera* - 1. Handle with care
2. Take care
92. *Bokia* - 1. Re-plough
2. Awaken
94. *Oyire* - 1. Burn
2. Incur a loss
95. *Kong'a* - 1. Be ripe
2. Be tough
96. *Tiara* - 1. Sharpen
2. Educate
97. *Takuna* - 1. Chew
2. Think
98. *Sieka* - 1. Be last
2. Close
99. *Kogwa* - 1. Fall
2. Fail in exam
100. *Nyora* - 1. Give birth
2. To find
101. *Ogotereria* - 1. Slide
2. Smear
102. *Bwata* - 1. Hold
2. Conceive (like cow)
3. Be worm
103. *Anekeria* - 1. Put it in the open,
2. Spread for drying
104. *Tega* - 1. Trick
2. Dribble
105. *sansoka* - 1. To be free
2. Untie \ loose
106. *Kong'onta* - 1. hit e.g. nail
2. Knock at e.g. door
107. *Rina* - 1. Make love
2. Climb
108. *Sera* - 1. Push
2. Reject
109. *Orokia* - 1. Teach
2. Show
110. *Karanga* - 1. Fry
2. Lie
111. *Ruga* - 1. Cook
2. Get married
112. *Rora* - 1. Bitter
2. Wild (woman)
113. *Chweria* - 1. To tear
2. Lumbering
114. *Orokia* - 1. Show

115. *Barira* - 2. Teach
1. Be ripe
2. Get annoyed
116. *Butora* - 1. Cut
2. Stop a relationship
117. *Miamia* - 1. Close eyes
2. Die
118. *Sabusia* - 1. Rinse
2. Finish a job
119. *Tokera* 1. Be dirty
2. Be annoyed
120. *Tiringa* - 1. Make something dirty
2. Succeed in exams
121. *Bwaterania* - 1. To warm for
2. To hold for
3. Conceive
122. *Misa* - 1. Die
2. Get dark
123. *Sasoka* - 1. to be happy
2. To put to dry
124. *Aakire* - 1. Beaten
2. Bribe
125. *Rina* - 1. Climb
2. Have sexual relationship
126. *Amatunda* - 1. Fruits
2. Results
127. *Kuorokia* - 1. To show
2. Teach
128. *Goticherera* - 1. Cover up
2. Hide something
129. *Gotindia* - 1. Make drunk
2. Tire
130. *Gesa* - 1. Stay without sleep
2. Add
131. *Chenga* - 1. Dribble (ball) \
2. Trick
3. Happy
132. *Soa* - 1. Accuse
2. Enter (e.g. gate)
133. *Tongia* - 1. Light a lamp
2. Prick an eye
135. *Rika* - 1. Dribble
2. Not fluent (or to stammer)
136. *Somera* - 1. Read for
2. Admonish
138. *Gera* - 1. Weigh

139. *Gotwa* - 2. Cause/make happen
1. Spit
2. Pluck maize
3. To rain
140. *Chora* - 1. Pick
2. Draw
3. Sort out
141. *Tenena* - 1. Stand up
2. Stop
3. Vie
142. *Tacha* - 1. Step on
2. Stop breast feeding
143. *Charoka* - 1. Jump over
2. Skip
144. *Chika* - 1. Invite
2. Aim
3. Give an order
145. *Gotura* - 1. Awaken
2. Minting (metal \ work of a blacksmith)
146. *Erore* - 1. Look at yourself (mirror)
2. Boast
147. *Gonkia* - 1. Breast feeding a child
2. Give birth
148. *Buna* - 1. Break something
2. Argue over something
3. Finish constructing a hut
149. *Sangia* - 1. Meet
2. Share
150. *Tuma* - 1. Jump
2. Skip
151. *Bima* - 1. Weigh
2. Aim
152. *Toma* - 1. Send
2. Shoot (like a ball)
153. *Kubia* - 1. Cool
2. Postpone
3. Act of a hen not fertilizing an egg
154. *Tema* - 1. Drive cows like to the river
2. Harvest mushroom
3. Cut something (like a tree)
155. *Nacha* - 1. Cut something
2. Pass verdict
156. *Konya* - 1. Make dirty
2. Bake (baking floor) mix thoroughly
157. *Buruga* - 1. Weed
2. Stir \ mix

158. *Sinyana* - 1. Next to (be a neighbor)
2. Differ
159. *Bonga* - 1. Put together
2. Attacked by weevils
160. *Mioria* - 1. Take away
2. Pull the foreskin backwards
161. *Roka* - 1. To vomit
2. To name
162. *Sega* - 1. Incite
2. Give moral support
163. *Okobooria* - 1. To save
2. Retain back
164. *Tobia* - 1. Make more fertile (samba)
2. Ripen (fruits)
165. *Seka* - 1. Laugh
2. Re-thatch a house
166. *Gecha* - 1. Hate
2. Cut something (tree)
166. *Okwaga* - 1. Hang
2. Weed
167. *Tona* - 1. Decorate
2. Divide
168. *Tokera* - 1. Choke\suffocate
2. Very dirty
169. *Richa* - 1. Make one fall
2. Tie the legs of a cow before milking.
170. *Boa* - 1. Tie
2. Fatten
171. *Meena* - 1. Lick
2. Be proud
172. *Bunga* - 1. Close\lock e.g. door)
2. Make millet
173. *Ata* - 1. Break
2. Divide
174. *Kumba* - 1. Bend something
2. Put final touches to a grass thatched house.
3. Cook little ugali
175. *Ng'ura* - 1. Massage
2. Pick everything
176. *Goika* - 1. Reach
2. Must
3. Descend
177. *Igwa* - 1. Taste
2. Listen
178. *Rimi* - 1. Stinging wattle
2. Dew

179. *Mocha* - 1. Miss
2. Make a mistake
180. *Koira* - 1. Take
2. Getting dark
181. *Kogechia* - 1. Annoy
2. Make people to cut trees
182. *Konora* - 1. Getting fat
2. Getting bushy
183. *Gosuma* - 1. Beckon
2. Borrow food
184. *Kogambia* - 1. to judge
2. Talk to somebody
185. *Sokia* - 1. Put out side
2. Milk
186. *Saria* - 1. Spoil
2. Erase
187. *Kwania* - 1. Defecate
2. To greet
188. *Sieka* - 1. Last
2. Shut
189. *Tenga* - 1. Put aside
2. Dance
190. *Eta* - 1. Walk past
2. Pass like an exam
191. *Nyora* - 1. Find
2. Give birth
192. *Genda* - 1. Go
2. Walk like a child starting to walk
193. *Bara* - 1. Count
2. Light (sun)
194. *Kama* - 1. Milking
2. Stop raining\falling
195. *Agia* - 1. Scratch
2. Hang
196. *Kuna* - 1. Touch
2. Beat thoroughly
197. *Rabia* - 1. Cut (shushing)
2. Wash, something to look neat
198. *Abwo* - 1. There (place)
2. Those (people)
199. *Asimora* - 1. Sneeze
2. He uprooted
200. *Guta* - 1. Make fire (lighting fire wood)
2. Blow (balloons)
201. *Ruga* - 1. Get married
2. Cook

202. *Kuba* - 1. Spoilt egg
2. Something not cooked well
203. *Sona* - 1. Mend cloth
2. Many people at a place
204. *Basoka* - 1. Be mad
2. Run like a calf
205. *Tweka* - 1. Put on the head
2. A lone
206. *Abusa* - 1. Finish completely
2. Sweep
207. *Robera* - 1. Stand in a line
2. Go
208. *Kweoma* - 1. Smear yourself with clay
2. Stay where not wanted
209. *Sasoka* - 1. put to dry for a while
2. To be happy
210. *Gwetora* - 1. Rest \ sleep
2. Remove something (load)
211. *Gokenga* - 1. To shield
2. Use magic to kill
212. *Gwekanya* - 1. Sit down
2. To be meek
213. *Korandia* - 1. Make something spread
2. Preach
214. *Gwata* - 1. Break
2. Demarcate
215. *Tarera* - 1. Use support to walk
2. Visit
216. *Gotachera* - 1. Use for stepping on
3. Make frequent visits
217. *Gotenenera* - 1. Stand in for some one
2. Use a tool to stand on
218. *Beka* - 1. Dress
2. Put
219. *Tura* - 1. Awaken
2. Mint like what a blacksmith does
220. *Amagoko* - 1. Hands
2. Remains of food in a sufuria
221. *Amabu* - 1. Saw dust
2. Ash
222. *Amaru* - 1. Alcohol
2. Knees
223. *Egesima* - 1. A well
2. V-shaped stick
224. *Rirongo* - 1. Celling
2. Traditional medicine for cows

225. *Egekombe* - 1. Cup
2. Knee
226. *Engende* - 1. Seed
2. Clitoris
227. *Enyeri* - 1. Udder
2. Female reproductive organ
228. *Egechege* - 1. Warts
2. Naughty\ troublesome person
229. *Ekemincha* - 1. Tail
2. Uncircumcised boy's reproductive organ
230. *Engoma* - 1. Banana leaf
2. Wind instrument
231. *Amase* - 1. Animal intestine
2. Cleared weeds
3. Stinging nettle
232. *Embare* - 1. Unruly person
2. Ground flour with large particles
233. *Egesa* - 1. A small hut
2. An empty vessel
234. *Egesero* - 1. Certificate
2. Traditional bed (made of skin)
235. *Egete* - 1. Stick
2. Traditional medicine
3. Male reproductive organ
236. *Risakara* - 1. Paper
2. Part of maize \cob\stalk
3. Money
237. *Obobe* - 1. Badness
2. Pain
238. *Chimbaratero* - 1. Footprints
2. Habits
240. *Riboa* - 1. Bundle
2. Agreement
241. *Rigena* - 1. Stone
2. An egg
242. *Omotienyi* - 1. Month
2. Menstrual period
243. *Ribeberi* - 1. A loose basket
2. A weak person
244. *Ekerandi* - 1. Guard
2. Respected person
245. *Rimisu* - 1. Smell
2. Rumours
246. *Obosani* - 1. Friendship
2. Small plates
247. *Ensa* - 1. Bundle

- 248. *Omoiri* - 2. Watch
3. An hour
- 249. *Amakondo* - 1. Relative
2. A type of a tree
- 250. *Omoyo* - 1. Dry mucus
2. Loud speakers
- 251. *Egesieri* - 1. Heart
2. Attitude (feelings)
3. Throat
- 252. *Ekebunguo* - 1. Door
2. Chapter in a book
- 253. *Omobuko* - 1. Key
2. Button
- 254. *Esike* - 1. Bag
2. Pocket
- 255. *Etebe* - 1. Cow dung
2. Mud
- 256. *Emoti* - 1. Ranks\medals
2. Drum\empty tin
- 257. *Egoree-* - 1. Rack for carrying arrows
2. A long pole
- 258. *Ekiriri* - 1. Male goat
2. Mattock
- 259. *Riswa* - 1. Shade
2. Milk gotten from a cow for the second time after calving
- 260. *Enkoro* - 1. Heap of soil. (Mole hill)
2. Part of a cow's body near the udder
- 261. *Endege* - 1. Heart
2. Shoot
- 262. *Obochuti* - 1. Pole for constructing traditional huts
2. Aeroplane
- 263. *Engoro* - 1. Tail end
2. Pistil of maize
- 264. *Ara* - 1. Hole
2. Female reproductive organ
- 265. *Ika* - 1. Make a bed
2. Scratch
- 266. *Karie* - 1. Descend like from a tree or hill
2. Arrive
- 267. *Egechanga* - 1. Eat
2. Engage in sexual intercourse
3. Take a bribe
- 268. *Etana* - 1. Metal wire
2. Needle
- 268. *Etana* - 1. Differ over something
2. By-pass each other

269. *Era* - 1. Remove chaff e.g. from grains
2. End
270. *Amache* - 1. Water
2. Alcohol
3. Male reproductive fluid
4. Urine
5. Tears
271. *Ruga* - 1. Cook
2. Annoy
272. *Ata* - 1. Sub-divide e.g. land
2. Break something e.g. a bottle
3. Run very fast
273. *Ama* - 1. Grow like a tree
2. Be extremely tired
274. *Ineka* - 1. Store bananas traditionally to ripen
2. Soak e.g. clothes
275. *Omogango* - 1. Cooking stick
2. Riffle like AK47
276. *Obosie* - 1. Flour
2. Employment/job
277. *Omote* - 1. A male reproductive organ
2. Tree
278. *Rabia* - 1. To clear a bush
2. To make bright
279. *Misa* - 1. Get dark
2. To die
3. Be quiet
280. *Ekeibi* - 1. A type of insect
2. Something that steals
281. *Rigegu* - 1. Molar tooth
2. A rich person
282. *Ramokia* - 1. Open your eyes
2. Be wiser
283. *Egechuchu* - 1. A child
2. A chick
284. *Oborera* - 1. A child
2. A maize that is not yet ripe
285. *Rosa* - 1. Get tired
2. Be pregnant
286. *Saboka* - 1. Prosper
2. A branch of a tree getting detached
3. Re-grow like tea after it has been picked
287. *Echwene* - 1. A very cunning thief
2. A very clever person
288. *Meena* - 1. Wash clean
2. Lick

289. *Bota* - 1. Frown
2. Swell e.g. fermented flour
290. *Bima* - 1. Aim at
2. Weigh
291. *Aga* - 1. Hang
2. Weed
292. *Beka* - 1. Put
2. Lay e.g. eggs
293. *Taboka* - 1. To complete
2. Get torn
294. *Emesa* - 1. table
2. Sacrament
295. *Egekongo* - 1. A wedge
2. An obstacle
296. *Ekige* - 1. A gecko
2. Traditional mat used as a door
297. *Ronda* - 1. Extract blood from a cow
2. Cleaning of intestines
298. *Omosaiga* - 1. A gemstone
2. A type of insect
299. *Egesicha* - 1. Flower
2. Girl
3. Money
300. *Etworu* - 1. Rubbish
2. Useless person

**APPENDIX C
ANALYZED DATA**

Homonymous Nouns

Word	Gloss in English
<i>Rigena-</i>	1.Egg 2. Stone
<i>Riige-</i>	1.Termite 2. A young one of a bird
<i>Ekebwe-</i>	1.Wild dog 2. Instrument for sucking blood in traditional treatment
<i>Egekondo -</i>	1. Monkey 2. Wild pumpkin
<i>Amagoko-</i>	1.Hands 2. Remains of ugali in a sufuria
<i>Amaru-</i>	1.Knees 2. Alcohol
<i>Rirongo-</i>	1.Ceiling 2. Traditional medicine for cows
<i>Engoma-</i>	1.Banana leaf 2. A wind instrument
<i>Amase-</i>	1.Animal intestine 2. Dry cleared weeds 3. Stinging nettle
<i>Amakondo-</i>	1.Dry mucous 2. Loud speakers
<i>Egesero-</i>	1.Traditional bedding (skin) 2. Certificate
<i>Richara-</i>	1.Insane/confused person 2. A big fingernail
<i>Obosani-</i>	1.Plates 2. Friendship
<i>Ensa-</i>	1.A bundle of tied grass 2. Hour/watch 3. Time
<i>Omoiri-</i>	1.Type of a tree 2. Relative
<i>Omoyo-</i>	1. Heart 2. Attitude/feelings 3. Throat
<i>Esosera-</i>	1.malaria (disease) 2. Fungi in water
<i>Omokubinyongo-</i>	1.Herbs for treatment 2. Rain ball
<i>Endege-</i>	1.Aeroplane 2. Pole
<i>Chimbata-</i>	1.Ducks

VERBS

<i>Geesa-</i>	2. Hinges 1. Stay overnight without sleep 2. Add
<i>Soa-</i>	1. Enter 2. Accuse
<i>Gera-</i>	1. Weigh 2. Cause
<i>Gotwa-</i>	1. Pluck 2. Falling of rain 3. Spit
<i>Gotura-</i>	1. Awaken 2. Minting by a blacksmith
<i>Chora-</i>	1. Pick up 2. Draw 3. Sort
<i>Tenena-</i>	1. Stand 2. Stop 3. Contest
<i>Tacha-</i>	1. Step on 2. Wean/stop breast feeding
<i>Chiika-</i>	1. Invite 2. Aim 3. Give an order
<i>Gonkia-</i>	1. Deliver a baby 2. Breast feed
<i>Buna-</i>	1. Break e.g. a stick/relationship 2. Finish a construction 3. Cause of
<i>Sangia-</i>	1. Share 2. Get
<i>Bara-</i>	1. Count 2. Sunrise/light
<i>Toma-</i>	1. Send 2. Shoot e.g. ball
<i>Bwatia-</i>	1. Warm e.g. water 2. Follow
<i>Romia-</i>	1. Give a share 2. Stick somewhere
<i>Koranda-</i>	1. Spread 2. Plane
<i>Gambera-</i>	1. Talk on behalf of somebody 2. Rule/govern
<i>Kubia-</i>	1. Cool 2. Postpone 3. Fail to hatch

<i>Tema-</i>	1. Drive cows 2. Harvest mushroom/Cut something
<i>Nacha-</i>	1. Cut e.g. a tree 2. Accuse 3. Pass verdict
<i>Agia-</i>	1. Hung something 2. Scratch
<i>Sinyana-</i>	1. Be next to 2. Differ
<i>Bonga-</i>	1. Collect together 2. Attack by weevils
<i>Roka-</i>	1. Name 2. Vomit
<i>Gecha-</i>	1. Cut e.g. a tree 2. Hate

POLYSEMOUS NOUNS

WORD	GLOSS IN ENGLISH
<i>Egechege-</i>	1. Wart 2. Naughty/troublesome person
<i>Ekemincha-</i>	1. A tail 2. A young boy's reproductive organ
<i>Egesima-</i>	1. V shaped stick 2. A well
<i>Engiti-</i>	1. Animal 2. Snake
<i>Embare-</i>	1. Unruly person 2. Ground flour with large particles 3. A type of a bird
<i>Enda -</i>	1. Pregnancy 2. Stomach
<i>Embori -</i>	1. Goat 2. Stupid person
<i>Amagoro-</i>	1. Legs 2. Support
<i>Eriso-</i>	1. Eye 2. Leader/one who can be depended upon
<i>Risase-</i>	1. Sun rays 2. Good looking person
<i>Risasi-</i>	1. Clever person 2. A bullet 3. Batteries
<i>Egete-</i>	1. Stick 2. One

	3. Male reproductive organ
<i>Rikembi-</i>	1. A thief 2. A prostitute
<i>Omonene-</i>	1. God 2. Big
<i>Enyomba-</i>	1. House 2. Clan
<i>Egekuba-</i>	1. Chest 2. Breasts
<i>Erongori-</i>	1. Porridge/uji 2. Alms/what is contributed during somebody's burial
<i>Ekeraka-</i>	1. Patch on a piece of clothing 2. A shot (from a ball)
<i>Omogoye-</i>	1. Rope 2. Tie 3. Umbilical cord
<i>Endetere-</i>	1. Seed 2. Tablet
<i>Oborito-</i>	1. Luggage 2. Pregnancy
<i>Omwoqe-</i>	1. Sharp 2. Wise person
<i>Riiko -</i>	1. Dirt 2. Abuses
<i>Obokongu-</i>	1. Hard times 2. Misfortune 3. Funeral
<i>Omworokiwa-</i>	1. Student 2. Apostle
<i>Enswē-</i>	1. Fish 2. Respected person
<i>Endagera -</i>	1. Food 2. Bribe
<i>Enchogu-</i>	1. Big person 2. Elephant
<i>Obooro-</i>	1. Slept over ugali 2. A gentle person

VERBS

<i>Soka-</i>	1. Get out 2. Get married 3. Be unfaithful
<i>Riika-</i>	1. Write 2. Employ
<i>Aka-</i>	1. Give a bribe

	2. Polish (shoes)
<i>Rara-</i>	1.Sleep 2. Die
<i>Nyunyunta-</i>	1.Suck 2. Kiss
<i>Tuguta-</i>	1.Throw away 2. Bury
<i>Monyoka-</i>	1.run 2. Diarrhea
<i>Timoka-</i>	1.Rest 2. Die
<i>Bokia-</i>	1.Replough 2. Awaken
<i>Mera-</i>	1.Swallow 2. Forgive
<i>Nyonka-</i>	1.Sniff 2. Investigate
<i>Kayie-</i>	1.Burn 2. Incur a loss
<i>Kon'ga-</i>	1.Be mature 2. Be tough
<i>Tieria-</i>	1.Sharpen 2. Educate
<i>Takuna-</i>	1.Chew 2. Think
<i>Sieka-</i>	1.Close 2. Be the last e.g. in class
<i>Tega-</i>	1.Trip 2. Trick
<i>Orokia-</i>	1.Show 2. Teach
<i>Barira-</i>	1.Be ripe 2. Be red 3. Get annoyed
<i>Sabusia-</i>	1.Rinse 2. Finish a task
<i>Tokera-</i>	1.Get dirty 2. Get annoyed
<i>Miamia-</i>	1.Close eyes 2. Die
<i>Riina-</i>	1.Climb 2. Have sexual relationship
<i>Misa -</i>	1.Get dark 2. Die 3. Be quiet
<i>Bereka -</i>	1. Carry by tying to the back

Gotindia-

2. Flowering of maize

1. Make drunk

2. Tire

Ruga

1. To cook

2. Get married

3. To annoy

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