# INFLUENCE OF GENDERED LINGUISTIC IMAGES ON GIRL EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF SOUTHERN KISII DISTRICT, KENYA

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A research project submitted to Graduate School in partial fulfillment for the requirements of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Language and Linguistics of Egerton University.

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# DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

## DECLARATION

This is my original work and has not yet been presented for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

Sign:----------------------------------------    Date:-- 09/10/2009

GEORGE E. ABERI

## RECOMMENDATION

This MA research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor.

Sign............................................    Date.......... 9/10/09

DR FELICIA YIEKE

# DEDICATION

Dedicated to the memory of my late father; papa Elizaphan Aberi and mama Priscillah Kwamboka

and

to my loving wife Jane and children: Bryan Mphalele and Aghata Kwamboka
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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine the dialectical relationship between gendered linguistic images and girls' self-concept, participation and completion of secondary schooling. The study sought to evaluate the Gusii gendered linguistic and symbolic (semiotic) structures for their semantic consequences on Gusii girls (between ages 14-19) whose first language is Ekegusii. The study was interested in the language factor, the linguistic and semiotic structures (within the Gusii speech community) that help to shape and constrain the Gusii girls' self-concept and attitudes towards education. This study presented specific gendered linguistic images that characterize the differing girls' participation and retention rates in secondary schooling. Particularly, the analysis of gendered linguistic images was restricted to linguistic forms extracted from the Gusii speech community; proverbs, derogatory terms, common nouns, and verbs for their form and intrinsic value. Further to this, the research also analyzed symbolic (semiotic) cultural norms/practices; payment of bride price, wife beating, property ownership and inheritance rights, biased parental attitudes and household/domestic chores for their connotative and semiotic meanings that serve to subvert the Gusii girls' self-definition and perceptions. The study was based on Critical Discourse Analysis as the interpretive and theoretical framework, and Bandura's Social Learning Theory. The theories benefited the study in terms of perspective, practical approaches and analytical tools. Considering that Critical Discourse Analysis allows for triangulation, twenty-four teachers were given questionnaires with closed and open ended questions to respond to. Similarly, forty-eight girls aged between 14-19 were interviewed in focus groups. The study established that the discursive use of Ekegusii discourses serves to construct the Gusii girls' perverted self concept and world view that are incongruent with their educational aspirations. The findings from this study will contribute to knowledge in the area of Applied Linguistics by showing how language planners can inculcate issues of gender equality into the curriculum.

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# ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| CDA | - | Critical Discourse Analysis |
| CLARION | - | Centre for law and Research International |
| ICRW | - | International Center for Research on Women |
| IDA | - | International Development Association |
| FAWE | - | Forum for African women Educationalists |
| MOE | - | Ministry of Education |

# CHAPTER ONE
## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Education is vital to ensuring a better quality of life for all children and a better world for all people. According to the International Development Association (IDA), Education empowers people to take charge of their lives and make informed choices besides giving a voice to the disadvantaged groups in society (FAWE, 1999). In Africa, millions of girls compared to boys are believed to be dropping out of school raising their number from twenty million in 1990 to twenty four million in 2002 (MOE, 1998).

Though some gender equity has been incrementally achieved in primary and secondary enrolment, the proportion of girls that drop out of secondary schooling constitutes a higher percentage as compared to that of boys (CLARION, 2004). Arguably, the higher dropout rates for the Kenyan girls compared to that of boys manifest the marginalization of girls in education.

Statistics show that the girl child is more disadvantaged than the boy child in terms of enrolment, performance, retention, completion and transition from primary to secondary and secondary to university. This scenario underpins the Ministry of Education's endeavours to eliminate gender disparities and promote equity through provision of basic education to all children (MOE, 1998). The table below confirms that boys' enrolment in secondary school have remained higher than those of girls over the years.

**Table1: Percentage Distribution of Secondary School Enrolment by Gender in Selected Years, 1963-1998**

| Year | 1963 | 1965 | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 | 1998 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | 68.2 | 72.4 | 70.4 | 64.1 | 59.3 | 61.8 | 57.2 | 54.1 | 53.3 |
| Female | 31.8 | 27.6 | 29.6 | 35.9 | 40.7 | 38.2 | 42.8 | 45.9 | 46.7 |

**Source: Ministry of Education and Human Resource Development (1998)**

A critical observation of the persistent low participation and retention rates of girls in secondary education call for an increased and focused effort by all groups in society including

linguists to help alleviate this shortcoming. However, in spite of the varied investigations by a wide variety of scholars on this problem of girls' low participation and completion of secondary schooling, very few linguists have shown interest in addressing the inequality. Most of the research data available is by educationists and it does not focus on language and gender as it relates to girl education. Eshiwani (1985) for instance, has studied the dismal performance of girls in national examinations. Kigai (1998) has focused on factors contributing to girls' dropout from secondary schooling in Mt. Elgon District. This research observes that being educationists, Eshiwani and Kigai's perspective is pedagogical and not linguistic.

The following table confirms that girls' enrolment in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) has been below that of the boys all the years because of the large number of girls dropping out before reaching form four.

**Table2: Enrolment for KCSE by Gender in Southern Kisii District**

| Years | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 |
|-------|------|------|------|
| Boys  | 3966 | 4190 | 4880 |
| Girls | 2567 | 2586 | 3048 |
| Total | 6533 | 6776 | 7945 |

**Source: DEO's Office, Southern Kisii District (2005)**

Though the free primary education policy has increased enrolment opportunities for girls to access basic education, a large proportion of girls tend to withdraw before the final examination year of high school in Southern Kisii District, Kenya.

The current study focuses on the gendered linguistic and semiotic images within the Gusii speech community that are part of the factors distorting girls' self-concept hence their apathy towards education. Notably, majority of the studies on this social problem have been done by educationists who do not refer to issues of language and gender, particularly, as they relate to girl education. For instance, Onchangu (1998) has examined the factors influencing students' dropout from secondary schools in Kisii District, Masimba Division, while Choti (1998) and Okindo (1995) have studied sexism and the subjugation of the Gusii woman (discussed herein) with no reference to issues of girl education. This confirmed that little was known about the influence of gendered linguistic images on girls' self image and attitude towards education.

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## 1.2 Origins of the Gusii Speech Community

Ekegusii is the language of Abagusii of Western Kenya. The Abagusii are a linguistic community (Bantu speaking community). They currently live in kisii highlands; their immediate neighbours are the Luos to the West and North, the Maasai to the East and the Kipsigis to the South.

The Abagusii claim to be descendants of Mogusii son of Osogo, who was a brother to Mulogoli and Andimi. The Gusii people claim their ancestral home to be *Misiri* (a place beyond the northern borders of Uganda. It is claimed that from Misiri, they came with the Suba, Abakuria, Kikuyu, Bukusu, Maragoli, Meru, Embu and Kamba (Ochieng, 1986). Afterwards, Abagusii, Maragoli, suba and Abakuria migrated southwards following the course of River Nzoia and arrived at the Northern part of lake Victoria a round 1500 and 1560 A.D. They are said to have moved eastwards along the lake shore and settled around Goya Bay in Yimbo location of Siaya District in Kenya, where they are believed to have lived as fishermen before fleeing the Nilotes to their present homeland (Kisii highlands). It is argued that Mogusii and Mulogoli were born here ( Ochieng, 1986). It is believed that Mogusii was their founder and from whom the Gusii people took their name; Abagusii means the people of Mogusii.

At this time, the history of the groups; Gusii, Logoli, Suba and Kuria seem to have been the same. It is suggested that these groups were one people with one culture and that their different names might have developed much later than they had separated into their present homeland. Later the Gusii people, their families and neighbours migrated from Goya because of the Luo migration into the region, who were also cattle keepers. Therefore, they begun to differ over grazing land; Abagusii migrated from Yimbo because they could not stand pressure from the Luo emigrants (Ogoti, 1978). They later settled in Kisumu location but could not stay for long due to the prolonged droughts in the area which resulted to famine. They thus moved southwards in search of fertile land and landed on the Kano plains to the eastern side of the Nyanza Gulf ( Ochieng, 1986). It is argued that they stayed here for quite along period of time, over hundred years (from around 1644-1755).

As they moved from Kano plains, they were already divided into their various totemic clans; *Mugirango*(leopard), *Basi* (Zebra) *Kitutu, Mugisero, Majoge* (Ape), and Wanjare (Hippotamus). By this time, they were a large community with several clans and sub clans. Between 1750 and 1850, the Gusii experienced several hardships. To begin with, they were driven from Kano

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settlement by the Luo (led by Ramogi Ajwang), who were migrating from Siaya District and another from (Jo-kano), migrating from South Nyanza into Kano plains (Ochieng, 1986). Thus, the Abagusii were pushed out of Kano plains to *Kabianga* in Kericho district, where they again settled for many years. The Gusii found Kabianga to be wet and cold throughout the year; their plants like millet and pumpkins could not do well. Many of their animals died and because their crops had failed, famine broke out which killed many people. They thus named this place *Kabianga,* meaning nothing could survive. The Kipsigis later constantly attacked them (Abagusii) forcing them further south into Maasai land. Between 1789 and 1809. The Maasai also repeatedly attacked the Gusii people, leaving them in a confused and broken state.

It is argued that the first group composed of kitutu, Nyaribari and a subset of Mugirango people settled in the present Kisii town. This group was later forced out to Manga escarpment by the Maasai.

The second group which included the *Majoge, Bassi* and a section of *Mugirango* escaped to *Nyakige* in Maasai land and later to *Esuguta ya muunde* then to luo of kabwoch. Others of mixed group of Bassi, Sweta, Girango, Nchari seem to have escaped to Suba land in Migori area, as Nchari moved north-Westwards and took refuge in Nyakoe forest in Wanjare location of Central Kisii District.

Finally, the Gusii settled in their present day home between 1830 and 1853. This was necessitated by the decline in power of the Maasai cattle rustlers. All the groups dispossessed began to resettle in their former areas peacefully under leaders like Nyakundi. Those groups that settled at Kabwochi, Karachwonyo and Kanyamwa had difficult life as servants to the Luos. They thus decided to move and settle at their present area (Kisii highlands).

### 1.2.1 Culture and Traditions of the Gusii People

The Gusii people's culture and traditions greatly determine their way of life; there are varied traditions that define the Gusii culture (Ogoti, 1978). These were passed from one generation to another orally through story telling, riddling sessions, using proverbs and other language forms. Through this language structures, young people learn and internalize the Gusii virtues and vices. This study however focused only on the following Gusii social cultural norms that were considered relevant for the present study.

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## 1.2.1.1 Institution of Marriage

According to the Gusii people, every normal person who attained the age of marriage was expected to get married and beget children who were highly valued in society. This way, marriage was respected considering its ability to assure a family of its continuity and lineage (Ogoti, 1978). This explains why a woman who fails to beget children is scorned at and labeled *ritinge* (a concubine), if she divorces and marries another man with the aim of enhancing her chances of getting children, in case her former husband was impotent. The same woman was / is considered immoral and labeled *rirogo* (a prostitute) to imply an immoral person.

Likewise, when a man attained the age of marriage, his parents were under obligation to search for a wife for him. It is in this respect that girls were viewed as a source of wealth to their parents upon marriage, hence why the Gusii people invented proverbs like: *Onabaiseke bange nkerandikiamabere botaka na botakoera* (He who has many daughters is a gourd of milk that will never go dry). This meant that whoever had many daughters was assured of over flowing milk (livelihood) upon their marriage, through the payment of bride price, paid by the family of the bridegroom.

## 1.2.1.2 Child Birth and Upbringing

According to the Gusii people, the birth of a child in marriage served to solemnize the marriage (Ngoko and Boera, 1980). This explains why couples who could not get children were looked down upon. In this regard, a woman was only respected if she had the ability to beget children. This further explains why the Gusii people came up with proverbs like: *totogia moiseke kieni, motogie mwana* (never praise a girl for her beauty, but rather for giving birth), meaning that a woman's sole role was seen as that of begetting children and fending for her husband and the children.

Similarly, the Gusii people display gender bias against the girl child from birth. That is, once a baby boy is born, women make several ululations to announce his arrival, while the birth of a baby girl is marked with very few ululations (even two), a communization that girls are less valued than boys. This way, the birth of a baby boy serves to assure a marriage of its continuity (Ngoko and Boera, 1980). This further explains why the Gusii people invented proverbs in praise of boys. An example of such proverbs include: *Ngongo machaywa imbamura etabwati* (for a region to be disrespected, then it is because of its lack of boys or men). This meant that only

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boys could assure the society of security and protection in the event of war; boys were / are believed to keep the family name as opposed to girls who upon marriage shift to another clan.

Our linguistic analysis of the Gusii linguistic structures revealed that such gendered treatment of children more so, girls is responsible for the Gusii girls' impaired self-concept and perceptions about the world.

### 1.2.1.3 Leadership among the Gusii People

From time immemorial, the Gusii people take leadership to be a preserve for men in society. Their first leader, *Omoruoti* (King) led all members in society. Under him were the so called abatureti (clan elders) who were chosen considering their leadership qualities. Polygamous men who managed their families well stood a better chance of being chosen as clan elders (Ochieng, 1986).

*Omoruoti* (king), together with *abatureti* (clan elders) helped in solving conflicts like land disputes and fights among members of the family. In this respect, women were assumed to belong to the homestead where their role was that of fending for their husbands and children. Our research established a dialectal link between the concept of domestic chores (taken to be a preserve for girls and women), and the Gusii girls' lack of exposure, low self image and perverted attitudes towards issues affecting them ( women and girls) in society more so, education.

### 1.2.1.4 Property Ownership and Inheritance

In the Gusii speech community, only boys have the right to inherit their parents' property. This practice is historical in as far as girls were and are still not allowed to inherit their parents' property more so, land. Being a male dominated society, this cultural practice is based on the patriarchal belief that only boys are capable of keeping the family name (Ngoko and Boera, 1980); Women's lack of ownership of property shows that women occupy a low status compared to their male counterparts in society.

### 1.2.1.5 Economic Activities

The Gusii people are small scale farmers who grow crops like Tea, maize, sorghum, millet, sweet potatoes, coffee, beans and bananas among other crops. They also keep animals like cattle,

sheep, goats, cats and goats. These animals are a valuable asset in marriage where they are paid to the parents of the bride as bride price. Their farming activities stretch back to their stay in mount Elgon where a prolonged drought killed much of their livestock and crops, forcing them to move eastwards along the shores of lake Victoria into the Kano plains where they met other Bantu speaking people, who were fishermen and cultivators of millet, bananas and root crops (Ochieng, 1986).

## 1.3 Statement of the Problem

Though scholars from diverse scholarly backgrounds have examined the problem of girls' low participation and retention in secondary schooling, linguists have not systematically addressed this social problem hitherto. There is insufficient research data on the influence of gendered linguistic images on girls' self concept and concern for formal education. Therefore, the influence of gendered linguistic images on girls' self concept and attitude towards formal education is not known

## 1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study sought to examine the influence of gendered linguistic images on the Gusii girls' self-concept and attitude towards education. Specifically, the objectives were:

1 To establish whether the Gusii speech community has in-built gendered linguistic images.

2 To investigate how gendered linguistic images influence the Gusii girls' self- concept and world view.

3. To determine the implications of gendered linguistic images on girls' attitude towards formal education.

## 1.5 Research Questions

1. Does the Gusii speech community have in-built gendered linguistic images?

2. How do the gendered linguistic images influence the Gusii girls' self-concept and attitude towards formal education?

3. What are the implications of gendered linguistic images on the Gusii girls' self image and attitude towards formal education?

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

Recommendations from the findings of this study may be useful to language planners in their efforts to mainstream gender strategies into the planning and implementation of language policies.

The findings from this study may contribute to knowledge in the area of Applied Linguistics by showing how language planners can inculcate issues of social justice, such as gender equality into the curriculum.

## 1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study was limited to analyzing Ekegusii gendered linguistic structures (common nouns, proverbs, verbs, and derogatory terms) and symbolic / semiotic cultural practices (payment of bride price, property ownership and inheritance rights, wife beating, biased parental attitudes and domestic/household chores).

The researcher observed that it would have been possible to get data from boys but this could have taken him out of focus besides making his work heavy and unbearable. Further, this research implicates boys as being those addressed favourably by the adult members of the Gusii speech community, who use language discursively to denigrate girls and women. Therefore, the researcher felt that they (boys) may lack the native shrewdness to realize the effect caused by the use of gendered language on the Gusii girls' self concept and world view; their use in this research would have greatly reduced the validity of the research findings.

Similarly, female secondary school dropouts and parents would have been contacted and interviewed on reasons for girls' low participation and completion of secondary schooling, but this was not possible for this study considering the size of data required for analysis. This explains why the study focused on secondary school female students per se. Also the research was limited to Southern Kisii District, designated as a rural area. This being a socio-cultural study, the researcher hoped that his familiarity with the Gusii cultural set up could help him enhance better management of the study. Similarly, considering that the researcher had not been granted a study leave, Southern Kisii district was convenient to him because this enabled him continue attending to his duties at his work station while undertaking the research.

## 1.8 Definition of Terms

**Discourse:** refers to the words and language we use, which help to shape and constrain our identities, relationships and systems of knowledge and beliefs (McGregor, 2003). Discourse is herein taken to mean the choice and use of socially acceptable language and other symbolic expressions of thinking, believing, valuing and acting that help one identify himself/herself as a member of a given social group.

**Discursive practices**: refer to the spoken and unspoken rules and conventions within a given speech community, which govern how people learn to think, act and speak in all the social positions they occupy.

**Gender:** refers to the ways in which social and culturally defined differences between men and women (whether real or perceived), have been valued, used and relied upon to classify women and men and to assign roles and expectations for them.

**Girl Education:** refers to the act and / or process of imparting or acquiring knowledge by girls and young women through teaching and learning, at schools and colleges. It (girl education) involves supporting and expanding educational opportunities for girls and women to equal those of boys and men.

**Ideology:** is a body of ideas, beliefs and concepts (both intellectual and psychological), that determine one's way of thinking.

**Images** are considered to be mental pictures or conceptions held by individuals (in this research girls) often formed though a type of stereotyping or inculcation process

**Linguistic Images**; refer to word symbols, names, linguistic expressions, symbolic cultural practices and their underlying semantic meanings that serve as structures, (both intellectual and psychological guides) to one's self definition and view of the world

**Linguistic structures:** taken to mean the language and symbolic systems espoused by members of a given speech community, which they use in human interaction and / or communication.

**Text**: used in an extended semiotic sense, to refer to the Pragmatic use of language and symbolic structures within a given social context to define and position people in that speech community.

**Stereotype**: is a fixed formalized or (and therefore perhaps false) phrase, idea or beliefs which can be used without thoughts or change.

## CHAPTER TWO
## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

Here, four aspects of related literature were examined. First, literature on linguistic images and semantic representation of meaning, literature on gender discourses, literature on girl education and finally, literature on critical perspectives on orientation to reality. The chapter also focused on the theoretical framework based on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Bandura's social learning theory, adopted by the study.

### 2.2 Linguistic Images and Semantic Representation of Meaning

Husser and Edmund (1980) define images as pictorial consciousness; something perceptually imagined. The scholars further observe that images stimulate perceptual experiences and were thus able to build on the interpretive schemas used in the on-going practice of everyday life. Notably, perceptually imagined experiences (beliefs, volitions, needs, views, feelings and values), represent a people's world as being in a certain way; they reveal a people's linguistic tradition which tells us how certain meanings are mapped to bring out the intended world view.

On their part, Langacker (1991) and Lakoff (1987) view an image as a cognitive structure which had two planes (conceptual and verbal); the image underlay a textual world with its micro and macro-structures which influence the interpretation of a text and that this interpretation depends on one's background knowledge. This viewpoint was reiterated by Hudelot et al. (2004) who posit that linguistic images have semantic content and that image interpretation depends on *apriori* semantic and contextual knowledge. The scholars further reaffirmed that semantics was not inside the image.

According to Pylyshyn (1973), linguistic images are constructed from aspects of the world, which we notice; images draw significance from the physical and cultural environment of those who use them (Sunkuli and Miruka, 1990). On their part, Steffensen et al. (1999) note that images restrict linguistic representation; the verbal system specializes in the representation of linguistic information while the non –verbal system specializes in the representation of images. This suggests that many aspects of meaning are the result of the verbalization process; the semantic meanings of images become evident via the verbalization process.

Quoting Saussure (1913), Adams and Seale (1965) argue that the meaning of any sign (linguistic image) is found in the association created between sound image and the concept. That is, a linguistic sign (herein linguistic image) is a combination of a signifier (herein words, names, linguistic expressions and semiotic terms) and a referent. The scholars further noted that any system of signs made up of the signifier and the signified is a semiotic or signifying system. This suggests that linguistic images are symbolic and semantic in nature; they are only understood indirectly via their relationship to directly understood concepts. Arguably, symbolic semantic knowledge helps in image interpretation.

Against this background, the current study took linguistic images to include word symbols, names, linguistic expressions, symbolic cultural practices and their underlying semantic meaning that become structures ( both intellectual and psychological ) which serve to guide girls' self definition and view of the world. This was what the current study tried to unravel.

## 2.3 Gender Discourses

According to Butler (1990), most of us experience ourselves as gendered beings; we become implicated in the construction of ourselves as gendered and sexual. She further asserts that we are involved in our construction as we work to achieve what may only be an ascribed status. This implies that a systematic analysis of gendered linguistic structures within the Gusii speech community could help reveal how the Gusii girls are constructed as gendered beings with ascribed statuses. Butler therefore, does provide a valuable perspective for this particular study. To this end, the present study observed that the line taken by Butler could present a useful starting point in the researcher's examination of the implications of such ideological perspectives on girls' view of the world, more so, in matters relating to their education.

While examining issues of gender and interaction in the Kenyan science classroom, Kitetu (1998) succinctly notes how language used in the teaching and learning of sciences is implicated in constituting and positioning girls and boys differently. Judging from teachers' language (tone of voice), she notes that girls and boys were treated differently. That is, boys were normally talked to in a very harsh tone while girls were treated politely. She also observes that the school culture endorses corporal punishment but girls were treated specially. In the physics laboratory sessions, she found out that girls never handled the laboratory equipment. The same observations were made in the computer room where boys touched and used the keyboard and the mouse as

girls watched and only wrote notes; girls were not in charge. She concluded that this gendered differentiation in the treatment of boys and girls was not good for the girl child. That is, girls become less aggressive in their educational endeavours. She further observed that girls were treated properly but never aroused to strive harder.

Whereas Kitetu looked at how the discursive practices of the classroom made girls feel gendered hence their lack of aggressiveness in the educational process, the current study sought to examine how the discursive use of the Gusii linguistic structures make girls feel gendered hence their negative self concept that characterize their lack of concern for academic success, evidenced in their continual withdrawal from secondary schooling.

Sadker and Sadker (1994) echoes Kitetu's viewpoint in their research on how schools short-change girls. They observe that many teachers tend to praise, correct, help and criticize boys while girls are largely overlooked. Teachers were also found to ask boys more complex, abstract and open questions besides giving them more detailed instructions. The researchers note that all these factors foster self-esteem and achievement in boys at the expense of girls' development. They conclude that such biased treatment force girls to stop being players and become the audience hence their consequent low performance and dropout from secondary schooling. They also assert that until educational sexism is eradicated, more than half our children will be short-changed and their gifts lost to society.

Bailey (1992) observed that the socialization of gender within our schools ensures that girls are made aware that they are unequal to boys. In this respect, teachers socialize girls towards a feminine ideal. She further noted that girls were socialized in schools to recognize popularity as being important and learn that educational performance and ability were not that important; boys on the other hand are more likely to rank independence and competence as more important. The current study acknowledges the role of the above said revelations for the persistent and glaring discrepancies in the academic attitudes and achievements between boys and girls in secondary schooling.

Though this study acknowledged Kitetu, Bailey, and Sadker and Sadkar's observations above, the researcher noted that the researchers ignored the fact that understanding girls' problem was inseparably bound up with clarifying the question of their (girls') lack of concern for academic achievement. This understanding was the propelling force behind this research.

Trudgill (1973) investigates the linguistic differences between men and women in society. The researcher observes that the evident linguistic differences between men and women were the result of linguistic acculturation; men are given opportunity to express their emotions with impunity whereas women are denied opportunity. This suggests that the way boys and girls are socialized may come to affect their response to gender related issues. Therefore, the kind of gender socialization that boys and girls undergo makes them to develop certain patterns of behaviour related to gender, which could be manifested in social interactions. The present research recognized that Trudgill did not point out the fact that sex differences accruing from gender socialization could be solved through schooling. That way, making girls aware of such inequality was to some degree a positive step towards eliminating barriers to girls' success in society. This was the major task of the present study.

According to Ngwana and Ogojo (1996), many societies place higher value on males than females. From infancy, they argued, girls may receive less food than boys and less medical attention when sick. In another research on gender norms that place girls at risk of sexual violence including rape and domestic violence, El-zanty and Shawky (1996) found out in their demographic survey in Egypt that 86 percent of the more than 3300 women interviewed believed that wife beating by their husbands was justified under some circumstances such as talking back or refusing to have sex. The highest percentage of those who believed that wife beating was justified; included girls aged 15 to 19. This study noted that such gendered norms were part of many other gendered norms that present gendered messages to the girls, which in effect creates in girls a feeling of low self-esteem that demotivate and impair their active role in the public domain more so in their educational efforts.

Choti (1998) examined the linguistic portrayal of the Gusii women. In his case, he evaluated Ekegusii metaphors, nouns, and similes for their sexist manifestations. He concluded that both Ekegusii usage and form illustrate a gender hierarchy in which Gusii men and women were portrayed as the privileged and the subjugated categories respectively. In his analysis of the Gusii philosophy concerning the male and female gender, Choti evaluates the Gusii verbs, pronouns and derogatory terms. He asserts that these forms portrayed women as passive participants on the receiving end of the participant continuum. Likewise, Choti did not refute the possibility that the above-mentioned linguistic forms could depress the Gusii girls' self-definition and academic aspirations that were of paramount concern for this study. In addition,

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this study presupposed a direct relationship between the active-passive relationship between men and women and girls' low educational outcomes. Also, whereas Choti's research looked at how such gendered linguistic forms are used to engender the subjugation of the Gusii women, this research looked at how these forms help to impair the Gusii girls' self appraisal and intellectual attitudes.

On his part, Okindo (1995) researched on sexism in Ekegusii by analyzing the proverbs of the language. He concluded that Ekegusii proverbs undermine women in general terms. He argued that though some of the proverbs reflect areas of success for women in society, such achievements are always appended to men. On his part, Achebe (1958) presented a different view from that of Okindo, by arguing that proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten'. This implies that 'proverbs are an embellishment that serves to enliven language (speech) by adding flavour, life and colour; language use without proverbs sounds dry and boring. In this regard, Achebe views proverbs as being a rich source of entertainment and aesthetic value that give life both colour and meaning. The current study acknowledged Okindo and Achebe's observations, but sought to move a notch higher to examine how the Gusii proverbs and other gendered linguistic forms serve to reinforce sexist norms that work to subvert the Gusii girls' worldview.

Owing to the fact that gender and sexuality are theoretically interconnected (Nicholson, 1994), this study undoubtedly benefited from Okindo and Choti's data on the Gusii gendered linguistic forms that are not value free reflections of fact, but a reinforcement of sexism and inequality that enforce girls' negative self image and diminished intellectual attitudes.

Okindo and Choti have studied sexism and the subjugation of the Gusii woman. Girls' response to such sexist norms has been ignored. That is, the researchers mainly focused on sexism and the portrayal of the Gusii woman. They never pointed out how such biased portrayal serve to subvert the Gusii girls' way of thinking. However, the scholars' investigations above were helpful for the study in that the researchers had studied the same linguistic community that was of concern for this study. Thus, the current study hoped to benefit immensely from their findings.

Buwembo (2004) notes that the capture and shooting of twenty poachers by wildlife protection authorities in Kasese District-Uganda, left scores of women husbandless; without shepherds. Notably, this perception of males as shepherds by their wives was passed on to their

daughters who also could believe that their future needs were guaranteed by their husbands. Bandura (1986) who argues that young girls may be accustomed to thinking that their needs are always guaranteed and make little struggle to meet their future needs, also makes this observation. This research observed that Buwembo did not tell us how girls and young women can move out of this narrow mindedness. Specifically, no reference was made to education as one of the ways of ensuring girls' freedom from such repugnant cultural beliefs that subjugate women. It was for this reason, that the current study considered girls' education an important issue for linguistic investigation.

Yieke (2001) argues that the biased portrayal of women in school textbooks and children's fiction had attracted a great deal of feminist research. She further observes that in many of the children's books, women are portrayed in certain stereotypical ways such as homemakers and mothers who are only capable of certain chores like washing dishes, caring for children and house keeping. She also notes that female children were restricted to functions such as helping their mothers in the kitchen and playing with dolls. She concluded that exposure to such biased literatures only served to restrict the choices available for girls, especially in the public domain.

Obura (1991) evaluates the portrayal of girls and women in Kenyan primary school texts. The researcher observes that they are underrepresented and stereotyped as subordinate to men; they are also portrayed as domestic workers whereas men eke out a living in towns. On the same issue, Nkinyangi (1984) examines gender in the Kenyan primary schools with the aim of unraveling the messages of gender conveyed by primary school texts. His research discovered that women are stereotyped as domestic workers while men own property and work away from home. He further observes that boys are shown as more inventive while girls remain supportive to their mothers within the homestead. Though the current research recognized these findings, it observed that gender socialization goes beyond school texts. Similarly, though the researchers above confirm that societal structures help perpetuate the subordination of girls and women; they did not consider how such stereotyped portrayal of girls and women help to mediate girls' self-concept and perception of the world. This study thus considered the vacuum above a legitimate cause for concern, hence the launching of this particular research.

Obura (1991) and Swann (1992) reiterate that language has been used to advance subordinate positions for women as reflected in textbooks found in schools. Their studies suggest that books can give an implicit kind of discourse in relation to accepted gender statuses and restrictions.

They recommend that schools should use texts that advocate gender equality. On the same note, Lanya (2001) presents a similar view, after examining Teachers' and Students' responses to gender themes in texts. He observed that schools are part of the many social institutions whose attitudes and practices are responsible for positioning girls and women as being different from men. This far, the present study acknowledged Obura, Swann and Lanya's recognition of the role of the school in addressing issues of gender inequality and other forms of injustice in society. However, the scholars did not mention the effect of such knowledge and enforced images of subordinate positions for women, on girls' self-concept and concern for academic success. It is for this reason that this study pioneered research in this direction.

Glass (1995) focused on students' responses in a research on text analysis in relation to gender. In this respect, she considered character naming, pronoun count, choice and use of verbs by each character. She found out that females are looked down upon and made to feel inferior through the use of pronouns, names and verbs. This research observed that though she found out that females are looked down upon and made to feel inferior through the use of the above said grammatical items, she didn't proceed to tell us how such biased portrayal of females can be challenged. This study also observed that whereas Glass addresses the effect of the grammatical items in books (texts), the current research sought to examine these forms in their usage in the social life within the Gusii speech community and as they relate to issues of girl education.

Matiangi (1992) attempts a literary analysis of the images of the African Woman in Buchi Emecheta's fictional works. He reveals from the study that African traditions and customs are the main source of the African woman's tribulations. Alluding to Emecheta's position on the plight of the African woman, the researcher observes that life would be better lived if some African customs and traditions like wife inheritance, payment of bride price and polygamy among many more were discarded altogether. Matiangi's view was echoed by Longariton (1995) who posits that many parents in Africa view an illiterate girl as a source of wealth, as she will get married and fetch a handsome bride price. This, the scholar argued, is unlike an educated girl, who might decide never to get married despite her parents' troubles. This research noticed that though Matiangi's perspective was in the crux of the present study, he did not give us even one mechanism through which the above said repugnant customs and traditions can be challenged. The present study recognized the school as one of the institutions that can engender the elimination of such rootless customs and traditions that subjugate women.

So far, the literature reviewed above reveal that much of the research data on linguistics has tended to be limited to written texts. This confirmed the little attention by linguists to the problem of girls' low participation and completion of secondary schooling.

## 2.4 Discourses on Girl Education

According to Afshar and Dennis (1992), the exclusion of women from large areas of education is not based on reality or even law, but rather on the ideological definition of women as domestic and dependent beings. They further assert that the idea that education is wasted on women is a prevalent one and not only voiced by the men in charge, but also by some women who are supposed to defend women's interests. This study posited that the history of exclusion and marginalization of girls and women from the education sector offers testimony for the current investigation. Therefore, targeted interventions by all groups and institutions capable of engendering change are needed to help girls equalize their chances of schooling to those of boys.

King (1990) points out that failure to raise women's education to be at bar with men's, exacts a high development cost in lost opportunities to raise productivity, income, and improve the quality of life. She adds that without government commitment to girls' education, the productive potential of much of the third world's labour force will remain untapped. The present research noted the need to step up immediate interventions to create an enabling environment for girls and women to complete their education without interruption. This requires the support of all members in the society including linguists.

Yates (1993) analyzes factors that impact upon girls' school choices and outcomes. She points out that girls are often harassed and silenced by boys, more so their male classmates. This, she argues, suppresses girls' academic achievements.

Notably, these research findings did not support the conclusion that boys and girls are significantly different in terms of their intellectual abilities, but rather aim at addressing issues that deny girls enough intellectual space and opportunity for academic success.

Gausted (1991) and Martin and Greenwood (1995) argue that there appears to exist a little difference in dropout rates of girls and boys in America due to behavioural difficulties affecting both sexes. The researchers cite problems of teenage pregnancy and marriage, search for employment, poor academic performance, peer relationships, single parenting and criminalization of student behaviour, as part of the causes for the dropping out of girls and boys

from high school. They concluded that the likelihood of living in poverty is nearly three times higher for high school dropouts than for those who finish high school. This understanding is in line with that of Adams (1980) who reaffirms that dropouts tend to suffer chronic unemployment, unstable family lives and limited future prospects; restricted or blocked educational opportunities typically result in constricted or impoverished conditions for those denied in a large number of societies, majority of whom happen to be women (Soroka and Bryjack, 1999).

Evidently, whereas Gausted (1991) and Martin and Greenwood (1995) look at the social and economic factors that force girls and boys to drop out of secondary schooling, the current study strived to examine factors that are gendered and linguistic in orientation. In addition, whereas the scholars focus on factors affecting both boys and girls, the current study narrows down to focus on girls as the objects of the research. Similarly, the contextual background of the above researches and the present study were socially and geographically different. This viewpoint is echoed by UNICEF (1999), which asserts that each region, district or community has its own unique contextual factors that hinder or help girls' enrolment, participation and retention in school.

In his research on the factors affecting female education at secondary and tertiary institutions, Mukiibi (1998) indicates that eighty percent of the dropouts are female and twenty percent male and that the majority of the girls who drop out of school do not return. The research singled out issues to do with teenage marriages, cultural beliefs, low economic resources, lack of parental influence and guidance as part of the factors thwarting girls' effort to acquire education.

Davison (1993) echoes Mukiibi's sentiments in the study on attitudes of Kenyan and Malawian rural parents towards educating girls. His research shows that gender inequalities in school attainment including opportunities for enrollment and retention are attributable to multiple and often interrelated factors. The current study extended Mukiibi and Davison's line of thinking to propose that there are clear grounds for reconsidering this social inequality from the linguistics perspective. This was in view of their observation that gender inequalities in girls' education are attributed to multiple and often interrelated factors.

Kigai (1998) and Kamau (1998) note that despite the efforts made to encourage students to learn, many of them, more so girls are still dropping out of secondary schooling. The researchers observe further that the problem of education for girls is not so much the failure to attend school,

but rather the process of progressive exclusion from the education system especially in secondary schooling. While investigating the factors contributing to secondary school girls' dropout in Mt. Elgon and Muranga Districts, the scholars blame the anomaly on indiscipline, political interference, household poverty, biased parental attitudes, poor performance in schools and early marriages.

UNICEF (1999) blames the lack of positive female role models in society for girls' lack of aggressiveness in the academic sector. It (UNICEF) recognizes that majority of teachers and civil servants are men, hence girls lack positive female role models to emulate. This understanding is also reiterated by UNESCO (2004), which notes that education system in Kenya remains overwhelmingly male at the top with few women in positions of authority. The current study observed that girls are highly likely to internalize such inequality and come to expect this experience. This in effect may put girls under pressure to conform rather than to bargain for change via education. This study pioneered inquiry in this direction.

In his research on the factors related to student drop out from secondary schools within Machakos District, Mwendwa (1996) documents that the Kenyan government uses and loses a lot of money paid for girls' education, after they drop out of school. He thus recommends further research in this area to help correct the anomaly. This research is one such initiative. Arguably, whereas Mwendwa researched on the drop out of both boys and girls from secondary schools in Machakos district, the current study narrowed down to issues of girls' non completion of secondary schooling in Southern Kisii District, with the hope that Southern Kisii presented a different contextual background.

To this end, the extensive review of literature given so far confirmed that linguists had not adequately addressed the plight of the girl child. Most of the research data available was by educationists and these did not focus on language and gender and as they relate to girl education. This observation mandated the researcher to authoritatively confirm that linguists had not previously researched on the problem of girls' dropping out of secondary schooling. Therefore, this study attempted to fill this gap.

## 2.5 Critical Perspectives on Orientation to Reality

Van Dijk (1993) documents that CDA offers Sociolinguistics a critical approach to examine more fully the interaction between language and social structures, and to explain how these

social structures are constituted by linguistic interaction. He asserts that in addition to language, these interactions may also include analyzes of cultural meanings represented by symbolic images. Evidently, Van Dijk talks of how linguistic interaction constitutes social structures but does not point out where such interaction takes place. Particularly, he does not emphasize the school as one such institution that provides for linguistic interaction. These revelations mandated the current study that attempted to critically examine the Gusii gendered linguistic and semiotic structures for their manifest and latent content.

CDA upholds the view that discourse shapes society by constituting knowledge, social relations and social identities. In this perspective, Van Dijk (1997) notes that discourse directly influences the mental models and hence the opinions and attitudes of recipients. In other words, it is through the mental models of everyday discourse that we acquire our knowledge of the world, our socially shared attitudes, our ideologies and fundamental norms and values. On the same issue, Fairclough (1989) reaffirms that humans categorize reality through language (discourse). That is, a culture's language and language forms serve to shape our beliefs, expectations and sense of reality. Echoing Van Dijk and Fairclough's perspective, Wetherell et al. (2001) asserts that language works rather like a picture by representing the world and people's thoughts and opinions. This viewpoint is also embraced by Lee (1992) who posits that linguistic practices play a crucial role in the creation and perpetuation of perspective. Lee (1992) observes that linguistic practices are part of the processes of socialization that apply to us all to shape and mould our orientation to social reality.

From the discussion above, the present research noted that discourse (language) operates through the selective use of linguistic structures and particular discursive practices to perpetuate a given perspective. This understanding was at the core of this study, which presupposed that the gendered linguistic structures within the Gusii speech community do play a deterministic role in mediating the Gusii girls' different worldview with respect to their academic and intellectual pursuits.

Fairclough (1985) and Tator and Henry (2002) observe that discourse and language can be used to make unbalanced power relations and portrayals of social groups appear to be common sense, normal and natural when in fact, the reality is prejudice, injustice and inequalities. It is because of this state of affairs that CDA attempts to unpack the ideological underpinnings of discourse that have become so naturalized over time that we begin to treat them as common,

acceptable and natural features of discourse (Teo, 2002). The current study supposed that there existed hidden meanings behind Ekegusii discourses (linguistic structures) which mislead and lure girls into embracing the dominant ideological underpinnings (worldview), which in turn discourages them from taking an active role in the mainstream activities. This far, the present study was an attempt to unpack and unveil the truth behind Ekegusii discourses with the aim of making girls and young women aware of such inequalities, more so as these relate to their educational endeavors.

Fairclough (1992), Yieke (2002), Wodak and Meyer (2001) point out that CDA has emancipatory objectives and is focused upon the problems confronting the losers within particular forms of social life; the poor, the socially excluded, those subjected to oppressive gender or race relations just but a few. The above stated objectives of CDA become clear when Fairclough (1993) and Van Dijk (1998) confirm that CDA draws attention to power imbalances, social inequalities, non-democratic practices and other injustices with the hope of spurring people to corrective actions. This assertion confirms that CDA intends to create awareness in recipients (agents) of how they are deceived about their own needs and interests thus bringing them to identify what their true needs and interests are. This perspective is consonant with Foucault (2000) who asserts that by unmasking such practices, CDA scholars aim at supporting the victims of such oppression and encouraging them to resist and transform their lives.

Similarly, the current study posited that the problem of girls' dropping out of school constitutes a social inequality and power imbalance that demands immediate correction. This helped support the rationale for the present study

Ball (1990) claims that one of the major roles of the intellectual is to change something in the minds of people. He asserts that in order for people to change their minds (their ideas, view of the world and ideological perspectives), a critique in some form or other must be undertaken.

Thompson (1984) notes that to study ideology is in some part and in some way to study language in the social world. He also observes that ideological diversity exists in varying degrees in all societies. Echoing Thompson, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) points out that discourse does some ideological work; one must consider how discourse is received, interpreted and what effect it has. In the same vein, Yieke (2001) claims that while defining critical theory, one of the research priorities should be to ask what kinds of considerations have an effect on the thoughts and practices of a particular group. Thus, one might ask as to how girls receive and interpret

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gendered linguistic and semiotic structures within the Gusii speech community, which are purported to engender their lack of ambition and self-motivation in the educational process. This is what the current study attempted to examine.

While commenting on the primary tenets of CDA, Fairclough and Wodak (1997) point out that Discourse Analysis is interpretive and explanatory. This understanding is further echoed by Wodak (1999) when she asserts that analysis must be neither purely inductive nor deductive, but rather abductive. This means that researchers must work to understand their own culture, rather than pronouncing truths and thus propose interpretations and solutions to perceived problems. The current research acknowledged the above mentioned stance and posited that if the researcher fails to take a position and be self-reflexive in terms of his or her interpretations and analyzes, then he /she risks producing analysis that maps directly into his / her own beliefs. This understanding helped the researcher to go beyond his own personal ideologies that are likely to be implicated in his work.

Rhoads (1994) and Thomas (1993) state that rather than simply asking how social processes function or how they can be made more efficient, critical research seeks insight into the mechanisms by which social processes exclude and /or marginalize. They further assert that only when such mechanisms are exposed can change begin. This implies that for critical researchers, knowing things is not enough, but rather knowing how things come about in order to show that change is possible and sometimes desirable. Rhoads and Thomas' observation is echoed by Fairclough (1995) who points out that there is no predictable one to-one association between any one linguistic form and any specific social meanings; in critical linguistics, interpreters may make assumptions which are not in the text, and which may have an ideological nature. This implies that interpretation is necessary to recover the social meanings expressed in discourse by analyzing the linguistic structures in the light of their interactional and social context. The current study pursued this stance.

Evidently, the literature reviewed above confirms that most researchers have laid little emphasis on the plight of the girl child. The influence of gendered linguistic images on girls' attitude towards education has therefore not been given emphasis.

## 2.6 Theoretical Framework

This research was based on the conceptual framework of two theories; Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) theory, and Bandura's Social Learning Theory. CDA is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social and political contexts (Van Dijk, 1998). The study adopted CDA by virtue of the fact that it dwells on issues of power, ideology and discourse, in its evaluation of issues of language, gender and girl education within the Gusii speech community. CDA was very useful in helping the researcher understand and expose issues of gender inequality as they relate to issues of girl education.

CDA includes both the use of linguistic structures and non-linguistic elements (semiotics), as part of discourse (Hodge and Kress, 1998). In this respect, the scholars posit that semiotic inquiry cannot be divorced from society or socio-political thought but analysis has to focus on the social processes that surround the text. In other words, discourse cannot exist without social meanings, hence the need for a strong relation between linguistic and social structures. This framework suited the present study in that the research did not just strive to analyze the Gusii gendered linguistic and semiotic structures, but also the cultural aspects and meanings linked to these structures. This way, CDA helped the researcher transcend the grammatical structures that account for the surface level examination of this kind of discourse, to unearth the hidden complex relations of power and inequality as they relate to gender and issues of girl education.

The study also operated within the framework of Bandura's social learning theory, which was nested within CDA as the overall interpretive and theoretical framework. In this theory, Bandura (1986) suggests that children's minds are structured by the environment and by the models and social training practices that the environment provides. That is, children's behaviour is the result of a conscious interaction between personal and environmental variables with environmental conditions shaping behaviour through the process of learning. Bandura notes further that our self-efficacy appraisals exert powerful effects on our levels of motivation; children frequently learn through observation of the behaviour of both sexes though they usually perform only the behaviour appropriate to their own sex because this is what they have been socialized and reinforced to do.

The perspective given above was of value to the current study that sought to examine how girls observe and acquire specific social identities that characterize their lack of interest and

concern towards educational achievement. The same standpoint is expressed by Marger (1999), who asserts that socialization involves not simply learning the rules and beliefs of the society, but also internalizing them and making judgments about the world; learning and accepting the socially defined rights and wrongs of thought and action. The same perspective is echoed by Butler (1990), when she asserts that individuals come together and perform their gender identity in the specific contexts of communities of practice, where individuals become implicated in the construction of themselves as gendered and sexual and work only to achieve what may be an ascribed status. Butler's perspective can be summarized using the three dimensional framework below.

Ideological Level (embraced ideas, beliefs and concepts)

Community of Practice

Individual level
(Gendered identity
and Perceptions)
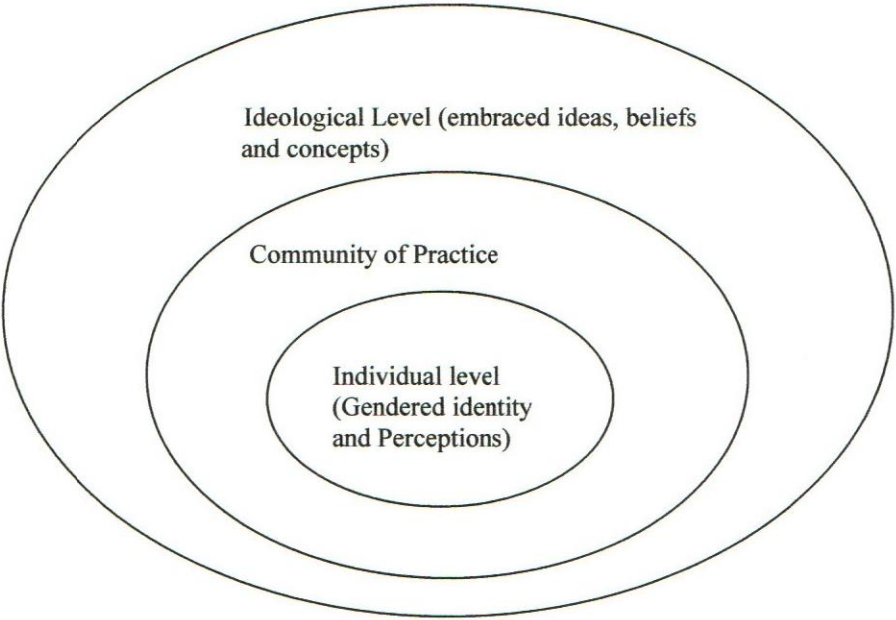
**Source: Adapted from Butler (1990)**

**Figure 1: An integrated framework for the language and gender studies**

Notably, the community of practice ellipse is contained within the overarching, ideological level, where an individual's self-concept and worldview may be constrained at a wider societal level. Further, the three levels in the three-tier framework above are interconnected and can only be understood in conjunction with one another; the three levels are interconnected in the sense that the link between textual and sociocultural levels is made by way of discourse practice (Fairclough, 1995).

In the three tier framework, an individual's self-image is presented as a social construct (Butler, 1990), identified within the individual level, where the individual engages in spoken interaction within the community of practice. In this regard, the Gusii girls' sociolinguistic identities can only be analyzed within the community of practice (contained within the overarching, ideological level), because only this practice permits us to draw on the linguistic and social information necessary to understand their shared ideological beliefs, values and concepts.

Therefore, the three-tier framework provided this study with a firm theoretical grounding for analyzing the discursive use of Ekegusii discourses using CDA.

# CHAPTER THREE

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

This section includes the following; Research design, Target population, Location of the study, Sampling procedures, Instrumentation, Data collection and Data Analysis.

### 3. 2 Research Design

The study adopted the descriptive research design to plan and build the content and form of this study. The descriptive research design was selected for this study because it enabled the researcher to determine and report the way things are; the descriptive research design helped the researcher to describe the possible behaviour and attitudes of his subjects (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999).

Similarly, the study made use of the qualitative methods of data analysis to analyze data depending on the findings of the study. Qualitative methods of research enabled the researcher to analyze and explain his research findings more deeply and exhaustively (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). Besides, qualitative research methods of data analysis helped the researcher to better understand the subjective perspectives of his subjects by collecting data (verbatim responses), that enabled him develop a descriptive, rich understanding and insight into their attitudes, shared beliefs, aspirations and culture that define their view of the world.

The researcher also used quantitative methods of data analysis to tabulate the teachers' responses into percentages to give the overriding opinions and attitudes.

### 3.3 Target Population

The study targeted girls between14 and 19 years. The girls were drawn from secondary schools purposefully selected for this study. Girls between ages 14 and 19 were selected for this study because at this age, girls experience pressure towards more rigid conceptions of gender roles and become more concerned with their physical
attractiveness, how women are supposed to behave, besides experiencing diminished academic achievement due to low self-esteem, anxiety and depression (Carnegie Council on Adolescents' Development, 1995). Consequently, during ages 14 to 19, girls are very impressionistic,

therefore the receptive audience of images transmitted through language in society more so those that signal social inequality (United Nations, 1995).

Similarly, the study also involved twenty-four teachers, purposefully selected for this research. The teachers were drawn from the schools where female students were interviewed. The researcher intended to use only those girls and teachers who speak Ekegusii as their mother tongue. These groups (girls and teachers) were assumed to have the required information for this study.

## 3.4 Location of the Study

This study had implications for the three Gusii districts where the status of the girl child is similar (own observation). People in the three districts (Southern Kisii, Northern Kisii and Central Kisii) speak the same language besides sharing the same culture. Therefore, the three Gusii districts presented the same contextual background for the study. However, Southern Kisii District was selected for this study because of its convenience to the researcher. That is, the researcher had not been granted a study leave and was on job while carrying out this study. This forced the researcher to undertake his research closer to his place of work. Similarly, considering financial constraints on the part of the researcher, travelling far was not possible. Therefore, carrying out the research within the district helped reduce the cost in terms of time and money.

## 3.5 Sampling Procedures

The researcher sampled the schools, respondents and linguistic texts in the following order:

## 3.5.1 Sampling Schools

The researcher obtained a list of secondary schools from the District Education Officer (DEO, Southern Kisii District). Using convenience-sampling procedures (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990; Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999), the researcher selected schools for the study. Convenience sampling procedures allowed the researcher to select schools (cases) that were available and convenient with easily and conveniently available subjects for the study.

The researcher accessed the field (schools) through the friend of a friend (Milroy, 1987), who guided him to the respondents. This in effect helped him to gain the respondents' informed consent. Besides, this helped the researcher build a rapport with the respondents hence avoiding

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observers' paradox. Observer's paradox refers to the challenges and / or problems that sociolinguists face while doing field work, where the task of gathering data on natural beahiour is undermined by the researcher's own presence (Wilson, 1987 and Labov, 1972). That is, the observed are liable to change their behaviour simply because they are being observed such that their observed behaviour ceases to be natural and / or typical. Six secondary schools ( two public girls' secondary schools, one public mixed boarding secondary school, one public mixed day secondary school and two private mixed day and boarding secondary schools] in Southern Kisii District were used for this study . The schools were taken to provide respondents with the right information for this study. These schools were designated as being rural schools and prevalent with gendered linguistic images and belief systems not very pronounced in urban schools considering their cosmopolitan environment.

The researcher picked more public secondary schools for the study than private schools because public schools are expected to reflect a wider population of girls compared to private schools that have fewer students.

### 3.5.2 Sampling Respondents

The researcher purposefully selected forty-eight girls aged 14 to 19 whose first language is Ekegusii. The selected sample was taken to be representative of typical Gusii girls in secondary schools anywhere in the larger Gusii community. Thus, eight girls were purposefully selected from six secondary schools in southern Kisii District, where focus group interviews were carried out. Therefore, the researcher used a table of random numbers to select girls from each class for this study.

Similarly, the researcher purposefully selected twenty-four teachers from the six secondary schools in which girls were interviewed. The teachers were assumed to possess the required information for this study.

### 3.5.3 Sampling Linguistic Texts

The linguistic structures for this study were identified and isolated through a critical review of related literature from past research theses and articles on language, gender and feminism. Owing to the fact that the written texts from which the above said linguistic structures were extracted are monolingual and cannot reflect their contextual implications, it was imperative that

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their pragmatic implications within the Gusii speech community be analyzed to reveal both their pragmatic implications and discursive usage.

Following the practice of CDA where there is no set list of linguistic devices for use in any analysis (Meyer, 2001), the researcher had to select those linguistic structures which were relevant to his research questions and whose analysis could allow relevant conclusions to be drawn.

Also, considering that language is the vehicle through which people express their attitudes, opinions thoughts, ideas and feelings ( Choti,1998 ), the linguistic structures for this study were selected with the belief that they are part of language hence their potential to express the Gusii people's social practices, feelings, opinions, attitudes and thoughts about women. Therefore, through purposeful sampling procedures, the researcher selected twenty-five linguistic structures from the Gusii speech community for this study. The five categories of linguistic structures were chosen for this study with the view that they are the most highly loaded with ideological beliefs and bias, hence their analysis could help to reveal the discursive use of language among the Gusii people. The linguistic structures investigated included five proverbs, five derogatory terms, five common nouns, five verbs and five symbolic cultural practices (payment of bride price, wife beating, biased parental attitudes, property ownership and inheritance rights and household chores). These were used to elicit formal responses from the respondents, regarding their view of the influence of gendered images on girls' self-concept and general world view. Also, this number of structures was taken to be adequate for the study, owing to the awareness that a single text may generate large volumes of data after undergoing a critical discourse analysis (Van Dijk, 1997).

## 3.6 Data Collection

Considering that the study adopted CDA as the overall theoretical and interpretive framework and that CDA allows for triangulation, the researcher used focus group interviews and questionnaires as methods for data collection. Triangulation enabled the researcher to maximize the validity and reliability of the research findings (Golafshani, 2003). That is, triangulation enabled the researcher to collect data from multiple and different sources, hence helping to maximize the validity and reliability of the research findings.

### 3.6.1 Focus Group Interviews

The researcher actively collected oral data from girls through focus group interviews using closed and open-ended questions. This was done in a round table conference, under a shade (naturalistic environment). Data regarding the girls' understanding of the nature of gendered linguistic images in the Gusii speech community was sought. Similarly, the influence of these images on the girls' self-definition was identified. The data collected included oral responses. These were words and statements revealing girls' view of gendered linguistic images, which were identified for analysis.

Focus group interviews were selected for data collection considering that the interaction between participants in focus groups highlights their view of the world, the language they use about an issue and their values and beliefs about their situation (Kitzinger, 1994). That is, focus group interviews enabled the researcher to evaluate the girls' shared beliefs, feelings and values, by probing, eliciting, acknowledging, commenting and inferring, thus gaining insight into how such shared knowledge and beliefs predispose girls to their perverted self image and world view. Goss and Leinbach, (1996) further posit that focus group interviews do allow the researcher to interview several people within a short period of time, hence saving time and effort.

Given that the recommended number of people (participants) per group is usually six to ten (Macintosh, 1981) and that the number of participants per focus group depends on the objectives of the research (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1990), the research used eight girls per focus group interview.

To make the research findings more valid and reliable, six focus group interviews were used to give varied view points about the issue under investigation. One focus group interview was carried out in each school, involving two girls from every class (form one to form four). All girls that could speak Ekegusii in each class were given random numbers. Thus, using a table of random numbers, the researcher picked two girls from each class for the study. This choice was taken to represent all the classes and age groups in secondary schooling.

Considering that the human eye, hand and mind are not fast enough to thoroughly follow through and remember all that is said in focus group discussions, field notes were taken for reference during data analysis.

### 3.6.2 Questionnaires

Since questionnaires were used as supplementary tools for data collection, twenty-four teachers purposefully selected for this study responded to the questionnaires.

Teachers' responses from filled in questionnaires (words and statements) that reflected on constructive and destructive attitudes were identified, categorized (ranked) and converted to percentages to give the overriding attitudes and opinions. These responses were tabulated in tables of percentages to help reflect the teacher's opinion about the interconnectedness between gendered linguistic images and the Gusii girls' self appraisal and general attitudes towards formal education.

### 3.7. Data Analysis

Guided by the research hypotheses, data was analyzed at two levels. This was done as follows:

### 3.7.1 Qualitative Data

Using qualitative data, the researcher undertook critical discourse analysis of the data collected with the knowledge that there is no set procedure for doing discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1992). Therefore, CDA was done by analyzing the text as follows:

First, the researcher identified the different responses that reflected the form and nature of gendered linguistic images; the textual form of the linguistic structures was analyzed to help the researcher mediate informed interpretation of the content of the discourses under investigation. Here, textual analysis sought to make a connection between gender representations in the text and their social cultural context. These were then described and their function in the text analyzed. That is, in order to critically analyze the discursive use of Ekegusii discourses, a detailed textual analysis of their form and content was imperative, considering that form and content are intrinsically related (Fairclough, 1999). In this regard, CDA sought to enhance our conceptualization of discourse at the level of text, the discursive practices and the social practice. In addition, the linguistic strategies that were used to construct the girls' self concept and world view were identified and discussed. This way, the gendered linguistic images that represent women negatively were identified in place of alternative presuppositions.

### 3.7.2 Quantitative Data

Simple descriptive statistics through the use of percentages was used to analyze the quantitative data. That is, the teachers' responses from filled in questionnaires (words and statements / expressions that reflected on the constructive and destructive attitudes were identified, categorized and converted to percentages to help reflect on the overriding opinions and attitudes about the influence of gendered Gusii discourses on girls' self-concept, world view and attitudes towards education.

# CHAPTER FOUR
# RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Introduction

Students' and teachers' responses on the existence and nature of the Gusii gendered linguistic images were analyzed. Also, the gendered images were examined to ascertain whether they actually impair the Gusii girls' self concept and world view. The nature and form of the Gusii gendered linguistic images were analyzed using critical discourse analysis. Simple descriptive statistics through the use of percentages was used to analyze the quantitative data. This far, data analysis was done in accordance with the background and hypotheses of the study. The analysis and ensuing discussions were done under the sub-headings; historical context of gendered discourses, presentation and description of gendered linguistic images, linguistic features of gendered images, context of gendered linguistic images on girl education and implications of gendered linguistic images on girls' self-definition.

## 4.2 The Historical Context of Gendered Discourses

Historically, women have held subordinate positions in comparison to men; traditional societies were purely patriarchal thus maintaining a culture of prejudice against women. Women were perceived as suitable only for domestic chores and for marriage (CLARION, 2004). Men on the other hand were viewed as belonging to the public domain, thus giving rise to gender inequalities based on the division of labour.

Similarly, cultural practices founded on patriarchy have perpetuated gender inequalities by sustaining gender differences in decision making and resource ownership. Women continue to be denied equal participation in the areas of education, employment, and other social services; they have lesser rights in decision making (Kamalini, 2002). This means that their positions and expectations have historically and culturally been restricted.

However, due to the rapid changes occasioned by economic modernization, many women have been brought to the labour market and professional fields previously considered a male domain. Here, their experiences of prejudice and discrimination engendered a climate of critical thinking and many women begun to question the sexism in policies and practices that explicitly discriminate against them, thus problematizing their situation. The new wave of feminism argues for participation in the public realm based on more feminist principles of justice and equality

(Gal and Kligman, 2000). With this need, different approaches and campaigns have been initiated by the government, non-governmental organizations and women groups, all out in a clamour for gender equality. This forced the government to adopt the Gender and Development (GAD) model, a feminist approach conceived within the historical context of women's disadvantaged position (CLARION, 2004). Here, rather than addressing the relationship between the male and female genders, the government and non-governmental organizations vigorously address strategies for integrating women in the development process.

In this respect, scholarly works on gendered discourses have been focusing on how society assigns social meanings to the different biological characteristics of males and females; the differences between men and women, they argued, are rooted in society, not in nature and as such could be historicized (Liddington, 2001, Cooke and Woollacott, 1993). In this way, women's lives have been shaped profoundly by gender prescriptions. Likewise, men's cultural ideals and practices of masculinity have been created together, often in opposition to those of women. Therefore, both men and women are presented as having gender histories that must be analyzed in tandem.

Gendered or feminist discourses have also focused on how gender ideologies have shaped women's identities and worldview and how these constructions have remapped the meanings of masculinity and femininity (Liddington, 2001). Other discourses have examined how issues of gender have helped shape women's experiences and struggles. They aim at highlighting how men and women have both shaped and have been shaped by gendered beliefs, practices and institutions.

However, the need to equalize women's chances of acquiring education goes hand in hand with the need to eliminate gender imbalances in society. Similarly, it is worth noting that the previously suppressed female voices have found their voices to address their plight through education.

This far, the discussion on the historical context of gendered discourses was useful not only in contextualizing the gendered discourses historically, but also in unraveling the discursive history and contemporaneous circumstances in which the present social relations occur.

Therefore, it was from within this historical context of gendered discourses that we can begin to understand this linguistic analysis on the influence of gendered linguistic images on girls' self concept and general worldview.

## 4.3 Presentation and Description of Gendered Linguistic Images

It was prudent to give a brief description of the linguistic images analyzed before any detailed analysis was made. The summarized description highlights on the Gusii gendered linguistic images and a glimpse of the images as perceived by the researcher.

In this respect, a separate description of each image was done to facilitate easy understanding. The linguistic structures described in this research are summarized in the table below and in the ensuing discussion.

# Table 3: The Ekegusii Linguistic Terms and Expressions

| Examples | Ekegusii Ideological Meanings according to Usage | English Translation |
|---|---|---|
| 4.3.1 | **Sexist Proverbs** | |
| 1 | *Totogia moiseke kieni, motogie mwana* | never praise a girl for her beauty, but rather for giving birth |
| 2 | *Onabaiseke bange nkerandi kiamabere botaka botakoera* | he who has many daughters is a gourd of milk that will never go dry |
| 3 | *Bakungu mbaya ko' menu yabasaririe* | women are good persons, though their mouths have rendered them bad |
| 4 | *Ngongo machaywa imbamura etabwati* | for a region to be disrespected, then it is because of its lack of boys or men |
| 5 | *Basacha mbaniberani, ko' nabakungu mbaiborerani* | men help fellow men in creating wealth as women help fellow women in begetting children |
| 4.3.2 | **Semantic Derogation** | |
| 6 | *Rirogo* | a prostitute |
| 7 | *Ritinge* | a concubine |
| 8 | *Mokabaisia* | boys' wife |
| 9 | *Engoko* | a hen |
| 10 | *Maiso abakungu* | women's eyes / evening hours approaching dusk |
| 4.3.3 | **Ekegusii Naming System** | |
| 11 | *Omosacha* | a man |
| 12 | *Omokungu* | a woman |
| 13 | *Omorugi* | a cook / wife |
| 14 | *Egesagane* | a lass |
| 15 | *Omoisia* | a lad |
| 4.3.4 | **Sexualized Ekegusii Verbs** | |
| 16 | *Eega* | to seduce |
| 17 | *Nywoma* | to marry |
| 18 | *Teta* | to make love |
| 19 | *Ruga* | to cook / get married |
| 20 | *Biaria* | to impregnate |
| 4.3.5 | **Symbolic Cultural Norms** | |
| 21 | Bride Price | |
| 22 | Wife Beating | |
| 23 | Biased Parental Attitudes | |
| 24 | Property Ownership and Inheritance Rights | |
| 25 | Domestic Chores | |

Source: Field Data

## 4.3.1 Sexist Proverbs

A proverb is a short well-known statement that gives practical advice about life. Proverbs carry folk wisdom, and are commonly used to embellish speech (Achebe 1958). They (proverbs) are passed down from generation to generation, hence best suited in reflecting the users' cultural meanings and their significance. The use of proverbs in this research helped the researcher to gain insight into the ways in which the Gusii people think and discursively use language to disparage women in society.

A variety of proverbs referring to both men and women exist in Ekegusii language. However, the relevant proverbs in the present study were those showing gender bias against women. In this regard, the study identified and evaluated some Gusii proverbs that exclusively reflect women negatively thus revealing the inherent biased attitudes and ideological beliefs about women. This is reflected in the following illustrations;

Example 1

*Totogia Moiseke kieni, motogie mwana*
Never praise a girl for her beauty, but rather for giving birth

The Proverb reflects the Gusii people's value for children and the honour attached to the bearer of children; a woman's worth is not attached to her beauty and / or abilities but rather to her being able to give birth. In this regard, a childless woman is seen as being of less value. That is, if a woman has to be recognized and respected, then she is expected to beget children. This way, it is unexpected among the Gusii people for one to say: *totogia Momura kieni, Motogie Mwana* (never praise a boy for his beauty but rather for begetting a child). Instead, the Gusii people say: *Totogia momura kieni, motogie nkoro.* (never praise a boy for his beauty but rather for his action*s*). This reveals the discursive use of Ekegusii proverbs to discriminate and portray women negatively. This further reflects the gendered treatment of women and girls, whose role is seen as that of begetting children. On the other hand, men and boys are evaluated on the basis of their actions and achievements.

## Example 2

*Onabaiseke bange nkerandi kiamabere botakana botakoera*

He who has many daughters is a gourd of milk that will never go dry

The Gusii people view girls as a form of property through which wealth is generated from their bride price upon marriage. In this respect, a person with many daughters is seen as having a huge source of wealth. This assumption is pegged on the belief that girls are likely to get married some day and earn their parents bride price in abundance. Other gendered proverbs whose use confirm the above said state of affairs include the following: *Omoiseke omuya, omonyene engombe namoroche* (a good girl is always seen by those with cows). With this understanding, at no circumstance can one say: *\*Onabamura bange nkerandi kiamabere botakana botakoera.* (he who has many boys is a gourd of milk that will never go dry).

Thus, such proverbs semantically reflect the opinions and ideologies held by the Gusii people, more so, those relating to their attitudes and feelings about women. This research found a dialectal relationship between the discursive use of proverbs in Ekegusii language and girls' self image and perception of the world.

## Example 3

*Bakungu mbaya ko' menu yabasaririe*

Women are good persons, though their mouths have rendered them bad

Here, women's talk is generally taken to be nothing more than mere gossip; women are assumed to be gossips. In this regard, it is illogical for one to say: *\*basacha mbaya ko'menu yabasaririe.* (men are good persons, though their mouths have rendered them bad). This shows the mistrust that exists between men and women in the Gusii speech community. The proverb is further used to suggest that women cannot be trusted with confidential issues in society. This way, linguistic structures can be used to express ideological beliefs based on patriarchal structures in society. Therefore, the researcher presents *gossip* as a discourse feature and as part of the linguistic data that supports the view that women are treated linguistically as being subordinate to men in the Gusii speech community.

Example 4

*Ngongo machaywa imbamura etabwati.*

For a region to be disrespected, then it is because of its lack of boys or men.

The Gusii people consider boys as a sure source of protection and security in society. This explains the people's admiration for male children. It is in this regard that the proverb above presupposes that for any region to be disregarded, then it is for its lack of able boys or men that guarantee protection. However, it is illogical for one to say: *ngongo machaywa imbaiseke etabwati.*(for any region to be disrespected then it is for its lack of girls). This way, the discursive use of proverbs in Ekegusii language shows open bias against the girl child who is considered as being of less value compared to the boy child.

Therefore, the discursive use of Ekegusii proverbs entail linguistic sexism considering that it devalues members of one sex (women), while reflecting men positively.

*Example 5*

*Basacha mbaniberani, ko'nabakungu mbaiborerani*

Men help fellow men in creating wealth as women help fellow women in begetting
Children

The Gusii people regard men as the sole creators and owners of wealth. On the other hand, women's role is viewed as that of begetting children and taking care of the home. The search for wealth including food is taken to be a tough and laborious task, only possible to men. In this regard, even if a woman acquires property in the Gusii community, it is normally administered by her husband together with the other family possessions. In this respect, one cannot affirm: *Bakungu mbaniberani ko'nabasacha mbaiborerani.* (women help fellow women in creating riches as men help fellow men in begetting children). This state of affairs can be attributed to the Gusii belief that upon marriage, a woman moves from her parents' home to her husband's home, where she is viewed as a form of property and the issue of owning property on her part is thus out of question.

With this understanding, the proverb implies that property ownership in the Gusii community is a preserve for men, whereas women are seen as child bearers and home makers. In all respects therefore, semantic derogation of women is achieved in the text by use of sexist proverbs.

### 4.3.2 Semantic Derogation of Women

Semantic derogation refers to the debasement of words and expressions which refer to a given group of persons in society; it refers to the negative meanings associated with certain words and / or expressions, and how they are used to designate women (Muriel, 1990). In other words, semantic derogation entails a situation in language, where terms and expressions used to designate women are given negative overtones that reflect the stereotyped differences in language behaviour between men and women in society.

Each language has terms with negative semantic implications. This study focused on semantic derogation in Ekegusii language. This selection was based on the view that Ekegusii language remains a linguistic deviation with contemptuous and derogatory terms used to denigrate women in society (Choti, 1998).

Considering language as a product of social reality that reflects the thoughts, opinions, attitudes and Culture of its users (Thirumalai, 2001), the study selected semantic derogation as reflected in Ekegusii language because this has the potential to reveal the prejudices and / or biases in words and phrases designating women, besides accounting for their effect on girls' low self concept and general world view. Also, considering that language reflects the culture that constructs that language (Muriel, 1990), our study of derogatory terms and expressions in Ekegusii language has the potential of revealing the Gusii peoples' sexist and prejudiced feelings, opinions and attitudes towards women which are presupposed in this study to affect the Gusii girls' self image and world view.

Besides using sexist proverbs to degrade women, semantic derogation was further reflected in the use of denigrating terms as shown below.

Example 6

*Rirogo*

A prostitute

The term *rirogo* is crafted from the word *ekerogo* (a chair). However, the term *rirogo* is here used to refer to a promiscuous woman. In normal usage, the term *rirogo* refers to a dilapidated chair normally sat on by anybody; it is not reserved for specific persons. Therefore, if a Gusii woman has more than one sexual partner, it is assumed that she no longer belongs to any specific man just like the dilapidated chair that is sat on and / or used by anybody. This way, *rirogo* refers to a promiscuous woman and one who practices commercial sex (Choti, 1998). However, if a man has more than one sexual partner, we cannot say: *John nerirogo* (John is a prostitute). Instead, we are expected to say: *Mary nerirogo* (Mary is a prostitute), simply because the term *rirogo is* only used to apply to women. This way, Ekegusii Language does not assign equivalent words to describe and/ or refer to men that are promiscuous.

Other terms (synonyms) negatively used in place of *rirogo* to refer to women only in Ekegusii language include, *rikembi, ribaita, riraya* and *ekiabuso* (a broom). Therefore, according to the Gusii people, the term *rirogo* (a prostitute), suggests that only women are and / or become prostitutes.

Example 7

*Ritinge*

A concubine

The term *ritinge* is used discursively in Ekegusii language to imply a woman who cohabits with men temporarily. That is, if a woman marries and divorces now and again, it is assumed that she cannot make a good wife and she is labeled *ritinge, as in: Josephine ne'ritinge (*Josephine is a concubine). This further suggests that a woman is restricted to one husband whereby her former title / status (as somebody's wife) holds.

Thus, in case of separation and / or divorce, a woman has no option other than to go back to her former husband lest she be labeled *ritinge* (a concubine). On the other hand, even if a man marries and divorces several times until this becomes more of his career, it is not in order for one to remark: *\*John neritinge.* (John is a concubine). This practice however reflects open bias against women because men are not restricted over how many sexual partners they should have even outside marriage as is the case with women. This way, the term *ritinge* is used in the Gusii speech community to exclusively refer to women and evoke negative images about them.

Example 8

*Mokabaisia*

Boys' wife

In the Gusii speech community, the term *mokabaisia* (boys' wife) is used discursively to imply a girl with loose morals. In this respect, if a girl has a boy friend (lover) and her parents or friends come to discover it, then they can refer to her as *mokabaisia* to imply that she is a girl with questionable morals hence the negative reference to rebuke her. However, when a boy that has not attained the age of marriage is found to have sexual relationships with members of the opposite sex, such a boy is not labeled: *Mokabaisia gose mokabisagane* (boys' wife and / or girls' wife). Under such circumstances, one cannot say; *\*Richard imokabaisia* (Richard is boy's wife). Instead, it is the norm to say; *Grace imokabaisia* (Grace is a boys' wife). It is in this regard, that the present linguistic investigation endorses the stance that Ekegusii language reflects and perpetuates discrimination against women. The term *mokabaisia* (boys' wife) in Ekegusii language is reserved exclusively for girls in the minds of many people.

The fact that Ekegusii language does not use the same derogatory labels for men with similar tendencies as women suggests and confirms censorship of women in all matters to do with sexuality, simply because they are women.

Example 9

*Engoko*

*A* hen or girl and / or woman with loose morals.

In normal language usage, e*ngoko* means an adult female chicken and / or a fully grown female bird. Normally, hens are raised and slaughtered for their meat, which is considered a delicacy. However, the term *engoko* is used figuratively in Ekegusii language to denote a woman known and / or suspected to have multiple sexual partners; hen is used metaphorically to represent the lack of morals on the part of women. In this regard, it is a common practice to say: *Flora nengoko* (Flora is a hen). This implies that her morals are not good. However, a man with similar tendencies as Flora above cannot be referred to as: *\*Richard nengoko* (Richard is a hen). Instead, if a man or boy has multiple girl friends or women friends, he is referred to as *etwoni* (a cock). This suggests that such a boy or man is a conqueror of women thus a superior person. In

this case, the use of such terms to denigrate women reflects Ekegusii language as one entrenched with prejudiced cultural beliefs pegged on patriarchal ideologies. Such terms not only reflect the lexical gaps in Ekegusii language but also confirm that sexist attitudes towards women may come to condition their way of thinking.

Example 10

*Maiso abakungu*

Women's eyes.

The phrase, *maiso abakubngu* is also used by the Gusii people to refer to evening hours approaching dusk. It implies that women's sight begin to fall at this time. Indirectly, the phrase, *maiso abakungu* (women's eyes) is figuratively used to imply that women lack foresight. In this respect, one cannot *say: *maiso abasacha* (men's eyes), to imply evening hours approaching dusk. This suggests that the phrase *maiso abakungu* (women's eyes) is solely used to denote experiences to do with women. This way, the phrase is used in the figurative sense of opposing the abstract reality.

From such observations, the research on Ekegusii language found out that living in a world permeated by such sexist words and expressions, may present the ordinary means by which girls and women get information and ideological knowledge with which they form judgments on issues affecting them in society (Thompson, 1995).

### 4.3.3 Ekegusii Naming System

A naming system entails the means by which people supply objects with names; it allows people to map names to objects for purposes of identification (William et al.1999). This research used common nouns to reflect the Gusii people's naming system. Common nouns are words in a language that denote the name of a person, place or thing. Ekegusii language has a variety of common nouns that reflect the Gusii people's feelings and attitudes towards the things, events or issues that they refer to. However, this study analyzed only those common nouns that carry cultural meanings capable of impairing girls' self concept and perceptions of the world.

Common nouns were selected for this study considering that they function to identify people, places or things in the world, where they (people, places or things) share a set of unique qualities

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/ characteristics that correspond to them (Close, 1975.). Further, common nouns were selected for this study, considering their ability to supply pragmatic information about the Gusii people's ideological beliefs, only available at their context of use.

In Ekegusii language, a number of common nouns are discursively used. These include;

Example 11

*Omosacha*

*A man*

The term *Omosacha* (a man) is derived from the verb *sacha* which in Ekegusii language means to fend for.

In this regard, the Gusii people use the term *Omosacha* discursively to mean the person who goes out to search for property. This implies that men in the Gusii community are supposed to actively and aggressively search for food to help meet and enhance their families' social needs.

If a woman displays masculine qualities, she is labeled *Omosacha* which is a mark of honour. Whenever a woman succeeds in a task deemed tough and laborious, it is common for her to affirm*: Inje nomosacha* (I am a man). This reveals how women's linguistic behaviour is constrained by forces operating within their context of situation; it further shows how women's gendered sociolinguistic identities are formed and expended.

Example12

*Omokungu*

A woman

The term *Omokungu* in Ekegusii language means a woman. Further, the term suggests someone whose role is to protect that which has been acquired, and in this case by her husband. In this respect, if a man wants to rebuke another man for purposes of belittling him, he can say: *Aye mbosa, aye nomokungu* (you are nothing, in fact, you are a woman).

Thus, even fellow women do not refer to one another as; *omokungu oyo*! (you woman). This is because, the reference *Omokungu* is a belittling term that is discursively used to downplay

women's status in society. This shows how aspects of language help to reveal social relations between men and women within the societal circles.

Semantically speaking, this presentation highlights not only relations of gender, but also the linguistic oppression of women in the societal hierarchy. Further, our linguistic analysis of Ekegusii linguistic structures serves to reveal the power of man as the provider of women's livelihood.

Example 13

*Omorugi*

A wife

The term *omorugi* (a wife / cook) is used in Ekegusii language to mean a wife and somebody who cooks for her husband. The implication is that a woman's role is to cook for her husband. Moreover, many women naively affirm: *Inje nomorugi oye*. (I am his wife / cook). This implies that a woman is somebody's wife and thus a person occupying a lower rank in society compared to her husband. Analytically speaking, the act of cooking is lowly rated, hence a demeaning task that is attributed to women and girls per se. In this respect, a man cannot say; *\*Inje nomorugi o'Jane*. (I am Jane's wife / cook). This is because, the term *Omorugi (a wife or cook),* is used to refer to women exclusively. Therefore, the Gusii people use the term *Omorugi* discursively to subordinate women before men.

Example 14

*Egesagane*

A lass

The term *egesagane* (a lass), is used by the Gusii people to suggest an un circumcised young girl. In this regard, a man who displays feminine characteristics is normally rebuked by other men: *Aye negesagane*. (you are a lass).

This implies an inferior being. *Egesagane* (a lass), is the opposite of *omoisia* (a lad ), though if one refers to his contemporary and / or playmate: *aye nomoisia* (you are a lad), it does not sound that abusive and ridiculous as being told: *aye negesagane* (you are a lass). This way, our

linguistic investigation of gendered discourses sought to reveal that the use of Ekegusii nouns has the potential to inculcate the belief in many girls and young women that hard work and aggressiveness are male attributes hence their relaxation and lack of ambition for success in society

In this regard, the term *egesagane* (a lass) is discursively used to reflect girls as being inferior to boys in society. This reveals the discursive use of language to disparage women in the Gusii speech community.

Example 15

*Omoisia*

A lad

The Gusii people use the term *omoisia* (a lad) to mean a young uncircumcised boy. However so, the term is used in a positive sense compared to its direct equivalent *egesagane* (a lass), which is negatively used to refer to a young girl. That is, the Gusii people use the term *Omoisia* (a lad) to imply an achiever hence a term of honour. This explains why it is common to hear both boys and girls affirming: *inje nomoisia omobe, natoboire* (I am a tough / bad lad, l have made it); and not *inje negesagane ekebe natoboire* (l am a bad girl, l have made it). In other words, when the equivalent term for *Omoisia* (a lad) is invoked, it carries negative connotations hence the loss of vigour and aggressiveness associated with *Omoisia* (a lad). Thus, the term *egesagane* (a lass) is negatively used to refer to women and girls whereas *Omoisia* (a lad), is positively used to reflect boys' or men's achievements in society.

Our linguistic analysis of Ekegusii common nouns sought to reveal the Gusii people's perceptions and sexualized attitudes towards women which constitute a paradigm that continues to substantially shape women and girls' view of the world. Consequently, the research found out that the use of Ekegusii nouns has the potential to inculcate the belief in many girls and young women that hard work and aggressiveness are male attributes hence their relaxation and lack of ambition for success in society

### 4.3.4 Sexualized Ekegusii Verbs

A verb is a word that indicates what somebody or something does, or the state in which somebody or something is in. Verbs are capable of representing actions typically intended and which allow our recognition, social understanding and ability to infer the reasons underlying the users' linguistic behaviour (Vallacher, and Wegner, 1987). Therefore, verbs were picked for this study with the view that their analysis could help the researcher unearth the gender bias underlying the discursive use of Ekegusii language. In this regard, verbs that take / receive a direct object are called transitive verbs, while those that do not take or receive direct objects are called intransitive verbs.

This study focused on the use of transitive verbs in Ekegusii language because the Gusii people have a linguistic tendency of passivising women thus reflecting them as a people dependent on men for direction.

Passivization entails a process that may occur if the verb is transitive and the direct object (in the active voice) is moved to subject position (in the passive voice; the process involves the active object becoming passive subject ( Bresnan, 2001 and Givon,1982)

In this operation (passivization), the original subject, which is obligatory in the active voice and occasionally associated with what is known as the agent (involved with the action indicated by the verb), is no longer obligatory in the passive voice. That is, passivization creates a new lexeme whose argument structure is different from the basic one (Bresnan,1982). This is reflected in the ensuing evaluation of the discursive use of verbs in Ekegusii language.

Example 16

*Eega*

To seduce

In Ekegusii language, the term *eega* (to seduce) is taken to be a male province / domain. Thus, saying: *Jane eega George* (Jane seduce George), is ridiculous. Instead, saying: *George eega Jane* (George seduce Jane), is the norm and the expected state of affairs. Here, Jane is the receiver of George's action.

In this regard, if a woman or girl is said to have seduced a man as in: *Mary naega George* (Mary seduced George), then it is believed that something is wrong with her or she is a spoilt and promiscuous person.

Therefore, the term *eega (to* seduce) in the Gusii speech community suggests that the act of wooing one for friendship and / or marriage remains a preserve for men and boys in society.

Example 17

*Nywoma*

To marry

In the Gusii speech community, the act of marrying is believed to be solely undertaken by the male members of society. In this state of affairs, it is not in order to remark: *John nanywomwa na Mary* (John was married by Mary). Instead, one is supposed to say: *Mary nanywomwa na John* (Mary was married by John). Similarly, we cannot tell a woman in Ekegusii language: *Jane nywoma John* (Jane marry John). Instead, we are expected to say: John nywoma Jane (John marry Jane). In this respect, saying *Jane nyuoma John (Jane* marry John) is illogical, while saying: *John nyuoma Jane* (John Marry Jane) is the expected line of argument.

This way, the verb *nyuoma* (to marry), in Ekegusii language implies that the act of begetting a wife or husband as one's partner and companion is a male activity and never vice versa. This shows the discursive use of Ekegusii verbs to reflect women as passive receivers and / or beneficiaries of men's action thus their subordinate position to men in society.

Example 18

*Teta*

To make love

In Ekegusii language, it is believed that the act of making love is a preserve for men. That is, we are expected to say: *Robert teta Josephine* (Robert make love to Josephine) and not: *Josephine teta Robert* (Josephine make love to Robert). In this regard, it is odd for one to say: \**Josephine natetete Robert* (Josephine made love to Robert), while saying *Robert natetete Josephine* (Robert made love to Josephine) is logical and acceptable. This suggests that the act of making love is taken to be a preserve for men.

The verb *teta* (to make love), has other synonyms in Ekegusii language, all of which are discursively used to portray women negatively. These terms include, *kari* (to eat), *rina* (to mount) and *takuna* (to chew). In this regard, it is common to find the Gusii people more so boys and young men remarking: *Fred kari Gladys* (Fred eat Gladys), or *Fred naria Gladys* (Fred ate Gladys). The same argument can be phrased: *Fred narina Josephine* (Fred mounted Josephine) or *Fred rina Josephine* (Fred mount Josephine), or *Fred takuna Josephine* (Fred chew Josephine).This way, one can affirm: *Jared natakuna Evelyn* (Jared chewed Evelyn). In this regard, the use of Ekegusii verbs reflects women not only as edibles but also as the direct target of man's actions.

Example 19

*Ruga*

To cook


In the Gusii speech community, the verb *ruga* (to cook) suggests different meanings when used with the two sexes in society. That is, if used with a woman it suggests two gendered meanings (to cook or get married), which is not the case when the same verb is used to designate a man. This is evident in the following episode: *Tom naruga* (Tom cooked). The statement suggests that Tom has cooked food and it therefore has one meaning. However, telling a woman or girl *ruga* as in: *Jane ruga* (Jane cook / get married). Suggests two different things whose meanings are context based (to cook or get married). Evidently, when referring to Jane, the verb *ruga* (to cook) becomes gendered and is discursively used to mean more than it should on the basis of gender.

Therefore, the text, *ruga* (to cook) suggests the act of preparing food, but if used in an utterance in relation to a woman or girl, then it may entail persuading a woman or girl to get married.

Example 20

*Biaria*

To impregnate

The verb *biaria* (to impregnate), just like majority of the gendered verbs in Ekegusii language imply that the act of impregnating a woman is solely a man's affair. With this understanding, it is unexpected for one to say: *Evelyn biaria James* (Evelyn impregnate James). Instead, one is expected to say: *James biaria Evelyn* (James impregnate Evelyn).In some occasions, though gendered, even women are overheard using the term *biaria* (to impregnate) in reference to one of their own especially when reporting about a man suspected to have impregnated a woman or girl, as in: *Thomas obiaririe Mary gatato* (Thomas has impregnated Mary three times).

However, the term *biaria* (to impregnate) is also used to refer to the act of helping an animal such as a cow to deliver its young one. The term *biaria* is here used instead of the normal term *iboria* (to help a woman be delivered of a baby), which is more courteous. The term *biaria* (to impregnate) is used in many occasions when referring to animals as opposed *to iboria* (to help a woman deliver a baby).Therefore, the verb, *biaria* (to impregnate) implies that the act of making a woman/ girl pregnant is a man's act / obligation and not vice versa

Evidently, our examination of the Gusii verbs revealed that women and girls are always affected by men's linguistic behaviour. They (women) are represented in Ekegusii language as recipients of men's actions. In other words, women are shown as being the target of men's actions; this is ideologically meant to imply that women are never in control of issues affecting them in society. This study sought to examine how such ideological thinking serves as interpretation frameworks that come to define girls' self definition and attitudes towards issues affecting them in society.

### 4.3.5 Symbolic Cultural Norms

Cultural norms refer to the behaviour patterns that are typical of specific groups, whose values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour take place in the context of a given organizational culture (Douglas, 1982). Cultural norms are often so strongly ingrained in an individual's daily life, to the point that he or she may be unable to recognize and challenge them, unless in the context of difference (Human Resource Institute, 2006).

The present study focused on the symbolic Gusii cultural norms because of their tendency to encourage men to take issues of women for granted, besides discouraging women from questioning their subjugation and oppression in society. This way, cultural norms carry cultural bias and are part and parcel of the culture, traditions and language of a people (own observation).

Therefore, because these cultural norms find their expression in language (Hymes, 1964), their study was imperative considering that they contain pragmatic presuppositions that exist at the pragmatic level, and whose analysis could help to reveal how the Gusii people use language discursively to reinforce assumptions used to downplay and subjugate women in society. This understanding is better brought out in the ensuing discussion regarding the symbolic Gusii cultural norms.

### 4.3.5.1 Payment of Bride Price

Bride price (also called bride wealth) refers to the fee that is traditionally paid by the prospective husband's family for the prospective wife; it is the amount of money, property or wealth paid to the parents of the bride for the right to marry their daughter (Wikipedia, 2007). Thus, the institution of marriage demands in many cultures that the prospective husband provides a token of appreciation in the form of money or highly valued goods to his wife's family before the marriage can be consummated.

The concept of *bride price* has been viewed and interpreted differently by different communities of social groups, but this research focused on the practice of bride price payment in the Gusii speech community. According to the Gusii men, payment of bride price constitutes the actual purchase of a wife; bride price enables a man to acquire a wife, a form of property.

Therefore, payment of bride price also called *chiombe* (cattle) in the Gusii speech community symbolically represents a woman's submission to her husband. This explains why it is common to hear the Gusii men affirming: *oyo mokane* (this is my wife), which signals ownership. That is, one's wife is part of his property.

In this regard, if a woman says: *oyo mogaka one* (this is my husband), the question of ownership is not expressed as it is when men affirm it. Whereas men can say: *oyo mokane nanywoma* (this is my wife that I married), it is illogical and against the Gusii cultural norms for a woman to say: *oyo mogaka one nanywoma* (this is my husband I married). In other words, the Gusii people believe that it is men who marry women and not the other way round. This exposes bride price payment as one of the forms of discrimination and inequality in the institution of marriage reflected in the Gusii linguistic practice.

This linguistic investigation on the payment of bride price in the Gusii speech community revealed that the practice provides the principles by which men discriminate and abuse women;

payment of bride price legitimizes and therefore justifies as acceptable the sexist ideologies that serve to discriminate and subjugate the Gusii women. Further, the practice reflects women's social position as being subordinate to that of men.

Similarly, the study sought to reveal how the discursive treatment of the concept of bride price may socialize some girls to believe that it is enough to be married and do nothing about their future.

### 4.3.5.2 Wife Beating

Wife beating is a cultural practice whereby wives are physically molested by their husbands; it entails wives being slapped, hit, kicked or beaten by their husbands (ICRW, 2002). The concept of wife beating is prevalent in many communities where each social group gives varied arguments in favour and against the cultural practice.

In the Gusii speech community, many people believe that wife beating is normal and the only way for correcting errand wives; wife beating is entrenched in the cultural belief that a man who does not beat his wife is actually henpecked and /or voiceless before his wife. Against this background, a man who is beaten by his wife is ridiculed and labeled a lesser man; while a man who beats his wife is seen to be in-control of his household.

This way, it is common to hear both men and women saying for instance, *Rael naitetwe na mogaka oye* (Rael was beaten by her husband). However, if a Gusii man is beaten by his wife as in: *John naitetwe na mokaye* (John was beaten by his wife), this is only said in whispers (guttural voices), because it is against the expected societal norms. In this regard, thought and language interact in the Gusii spoken discourse, where cultural practices like wife beating find their expression. In this circumstance, *wife beating* symbolizes women's lack of independence and autonomy.

A linguistic study of this practice of *wife beating* in the Gusii speech community revealed the cultural practice as being one of the most prevalent form of gender inequality and a grave manifestation of the low status that women occupy in the household and society; this constitutes gender violence against women which is part of the gender norms that result in differential power relations between men and women in society. Wife beating is one of the pragmatic features of the Gusii cultural practices that serve to downplay a woman's place in society.

The study on the discursive use of the concept of *wife beating* revealed the cultural practice as being responsible for women's sense of insecurity and inequality; this demonstrates an empirical relationship between the discursive use of linguistic structures and women's low levels of self confidence and self esteem.

Though waning with time, the practice of wife beating by the Gusii men serves to subjugate women hence relegating them to their ever subordinate position in the male dominated society. This gives testimony that the Gusii men actually beat their wives. That is, the Gusii women are usually beaten, molested and / or disciplined by their husbands. Regrettably, some women think that when their husbands beat them, it is a communication of their love and commitment to marriage. This explains why some women do remark: *rero mogaka one tana kongita, nigo gose agatagete gonseria?* (Nowadays, my husband has never beaten me. Could he be intending to divorce me?)

### 4.3.5.3 Biased Parental Attitudes.

Biased parental attitudes are used in this research to mean the parents' preferential (biased) treatment of their children on the basis of their gender. This social practice shows the fact that parents display different levels of concern and interest in their children's welfare. In this regard, it is common to hear some parents remarking, *tiga insomie abaisi bane, chinyaroka nechiaronde* (let me educate my sons because girls are meant for another clan). This reflects meanings as mental things in the minds of language users; the Gusii sociocultural assumptions and understandings constitute symbolic semantic knowledge that serve to disadvantage women and girls in their social world. In this way, biased parental attitudes entail absence of social support for girls, which make some of the girls to harbour a sense of inequality hence making it difficult for them to bring matters affecting them to the knowledge of the society

This linguistic investigation found biased parental attitudes to be an historical  phenomenon and a cultural practice that shows gender discrimination, injustice and inequality; it engenders in women  and girls a feeling of self hatred and low self-esteem, that accounts for their (women and girls) diminishing participation in public life, more so in their educational pursuits.

### 4.3.5.4 Property Ownership and Inheritance Rights

Property (also called possessions) refers to a thing or things that are owned by somebody, it includes land, buildings, money and other physical properties (Hornby, 2000). Property ownership contributes to equality, empowerment, and enhanced capacities for negotiation, bargaining power, and power in decision making of self (ICRW, 2002).

In the Gusii speech community, girls do not inherit property from their parents; they (girls) are believed to belong to another clan upon marriage. Thus, this cultural practice restricts girls by ensuring that only boys inherit property from their fathers and / or parents.

Likewise, upon marriage, the Gusii men take their wives to be part of their property, and the question of a woman owning property in her marital home does not arise (she is owned, hence part of her husbands possessions).

In this respect, it is odd to say: *etugo eye neya Jane* (these cattle belongs to Jane) or *amari aya naya Jane* (this wealth belongs to Jane). This shows how language plays a crucial role in the construction of difference in issues of access, power and disparity among the Gusii people, besides revealing how women's interests are relegated to the periphery, in real world situation where language is a central issue.

This way, the concept of property ownership and inheritance rights was relevant for this study considering its potential to reveal how deep rooted gender bias in property ownership and inheritance rights within the Gusii speech community serve to keep women down thus denying them the capacity for equal participation in negotiating situations affecting their lives.

Property ownership and inheritance rights gives women a sense of self-esteem, personal pride, and self-confidence which translates into their increased social status value and respect) in society; property ownership empowers women with the voice and confidence to participate more equally in familial and community decision making (Kamalini, 2002 and World Bank, 1993).

In this study, the concept of property ownership and inheritance rights among the Gusii people established that the lack of direct and independent control over property accounts for women's low self confidence and self worth thus their inability to voice their opinions in the decision making process; this reveals the role of gender bias entrenched in patriarchal systems that serve to limit and constrain women hence their sense of helplessness and subordinate position in society.

### 4.3.5.5 Domestic Chores

Domestic chores refer to daily routine and / or domestic tasks undertaken within the household / homestead and they include; cooking, washing clothes and utensils, cleaning the house, milking cows, fetching firewood and water.

In many African societies, domestic chores are considered a preserve for women and girls. Though the belief is waning with time; the practice is still rife among many social groups including the Gusii people of Western Kenya.

This way, the present study sought to reveal how the Gusii cultural practices serve to present a worldview which is contrary to women's interests, and to the extent that some women have had to internalize a male worldview. That is, our linguistic analysis of Ekegusii linguistic structures revealed that biased beliefs (like those displayed towards domestic chores as being a preserve for women) may predispose girls to thinking that their place is in the kitchen / homestead, hence their limited exposure and lack of sufficient intellectual stimulation.

In this regard therefore, it is illogical for one to tell a Gusii boy or man: *Jeremiah rigia chinko, oute otorugere* (Jeremiah look for firewood, light fire and cook for us). Instead, it is common practice for us to say: *Jennifer rigia chinko, oute otorugere* (Jennifer, look for firewood, light fire and cook for us).

Likewise, a man or boy is not expected to wash the baby's diapers, as in: *John sibia chinabukini chiomwana* (John wash the baby's diapers). Here, one is expected to say for instance: *Josephine sibia chinabukini chiomwana*( Josephine wash the baby's diapers). In this respect, if a man is sported washing diapers, he is laughed at and cajoled as in: *aye mbosa, nigo ogambeire nomokungu(* you are nothing, you are hen pecked by your wife*).* This reveals the Gusii peoples' linguistic routines that serve to reflect tasks meant for women.

It is from this understanding that the present study sought to identify the role of language (words and expressions) in locating and maintaining girls and women in their disadvantaged position in society; Ekegusii language comes out as one language that inevitably keeps women in a subordinate position.

Our linguistic analysis of the Ekegusii language presents the Gusii cultural values as linguistic structures that influence discourse norms as manifested in the girls' self-concept and. worldview

Therefore, the researcher supports the thesis that domestic chores so expressed in the Gusii language are highly likely to socialize and thus condition girls' perceptions about reality, which comes to affect their attitudes towards life and education

## 4.4 Linguistic Features of Gendered Images

The researcher focused on the various linguistic features of gendered linguistic images as highlighted below. Here, the discussion centered on reflecting the various distinct features of the Gusii language and the likely purpose of those features.

### 4.4.1 Foregrounding and Backgrounding Techniques

Foregrounding entails the giving of unusual prominence to one element or property of a text, relative to other less noticeable aspects. In this study, foregrounding has been used to mean language deviation from the normal usage in the text by giving emphasis to certain concepts through textual prominence.

According to Hakemulder (2004), foregrounding (in a purely linguistic sense) refers to new information, in contrast to elements in the text which form the background against which the new elements are to be understood by the listener or reader; foregrounding is a deviation from intrinsic norms (Hakemulder, 2004). That is, foregrounding breaks up the listener's or reader's routine behaviour and perspectives and replaces them by new and surprising insights and sensations thus making him or her aware of his or her automatized actions and preconceptions

Foregrounding is aimed at making particular expressions and words in the text more prominent than others, whereas backgrounding is aimed at de-emphasizing given issues in the text thus denying them public scrutiny and / or criticism. Backgrounding shows how language in a text serves to de-emphasize given issues of concern in the text. The ultimate form of backgrounding is omission, which entails leaving certain things completely out of a text (Huckin, 1997): That is, omission is often the most potent aspect of tantalization, because if the speaker or reader does not mention something, it often does not enter the listeners' mind and thus is not questioned and/or subjected to his or her scrutiny ( Huckin, 1997).

Foregrounding creates renewed perceptions that create a fresh awareness (Van Peer, 1986) and (Hakemulder, 2004) foregrounding plays a role in the actors' mind by enhancing their aesthetic appreciation of the text besides helping to change their perceptions of the world outside

the text (Van Peer, 1986). This way, foregrounding technique was selected for this study considering that it has the potential to influence girls' perception of the world.     Besides foregrounding was assumed to help the researcher establish the link between the Gusii linguistic structures and their contexts of use within which they are situated. This is in line with the view that foregrounding can be used to evaluate texts, situate them historically or explain their importance and cultural significance. This means that foregrounding and its consequent textual meanings must often be deduced from the context in which the term is used (Van Peer, 1986).

Overally, our research utilized both foregrounding and back grounding techniques considering their potential to influence girls' perceptions through renewed awareness beyond their routine behaviour use. In other words, the researcher hoped that the use of foregrounding and back grounding techniques could enable him present the new ways in which meanings are brought about and experienced among the Gusii people, hence the Gusii girls' perverted self - concept and perceptions of the world.

The concepts of foregrounding and back grounding are better elucidated in the examples below, which highlight the use of sexist proverbs, denigrating terms and gendered nouns in Ekegusii language.

The term *ritinge* (a concubine) is used discursively by the Gusii people to imply that only women are and / or become concubines. That is, if a woman marries and divorces several times, then she is referred to as *rirogo* (a concubine). In this way, it is common to hear references like: *Jeria neritinge rigotu* (Jeria is an old concubine). However, it is odd for one to remark: *Geoffrey neritinge rigotu* (Geoffrey is an old concubine). That is, the derogative term *ritinge* (a concubine) is exclusively used to denigrate women.

Such derogatory terms serve to put women's presupposed evils at the fore so as to portray them negatively hence giving them a negative image in society. Women's moral backbone is put into the fore whereas that of men is hidden (back grounded) because no equivalent terms used to refer to men are given in Ekegusii language.

The reference *rirogo* (a prostitute) is discursively used in Ekegusii language to refer to a promiscuous woman. *Rirogo* is also used to mean a promiscuous woman who practices commercial sex (Choti, 1998). However, Ekegusii language does not assign equivalent terms to refer to men who are immoral. Thus, saying: *Tom nerirogo* (Tom is a prostitute), is unacceptable while saying: *Jennifer nerirogo* (Jennifer is a prostitute) is the norm and the formula. This

portrayal is in effect meant to make women's presupposed negative image more recognizable compared to that of men. This way, a critical examination of semantic derogation in Ekegusii language reveals that once a word is associated with women, it often acquires semantic stereotypes that are negative.

Similarly, the Gusii people discursively use the term *engoko* (a hen) to exclusively refer to a promiscuous woman. However, there is no direct equivalent term in Ekegusii language to denote an immoral man.

The equivalent term for *engoko* (a hen), is *etwoni* (a cock) which is however used in this instance to give glory and reflect a man with several sexual partners as a conqueror of women. Thus, the consistent use of derogatory terms to denigrate women serves to make their implied negative character more recognizable than their achievements.

In this regard, if a woman's morals are questionable, she can be referred to as; *Janet nengoko* (Janet is a hen). Metaphorically, equating a promiscuous woman to a hen has semantic implications. It presupposes that women are just like hens (inferior and dirty birds). In the same vein, a promiscuous man cannot be referred to as: *Jeremiah nengoko* (Jeremiah is a hen). Instead, he will be praised as in: *Jeremiah netwoni* (Jeremiah is a cock). This reveals open discursive discrimination in Ekegusii language against women. Such derogatory terms serve to foreground women's negative image.

Consequently, all the above mentioned derogative terms present women as victims on the spotlight and not on those pushing them to these acts (presumably, men). The omission (back grounding) of men's evils from the texts serves to present women as subject to moral depravity and men as not being guilty of such offences.

Therefore, women's moral situation as depicted in Ekegusii language is meant to create an ideology and fallacy that persuasively implore women and girls to feel inferior and subordinate to men. Further, the derogatory terms investigated showed that biased attitudes and opinions towards women have a negative effect on girls' self-definition and way of thinking.

In the same light, discursive use of derogatory terms and expressions with negative semantic implications point towards girls' low self-concept and negative attitudes towards education. Also, the use of derogatory references in this text serves to signal how language is used to promote and perpetuate negative images of women in society.

In relation to the above said state of affairs, some proverbs in Ekegusii language are also used discursively to portray women negatively by putting their implied weaknesses at the fore. This positioning foregrounds them although negatively. For instance, the proverb *totogia moiseke kieni, motogie mwana* (never praise a girl for her beauty, but rather for giving birth), implies that a woman or girls' role in society is to beget children. One wonders why the same proverb when referring to men has lexical variations aimed at reflecting men favourably. That is, when addressing men, the proverb goes: *totogia momura kieni, motogie nkoro* (never praise a boy for his physical appearance, but rather on the basis of his actions / achievements).

The proverb *Onabaiseke bange inkerandi kiamabere botakana botakoera* (he who has many daughters is a gourd of milk that will never go dry), reflects girls as a sure source of wealth via bride price upon marriage. Therefore, the image of girls as symbols of wealth is foregrounded. The use of such gendered proverbs in Ekegusii language was found to be instrumental in the negative presentation of women and girls who are presented as man's tool for trade, a form of property to be sold for cash.

Similarly, the Gusii proverb, *Bakungu mbaya ko'menu yabasaririe* (women are good persons though their mouths have rendered them bad), portrays women negatively as gossips, thus foregrounding their presupposed negative character whereas men's evil character is back grounded so as to reflect them as being perfect. This is presupposed by omission; the men are not supposed to be gossips. It is assumed that only women's talk is bad hence the need for censorship. This negative treatment of women is pegged on sexist ideologies which are meant to exclude and problematise women's situation, more so, in the mainstream activities. The use of the metaphor indicates that women have negative attributes which can only be associated with the female folk.

In this regard, it was observed that even the affected persons (women) in the Gusii speech community, do assert using gendered proverbs to justify their arguments with fellow women.

Against this background, the proverb: *ngongo machaywa, mbamura etabwati* (for any region to be disrespected then it is because of its lack of boys or men), implies that only boys are taken to play a significant role in providing security to the community. This foregrounds men's role while, downplaying (back grounding) women's role, to de-emphasize their importance; boys are presented as symbols of protection and security.

woman protects the property. This positioning of man in Ekegusii language as the searcher and woman as the protector of that which has been acquired is one way of giving men prominence over women. That is, it is man who first acquires that which the woman has to protect. This explains why it is common to hear the Gusii men and women remarking: *Omosacha noyo gosacha, nomokungu noyo gokunga etugo* (a man is meant to search for wealth while a woman is meant to protect wealth). This way, the Gusii woman is presented as a *goal keeper* who receives and surrounds what man has brought home; her role in searching for food and wealth is technically backgrounded. This presents the top-down orientation of their social position in our society.

Therefore, in a way, woman is subordinate to man because, without man, she will not find something to protect (presumably food). This state of affairs gives prominence to man's power as the provider of woman's livelihood.

With respect to the above said, when one says: *aye nomosacha* (you are a man), it implies the strong and superior one. However, if one says: *aye nomokungu* (you are a woman), this reflects a person of a lower status compared to that of a man. Also, if a man displays feminine tendencies and / or qualities, both men and women can openly tell him: *aye nomokungu* (you are a woman) to imply an inferior being.

It is also very common to hear women remarking: *inche nomosacha* (I am a man), whenever they achieve that which is taken to require a man's effort.

The term *Omorugi* (a wife or cook), in Ekegusii language is used to subordinate women before men. That is, the text implies that women are cooks whose role is to cook for men (their husbands). This text therefore positions women as being inferior to men. This in effect gives men prominence while back grounding women as being inferior and second to men.

Therefore, when one says: *Jane nomorugi o'John* (Jane is John's cook / wife), it implies that Jane's sole role in society is to cook and fend for her husband and children. In this regard, even if John cooks for his wife, it is illogical for us to say: *John nomorugi o'Jane* (John is Jane's cook). In some circumstances, men introduce their wives as: *eye imwane* (this is my house / wife). However, if a woman says: *eye imwane* (this is my house), it solely means her house and not her husband. This reflects Ekegusii as being gendered when used in relation to women

Also, the equivalent term in Ekegusii language for *Omorugi* (a cook / wife), used to refer to men is *embisi* (a cook), but it is rarely used because of its negative connotative meaning. This

reflects the discursive use of language to discriminate and subjugate women which was found in this research to impair women and girls' self image and world view

Likewise, the term *omoisia* (a lad) is also given prominence over its direct equivalent in Ekegusii language *egesagane(a* lass), used to refer to girls. In this respect, *omoisia* is used positively to suggest an achiever and conqueror hence making boys more recognizable than girls. Therefore, if one tells you: *aye nomoisia* (you are a lad), you can't feel offended as when one remarks: *aye negesagane* (you are a lass), which is the direct equivalent of *Omoisia* (a lad) in Ekegusii language.

The reference *Omoisia* (a lad), therefore gives boys credit even where they do not deserve. On the other hand, the term *egesagane* is used to suggest an inferior person. These references serve to discredit and trivialize girls' needs and aspirations thus back grounding their social standing in society; boys are however given a favourable treatment.

The nouns above are part of the many Ekegusii common nouns that are used discursively to distinguish a man from a woman in terms of the society's gender roles that are overtly sexist; they are not based on one's intellect or talent.

## 4.4.2 Presuppositions and Insinuations

Presuppositions entail the use of certain words that take certain ideas for granted in the text; they refer to the use of persuasive rhetoric, normally to convey the impression that what one (an agent of power) says carries more weight in the text (Huckin, 1997). Presuppositions entail the use of language in a way that appears to take certain ideas for granted, as if there were no alternatives. Presuppositions are notoriously manipulative because they are difficult to challenge (Huckin, 1997).

According to Dilts (1998), presuppositions relate to unconscious beliefs or assumptions embedded in the structure of an utterance, action or another belief and are required for utterance, action or belief to make sense. In this regard, linguistic presuppositions occur when certain information or relationships must be accepted as true in order to make sense of a particular statement.

On the other hand, insinuations refer to comments that are slyly suggestive. Like presuppositions, insinuations are hard to challenge (Huckin, 1997). Presuppositions and insinuations constitute beliefs that form the foundation of a particular system of knowledge

(Dilts, 1998). Therefore, it is with this understanding that presuppositions and insinuations were selected for this study, considering that they could help the researcher gain insight into the shared knowledge of the Gusii girls that is taken to influence their self concept and perceptions of the world.

Also, the present research presupposes that when girls let presuppositions to pass outside their awareness, they usually accept them. That is, considering that presuppositions are notoriously manipulative and difficult to challenge (Huckin,1997), the researcher presupposes that girls may tend to focus on the outermost layer of meaning and overlook the presupposition deep inside

Presuppositions and insinuations were taken to be relevant for this study considering their indirect and latent meanings characteristic of those sexist meanings that are common in Ekegusii language. This was evidenced in the text as follows.

The proverbs *Totogia Moiseke Kieni, motogie mwana,* (never praise a girl for her beauty but rather for giving birth), and *basacha mbaniberani, nabakungu mbaiborerani* (men help fellow men in creating wealth, while women help fellow women in begging children), presupposes that women's sole role in society is that of giving birth. The implication is that each woman or girl is supposed to get married and beget children if she is to be recognized and respected in society.

The argument that *bakungu mbaya ko'menu yabasaririe* (women are good persons though their mouths have rendered them bad) presupposes that women are loose talkers. This further suggests that their talk is naturally bad. For instance, this explains why there is no such expression in Ekegusii terminology as: *basacha mbaya, ko'menu yabasaririe* (men are good persons though their mouths have rendered them bad)

On the same understanding, the proverb *Ngongo machaywa mbamura etabwatie* (for a region to be disrespected, then it is because of its lack of men / boys), presupposes that only men and boys can provide protection and security in our society. This is why Gusii men are commonly overheard affirming: *abasacha intorendete engongo* (*we* men are protecting our territory / region). Semantically speaking, such presuppositions serve to insinuate the feeling that girls are of less value compared to boys. Therefore, the Gusii proverbs have a persuasive structure suggesting that the text is meaningful for its users only because it presupposes a vast common ground and common knowledge and sense. Such negative propositions express the denigrating of girls and women and the specific attitudes and opinions about their social positions.

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The concept of *wife beating* in Ekegusii language suggests that only women are beaten by their husbands and not vice versa. That is, if one says: *Jane nangondete mogaka oye* (Jane beat her husband), then that man is seen as being hen pecked and / or voiceless before his wife. He is taken to be a female of the male sex (another woman). This means that nobody will accuse a man of having beaten his wife which is unexpected since they (men) are the only ones expected to discipline their wives. This cultural practice constitutes a violation of women's rights. Besides, it signals the underlying ideological thinking that expresses the opinions, attitudes and ideology in the Gusii speech community which serves to influence women's mental dispositions; women are persuasively implored to embrace the idea that their position and abilities cannot be matched with those of men.

Also, the issues of *property ownership and inheritance rights* among the Gusii people confirm how some cultural practices take women's needs and aspirations for granted. That is, only men have the right to inherit and own property from their parents according to the Gusii culture. For example, when boys grow and attain the age of marriage, it is common to hear parents (both men and women) confirming: *intwe twateire abamura oboremo* (we have given our sons their pieces of land*) and not: intwe twateire abaiseke oboremo (*we have given our girls their pieces of land*). This implies that girls' accessibility to land and property is to be provided for in another clan, probably upon marriage. Likewise, when parents die and it happens that all their children are females, many of the Gusii people do ask: *ningo batigerete etugo, gekogera abaiseke imbaronde* (under whose care did they leave their property, given that girls are meant for another clan). This suggests that only boys are important to their parents. The overall message put across is that girls are less important to their parents compared to boys.

Similarly, the terms *rirogo* (a prostitute), *ritinge* (a concubine) and: *engoko* (a hen / woman with loose morals), suggest that only women are subject to moral probity. In other words, the terms above, *rirogo, ritinge* and *engoko* are used discursively to make the listener feel that women are spoilt and inferior to their male counterparts. *Rirogo* (a prostitute) is taken to refer to women only, thus suggesting that only women become prostitutes. *Ritinge* (a concubine), is also used to refer to women implying that men are free from such negative references. In other words, it is highly unlikely for the Gusii people to say: *\*Tom nerirogo* (Tom is a concubine). We are in this respect supposed to say: *Janet nerirogo* (Janet is a prostitute) or *Janet neritinge* (Janet is a concubine).

Likewise, *engoko* (a hen) is used to suggest that only women's morals are bad. This explains for example why nobody can remark: *Geoffrey nengoko* (Geoffry is a hen). Such references entail the manipulation of Ekegusii language by using selective voices to convey the message that women's moral depravity is real and that their implied inferior social position is correct and legitimate.

### 4.4.3 The Passive Construction / Passivization

Passivization serves to subordinate the obligatory subject (in the active voice), by embedding it into the main clause within the larger hierarchical structure (Givon, 1982). In other words, passivization is a manipulation which makes active sentence such as (Thomas pushed Jane) into passive sentence such as (Jane was pushed by Thomas). Here, the subject / agent of the active clause becomes a non-actor. In this study, passivization entails the process by which women and girls are made to accept issues affecting them in life without reacting or trying to question them. Passivization in Ekegusii language reveals the underlying semiotic representations that reflect on the social relations between men and women in society. This is better explained in the ensuing illustrations from Ekegusii language in relation to transitive verbs.

In relation to the verb, *eega* (to seduce), it is illogical to say *Jane eega Tom* (Jane seduce Tom) or *Tom naegwa na Jane* (Tom was seduced by Jane). Instead, the construction, *Jane naegwa na Tom* (Jane was seduced by Tom) is the acceptable argument. That is, the Gusii people do not expect a woman or girl to woo and /or propose to a man. This shows how meanings communicated in Ekegusii language may constitute barriers to girls' rational judgment about issues affecting them.

Similarly, in the Gusii speech community, when courting a partner for companionship or marriage, only men are expected to woo women. In this respect, it is not in order for one to say *Janet eega George* (Janet seduce/ woo George). Instead, one is expected to say: *George eega Janet* (George seduce Janet). Here, George is the subject and Janet the object (passive receiver of George's actions). However, it is possible that Janet can seduce Tom, though this is viewed as being irregular. Semantically speaking therefore, Janet's power as a woman is weakened by passive voice construction. This presents some linguistic information indicative of the superior and inferior status of men and women in the Gusii speech community.

In this regard, Ekegusii language reflects women as the direct target of man's actions. This presupposes that women and girls are passive beings that depend on men for direction. Semantically, this implies that women and girls are passive beings that have no control over what happens to them. This portrayal further makes men's role and power conspicuous, compared to that of women.

On the same note, the verb *nyuoma* (to marry), is used to request a man to marry a woman and never the reverse. It is unheard of in the Gusii speech community, for us to say: *Miriam nyuoma Tom.* (Miriam marry Tom). Instead, we are required to say: *Tom nyuoma Miriam* (Tom marry Miriam). Likewise, it is odd for one to say: *Tom Nanywomwa na Miriam* (Tom was married by Miriam). Instead, we are expected to say; *Miriam nanywomwa na Tom* (Miriam was married by Tom). The semantic implication of this passive construction serves to show women as being passive in the society. In this respect, women are portrayed as being affected by the semiotic actions of men thus reinforcing their image as the affected; the representation of women as beneficiaries of men's actions is foregrounded in this circumstance to give focus to women's presupposed inabilities.

By the same token, the concept *teta* (to have sex with somebody / to make love), is taken to be a male activity in which case women are assumed to play a passive role. For instance, it is a taboo subject in Ekegusii language for one to say: *Rebecca teta Charles* (Rebecca make love to Charles). Instead, we are expected to say: *Charles teta Rebecca* (Charles make love to Rebecca). Here, man occupies the subject position and woman the object position; man is presented as the doer and woman as the passive receiver of man's actions at the end of the participation continuum. In this framework, the subject and object are not only different entities, but also do stand in an adversative relationship within a hierarchical structure, where the object is subordinate to the object. In this context of situation, Ekegusii transitive verbs are used discursively to give prominence to men.

Passivization of women here has ideological implications; it communicates the ideological beliefs entrenched in patriarchal thinking that is prevalent in the Gusii speech community. Also, by backgrounding women's agency, passivization through selective choice by lexical structures is meant to imply women's detachment from the actions affecting them in their own lives. The selective choice and use of Ekegusii verbs entail discriminative objectification (Van Dijk, 1993), via discursive treatment of women as objects of some purpose to the text. That is, women are

treated as objects for man's manipulation and are thus shown as not having their own needs and interests. The research further found out that this type of discrimination is normally part of a larger pattern of discrimination in society against women.

Evidently, putting men in the subject position and women in object position serves to create a perspective that men are dominant and hence superior to women. The verbs consistently describe events that continually depict men as initiating actions, thus exerting power over women hence portraying them (women) as being docile and less aggressive. This in effect backgrounds women's role in society hence down playing their position and contributions. Also, all the verbs foreground men's superiority in such a way that bias against women is evident.

Thus, foregrounding men's role by putting them in a superior position compared to that of women in the next is not without ideological underpinnings. In the same vein, passivization of women in the text serves to foreground women's presupposed secondary role besides revealing their subordination in society.

Considering that discourse can help to construct, justify and perpetuate a given social condition or situation (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001), the present study sought to endorse the argument that the selective choice and discursive use of linguistic structures may serve to predispose girls' thinking and self concept thus restricting their participation in the public domain.

In all the examples given, *man* occupies the subject position and *woman* the object position; man is presented as the doer and 'woman' as the receiver of man's actions. This in effect serves to reflect women as passive beings at the receiving end of the participant continuum. Semantically speaking, putting men in the subject position helps to create a perspective that men are dominant and hence superior to women. This way, Ekegusii verbs discussed herein are used discursively to reflect women and girls as being helpless and vulnerable; the text consistently describes events that continually depict men as initiating actions, thus exerting power over women hence portraying them as docile and less aggressive. This portrayal is not without the underlying ideological investments; it serves to communicate the existing power relations between men and women in society and the connection between language and the exercise of power (Thompson, 2002) and (Fiske, 1994).

Therefore, it can be confidently asserted that this portrayal of women as passive participants at the receiving end of the participation continuum amounts to gender discrimination against

woman; transitivity in this text then serves to communicate the expression of casualty and attribution of responsibility as women and girls are in effect portrayed as not being in control of issues affecting them.

### 4.4.4 Metaphorical Language

Metaphors entail comparative constructions in a language in which an entity's attributes are transferred onto another entity in the text (Pecheux, 1982). In this regard, a word, expression or proposition does not have meaning of its own; meaning does not exist anywhere except in the metaphorical relationships (realized in substitution effects, paraphrases and synonym formations) which happens to be more or less provisionally located in a given discursive formation. The study of metaphorical relationships in which meaning is located within the boundaries of a discursive formation can lead to insights into the ideological dimension of meaning (Pecheux, 1982).

Metaphorical use of language was therefore appropriate for this study considering that Ekegusii language has several metaphorical references used to reinforce assumptions held about the forms of meaning related to the Gusii beliefs and hence attitudes and ideologies that sexist men enact or express when talking about women.

Metaphors correspond to a world outside language itself (the social cultural issues in society). A metaphor is seen in terms of properties of attribution, which are alluded to. That is, texts are seen to contain pragmatic presuppositions which exist at the pragmatic level (Lennon, 2004). Thus, for us to gain analytical insights into the discursive use of linguistic structures to downplay and subjugate women in the Gusii speech community, analysis of metaphorical language was imperative considering its advantage in calling attention to the semantic problem of reference, meaning and truth in Ekegusii language. In this regard, it is worth nothing that Ekegusii language has several metaphorical references. However, the study utilized only those metaphorical references that are discursively used to talk about women.

Also, metaphors entail comparative constructions in a language in which the attributes of an entity are transferred onto another entity in the text. Ekegusii language has numerous metaphorical references used to reinforce assumptions held about the forms of meaning that sexist men express when talking about women. Examples of metaphorical references in the text include: *Onabaiseke bange nkerandi kiamabere botakana botakoera* (He who has many girls is a

gourd of milk that will never go dry). In this proverb, a person with many girls is metaphorically compared to a gourd of milk that will never dry up. Ironically, this implies that once married, the girls become a source of bride price, hence a constant source of milk (livelihood) for their parents. Therefore, girls are looked upon as items of a trade.

Similarly, the text on semantic derogation has denigrating terms that are metaphorically used to invoke negative attitudes towards the female gender. These include *engoko* (a hen / or girl/woman with loose morals). In this example, a woman or girl with loose morals is metaphorically compared to a hen (a bird) to suggest an inferior (lesser) being and a morally deprived person. In this text therefore, girls and women are negatively portrayed.

In the same vein, the phrase m*aiso abakungu* (women's eyes / evening hours approaching dusk), is also used metaphorically; women's eyesight is indirectly compared to evening hours approaching dusk. Ironically, the choice of such negative terms to refer to women communicate the fact that women are the victims of aggression in the text. They (women) are projected not only as a people who are inferior, but also as persons who lack foresight. The choice and use of terms in the text thus imply a form of morally or legally reprehensible harassment and abuse of power.

Such words and expressions contribute to the overall polarization of the conceptual structure of the text and to the formation of a biased and polarized model of events where women and girls are clearly portrayed as the bad and men as the good. Therefore, conceptual polarization is implemented in the text by the use of the above said forms of metaphors; the semantic polarization of this text serves to construct and express biased models of girls and women. These mental models also represent personal beliefs, knowledge, attitudes and ideologies which are held in our society about women

## 4.5 Context of Gendered Linguistic Images on Girl Education

The context of gendered linguistic images on girls' view of education was looked at by focusing on the linguistic strategies for constructing women and girls' self concept and world view, and the implications of gendered linguistic images on girls' self-definition and attitude towards education.

### 4.5.1 Linguistic Strategies for Constructing Women and Girls' Self Concept and World View

Self concept refers to the sum total of an individual's knowledge and understanding of his or herself (Purkey, 1988 and Lucky, 1945). In other words, a person's self concept is the way an individual views and / or perceives himself or herself hence the means by which he or she interacts with life in a way that makes him or her meet his or her basic needs. The self-concept is not innate, but it is developed or constructed by the individual through interaction with the environment and reflecting on that; it is also possible to change one's self-worth (Brigham, 1986). This is best reflected in the use of the proverb *ngongo machaywa, mbamura etabwatie* (for a region to be disrespected, then it is because of its lack of boys) to which one of the girls remarked: 'such proverbs make me feel despised, discriminated against, and valueless in society.' The girl is made to regret her being born female which is implicitly suggested as not being able to provide protection and security in society. Thus, the present discourse ably represents women negatively because of their gender, thus engendering in them a feeling of being unwanted in society.

Likewise, many of the successes and failures that people experience in many areas of life are closely related to the ways that they have learned to view themselves and their relationships with others (Mc Adam, 1986, Ryan et al. 1986). It is from this understanding, that the researcher views the Gusii girl's academic performance in education as being generally based on values internalized from their speech community rather than from their own valuing. This means that the Gusii girl's self conceptions differ from the reality of their experiences in which case, a state of incongruence exists. This evaluation is further made clear by Mugui (2004), who argues that self concept entails a process by which individuals ignore, deny, distort or perceive experiences that define them. The paradigm of self-concept is thus relevant for this study which purports that the use of gendered linguistic images serve to distort and / or present the Gusii girl's self concept thus perverting their perception of the world; the researcher presupposes that the Gusii girl's ever diminishing interests for academic success and achievement results from their distorted self-concept.

By the same token, there are several different components of self-concept; physical, academic, social and transpersonal. Our academic self-concept relates to how well we do in school or how well we learn and it is the basis for all motivational behaviour (Franken, 1994).

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There is a relationship between one's self concept (knowledge of one's self) or self-esteem (one's subjective evaluation of his or her value/worth) and academic success (Bandura, 1997). This viewpoint is relevant for the present study considering that it sought to investigate how gendered linguistic images affect the Gusii girl's self concept, world view and attitudes towards formal education

On the other hand, worldview is taken in this research to mean the framework of ideas and beliefs through which girls interpret the world and interact in it; worldview consists of basic assumptions and images that provide amore or less coherent way of thinking about the world (Wallace, 1970). In other words, worldview entails a person's internal framework about reality and life; implying it encompasses the personal insight about reality and meaning. For instance, the proverb *Bakungu mbaya koomenu yabasaririe* (women are good persons, though their mouths have rendered them bad), is used in Ekegusii language to create a perverted world view based on perceived attributes of the female folk; the proverb is discursively used to create a slant perspective or ideology that being a man is good as opposed to being a woman. This was evidenced from one girl who confirmed: 'I fear to speak or talk openly because everything I say is taken to be gossip and nothing more.' The proverb thus makes women and girls not to feel free and confident in their public life because their words are treated with contempt. This in effect makes the female folk feel that their language is not addressing their needs.

Much of a person's worldview is shaped by his or her culture and upbringing (Wallace, 1970). It is from this understanding that the researcher sought to investigate how the use and internalization of gendered linguistic images within the Gusii speech community serves to socialize girls to embrace a perverted view of both the self and the world around them. This research sought to establish the dialectal relationship between the discursive use of linguistic structures and girls' self-concept and world view.

Different linguistic strategies used to construct girls' self concept and world view were discussed and they include: referential and argumentation strategies.
In this research, strategies entail the systematic way of using language adopted to achieve a particular aim (Wodak, 2004).

In this regard, the study utilized referential strategies and argumentation strategies to analyze how the Gusii girls' self concept and world view are constructed and presented via the discursive choice and use of linguistic structures.

**Table 4**: **Linguistic Strategies used in Constructing Women and Girls' Self Concept and World View**

| Linguistic strategies | Objectives | Linguistic devices employed |
|---|---|---|
| Referential | Creation of girls' self concept and world view | -Presuppositions<br>- Insinuations<br>-Selective lexical choices |
| Argumentation | Justification of women and girls' negative attributes. | -Use of arguments and presupposed facts. |

Source: Adapted from Marube (2005)

### 4.5.1.1 Referential Strategies

In this research, Referential strategies entail the systematic ways of using language to construct and represent the girls' self-image and world view; referential strategies are realized and / or actualized in the form of linguistic structures through which girls are referred to or named (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). Therefore, referential strategies were selected for this study considering that any form of reference or naming often involves an evaluation (characterization) of that which is named (Reisigl and Wodak, 2001). This way, referential strategies were particularly significant in this study because, the way girls are categorized influences the way we perceive and relate to them; the discursive use of linguistic structures imply the characterization and / or evaluation of girls by the Gusii people.

In the same vein, referential strategies were selected for this study based on the nature of the present linguistic investigation which necessitated the analysis of linguistic structures, whose use reflected how girls are presented and represented in the Gusii speech community. The use of referential strategies to construct and present girls' perception of the world is better explained in the ensuing discussion regarding gendered linguistic images that help to construct and impair girls' self- image and way of thinking.

The proverb *Bakungu mbaya koomenu yabasaririe* (women are good persons, though their mouths have rendered them bad), suggests that women are gossips and evil-minded persons who cannot be trusted with sensitive societal issues. It portrays women as a people who have no right to free expression of their opinions and ideas; this constitutes a violations of women's human rights, more so their freedom of speech. The metaphor alludes to the fact that women lack mentorship and empowerment. The lack of an equivalent proverb to refer to men implies that men are beyond reproach

The view point was also expressed by one of the girls interviewed in this research. She declared: '... I am made to feel guilty and think that all women are gossips and that all our talk is always bad.' This implies that the girls are affected by the consumption of gendered proverbs in their community

However, this assertion is not without ideological purposes by the users of the text. This understanding is ideologically meant to inhibit women's self-expression, hence making them cautious of everything they say, thus their shyness from free expression of their needs and feelings in society. This discourse is part of the overt and blatant forms of sexism that indirectly serve to treat women unequally by presupposing that only men's talk is mature and free from gossip. This understanding was best elucidated in the text to which one teacher remarked:

There is a common belief that women's talk is bad and full of gossip. This however is prone to make majority of the women to feel guilty and shy off from free self-expression. In effect, the use of this kind of proverbs may make many women to feel like their needs are taken for granted besides making them lack the guts to talk openly.

In this response, women are encouraged to feel guilty about their talk. This presents women and girls as gossips besides engendering in them the fear to speak openly in the public domain. This reflects women and girls as a people in need of protection from such exclusion that is based on sexist ideologies effected by the use of rhetorical forms that give rhetorical emphasis on men's presupposed good image which is a matter of meaning and content, and not of form.

The proverb *ngongo machaywa mbamura etabwatie* (for any region to be disregarded / disrespected, then it is for its lack of boys), suggests that masculinity is a mark of superiority which is adored and glorified in the Gusii speech community. Men are therefore more respected and valued simply because they possess masculine features that women miss. The proverb

presupposes that women are worthless and inferior beings. This understanding was expressed by one of the girls interviewed, who argued: 'as girls, we are made to feel that boys are more valued and respected than us'. The suggestion in the proverb is that only boys are capable of providing protection and security which girls are incapable of doing. This feeling is further captured from one of the respondents who argued: 'as girls, we are made to feel that boys are more valued and respected that us'. In such circumstance, girls are made to feel belittled, and disabled hence their inferiority complex and low sense of self-esteem This explains how discourse works to reinforce social relations in society.

Therefore, women and girls are evaluated as being of less value to the men and boys respectively. This reflects how the text ideologically perpetuates subordinate positions for women in society besides entrenching the ideology that being male is good and important as opposed to being female. This portrayal is consistent with the social practices in the Gusii speech community which engenders in girls a feeling of worthlessness and being discriminated against. Therefore, the Gusii discourses serve to marginalize and exclude women by evaluating them as being less on all relevant dimensions of social rating. This study confirmed that such expressions may make girls and young women feel disabled, despised and valueless.

*The term rirogo* (a prostitute) presents women as prostitutes and as persons without sound morals. It depicts women as less dignified in comparison with their male counterparts, whose negative attributes have been concealed from public scrutiny. This portrayal communicates an ideologically complex perspective that women are inferior to men. However, the term *rirogo* does not have its direct equivalent term used to describe men. Therefore, the term *rirogo* paints a one sided picture that favours the male folk at the expense of the female folk. This is further evidenced in the text from one of the girls interviewed. She argued: '…when you call me r*irogo,* I feel hated, useless and dishonoured'. Further to this, another respondent argued: 'if you refer to me by the term *rirogo,* I feel dirty, hated and discriminated against on sexual grounds'. This way, girls' self image is constructed for them in that they are made to evaluate themselves as being spoilt and dishonoured, considering that they are part of the female folk whose morals are presupposedly rotten.

The metaphorical use of the term *rirogo* (a prostitute) to refer specifically to women, confirms the underlying ideological belief in the Gusii speech community; only women can become prostitutes, thus rendering their morals questionable. This belief is further reflected in

the use of the term *engoko* (a hen), where women and girls are further equated with an inferior bird, *engoko* (a hen) which is used in the text to refer to any woman with loose morals. This is seen from the reaction of one of the respondents who argued: 'when you call me *engoko, you* make me feel dirty and immoral'. Arguably, the use of such gendered terms signal the stereotyped and prejudiced attitudes that the the Gusii people harbour towards women.

Arguably, such depiction can make some girls to conclude that only boys matter and are supposed to participate in the mainstream activities. This can create a false image. This further shows how language can be used discursively to implant the ideology of fear and insecurity among women and girls by presupposing that women's morals are bad.

The reference *mokabaisia* (boys' wife) further illustrates the fact that girls do prostitution with boys which in effect serves to debase their morals. *Mokabaisia* refers to girls with multiple sexual partners. The fact being stated conveniently is that only girls do prostitution with men and not vice versa. Similarly, the phrase *maiso a bakungu* (women's eyes / evening hours approaching dusk), presents yet another metaphor which implies that women are evil and lack foresight. Metaphorically, women are associated with darkness (the night) to imply that they do not see far at night; night hours are however normally associated with evil. Ironically, the metaphor presupposes that women are not only evil but they also lack foresight. Therefore, women are presented as people who have negative attributes. This constructs them in a negative way.

In the Gusii speech community, the term *Omokungu (a woman)* presents women as persons who depend on men for their livelihood and / or existence. Women are depicted as being recipients of that which has been searched for and obtained by man. This depicts women as parasites whose role is to protect and / or surround that which has been searched for by man. This was evidenced from one of the respondents who argued: '*Omokungu* is a married person; hers is to protect her husband's property.' Women are thus depicted as a people who are passive and depended on men's effort. The term *Omokungu* further portrays women as people who lack the ability to fend for themselves. This is an example of the ideological purposes of discourse meant to make girls and women surrender to fate with the belief that their needs will be guaranteed by their future husbands.

The discursive use of the term *omosacha* (a man), the equivalent term for *Omokungu* (a woman) presupposes that men search for food to help enhance their families' socio-economic

needs. The men who search for property are positively appreciated as the ones who guarantee women of their livelihood; men's role is to provide for the wellbeing of others. This presupposes that men are superior and more aggressive compared to women who are depicted as being inferior and less aggressive. Also, this presents a kind of discursive sexism that serve to communicate the underlying negative opinions held by the Gusii people about women. This further communicates one of the ideological functions of discourse which is to bring to the fore the underlying power struggles between men and women. This understanding prompted the researcher's advocacy for the empowerment of women because their positions are prejudiced and stereotyped by men. The present study presupposes that this negative portrayal of women may mislead young and unwary girls and young women to think that their future needs are guaranteed hence sit and relax. This way, they will miss the aggressiveness required for their academic success.

Also, the term *omoisia* (a lad), is a term of recognition in Ekegusii language while its equivalent term *egesagane* ( a lass) is an abusive term that signals an inferior being  This was evidenced from one respondent who noted: ' the reference to a girl as *egesagane* makes her feel abused and inferior. However, the reference to a boy as *omoisia* does not sound abusive and belittling as when referred to as *egesagane*'. Thus, the use of such subjective linguistic structures serves to depict women unfavourably.

The term *eega* (to seduce / woo) depicts girls and women as persons whose actions are directed by men. They (women) are constructed as people who depend on instructions and commands from men on what to do and how to do it. Therefore, the act of 'wooing' is believed to be a male province in the Gusii culture. Thus, only men are believed to initiate relationships. This way, if a woman seduces a man, then it is argued that something could be funny with her and majority of the Gusii people may conclude that she is a prostitute; they will always treat her with contempt. This stance was stated by a respondent who retorted:

> It is not normal for a woman or girl to propose that we become lovers. We expect men to do this. If a woman or girl seduces or proposes to me, I will in fact runaway  because  she could be a prostitute.

Therefore, the discursive use of the term *eega* (to seduce), ideologically serves to reflect women as being passive beings; it presupposes that women are not supposed to propose to a

man in case of initiating a relationship leading to marriage. This presents women as persons who are not in control of issues affecting them in society.

Similarly, the verb *nyuoma* (to marry), implies that women remain passive when men woo them for marriage. This depicts them (women) as being inactive and men as being active and as a people who dictate women on what to do. This approach serves to engender in women a feeling of inactivity and helplessness. This negative portrayal of women is further reflected in the discursive use of the verbs *teta* (to make love) and *biaria* (to impregnate). The verbs depict women as passive beings at the receiving end of the participation continuum. That is, the use of the transitive verbs, *teta* (to make love) and *biaria* (to impregnate), imply that men impregnate their wives who remain passive in this process; this is a male domain and only men can impregnate and not vice versa. This understanding was expressed by one of the female teachers, who argued:

> Women actually receive pregnancy from their husbands. Even women cannot dispute this fact.

This depiction implies that women do not participate in the act of begetting children and are thus people who lack initiative of their own. Semantically speaking, this portrayal serves to reflect women as sex objects, play things and / or symbols of sexual fulfillment for men. They are shown as objects that are operated in the love making process hence making them pregnant. However, what is being insinuated here is the general societal view that women are passive beings. This stand point further helps to sustain the existing traditional patriarchal relations in society.

This way, Ekegusii language succeeds to depict women as being passive in the active-passive participation continuum. This portrayal of women reveals some hidden ideological meaning behind the Gusii language; it serves to deny women a realistic portrayal of their needs and aspirations hence the need to debunk such ideologies.

Categorization of women based on their gender is further evidenced in the concept of *wife beating*. This cultural practice suggests that women (wives) are always beaten by their husbands. In response to this stance, a respondent confirmed: '...husbands beat their wives as a way of correcting them when they do mistakes and because it is normal and allowed in our culture'. The practice insinuates that women are inferior to men. Another girl confirmed: 'women are always

beaten to correct them from mistakes. My uncle beats his wife whenever she goes wrong'. Women are thus depicted as being in need of protection from marital violence. This view places men over women and it is aimed at convincing women that they are inferior to men. However, this portrayal is not without some ideological investment. *Wife beating* is ideologically used to show that men who beat their wives are not hen pecked and or / voiceless. This however constructs women as a people with a very negative experience. Therefore, freedom from such imprisoning cultural beliefs is required as a way of protecting women against discrimination. This research thus aspires to give apparent powers to the women and girls who apparently need such power to help them change their social standing which in effect entails transforming their self image. It is in this respect, that the researcher considers education as the sole liberator of the oppressed and subjugated women in society.

The concept of *biased parental attitudes*, presents girls as being less valued compared to their male counterparts. This understanding was echoed by one of the respondents who retorted:

> Our parents value our brothers than us. They give them first priority in everything. It is like our brothers are more important than us girls.

Unfortunately, such treatment shows gender discrimination, injustice and inequality which may engender in girls and women a feeling of self-hatred and low self-esteem. This feeling was also echoed by one girl who reiterated: this practice makes me feel disliked and valueless'. Therefore, such a categorization leads one to question why women and girls should be treated differently on the basis of their differing gender.

*Biased parental attitudes* are presented as being historical. This communicates the understanding that they (biased parental attitudes) have been there and are supposed to emphasize male supremacy and masculinity over femininity, vulnerability and inferiority complex. In the same vein, *domestic chores* depict women and girls as people whose place is in the kitchen; their roles are within the kitchen and within the homestead. The position being advanced here is that domestic chores are a preserve for the female folk.

Such a belief may restrict girls and a woman's thinking so they begin to imagine that their future roles are in the kitchen and within the homestead hence their lack of active participation in the public domain. This view is revealed in the following response:

Rarely do boys cook. In fact, cooking and other household jobs are normally done by girls. Nowadays however, some boys share in the household chores.

The practice of property ownership *and* inheritance rights depicts women as a people without property ownership and inheritance rights. This was evidenced from one of the respondents who said:

As a girl, l don't expect to inherit my parents' property. In our community, girls do not inherit property from their parents more so land.

This argument presupposes that girls own nothing and are not entitled to their parents' property hence their lack of a sense of belongingness. This may in effect make many of the Gusii girls to focus their minds elsewhere; some of the girls may feel that they are not recognized and decide to hurry and 'catch' land for fear that they might miss where to anchor in case they delay to get married. This presentation depicts the Gusii women as being worthless and as a people who have no right of ownership. This belief is entrenched in the ideological belief (thinking) that only boys can assure a family of its continuity and or lineage; only boys have property ownership and inheritance rights. This portrays women as people who own nothing and are thus not entitled to own property, leave alone inheriting property from their parents; the women are thus presented as the second other.

Evidently, having less access to material goods and control over symbolic resources like land and status among many other resources is meant to problematize women's situation and position. in society. Such portrayal may make girls to feel discriminated against and worthless. Therefore, in this discourse of gendered linguistic images, the women and girls are presented as facing the threat of discrimination and exclusion; their rights to inherit and own property are violated at will by the Gusii people more so their fathers. Thus, women and girls are constructed as people who are in dire need of protection from such prejudice and discrimination based on sexist ideologies.

Our linguistic analysis of gendered images in Ekegusii language revealed that gender stereotyping is capable of distorting girls' perception of the world, besides disadvantaging them as learners.

#### 4.5.1.2 Argumentation Strategies

Argumentation entails an iterative process emerging from exchanges among agents to persuade each other and bring about a change in intentions (Kraus et al. 1993); it is both a semiotic and epistemic process that can lead to reflection and knowledge restructuring (Andriessen et al., 2003). In this study, argumentation strategies were used to mean the strategies used in language to justify and legitimize the negative attributions assigned to girls and women in the Gusii speech community. Argumentation strategies serve to make their accounts suggest impelling forms of empirical proof.

Argumentation strategies were therefore selected for this study considering that argumentative dialogue between girls and the linguistic structures influence their perception of the world. That is, girls' world view can be altered through their participation in a dialogue of opposing viewpoints that are characteristic of those expressed in the Gusii proverbs.(Ravenscroft, 2000; Ravenscroft and Pilkington, 2000)

Also, given the direct links between standpoint and opinion, which in turn may be linked to shared group attitudes (Ravenscroft, 2000), argumentation structures were taken to be a powerful signal of the underlying structures of ideological attitudes (reflected in Ekegusii language) that were found to be responsible for the Gusii girls' gendered, opinions and attitudes towards themselves and the world. Consequently, argumentation strategies were chosen for this study because of their potential to allow evaluation of girls' perceptions against established norms in the Gusii speech community. That is girls' simplistic interpretation of their situation / reality against the established / prevalent ideological structure could only be unraveled through argumentation strategies.

Finally, considering that argumentation also entails a connected set of statements and / or premises intended to establish a particular conclusion (Labossiere, 1995), argumentation strategies were deemed appropriate for this study considering their make believe structure that is characteristic of the Gusii proverbs discussed below.

The proverb *onabaiseke bange nkerandi kiamabere botakana botakoera* (he who has many girls is a gourd of milk that will never go dry), presents the girl child as a sure source of wealth for her parents; she is depicted as a form of property, a commodity to be bought with cash. This view was evidenced in the following response:

Traditionally, girls were viewed as a source of wealth but in the modern society, such beliefs are dying. Unless well educated, girls cannot be a source of wealth.

This suggests that the Gusii people still view their daughters as items of trade, which is of course an abuse of a well-intended cultural practice. Women are taken to be a form of commodity that is sold for cash. The proverb metaphorically confirms the fact that girls are the centre of ridicule. In response to this assertion, one of the respondents argued: 'each of us girls expect to get married some day and our parents are the beneficiaries.' Such argumentation however communicates some discrimination of the Gusii women.

The proverb *Totogia Moiseke Kieni, motogie mwana,* (never praise a girl for her beauty but rather for giving birth), depicts girls and women as a people whose sole purpose in life is to give birth. This presentation of the girls implies that their needs are highly overlooked; it is like only the boys' concerns are of value. The proverb shows how girls are socialized towards a feminine ideal. To this state of affairs, one of the girls argued:

> Such a proverb can make young girls to conclude that even with or without education, giving birth' is a woman's ultimate goal in life.

This way, girls are constructed as a people that have no business with formal education; education is not a priority for them. Theirs is to get married and beget children. That is, they are made to internalize such inequalities and come to expect this experience. This constitutes a stereotyped portrayal of girls and women which serve to mediate their low self-esteem and perceptions of the world. This understanding is in line with the Gusii ideological beliefs that help to sustain age-old practices that need be abandoned to pave way for modernity.

Access and acquisition of formal education serves as a shield against the process of exclusion and marginalization in society. This stance was highlighted by one of the teachers who argued:

> These proverbs can encourage some of the girls and young women to loose their morals besides falling victims of early marriages.

From this statement, it is plain that girls are discouraged from taking their education seriously. This explains why girls need protection against early marriages, which constitute a barrier to their progress in society.

Besides, the text *Basacha mbaniberani, ko'nabakungu mbaiborerani* (men help fellow men in creating wealth as women help fellow women in begetting children), further helps to present women negatively. This proverb is discursively used to construct women as a people whose sole role is to give birth. To this understanding, one of the respondents reiterated: 'some of' us girls may assume that our major role in society as women is to get married and give birth'. This assertion reflects the effect of gendered language on girls' self concept and world view. The proverb implies that women lack the ability to create wealth, hence the suggestion that creation of wealth is a preserve for men. Therefore, women are represented negatively. Such depiction is in a way meant to downplay women's major concerns in society.

Evidently, such portrayal of women is insincere considering that persons consistently depicted as initiating it aim at dictating the agenda and thinking of these women and girls. This suggests that the persons capable of controlling the agenda and thinking of women and girls do possess immense power to dictate their worldview. In this manner, women are depicted as being powerless and helpless considering their lack of contribution to the construction of the text. In this way, our linguistic analysis of gendered linguistic images helped to reveal how girls are duped to embrace a perverted world view that is not in agreement with their immediate needs and aspirations in society.

## 4.6 Implications of Gendered Linguistic Images on Girls' Self-Definition and Attitude towards Education

Girls' inability to participate and complete secondary school education is presented as a barrier to their survival and success in society. The discursive use of linguistic structures and their effect on girls' self-image and worldview was taken to constitute a linguistic barrier to girl education. In this respect, girls' inability to participate and complete secondary school education was also presented as hampering the girls' survival and progress in society. The influence of gendered linguistic images on girl education was first looked at by analyzing the linguistic barriers to girl education, then the statistical analysis of data on gendered images. This was done as follows.

### 4.6.1. Ekegusii Proverbs and Girl Education

The discursive use of the Gusii Proverbs has the potential of duping unwary girls to think that education is not a priority. In this respect therefore, the girls seem to have no business with formal education. This implies that some girls may be made to conclude that their role is that of begetting children hence their lack of concern for academic success. For instance, the proverb *totogia moiseke kieni, motogie mwana* (never praise a girl / woman for her beauty, but rather for giving birth), justifies the above said stance.

Similarly, the proverb *onabaiseke bange nkerandikiamabere botakanabotakoera* (he who has many girls is a gourd of milk that will never go dry) is used discursively in Ekegusii language to socialize girls towards their exclusion and marginalization from active participation in the educational process. This viewpoint was highlighted by one girl who reiterated:

> such a proverb can make unwary girls to conclude that even without education, getting married and giving birth is every woman's ultimate goal in life. To some extent, this can encourage some of the young girls and women to loose morals besides falling victims of early marriage at the expense of their education.

From this argument, it is plain that the discursive use of proverbs in Ekegusii language constitutes a linguistic barrier that discourages girls from taking their education seriously.

The use of the proverb *bakungu mbaya ko'menu yabasaririe* (women are good persons though their mouths have rendered them bad), has the potential to make girls feel that their talk is always bad (full of gossip), hence their lack of guts to speak freely on issues directly affecting in their academic pursuits. This in effect hinders their active participation in school hence their ever diminishing desire for formal education. This understanding was reiterated in the following response:

> There is a common belief that women's talk is bad and full of gossip. This however is prone to make majority of the women and girls to feel guilty and shy off from talking freely.

It is from this observation that the researcher sought to demonstrate that the use of gendered Ekegusii discourses has the potential to inhibit girls' active participation, in their academic and intellectual pursuits.

Similarly, the proverb *ngongo machaywa mbamura etabwatie*(for any region to be disrespected, then it is because of its lack of boys/men) is capable of making girls to conclude that only boys and men matter and are capable of participating in the public domain. It is in this regard, that one teacher remarked:

> This proverb elicits a feeling of helplessness, abuse and low self-esteem in girls and a feeling that their achievements are inconsequential.

This way, such presentation may make some girls to conclude that only boys and men are valued, respected and glorified thus their morale for pursuing important issues in society like education. This argument was further alluded to in the following response:

> This proverb makes some girls feel powerless and insecure. They feel disabled and confine themselves to less challenging tasks

This confirms that the discursive use of proverbs constitutes a barrier to girls' progress in education.

The discursive use of the prove*rb, basacha mbaniberani ko'nabakungu mbaiborerani* (men help fellow men in creating wealth as women help fellow women in begetting children), serves to depict men as the only people supposed to acquire and generate wealth. This gives the impression that the Gusii people hold men in high esteem but at the expense of women's concerns. This positive evaluation was evidenced from one of the respondent's argument: 'many of our men still think that women are meant to give birth as the men create and accumulate wealth. Some women however see children as their wealth'. This suggests that the use of gendered proverbs is capable of engendering warped thinking capable of misleading girls and women not to prioritize education.

Further, the thinking expressed above is false and misleading because even women can acquire and own property. Such depiction is therefore meant to downplay women's major concerns in society, thus blocking their progress, more so, in education. It is from the above said evaluation that the researcher considers the Gusii proverbs as constituting a barrier to girls' participation and success sin education.

### 4.6.2 Derogatory Terms and Girls' Morale for Education

The use of derogatory terms was found in this research to present women as a people with questionable morals: these denigrating terms make many girls and women to feel hated and discriminated against hence their low self-esteem that characterize their ever diminishing participation in the public domain. This evaluation is elucidated below.

The term *rirogo* (a prostitute), presents women as people with tainted morals. This was revealed from one respondent who remarked: 'these abusive words may make girls to think that women are the cause of all evils in society especially sexual immorality. If you refer me by the term *rirogo*, I feel dirty, hated and discriminated against on sexual grounds.' This way, the discursive use of derogatory terms in Ekegusii language serves to alienate girls and women's thinking from important issues in society like education.

The discursive reference to a woman solely as *rirogo* presents an assumption that being a man is protection enough against moral degeneration. This way, the gendered use of derogatory terms in Ekegusii constitute a barrier to women's education for women and girls who succumb to this psychological warfare.

The above said state of affairs is further presented in the use of the term *engoko* (a hen or woman with loose morals), to which one of the teachers affirmed:

> In fact, it is embarrassing to be called *engoko*. These references are seriously biased that only women are immoral. I am foreseeing a situation where girls' efforts will continue to be affected because of the way they are perceived.

In other words, the use of denigrating references may force girls to make subjective evaluation of their self worth thus socializing them to patterns of behaviour related to their gender but to their disadvantage in education. This understanding is in line with Shapiro (1989), who asserts that a student's personal orientation and approach to learning is guided by the nature of his or her image of the self.

Also, the terms *ritinge* (a concubine) and *mokabaisia* (boys' wife), are capable of making some girls to feel inferior, degraded and dishonoured. This may in turn lower their self-esteem and morale for active participation in the mainstream activities including education. This understanding was echoed in the following response:

Such abusive words and phrases define girls as immoral people and make them feel embarrassed. This embarrassment hinders them from engaging in eye catching issues in society like education and leadership.

The researcher discovered Ekegusii language to be lacking the understanding that a good image is the concern of each one of us; there is nobody who doesn't need to be portrayed correctly. Therefore, it is like women and girls are the disposal site for anything evil or ugly in society. This portrayal thus denies women and girls of their self-confidence and sense of purpose appropriate for academic success

### 4.6.3 Ekegusii Naming System and Girls' View of Education

As discussed earlier, the discursive use of Ekegusii common nouns serves to depict men as capable achievers; women and girls are made to feel inferior for not being born male. Therefore, the use of such subjective terms that depict women unfavourably is highly likely to make them feel inferior thus lowering their self confidence appropriate for active participation in education. This viewpoint was expressed in the following response:

> Some of our terminologies in Ekegusii language undermine the girl child and make her to grow up with an inferior mind, thinking that she cannot compete favourably with boys because it is against their culture to do so.

This stance is also echoed in the response: '*egesagane* has a negative connotation. It is an abusive name while *omoisia* is used to raise and cheer up young boys especially when they achieve something'

The negative evaluation of girls, in effect serves to present women as being subordinate to men; this presents discursive sexism that serve to communicate the underlying negative opinions held by men about women.

### 4.6.4 Ekegusii Verbs and Girls' Aggressiveness in Education

The Gusii verbs present women as a people whose actions are initiated and controlled by men. This way, Ekegusii verbs are used discursively to reflect women's helplessness and men's authority and superiority. For instance the verbs *nyuoma* (to marry) and *eega* (to seduce) are

discursively used to imply that women do not participate in the process of courting for marriage besides other issues affecting them in society.

The expression of casualty and attribution of responsibility in the text is meant to portray women as not being in control of issues affecting them, more so, their access and participation in the educational process. This stance was evidenced from one of the teachers who argued:

> The Gusii verbs show a woman's position in society as being that of a voiceless person and one whose abuse is uncommon. She is portrayed as weak and powerless. This may make many women to shy off from participating freely in competitions with their male counterparts.

It is from this viewpoint that the present research sought to confirm that the use of such verbs may influence some girls to feign weakness hence their withdrawal and a feeling of inadequacy in their educational pursuits.

## 4.6.5 Bride Price and Girls/ Parents' Commitment and Concern for Education

As discussed earlier, *payment of Bride price* in the Gusii speech community depicts women as objects that are exchanged between hands (from parents to their husband). In a way, this ideological belief accounts for some parents' lack of commitment and concern in educating girls who thus lose hope in life and opt for early marriages at the expense of their education, but to the benefit of their parents.

## 4.6.6 Domestic Chores and Girls' Exclusion from Education

The paradigm of *domestic chores* is used discursively by the Gusii people to suggest that a women's place is in the kitchen hence the need to prepare young girls for the roles that entail their future work / role within the homestead. This understanding was brought out in the argument: 'domestic chores are meant for girls and women. Boys are to wonder and adventure'. This understanding to some degree accounts for women's shyness in the public domain due to lack of appropriate exposure; they commonly seem to accept their predefined roles and live within the set standards. Our linguistic study of domestic chores established a dialectal link between girls' lack of aggressiveness in education and the discursive presentation of *domestic chores* by the Gusii people.

Seemingly, there is enough reason why girls should be inducted on how to bargain for change through education. That is, all people in society have the right to pursue that which befits them as human beings, considering that every individual has the freedom to achieve all to his or her full potential. This awareness is a remedy against further exploitation and oppression of girls and women in society.

### 4.6.7 Property Ownership and Girls' Marginalization in Education

The concept of *property ownership and inheritance rights*, presents women as persons who have no right to inherit and own property. This confirms the entrenched patriarchal thinking that women have no right to inherit and / or own property, hence the need for them (women) to accept this understanding without question. This fact was supported by one of the respondents who said: 'our culture does not allow women to inherit their parents' property especially land. Each woman is expected to get married and take care of her matrimonial home'. Our linguistic analysis of property ownership and inheritance rights among the Gusii people, confirmed that girls are treated differently because they are female; this makes them feel that they have no place in their maiden homes, but somewhere else, probably in another clan (matrimonial home). This may facilitate their decision to get married earlier than expected, but at the expense of their education. This further succeeds in drawing women's attention from more substantive aspects in society.

### 4.7 Representation of Statistical Significance of Data on Gendered Images

Inability to participate and complete secondary school education is presented as a threat to the individual's survival and success in society. To determine the effect of gendered images on girls' attitudes, respondents were asked to respond to questions in a questionnaire. The question was whether gendered linguistic images affect the Gusii girls' self-concept and attitudes toward education. In this respect, the research aimed at ascertaining the teachers' perceptions and interpretations of the extent to which the discursive use of gendered linguistic images impair the Gusii girls' self concept and world view.

The respondents were supposed to respond to five categories of responses namely: strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree and not sure. Similarly, there were a total of 816

responses and twenty-four respondents (teachers), each of whom made thirty-four responses. The responses are discussed below.

Out of a total of 816 responses, 301 responses showed that some respondents strongly agreed that gendered linguistic images do influence girls' self-concept and general attitudes towards education. These responses constituted 36.9 percent of the total responses collected from the field. Similarly, a total of 312 responses revealed that majority of the respondents were of the opinion that the Gusii girls were persuasively compelled to embrace a perverted self concept which in turn influence their attitudes toward active participation in the mainstream activities, education included. This self concept is based on the construction of the girls' self-image. At this point, we can affirm that the girls are predisposed to agreeing with the message of the text.

A total of 615 responses were in agreement with the view that the girls' self-definition and world view are influenced by the use of gendered linguistic images in the text and thus have their concept of the self constructed for them. This number of responses show that a high percentage which is a clear confirmation that gendered linguistic images do influence the Gusii girls' self-concept and general attitudes towards education.

Also, the girls' self image being constructed is not to the advantage of the girls. That is, the powerful groups in society do use such like discourses to entrench ideologies which serve to take power away from the girls by sustaining suppression and domination. This shows how discourse and language can be used to make unbalanced power relations and prejudiced portrayal of social groups in society (Fairclough, 1985; Tator and Henry, 2002), besides shaping society by constituting knowledge and social identities (Van Dijk, 1997). This way, the ideologies serve to create girls world view based on the creation, consumption and acceptance of prescribed gendered self image.

The fact that the Gusii girls embrace and confirm that their self concept and world view is constructed for them implies that they have to think along the lines prescribed by the producers of these gendered linguistic structures. The girls passively accept to be grouped as being inactive and inferior members of the Gusii speech community. This standpoint confirms the hypothesis that gendered linguistic images do actually affect the the Gusii girls' self-concept and general attitudes towards education.

A number of respondents disagreed with the idea that girls have their self image and world view constructed for them by the powerful members of society. There were 112 responses that

strongly disagreed. This was 13.7 percent of the total responses. Similarly, 69 responses were in general disagreed which constituted 8.5 percent of the total responses. In total, therefore, a total of 181 responses were in disagreement. This constituted 22.2 percent of the total responses. By disagreeing, the respondents had refused to accept the presentation of the girls' attributes which presuppose their future perceptions of the world. This means that they do not embrace the belief that gendered linguistic images to affect the girls' self-image and manner of thinking. This implies that not all girls are affected and / or influenced by the gendered linguistic images in society. They have taken their ground and are against such discursive practice of gendered discourses. This confirms the need to create awareness in girls and women of how they are deceived about their own needs thus bringing them to identify what their true needs and interests are (Fairclough, 1993). This way, the present research sought insight into the mechanisms by which social processes exclude and marginalize (Rhoads, 1994 and Thomas, 1993). A total of 20 responses were not sure of where they belonged. This was 2.4 percent of the total responses. This could be a signifier of their not being aware of the presence of such discursive processes in society.

These responses reveal the truth behind the observations made by Fairclough (1985), and Henry and Tator (2002) that discourse and language can be used to make unbalanced power relations and portrayals of social groups appear to be common sense, normal and natural, when in fact the reality is prejudice, injustice and inequality. That is, some people seem to lack the necessary critical understanding of the deterministic role played by such discursive practices in shaping girls' self definition and general world view. This state of affairs confirm the aim of this research which sought to unpack and unveil the truth behind Ekegusii discourses with the aim of making unwary members of society, more so girls and young women to be aware of such inequalities, and specifically as they relate to their academic and intellectual pursuits. This objective was in line with the emancipatory aim of CDA which is to spur people to corrective action by making them aware, not only of the existing power imbalances, social inequalities and other non-democratic practices, but also by bringing them to identify what their true needs and interests are (Fairclough, 1993) and (Van Dijk, 1998).

Therefore, we can conclude that the findings of this study are in agreement with the view that gendered linguistic images do impair the Gusii girls' self-definition and attitudes towards formal education. Consequently, only a systematic analysis of the Gusii gendered linguistic structures

can help to reveal how girls and women are constructed as gendered beings with ascribed statuses. The findings of this research are summarized in the table below.

**Table 4 Responses to the suggestion that gendered linguistic images influence girls' self-definition and attitudes towards education.**

| Response | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Strongly agree | 301 | 36.9% |
| Agree | 312 | 38.5% |
| Strongly disagree | 69 | 8.5% |
| Disagree | 112 | 13.7% |
| Not sure | 20 | 2.4% |
| Totals | 816 | 100% |

Source: Field Data

From the table above, it is evident that out of a total of 816 responses, 301 responses constituting 36.9 percent of the total responses showed that some respondents strongly agreed that gendered linguistic images do influence girls' self-concept and general attitudes towards education. Also, a total of 312 responses constituting 38.5 percent were in general agreement that the Gusii girls were persuasively compelled to embrace a perverted self concept which in turn influences their attitudes towards formal education. Thus, a total of 615 responses were of the opinion that the Gusii girls' self- image, world view and attitudes towards education are generally influenced by the discursive use of Ekegusii language.

Similarly, total of 181 responses constituting of 22.2 percent of the total responses were in disagreement with the idea that the discursive use of Ekegusii language affects the Gusii girls' self- concept and attitudes towards education. Therefore, the highest percentage of respondents agreed that the use of gendered linguistic images do impair the Gusii girls' self-concept, way of thinking and attitudes towards education.

# CHAPTER FIVE
## SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

This section presents the research findings based on both the background to the study and the research questions. Here, conclusions were made based on the findings of the study. Further the problems encountered while undertaking this research were narrated. Finally, recommendations for further research were given based on the findings of the current study.

### 5.2 Summary of Research Findings

This study sought to examine the Gusii gendered linguistic images that serve to pervert the Gusii girls' self-concept and attitude towards formal education. The study was guided by two research questions. These were:

(a) Does the Gusii speech community have in-built gendered linguistic images?

(b) How do the gendered linguistic images influence the Gusii girls' self-concept and attitude towards education?

Concerning the question of in-built gendered linguistic images, the study established the existence of various gendered linguistic images in the Gusii speech community. This was done by identifying and analyzing the different responses (words and statements) that reflected the form and nature of gendered Ekegusii discourses. These existed in the form of foregrounding, backgrounding, presuppositions, insinuations and metaphorical references among many others.

Regarding the influence of gendered linguistic images on girls' self concept and attitude towards formal education, it was found out that the discursive use of Ekegusii discourses serves to construct the Gusii girls' perverted self concept and world view that are incongruent with their educational aspirations. That is, out of a total of 816 responses collected from the field for this study, 615 responses constituting 75.4 percent were of the opinion that the discursive use of Ekegusii language serves to pervert the Gusii girls' self image and attitude towards formal education. This way, the highest percentage of respondents agreed that the discursive use of Ekegusii discourses serves to impair the Gusii girls' concept and attitude towards formal education.

The study was based on the conceptual framework of two theories; Critical Discourse Analysis and Bandura's Social learning Theory. Critical Discourse Analysis focuses on issues of power abuse, social inequality and dominance in the social and political contexts (Van Dijk, 1998). The study adopted Critical Discourse Analysis considering that it dwelt on issues of power abuse, inequality and ideology in the Gusii spoken discourses.

Similarly, the study adopted Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which argues that children's behaviour is the product of their conscious interaction between the personal and environmental variables that shape their behaviour through the process of learning. The study adopted this theory because it sought to examine how the Gusii girls observe and acquire specific social identities that characterize their perverted self concept, world view and attitude towards formal education.

. Further, a critical examination of the gendered Ekegusii discourses revealed that the ideological attitudes and opinions held by the Gusii men about women help to sustain the existing patriarchal relations in the Gusii speech community, where women are depicted as being docile and dependent on men for their livelihood. This observation by the researcher was aimed at debunking the assumptions, contradictions and ideological attitudes that are entrenched in the text, with the aim of making it (text) more transparent to the gullible and uncritical girls and young women.

## 5.3 Conclusions of the Study

The aim of this study was to identify and examine how the discursive use of Ekegusii language helps to construct the Gusii girls' self-concept, worldview and attitude towards formal education. In this regard, the research findings confirm and support the theses of this research that the discursive use of gendered Ekegusii linguistic images influence majority of the Gusii girls' self-image, way of thinking and attitude towards formal education. Therefore, we can assert with empirical certainty that the research questions raised in this study have been adequately addressed.

The findings from this study would make significant contributions to the field of language, gender studies and Applied linguistics in general.

## 5.4 Problems Encountered by the Researcher.

Feminism is typically concerned with women's issues of gender equality, sexual oppression and sex discrimination. Thus, venturing into sociocultural issues affecting girls and women engendered in the researcher a feeling of being an outsider trying to delve into a purely feminine area of operation. However, this helped him (the researcher), to remain reflexive at every stage of his research, thus avoiding superimposing his personal ideological beliefs into the findings of this study.

Another problem encountered was during data collection whereby some respondents (especially those in private schools) asked for some monetary incentives from the researcher before they could respond to the researcher's questionnaire, thinking that the researcher was highly funded to undertake the study hence the need to share the presupposed financial benefits. This problem was ironed out using the friend of a friend (Milroy, 1987), who explained to them the importance of the study hence the need for their cooperation and free contribution.

Also, some of the linguistic structures initially programmed for the study were found to be incongruent and / or not compliant with the dictates of the context of the study, thus forcing the researcher to substitute them with more context compliant ones. That is, the linguistic structure (circumcision), was replaced with the payment of bride price.

## 5.5 Recommendations for Further Study

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher recommends that:

An examination of gendered linguistic images on boy education be done with the aim of finding out if there are any major differences in the ways these images influence the boys' self-concept and perceptions of the world.

The Gusii people ought to adopt a new culture embraced in a language of love and respect, where both men and women have equal respect and rights if the community hopes to boost women's education. That is, though abolishing sexist language cannot abolish sexist thinking (Choti, 1998), the Gusii people need to effect fundamental linguistic changes to correct the verbal stereotyping prevalent in Ekegusii language which is responsible for girls' low self concept and perverted attitudes towards education.

More research need be done on the best ways of rehabilitating Ekegusii language at least to some level of neutrality, thus enabling the Gusii people adopt a compromise language (words

and expressions) that can help to get rid of linguistic terms that serve to sustain inequality, public mistrust of women's abilities and achievements thus predisposing them to gendered thinking that restricts their participation in public life.

The researcher further recommends for a replication of this study in another speech community, to help find out if discursive use of linguistic structures actually impair girls' self image and worldview, which is found in this research to affect their attitude towards education. This will in effect help ascertain the extent to which the findings of this study are generalizable to other research findings on the same issue.

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**Teachers' Questionnaire on the Influence of Gendered Linguistic Images on Girl Education.**

Please tick [ √ ] where appropriate or fill in the information where required. All responses will be treated as confidential.

**Part I**

Demographic Data

( i ) Type of your school ;

Girls ☐     Boys ☐     Mixed ☐     Public ☐     Private ☐

( ii ) Your gender;     Male ☐          Female ☐

( iii ) Designation;     Head Teacher ☐     Deputy H. Teacher ☐

Head of Department          Assistant Teacher ☐          ☐

Others specify          ☐

**Part II**

Research Questions

For each of the following questions, indicate your answer by ticking Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Not Sure (NS).

## ( 1 ) Proverbs

A Proverb is a short well-known statement that gives practical advice about life. The following proverbs show women and Girls as being inferior / unequal to men and boys.

Tick accordingly

( a ) (i) Totogia moiseke kieni,  motogie mwana (Never praise a girl/ woman for her beauty  but rather for giving birth)      SA    A     D     SD    NS

SA ☐    A ☐    D ☐    SD ☐    NS ☐

(ii) Onabaiseke bange nkerandi kiamabere botakana botakoera (He who has many girls is a gourd of milk that will never go dry).

SA ☐    A ☐    D ☐    SD ☐    NS ☐

(iii) Bakungu mbaya koomenu yabasaririe (women are good persons though their mouths have rendered them bad).

SA ☐    A ☐    D ☐    SD ☐    NS ☐

(iv) Ngongo machaywa mbamura etabwatie ( for a region to be  disrespected, then it is because of  its lack of men / boys).

SA ☐    A ☐    D ☐    SD ☐    NS ☐

(v) Basacha mbaniberani,  nabakungu mbaiborerani (men help fellow men in wealth creation as  women help fellow women in begetting children)

SA ☐    A ☐    D ☐    SD ☐    NS ☐

( b )Which symbolic (underlying) cultural meanings do these proverbs convey to the Gusii girls, more so as it relates to their future roles and career objectives?

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## (2 ) Semantic Derogation

Semantic derogation of women entail a situation in language where words and phrases related to women and girls are negatively viewed. The following words and phrases in Ekegusii language refer to women and girls and invoke negative attitudes towards the female gender. Tick accordingly.

<div style="text-align:right">SA    A    D    SD</div>

( a ) ( i ) Rirogo ( a prostitute )

SA ▢    A ▢    D ▢    SD ▢    NS ▢

( ii ) Ritinge ( a concubin )

SA ▢    A ▢    D ▢    SD ▢    NS ▢

( iii ) Mokabaisia ( boys'wive )

NS

SA ▢    A ▢    D ▢    SD ▢    NS ▢

( iv ) Engoko (a hen ,used to refer to a woman / girl with loose morals

SA ▢    A ▢    D ▢    SD ▢    NS ▢

( v) Maiso abakungu (women's eyes, used to refer to evening hours approaching

   dusk)

SA ☐   A ☐   D ☐   SD ☐   NS ☐

   (b) In your own opinion, in what ways do such references affect the Gusii

girls' self-definition and concern for achievements in society?.

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### (3) Common Nouns

Nouns are words in a language that denote the name of a person, place or thing. Ekegusii language has a variety of common nouns. Some of these common nouns carry cultural meanings that impair the Gusii girls' self-concept and attitudes towards personal achievement in society more so through formal education. React to this statement/ argument by ticking the appropriate alternative to you.

SA      A      D      SD      NS

( a )( i ) Egesagane (lass)

SA ☐   A ☐   D ☐   SD ☐   NS ☐

( ii ) Omoisia (lad)

SA ☐   A ☐   D ☐   SD ☐   NS ☐

( iii ) Omokungu (woman)

SA ☐   A ☐   D ☐   SD ☐   NS ☐

(iv ) Omosacha (a man)

SA ☐    A ☐    D ☐    SD ☐    NS ☐

(v ) Omorugi (wife/cook)

SA ☐    A ☐    D ☐    SD ☐    NS ☐

(b)  What is the underlying meaning of these common nouns and many other common nouns related to the gender classes.

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...................................................( c )  How do the above nouns / names affect the Gusii girls' self-image and response to

Social roles played by each sex?

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## ( 4 )  Verbs

A verb is a word that indicates what somebody or something does, or the state in which somebody or something is in. In this respect, verbs that take / receive a direct object are called transitive verbs, while those that do not take / receive  direct objects are called intransitive verbs. Ekegusii language has a variety of gendered ( biased) transitive verbs which include;

|          | SA | A | D | SD | NS |
|----------|----|---|---|----|-----|

( a) (i)  eega ( to seduce)

SA ☐  A ☐  D ☐  SD ☐  NS ☐

(ii)  nywoma ( to marry)

SA ☐  A ☐  D ☐  SD ☐  NS ☐

( iii) teta (to fuck)

SA ☐  A ☐ D ☐  SD ☐  NS ☐

( iv)  ruga ( to cook)

SA ☐  A ☐  D ☐  SD ☐  NS ☐

(v)  biaria ( to impregnant).

SA ☐  A ☐  D ☐  SD ☐  NS ☐

( b ) Notably, these verbs  in Ekegusii language present  women / girls as passive beings and men / boys as active beings who direct  women's actions. Mark  accordingly.

|          | SA | A | D | SD | NS |
|----------|----|---|---|----|-----|

(i) eega ( to seduce)

SA ☐  A ☐  D ☐  SD ☐  NS ☐

(ii) nywoma ( to marry)

SA ☐  A ☐  D ☐  SD ☐  NS ☐

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( iii) teta (to fuck)

SA ☐ A ☐ D ☐ SD ☐ NS ☐

( iv) ruga ( to cook)

SA ☐ A ☐ D ☐ SD ☐ NS ☐

(v) biaria ( to impregnate).

SA ☐ A ☐ D ☐ SD ☐ NS ☐

(c ) This portrayal of women /girls as passive participants show gender discrimination against the female gender. Tick whichever is appropriate

|  | SA | A | D | SD | NS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|

(i) eega ( to seduce)

SA ☐ A ☐ D ☐ SD ☐ NS ☐

(ii) nywoma ( to marry)

SA ☐ A ☐ D ☐ SD ☐ NS ☐

( iii) teta (to fuck)

SA ☐ A ☐ D ☐ SD ☐ NS ☐

( iv) ruga ( to cook)

SA ☐ A ☐ D ☐ SD ☐ NS ☐

## (5) Symbolic Cultural Norms

Symbolic norms refer to cultural  practices that carry symbolic (underlying) meanings in the Gusii speech community. The following  cultural practices and their cultural meanings serve to impair/constrain the Gusii girls' self-definition, worldview and career choices; Tick accordingly.

SA          A          D          SD          NS

( a ) (i) Payment of  bride price

SA ☐    A ☐    D ☐    SD ☐    NS ☐

(ii) wife beatings  SA ☐    A ☐    D ☐    SD ☐    NS ☐

(iii) Property ownership and
inheritance rights

SA ☐    A ☐    D ☐    SD ☐    NS ☐

(IV) biased parental attitudes

SA ☐    A ☐    D ☐    SD ☐    NS ☐

(v) household/domestic chores

SA ☐    A ☐    D ☐    SD ☐    NS ☐

(b)How can Secondary school girls be encouraged to resist traditional/cultural norms in support of their academic and professional pursuits?

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Students' Interview checklist on the Influence of Gendered Linguistic Images on Girl Education.

**STUDENTS' FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE**

| FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW TOPIC/QUESTION | NOTES/MESSAGE |
| --- | --- |
| (A) Ekegusii language has numerous words <br><br> related to women which are negatively viewed. These include, <br><br> (1) Rirogo   (a prostitute) <br><br> (2) Ritinge   (a concubine) <br><br> ( 3) Mokabaisia   (boys'wive)) <br><br> (4) Engoko   (a hen ,used to <br> refer to a woman /girl with loose morals) <br><br> (5)Maiso abakungu   (women's eyes, <br> used to refer to evening hours approaching dusk) <br><br> ( i ) In your own assessment, how do  these negative references to women and girls affect  girls'  self – image  and concern for active participation in society? | |

| FOCUS GROUP INTERVIW TOPIC/QUESTION | NOTES/ MESSAGE |
|---|---|
| (B) A proverb is a short –well-known Statement that gives practical advice about life. Ekegusii language has several proverbs that are gendered (biased) against women. These include;<br><br>( 1) Totogia moiseke kieni motogie mwana ( never<br>praise a girl/ woman for her beauty but rather for<br> giving birth)<br>(2) Onabaiseke bange nkerandi kiamabere botakana<br> botakoera ( He who has many girls, is a gourd of milk that will never go dry.)<br>(3) Bakungu mbaya koomenu yabasaririe (women are good persons  though their mouths have<br>rendered them  bad).<br>(4)  Ngongo  machaywa  mbamura etabwatie ( for a region to be  disrespected, then it is because of  its lack of men/boys).<br>(5)  Basacha  mbaniberani,  nabakungu mbaiborerani ( men help fellow men in wealth creation  as  women help fellow women  in begetting children ). | |

These proverbs show women and girls to be inferior / unequal to men and boys.

( i ) How do such proverbs and many others in your speech community affect girls' self- definition and concern for academic success?

( ii ) Which symbolic (underlying) cultural meanings do these proverbs convey to the Gusii

girls, more so as it relates to their future roles

and career objectives?

(C) A verb is a word that indicates what somebody or something does, or the state in which somebody or something is in. In this respect, verbs that take / receive a direct object are called transitive verbs, while those that do not take / receive direct objects are called intransitive verbs.

Ekegusii language has a variety of gendered (biased) transitive verbs which include ;

eega ( to seduce)

nywoma ( to marry)

teta (to fuck)

ruga ( to cook)

biaria ( to impregnate)

Notably, these verbs in Ekegusii language present women/girls as passive beings and men/boys as active beings who direct women's actions. This portrayal of women / girls as passive participants shows gender discrimination against the female gender besides demotivating them from taking an active role in society.

( i ) How far do you agree with this statement/argument

Please, explain your answer

(D) Symbolic cultural norms include practices like payment of bride price, wife beating, biased parental attitudes, domestic / household chores and property ownership and inheritance rights among many more. In your own understanding what do some of these cultural norms / practices

| symbolize/stand for in your community? (i) How do these cultural practices/norms interfere with your schooling/ | |
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| | |

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|---|---|
| ( ii) How can secondary school girls be encouraged to resist traditional/cultural norm in support of their academic and professional pursuits? | |

**LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL**

**GEORGE E. ABERI**
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**P. O. BOX 536, NJORO**
**NAKURU**

**To Whom It May Concern**

I am an M. A. student of Egerton University. I am requesting to use your students as respondents in my research. The research seeks to establish the Influence of Gendered Linguistic Images on Girl Education. You are asked to respond to the Questions by filling in the Questionnaire.

Thanking you in anticipation;

Yours Sincerely

**George Ezekiel Aberi**