

**THE POLYSEMY OF THE *GĪKŪYŪ* NOUNS**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

### Declaration by the Candidate

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other University.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my late brother Pastor Anderson who always encouraged me to enroll for PhD studies but who, unfortunately, passed on before he could see the fruits of his encouragement.

## ABSTRACT

Polysemy is a term used in semantic analysis to describe the situation in which a word has two or more related meanings. This study is a Cognitive Semantic account of the Gĩkũyũ nouns as productive sources of polysemous meanings. This study examined the polysemy of the Gĩkũyũ nouns through description of their semantic networks. While existing studies have contented with polysemy in the semantic field of body parts or just one noun, the present study has extended the analysis across twelve semantic fields which include Plants and fruits, animals, buildings among others. The aims of the study were to explore ways in which the Gĩkũyũ nouns branch providing extended meanings, how noun categories emerge from these various extended meanings, and how cognitive processes of metaphor and metonymy and cultural factors motivate the polysemy of these nouns. The researcher adopted the interpretivist philosophical systematic quest for theoretical answers and utilization of data for generation of and broader understanding of polysemy. The study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design that enabled effective collection and an in-depth analysis of the data. The target population were females and males aged above fifty years in the four locations of the Nyeri South sub-county namely Chinga North East, Chinga North West, Chinga SouthEast and Chinga North West. The informants were identified through the snowball sampling method where prior identified key informants helped in identifying the next suitable informants due to the difficulty of identifying people who are competent in Gĩkũyũ. A total of forty informants (twenty males and twenty females) were sampled for the study. To collect data, thirty- one nouns were purposively selected from a Kikuyu – English Vocabulary Dictionary. These nouns were put in different semantic fields and presented, through an open-ended questionnaire to the study participants. The questionnaire aimed at eliciting additional noun meanings not given in the dictionary. The polysemous meanings of each noun were put in a semantic network, showing how they were derived from either the prototypical or extended meaning and patterns formed from these meanings were then discussed. The study used the Cognitive Linguistic Approach, specifically, the Principled Polysemy Model as postulated by Tyler and Evans (2003, 2004). This model views polysemy in terms of radial semantic networks that centre on a prototypical sense. The findings led to several conclusions. First, Gĩkũyũ nouns are extended to have polysemous meanings in different semantic fields that derive from the prototypical connotations. While some of the meanings belong to the same nouncategory as the meaning they branch from, others belong to different categories. Secondly, metaphor and metonymy are the central processes that motivate the polysemy of the Gĩkũyũ nouns. Thirdly, socio- cultural factors, and not just linguistic phenomena, motivate the polysemy of these nouns. This study is important because it enhances the scholarly understanding of polysemy in Gĩkũyũ and contributes further to research in Cognitive Linguistics. The study recommends research on other categories of words in Gĩkũyũ so as to establish whether they are also productive sources of polysemy. Quintessentially, there is need for a comparative study in polysemy with national languages such as English and Kiswahili with a view to elevating Gĩkũyũ to a similar status.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

#### 1.0. Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter comprises the background of the study, statement of the problem, the objectives and research questions that guided this study, and the limitations of the study. The significance and contributions of the study, literature review, theoretical framework and methodology are also included.

#### 1.1. Background to the Study

This study is a Cognitive Semantic account of polysemy. It investigates the Gīkūyū nouns as productive sources of polysemous meanings.

The term polysemy is derived from the Greek word polysema (Poly- ‘many’ and sema ‘sign’ meanings). According to Barnes (1984), the issue of a single word being associated with multiple meanings was addressed as early as the writings of Aristotle. In his work ‘Categories’ cited in Falkum (2011), Aristotle differentiates between synonymy and homonymy which he referred to as univocity and multivocity, respectively. Antunano (1999) observes that polysemy is the term used in semantic analysis to describe the situation in which a word has two or more related meanings. From the above definition of polysemy, it is apparent that a polysemous word has more than one meaning or sense and semantic connections exist between these meanings.

Polysemy is a universal mechanism and there is a probability that all natural languages have polysemous words. According to Srinivasan and Rabagliati (2015), all-natural languages

have a repertoire of words that are used to express a large set of basic ideas that range from concrete concepts of animals, objects, and materials, to more abstract notions like events and beliefs. Instead of labelling each of these ideas with a unique term, languages systematically group sets of related ideas under a single word. This is what contributes to polysemy. Gīkūyū has a large number of nouns which admit new members through semantic extensions thus making them polysemous. These nouns denote objects and concepts which cut across different semantic fields like plants, fruits, animals, the human body parts, types of food and beverages, social practices, social and religious roles, celestial bodies, technological advancements, among others.

According to Andres (2020), polysemy is a very common phenomenon in language and most open-class words we normally use are polysemous, that means that they are associated with several related meanings. Consider the following examples from Gīkūyū which are adapted from Gathara (2015).

1. *Ndīrenda maĩ ndĩ mũnyotu.*

I need water I am thirsty.

2. *Mūtumia ũcio mũritũ nĩ atũra maĩ.*

Woman that heavy has broken water.

That expectant woman has broken the amniotic fluid.

3. *Hwaĩ twaheo maĩ mũno.*

Last night we were given water a lot.

Last night we drank a lot of beer.

The noun *maĩ* in Example 1 refers to water and it expresses the original meaning of the term. In addition to the original meaning there are meanings that are attributed to this term. In Example 2, it is used euphemistically to denote the amniotic fluid as a way of avoiding to mention directly the bodily functions associated with reproduction. Thirdly, the term denotes beer when it is used in social contexts such as beer drinking ceremonies or in a bar. These three senses are related because they are liquids.

Polysemy as one of the central issues of present-day lexical semantics has been studied from various approaches. One of the approaches is the traditional which holds that the lexicon constitutes a static set of word senses, tagged with morphological, syntactic and semantic features inserted into frames. The lexicon is viewed as a 'finite set' of memorized units of meaning (Jackendoff 1997). This approach focuses on two issues. The first one is the monosemy approach advocated by Ruhl (1989). This approach holds the view that each lexical item is associated with a single abstract sense and all other meanings or senses that are associated with it are derived contextually. The second is the homonymy which is a traditional view in the study of the lexicon that began as early as Bloomfield (1933, cited in Tyler & Evans 2003). This approach assumes that the multiple meanings of a single form are unrelated and they are a random accident. In this case, it fails to point out that the distinctive meanings that one phonological form exhibits are systematically related. The homonymy approach also emphasizes a narrow synchronic view thus failing to recognize the fact that the evolving nature of language that has historically extended its meanings in a systemic and motivated way (Tyler & Evans 2003). Due to these perceptions, polysemy has received minimal attention. Linguists such as Leech (1974), Lyons (1971, 1977, 1995) and Lipka (1992) have explored the phenomenon of polysemy by primarily focusing on the differences between polysemy and homonymy. Those who approach polysemy in this way

restrict it to word meanings, and recognize that the various senses of a polysemous word could be derived from a basic sense. However, they do not go further than this. This approach regards the processes of metaphor and metonymy to be figures of speech.

However, the traditional approach fails to account for the systematic ways in which the meanings of polysemous words are related, despite recognizing the fact that words have various meanings. It also envisages meaning as being finite; but meaning is never finite (Sweetser 1990, Langacker 2004, Tyler and Evans 2003).

Due to these perceived shortcomings of the traditional approach, new approaches have arisen to bring the studies on polysemy to another level. One of these approaches is Cognitive Linguistics which re-centres polysemy and considers it a fundamental feature of human language. This approach is a usage-based model. It explores language based on our experience of the world, the way we perceive and contextualize it (Ungerer and Schmid 1996). Polysemy is viewed as an omnipresent phenomenon associated with lexical items, grammatical constructions and whole grammatical classes. Furthermore, unlike the traditional approach, Cognitive linguistics regards, a polysemous word as a category which is composed of various related meanings (Kovacs 2011). Among these meanings are the prototypical or literal meaning. This is the basic or the original meaning which the members of a given speech community are likely to give if they are asked what a given word means out of context. This prototypical sense is not shared by the other senses. Instead, it is the original basis from which the other senses are derived. It is also likely that some senses are in turn derived from other derived senses (Murphy1997). These meanings that are derived from the prototypical meaning are the peripheral or the extended ones. All the meanings of a



polysemous word are related to each other in a systematic and natural way to form a motivated semantic network (Evans 2004).

This thesis adopts the Cognitive Linguistic perspective as it advocates that many words are polysemous. In addition, it employs mechanisms such as semantic network, metaphor and metonymy. These mechanisms enabled, the researcher to carry out an in-depth analysis of the Gĩkũyũ polysemous nouns instead of just listing their multiple senses.

### **1.1.2. Gĩkũyũ Language**

Gĩkũyũ is a Kenyan highland Bantu Language of the Niger-Congo sub- family of languages which is mainly spoken in the five counties of the former Central province, namely Nyeri, Murang'a, Kiambu, Nyandarua and Kirinyaga. However, quite a significant number of Gĩkũyũ speakers have settled in the Rift Valley, Eastern, Coast regions and other parts of the country as a result of migration from their original homeland. According to the 2019 Kenya national population and housing census, it has a large number of native speakers, about eight million.

Maho (2009) in his update of Guthrie's (1948, 1971) classification of the Bantu Languages places Gĩkũyũ in group 50 E which he refers to as the Kikuyu-Kamba group or the Central Kenya Bantu. For more information on the classification of the Gĩkũyũ language see Doke (1954,1960) and Mohlig (1981).

Mutahi (1977) suggests that Gĩkũyũ has seven dialects. These are Kĩ-Embu and Kĩmbeere which are spoken in Embu county, Gĩgĩchũgũ and Kĩndia which are spoken in Kirinyaga county, the Northern dialect which is spoken in Mũrang'a and some parts of Nyeri county, the Southern dialect which is spoken in Kiambu, as well as Kĩmathĩra which is spoken in

Kĩeni and Mathĩra in Nyeri county. On the other hand, Njogu (1978) and Wachera (2008) identify five dialects of Gĩkũyũ. These are the southern dialect (Gĩ-kabete), the northern dialect, Kĩmathĩra, Gĩgĩchũgũ and Kĩndia. However, according to Ngure (2005), determining the exact number of the Gĩkũyũ dialects is a debatable issue among linguists up to date. The current study takes the five dialects approach since Kĩembu is a distinct language that would pose acute translation challenges with fewer speakers than the Northern dialect. Among the five dialects, the current study used the Northern Gĩkũyũ dialect spoken by the majority of the Agĩkũyũ in order to access ample data to investigate the polysemy of the nouns.

### **1.1.3. The Gĩkũyũ Nouns**

All Bantu languages have nouns that are divided into classes which are distinguished by characteristic prefixes that are affixed to the noun stem. These classes differ in number from one Bantu language to another. However, the most popular and spoken Bantu languages tend to have developed word forms. According to Mũgane (1997) Gĩkũyũ has 17 noun classes as illustrated in table 1 below:

**Table 1: Gikūyū Noun Classes**

Class	Prefix	Example	Gloss	Description
1	Mū-	Mūtumia Mūthuuri	Woman Man	Singular of 2
2	a-	Atumia Athuuri	Women Men	Plural of 1
3	Mū-	Mūtī Mūtwe	Tree Head	Singular of 4
4	Mī-	Mītī Mītwe	Trees Heads	Plural of 3 and occasionally of 14
5	i-\rĩ	Itumbī Riitho	Egg Eye	Singular of 6
6	Ma-	Matumbī Maitho	Eggs Eyes	Plural of 5, 14
7	Kī-\gĩ	Kiōndo Gītī	Basket Chair	Singular of 8
8	Ci-\i-	Ciondo Itī	Baskets Chairs	Plural of 7
9	n-	Ng'ombe Mbūri	Cow Goat	Singular of 10
10	n-	Ng'ombe Mbūri	Cows Goats	Plural of 9 and 11
11	Rū-	Rūrigi Rūtumo	Rope Stitch	Singular of 10
12	Ka-\ga-	Kairītu Gatī	Small girl Small chair	Diminutive singular of 13
13	Tū-	Tūrītu Tūtī	Small girls Small chairs	Diminutive plural of 12
14	Ū-	Ūrathi Ūici Ucūrū	Prophecy Theft Porridge	- Mainly consist of concepts and also a sub class of tangible objects Plural where possible is found in class 6
15	Kū-\gū	Kūgūrū Gūtū	Leg Ear	Singular of 6
16	Ha-	Andū	Place	Definite location
17	Kū-	Kūndū	Place	Indefinite location

For more information on these noun classes see Mūgane (1997) & Gecaga (1994).

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study examines the polysemy of the Gĩkũyũ nouns. Studies on noun polysemy, for instance, Gathara (2015) and Almajir (2013) have mainly focused on the body part terms. These studies have used the frame semantics and the compositional polysemy theoretical frameworks respectively. There are other studies that have focused on the polysemy of a single noun. The first one is Jurewics (2019) who studies the polysemy of *vana* 'tree' from a cognitive linguistic approach. The second is Smith (2012) who has looked at the polysemy of the noun 'boy' also from the Cognitive linguistic approach. The third one is Evans (2005) who has studied the polysemy of the abstract noun 'time' using the principled polysemy approach. While all these studies have focused on the polysemy of the nouns, the present study, goes beyond their scope by extending the study of polysemy of the nouns across twelve semantic fields which include animals, plants and fruits, buildings among others.

The study uses the Cognitive Linguistics approach, specifically the Principled Polysemy Model to examine the polysemy of the Gĩkũyũ nouns. This approach views polysemy in terms of radial semantic networks that centre around a prototypical sense from which other senses extend in a motivated way. The above studies have not looked at the motivations of the polysemy of the nouns. The present study, guided by the Principled Polysemy goes beyond listing the senses of the polysemous nouns to examine the cognitive mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy as the central mechanisms that motivate the polysemy of the Gĩkũyũ nouns. As a language usage based model, it also aids to demonstrate how linguistic expressions interact with cultural aspects in the motivation of the nouns to have polysemous meanings that reflect the social, political, religious, economic activities and roles and the taboos of the Gĩkũyũ people.

### **1.3. Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study is to investigate the polysemy of the Gĩkũyũ nouns using the Cognitive Linguistics Approach.

### **1.4. Objectives**

The study is guided by the following four specific objectives: To

1. Describe how Gĩkũyũ polysemous nouns branch to have extended meanings.
2. Determine whether the extended meanings belong to the same noun categories as the meanings they branch from.
3. Establish how the semantic cognitive mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy motivate the semantic extension of the polysemous Gĩkũyũ nouns.
4. Explore how the Gĩkũyũ nouns are extended along the cultural process to have polysemous meanings that reflect the social, religious, economic and political roles and activities and the taboos of the Agĩkũyũ people.

### **1.5. Research Questions**

The study answers the following research questions:

1. How do the Gĩkũyũ polysemous nouns branch to have extended meanings that form their semantic networks?
2. Which categories of nouns do these extended meanings belong to?
3. How is the polysemy of the Gĩkũyũ nouns motivated by the semantic cognitive mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy?
4. How are the polysemous nouns extended along the cultural process to have meanings that reflect the social, religious, economic and political roles and activities and the taboos of the Agĩkũyũ?

### **1.6. Significance of the Study**

The current study looks at the polysemy of the Gikũyũ nouns. It enhances the scholarly understanding of the language by providing data that helps in the preservation of the language and the teaching of the nouns. The study is useful to the language teachers as they impart information on how word meanings can be generated in natural languages. The study also gives insight into the field of cognitive linguistics and deepens the knowledge of Gikũyũ polysemy thus contributing to the already existing research in this field.

From this study, the cultural factors that influence polysemy are investigated. These factors play a key role in shaping and influencing the linguistic structures, the vocabulary and also the polysemy and semantic extensions in Gikũyũ. The study brings into light the cultural experiences of the Gikũyũ and shows how they use different terms or expressions to describe the activities, things, objects and concepts in their world. These terms are closely linked with their environment and the everyday experiences that they go through.

### **1.7. Scope and Limitations of the Study**

Languages experience change in all aspects including the lexicon and other components whether phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic. This work, however, was only concerned with the semantic extensions that the polysemous nouns go through at the lexical level.

The study is limited to the polysemy of the Gikũyũ nouns which are an open class category of word. Therefore, polysemy of other open class words such as verbs, adverbs, adjectives and the closed-class category are not being looked into. Nouns go through many semantic

relationships such as synonymy, antonymy, homonymy, hyponymy, meronymy and hyponymy. However, the main concern of this work is polysemy

There are various word formation processes for the derivation of nouns such as coinage, clipping, acronyming and backformation. This study being semantic, however, restricted itself to the cognitive semantic mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy which are main mechanisms for the derivation of the meanings of polysemous words in Cognitive Linguistics according to Kovacs (2011).

The Cognitive Linguistics Approach operates under many principles such as conceptual processes, embodied experience in the study of language and image schema transformations among others. However, providing a comprehensive account of them is beyond the limited scope of this thesis. The focus, therefore, is on the concepts that are fundamental to the analysis presented at the core of this thesis. These are the tenets of the Principled Polysemy that are fundamental to the study, and which are used to bring out the different meanings of the nouns, construct a semantic network for each of the nouns and account for the cultural factors that motivate polysemy. The three criteria of the Principled Polysemy namely the meaning criterion, elaboration and the grammatical criterion are also used as they play an important role in identification of the distinct senses of the nouns, determination and explanation of the noun categories that the extended meanings belong to. The approach views all linguistic units such as morphemes, words and grammatical constructions to be polysemous, but the scope of this work is limited to mainly nouns.

The meaning extensions of the nouns form different patterns in their semantic networks. However, to remain within a manageable scope, not all the patterns for the thirty-one nouns

are described. To illustrate each pattern, representative examples are drawn from these nouns. These examples are purposively selected, depending on the number of polysemous meanings that the nouns exhibit and also on whether the meanings are derived just from the prototypical meaning or from the prototypical and the extended meanings.

The sampling of the informants was confined to the four locations of Othaya South division of Nyeri South subcounty. This is because the area is largely rural and is mainly inhabited by people who predominantly use to conceptualize their world.



## 1.8. Definition of Terms

**Cognitive Linguistics:** A language usage based model that promotes the idea that the meaning of an individual word is conceptual,

**Encyclopedic Knowledge:** A set of assumptions that represent the individual's real-world knowledge

**Generalization or semantic broadening:** This term is also referred to as semantic broadening. It is the use of a word in a broader realm of meaning than it originally possesses, often referring to all items in a class rather than one specific item.

**Gĩkũyũ:** Bantu language that is mainly spoken in the Mount Kenya counties. This term is interchangeably used with Kikuyu.

**Agĩkũyũ:** The people who speak the language.

**Idealized cognitive model:** A cognitive framework through which human beings know and experience the world.

**Literal meaning:** The meaning of words in their basic or original sense. This term will be used interchangeably with the prototypical sense or meaning.

**Metaphor:** A notion where one concept is expressed in terms of something else.

**Mapping:** Cognitive process that relates literal meanings to extended meanings

**Metaphorical extension:** The mappings across conceptual domains, from the source domain to the target domain.

**Metonymy:** Cognitive mechanisms or process where there is transfer of name from one object (phenomenon, thing, and action, process) to another based on the contiguity of their properties relations.

**Peripheral meaning:** The extended meaning of a word that is derived from the literal meaning.

**Prototypical Meaning:** The meaning of a word that one is likely to give when asked what a word means out of context. In this study, it will be used interchangeably with the literal or basic meaning or sense.

**Semantic derogation:** the characteristic of transferring the negative attributes of an animal to a human being.

**Semantic network:** Range of polysemous senses or meanings associated with a given word

**Sense:** The polysemous meanings of a given word. This term will be used interchangeably with meaning.

**Source domain:** Conceptual domain from which metaphorical expressions are drawn

**Target domain:** Conceptual domain that is understood in terms of the metaphorical expression from the source domain

**Specialization:** This term is also referred to as semantic narrowing. It is the narrowing of a word to refer to what previously would have been but one example of what it referred to

**Semantic Field:** Organization of semantically similar words into a system that reflects their relationship to one another.

## **1.9 Literature Review**

### **1.9.1. Introduction**

This section provides review of the studies on noun polysemy, semantic studies in the areas of Polysemy from the Cognitive linguistics perspective, mechanisms that govern meaning extension, and semantic studies in Gikūyū and related languages. The gaps that are filled by the study are also given.

### **1.9.2. Studies on Noun Polysemy**

There are a quite a number of studies that have been carried out on noun polysemy. Evans (2004) has conducted a study on the abstract noun ‘time’ within the Principled Polysemy theory. He argues that there are various senses associated with ‘time’ forming a semantic network centered around a prototypical sense which he takes to be the ‘duration sense’. This study provides very useful insights to the present study, especially on the application of the Principled Polysemy in the study of noun polysemy. Evans has also provided a graphic representation of the semantic network for ‘time’ demonstrating how the extended meanings branch from the prototypical meaning. In the current study, the graphic representations of the semantic networks of the nouns are provided, demonstrating how the extended meanings branch either from the prototypical or extended meanings. However, the present study goes farther than Evan’s because it looks into the polysemy of nouns from twelve semantic fields Furthermore, this study discusses the relationships that the polysemous meanings of the nouns have.

Another study is by Smith (2012) who has looked at the polysemy of the noun ‘boy’ from a cognitive linguistics perspective. The study describes and analyzes the different senses of the noun in regard to their differences and similarities, as well as their relation to the primary

sense. In the analysis, Smith argues that the polysemous senses of 'boy' have connections. However, he has not indicated how these connections occur. This study is beneficial in that it provides insights on how to carry out analysis of polysemous words using the Cognitive Linguistics approach. Despite the fact that this study has used the cognitive linguistic approach, it has focused on only one noun. It has also not described the cognitive processes that are used in the derivation of the polysemous senses of the noun. These are some of the gaps addressed by the present study.

Thirdly, there are number of other studies that have been carried out on polysemous nouns in language. Andres (2020), for instance, has carried out studies on polysemous nouns and copredication. She defines copredication as a phenomenon in which a nominal expression has simultaneous predications for two or more different meanings of a word in a sentence. She contends that each specific sense of the copredicative noun that is referred to in a copredicative sentence has a single denotation. In as much as Andres' and the current study focus on nouns, the current study goes farther to include the cultural perspective in polysemy.

There are many studies in polysemy on the domain of body parts. Yetong (2012) has used metaphor and metonymy in his study of the polysemy of the Chinese body parts 'head' and 'eye'. He argues that most terms used to refer to Chinese body parts are polysemous and the meanings associated with them are figurative in nature. He discusses how metaphor and metonymy are used to derive extended meanings from the prototypical meanings of the two terms. In addition, he comes up with the metaphoric and metonymic relationships, such as **WHOLE FOR THE PART** and the **TOP FOR THE FRONT POSITION OF THE HEAD**. The current study is similar to Yetong's in that it uses the Cognitive linguistic approach and

explores how the Gĩkũyũ nouns are extended via metaphor and metonymy to have related meanings in different semantic fields. At the same time, it gives the different metonymic and metaphoric relationships among the polysemous nouns. However, the present study does not just analyze the polysemy of the terms of body parts. It goes farther to analyze nouns that cut across different semantic fields and describe the different ways in which the meanings of each noun branch either from the prototypical or extended meanings, thus forming the semantic network for each of the nouns.

There are some studies that have been carried out on the polysemy of nouns in Gĩkũyũ and other African Languages. One of these is Gathara (2015) who focuses on the polysemy of three Gĩkũyũ body parts, *ngoro* ‘heart’, *kũgũrũ* ‘leg’ and *riitho* ‘eye’. This work, written in Gĩkũyũ offers some insight to the current study especially on the domain of body parts. However, it uses the Frame semantics which, despite being a cognitive approach, is different from the Principled Polysemy approach that is used in this study. The Frame approach looks at meanings of polysemous words in terms of frames whereas the Principled Polysemy presents polysemous meanings in form of a network with the primary meaning in the centre of a radial extension of nodes representing the extended meanings. Additionally, the study focuses on nouns from just one semantic field unlike the present study which uses twelve semantic fields.

Another study is Almajir (2013) which focuses on the Hausa terms for body parts, *kai* ‘head’ and its subparts *ido* ‘eye’, *hanci* ‘nose’, *baki* ‘mouth’ *fuska* ‘face’. *gosh* ‘forehead’ and *kunne* ‘ear’. This work uses the Descriptive Lexical Semantic Approach. Despite the analysis of a different language and use of a different approach, the work provides useful insights. This is especially in the area of the meaning extensions of the body part terms where he observes a

clear motivation, through both metaphor and metonymy. This is the view taken in this work where the meaning extensions of the nouns from the different semantic domains are taken to be motivated by metaphor and metonymy. The above two studies, however, are limited since they just focus on nouns from one semantic field. The current study analyses the polysemy of nouns from different semantic fields with an aim of establishing how their polysemous senses are derived, and describing the connections between these senses. Besides, this study uses the Principled Polysemy approach which they have not used.

Mulwa (2012) is another study on an African language that looks at the phenomenon of polysemy. The study addresses the distinction between polysemy and homonymy in *Kimasaku*, a dialect of Kamba using the Sense Relations Theory. It investigates nouns and verbs, to determine whether it is possible to have homonyms and polysemes in various word classes. Although this study is from a different language and uses a different theoretical approach from the one used in the present study, it has discussed the phenomenon of polysemy and meaning relatedness, just like the current study has done. However, unlike Mulwa who has looked at nouns and verbs, the present study is restricted to nouns for an exhaustive examination of polysemy. Mulwa's treatment of polysemy is not exhaustive because he has just listed the various related meanings of a given word, but not shown the motivation behind these relatedness, neither has he explained how the different meanings of a noun or verb are derived to form the given word's semantic network. His data collection procedures are partially similar to the ones used in this study in that he has drawn a corpus of *Kimasaku* nouns and verbs with multiple meanings from two *Kikamba* dictionaries, and then presented them to respondents using an interview in order to get the meanings of the given words and the relatedness of these meanings. The nouns used for examination in the current study were purposively sampled from a Gikũyũ-English vocabulary usage dictionary. These

nouns were then presented to the respondents in a questionnaire in order for them to provide the meanings attributed to the nouns and also the relatedness of these meanings.

### **1.9.3. The cultural factors in semantic extension**

Cognitive linguists have recognized the important role culture plays in the study of meaning. According to Kraska-Szlenk (2018), these linguists have relied on the assumption that meaning can be examined only when taking into account the full context of its use with all its facets, including the culture of a speech community. Szlenk further emphasizes that language and culture are interdependent. In cognitive linguistics, the interdependences between language and culture are known by labels such as cultural scripts, cultural models or cultural conceptualizations. These labels refer to a range of cognitive processes, for example, schemas, metaphors, and metonymies which prevail in a particular society and are reflected in language and sociocultural behaviors. Cassanto (2016, 2017) argues that these cultural conceptualizations are realized by means of social behaviours and linguistic expressions which reflect them and, at the same time, entrench them through constant language usage. The current study, demonstrates how the cognitive processes of metaphor and metonymy interact with linguistic expressions in the semantic extensions of the polysemous Gīkūyūnouns.

Cognitive Linguists have also recognized the important role that culture plays in the formation of polysemy in a language. One such linguist is Yun (2015) who asserts that cultural factors in the semantic extension of polysemous words have held the attention of many researchers. According to him, this has happened since when Williams (1976) pointed out that key words had a lot of relevance to the culture and the society, and a large number of these words are polysemous which extend their meaning consequentially along with the

cultural process. Yun has carried out a study on the semantic extension of the polysemy of Chinese key words from a cognitive approach and argues that it is persistently influenced by cultural factors. In his perspective these factors include the material civilization and ideology which is the sum totality of the Chinese people's ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, prejudices, myths, religious strictures. These cultural factors play a key role in shaping and influencing linguistic structures and vocabulary including polysemy and semantic extension. Bennet, Grossberg and Morris (2005) have also emphasized the importance of culture in the motivation behind the change of meaning of words. These scholars assert that the meaning of words change over time, but what is important is that they change in relationship to the changing political, social and economic situations and the needs of the people.

Kress and Hodge (1979) also argue that the cultural aspects may be a key role in shaping and influencing linguistic structures and vocabulary, including polysemy and semantic extension. Folklore is also another factor that affects semantic extension. This is because the traditional customs, social conventions, myths and legends of a particular community, contribute to colors, animals, plants and even articles for daily use having extended meanings.

From the review of literature, the researcher noted that there are no studies on Gīkūyū polysemy that take the cultural perspective. However, using insights from the above studies, the researcher was able to examine the cultural factors that motivate the polysemy of the Gīkūyū nouns and demonstrate how these nouns extend their meanings along the cultural process to reflect the social, religious, economic, and political activities and roles and the taboos of the Agīkūyū.



#### **1.9.4. Cognitive Semantic Studies on the Polysemy**

There are various semantic studies on polysemy that have used the Cognitive Linguistic Approach. Among these are Kovacs (2011) who argues that cognitive linguistics places importance on the role of meaning, conceptual processes, embodied experience of language, the human mind and the way in which these elements interact in the formation of polysemy. Kovacs further asserts that the word is regarded as a category with distinct senses. These senses are related to each other in a systematic and natural way as they are derived from the prototypical meaning through the cognitive mechanisms of metaphor, metonymy, generalizations, specifications and image schema transformations. (Kovacs 2011, Lakoff 1987).

The main focus of research on polysemy in the Cognitive Linguistic Approach has been the closed-class lexical items specifically prepositions. The pioneering work in the polysemy of the English preposition 'over' was carried out by Brugman in the 1980s. The research was followed by Lakoff (1987), Brugman (1988) and Brugman and Lakoff (1988). These last two linguists analyzed the preposition 'over' as a range of distinct but related senses organized around a prototypical sense of 'over' in a lexical network sense which they took to be the 'above and across' sense. Their approach also provides a full specification of the range of possible senses of 'over'; all of which they take to be stored in the long-term semantic memory of the speakers. However, this full specification approach is criticized in that it entails an indefinite proliferation of mentally stored senses in order to cover the range of use of lexical items. For example, Brugman (1988), identifies nearly a hundred different uses of the preposition over. Another reason why Brugman's and Lakoff's account of polysemy is criticized is that it fails to distinguish between these aspects of meaning that are part of the word meaning proper and those that result from interaction with context. Sandra

(1998) also criticizes this account on the basis that it does not have any methodology for postulating the different senses of a word. In other words, they do not provide proof, linguistics or otherwise, of the necessity for making their distinctions.

Since Lakoff and Brugman's study, several other linguists working within cognitive linguistics have come up. Among them are Tyler and Evans (2001, 2003) and Evans (2005, 2009, and 2010). Tyler and Evans (2001, 2003) have advanced the investigation of the English preposition 'over'. In their account, while espousing the Lakoff - Brugman idea that polysemous sense are represented in terms of sense networks centered around a prototypical sense, they propose a set of criteria that makes it possible to determine whether a particular sense of a word counts as a distinct sense and establish the central sense of a polysemous lexical item.

The above studies, despite looking into the polysemy of the preposition, have provided insight to the present study. This is mainly on the representation of the polysemous senses of the nouns in terms of networks that are centred around a prototypical meaning. Evans (2009, 2010) has also carried out studies on the state senses associated with the prepositions 'in' and 'on'. He argues that the senses associated with these prepositions are not identical.

Evans (2015) broadens the study of polysemy within cognitive linguistics by using the Lexical Concepts and Cognitive Models (LCCM) theory. He addresses two distinct types of polysemy. The first is the inter lexical polysemy which arises from different word forms. He has illustrated this form of polysemy by using the prepositions 'in' and 'on' which he had already studied in 2001 and 2003. The second type of polysemy is conceptual. In this one, a single lexical item obtains distinct meanings in different contexts of use. He illustrates this

by using the lexical item ‘book’ which obtains different meanings depending on the context, (for example, book as a tome or text, or to show the level of interest or the duration one takes when reading it). The current study has examined polysemy of the Gikūyū nouns in order to show how each of the nouns has different meanings in different contexts of use.

There are linguists who have used the Cognitive Linguistics Approach to study the polysemy of other languages. Kang (2012) studies spatial markers in Korean. The spatial markers are ‘-ey’; ‘-eyse’ and ‘-ulo’ which indicate approximate equivalence to English preposition ‘at\to’, ‘at\from’ and ‘to\toward’. Following the Principled Polysemy model, Kang argues that the semantic network of these spatial markers can be explained with one central meaning and that they exhibit a polysemous network with motivated extended meanings. Although Kang’s work focuses on a category of words that are different from the ones in the current study, both studies have used the Principled Polysemy theory. The current study argues that the semantic network of a given noun can be explained with one central meaning. In addition, nouns exhibit polysemous networks with motivated meanings. The current study, however, goes farther than Kang’s to explain the relationships that link the polysemous meanings and construct the semantic networks for the nouns. Besides that, it shows the different patterns that are exhibited in the semantic networks.

The studies reviewed above have recognized the fact that words have polysemous meanings and that these meanings form a semantic network around a prototypical meaning. While the current study agrees with this fact, it goes farther to identify and describe the common patterns that occur among the polysemous meanings in the semantic networks of the given nouns. The studies have also failed to explain how the cognitive mechanisms govern meaning extension, an issue that the present study has taken up. This has been done by

adopting the semantic network accounts as postulated by the Principled Polysemy theory to explain the relationships among the polysemous senses of Gĩkũyũ nouns and, at the same time, use the cognitive mechanisms of metaphor, metonymy to show how they motivate the systematic patterns of relationships among the polysemous meanings. The main metaphorical mapping models and the metonymic relationships that polysemous nouns have are shown.

### **1.9.5. Semantics Studies in Gĩkũyũ and other African Languages**

Gĩkũyũ is a language that is highly studied in the areas of phonology, morpho-phonology, morphology, syntax, morpho-syntax and sociolinguistics. However, not much has been done in the field of semantics, especially on the phenomenon of polysemy. One semantic study that uses the Cognitive Linguistic approach is Gachara (2012). He studies the metaphors used in Gĩkũyũ marriage negotiations from the Career Metaphor theory which is a cognitive theory. However, the current study goes farther than Gachara's by focusing on various domains of metaphor and the metaphorical mappings that arise from the polysemous meanings of the nouns.

Gatambuki (2010) uses the Conceptual Metaphor, a cognitive theory posited by Johnson and Lakoff (1980). He analyzes the lexical and semantic processes of creating Gĩkũyũ euphemisms of death, sexual intercourse, body effluvia, disease and anatomy. Despite the use of the cognitive linguistics approach in the current study, euphemisms are only discussed if they are related to the polysemous meanings of the nouns being examined.

There are also studies that are carried out using the Lexical Pragmatics Theory by Blunter. These studies are mainly on semantic shifts and sense relations. Munga (2009) focuses on sense relations in Gĩkũyũ and aims to provide evidence for synonymy, homonymy and

polysemy. Although Mũngahas looked at the phenomenon polysemy, she has not done so in details, since it is studied alongside other sense relations such as synonymy and homonymy. Wambugu (2010) focuses on semantic shifts in Gĩkũyũ and examines whether lexical broadening through metaphorical extensions results in shifts of Gĩkũyũ lexemes. Lexical narrowing is also tested to establish its ability to disambiguate the concepts encoded by a lexeme. These two studies have used a lexical pragmatic approach, unlike the present study which is semantic and goes farther to examine the different polysemous relationships that result from metaphoric and metonymic extensions.

Away from Gĩkũyũ, Mwebia (2006) has also used the Lexical Pragmatic Approach to study sense relations in Kimeru, a language which is genetically related to Gĩkũyũ. This is a comparative study which tries to find out the differences and similarities in sense relations involving corresponding lexical items in English and Kimeru. Khacula (2013) examines semantic shift in determining the meaning of words in Lumarama, a dialect of Luhya. The study has mainly focused on the area of lexical pragmatic processes like narrowing and broadening to show how they motivate semantic shifts. Although, Luhya is not closely related to Gĩkũyũ, this study has offered some insights on semantics shifts. The current study is, however, different because it examines polysemy which is regarded as a semantic phenomenon but not a pragmatic one.

There are also studies that have approached the issue of meaning from a gender perspective. Examples of these are Njuguna (2010) who uses the lexical pragmatic approach to discuss manifestations of gender stereotypes through various elements of figurative language. The study focuses on how a speaker expresses a particular stereotype by choosing one given expression and not any other. Munyiri (2006) explores the existence of a semantic

equivalence in the connotative value of symmetrical terms that refer to both male and female gender in Gĩkũyũ. The study aims to establish if words in Gĩkũyũ have equivalent semantic connotations and to what extent certain lexical items reinforce the subjugation of one gender while exalting dominance of the converse gender. Wango (1998) focuses on Gĩkũyũ nouns in relation to gender from a socio-semiotics perspective with a view to determining in what ways Gĩkũyũ devalues women. The study investigates the extent to which the meanings in some Gĩkũyũ words tend to crystallize gender attitudes of dominance and subservience that undermine the quest for equality among men and women. Although Njuguna's, Munyiri's and Wango's studies have looked at the issue of meaning of words in Gĩkũyũ, the current study is different from them because it examines different categories of nouns from the perspective of polysemy.

Njeri (2007) investigates language use in HIV/Aids discourse and makes a pragmatic exploration of the lexical euphemisms used as substitutes of what is taboo in Gĩkũyũ speech. She uses the Politeness Theory of Brown and Levinson and Neo Grecian Theory of implicatures (1975). Njeri's study is different from the current one since she only focuses on euphemistic words that are used in HIV/Aids discourse study, while the present study looks at various categories of nouns and their polysemous meanings from a semantic approach.

A study that uses the Sense Relations theory is Murianki (2007) where nouns that are related to kinship are investigated. This study is different from the current one in its approach; it does not look at polysemy and only focuses on one domain of nouns.

Some other studies in Gĩkũyũ that have looked at the issue of meaning include Gichuhi (2009) who focuses on lexical replacement. This study has analyzed the nature of the process of replacement using the Lexical Semantics Approach. The variables of age, gender and

education are used. According to the study, lexical replacement occurs when a word previously used in a given context is replaced with another, but it still retains its meaning. The only similarity to the current study is the focus on meanings of Gĩkũyũ words.

Kamau (2008) discusses the truth conditions in pragmatics from a Relevance Theoretic Approach. He demonstrates the need to consider context in the truth conditions and hence transform semantics into pragmatics. This study is quite different from our own, from the theoretical approach. Besides, we have not looked at truth condition which is a pragmatic aspect while the current work is semantics.

In addition to studies in Gĩkũyũ and other Bantu languages, there are semantics studies carried out in non-Bantu languages which focus on meaning. One of these is Atoh (2001) which analyzes the meaning of Dholuo nouns from the semantics fields approach. Dholuo is not genetically related to Gĩkũyũ; nevertheless, we find some useful insights from the study since we are also investigating nouns which have multiple meanings. Atichi (2004) looks at the divergence of meaning of words in Kenyan English within the Lexico - Dynamism and Stern's seven classes of Meaning Approach. The study seeks to show that additional or altered meanings in Kenyan English do not occur arbitrarily but go through a systematic process of meaning change in order to serve a functional purpose within the Kenyan setting. According to him, it would be impossible to cover meaning without touching on context, linguistics or otherwise. Despite the different theoretical approach in Atichi's study, the present study agrees with some of the issues on meanings since it also seeks to show that the polysemous meanings of the Gĩkũyũ nouns do not occur arbitrarily but they go through a systematic process of meaning extension and at the same time polysemy occurs in a context. metonymy.

Ndlovu and Sayi (2010) have carried out a study that focuses on the treatment of polysemy and homonymy in monolingual dictionaries with special reference to Isichazamwazwi Sesi Ndebele. The authors have argued that there are inconsistencies in the treatment of these two phenomena in the dictionaries. They therefore, propose a holistic approach that can be used to distinguish polysemy and homonymy. The approach has the following five criteria: etymology, relatedness versus unrelatedness of meaning, componential analysis, the identification of the central or core sense and the test of ambiguity. Despite the fact that polysemy is focused on from a lexicographical approach, the current study gets some insight especially in the treatment of metaphor as a source of polysemy.

### **1.9.6. The Semantic Mechanisms that Motivate Polysemy**

#### **1.9.6.1. Introduction**

There are various studies that have been carried out on the mechanisms that motivate polysemy. Among these are Kovacs (2011) who argues that the word with its network of senses is regarded as a category in which these senses are related to each other by general principles such as metaphor, metonymy, generalizations, specifications and image schemas. The present study, however, has focused on metaphor and metonymy which according to Lakoff (1987) are the central cognitive mechanisms that motivate polysemy in cognitive linguistics

According to Grudzinska (2011), polysemy is governed by motivated mechanisms which are productive, rule governed, predictable and available in many other languages and for this reason certain patterns of meanings recur over and over in the languages of the world.



Grudzinska further asserts that in typical cases of polysemy, the meanings of a polysemous word are related by motivated links. One such process is metonymic transfer, responsible for creating senses such as ‘newspaper’ in ‘the newspaper fired its editor’. Here, the process maps according to a specific transfer function which takes a thing or concept. Another process is metaphoric mapping from a model, in one domain to another domain. For example, ‘foot’ in the foot of the mountain.

Kovecses (2002) regards polysemous relations to come from meaning metamorphosis and they may be based on metaphor or metonymy. Other linguists like Fenk and Fenk (2010) take metaphor and metonymy to be the main sources of polysemy.

Dirven (2001) and Dirven and Verspoor (2004) state that the various senses of a linguistic expression are linked to each other systematically by cognitive processes such as specialization, generalization, metaphor, metonymy and can be represented in a coherent radial network.

In the analysis and interpretation of the data in the current study, the relationships among the polysemous meanings of the Gikūyū nouns are analysed to show that they are not random but are systematically related via the cognitive processes of metaphor and metonymy.

The following sections discuss each of the mechanisms and give examples of the nouns which have polysemous senses that are related to each other via these processes.

### **1.9.6.2. Metaphor**

Metaphor is derived from the Greek word ‘*metaphora*’. The study of metaphor dates back to Ancient Greece. One of the ancient Greek philosophers who studied metaphor is Aristotle (384 – 322 B.C). Aristotle in *Poetics* (cited in Lanchun 2003, p.5) defines metaphor as

consisting in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species or from species to genus or from species to species or on grounds of analogy. The traditional approach holds the view that metaphor happens at the word level, that it is a linguistic issue and it is also a figure of speech. However, in cognitive linguistics metaphor is a conceptual phenomenon which is associated with people's thinking and behavior (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). These two linguists also hold the view that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought, action and our ordinary conceptual system in terms of which we think and act which is fundamentally metaphorical in nature.

From the aspect of Cognitive Linguistics, metaphor is an across domain mapping whereby there is a source and a target domain. In this mapping one conceptual domain is systematically structured in terms of another. Cognitivists see metaphor as a central feature of human language and an important source of meaning extension.

According to Lakoff (2003, p.248), metaphor often accounts for polysemy. The conceptual metaphor explains the systematicity of polysemy and correspondingly, systematic polysemy provides evidence for the existence of metaphor. In this case, metaphor and polysemy are concurrent and co-operating phenomena, which shape our language and thinking.

Blank (2003) argues that metaphoric polysemy is based on more or less salient similarities between two concepts that belong to different or even distant conceptual domains, for example, mouse which is a small rodent that belongs to the animal domain and a computer device (computer domain).

### 1.9.6.3. Metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics

In cognitive linguistics metaphor is a conceptual phenomenon which is associated with people's thinking and behavior (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). These two linguists also hold the view that metaphor is pervasive in everyday life not just in language but in thought, action and our ordinary conceptual system in terms of which we think and act which is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. From the view of CognitiveLinguistics, metaphor is an across domain mapping whereby there is a source and a target domain. In this mapping one conceptual domain is systematically structured in terms of another. In the mapping the characteristics of the source which is regarded to be more concrete are mapped onto the target which is abstract. Cognitivists see metaphor as a central feature of human language and an important source of meaning extension.

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Mapping is the cognitive process that relates literal meaning to the extended meaning. According to Kovecses (2010), the common source domains are the human body, health, animals, buildings and constructions, machines and tools, games and sports, cooking and food, heat and cold, light and darkness, movement and directions. The common target

domains are emotion, desire morality, thought, society/nation, politics economy, human characteristics, communication, time, life and death, religion, events and actions.

The analysis that is provided in this study looks at metaphoric polysemy. It determines whether the above common source and target domains apply in the polysemy of the Gīkūyū nouns or whether there are other domains.

#### **1.9.6.4. Metonymy**

Metonymy is derived from the Greek word *metonymia* which means change of name. Several linguists have attempted to define the concept of metonymy. Yartseva (1990) defines metonymy as a language mechanism consisting in a regular or occasional transposition of a class of objects to another class or singular object on the basis of contiguity or involvement in the same situation. Dirven and Verspoor (2004) regard metonymy as the semantic link between two or more senses of a word based on a relationship of contiguity. Beshaj (2015) states that metonymy is a transfer of name from one object, phenomenon, thing, action, process to another based on the contiguity of their properties or relations. This transfer of name is conditioned by close ties between the two objects.

In the traditional view, metonymy is chiefly the use of a word in place of another in order to refer to some entity where one word can be used for another if the meanings of words are contiguously related.

#### **1.9.6.5 Metonymy in Cognitive Linguistics**

The Cognitive Linguistic approach regards metonymy as a cognitive mechanism which is omnipresent in language and has communicative functions (Barcelona,2002 Langacker 1999

and Radden, 2005). Cognitivists also consider metonymy to be a conceptual phenomenon and a fundamental process that has a key role in structuring and shaping human thinking and language. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1987; Lakoff & Turner, 1989). Dirven & Verspoor (2004) regard metonymy as the semantic link between two or more senses of a word based in a relationship of contiguity. Dirven & Poring (2003) consider linguistic metonymies as reflections of underlying cognitive structures in the form of metonymic mappings, for example, producer for products, and face for person. The stand in the current study is that metonymy is a cognitive semantic mechanism where mapping takes place within one conceptual domain.

#### **1.9.6.6. Metonymic Relationships**

There have been different views regarding the definition and the underlying mechanisms of metonymy. Despite this fact, there exists many types of metonymic relationships that are shared. According to Arata (2005, pp. 58 – 61), the Greek rhetors classified the following as metonymy, saying the name of the divinity to mean his attributes and vice versa, saying the thing that is contained by the name of the thing containing it, saying the name of a place to signify the name of the inhabitants, saying the name of the instrument to signify the name of the activity, saying the name of the thing that has a quality to signify the name of the quality, and saying the name of the cause to signify the name of effect.

Several linguists among them Yamanashi (1987), Lakoff and Johnson (1980), Lehrer (1990), Murphy (1979), Klein and Murphy (2001), Kövecses and Radden (1998, 1999), Fauconnier and Turner (2002), Taylor (2003), Dirven and Porings (2002) and Barcelona (2000 b), and Barstch (2002), have given the common metonymic relationships. Among these relationships are, agent for action, action for means, member for category, container for

contents, contents for container, controller for controlled, function for organ, instrument for possessor, object for material consisting the object, part for whole, whole for part, institution for place, place for event, event for place , possessor for possession, institution for people responsible, the face for person, object use for user and object for the substance derived from the substance., whole for the part and part for the whole.

The current study discusses metonymic polysemy and explores whether Gikūyū nouns exhibit the above metonymic relationships or they have unique relationships. It also determines the metonymic polysemous relationships that are more salient among the nouns.

#### **1.9.6.7. Metaphor and Metonymy**

Hamann (2011) argues that metaphor and metonymy are two ways of construing new concepts from old concepts. She adds that the meanings derived through metonymic and metaphoric extensions result in polysemy. Despite the fact that her work is based on prepositions, which are a closed class category while this work is on nouns that are an open class category, there is a lot of insight that the current study gets from her work. Just like her work, the current study comes up with the different metonymic and metaphoric relationships that the meanings of the polysemous nouns have.

Antunano (1999) is another study based on polysemy and metaphor in perception verbs. The study is cross linguistic such that English and Spanish verbs are explored to show how people's experiences and understanding of the verb senses constrain and shape the mappings between the physical domain of perception on to the more metaphorical and abstract conceptual domains of experience. Her argument is that in Cognitive Linguistics, the central approach to polysemy is not that a word is associated with different senses but that these

meanings are related in a motivated way by means of metaphorical and metonymical mappings. This is the view held in the current study. Despite the fact that Ibarexte looks at verbs while the current study looks at nouns, there are useful insights especially on the Cognitive Linguistic such as the use of metaphor to derive polysemous meanings of words. However, her study has discussed the physical and the metaphorical meanings that the verbs convey but has not analysed the metonymical meanings. The present study, goes farther to look at the metaphoric and metonymic extensions of the given nouns and the various mappings that emerge from these extensions.

## **1.10. The Theoretical Framework**

### **1.10.1 Introduction**

The studies conducted in Gīkūyū and related languages have used different theoretical approaches. The current study is grounded in the Cognitive Linguistic approach. This is an approach which is concerned with the exploration of the relationship that exists between language, the mind and experience of the world (Ungerer and Schmid, 1996). The approach is a usage based model which relies on the assumption that meaning can be explained only when taking into account the full context of use with all its facets, including the culture of a speech community (Schimid, 2016, Geeraerts 2016).

In Cognitive Linguistics, polysemy is regarded as a common language phenomenon which derives and mirrors the conceptual structure of human beings. The function of human cognition is emphasized in the description of lexical meaning and the various polysemous meanings are, therefore, produced through the interactions between human beings' cognitive activities and the surroundings they live in. There are several theories that are informed by

the principles and tenets of Cognitive Linguistics. Among them are the Conceptual Metaphor (CM) by Lakoff (1987) and the Great Chain of Being (CGB) by Lakoff & Turner (1989). These two theories were not applied in this study as they are mainly concerned with metaphor which is just one aspect of polysemy. The researcher needed a theory that would be all encompassing and thus be used in the analysis of all the aspects of polysemy covered in the study. The theory that fitted this specification was the Principled Polysemy as postulated by Tyler & Evans (2003) and Evans (2004)

### **1.10.2 The Tenets of the Principled Polysemy Framework**

The Principled Polysemy Model is informed by the principles and tenets of Cognitive Linguistics. The model was postulated by Tyler and Evans (2003) and Evans (2004). According to this model, the meanings that are associated with words are not fixed but they change over time. The model posits that many words are highly polysemous and they have a range of similar and associated meanings. It recognizes the status of the prototypical sense as the primary sense which is central to meaning extension. It is the sense from which other senses rise. Polysemy is presented in form of a semantic network. This network has multiple, linked nodes which represent the different senses of the word in question. The nodes branch out from a central node which is taken to be the prototypical sense of the word. The prototypical meaning is the most basic or the literal meaning which the members of a speech community are likely to give as the meaning of a word when they are asked what it means out of context. The nodes are situated at varying distances from one another and from the semantic centre. The model also claims that the multiple meanings of a word are not developed arbitrarily but rather through cognitive processes such as metaphor and metonymy. This, therefore, shows that the meaning extension of the polysemous meanings is



not random but it is systematic and motivated. The Principled Polysemy being cognitive is a usage based model which also relies on the assumption that meaning can only be examined by taking into account the full context of use that includes the culture of a given speech community.

In addition to the above tenets, the model gives three criteria for determining the distinct senses of a word. These are:

i) The meaning criterion

In the meaning criterion, the senses of a word are regarded as different only when they demonstrate a different meaning and also an additional meaning which is not in the other senses.

ii) The elaboration criterion

The elaboration criterion pertains to the nature of the semantic content appropriated by a particular sense and which serves to structure a certain sense.

iii) Grammatical criterion

The grammatical criterion concerns the nature of the grammatical profile adopted by a given lexeme. Different categories of lexemes adopt various profiles. For instance, a lexeme that belongs to the lexical category of nouns may be common, proper, count, mass or abstract.

These three criteria are applicable in the present study. Firstly, the researcher is able to demonstrate how the Gīkūyū nouns have multiple meanings which are related to the original meaning in some characteristics. Secondly, through, the elaboration criterion, these characteristics are elaborated in an in-depth manner. Thirdly, in the grammatical criterion, the choice of the words that are used for analysis in the present study is explained. These words are common nouns, some of which are count and others mass. Twenty-six of the

words are count nouns, four are mass nouns while one is an abstract noun. Through this criterion, the researcher is able to identify the different noun categories that the meanings that are extended either from the prototypical meanings or extended meanings belong to. Since polysemy exists in a context, this criterion is also used in the current study to put the meanings in a linguistic context through construction of sentences that help to illustrate the different prototypical and extended meanings that have been extracted from the questionnaire.

To illustrate how the model is applied in the analysis of the polysemy of the Gikũyũ nouns, consider the various meanings of the term *mũkuha* in the sentences below:

5. *He mũkuha ucio ndume gĩtarũrũ*

Give me needle that I weave winnower.

Give me that needle I weave a winnower.

In the above example, *mũkuha* denotes the weaving needle, a sharp instrument that is used for weaving winnowers. It is the prototypical meaning from which other meanings branch.

These meanings are, the knitting needle' and 'injection' as illustrated below:

6. *Gũra mũkuha ya gũtuma burana.*

Buy needles for knitting pullover

Buy needles for knitting a pullover.

7. *Ndathecwo na mũkuha thibitarĩ.*

I was injected with needle hospital

I was injected with a needle in the hospital.

All the above meanings are count nouns.

*Mūkuha* has three meanings in its semantic network which are graphically represented in

Figure 1 below:

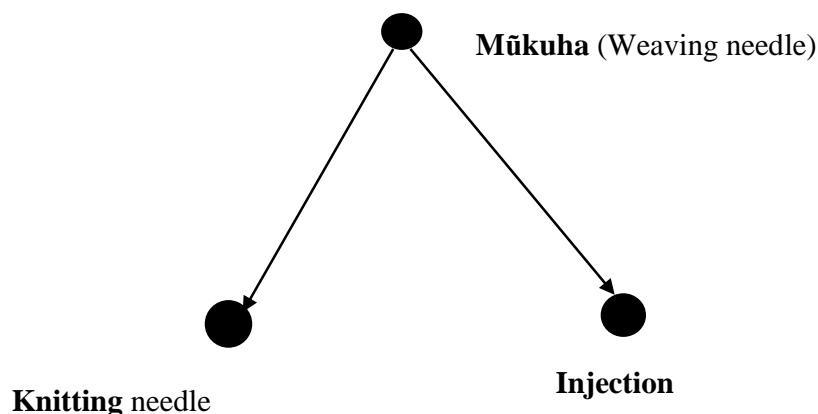


Figure 1: Semantic network for *mūkuha*

In the diagram above, it can be seen that two extended meanings directly branch from the prototypical meaning. The three meanings of the above term are interrelated. This relationship arises because the extended meanings are derived from the prototypical meaning via metaphoric extension. The metaphoric relationship arises because of the resemblance in shape and functions that the two objects have with the weaving needle. The knitting needles and the injection were new in the *Gikūyū* world view, however, they did not give them unique terms. Instead, they looked into their word view for an object which had similar characteristics as these two objects. They noted that just like a weaving needle was sharp and it was used to pierce through the winnowing fan as it was being woven, the two objects were also sharp and were used to pierce through the pullover as it was being knitted and the human body as it was being injected. As a result of this meaning relatedness *mūkuha* becomes polysemous and the three meanings form its semantic network

The prototypical meaning of *mūkuha* as a term that is used to refer to an instrument is got from the material culture of the Gīkūyū people. It reveals the social and economic activity of weaving that the people were involved in. This term is extended to include in its denotation, the knitting needle and the injection. Which are objects that have entered the Gīkūyū world view as a result of the transformations introduced by the Western culture. Through these semantic extensions, the socio- economic activities and also the technological innovations in the medical field are revealed.

The Principled Polysemy theory provided the researcher with guidelines to recognize the distinct senses of the polysemous Gīkūyū nouns. It also enabled her to graphically present these senses in a semantic network demonstrating how each sense branches from the prototypical sense or from an extended sense. Furthermore, the researcher was able to go beyond mere enumeration of the senses to explain how the different senses associated with the nouns are motivated by cognitive mechanisms and cultural factors.

## **1.11 Research Methodology**

### *1.11.1 Introduction*

This section looks at the research design, the target population, the sample and the sampling procedures, instruments for data collection and data collection procedures, data analysis and interpretation procedures that are used in the examination of the polysemy of the Gīkūyū

### *1.11.2 The Research Design*

The aim of this study is to investigate the polysemy of the Gīkūyū nouns from a Cognitive Linguistic approach. The data that is used is non numerical as it is in form of the words that are sampled from a dictionary and the responses from the questionnaire. The researcher

adopted the interpretivist philosophical systematic quest for theoretical answers and utilization of data for generation of and broader understanding of polysemy. The study adopted a qualitative descriptive research design that enabled effective identification of the data and an in-depth analysis of this data.

The design is an appropriate tool that provided a range of processes and procedures through which the researcher was able to carry out an in-depth investigation of the polysemy of the Gĩkũyũ nouns by gathering detailed data through open-ended questions, organizing the data into themes and identifying the patterns of polysemic relationships among the categories of the polysemous nouns. The design is also based on interpretive philosophy. As a result, the researcher was able to interpret, analyze the data and capture the range of meanings given for each noun and finally come with findings. The researcher was also able to move from the qualitative data that had been collected into some explanation, understanding of the culture of the people and the phenomenon that was being investigated and finally wrote the report which was descriptive and in narrative form.

### *1.11.3 The Site of Research*

The study was conducted in Othaya South Division in Nyeri south Sub County of Nyeri County. This Division has four locations namely Chinga North East, Chinga North West, Chinga South East and Chinga North West. The area was chosen because it has a rural setting away from towns. The inhabitants also predominantly speak Gĩkũyũ as their indigenous language. This setting also provided the natural environment in which the language is spoken, thus it was deemed the best to get natural data from.

#### *1.11.4 The Sample and Sampling Procedures*

The target population were females and males aged above fifty years in the four locations of Othaya South Division in Nyeri South Sub-County. This is because the ones in this age have stability in the language and have received instructions in the language. For these reasons, they were in a position to bring out the meanings required for the nouns. The informants were identified through the snowball method where prior identified key informants helped in identifying the next suitable informants due to the difficulty in identifying people who are competent and good in performance in Gĩkũyũ. A total of forty informants (twenty males and females) were sampled for the study using the snowball method. Males and females were sampled to avoid gender bias and to provide representative data in terms of the meanings that were needed to carry out an in-depth study of the polysemous Gĩkũyũ nouns. To collect data, a total of thirty-one nouns from a total of four hundred and forty-five nouns were purposively selected from a Kikuyu-English Vocabulary Usage Dictionary (Wanjohi 2006). These nouns were selected using a thematic approach according to the different semantic fields they belonged to.

#### *1.11.5 Data Collection Procedures and Instruments for Data Collection*

Data collection proceeded in stages. Stage one involved purposively sampling the thirty nouns from the Kikuyu-English usage dictionary. Since relying on the meanings found in the dictionary was not sufficient, it became essential to construct an open-ended questionnaire which was a useful tool that would help to elicit additional meanings of a word and map out both the primary and extended meanings. The questionnaire comprised two sections. Section A had background information on the informants. Section B had open-ended questions based on the thirty nouns which the informants were required to respond to.

The questionnaire was administered personally by the researcher in all the four locations at different times in order to enable any clarifications that were required to be provided. After that, the researcher collected the filled questionnaires for the data analysis on the responses given on the meanings of each noun.

#### *1.11.6. Pilot Study*

Before the actual comprehensive data collection, the researcher conducted a pilot survey in July 2015 to pre-test the questionnaire. The pilot was meant to ensure the reliability of the data. The questionnaire was administered to ten informants who were not part of the sample of the actual study. Five were men and five women, all aged fifty and above. These respondents were sampled using the friend of a friend technique. They were sampled from Chinga North one of the locations of the area of study which was picked purposively out of the four locations. Each respondent was subjected to a questionnaire to answer the set questions based on ten nouns which were purposively sampled out of the corpus of the thirty nouns that form the sample. This helped in identifying any problems with the questionnaire to avoid wasting resources and coming up with defective data. From this survey, the researcher noted that the respondents were able to give the meanings of the nouns, however, some questions needed clarifications. The researcher also observed that she should administer the questionnaire in person so as to give clarifications where and when they were needed. The other reasons for this were to ensure a high return rate and enable the researcher to clarify any other issues that the respondents would have. Besides that, the respondents also needed to be assured of their confidentiality as far as the whole exercise was concerned.

### *1.11.7. Data Analysis and Interpretation*

This section delves into the way the analysis of the polysemous meanings of the nouns was carried out. A thematic approach was applied where the nouns were categorized into twelve semantic fields according to how they are related. The Gīkūyū terms for the nouns were matched with an English ‘gloss’. Then the meanings were categorized as either prototypical or extended guided by the meaning criterion.

Since polysemy exists in a context, the researcher constructed sentences to help bring out the varieties of the meanings for each noun. The polysemous meanings of each of the nouns were put in a semantic network in order to show how they branch from the prototypical meaning or from an extended meaning. The noun categories that the meanings belong to were identified in relationship to the prototypical or extended meanings that they branch from.

After that, the nouns from different semantic fields were analyzed in terms of how they are related to each other through the cognitive mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy. The different patterns of metaphoric and metonymic relationships that occur among the nouns were described. A summary of the source domains and their targets, and the most salient metonymic relationships was also given. Lastly, the cultural factors that motivate polysemy in Gīkūyū were discussed. The proceeding chapters of the thesis provide an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the data using the principles of the Principled Polysemy Model. The thesis is structured as follows:

Chapter two describes the semantic extensions of the nouns in terms of how they branch either from the prototypical meaning or an extended meaning. These meanings are presented in form of a semantic network with the prototypical meaning in the centre of a



radial extension of nodes representing extended meanings. The categories of nouns that these meanings belong to are also discussed. Chapter three analyzes metaphoric polysemy. In this chapter, the patterns of the metaphoric polysemic relationships that the Gikūyū nouns exhibit are also discussed. The source domains of the nouns and their targets are also discussed. Chapter four discusses metonymic polysemy and the patterns of metonymic polysemous relationships. Chapter five discusses the socio-cultural factors that motivate the polysemy of the Gikūyū nouns. Lastly, Chapter six summarizes the findings and gives recommendations for further research.

### **1.12 Ethical Considerations**

Before administering the questionnaire, the researcher informed the respondents of the objectives of the study. They were assured that high levels of confidentiality would be observed and the data would be used only for academic purposes. This was meant to encourage the informants to fill the questionnaire without shying away. The process of filling in the questionnaire was voluntary. Therefore, no respondent was forced to do so. Even where the respondents left some blank spaces in the questionnaire, their decisions were respected.

### **1.13 Summary of the Chapter**

This chapter looked at a number of issues. These are background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives and research questions that guide the study, significance, scope and limitations, literature review which filters the gaps to be filled, methodology, the theoretical approach on which the study is grounded, the pilot study and finally the ethical considerations. In the next chapter, the Gikūyū polysemic nouns and their multiplied extended meanings are discussed.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2.0 Polysemic nouns and multiple extended meanings in gīkūyūlanguage

#### 2.1 Introduction to the Chapter

The objectives addressed in this chapter are one and two namely to describe how Gīkūyū polysemous nouns branch to have extended meanings and determine whether the extended meanings belong to the same noun categories as the meanings they branch from

Lexical items in most Languages have extended meanings that go beyond their prototypical or primary meanings. This chapter examines the polysemous nouns and their extended meanings in the Gīkūyū Language. In this chapter, the tenets of the Principled Polysemy Model have been used to describe how the different extended meanings arise from the polysemous nouns. The meaning, elaboration and the grammatical criterion are applied on data to illustrate the different meanings of each noun and the categories of nouns they belong to. The semantic networks of the nouns are presented graphically to show how the extended meanings branch. Moreover, the data is organised in twelve semantic fields which are arranged according to different topics that reflect how the nouns are related. These fields include Gīkūyū nouns on animals, human beings, body parts, plants/fruits, types of food, types of liquids, containers, buildings, social activities, celestial bodies, technological innovations and processes of measuring time. These semantic fields are categorized according to different topics that reflect how the words are related.

## 2.2 Semantic Extensions from Animal Terms

This section looks at the semantic extensions involving two terms namely *mbũri* ‘goat’ and *kamũngũriũ* ‘squirrel’. These two terms in their prototypical meanings refer to animals. The prototypical meaning of *mbũri* ‘goat’ is a small animal with horns, which is kept for its milk and meat. *Kamũngũriũ* ‘squirrel’ is a small animal with a long thicktail. These prototypical meanings are illustrated in the following sentences as follows:

1. *Endia mbũri ithano.*

The direct translation of the above sentence is ‘he/she has sold goats five’ while its free translation is ‘he/she has sold five goats’.

2. *Kamũngũriũ nĩ karia mbembe.*

The squirrel has eaten maize.

These are not the only meanings conveyed by the terms. Through semantic extension they have other meanings attributed to them as it is illustrated in the proceeding paragraphs.

Among the meanings of *mbũri* is where it is referred to as meat which has the sense of a type of food as illustrated by:

3. *Gũra kiroĩmwe ya mbũri.*

Buy kilo one of goat

Buy one kilo of goat (meat)

In addition, *mbũri* means wealth, for example in the sentence below

4. *Ena mbũri nyingĩ.*

He has goats many

He has many goats (wealth).

Moreover, *mbũri* means foolish person, as in

5. *Mũndũ ũcio nĩ mbũri.*

Person that is goat

That person is a goat (foolish).

This is a meaning that is used when a person is being reprimanded for not behaving as it is expected.

The above three meanings are extended from the prototypical meaning, however, there are some meanings that are extended from the extended meanings. One of the meanings of *mbũri* is a party where goat meat is eaten and funds are raised as in:

6. *Ndĩramwĩta tũrĩe mbũri.*

I am inviting you so that we eat goat.

The above meaning is extended from meat and it does not refer to the animal but it is used in a social context. The other meaning is *mbũri* as bride price which is extended from wealth as in:

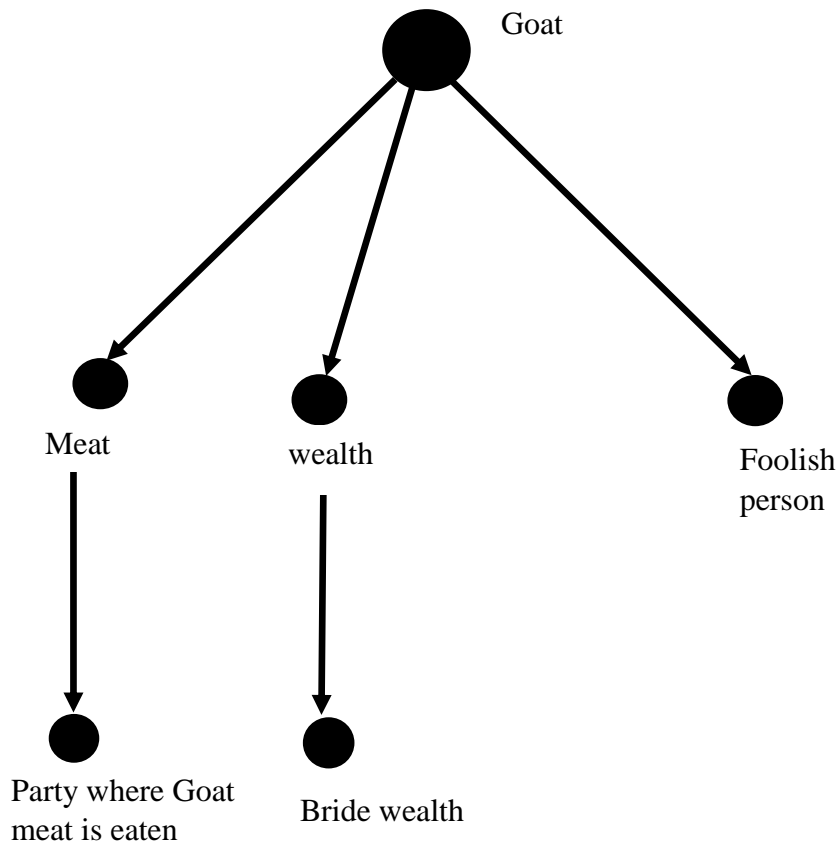
7. *Araracirie mbũri igana.*

He gave bride price goat one hundred.

He gave one hundred goats as bride price.

The noun *mbũri* has five extended meanings which belong to different semantic fields.

The term *mbũri*, therefore, has six meanings in its semantic network as graphically represented in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2: Semantic network for *mbūri***

In this semantic network, it can be observed that three meanings of *mbūri* directly branch from the prototypical meaning. There are also two meanings that branch from extended meanings.

*Kamūngūriū* on the other hand, has the following extended meanings. Firstly, it denotes a small/short person as in:

8. *Mūndū ũcio nīkamūngūriū.*

Person that is squirrel.

That person is a squirrel

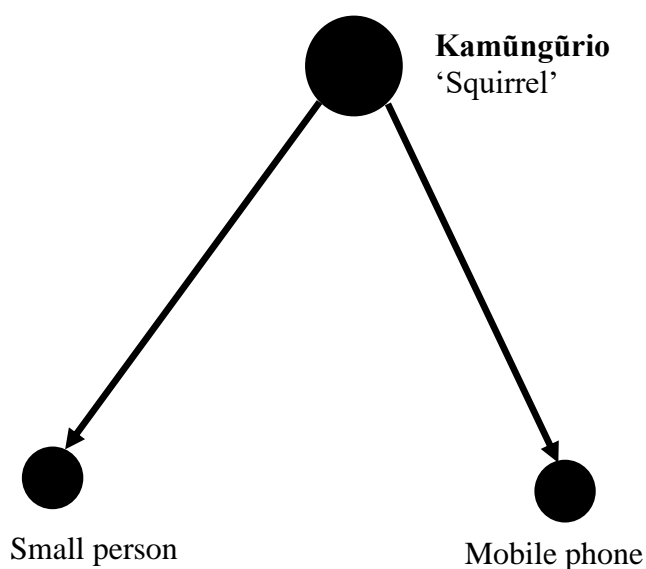
Secondly, *kamūngūriū* is used to refer to a mobile phone as in

9. *Nindagura kamūngūriū.*

I have bought squirrel

I have bought a mobile phone.

This term therefore has three meanings in its semantic network as graphically represented in Figure 3 below:



**Figure 3: Semantic network of *kamũngũrio***

From this network, it can be observed that both the extended meanings of *kamũngũriũ* directly branch from the prototypical meaning. However, no meanings branch from the extended meanings

In their prototypical meanings, both *mbũri* and *kamũngũrio* are count nouns. However, their extended meanings belong to different noun categories. *Mbũri* has two extended meanings, foolish person and party where goat meat is eaten and funds are raised that are count nouns. One meaning, meat conveys a mass noun, while the other two, wealth and bride price are

abstract nouns. Kamũngũrio does not have extended meanings that belong to different noun categories, both of its extended meanings are count nouns

### 2.3 The Semantic Extensions from Plant/Fruits Terms

In this section, the extension of two terms is analysed. These are *mũtĩ* ‘tree and *gacungwa* ‘small orange which in their prototypical meanings denote the plant and the fruit senses respectively as illustrated in examples 10 & 11 below.

10. *Handa mũtĩ.*

Plant tree

Plant a tree.

11. *Gacungwa gaka ti keru.*

Small orange this is not ripe

This small orange is not ripe

*Gacungwa* in this example denotes a small orange fruit, the diminutive of ‘*icungwa*’.

The two terms do not just convey their prototypical meanings but they have several other meanings attributed to them. These meanings are as a result of semantic extension as illustrated in the following examples.

*Mũtĩ*, first is extended to denote a stick as in:

12. *Amũhũra na mũtĩ.*

He/she has beaten him/her with stick

He/she has beaten him/her with a stick.

The next meaning is *Mũtĩ* as wood derived from the tree as in:

13. *Mũtĩ ũyũ nĩ mwegwa wa gwaka.*

Wood this is good for building

This wood is good for building.

In addition, *mũtĩ* refers to love potion and herbal medicine as in the following sentences.

14. *Ahĩngĩca arũme na mũtĩ.*

This sentence is directly translated as ‘he/she confuses people with trees’. Its free Translation is he/she confuses people with love potion.

15. *Arwara anyuaga mũtĩ.*

The direct translation of this is ‘when he/she gets sick he/she drinks trees’. Its free translation is ‘when he/she gets sick he/she takes herbal medicine.

Furthermore, *mũtĩ* is used to denote the male reproductive organ as in:

16. *Humbĩra mũtĩ waku.*

You cover tree yours

Cover your tree.

Cover your reproductive organ.

The above five meanings are extended from the prototypical meaning. However, these are not the only meanings that *mũtĩ* has. This term has some meanings that branch from extended meanings.

The meanings of *mũtĩ* that branch from extended meanings are as follows:

First there is the vote which is extended from the stick as shown below:

17. *Gĩthurano gĩathira mũtĩ nĩ ĩgũtarwo.*

Election it is over votes will be counted.

When the election is over the votes will be counted.



The second meaning is *mũtĩ* as the cross. This meaning is extended from the wood as in:

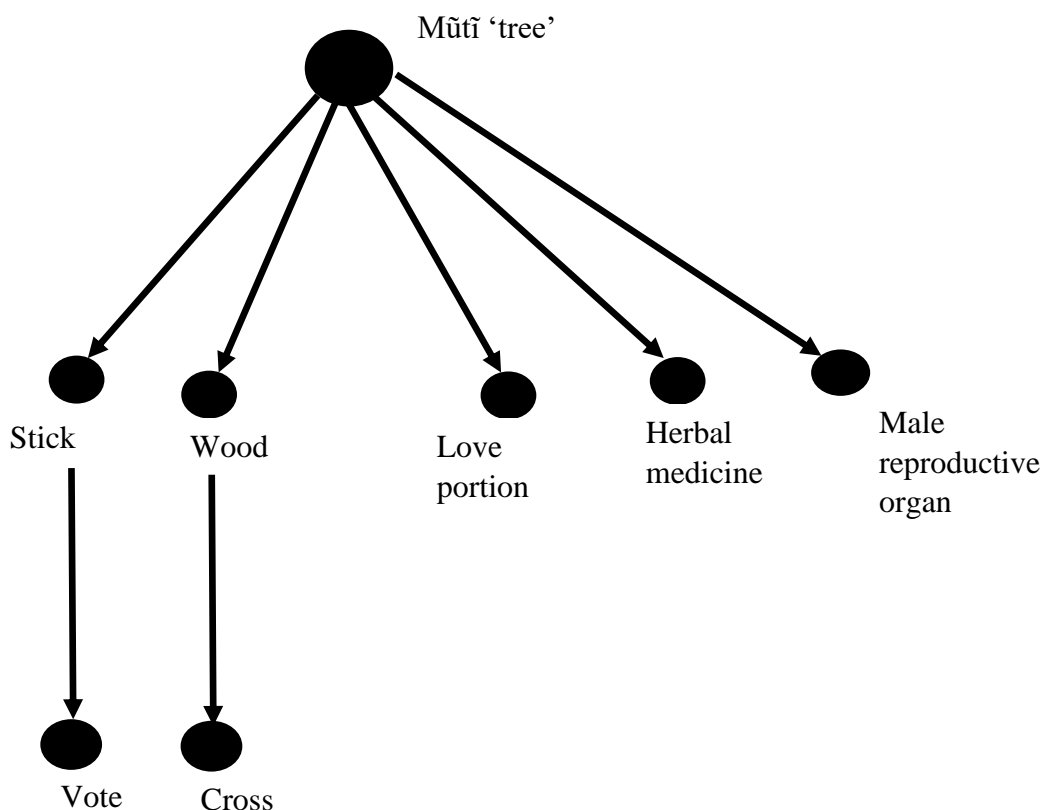
18. *Jesũ ambirwo mũtĩ-inĩ.*

Jesus was crucified cross on the tree

Jesus was crucified on the cross.

From the above analysis, it was observed that *mũtĩ* has eight meanings in its

Semantic network as graphically presented in figure below:



**Figure 4: Semantic network for mũtĩ**

From the above network, it can be observed that five meanings of *mũtĩ* directly branch from the prototypical whereas two meanings branch from the extended meanings.

Besides its prototypical meaning, *gacungwa* has the following extended meanings attributed to it. *Gacungwa* as , a young and beautiful girlfriend to an old man as in the following sentence.

19. *Gacungwa gake nĩ gathaka.*

Small orange his/her is beautiful

His/Her small orange is beautiful

This extended meaning is further extended into two other extended meanings to refer to a concubine and a man's other wife as shown in the examples below.

20. *Maina nĩarahikirie gacungwa.*

Maina has married a small orange.

'*Gacungwa* here denotes a second wife or any other wife apart from the first one.

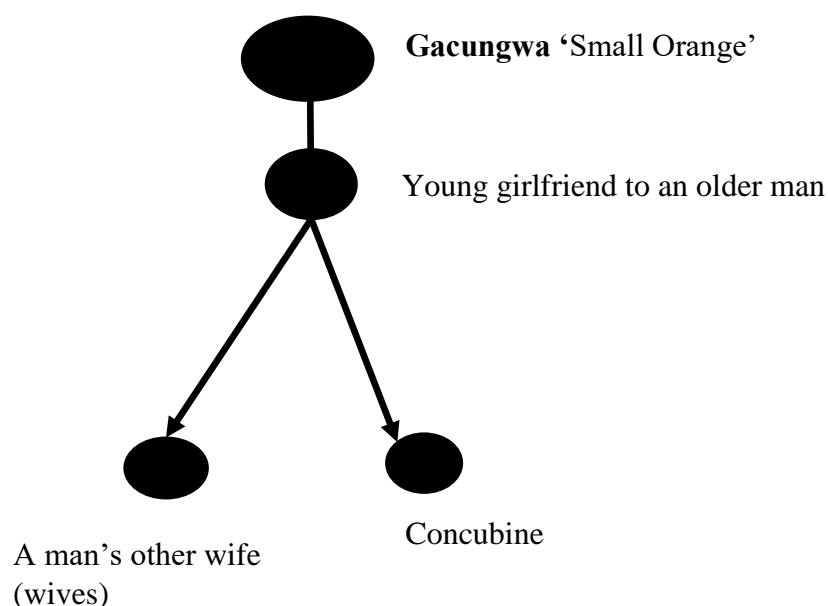
20. *Nĩraikirio nja nĩ gacungwa gake.*

He was thrown out by small orange his

He was thrown out by his small orange.

*Gacungwa* in this example denotes a concubine.

*Gacungwa*, therefore, has four meanings in its semantic network as graphically represented in Figure 5 below.



**Figure 5: Semantic network for *gacungwa***

In the semantic network above, one extended meaning directly branches from the prototypical meaning, while from these meaning two more extended meanings branch.

In their prototypical meanings, *mũĩĩ* and *gacungwa* convey count nouns but it can be observed that their extended meanings are not only count nouns but also belong to other categories of nouns. For instance, *mũĩĩ* has extended meaning namely, stick, vote, male reproductive organ and cross that are count nouns. The other meanings, wood, love potion, herbal medicine are mass nouns. On the other hand, all the extended meanings of *gacungwa* are count nouns just like the meanings they branch from.

#### **2.4 The Semantic Extensions from Terms Relating to Human Beings**

This section describes the semantic extension of the two terms *mũthuuriman* and *kameme* ‘gossip’ which have the prototypical meanings of an adult male and a person who spreads information in form of rumours and gossip as in the following examples:

21. *Mũthuuri* wothe n̄etĩtwo mũcemanio ũyũ.

Man every he has been invited meeting this

Every man has been invited to this meeting.

22. *Mũndũ ũcio nĩ kameme, ndangĩga thiri.*

Person that is gossip, he/she cannot keep secret

That person is a gossip, he/she cannot keep a secret.

These two terms do not only refer to the prototypical meanings but there are also other meanings associated with them as exemplified in the following paragraphs.

*Mũthuuri* is in the first place extended to denote, a husband, a special type of man in the Gĩkũyũ, one who is married and has paid bride price for his wife or wives. The second meaning refers to an elder, who from the traditional Gĩkũyũ perspective should be a man. The third meaning is attributed to a woman who has the characteristics of a man. These three meanings are illustrated in the sentences below

23. *Mũthuuri* wakwa endete mũcere.

Husband mine he likes rice

My husband likes rice.

24. *Cira ũratwithanirio nĩ mũthuuri wa kĩama.*

Case was settled by man of council

The case was settled by man of council

The case was settled by an elder

25. *Wanjiku ni mũthuuri.*

Wanjiku is a man

In the last example, Wanjiku is an adult female who has the characteristics of a man. The three meanings are extended from the prototypical meaning. However, one extended meaning, 'elder' is further extended to denote specific types of elders namely, a church elder and a village elder, respectively, as in the examples below:

26. *Nĩarathurirwo mũthuuri wa kanitha.*

He /she was elected elder of church

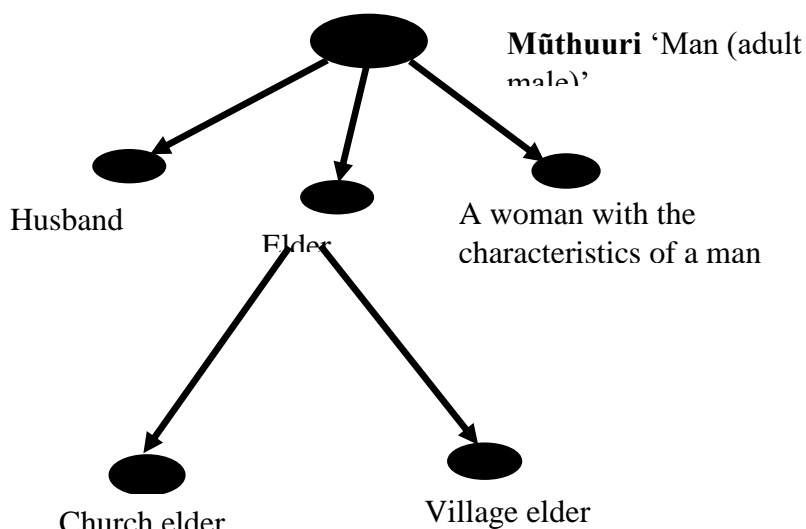
He/she was elected a church elder

27. *Cibũ nĩetĩte mũcemanio wa athuuri a itũra.*

Chief he has called meeting for elders of village

The chief has called a meeting for the village elders

These two meanings are used in the social and religious contexts. *Mũthuuri*, therefore, has six meanings in its network as graphically represented in Figure 6 below:



**Figure 6: Semantic network for *mũthuuri***

In the above network, it can be seen that three meanings directly branch from the prototypical meaning while two meanings branch from an extended meaning.

The second term *kameme* is firstly extended to refer ‘a radio which is an electronic device for broadcasting as indicated below:

28. *Nĩndĩragũrĩre kameme kerũ.*

I bought radio new

I bought a new radio.

The above extended meaning further branches into three other meanings as illustrated by the following examples:

29. *Andĩkĩtwo nĩ kameme.*

He/she is employed by the radio

*kameme* in this example denotes the organization that owns the radio.

30. *Kameme gatĩrĩ gũkũ.*

Radio is not here

The radio is not here

In the above example, *kameme* denotes the people who work for/in the organization that owns the radio, for example, the journalists

31. *Hũthĩra kameme andũ maigwe ũrĩa ũrauga.*

Use radio people hear what you are saying

Use the radio so that people can hear what you are saying.

*Kameme* in this example denotes a loud speaker or microphone, a special electronic device that is used in public places to address large gatherings of people.

The above term, therefore, has five meanings in its semantic network which are graphically represented in figure 7 below:

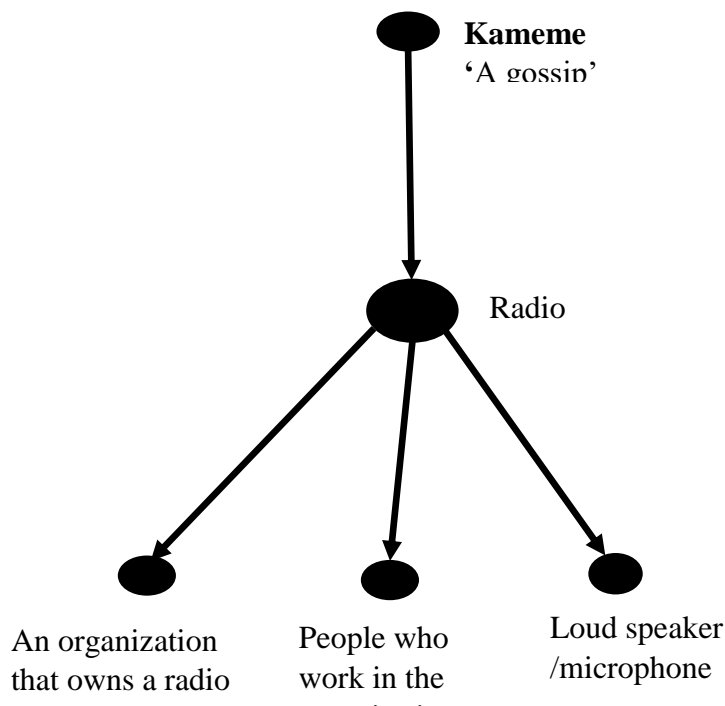


Figure 7: Semantic network for *kameme*

In this semantic network, it can be observed that one extended meaning directly branches from the prototypical meaning whereas three meanings branch from this extended meaning.

In their prototypical meanings, *mũthuuri* and *kameme* convey count nouns. Similarly, all the extended meanings of these terms are count nouns

## 2.5. The Semantic Extensions from Body Parts Terms

In this subsection, the semantic extension of two terms *kĩongo* 'head' and *kũgũrũ* 'leg' are presented. These two terms refer to external body parts.

The prototypical meaning of *kĩongo* is illustrated by the following sentences

33. (a) *Inamia kũongo.*

Lower the head

(b) *Inainia kĩongo gĩaku.*

Nod/shake head your

Nod/shake your head.

(c) *Ambararia kĩongo.*

Raise head

Raise the head

(d) *Ena kĩongo kīnene.*

He/she has head big

He/she has a big head.

In sentences 33a-c, the head has its own particular activities, directions and physical functions such as nodding, shaking, lowering and raising. In the Gĩkũyũ culture, one generally employs the motions of the head to express agreement or disagreement as indicated in 35b, where a person nods his/her head to show agreement. However, when he/she shakes the head, it signifies disagreement. Using the head, one also employs various angles of view as in 35 a, c. In 35d, the size of the head is referred to.

All the above examples indicate the prototypical meaning of *kĩongo* which is a body part of human beings and animals that is above the neck, composed of the eyes, nose, mouth, ears and the brain.

The prototypical meaning of *kũgũrũ* is illustrated in the sentence below.

34. *Kũgũrũ gwake nĩ kunĩku.*

Leg his/her is broken

His/her leg is broken.



*Kūgūrū*, in this example, means leg which is a body part of a human being or animal that is used for standing or moving.

*Kīongo* and *kūgūrū* do not just denote the body parts but they have other meanings as the discussions in the proceeding chapters show.

The prototypical meaning of *kīongo* is extended to have multiple meanings. Firstly, it is extended to refer to its parts namely, the hair and the mind (brain), as illustrated below:

35. *Canūra kīongo*.

Comb head

Comb your hair

36. *Hūthira kīongo gĩaku*.

Use head your

Use your head

Use your brain/mind.

Secondly, it is extended to denote, a type of meat that is from the head, hence it has a type of food sense as in

37. *Therūkĩa kīongo*.

Boil the head (meat).

Thirdly, it is extended to denote a position of authority or leadership as in:

38. *Mūthuuri nĩ kīongo kĩa mūciĩ*.

Man is head of home (family).

The man is the head of the home/family.

The other extended meanings of *kīongo* are theme/subject, the source of something respectively as illustrated in the following examples:

39. *Kīongo kĩa ithomo rĩakwa*

Head of sermon mine

Head of my sermon

The theme of my sermon

40. *Kĩongo kĩa rūĩ rūrũ nĩ kĩrĩma gĩa Kĩrĩnyaga.*

Head of river this is mountain of Kĩrĩnyaga

The head of this river is Mountain of Kĩrĩnyaga

The source of this river is Mount Kenya.

Lastly, it is also extended to denote an object part as in example 42 below:

41. *Ĩkĩra kĩongo kũ wega gĩtikoime.*

Fix head that well so that it does not come out

Fix that head well so that it does not come out.

The meaning illustrated in 41 can be extended to refer to heads of specific objects for example, the regulator of a gas cylinder and the red end of a match stick as illustrated in the following examples;

42. *Ĩkĩra kĩongo wega ngathi yume.*

Put head well gas come out

Fix the regulator well so that the gas comes out.

43. *Kĩongo kĩa mũgwĩ wa kĩbiriti nĩ kiunĩku.*

Head of stick of match is broken.

The head of the match stick is broken

From the analysis, it can be observed that *kĩongo* has eight meanings in its network which are graphically represented in figure 8 below:

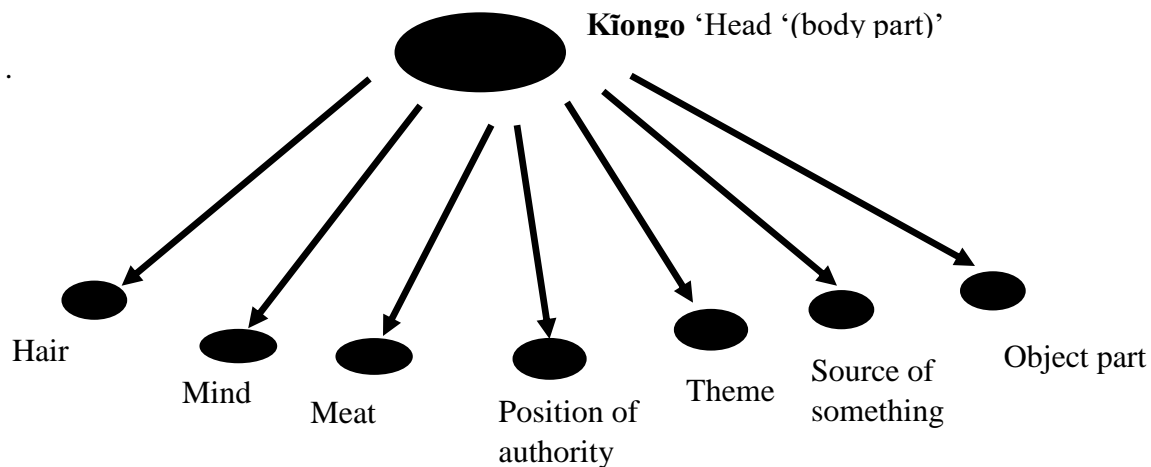


Figure 8: Semantic network for *kĩongo*.

In this semantic network, all the extended meanings of *kĩongo* directly branch from the Prototypical meaning.

The prototypical meaning of the second term, *kũgũrũ* is first extended to denote the meat that is got from the leg of an animal and it has the sense of a type of food.

This meaning is illustrated here below:

44. *Karanga kũgũrũ kũu.*

Fry leg that

Fry that leg.

The second extended meaning refers to the male reproductive organ as in the sentence below:

45. *Humbĩra kũgũrũ gwaku kwa gatatũ.*

Cover leg yours of three

Cover your third leg.

Cover your Penis.

Kūgūrū as the third leg is used euphemistically to denote the male reproductive organ. Finally, *kūgūrū* is extended to refer to the thin vertical part of an object on which it stands as in:

46. *Etha macini ya gūconga kūgūrū kūu.*

Look machine for to shape leg that

Look for a machine to shape that leg.

*Kūgūrū* as an object part can be extended further to refer to legs of specific objects namely the leg of a pair of trousers, the leg of pieces of furniture such as a chair, a table and a bed, the wheels of objects such as a sewing machine and a car, respectively, as illustrated below.

47. *Tuma kūgūrū kwa mubuto.*

Stitch leg of trousers

Stitch the leg of the trousers.

48. *Kūgūrū gwa gĩĩ gĩakwa gwakĩtwo na mbaũ.*

Leg of chair mine is made of timber

My chair's legs are made of timber.

49. *Kūgūrū kwa metha ĩyo nĩ gūkuhĩ*

Leg of table that is short

The leg of that table is short.

50. *Kūgūrū kwa ũrĩrĩ nĩ kūrainaina.*

Leg of bed is wobbling

That bed's leg is wobbling.

51. *Nyitia kūgūrū kwa ngari ya gūtuma nguo.*

Tighten leg of car of to make clothes

Tighten the wheel of the sewing machine.

52. *Kūgūrū kwa ngari iyo kwina irima.*

Leg of car this has puncture

That car's wheel has a puncture.

The semantic extension for *kūgūrū* goes even farther such that the extended meaning 'wheel' which is part of an object is extended to refer to the actual object, the 'car' as in

53. *Nīragūre magūrumerū.*

He|she got legs new

He|she got new legs.

He|she got new wheels

The 'wheels' refers to the car

*Kūgūrū* has four meanings in its network which are graphically represented in Figure 9

below:

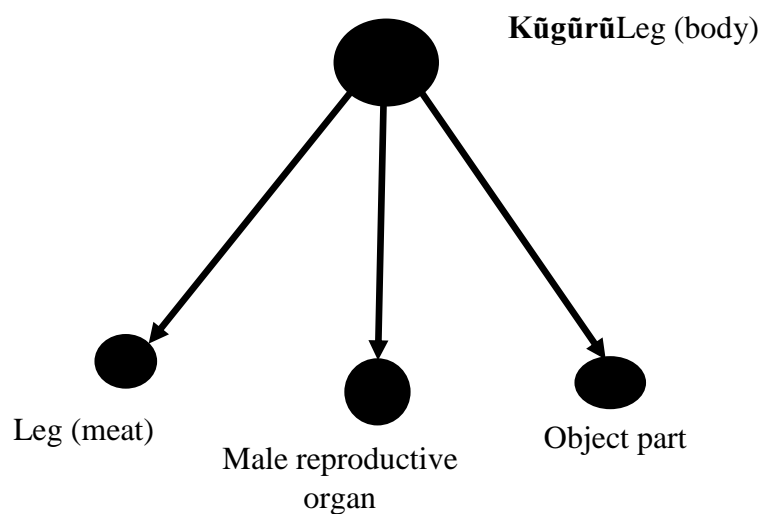


Figure 9: Semantic network for *kūgūrū*

In this semantic network, it can be observed that, the extended meanings of *kūgūrū* directly branch from the prototypical meaning.

The two terms *kĩongo* and *kũgũrũ* are count nouns. Some of their extended meanings denote objects that are count nouns while the others are of different noun categories. The meanings that convey count nouns are theme, source, object part and male reproductive organ. There are those that are mass nouns namely the hair, brain and meat. Lastly, the position of leadership/authority is an abstract noun.

## 2.6. The Semantic Extensions from Types of Food Terms

The semantic extension of two terms namely *ngima* ‘corn bread’ and *njenga* ‘particles ofground maize’ is described in this section.

The prototypical meanings of the two terms are illustrated by the following examples:

54. *Ũmũthĩ tũrarĩa ngima.*

Today we are eating corn bread.

In example 54 *ngima* means corn bread which is a type of food that is made of maize flour mixed with water. The next term is *njenga* whose prototypical meaning denotes particles ofground maize as in:

55. *Njenga ici ti thĩe wega.*

Particles of maize these are not ground well

These particles of maize are not ground well.

These two terms do not just refer to the terms exemplified by their prototypical meanings. Through semantic extension, their denotations are extended to include other objects as illustrated in the following paragraphs.

*Ngima* is extended to refer to money and a foolish person as illustrated in examples 56 and 57 respectively:

56. *Ruta ngima nyingĩ ngũhe wĩra.*

Give corn bread a lot I give you job

Give a lot of corn bread so that I give you a job.

In this example, *ngima* is used euphemistically to denote money. The meaning may be used in a context where one is required to give a bribe. This is because in Gĩkũyũ, the language of bribery is in direct.

57. *Mwana ũcio nĩ ngima ndanyitaga kĩndũ.*

Child that is corn bread he/she does not understand anything.

That child is corn bread he/she does not understand anything.

Here corn bread means a foolish person. This meaning may be used in a school context where the child does not understand anything or takes long to understand things

*Ngima*, therefore, has three meanings which are graphically presented in Figure 10 below:

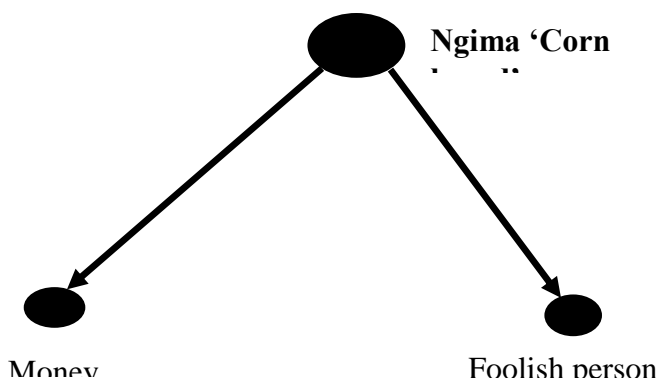


Figure 10: Semantic network for *ngima*

In this semantic network, the two extended meanings of *ngima* directly branch from the prototypical meaning.

Besides referring to particles of grounded maize, *njenga* is used to refer to this maize when it is cooked as in:-

58. *Tūraruga njenga*.

We are cooking particles of ground maize.

In this sentence, the meaning expressed is that of cooked food. Traditionally, it was a special type of food that was mainly eaten during weddings

This meaning is further extended to refer to an event where this type of food is eaten as illustrated below.

59. *Ndathii njenga*.

I am going for njenga

I am going for ground maize

In this example, *njenga* refers to an event, especially a wedding, where this type of food is eaten. *Njenga*, thus, has, three meanings in its network which are graphically represented in figure 11 below.

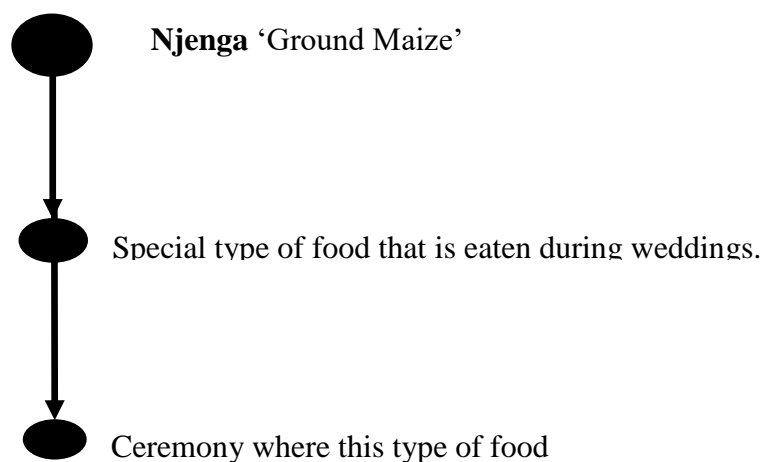


Figure 11: Semantic network for *njenga*

In the semantic network above, one extended meaning directly branches from the prototypical meaning, while one meaning branches from an extended meaning.



In their prototypical meanings, *ngima* and *njenga* convey mass nouns. These terms have extended meanings that denote objects that are mass nouns. These are money and the cooked food. Nevertheless, two meanings, foolish person and event where *njenga* is eaten are count nouns.

## 2.7. The Semantic Extensions from Types of Liquids Terms

In this section, the semantic extensions of two terms namely *maĩ* ‘water’ and ‘*mata* ‘saliva’ are described.

The prototypical meanings of these terms are illustrated in the following examples:

60. *Maĩ maya nĩ mahehu.*

Water this is cold

This water is cold.

In the above example, *maĩ* denotes a clear liquid that falls as rain and is used for drinking, cooking, washing among other things.

61. *Mata makwa nĩ marũrũ.*

Saliva my is bitter

My saliva is bitter.

The prototypical meaning of *mata* in the above sentence is saliva, a liquid produced in the mouths of human beings and animals.

Apart from their prototypical meanings, these two terms have other meanings attributed to them through semantic extension. These meanings are illustrated in the following paragraphs:

There are several meanings that are attributed to *maĩ*. Among these meanings are the portioning of the water, beer, amniotic fluid, syrup, a medicine in liquid form, watery food, and an easy task to do, as illustrated in Examples 62 to 68.

62. *Gūra maĩ matatu.*

Buy water three

Buy three waters (portioning of water)

63. *Anyũite maĩ maingĩ ndarahota gũthiĩ.*

He/she has drunk a lot of water such that he/she is unable to walk.

In this example, *maĩ* means beer.

64. *Maĩ make matũrĩka mbere ya akinyĩte thibitarĩ.*

Water hers broke before she could arrive in hospital

Her water broke before she could arrive in hospital.

Her amniotic fluid broke before she could arrive in hospital.

The term *maĩ* in the above example is used euphemistically to avoid mentioning directly, the subject of giving birth direct.

65. *Ndĩraheirwo ndaawa ya maĩ ya rũhayo.*

I was given medicine of water of cough

I was given a cough syrup.

66. *Ndũkahe irio maĩ.*

Do not give me food water

Do not give me watery food.

This meaning is mainly used when the food being referred to is very thin and looks like a liquid.

67. *Ithabu rĩrĩ nĩ maĩ.*

Sum this is water

This sum is easy.

The meaning expressed in Example 67 is used when one is able to complete a given task

very fast and without any difficulties.

It is not just the prototypical meaning of ‘*maĩ*’ that is extended to have other related meanings. One extended meaning of ‘beer’ is also further extended to refer to the portioning of beer as in Example 68 below.

68. *Muhe maĩ merĩ tu ndakarĩo mũno.*

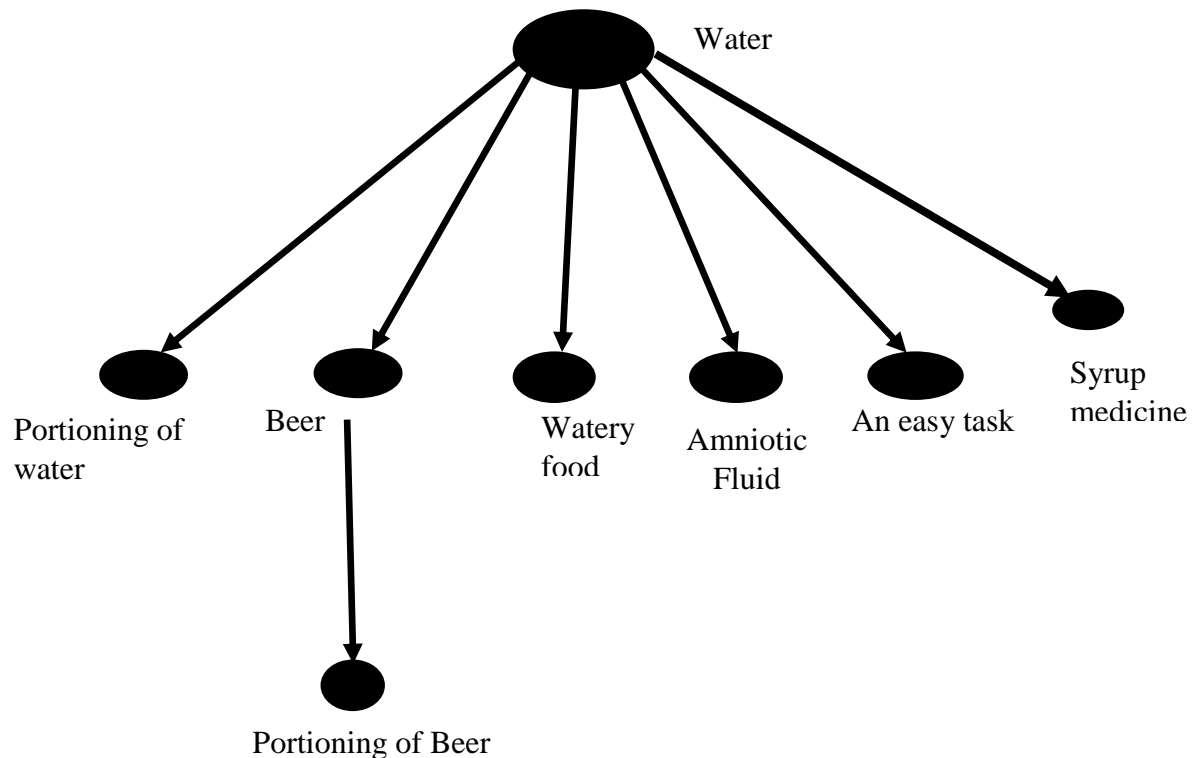
Give him/her waters two only so that he/she does not get drunk

Give him/her two waters only so that he/she does not get drunk a lot.

Give him/her two beers only so that he/she does not get drunk.

This meaning is used in a context where people are drinking beer, for instance in a bar.

From the above analysis, *maĩ* has eight meanings in its semantic network which are graphically represented in Figure 12 below:



**Figure 12: Semantic network for *maĩ***

In this semantic network, six extended meanings directly branch from the prototypical meaning. One meaning branches from an extended meaning.

*Mata* on the other hand has two extended meanings namely venom and as illustrated in Examples 69 & 70

69. *Mata ma nyoka nĩ ũrogi.*

Venom of snake is poison

The venom of a snake is poisonous. In this sentence, *mata*, denotes venom, a poisonous liquid that is produced by snakes and insects.

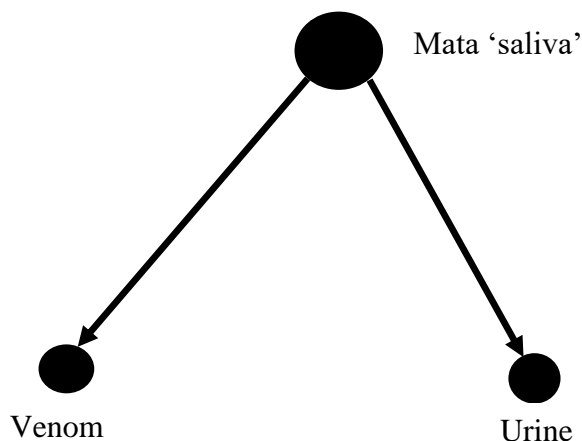
70. *Ke ngatwe mata.*

Let me go spit saliva

Let me go and pass urine.

*Mata* here, refers to urine, a waste liquid from human beings. It is mainly used in a context where one wants to avoid mentioning the act of urinating directly.

In the above analysis, *mata* has three meanings in its network which are graphically represented in Figure 13 below:



**Figure 13: Semantic network of *mata***

In this semantic network, all the extended meanings of *mat* directly branch from the prototypical meaning.

*Maĩ* and *mata* are mass nouns. The extended meanings of *maĩ*, however, belong to different noun categories. Four of its extended meanings denote objects that convey mass nouns. These are beer, amniotic fluid, cough syrup, and watery food. Three meanings, portioning of water, portioning of beer and an easy task convey count nouns. Both extended meanings of *mata* convey mass nouns.

## 2.8. The Semantic Extensions from Containers Terms

The semantic extensions of two terms namely *gĩkombe* ‘cup’ and *nyũngũ* ‘pot’ are described in this section. Their prototypical meanings are illustrated by the following Examples:

71. *He gĩkombe nyue maĩ.*

Give me cup I drink water

Give me a cup I drink water.

*Gĩkombe* in its prototypical meaning denotes a cup which is a container that is used for drinking liquids. The next container term is *nyũngũ* which has the following meanings:

72. *Endagia nyũngũ.*

He/She sells pots.

In this example, *nyũngũ* refers to a pot which is a utensil that is used for cooking, storing food and water. These two terms have other meanings attributed to them as it is shown in the following discussions.

*Gĩkombe*, besides, being a container can be extended to denote the contents of the container as in.

73. *Ingĩra ũnyue gĩkombe gĩa caai.*

Come in and drink cup of tea

Come in and drink a cup of tea (contents of the cup).

It can also refer to the chalice as illustrated in sentence 74

74. *Njohi ya gĩathĩ kia mwathani ĩkĩragwo gĩkombe-inĩ.*

Wine of meeting of God is put in a cup.

The wine for the Holy Communion is put in a cup(chalice).

Here, *gĩkombe*, has the sense of a chalice which is a special cup that is used to drink wine in religious ceremonies.

75. *Nĩmaracindanire gĩkombe kĩa mahenya.*

They won cup for athletics

They won the cup for athletics (trophy).

In this sentence, *gĩkombe* denotes a special cup that is given to winners in a competition.

The ‘chalice’ is further extended to refer to the contents as illustrated in sentence 78 below.

76. *Yuanĩrai gĩkombe gĩkĩ. Īno nĩ thakame yakwa ĩrĩa yaitirwo nĩ ũndũ wanyu.*

You drink together cup this. This is blood mine that was shed because of you.

You drink this cup together. This is my blood that was shed because of you.

This meaning is used in a religious context, especially for the Christians when they are partaking of the Holy Communion.

From the analysis, *gĩkombe* has five meanings in its network which are graphically represented in Figure 14 below:

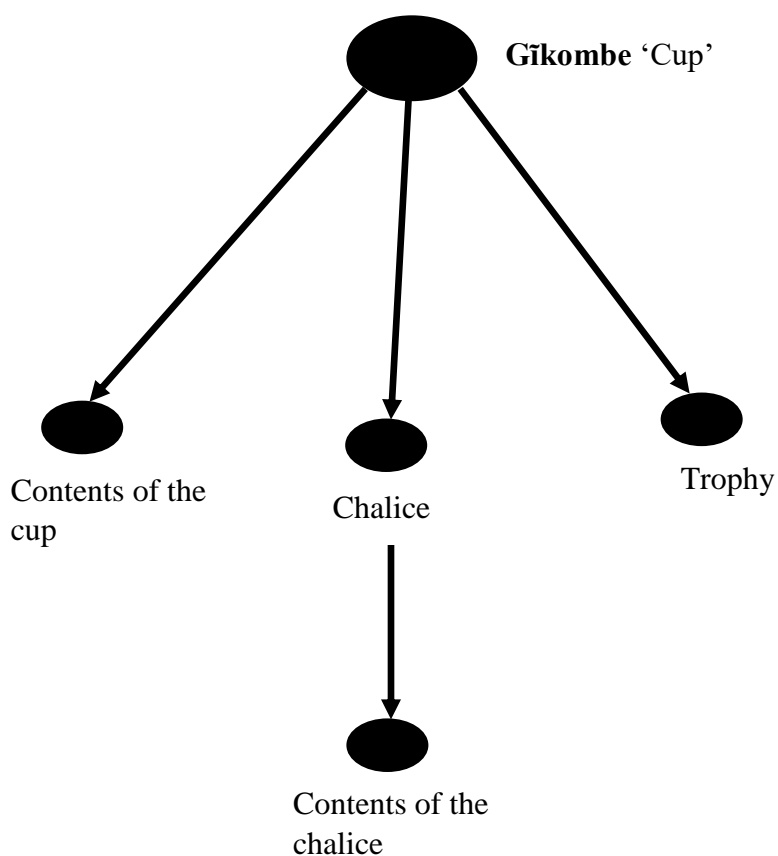


Figure 14: Semantic network for *gĩkombe*

In this network, three extended meanings directly branch from the prototypical meaning while one extended meaning directly branches from another extended meaning.

*Nyũngũ* on the other hand, has two extended meanings namely the contents of the pot and the uterus as illustrated in Examples 77&78.

77. *Ūraruga nyũngũ cigana?*

You are cooking pots how many?

How many pots are you cooking?

*Nyũngũ* in the above example is used in a context where is cooking different types of food.

78. *Nĩararutirwo nyũngũ ya mwana.*

She was removed pot of baby.

Her uterus was removed.

*Nyūngū* here is used euphemistically to avoid mentioning directly the uterus, an organ that is associated with reproduction.

*Nyūngū*, therefore, has three meanings in its network which are graphically represented in Figure 15 below:

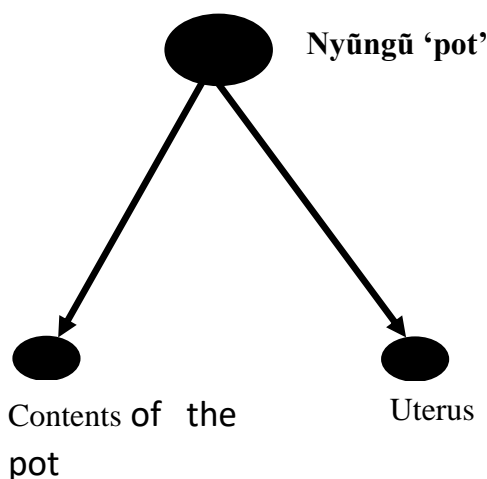


Figure 15: Semantic network of *nyūngū*

In the above semantic network, it can be observed that all the extended meanings directly branch from the prototypical meaning.

*Gĩkombe* and *nyūngū* are count nouns but the objects denoted by their extended meanings belong to various categories of nouns. Firstly, there are those that are count nouns. Among these are the chalice, the trophy and the uterus. Secondly, there are some that denote mass nouns. These are the contents of the cup, the chalice and the pot.

## 2.9. The Semantic Extensions from the Buildings Terms

The semantic extensions of the terms, *nyūmba* 'house and *riiko* 'kitchen are analyzed in this section.

The prototypical meanings of the two terms are illustrated in examples 79 & 80 below

79. *Nyūmba yake yakĩtwo na mahiga.*



House his|her house is built with stones.

His/Her house is built with stones.

In this example, *nyumba* denotes a house which is a building that is used for dwelling by human beings.

80. *Riiko r̄iao r̄git̄two na mabati.*

Kitchen their is roofed with iron sheets

Their kitchen is roofed with iron sheets.

The meaning of *riiko* is a building where food is cooked and stored.

Besides their prototypical meanings which have the sense of a building, these two terms through semantic extension also have other meanings that are attributed to them.

*Nyumba*, has the following extended meanings, marriage, grave, death that marks the end of life family, clan, the ethnic group, as illustrated in the Examples below.

81. *N̄araḡire nyumba.*

He|she has got a house

He|she has got married.

*Nyumba*, here, does not refer to the building but to the institution of marriage.

82. *Nyumba yake n̄rar̄kire.*

House his|hers got complete

His|her house got complete.

This meaning of *nyumba*, is used in a context where people want to avoid mentioning death directly. Instead of saying *n̄arakwire* ‘h/she has died, it is common to talk about the completeness of one’s house. This completeness of the house evokes the finality of death.

83. *Nyumba ĩr̄ia ũr̄ia ũrat̄tigire ak̄uhur̄kio n̄i thiru.*

House where the one who left us will be rested is ready.

The house where the one who left us will be laid to rest is ready.

The above meaning is also used euphemistically in a context where people want to avoid mentioning matters related to death directly. In this case, 'the grave is referred to as *nyũmba* instead of *mbĩrĩra* or *kaburi*.

There are meanings of *nyũmba* that are derived from other extended meanings. These are 'family' which is extended from marriage as in:

84. *Nyũmba ya Maina ñna ciana ikũmi.*

House of Maina has children ten

Maina's house has ten children.

The meaning, here, refers to the institution of the family.

The family meaning is farther extended to refer to the clan as in:

85 *Athuuri a nyũmba yao nĩmaracemania.*

Elders of house theirs are meeting.

The elders of their clan are meeting

The clan meaning is extended from the family because among the Gĩkũyũ, a clan is made up of many families.

Lastly, the clan is extended to refer to the whole ethnic group as it is believed that it is made up of many clans. It is for this reason that the people refer to themselves as, *Nyũmba ya Mũmbi* 'house of Mũmbi' which refers to the Gĩkũyũ as an ethnic group.

*Nyũmba*, therefore, has seven meanings in its network which are graphically represented in Figure 16.

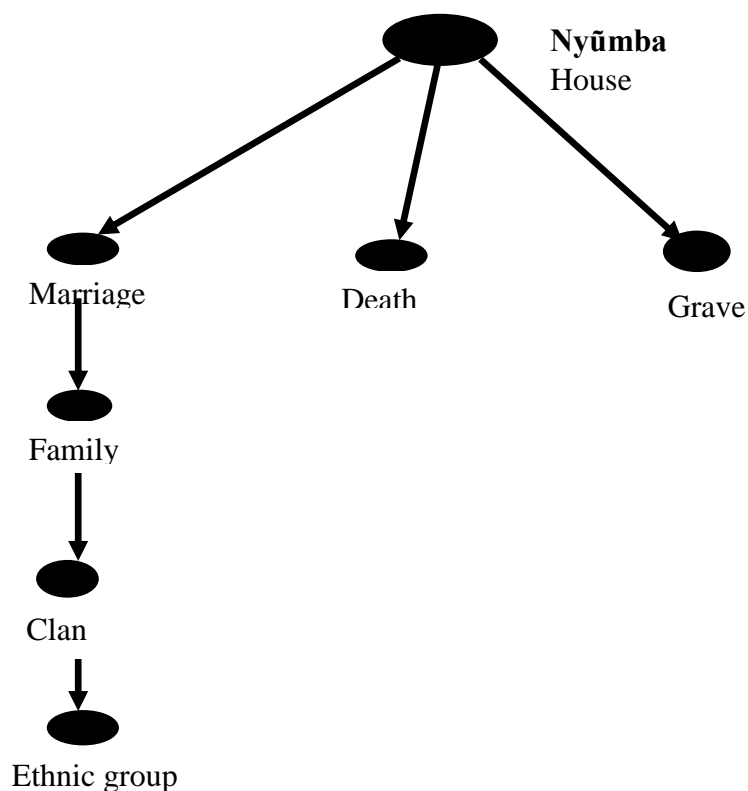


Figure 16: Semantic network for nyūmba

In this network, three extended meanings branch directly from the prototypical meaning. However, there is extensions of extensions as some meanings branch from extended meanings. It can be observed that one extended meaning ‘family’ serves as the node for further extension. Then the ‘clan’ meaning that results from this extension, is further extended to have another extended meaning ‘the ethnic group’.

The prototypical meaning of *riiko* is extended to include in its denotation, ‘the hearth which is the traditional fireplace made of three stones’, ‘the modern cookers’ and ‘the people who work in the kitchen’ as illustrated in the sentences below:

86. *Riikorĩakwa nĩrĩa mahiga matatu.*

Fireplace my is has stones three

My fireplace has three stones.

The meaning in this sentence, denotes the traditional fire place which has the three stones to hold and support the pot.

87. Nĩragũrire riiko rĩerũ

He/she bought cooker new

He/she has bought a new cooker.

The *riiko*, here, can refer to a stove *or or* electronic devices for cooking such as gas or electric cookers.

88. Riiko rĩkinyĩtie ha?

Kitchen it has gone how far?

How far has the kitchen gone?

In this example, the meaning expressed is that of the people working in the kitchen especially those who are involved in the preparations and cooking of food.

From the analysis *riiko* has four meanings in its semantic network which are graphically represented in Figure 17 below

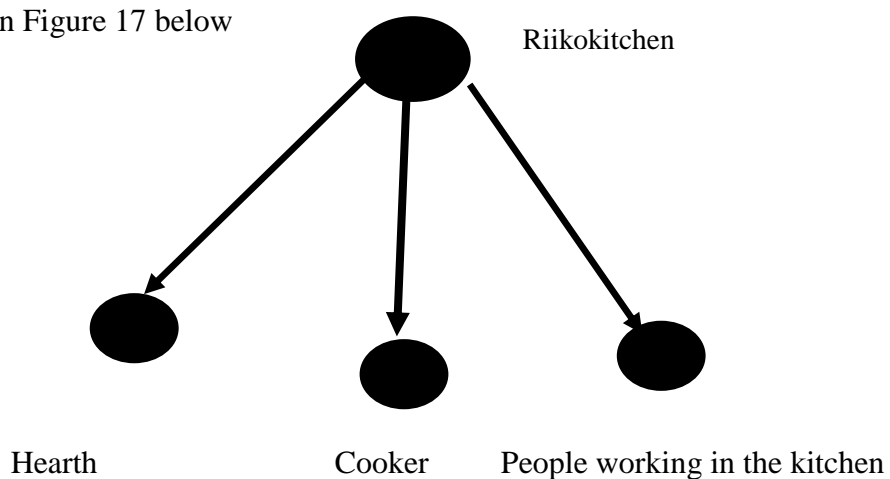


Figure 17: Semantic network of *riiko*

In this network, all the extended meanings of *riiko* directly branch from the prototypical meaning.

*Nyũmba* and *riiko* are count nouns but it has been observed that their extended meanings belong to various categories of nouns. For example, *nyũmba* has extended meanings that denote count nouns, namely the grave and the clan while death, the institution of marriage and the family are abstract nouns. Then the ‘ethnic group meaning refers to a special group of people, ‘the house of *Mĩmbi*. Therefore, this meaning conveys a proper noun, All the three extended meanings of *riiko* on the other hand convey count nouns.

## 2.10 The Semantic Extensions of the Social Activities Terms

The semantic extensions of two terms namely *kĩama* ‘group’ and *gĩathĩ* ‘appointment’ are analyzed in this section. Their prototypical meanings are illustrated in Examples 89 & 90 below:

*Kĩama* has the following meanings as illustrated by the sentences below:

89. *Nĩ wega kũingĩra kĩama.*

It is good to join group/association.

It is good to join a group/association

*Kĩama* in the above example means a group or association with common interests and it is the prototypical meaning.

90. *Ndĩraheirwo gĩathĩkĩa rũcio.*

I was given appointment for tomorrow

I was given an appointment for tomorrow

The meaning exemplified in this sentence is ‘appointment which denotes an arrangement to meet or visit somebody at a particular time. This is the prototypical meaning for the term.

These two terms, however, do not just refer to their prototypical meanings. Through semantic extension, they are extended to have in their denotations meanings for terms in other semantic fields as it is shown in the following paragraphs.

*Kĩama* is extended to include in its denotation different manifestations of associations. Among these associations are council of elders, church council, trade union, school committee and political party as illustrated in the following Examples.

91. *Athuuri a kĩama nio mamaenyagĩrĩra mĩtugo ya rũrĩrĩ.*

Elders of council are the ones who protect customs of tribe.

The council of elders is the custodian of the customs of the tribe.

*Kĩama* in this example, is extended to refer to the council of elders which is a specific group.

92. *Kĩama kĩa arĩmũ nĩ kĩretirie mũgomo.*

Association of teachers has called strike

The Association of teachers has called for a strike

In this example, *kĩama* is extended to denote a trade union.

93. *Kĩama gĩa kanitha gĩgacemania rũcio.*

Council of church will meet tomorrow

The church council will meet tomorrow.

94. *Nĩarathurirwo kĩama-inĩ gĩa thukuru.*

He/she was elected in the school committee

*Kĩama* in this example, is extended to denote the board of management or the committee of a school.

95. *Nīararugūririe kīama kīerū kīa ūteti.*

He/she has launched party new of politics

He/she has launched a new political party.

From this analysis, *Kīama* has six meanings in its network which are graphically represented in Figure 18 below

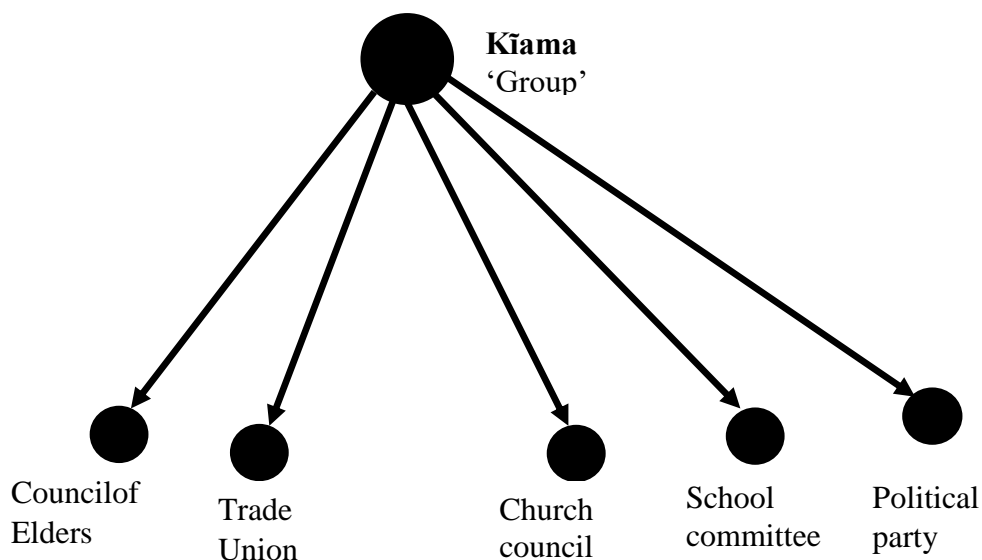


Figure 18: Semantic network of *kīama*

In the above network, all the extended meanings directly branch from the prototypical meaning.

*Gīathĩ* has the following extended meaning 'market' and 'Holy Communion' as in

96. *Ndathiĩ gīathĩ kũgũra mbembe.*

I am going market to buy maize

I am going to the market to buy maize

97. *Kiumia twĩna gīathĩ kīa Mwathani.*

Sunday we have appointment of God

On Sunday we have Holy Communion.

The meaning of *gĩathĩ* in this sentence is used in a Christian context to refer to the Holy Communion or Mass.

The word *gĩathĩ*, therefore, has three meanings in its semantic network as shown in Figure 19 below.

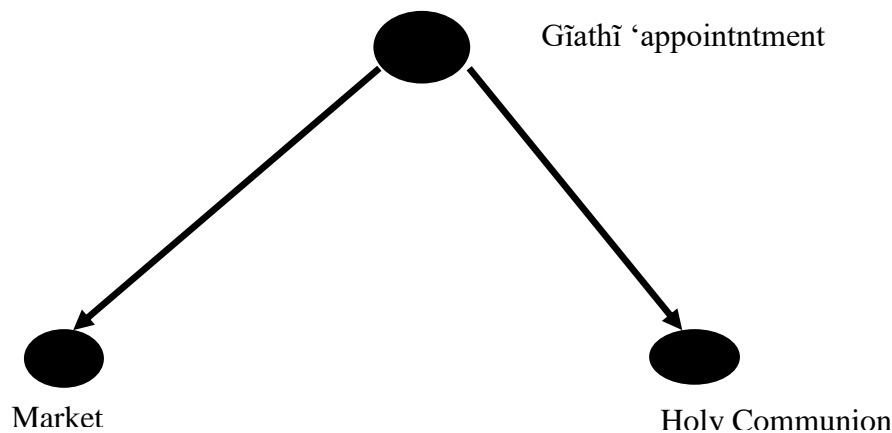


Figure 19: Semantic network of *gĩathĩ*

In the above network, all the extended meanings directly branch from the extended meaning.

In the semantic extension of nouns that denote social activities, *kĩama* and *gĩathĩ* convey count nouns. All the extended meanings of *kĩama* convey count nouns whereas one meaning of *gĩathĩ*, 'market' is a count noun. *Gĩathĩ* has one extended meaning, 'the Holy Communion which is a proper noun.

### 2.11 The Semantic Extensions of the Celestial Bodies Terms

The semantic extensions of two terms namely *mweri* 'moon' and *njata* 'star' which refer to celestial bodies are analyzed in this section. The prototypical meanings for these terms are illustrated in the following Examples.



98. *Ūmũthĩ mweri ndũroneka.*

Today moon cannot be seen

Today the moon cannot be seen.

*Mweri* in this example means the moon which is a celestial body that moves round the earth and illuminates the earth at night.

99. *Kwĩna njata nyingĩ igũrũ.*

There are stars many sky

There are many stars in the sky.

The meaning expressed in this example is ‘star’ which is a celestial body that appears in the sky at night and gives light. This is the prototypical meaning for the term. Apart from their prototypical meanings, these two terms have other meanings attributed to them

*Mweri* has the following four extended meanings, ‘month’, ‘name of a cow’, ‘date’ and ‘monthly period’ as illustrated in Examples 100-103

100. *Mweri wa kerĩ warĩ mbura nene.*

Month of two had rain heavy

The month of February had heavy rain. *Mweri* here denotes a month which marks a season.

101. *Ng’ombe yao ĩtagwo mweri.*

Cow theirs is called moon

Their cow is called moon.

In this example, *mweri* denotes a name for a cow.

These two meanings are extended from the prototypical meaning.

One of the extended meanings ‘month’ is further extended to have two other meanings; ‘date’ and ‘monthly period’ respectively as indicated below:

102. *Ngooka mweri ikũmi.*

I will come date ten

I will come on tenth.

Months are made of dates. In Gikūyū, the same term *mweri* is used to refer to both the month and the date

103. *Ena mweri.*

She has month

She has the monthly period.

The monthly period is used to refer to the menstrual discharge that women have every month.

The term *mweri*, therefore, has five meanings in its network which are graphically represented in Figure 20 below:

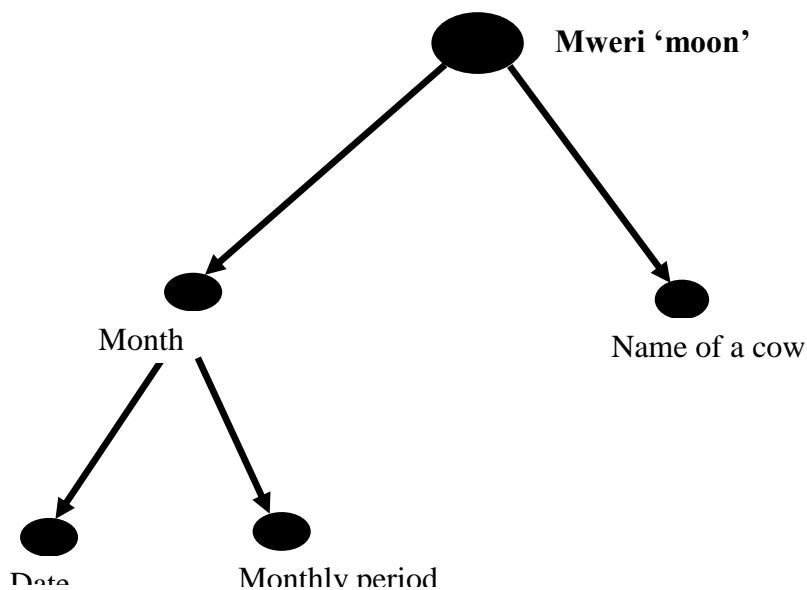


Figure 20: Semantic network for *mweri*

In the network above, there are two extended meanings of *mweri* which directly branch from the prototypical meaning. There is also extension of extensions because two extended meanings branch from the extended meaning ‘month’.

The second term *njata* has the following extended meanings as illustrated in Examples 104 & 105

104. *Mūtumia ūyū nĩ njata ya ūini.*

Woman this is star of music

This woman is a star of music.

Here, *njata* denotes a celebrity

105. *Ng’ombe yakwa itagwo njata.*

Cow my is called star

My cow is called star.

In this sentence, *njata*, denotes the name of a cow.

The term *njata* exhibits three meanings in its network as illustrated in Figure 21 below:

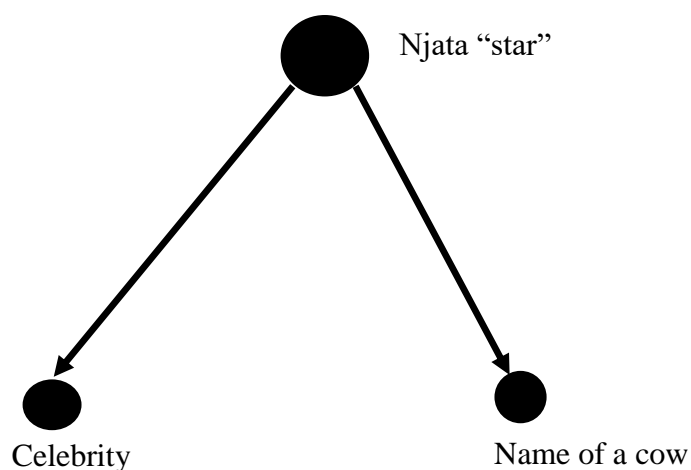


Figure 21: Semantic network of *njata*

In this network, there are two extended meanings that directly branch from the prototypical meaning. In this case, it is just the prototypical meaning that forms the basis of the semantic extension.

*Mweri* and *njata* in their prototypical meanings both convey count nouns. Nevertheless, *mweri* has extended meanings which denote objects that are count and others that are mass nouns. The extended meanings that convey count nouns are ‘month’, ‘date’ and name of a cow while ‘the monthly period’ denotes a mass noun. Both of the extended meanings of *njata* denote objects that are count nouns.

## 2.12 The Semantic Extensions from the Technological Innovations Terms

The semantic extension of one term *mũgithi* ‘train’ is analysed in this section. The prototypical meaning of *mũgithi* ‘train’ is a vehicle that pulls carriages along rail lines. This is illustrated in Example 106.

106. *Mũgithi ũkuaga andũ aingĩ mũno.*

Train carries people many very

The train carries very many people.

This prototypical meaning, however, is not the only meaning for the term as there are other meanings attributed to it. This meaning is semantically extended to include in its denotation, three meanings viz ‘a road show’, ‘a singing and dancing activity where those involved imitate the movement and sound made by a train’ and a type of banana that has a long stem and long banana fruits as illustrated in Examples 107 to 109 below.

107. *Mũgithi wakũgathĩrĩria kĩaama kĩaao nĩ wahitukĩra haha.*

Train to advertise political party theirs has passed here.

The roadshow to advertise their political party has passed here.

108. *Tugathiĩ mũgithi njũmamothe.*

We shall go for train Saturday.

We shall go for train on Saturday.

In this sentence, the meaning of train is mainly used in a social context where people are enjoying themselves.

109. *Mũgithi ũrĩ marigũ maraihu.*

Train has bananas long.

The train has long bananas.

In this sentence, *mũgithi* denotes a long banana which has the sense of a plant.

*Mũgithi*, therefore, has four meanings in its semantic network that are graphically represented in Figure 22 below:

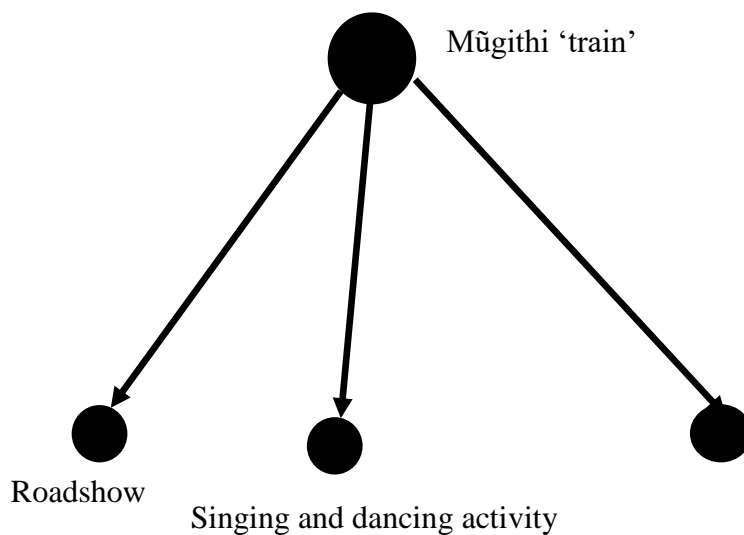


Figure 22: Semantic network for *mũgithi*

In the network above, all the extended meanings directly branch from the prototypical meaning.

*Mũgithi* and its three extended meanings belong to the category of count nouns.

### 2.13 The Semantic Extensions from the Process of Measuring Time Terms

In this section, the semantic extensions of *gĩthaa* 'hour/time' are analyzed.

The prototypical meaning of this term is illustrated in Example 110. below

110. *Gĩkĩ nĩ gĩthaa kīega gĩa gũthiĩ.*

This is hour/time good for going

This is a good time/hour for going.

The meaning expressed is that of time as a process. This is the prototypical meaning which is extended to mean, 'an extremely big clock' and an extremely big watch which are electronic devices for measuring time and an extremely good time for those in the matatu industry to do business as there are many people on the road. These meanings are illustrated in Examples 111 to 113.

111. *Macurĩtie gĩthaa rĩthingo-inĩ.*

They have hung big clock wall on the

They have hung a big clock on the wall

112. *Ekĩrĩte gĩthaa guoko-inĩ.*

She/he has worn big watch wrist on the

She/he has worn a big watch on the wrist

113. *Kwĩna na gĩthaa bara.*

There is an hour on the road.

The meaning expressed by *gĩthaa* in this sentence is 'an extremely good hour/time to do business. This is used in the context of the language those in the matatatu business mainly

by the touts and drivers when there are very many travellers on the road so it is a good time for them to do business.

From the analysis, the term *gĩthaa* has four meanings in its network as graphically represented in Figure 23 below:

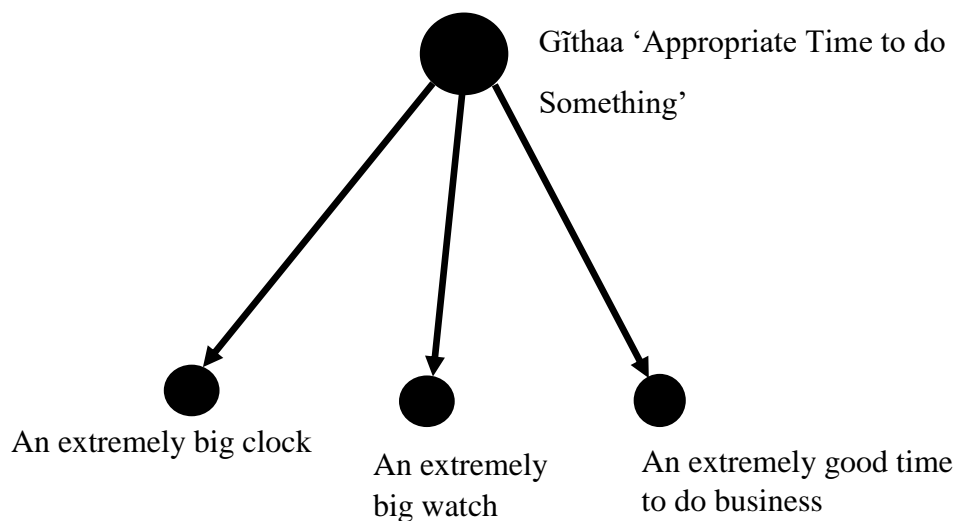


Figure 23: Semantic Network of *gĩthaa*

In the network above, the three extended meanings of *gĩthaa* directly branch from the prototypical meaning.

In its prototypical meaning, *gĩthaa* is *the* augmentative of *ithaa* 'hour/time' and it is an abstract noun. However, in its extended meanings, the term exhibits different categories of nouns from the meanings. Two extended meanings 'an extremely big clock and 'an extremely big watch' are count nouns whereas 'a good time to do business' is an abstract noun.

## 2.14 Summary of the Chapter

The focus of this chapter was an analysis of the possible meanings conveyed by the polysemous Gĩkũyũ nouns. Using examples, the prototypical meanings of the nouns and

their extended meanings were illustrated. The chapter has also discussed schematic diagrams to show how the meanings of each noun are organized in a semantic network with nodes of extended meanings. The different categories of nouns that the prototypical meanings and the extended meanings belong to are also discussed.

The analysis of the data revealed that the Gĩkũyũ nouns are extended beyond their basic (prototypical) meanings to have other meanings. These extended meanings branch from the prototypical meanings. For these nouns, the prototypical meanings form the basis of the extension. The nouns in this group are *ngima* ‘corn bread’, *kĩongo* ‘head’ *kũgũrũ* ‘leg, nyũngũ ‘pot’, *kamũngũriũ* ‘squirrel,’ *riiko* ‘kitchen’, *kĩama* ‘group/association’ *gĩathĩ* ‘appointment,’ *njata* ‘star’ and *mũgithi* ‘train’. The prototypical meanings of these nouns were found to branch into extended meanings in various ways. Firstly, the prototypical meaning branches into one extended meaning. Secondly, the prototypical meaning branches into two extended meanings. Thirdly, the prototypical meaning branches into three extended meanings. Fourthly, the prototypical meaning branches into five extended meanings. Fifthly, the prototypical meaning branches into six extended meanings. Lastly, the prototypical meaning branches into seven extended meanings

A notable observation is that the Gĩkũyũ polysemous nouns also allow for extensions of extensions where some of the meanings branch from other extended meanings. In this case, an extended meaning forms the basis of the semantic extension. The nouns that have meanings branching from extended meanings are *mbũri*, ‘goat’, *njenga* ‘ground maize’, *maĩ* ‘water’, *mũthuuri* ‘man’, *kameme* ‘gossip’, *nyũmba* ‘house’ and *mweri* ‘moon’. It is not all the extended meanings that are further extended. These meanings branch from the extended meaning in the following four ways. First, one extended meaning branches into another



extended meaning. Second, one extended meaning branches into two extended meanings. In addition, one extended meaning branches into three extended meanings. Moreover, two extended meanings each branches into one other extended meaning.

The Gĩkũyũ polysemous nouns that have been used in the analysis of the data are mainly count nouns. However, there are a few that are mass nouns. From the analysis, however, it was observed that through semantic extension, these nouns may retain, the category of the meaning they branch from. Another observation is that the noun category may change. It was also observed that the prototypical meaning may branch into extended meanings which belong to the same noun category as it. For example, *mata* ‘saliva’ which is a mass noun has two extended meanings, ‘venom’ and ‘urine’ which are both mass nouns. At the same time, there are some nouns with extended meanings which have some of the meanings belonging to the same noun category as the meaning they branch from while other meanings are from different categories. An example is *ngima* ‘corn bread’ which is a mass noun while ‘money’ one of its extended meanings is a mass noun and the other one ‘foolish person’ is a count noun. The extended meaning may branch into extended meanings which belong to the same noun category as it. For example, *mũtĩ* ‘stick’ an extended meaning of ‘tree’ is a count noun which is extended to denote ‘vote; also a count noun. The extended meaning may also have extended meanings from a different noun category. For instance, *gĩkombe* ‘chalice’ which branches from ‘cup’ is a count noun which is extended to denote the ‘contents of the chalice, a mass noun. Finally, the extended meaning may have some extended meanings that belong to the same category as it while others belong to a different category. For instance, *mweri* ‘month’ which is extended from the ‘moon’ is a count noun, however, its extended meanings, the ‘date’ and ‘monthly period’ are count and mass nouns respectively.

In this chapter it has been noted that the Gīkūyū nouns are extended to have multiple meanings. These meanings are not random but they are motivated. The motivations for these extensions are topics for discussion in the chapters that follow. Chapters three and four discuss metaphor and metonymy respectively while chapter discusses the cultural motivations

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 Metaphoric polysemy in g polysemy in Gīkūyū

#### 3.1 Introduction to the Chapter

The preceding chapter dealt with polysemous nouns from Gīkūyū and their extended meanings. It was observed that the Gīkūyū nouns have a number of meanings in their semantic networks. In Cognitive Linguistics, these semantic networks are motivated. This means that the relationships among the polysemous meanings of the nouns are not random but are natural and systematic, and they are related by motivated links. This chapter, therefore, has dealt with objective three which aimed at establishing how the cognitive semantic generation mechanism of metaphor and metonymy motivate the semantic extensions of the Gīkūyū polysemous nouns. It has specifically discussed metaphor as a central mechanism in the motivation of the polysemy of these nouns. A summary of the metaphoric polysemous relationships that occur among the meanings is given. From the cognitive linguistics perspective, metaphor is understood as a motivated transfer between two different domains, the source and the target. According to Kovesces (2010), the source domain which is regarded to be more concrete provides the means for describing the target domain. The target domain, on the other hand is regarded to be more abstract. In this Chapter, the source domains of the Gīkūyū polysemous nouns and their target domains are discussed, the characteristics of the source that are transferred to the target are also discussed. The main metaphoric polysemic relationships that occur as a result of the transfer of the characteristics of the source to the target are also explained.

### 3.2 Metaphoric Extensions from the Body Parts Domain

The study of body part terms is one of the most popular areas in linguistics. Their enormous potential for extension into other semantic domains as well as their development into grammatical forms has attracted the attention of researchers from different domains. According to Hein et' al (1991) body part terms have been identified as a source of figurative meanings as well as grammatical meanings. Bilkova (2000) argues that body part terms offer a good, varied and rich laboratory for polysemy and conceptualization. The body part terms in Gĩkũyũ are no exception to this. In these extensions, the body part terms serve as source domains for deriving concepts of various kinds

Wei (2010) claims that human body terms are those earliest things which are used by human beings to recognize and experience other abstract material. Wei adds that people apply their body part terms to perceive the outside world in terms of their similarities, position, structure and shape or function of the concrete object. According to Chen (2005), the words which express, human body terms are easily mapped onto other semantic domains by metaphor.

Several people have tried to define the term body. Oladipo (1992) argues that the body is a collective term for all the material component of a person. Gbadegesin (2003) defines the body as a physico - material part of the human being. According to him, it includes the external parts, for example, the head, forehead, eyes and ears and the internal components like the heart, stomach, soul, liver. In Gĩkũyũ, the general term for the body is *mwĩrĩ*. However, this term is extended to the external and internal components as illustrated in the following Examples:

1. a) *Mwĩrĩ wake ti mweka.*

Body his/her is not good

His/her body is not good

b) *Ndiraturwo ni mwĩrĩ.*

My aching/ paining is body

My body is aching /paining

In the above sentences, *mwĩrĩ* does not necessarily mean the physical body but the term is also extended to mean that one of the components or a number of them are aching or are in pain. The body consists of external parts, for example, *kĩongo* ‘head’, *matũ* ‘ears’, *maĩtho* ‘eyes’, *iniũrũ* ‘nose’, *moko* ‘hands’, e.t.c and the internal components like *ngoro* ‘heart’, *ini* ‘liver’, *mara* ‘intestines’ and, *higo* ‘kidneys’.

The following words are considered to illustrate the metaphoric polysemy of the nouns that denote body parts in Gikũyũ, *kĩongo* ‘head’, *gũtũ* ‘ear’, *magego* ‘teeth’, *kũgũrũ* ‘leg’ and *mũkingo* ‘extremely long neck. These terms do not just refer to the physical body parts but have great potential for semantic extensio through metaphor to have other related meanings.

The prototypical meaning of *kiongo* is head which is a body part above the neck. This meaning is metaphorically extended to have polysemous meanings that refer to a position of authority or leadership in an institution, an object part, the source of a river and also a topic/title or theme /subject of an article or even a sermon in church. The human head is the core part of the human body as it comes at the top of all the other body parts, thus it controls the normal operation of the body. It is these attributes that are transferred metaphorically to the other referents of the head thus making the term *kĩongopolysemous*. The polysemous meanings of *kĩongo* are discussed in the proceeding paragraphs.

In the Gĩkũyũ culture, the man is regarded as the head of the institution of the family with all the other members of the family being subordinate to him. The meaning head of an institution or position of leadership or authority in an institution is derived from the prototypical meaning via the TOP-BOTTOM /HIGH STATUS IS UP conceptual metaphor. This metaphor corresponds to hierachichal models organized in a bottom-up scale. This is because the high status and position of man is regarded to be conceptually similar to the top position of the head. The subordinate position of the other members of the family is conceptualized to be at the bottom. To emphasize these positions, *kĩongo* is always contrasted with *ngingo* ‘neck’ as in the following statement:

2. *Ngingo*      *ndĩrĩ*              *yahĩtũka*              *kĩongo*.

Neck has never      passed              head

The neck has never passed the head

The neck which is a body part is here used metaphorically to refer to the woman. Since the neck is below the head, the woman is considered to be subordinate to the man who is regarded to be the head. In this meaning *kĩongo* indicates the notion of position through the TOP-BOTTOM conceptual metaphor. This means that just like the head controls the operations of the body, the man controls all the operations of his family.

The theme which is the main subject of the sermon or article comes at the beginning, just like the ‘head’ comes at the beginning of the body. As a result of this it is the core of the message in the sermon or article. In this case, therefore the ‘head’ which is a concrete object is mapped onto the theme which is an abstract object. This mapping is based on the general conceptual metaphor THE HEAD IS THE HEAD OF A SERMON/ARTICLE which is

realized in this meaning through the sub metaphor THE POSITION OF A HEAD IS THE POSITION OF A THEME OF A SERMON/ARTICLE.

The source of the river is the beginning of the river just like the 'head' comes at the beginning of the body. The source, therefore, is the core of the river, which controls how it will flow. Here, the head indicates the notion of position by means of a conceptual metaphor whereby the head which is a concrete object is mapped onto the source of the river which is an abstract object

The head is also metaphorically extended to refer to an object part via the general conceptual metaphor, AN OBJECT PART IS A HUMAN HEAD. This object part can be extended to refer to heads of specific objects, for instance, the regulator which comes at the top of a gas cylinder and the top of a matchstick. These object parts are also round like the head. This metaphoric extension is based on the similarities in shape and position as the objects referred to are round and are placed on top of the objects just like the head. This mapping, therefore, can be said to be realized through two sub metaphors namely THE SHAPE OF AN OBJECT PART IS THE SHAPE OF THE HUMAN HEAD/THE POSITION OF THE OBJECT PART IS THE POSITION OF THE HUMAN HEAD.

Similarly, *gūtū* as a body organ that is used for hearing or listening by both animals and human beings has polysemous meanings as a result of metaphoric extension. These meanings denote handles of objects specifically handles of cups, baskets and pots. The metaphoric extensions are motivated through the general conceptual metaphor OBJECT PARTS ARE EARS. This metaphor has the sub metaphor THE SHAPE/POSITION OF THE HANDLE OF AN OBJECT PART IS THE SHAPE/POSITION OF THE HUMAN EAR. The shape or structural position of the human body part ear is metaphorically mapped

on to the shape and structural position of the object part. The handles of objects resemble the ear in shape and position. These handles are shaped like the ear and they are also placed on both sides of the objects just like the ears are placed on both sides of the head. At the same time, the ear controls what goes into the human mind. These handles also control the objects thus making them firm. It is these characteristics that are mapped from the source domain of the body parts to the target domain of object parts thus making the term *gũtũ* polysemous.

*Kũgũrũ* ‘leg’ which is an elongated body part that refers one of the long parts of an animal and human being that connects the feet to the rest of the body and is used for standing or movement is another body part term that is extended metaphorically to have a variety of polysemous meanings. Firstly, it serves as a source domain for elongated object parts, for instance, the leg of pieces of furniture. It is also metaphorically extended to refer to other object part such as the leg of a piece of trousers, the wheels of cars and the male reproductive organ. All these metaphoric extensions are triggered by the conceptual metaphor THE LEG OF A HUMAN BEING/ANIMAL IS THE LEG OF AN OBJECT. Where *kũgũrũ* is extended to refer to legs of pieces of furniture, the mapping involves similarities in shape, position and functions between the body part and the object part. The leg of an animal or human being is elongated, it is positioned at the bottom part of the body and is used for standing, walking and it gives the human beings or animals support. The object part, especially the leg of a chair, table or bed is also elongated, positioned at the bottom of the object and it is used for standing thus giving the object support just like the legs support human beings and animals. Secondly, the part of trousers that covers the leg has acquired the name of the prototype on the basis of the similarities in shape and position.



Both are positioned on the lower parts of the body and the object respectively. At the same time, this part of the trousers is shaped like a leg so that it will fit in the leg when one wears the piece of clothing. Thirdly, the wheel which is part of a car, hence an object part has a metaphoric relationship with the prototypical meaning based on position and functions. Just like the leg is positioned at the bottom part of the body, the wheel is also at the bottom part of a car and it is used for making movements and giving support to the car just like legs. Lastly, the male genital meaning is derived from the prototypical sense through metaphor as the two have similarities in position and shape. This organ is positioned between the legs which are on the lower parts of the body and when it is erect it stands straight just like the leg.

Another typical case of conceptualization based on metaphoric mapping involves *mūkingo* ‘an extremely long neck’. This meaning is metaphorically extended to have polysemous meanings. The first meaning is a part of a piece of a garment that goes round the neck. This meaning is realized through the conceptual metaphor. A LONG NECK IS A LONG OBJECT PART. The metaphoric mapping involves similarities in shape between the body part and the object part. The neck of a garment is shaped like a neck so that it will fit the neck of the person who will wear the garment. *Mūkingo* is also extended refer to HIV AIDS which is a medical condition through the conceptual metaphor A LONG NECK IS HIV AIDS. When the first case of Aids was reported in the 1980s, it was a strange disease and the Gikūyū people did not have a name for it. They, therefore, looked for a term of a familiar object whose denotation they could extend to name this disease. Since the neck of the victims of this disease seemed to grow longer as the victims got weaker, the term *mūkingo* was coined to euphemistically show the physical effects on an individual who becomes

thinner and thinner. The metaphor consists of mapping of the shape of the long neck on to the effects of the medical condition on the victims suffering from it.

Lastly *magego* ‘teeth’ which denotes the body parts which which stick out of the jaws of animals and human beings, and they are used for biting and chewing is metaphorically extended to have polysemous meanings that denote object parts especially those that are arranged in rows and stick out of the edges of the objects. Among these are the teeth of objects or tools such as saws, zips, combs and cogs of wheels. These meanings are realized through the conceptual metaphor THE TEETH OF HUMAN BEINGS/ANIMALS ARE THE TEETH OF OBJECTS. The metaphoric mapping between the body part and its targets involves the similarities in shape and arrangement. The object parts are arranged in rows and stick out of the edges of the tools just like the teeth of the human beings and animals. In addition, the mapping involves similarities in functions between the body part and the object part. For instance, the teeth of a saw also have the same function with the teeth of human beings and animals as they are both used for cutting. In this case, the metaphoric relationships among the meanings of *magego* arise as a result of the similarities in shape, arrangement and functions thus making *the* term polysemous.

In the analysis of the metaphoric polysemy of the nouns that denote body parts, it was observed that object parts are the salient target domains. The metaphoric extensions are triggered by the general conceptual metaphor THE OBJECT PART IS A BODY PART. The metaphoric mapping from the source domain to the target domain is based on similarities in arrangement, function, position and appearance between the body parts and the object parts that they are extended to refer to.

### 3.3 Metaphoric Extensions from the Celestial Bodies Terms

In this section, the Metaphoric polysemy of *mweri* ‘moon’ and *njata* ‘star’ which are celestial bodies is discussed.

*Mweri* ‘moon’ which is a celestial body that illuminates the earth is first extended metaphorically to mean ‘month’ which is a season. This extension is based on the perceived similar characteristics between the moon and the month. The moon and the month are closely connected in that traditionally, the Agĩkũyũ people used to observe the cycle of the moon in order to mark days and seasons. From the first appearance of the moon, the cycle began and they would observe this cycle when the moon rose and set. When the moon completed its cycle after so many days that period was referred to as ‘*mweri*’. The second meaning refers to the name of a cow. The metaphoric extension here is based on the similarities in appearance between the cow and the moon. A cow which is white is called *mweri* because it is as bright as the moon. In a second case, a cow can also be referred to by this term if it was born on a moonlit night.

Another celestial body that is extended metaphorically is *njata* ‘star’. It is extended to refer to the name of a cow. The mapping is based on similarities in appearance between the cow and the star. A cow that has patches of black and white or brown and white on the back, the stomach and/or on the head is referred to as *njata*. This is because the patches of colour resemble the stars when they twinkle in the sky at night. Besides, the patches, any cow that is born on a starlight night, is also referred to as *njata*.

In these metaphoric extensions, there is mapping from the sourcedomain of celestial bodies which are inanimate objects and the target domain of animals. This mapping is triggered by

the conceptual metaphor AN ANIMAL IS A CELESTIAL BODY. The metaphoric mappings are mainly based on similarities in appearance between the source and the target.

### 3.4 Metaphoric Extensions from Terms that denote Containers

This section analyzes the metaphoric polysemy of the nouns that denote containers in Gikūyū. These are *kīnya* ‘gourd’, *gīkombe* ‘cup’ and *nyūngū* ‘pot’.

*Kīnya* refers to a gourd that is an oval container that is used for keeping and serving liquids such as water, beer, and porridge. It also refers to a small container that is used for keeping snuff. In its prototypical meaning, *kīnya* has the attribute of containment. This term is metaphorically extended to refer to the prison, a place where those who commit crime are kept as punishment. *Kīnya* is metaphorically mapped onto prison according to the similarities that the two objects have in functions. They both have the function of containment. Just like *kīnya* holds liquids and/or powders, the same applies to a prison where the prisoners are contained within the four walls without freedom. This mapping is triggered by the metaphor THE PRISON IS A GOURD. In everyday discourse, it is common to hear people say, *e kīnya* which literally means, she/he is in the gourd but the speakers of Gikūyū know that the statement means that the person being referred to is in jail. Moreover, the other container whose term is metaphorically extended is *gīkombe* which originally refers to a cup that is a container used for drinking liquids. It is metaphorically extended to denote, a chalice which is a special cup that is used for drinking wine in formal and religious ceremonies and a trophy, a silver cup that is awarded to a person or a group for winning a competition. *Gīkombe* is mapped on to these two objects according to the similarities in shape and functions. The chalice and the trophy are shaped like a cup and they also have handles just like it. It is also mapped on to the chalice based on functions, because both are used in

drinking liquids. In these metaphoric relationships, there is mapping from the source domain of household containers to the target domains of special cups.

Finally, *nyūngū* ‘pot’ which prototypically refers to a round container that is made of either clay or metal and is used for cooking, storing food and liquids like water is also metaphorically extended to denote the uterus and so it is referred to as *nyūngūya mwana* ‘the pot of the baby’. This meaning extension is triggered by the conceptual metaphor A BODY ORGAN IS A CONTAINER based on the similarities in functions and shape between the pot and the uterus. Just like food is cooked in a pot until it is ready, the baby grows in the uterus until it is ready to be born.

In the analysis of the polysemy where the terms that denote containers act as source domains, it was noted that they are metaphorically extended to have related meanings in the target domains of containers, body organs and prison. The metaphoric mapping is based on similarities in shape and functions between the source and the target.

### **3.5 Metaphoric Extensions from the Animal Domain**

In this section, the metaphoric polysemy of the terms that refer to animals is analysed. These animals are *mbūri* ‘goat’ and *ngūrwe* ‘pig’ which are domesticated and *kamūngūrū* ‘squirrel’ which is undomesticated. According to Wei (2010) animals are closely related to the human beings and they provide a rich basis for the conceptualization of human beings and their activities. This also applies in the Gikūyū worldview where these animals are familiar and their terms are commonly used not just to refer to the animals but also to human beings and their activities, objects and concepts in different semantic fields.

Animal metaphors are ubiquitous in the languages of the world (Sabaria and Nurul, 2013). According to Rouhi & Mahand (2011), what counts as an animal metaphor is the use of an animal name as the source domain rather than the target. Erviti (2012) asserts that an animal metaphor can be thought of as a system of metaphoric mapping. According to Wei (2010), mappings from the source domain of animals can be divided into the appearance of the animal mapped on the appearance of human beings, the behavior of the animal mapped onto the behavior of the human beings and the action of the animal mapped onto the action of human beings. Kovecses (2002) asserts that a substantial part of human behavior seems to be metaphorically understood in terms of animal behavior which leads to the conceptualization of PEOPLE ARE ANIMALS metaphors. In these metaphors there is meaning transfer from the source domain of animals to the target domain of human beings. This transfer involves the transfer of attributes and actions associated with an animal to human being. This transfer may be negative or positive. Martsa (2013), argues that this kind of transfer relies on five parameters namely: habitat, size, appearance, behavior and relation between the animals and human beings.

In the Gīkūyū worldview, animals are closely related to the human beings and they provide a rich basis for the conceptualization of human beings. However, the characteristics of animals are not only used to conceptualize human beings and their characteristics but they are also to conceptualize even inanimate objects as it is shown in the proceeding chapters.

The prototypical meaning of *mbūri* 'goat' is a small animal with horns which is kept for its milk, meat, wool and manure. This meaning, however, is not the only one that is conveyed by this term. Through metaphoric extension this term has the 'foolish person' meaning attributed to it. This metaphoric extension is motivated by the conceptual metaphor

ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR IS HUMAN BEHAVIOUR. The goat has low intellect and relies on its owner for everything and cannot make any decisions. It is these characteristics that are mapped on to a person who is of low intellect and is unable to make decisions on his/her own and follows others blindly. The mapping, here, involves similarities in behaviour between the source and the target. Due to this mapping, *mbūri* becomes a polysemous term.

The next animal term is *ngūrwe* ‘pig’ whose prototypical meaning has the animal sense which is further metaphorically extended to refer to a person who has the characteristics of a pig. This metaphoric extension is motivated through the conceptual metaphors ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR IS HUMAN BEHAVIOUR and ANIMAL APPEARANCE IS HUMAN APPEARANCE. In Gikūyũ, the pig is conceptualized as a fat, greedy and dirty animal. In this case, it is an ugly animal. If a human being exhibits these characteristics, then he/she is referred to as *ngūrwe*. The mapping is based on similarities in appearance and behavioral characteristics between the animals and the person being referred to. Here there is mapping from the source domain of animals to the target domain of human beings. The term *ngūrwe* also assumes a gender perspective where women are referred to as pigs in a derogatory manner as in the following statement:

3. *Nĩarehereirio ngūrwe mūciĩ.*

He/she was removed pig home

A pig was removed from his/her home

The above statement does not refer to the animal but it refers to a woman. This is because among the Gikūyũ women are believed to eat too much. Consequently, when a girl gets married, it is common to hear people say that a ‘pig’ was removed from the home. This

means that there is one mouth less to feed because the woman can now go and over eat at her husband's place. In this metaphoric extension, semantic derogation is portrayed, where the negative characteristics of a pig namely being greedy and dirty are transferred to human beings. The pig is also known to be a very fertile animal, so any woman who has given birth to very many children is also likened to a pig as in the statement: '*Aciarĩte ota ngũrwe*' (She has given birth like a pig.)

Lastly, *kamũmgũriũ* 'squirrel' is another instance where an animal term is metaphorically extended to have polysemous meanings. The prototypical meaning for the term denotes a small animal. It is metaphorically extended to refer first to a small person. This semantic extension is an instance of the conceptual metaphor ANIMAL APPEARANCE IS HUMAN APPEARANCE. The connections between the source and the target are based on similarities in size between the animal and the human being. The small size of the animal is mapped on to a person of the same size. The second meaning it is extended to is the mobile phone. The extension is an instance of two conceptual metaphors ANIMAL APPEARANCE IS THE APPEARANCE OF AN INANIMATE OBJECT/ANIMAL CHARACTERISTICS ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN INANIMATE OBJECT. The connections between the source and the target are based on similarities in size between the animal and the mobile phone. The small size of the animal is mapped on to the mobile phone. Moreover, the connections are based on similarities in characteristics. The squirrel is a very destructive animal that moves from place to place very fast eating the seeds that the farmers have planted. When the mobile phone was introduced, it was observed that it had almost similar characteristics with the squirrel. It was used to spread information very fast to so many places all over the world. Some of the information might be destructive. Due to these



observed similarities in size and behavioral characteristics, the term *kamūngūrū* which referred to an already existing object was metaphorically extended to refer to a mobile phone which was a new object. In these metaphoric relationships, there is mapping from the source domain of animals to the target domains of human beings and inanimate objects.

In the analysis of the metaphoric extensions from terms that denote animals, it was observed that these nouns do not just refer to the animals but there are extended metaphorically to have polysemous meanings that refer to animate and inanimate objects. The salient target domains are human beings. However, the animal terms can also be extended to refer to inanimate objects. The mappings are mainly triggered by the conceptual metaphors ANIMAL BEHAVIOUR IS HUMAN BEHAVIOUR and ANIMAL APPEARANCE IS THE APPEARANCE OF A HUMAN BEING/INANIMATE OBJECT. The metaphoric mappings mainly involve similarities in appearance and behaviour between the animals and the people and objects that they are extended to refer to. The aspects of semantic derogation are also revealed whereby the negative characteristics as of an animal are extended to a human being. Lastly, it was also observed that when new objects enter the Gīkūyū worldview they are not given unique terms but the people look for an already existing object which has some similar characteristics with the new object and its term is extended to refer to this new entrant. This is evident in the term *kamūngūrū* which is extended to refer to a mobile phone, the Gīkūyū look for an already existing object which has some similar characteristics with the new object and its term is extended to refer to this new entrant.

### **3.6. Metaphoric Extensions from the Buildings Domain**

This section analyses the metaphoric polysemy of the noun terms that refer to buildings. These terms do not just convey the prototypical meanings but they have the potential to be

metaphorically extended to include other objects and concepts in their denotation. An example of a noun in this category is *nyumba* ‘house’. This term has the prototypical meaning of a building used for dwelling in by humanbeings. This term is extended metaphorically to include in its denotation death. *Nyumba* is used with the verb ‘*kũrika*’ (complete) to refer to death, the end of life. This metaphoric extension is motivated through the conceptual metaphor DEATH IS THE COMPLETION OF A HOUSE. Among the Gĩkũyũ, when one dies it is believed that he or she goes to the spiritual world and it is a taboo to speak directly of death. In this case, instead of saying ‘*nĩarakuire*’ (he/she has died), they euphemistically say ‘*nyumba*’ *yake nĩrarĩkire*’ (his/her house got completed). *Nyumba* is also extended metaphorically to refer the grave. This meaning is triggered by the metaphor A GRAVE IS AHOUSE due to the fact that, just like in a house where people rest and are provided with protection, a dead body is also laid to rest to in a grave where it is protected from all sorts of disturbance. The metaphor here also arises because of taboo as aforementioned. In this case, the term *nyumba* is used euphemistically to refer to the final resting places of the dead and their souls. In this metaphoric relationship between these meanings, there is mapping between the source domain of buildings which are concrete objects and the target domain of death which is abstract. Due to the mapping of the characteristics of the source on to the target, the term *nyumba* becomes polysemous.

### **3.7 Metaphoric Extensions from the Technological Innovations Domain**

This section analyzes the metaphoric polysemy of the nouns that denote technological innovations which entered the Gĩkũyũ world view due to the transformations in the society. An instance of a term from this category of nouns that is extended metaphorically is *mũgithi* train. The prototypical meaning of the above term is is train, a vehicle that has many

carriages attached to it and moves on the rail lines. Due to these carriages, the train appears to be very long. This meaning is metaphorically extended to have other related meanings where some of its characteristics are mapped on to the objects and concepts referred to. The first meaning is a roadshow. This meaning is triggered by the metaphor A ROADSHOW IS A TRAIN. This is based on the fact that in a road show, there are many vehicles that move following each other in a single file. This movement resembles that of a train as it moves on the rails. The second meaning is that of a dancing and singing activity which is triggered by the metaphor SINGING AND DANCING IS A TRAIN. In this activity, those involved hold each other and move in single file just like the carriages of the train and at the same time, they imitate the sound made by the train as they sing and dance. The third meaning is a banana. Which is triggered by the metaphor A BANANA IS A TRAIN. The mapping here is based on similarities in appearance between the banana and the train. The length of the train is mapped on to a type of a banana that has a long stem and also long fruits. Through metaphoric extension *mũgithi* acquires three other related meanings thus it becomes polysemous. These meanings belong to the target domains of social activities and plants which are abstract and concrete respectively.

### **3.8. Metaphoric Extensions from the Liquids Domain**

In this section, the metaphoric polysemy of the terms, *maĩ* ‘water’ and *mata* ‘saliva’ that denote liquids is analyzed.

*Maĩ* ‘water’ whose prototypical meaning is a clear liquid without colour or taste which falls from the sky as rain and it is necessary for animal and plant life conveys other meanings via metaphoric extension. *Maĩ* is first extended to refer to the amniotic fluid. This extension is an instance of the metaphors THE APPEARANCE OF WATER IS THE APPEARANCE

OF AMNIOTIC FLUID/THE FUNCTIONS OF WATER ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF THE AMNIOTIC FLUID. On the basis of these metaphors there are connections that can be established between the source which is water and amniotic fluid, the target. Firstly, the connections are based on similarities in appearance as both liquids are colourless. Secondly, the two have similarities in function as both are a source of life. Water is a source for human beings, animals and plants. Similarly, the amniotic fluid surrounds the foetus in the mother's womb thus protecting it from any harm and giving it life. Due to these similarities, the term *maĩ* is extended to include the amniotic fluid in its denotation. The other extension is *maĩ* as an easy task. This extension is an instance of the metaphor AN EASY TASK IS WATER. In this metaphoric extension, doing an easy task is likened to how water is light and easy to drink. This means that in drinking there are no interferences, just as it is when one is doing an easy task. In these metaphoric relationships, there is mapping from the source domain of water to the target domains of liquids that are released from the human body and tasks that are performed by human beings.

The second term is *mata* 'saliva' whose prototypical meaning is a liquid produced from the mouth of animals and human beings and which aids in chewing, swallowing and digestion. This term is metaphorically extended to denote venom, a poisonous liquid secreted by some animals such as snakes and also urine, a yellowish liquid waste that is released from the body of, a human being or an animal. These two meanings are an instance of the conceptual metaphors VENOM/URINE IS SALIVA. These two meanings have a common attribute with saliva in that they are liquids that are produced by animals and human beings. In this metaphoric relationship, the source domain of liquids is mapped on to the target domain of liquids. However, the liquids in the target domain are either in form of poison or waste.

In the analysis of the metaphoric extension of the above terms, it can be noted that they are extended to refer to terms in the target domains of liquids that are released from the body and tasks that are performed by human beings. The transfer of the appearance and functions of *maĩ* ‘water’ and *mata* ‘saliva’ to amniotic fluid, an easy task, venom and urine respectively make these two terms polysemous.

### 3.9 Metaphoric Extensions from the Food Domain

In this section, the metaphoric polysemy of terms that refer to types of food is analysed. The term that is analysed is *ngima* ‘corn bread’. The prototypical meaning of this term is corn bread, a type of food that is made by mixing maize flour and water. This meaning is metaphorically extended to have polysemous meanings in different semantic fields.

First *ngima* is metaphorically extended to denote a foolish person. This extension is motivated through the conceptual metaphor A FOOLISH PERSON IS CORN BREAD. This meaning is derived from the prototypical meaning via metaphoric extension based on the similar characteristics observed between this type of food and the person being referred to. The foolish person is likened to *ngima* because just as it is thick when cooked, the foolish person is also thick and does not understand anything. The second meaning is *ngima* as money. This meaning is an instance of the metaphor MONEY IS CORN BREAD. On the basis of this metaphor, the following connections between the source and the target. *Ngima* is a staple food for the Gĩkũyũ and people cannot survive without it. Money is likened to *ngima* because it shares the attribute of being depended on. For people to get their basic needs for survival they must have money. It is these perceived similarities between the object denoted by the prototypical meaning and the extended meanings that make *ngima* to

be polysemous. In these metaphoric relationships, there is mapping from the source domain of types of food to the target domains of human beings and money which are animate and inanimate respectively.

### **3.10 Metaphoric Extensions from the Plants/Fruits Domain**

In this section the metaphoric polysemy of the following words, *mũtĩ* ‘tree’, *irio* ‘food crops’ and *gacungwa* ‘small orange’ is analysed.

*Mũtĩ* ‘tree’ has the prototypical meaning which denotes, a tall plant. This term, is however, used to convey other meanings through metaphoric extension. One of them is the male reproductive organ which is motivated through the conceptual metaphors THE SHAPE/FUNCTIONS OF A TREE ARE THE SHAPE/FUNCTIONS OF THE MALE REPRODUCTIVE ORGAN. The tree is a symbol of life as it bears fruits. It is also straight and has branches. It is these characteristics that are mapped onto the male reproductive organ. This mapping occurs because of the similarities in shape and functions between the male reproductive organ and the tree. Just like a tree, the male reproductive organ is also a source of life, because through it, human beings are brought to life and when it is erect, it stands straight like a tree. The next meaning of *mũtĩ* is the vote which is not directly derived from the prototypical meaning. This meaning is metaphorically derived from ‘stick’ which is extended from the prototypical meaning. The metaphoric relationships between the stick and the vote are motivated by the conceptual metaphor THE FUNCTIONS OF A STICK ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF A VOTE. The stick is a symbol of power and control over the person it is being used on. The same case applies to the vote as it symbolizes power and control. Those who cast their votes have the power to elect leaders of their choice. When elections were introduced, people had to cast their votes which were then counted in order to

know who the winner was. This act evokes the traditional way of counting sticks. Due to these reasons the vote came to be referred to as *mũtĩ*. This extension shows that when new concepts or objects enter the Gĩkũyũ worldview, they are not given unique terms. Instead terms of already existing objects/concepts are extended to refer to them. In this metaphoric relationship, there is mapping from the source domain of the parts of a tree to the target domain of politics.

The other instance of metaphoric extension is *gacungwa* ‘a small orange’ whose prototypical meaning exemplifies the fruit sense. This meaning is extended to include in its denotation, a beautiful young girlfriend to an old man. This extension is motivated by the conceptual metaphor THE SWEETNESS OF A HUMAN BEING IS THE SWEETNESS OF A FRUIT. The orange fruit is sweet and juicy. It is these characteristics of the fruit that are mapped onto a person who is perceived to have similar characteristics. The young girlfriend is likened to this fruit to evoke the sense that she is as sweet and juicy and arouses desire in a man and can be eaten just like the fruit. This meaning entered the Gĩkũyũ lexicon in the 1990s when so many people were retrenched from their jobs. During this period many men left their homes and looked for young women to help them ‘eat’ the retrenchment package. The word *gacungwa* is always used in contrast with *karimaĩ* ‘small lime’ a fruit which has an acidic taste to refer to the men’s legal wives who at the time were regarded as being too old and unsophisticated to arouse any desire in their husbands unlike the ‘*gacungwa*. In this metaphoric relationship, there is mapping from the source domain of fruits on to the target domain of human beings.

In the metaphoric extension of the terms that denote plants and fruits, it was observed that they are extended to have polysemous meanings in the target domains of human beings, human body parts and abstract concepts such as politics. The metaphoric mapping is based on similarities in shape and functions between the source and the target.

### 3.11 Metaphoric Extensions from the Human Beings Domain

In this section, the polysemy of the terms that refer to human beings is analysed. These nouns are *mũthuuri* ‘man’ and *kameme*, a gossip’. Here the terms that refer to human beings act as the source domains and they are mapped on to target domains from different semantic fields.

The prototypical meaning of *mũthuuri* man is an adult male. Through semantic extension, this term is used to denote a woman who has the behavioural characteristics of a man. This extension is motivated by the conceptual metaphor A WOMAN IS A MAN. The connections between the source and the target are based on similarities in behavioural characteristics. In Gĩkũyũ the man is perceived to have the qualities of leadership, power and control over all the members of his family and courage. He is also a protector and provider for his family. If a woman portrays these characteristics, she is likened to a man, where the transfer of *mũthuuri* from a typical man to a woman of similar behaviour, is therefore metaphorical by similarity between the man and woman on basis of the relational identity to the behavior or characteristics of a man. In this metaphoric relationship, there is mapping from the source domain of human beings to the target domain of human beings.

The other term in this category of nouns is *kameme* ‘gossip’ which has the prototypical meaning of a person who talks too much. The person being referred to here has the behaviour



of spreading information most of which is in form of rumours and gossip very fast to very many people. This meaning is extended to refer to a radio an electronic device. The polysemy here is triggered by the conceptual metaphor A RADIO IS A GOSSIP. When the radio, an electronic device for broadcasting was introduced the Gīkūyū did not have a term to refer to it. For this reason, they looked into their world view for an object among the ones they used to spread information through, to see which one had similar characteristics to the new device. They observed that *kameme* had some similar characteristics with the radio. Just like a gossip spreads a lot of information to very many people within a very short time, the radio is also used to broadcast lots of information in form of news and programmes to very many people within a large geographical region very fast. Due to these perceived similarities in functions, the term *kameme* was extended to denote, a radio. In this metaphoric relationship, there is mapping from the source domain of human beings on to the target domain of technological innovations. This mapping is also from the source domain of animate objects to the target domain of inanimate objects.

In the metaphoric extensions of the nouns that denote human beings, it can be noted that the mappings are from the source domain of human beings to the target domains of human beings and technological devices. Two mapping models have been observed. These are mappings from the animate being on to the animate being and mapping from the animate being to the inanimate being

### 3.12 Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, the polysemy that is based on metaphorical extension has been discussed. The characteristics of the source domain which are transferred to the target are discussed. Lastly the main mapping models between the source and the target are discussed.

Metaphor was observed to be a central feature of Gīkūyū and it is an important source of polysemous senses. As earlier stated, metaphor in Cognitive Linguistics is regarded as a mapping between the source domain and the target domain. In the analysis and interpretation of the data, four mapping models of metaphoric polysemous relationships emerged. These are mapping from the animate domain on to the animate domain, mapping from the animate domain to the inanimate domain, mapping from the inanimate domain to the animate domain and mapping from the inanimate domain to the inanimate domain.

Nouns from various semantic fields such as animals, plants and human body parts occur more in metaphor and act as the source domains. Their target domains are concrete as well as abstract objects. In Table 2 below a summary of the source domains of the polysemous Gīkūyū nouns and the target domains that they are mapped on to is given.

**Table 2: Summary of the Source Domains of the Gikūyū Nouns and their Target Domains**

Summary of the Source Domains of the Gikūyū Nouns and their Target Domains

	<b>SOURCE DOMAIN</b>	<b>TARGET DOMAIN</b>
1	Animals	Human beings Inanimate objects, for example, the mobile phone Types of food such as meat.
2	Body Parts	Object parts Strange diseases, for example, HIV Aids Source of something, for example, source of a river Theme or subject of a topic Abstract concepts, for example, positions of leadership
3	Plants/Fruits	Human body parts Human beings
5	Containers	Containers Internal body organs Buildings that denote correctional facilities
6	Buildings	Taboos Social institutions such as marriage Taboos such as the ones associated with death.
7	Types of food	Human Beings Economic activities
8	Celestial bodies	Names of animals Human beings Seasons Taboos
9	Technological Activities	Social activities Plants
10	Human beings	Human beings Inanimate objects, for example, the radio

In the literature, the source domain is regarded to be more concrete while the target is abstract. However, in Gikūyū, the following was noted: there are many instances where the

source and its target are both concrete. For instance, where the animal is the source and its target is a human being or an inanimate object such as the mobile phone. In other instances, the source is concrete while its target is abstract. For instance, where the *nyūmba* 'house', a building is the source domain which is metaphorically extended to the target domain of death which is an abstract concept

In this type of polysemy, the characteristics of the source are mapped on to the target. In the metaphoric polysemy of the Gikūyū nouns the appearance, the behavior, the position and functions of the source domain objects are transferred to the target domain object.

The next chapter presents metonymic polysemy.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 METONYMIC POLYSEMY IN GĪKŪYŪ

#### 4.1 Introduction to the Chapter

This chapter discusses objective three which aims at establishing how the semantic cognitive mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy motivate the semantic extensions of the polysemous Gĭkŭyŭ nouns. It has focused on metonymy as one of the central mechanisms that motivates the polysemy of the Gĭkŭyŭ nouns. In Cognitive Linguistics, metonymy involves the mapping of one referent to another element within a frame or domain, a conceptual structure containing both concepts (Lakoff 1987, Fauconnier 1985). For this reason, the expression denoting the source is then used metonymically to refer to the target. Norrick (1981) contends that metonymical senses extend the core sense to an entity denoted by the core sense. In this case, both the core sense and the extended sense are physically related and they are found together in the real world. Due to this, the extended meaning remains in the same domain as the core sense

#### 4.2 Patterns of Metonymic Polysemy

In the literature, this type of polysemy is referred to as regular, systematic, logical or sense alternation polysemy (cf. Sirinvas & Rabagliati, 2015; Dolling, 2018; Vicente & Falkum, 2017; Pustejovsky 1991&1995, Copestake & Briscoe, 1996; Apresjan 1974). In this polysemy, there are different systematic patterns of polysemy where multiple words have sets of senses that are related in similar ways. These senses cut across different semantic fields such as animals, plants, objects, body parts, types of food and liquids, and events. Norrick (1981) contends that metonymical meanings follow regular patterns that are generalizable across languages. The proceeding sections, therefore, discuss the patterns of

metonymic relationships which motivate the polysemy of the Gĩkũyũ nouns. The syntactic behaviour of some of the metonymic polysemous relationships is also discussed.

#### 4.2.1 The whole for the part

According to Fu (2012), the most typical kind of metonymy is probably the WHOLE FOR THE PART. This can be extended to the specific for the general metonymy where a salient member of an experiential domain or category is used to stand for that domain or category as a whole. Fu further argues that the cognitive linguistic treatment of metonymy focuses on how the part concept can evoke the whole, how a salient part of an experiential domain can evoke the domain at large, and how a specific can evoke the whole category. In this relationship, the name of the whole is also extended to the part. In the analysis of the polysemous Gĩkũyũ nouns, the WHOLE FOR THE PART metonymic relationship is realized through more specific sub-types as enumerated in the following paragraphs.

To begin with, this relationship is realized through the subtypes HEAD FOR HAIR and HEAD FOR MIND/BRAIN. In this category, the same term is used to denote the body part and also to the components of that part. *kĩongo* which denotes the head, the body part is extended through the WHOLE FOR THE PART METONYMY to denote the hair and the brain which are its component parts as in the following Examples:

1. a). *Ena kĩongo kĩnene.*

He/she has a big head.

b). *Enjkĩongo.*

Shave head

Shave your head.

c). *Hũthĩra kĩongo gĩaku wega.*

Use head your head well.

Use your head well.

In the above examples, the head refers to the body part, the hair and the mind/brain through the WHOLE FOR THE PART metonymy. The head in its relationship with the whole body has a PART FOR THE WHOLE relationship but in its relationship with its component Parts it has a WHOLE FOR THE PART relationship.

The second sub-type is the ANIMAL FOR MEAT DERIVED FROM THE ANIMAL. According to Greenberg (1983), the Niger-Congo languages, of which Gĩkũyũ is a member, collapse the meanings animal and meat from the animal into a single word. For this reason, the term for the animal which denotes the whole is extended to refer to the meat derived from the animal which is the part. In Gĩkũyũ, the term *ngũrwe* is an example of a noun that is used metonymically to refer to both the animal and the meat derived from the animal as illustrated in Examples 2 a&b below.

2a). *Ngũrwe nĩ noru mũno.*

Pig is fat very.

The pig is very fat.

b). *Ruga ngũrwe.*

Cook pig

Cook the pig.

In addition, the TREE FOR WOOD DERIVED FROM THE TREE and the TREE FOR STICK DERIVED FROM THE TREE exhibit the WHOLE FOR THE PART metonymic relationship. In Gĩkũyũ, the same term is used to denote the tree and its component parts as illustrated in Examples 3a- c below.

3a). *Tema mũtĩ.*

Cut tree.

Cut the tree.

b). *Mũtĩ ũyũ nĩ mwega wa waka.*

Tree this is good for building.

This tree is good for building.

c). *Amahũra nginya mũtĩ waunangĩka.*

He/has beaten them until stick got broken.

He/she has beaten them until the stick got broken.

In sentences 3a *Mũtĩ* denotes the whole while in b-c, it denotes its component parts through the WHOLE FOR THE PART metonymy

Likewise, the ASSOCIATION FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF ASSOCIATIONS and APPOINTMENT FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF APPOINTMENTS are also sub-types of the WHOLE FOR THE PART metonymy. In Gĩkũyũ, the names for the association and appointment are extended to refer to the different types of associations and appointments as illustrated in Examples 6a- d & 7 a-c.



6a). *Ingĩrai kĩama.*

Join association.

Join an association

b). *Kĩama gĩũ kĩrahotanire gĩthurano.*

Party ours it won elections.

Our party won the elections.

c). *Kiama kĩa athuri nĩ gĩatuire cira ũcio.*

Association of elder settled case that.

The council of elders settled that case.

d). *Kĩama gĩa thukuru nĩkĩrandikire arimũ.*

Committee of school employed teachers.

The school committee employed teachers.

7a). *Aheo gĩathĩ Kĩa rũcio.*

He/She was given appointment for tomorrow.

He/She was given an appointment for tomorrow.

b). *Ndagũra mbembe ici gĩathĩ.*

I bought maize this appointment.

I bought this maize in the market.

c). *Tũkarĩa gĩathĩ kĩa mwathani kiumia.*

We shall eat appointment of God Sunday.

We shall take the Holy Communion on Sunday.

In sentences 6a & 7a, *kĩama&gĩathĩ* denote associations and appointments in general which are the whole while in 6 b-d & 7b-c they are extended to refer to the different types of associations and appointments through the WHOLE FOR THE PART metonymy.

There are other sub-types of the WHOLE FOR THE PART. Among these are the MONTH FOR DATE where the same term is used to denote the month and the date respectively as in Examples 8a&b.

8a). *Mweri ũkoragwo na thikũ mĩrongo itatũ.*

Month it has days' thirty

A month has thirty days.

b). *Ūmũthĩ nĩ mweri igĩrĩ.*

Today is date two.

Today is second.

In these examples, the month denotes the whole which is extended to refer to the date, the part.

Furthermore, in the MAN FOR HUSBAND /ELDER subtype, the term *mũthuuri* is used to refer to man which denotes the whole category of men. Through metonymic extension the term is used to refer to husband and elder a specific group of men, thus they are part of the whole group as in Examples 9a-c below.

9a). *Mũthuuri wothe oke mĩcemanio.*

Man every come meeting.

Every man should come for the meeting.

b). *Mũthuuri wake nĩaramũracĩirie.*

Husband hers paid bride price for her.

Her husband paid bride price for her.

c). *Athuuri nĩmekire igongona mũgumo-inĩ.*

Elders did ceremony fig tree in.

The elders performed a ceremony under the fig tree.

*Mũthuuri* denotes man which is a general term for all adult males thus it evokes the whole class of men. Husband and elder denote specific type of men thus the two are a part of the whole.

Finally, the CUP FOR CHALICE /TROPHY and the PLANT FOR FOOD DERIVED FROM THE PLANT are the other sub-types of the WHOLE FOR THE PART metonymy that the Gĩkũyũ polysemous nouns have exhibited. In these relationships, the terms for the cup and the plant are extended metonymically to denote the chalice, trophy and the food derived from the plant respectively as in Examples 10a-c & 11a-b

10a). *Rehegĩkombe kũu.*

Bring cup that.

Bring that cup.

b). *Njohi ya gĩathĩ kĩa mwathani ikĩragwo gĩkombe-inĩ.*

Wine of appointment with God is put cup in.

The wine for the Holy Communion is put in a chalice.

c). *Nĩmachinda gĩkombe kĩa mahenya.*

They have won cup for athletics.

They have won a trophy for athletics.

*Gĩkombe*, in Example 10 a denotes the whole class of cups while in Examples 10 b&c, it

denotes specific types of cups. In this case the two are part of the whole.

11 a). *Irio nĩmerete wega.*

Plants have germinated well.

The plants have germinated well.

b). *Irio nĩ hũu?*

Food is ready?

Is the food ready?

In Example 11a *irio* stands for food crops and it has the plant sense and it denotes the whole while in 11b it has the sense of food that is derived from the plant, hence it is the part.

#### 4.2.2 Part for the whole

According to Emanatian (1994), the PART FOR WHOLE polysemic relations are apparently common. In this relationship, the name for a part of an entity is also used to refer to that entire entity. The Gĩkũyũ polysemous nouns have exhibited this relationship through the enumerated sub-types.

Firstly, it has been exhibited through the WHEELS FOR CAR. Where the same term is used to denote both the wheels and the car as in Examples 12a&b.

12a). *Magũrũ ma ngari nimaregeru.*

The legs of the car are loose.

The wheels of the car are loose.

b). *Nĩaragũrire magũrũ.*

He bought wheels.

In the above examples, *magũrũ* denotes an object part. The wheels are component parts of the car. Through the PART FOR THE WHOLE metonymy, the term is also extended to refer to the car which is the object.

Additionally, the relationship is extended through the FAMILY FOR CLAN subtype. In this metonymy, the same term is used to refer to the family and the clan as in Examples 13a&b

13a). *Nyũmba yao ti nene.*

House theirs is not large.

Their house is not large.

b). *Cira ũcio ũgũtuo nĩ athuuri a nyũmba.*

Case that it will be settled by elders of house.

That case will be settled by the elders of the house.

In 13a *nyũmba* denotes the family which is a part of a clan while in 13b, it denotes the clan which denotes the whole.

Beyond the WHOLE FOR THE PART and PART FOR THE WHOLE metonymic polysemous relationships, Gĩkũyũ nouns exhibit several other metonymic relationships as it is illustrated in the proceeding sections.

#### 4.2.3 Container for contents

In the CONTAINER FOR CONTENTS metonymic polysemy, the nouns can either denote the containers or units of substances which are contained in such containers. In Gĩkũyũ, this relationship is realized firstly through the CUP FOR CONTENTS OF THE CUP and the POT FORTHECONTENTS OF THE POT. Here, the same terms are used to denote the cup, the pot and their contents which are mainly liquids and food as illustrated in Examples 14a&b & 15 a&b.

14a). *Thambia gĩkombe*.

Wash the cup.

b). *Ndanyua gĩkombe kĩa maĩ*.

I have drunk a cup of water

15 a). *Hiũhia maĩ na nyũngũ*.

Warm water with pot.

Warm the water with the pot.

b). *Ruga nyũngũ ïmwe*.

Cook pot one.

Cook one pot.

In Examples 14a & 15a, *gikombe* and *nyũngũ* denote containers while in 15&16b, they denote the contents of the containers through the CONTAINER FOR CONTENTS metonymy. The other sub-type of this metonymic polysemy is the HEAD FOR THE BRAIN. The term *kĩongo* denotes the head which is a body part, however, it is also extended metonymically to refer to the brain implying the notion of the mind as in Example 1c repeated here as Example 16.

16. *Hũthĩra kĩongo gĩaku wega.*

Use head your head well.

Used your head well.

The head is considered to be a storage place for the brain. For this reason, it is conceptualized as a container with the mind /brain inside. The notion of the mind is established via the metonymic relationship CONTAINER FOR THE CONTENTS with the head being the container and the brain, the contents

#### **4.2.4 Material for product**

In the MATERIAL FOR PRODUCT metonymic polysemy, the same term is used to refer to the material and its product. In Gĩkũyũ It is divided into the following sub-types. Firstly, it is realized through the WOOD FOR THE CROSS as in example 17.

17. *Jesũ ambirwo mũtĩ-inĩ.*

Jesus was crucified cross on.

Jesus was crucified on the cross.

In this metonymic relationship, wood which is part of a tree is further extended metonymically to refer to the cross. This because the wood constitutes the material from which the cross is made. The next sub-types are TREE FOR LOVE POTION and TREE FOR HERBAL MEDICINE as in Examples 18 & 19 below.

18 *Ahĩngĩcĩtwo na mĩtĩ.*

She /he has been confused with trees.

She/he has been confused with love potion.

19. *Nyua mĩtĩ niguo ũhone.*

Drink trees so that you get healed.

Drink herbal medicine so that you get healed.

The tree constitutes the material from which the love potion and herbal medicine are made. For this reason, the term for tree is extended to refer to both products.

#### **4.2.5 Body part for object part**

In the BODY PART FOR OBJECT PART polysemy, the terms for the body part is metonymically extended to refer to object parts. It is worth noting that in Gĩkũyũ, the body acts as a source domain for various metonymic extensions. The Body part terms such as *kũgũrũ*, *kĩongo*, *ngingo*, and *magego* are examples of nouns which exhibit this relationship.



Through the Metonymic Polysemous relationship, BODY PART FOR OBJECT PART, these terms are extended to have many various more sub-types as enumerated below.

*Kūgūrū* is extended to have polysemous meanings through the following three sub-types, THE LEG FOR THE LEG OF A PIECE OF FURNITURE /PAIR OF TROUSERS/WHEEL OF A CAR which are parts of specific objects as illustrated in Examples 20a-d.

20a). *Kūgūrū gwakwa nīkūimbu.*

Leg mine is swollen.

My leg is swollen.

b). *Kūgūrū kwa metha nīkunīku.*

Leg of table is broken.

The table's leg is broken.

c). *Tuma kūgūrū kwa mūbuto.*

Stitch leg of trousers.

Stitch the leg of the trousers.

d). *Kūgūrū kwa ngari ĩno nīgūtūrīkū.*

Leg of vehicle this is punctured.

The wheel of this vehicle is punctured.

Similarly, *ngingo* 'neck' is extended through the metonymic relationship, NECK FOR NECK OF A DRESS as in Examples 21a&b.

21a). *Ena ngingo ndungu.*

She/he has neck fat.

She/he has a fat neck.

b). *Nguo ãyo ãna ngingo ndaihu.*

Dress that it has neck long.

That dress has a long neck.

In 21 a, *ngingo* denotes the body part while in b it denotes the neck of a dress, therefore, it is an object part.

Moreover, *kĩongo* is metonymically extended through the HEAD FOR THE REGULATOR OF A GAS COOKER/RED END PART OF A MATCH STICK. As illustrated in Examples 22a-c.

22a). *Ambararia kĩongo.*

You raise head.

Raise your head.

b). *Nyitia kĩongo kĩa mũtũngi wa ngathi.*

Tighten head of cylinder of gas.

Tighten the head of the gas cylinder.

c). *Kĩongo kĩa mũguĩ nikiuniku.*

Head of match stick is broken.

The head of the match stick is broken.

In the above instances *kĩongo* refers to the body part and heads of specific objects like the gas cylinder and the match stick

Last but not least, the term *magego* is extended through the TEETH FOR THE TEETH OF A SAW/COGS OF A WHEEL/TEETH OF A COMB/ A ZIP metonymic relationships to refer to the body part and the object parts. As illustrated in Examples 23a to 23 e

a). *Magego makwa mena marima.*

Teeth mine have holes.

My teeth have cavities.

b). *Magego ma thoo nĩmatuhu.*

Teeth of the saw are blunt.

The teeth of the saw are blunt.

c). *Magego ma magũrũ ma ngari ñno nĩmaregeru.*

Teeth of the wheels of this car are loose.

The cogs of the wheels of this car are loose.

d). *Magego ma gĩcanĩri gĩkĩ matiracanĩra njuirĩ.*

Teeth of this comb this are not combing hair.

This comb's teeth are not combing the hair.

e). *Magego ma nyororo ya nguo ñno nĩmaunĩku.*

Teeth of zip of dress this are broken.

The teeth of the zip of this dress are broken.

In sentence 23 a, *magego* denotes the body part while in b-e, the object parts.

The BODY PART FOR OBJECT PART relationship can be extended to THE WHOLE FOR THE PART/ PART FOR THE WHOLE metonymic relationships. This is because the

body parts namely, *kūgūrũ*, *ngingokĩongo* and *magego* have a PART FOR THE WHOLE relationship with the whole body since they form its components. Then the object parts also have the same relationship with the objects since they form their components. This metonymic relationship evokes metaphoric relationships between the body parts and the object parts they are extended to denote. The metaphoric mapping between the source body part and the target object part is based on similarities in appearance, position and function. For instance, *kūgūrũ* which is an elongated body part acts as a source domain for elongated object parts such as leg of a chair and leg of a bed.

#### 4.2.6 Object for the substance derived from the object

According to Klein and Murphy (2001), the OBJECT FOR SUBSTANCE relation is found when the same word is used to refer to an object and the substance that makes it up. These scholars state that these forms of polysemy are highly productive and they are used quite easily when new words enter the lexicon. In Gĩkũyũ, this pattern of metonymic polysemy is divided into many specific sub-types as illustrated in the proceeding paragraphs.

The first group of these relationships are those that are extended from the term *mũtĩ*. Among these is TREE FOR WOOD as in sentences 3a-b repeated in Examples 24 a&b below

24a). *Tema mũtĩ.*

Cut tree.

Cut the tree.

b). *Mũtĩ ũyũ nĩ mwega wa gwaka.*

Tree this is good for building.

In these examples, *mũtĩ* denotes the tree which is the object and the wood, the substance.

The other relationships are TREE FOR LOVE POTION and TREE FOR HERBAL MEDICINE as illustrated in sentences 25a&b repeated from Examples 18&19.

25a). *Ahĩngĩcĩtwo na mĩĩ.*

She /he has been confused with trees.

She/he has been confused with love potion.

b). *Nyua mĩĩ niguo ũhone.*

Drink trees so that you get healed.

Drink herbal medicine so that you get healed.

In these examples *mĩĩ* stands for the object and the substances derived from it namely the wood, love potion and the herbal medicine.

The other group is where the term is extended to denote the meat. The examples are, THE ANIMAL FOR MEAT DERIVED FROM THE ANIMAL and THE HEAD FOR MEAT DERIVED FROM THE HEAD as illustrated in Examples 26 a &b &27a&b below.

26 a). *Thĩnja mbũri.*

Slaughter goat.

b). *Mbũri ĩ cama.*

Goat is tasty.

The goat is tasty.

27a). *Inania kĩongo.*

Raise head.

Raise your head.

b). *Therũkia kĩongo.*

Boil head.

Boil the head.

In the above examples, *mbũri* and *kĩongo* stand for the animal and the body part which are objects. Through metonymic extension, these two terms are also used to refer to the meat which is a substance derived from the object.

#### 4.2.7 BUILDING FOR INSTITUTION

In the BUILDING FOR INSTITUTION metonymic polysemous relationship, the same term is used to denote the building and the institution. In Gĩkũyũ, it is realized through the sub-type HOUSE FOR FAMILY as illustrated in Examples 28a&b

28a). *Nĩarakire nyũmba.*

He/she has built a house.

b). *Nyũmba itũ ñna mũcemanio.*

House us has a meeting.

Our house has a meeting.

In 28 a, *nyũmba* refers to a bulding while in b to the institution of the family.

#### 4.2.8 Building for physical object/device

In the BUILDING FOR PHYSICAL OBJECT/DEVICE metonymic polysemy, the word denoting the building is metonymically extended to refer to the object /device that is placed in the building. In Gĩkũyũ, it is realized through the sub-type KITCHEN FOR COOKER as illustrated in 29a&b

29 a). *Iga irio riko.*

Keep the food in the kitchen.

b). *Akia riko*.

Light the cooker.

In Example 29a, *riko* denotes the building where food is cooked and stored while in b, it denotes, the cooker. The cooker is referred to as *riiko* since it is a device for cooking which is placed in the kitchen where the cooking takes place.

#### **4.2.9 Building for people working in the building**

In the BUILDING FOR PEOPLE WORKING IN THE BUILDING metonymic polysemy, the same term is used that refer to the building and the people who are working in that building as illustrated in Examples 30a & b.

30a. *Hinga riko*.

Close the kitchen

b). *Thiĩ ũteithie riko*.

Go you help kitchen

You go and help the kitchen.

In Example 30 a, *riko* denotes the building while in 30 b it denotes the people who are working in the kitchen.

#### 4.2.10 Animal trait for personality trait

In the ANIMAL TRAIT FOR PERSONALITY TRAIT metonymic polysemy, same term is used to denote the animal and a person who has the traits of the animal. This metonymy is realized through the ANIMAL TRAITS FOR HUMAN TRAITS. This is illustrated in Examples 31a&b

31 a) *Ngūrwe nīyendio.*

Pig has been sold.

The pig has been sold.

b) *Mūdū ūcio nī ngūrwe.*

Person that is pig.

That person is a pig.

In Example 31a, *ngūrwe* refers to the animal. This animal is fat and thus ugly. At the same time, it is greedy. If a human being portrays these traits, he/she is referred to as *ngūrwe* and that is why we have an Example like 31 b above. This metonymic relationship evokes meatophoric relationships. This is because there is mapping between the source domain of the animals and the target domain of human beings. As already indicated in Gīkūyū, the pig is conceptualized to be a very greedy and ugly animal. It is, therefore, the behaviour traits and appearance of this animal that are transferred through metaphor to a human being who has such traits.



#### 4.2.11 Substance for portioning of the substance

In the SUBSTANCE FOR PORTIONING OF THE SUBSTANCE metonymic polysemy, the same term is used to refer to the substance and the portioning of that substance as illustrated in 32a&b.

32a). He maĩ.

Give me water.

b). *Hemaĩ merĩ*.

Give me water two

Give me two waters.

In these examples, *maĩ* denotes the substance and the portioning respectively.

#### 4.2.12 Physical object for institution/people responsible

In The Physical Object For Institution/People RESPONSIBLE metonymic polysemy, the same term is used to refer to the physical object, the institution and the people responsible as illustrated in Examples 33a, b &c

33 a). *Hingũĩrakameme*.

Open radio.

Switch on the radio.

b). *Andĩkĩtwo nĩ kameme*.

He/She is employed by the radio.

c). *Kameme ti gakinyu.*

The radio has not arrived.

In 33a, *kameme* refers to radio which is a device for broadcasting hence it is a physical object while in 33 b-c it refers to the radio station which is an institution and the people who work for that radio station respectively.

#### 4.2.13 Process for object/Device for measuring the process

In the PROCESS FOR OBJECT/DEVICE FOR MEASURING THE PROCESS metonymic polysemy, the same term is used to refer to the process and the device for measuring the process as illustrated in Examples 34a, b & c.

34a). *Nĩ gĩthaa kĩega gĩa kũruta wĩra.*

It is time good to do work.

It is a good time to work.

b) *Macuritie gĩthaa rĩthingo-inĩ.*

They have hung an extremely big clock on the wall.

c). *Ekĩrĩte gĩthaa guoko.*

He/she has put an extremely big watch on the hand.

*Gĩthaa* in 34a refers to time which is a process while in 34b-c, it is metonymically extended to denote an extremely big clock and watch which are electronic devices for measuring time.

#### 4.2.14 Type of food /beverage taken during an event for the event

In Gĩkũyũ, there are nouns that have a binary meaning such that they can be used to refer to a type of food or beverage and the event where that food or beverage is consumed as illustrated in 35a to 35 d

35a). *Tũkũrĩa njenga*.

We are going to eat particles of ground maize.

b). *Ndathiĩ njenga*.

I am going for particles of ground maize.

c). *Nyua cai*.

Drink tea.

d). *Nĩwĩtĩtwo cai?*

Have you been invited tea?

Have you been invited for tea?

In 35a and c, *njenga* and *cai* exemplify the food and beverage senses respectively while in b and d they both have the event sense were the food and the beverage are taken.

#### 4.2.15 Instrument for the action metonymy

In the analysis of the data, the INSTRUMENT FOR THE ACTION polysemy is exhibited by the term *gūtũ*. This term involves a number of semantic extensions which are motivated through the BODY PART FOR OBJECT. However, it should be noted that in *Gĩkũyũ*, this term exhibits other metonymic relationships such as the one above. This is realized through, the phraseological expressions, involving the ear to refer to listening or hearing as illustrated in Examples 36 a&b below:

36. a). *He gūtũ.*

Give me ear

Give me your ear.

b). *Tegagūtũ.*

Trap ear.

Pay attention.

In the first example, ear is mapped on to listening through the INSTRUMENT FOR ACTION metonymy. In the second example, ear stands for paying attention when used with the verb ‘tega’. The mapping also takes place through the same metonymic relationship. The ear in the above examples is the physical object organ that has a listening and hearing function. It has an extended meaning that refers to the abstract qualities of listening and being attentive through hearing. In both cases, therefore, the metonymic transfer is from the concrete domain of the body to the more abstract domain of the intellect.

#### 4.2.16 Body part for illness metonymy.

In the BODY PART FOR ILLNESS polysemy, a body part is associated with a medical condition. This consists of a mapping of the body part on to the medical condition. An instance of this polysemy in Gĩkũyũ is the mapping of *mũkingo* ‘an extremely long neck’ on to HIV AIDS, a medical condition that is not caused by the neck as illustrated in Examples 37a&b.

37a). *Mũkingo wake nĩ mutihie.*

Neck(Augumentative) his/her is wounded.

b). *Ndawa cia mũkingo itironeka*

The drugs for extremely long neck are not available.

The drugs for HIV AIDS are not available.

In 37a, *mũkingo* refers to the body part while in b it refers to the medical condition.

This metonymy evokes metaphoric relations in that there is mapping of the characteristics of the body part on to the symptoms of the diseases. The neck being referred to is long and thin. At the same time, those who are infected by HIV AIDS are ravaged by the effects of the disease and they become thinner and thinner. Due to this there is metaphorical projection from the shape of the neck on to the symptoms of this medical condition.

#### 4.2.17 General for specific metonymy

According to Washington (2010), in the GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC polysemy, the semantic form of a word can be more general. This means that the meaning of a word becomes more inclusive where its conceptual space grows as it widens its meaning to have more referents.

The general term of an object, can also be used to denote its specific parts. When this happens, the original meaning is restricted to a small group of referents. This means that the meaning of a word becomes less general and less inclusive as its conceptual space shrinks. In the GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymy, the semantic processes occur within a single domain causing a shift of meaning between the super ordinates level, the basic level and the level of species

The WHOLE FOR THE PART metonymic relationship can be extended to the GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymy where a salient member of an experiential domain or category which is used to stand for that domain or category as a whole is also extended to refer to the specific parts. The instances that exhibit the GENERAL FOR THE SPECIFIC polysemy are sub-types of the WHOLE FOR THE PART METONYMIC relationship. Some of the examples of these subtypes are the MAN FOR HUSBAND and MAN FOR ELDER. The general term for man in Gīkūyū is *mūthuuri* which denotes all adult males. However, this term, has some specialized meanings. These are ‘husband’. As compared to the original meaning, this meaning is exclusive as it denotes a special type of man, one who is married and has paid bride price for his wife or wives. The second meaning is ‘elder’ which is exclusive as it is only used to refer to some specific group of men. In Gīkūyū, an elder is a man who is old, married, all his children are grown up and he is highly respected in the society. All other men and women are not included in this group.

The next pattern of this polysemy is GROUP/ASSOCIATION FOR TYPES OF GROUPS/ASSOCIATIONS. The general term for a group or association is *kīama*. This term includes in its denotation all groups/associations. This term’s prototypical meaning denotes an association or group that serves common interests. It is also used to denote

specific types of groups. Among these is the council of elders which in the traditional Gĩkũyũ perspective a specific group of men. This group is exclusive as it is only the men who are old, married and highly respected in the society who belong to it. The examples of other specific types of groups are which are denoted by this term are political party, trade union, church council, school committee.

### **4.3 Metonymic Polysemy and the Syntactic Behaviour of the Gĩkũyũ Nouns**

In metonymic polysemy, some of the relationships seem to affect syntactic behaviour, for example, the relationships that rest on the count-mass noun distinction. According to Dolling (2018), the probably most salient variations in meaning, and with it, in denotation of nouns are closely linked to the count-mass distinction in English and other languages with count-mass syntax. For more information on this see Pelletier&Schubert (2001), Krifka (1995), Chierchia (1998) and Falkum (2011).

In Gĩkũyũ, there are varieties of metonymic relationships that help bring out the count-mass distinction in the language. This is where a number of nouns vary in reading in which they denote objects such as trees, body parts, animals, containers, buildings, hence they are count nouns. In another reading, they denote a substance, a product from such objects, hence they are mass nouns. To begin with the WHOLE FOR THE PART metonymic polysemy, in some cases helps to bring the count-mass distinction. This is realized through some sub-types of this metonymic relationship as illustrated by the following instances:

#### **1. Animal for meat derived from the animal**

a). *Mbũri nĩyarĩa nyeki.*

Goat has eaten grass.

b). *Tūkūrīa mbūri.*

We shall eat goat.

## 2 tree for wood derived from the the tree

a) *Mūtī ũyũ ũkūrīte wega.*

Tree this has grown well.

This tree has grown well.

b). *Metha ĩno yakĩtwo na mūtī mūmũ.*

Table this is made of tree hard.

This tree is made from hard wood.

## 3. Head for the hair /head for the brain /mind

a). *Ena kĩongo kīnene.*

He/she head big.

He/she has a big head.

b). *Rengerera kĩongo.*

Trim head.

Trim the head.

c). *Tũmĩra kĩongo gĩaku.*



Use head

Use your head.

In these relationships, the syntactic behaviour of *mbũri*, *mũtĩ* and *kĩongo* is affected. This is because in Examples 1a,2a &3a, these nouns instantiate count nouns. In Examples 1b, 2b, 3b&c, they are extended to denote, the meat, wood, hair and the brain/mind, hence they are used as mass nouns.

According to Dolling (2018), some substance nouns such as beer, wine, gin, coca-cola are mass when they denote amounts of liquid, but are count when they denote units of liquids. This is the same case with some Gĩkũyũ nouns such as *maĩ* ‘water’ and *caai* ‘tea’ which have exhibited this pattern in the metonymic relationship SUBSTANCE FOR THE PORTIONING OF THE SUBSTANCE as illustrated by Examples 4a-d

4a). *Nyua maĩ*,

Drink water.

. b). *Endia maĩ matano*.

Sell five waters.

c). *Hiũhia caai*.

Warm tea.

Warm the tea.

d). *Rehe caai ãmwe*.

Bring tea one.

Bring one tea.

In Example 4a, *maĩ* denotes water, which is a liquid, thus it is used as a mass noun. In addition, *caai* which is also a liquid is used as a mass noun in 4c. Moreover, in 4b & d, *maĩ* and *caai* are extended to denote the portioning of the liquids, hence they are used as a count noun.

The next pattern which brings out the count-mass distinction is where the nouns can denote either the containers or units of substances that are contained in such containers. This is illustrated by the CONTAINER FOR CONTENTS metonymic polysemy, The Gĩkũyũ nouns were observed to exhibit specific subtypes of this relationship. Among these is

5. CUP FOR THE CONTENTS OF THE CUP as illustrated in Examples 5 a&b.

a). *Thambia gĩkombe.*

Wash cup.

b). *Nyua gĩkombe tu.*

Drink cup only.

Drink a cup only.

Similarly, the POT FOR THE CONTENTS OF THE POT also falls in this group as illustrated in Examples 6a & b

6a). *Nyũngũ nĩ nguĩ.*

Pot is broken.

The pot is broken.

b). *Nyũngũ nĩ hĩu?*

Pot is ready?

Is the pot ready?

In 5a&6a, *gĩkombe* and *nyũngũ* denote the containers hence they are used as count nouns whereas in 5b&6b, the two are extended to denote the contents of the containers, hence they are used as mass nouns.

Besides these nouns, there are also other nouns that have the relationship between container and contents. For instance, *kĩongo* ‘head’ in the relationship HEAD FOR BRAIN/MIND. The head, as a body part on one hand is conceptualized as a container, thus it instantiates a count noun. On the other hand, the head, is extended to denote the brain which is conceptualized as a substance that is contained in the head. In this instance, *kĩongo* is used as a mass noun.

Finally, there are nouns that can be used to refer to the food and the event where it is consumed. In such cases, the noun is either used as count or mass. Some Gĩkũyũ nouns were observed to have the metonymic polysemy, where the same term is used to refer to the type of food and the event where it is consumed. This is illustrated by the relationship FOOD/ FOR THE EVENT WHERE THE FOOD/BEVERAGE IS CONSUMED. This was observed in nouns such as *njenga*, *caai* and *mbũri*. These nouns instantiate the mass nouns

when they denote the type of food while they denote count nouns when they are extended to refer to the event where the food is consumed.

Some other patterns of metonymic polysemy help bring out the concrete-abstract noun distinction. In these patterns a noun has a reading that denotes a concrete noun on one hand and on the other hand it has a reading that denotes an abstract noun. Among these is the metonymic relationship, the BUILDING FOR INSTITUTION which is realized through the specific sub- type HOUSE FOR MARRIAGE as illustrated in Examples 7a&b.

7a). *Theria nyũmba.*

Clean the house.

b). *Nĩragĩire nyũmba.*

He got a house.

In 7a, *nyũmba* denotes a house. It has the sense of a building which is a physical object, hence it instantiates a concrete noun. In 7b, *nyũmba* is not an instance of the prototypical meaning of a building but it is metonymically extended to refer to the institution of marriage, thus it is used as an abstract noun.

The other pattern in this group is the PROCESS FOR THE DEVICE THAT IS USED TO MEASURE THE PROCESS which is exhibited through the specific subtype TIME FOR THE DEVICE THAT IS USED TO MEASURE TIME as illustrated in Examples 8a&b

8a). *Nĩ gĩthaa kĩega gĩa gũthĩ.*

It is time good for to going.

It is a good time for going.

b). *Gĩthaa kũu nĩ kĩerũ.*

Big clock that is new.

That big clock is new.

In 8a, *gĩthaa*, denotes time which is a process hence it is used as an abstract noun while in 8b, the term is metonymically extended to denote a big clock which is a device for measuring time, thus it is used as a concrete noun.

#### **4.4. Summary of the Chapter**

In this chapter, I have analyzed the metonymic polysemy exhibited by the Gĩkũyũ nouns. The patterns of metonymic polysemous relationships were also discussed. Metonymy was observed to be a vital process that underlies meaning extension in Gĩkũyũ. Through the metonymic extensions, the polysemy of the nouns is realized. In the metonymic polysemy, the Gĩkũyũ nouns exhibit systematic patterns in which sets of senses are related in similar ways. These senses cut across different semantic fields such as plants, fruits, human body parts, animals, human beings, buildings, types of foods, containers and liquids. The various ways in which these nouns can be systematically polysemous are highlighted. The nouns exhibit various patterns of metonymic polysemy. The most salient of these patterns is the WHOLE FOR THE PART which is realized through specific subclasses such as TREE FOR WOOD DERIVED FROM THE TREE and ANIMAL FOR THE MEAT DERIVED FROM THE ANIMAL among others. This relationship can also be extended to the GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymy with the part denoting the specific and the whole the general. One of the examples, through which this relationship is realized through the

MAN FOR HUSBAND/ELDER. Here, *mũthuuri*, the general term for man is extended to denote specific types of men.

Some metonymic relationships evoke metaphoric relationships. An example is the BODY PART FOR OBJECT PART. Here, the characteristics of the body part are mapped on to object part on the basis of similarities in appearance, functions and position between the body part and the object part. For instance, *kũgũrũ* ‘the leg of an animal or human being’ is one of the long thin parts that is positioned at the bottom part of the body and is used for standing and also walking and they give the human beings or animals support. This term is metaphorically extended to denote the object part, especially the leg of a chair, table or bed. This is because the legs of these pieces of furniture are long, thin, positioned at the bottom of the object and they are used for standing thus giving the object support just like the legs support human beings and animals do.

Some of the patterns are closely linked to the count-mass noun distinction in Gĩkũyũ. Examples of these are CONTAINER FOR CONTENTS OF THE CONTAINER and OBJECT FOR SUBSTANCE DERIVED FROM THE OBJECT. Furthermore, there are patterns that help bring out the concrete-abstract noun distinction. Examples of these are the BUILDING FOR INSTITUTION and PROCESS FOR THE DEVICE FOR MEASURING THE PROCESS.

In chapters three and four metaphor and metonymy as motivations for the semantic extension of the polysemy of the Gĩkũyũ nouns are discussed. However, these are not the only factors that motivate this polysemy. Chapter five, therefore, explores the cultural factors that motivate the semantic extension of the polysemous Gĩkũyũ nouns.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 Cultural factors in the semantic extension of the polysemous gīkūyū nouns

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses objective four whose aim is to explore how the Gīkūyū nouns are extended along the cultural process to have polysemous meanings that reflect the social, religious, economic and political roles and activities and taboos of the Agīkūyūpeople.

According to Emanatian (1991), Polysemy is not merely a semantic phenomenon with no importance outside linguistics. For this reason, the socio-cultural factors have as significance in the generation of polysemy. Polysemy and especially metaphorical extension is a linguistic resource for relating one concept, or kind of experience to another. Conceptual relationships normally do not exist in language alone, but connect with other facets of human life, such as beliefs, actions. Studies on polysemy can elucidate these connections. Cognitive Linguistics relies on the assumption that meaning can be examined only when taking into account the full context of use with all facets, including the culture of a speech community (Kraska-Szlenk 2018). Cognitive Linguistics has always underlined the role of culture in shaping language structure and a lot of attention has been paid to examining the cultural models through their reflections in various linguistic expressions analyzed by means of conceptual metaphor and metonymy (Kraska-Szlenk 2014).

This chapter, therefore, analyses the socio- cultural factors that motivate the semantic extension of Gīkūyū nouns to have polysemous meanings. It also discusses how linguistic expressions, in this case nouns, interact with cultural knowledge to have extended meanings that reflect the social activities, social roles, economic activities, religious activities and

roles, political activities and finally the taboos of the Gīkūyū people. Moreover, it also analyses the cognitive process that trigger these extensions along the socio-cultural line.

## **5.2. The Semantic Extensions into the Social Activities/ Social Roles**

According to Yun (2015), China has a long history of farming right from the traditional to the contemporary time. Farming constitutes a great proportion of their economy. Words from their farming activities are extended to have meanings in other domains. There are polysemous words that have various extended meanings that are determined by material civilization such as agriculture. Gīkūyū is no exception to this. As there are various polysemous nouns that have extended meanings that are determined by the agricultural activities of the people. They have terms which are used to refer to the various plants, fruits, domestic animals and farming activities. These terms are semantically extended through metaphor and metonymy to have polysemous meanings outside farming. These extended meanings reflect other socio- cultural aspects.

One instance of such extensions is *mūtī* ‘tree’ which is extended through the MATERIAL FOR THE PRODUCT and the OBJECT FOR THE SUBSTANCE DERIVED FROM THE OBJECT metonymy to refer to the love potion and herbal medicine. These extended meanings reveal the Gīkūyū world where they had their own traditional medicine even before the introduction of conventional medicine. The meaning extension also reveals that they have ways of dealing with social issues such as matters related to love, where they use potions from the products of trees to influence somebody to love another person. These terms *mūtī* (singular) and *mītī* (plural) have both been extended to refer to any products not necessarily from trees that are used to influence people on matters of love.



The development of modern politics has had an effect in the extension of *mũtĩ*. This is because it is extended meaning stick is further extended through the conceptual metaphor a VOTE IS A STICK to include a vote in its denotation. The extension arises from the fact that stick and vote have the same characteristics. In the Gĩkũyũ culture, a ‘stick’ is used to beat people, thus the one who uses it has power and control over the person who is being beaten. The semantic extension arises as a results of these similarities. Among the Gkũyũ, the stick is a symbol of power and control. The one who uses a stick, especially to beat another person, wields a lot of power and control over him or her. With the introduction of modern politics, *mũtĩ* was extended to denote a vote.

This is because just like a stick, the vote is a symbol of power and control. Those who vote (the electorate) have the power to elect people of their choice at the same time, those who win the elections, have the power and control given to them by the electorate through their votes. The reference of the vote as *mũtĩ* also evokes the Gĩkũyũ system of counting using sticks. This is because, the votes once cast have to be counted in order to decide the winner. Moreover it is also extended to refer to ‘lots’ which have a socio-economic perspective. This happens when people in a merry go round contribute money and need to know whom to give it to. It is therefore, common to cast lots to know which position one gets. In their discourse, during such an occasion, it is common to hear people say, *ndoya mũtĩ wambere* ‘I have taken the first lot’. These lots are not sticks, but are small pieces of papers which have numbers written on them, are then folded, put in a container and each person picks.

The contact with other communities like the Indians and the Swahili people from the coast introduced new types of food to the Gĩkũyũ. They had to learn how to prepare and cook them. An example of this type of food is *chapati* which is prepared using a *chapati* board

and a rolling pin. These implements were not given new terms. Instead terms for already existing objects were extended to refer to them. Through the MATERIAL FOR THE PRODUCT metonymy, *mũĩ* is extended to refer to the rolling pin since it is made of wood. Through this extension, the social activity of cooking is reflected.

The Gĩkũyũ grow various food crops such as *mbembe* ‘maize’, *mboco* ‘beans’. All these are referred to using the term *irio* ‘food crops’. This term is, however, extended to denote other objects in the culture of the people. First it is extended to refer to cooked food from the food crops as well as products that are cooked. It is also extended through the GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymy to refer to a specific type of food especially in a hotel context, food that is cooked with green maize, peas and mashed with pumpkin leaves, green bananas and Irish potatoes. From these meanings extensions, it can be seen that, the people have social activities like cooking.

Another instance is *caai* ‘tea bushes’ which is a cash crop that was introduced by the British colonizers. Some of the terms for these cash crops are extended to include in their denotations other objects and concepts. First it is extended to denote a beverage that is made of boiled water and processed tea leaves. This meaning is further extended through the GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymy to refer to other types of beverages which people drink such as cocoa. Among the Gĩkũyũ, it is also extended to refer to the event where this beverage is taken. In the contemporary, society, *caai* has even further been extended to refer to any event where people meet, drink other beverages like soda and at the same time raise money. It is therefore, common for people to refer to occasions such weddings, graduation parties, circumcision parties, baby showers and even fundraising events as *caai*. This

meaning extension of *caai* is motivated through the TYPE OF BEVERAGE TAKEN DURING AN EVENT FOR THE EVENT metonymy, this term is extended to include in its denotation the social activities of the people.

With the changes that have occurred in the society, a lot of vices have been introduced. One such vice is bribery. Since the language of bribery is indirect, people who engage in this vice, do not refer to it as *ihaki* ‘bribe’, the Gĩkũyũ word for it. Instead, they use *caai* to refer to the money or any other commodities that are given in form of bribes. Taking *caai* tea is a very common activity and people are always inviting each other for tea. This is why it is very easy for them to extend this term to refer to a bribe as bribe giving and taking have become very common activities in the society. Through this extension, the term reflects the social vices that exist in the society.

The Gĩkũyũ grow many types of fruits including *macungwa* ‘oranges’. The terms for these fruits are semantically extended to refer to other objects within the Gĩkũyũ world view. An example of such a term is *gacungwa* ‘small orange’ which is the diminutive of *icungwa* ‘orange’. This term was initially metaphorically extended through the conceptual metaphor PEOPLE ARE FRUITS to refer to an old man’s young girlfriend. It acquired this meaning in the 1990s due to the socio-economic changes that occurred in the society. This is when very many people were retrenched from their jobs. To enjoy the retrenchment package, some men looked for young women to be their companions and they left their wives. These young women were regarded to be desirable and sweet to the men since they were perceived to be different from the other women. The people looked for a term to refer to them. The term for the orange, a common sweet and juicy fruit in their world view, had its denotation extended to include this group of women. Since the women were young the term was extended in its

diminutive form to refer to them. The term became very common in everyday discourse such that it was contrasted with *karimau* ‘small lime’ which is used to refer to the man’s legal wife. *Karimau* is a bitter fruit. This means that the wife was not as sweet and desirable as the *gacungwa*. The term has since then been extended to refer to all other women associated with a man who are either mistresses and other wives apart from the first wife. The above polysemous meanings of *gacungwa* reflect the social roles that women play in the Gĩkũyũ culture. There are those who play the role of girlfriends, mistresses and other wives. Besides, it also reflects the institution of marriage as being polygamous.

In addition to the above terms, the terms that denote animals have extended meanings that reflect the social activities. In the traditional culture, some of the animals especially cows and goats played very important socio-economic and religious roles. They were used as mediums of exchange in barter trade, for buying land, paying fines, paying bride price and were slaughtered during social activities and for sacrifices. For these reasons, a term such as *mbũri* ‘goat’ does not just refer to the domestic animal but it is semantically extended via the ANIMAL FOR WEALTH metonymy to refer to wealth. This meaning reflects the economic activities of the people. Then through the GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymy the term is further extended to refer to bride wealth which is a social activity. Moreover, it is also extended via the TYPE OF FOOD EATEN DURING AN EVENT FOR THE EVENT metonymy extended to refer to an event where goat meat is eaten’. Through these meaning extensions of *mbũri* the social and economic activities of the Gĩkũyũ are revealed.

The terms that denote types of food and liquids are also extended along the socio-cultural line to have polysemous meanings. Among these is *njenga* ‘particles of ground maize’. This term is extended via the GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymy to denote the cooked

particles which was a special type of food that was eaten during important social events such as weddings. This meaning is further extended via THE TYPE OF FOOD EATEN DURING A EVENT FOR THE EVENT metonymy to refer to the event where this type of food is eaten. In addition, the terms for types of liquids are extended to have polysemous meanings which reflect some cultural aspects. One such term is *maĩ* ‘water’, a colourless liquids which falls from the sky as rain. This term is extended via THE GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymy to refer to beer and other alcoholic beverages. This meaning extension is mainly based on the fact that these beverages are liquids just like water. At the same time water was one of the ingredients that was used to make beer in the traditional society. The statement *mahe maĩ* ‘give them water’ can imply another meaning apart from having the people being given water to drink. In a beer drinking context, it can mean that the people being referred to should be given alcohol or beer. These meaning extensions reveal the social activities such as weddings and beer drinking ceremonies that the Gikũyũ have.

The terms from the human being domain are also extended to have some meanings that reflect the social roles. An example of these terms is *mũthuuri* ‘an adult male’ which is extended through the WHOLE FOR PART/GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymies to include other meanings in its denotation that reflect social roles in the society. Firstly, it is extended to denote ‘a husband’, a meaning that reflects the social role of a special type of man. This is one who is married and has paid the bride price for his wife or wives. Secondly, it denotes, an ‘elder’. It is not all men who assume, the role of elders. For one to become an elder, he has to have specific characteristics. One has to be highly respected, has to be old and married, and does not engage in activities that make him to be perceived impure. Traditionally, the meaning of *mũthuuri* does not include women; however, with the social

and religious transformations that the society has gone through, this term has undergone semantic changes that have made it to acquire more meanings that include women. An example of this *mũthuuri wa itũra* (village elder) which reflects the social roles that are played by both men and women in the society.

The body parts are another domain that provides a vehicle for the conceptualization of the socio-cultural aspects of the Gĩkũyũ. For instance, *kĩongo* ‘head’ is used to conceptualize the notion of position of leadership via the conceptual metaphor HIGH STATUS IS UP as in the statement below.

*Mũthuuri nĩ kĩongo kĩa mũciĩ.*

Man is head of home (family)

The man is the head of the home/family.

The man is regarded as the head to show the high position of leadership that he occupies. This extension reflects the social roles that people have.

The terms that denote celestial bodies are also extended from their original meanings to have polysemous meanings that denote various aspects of the Gĩkũyũ culture. Among these is *mweri* ‘the moon a celestial body that illuminates the earth at night’ which is extended to denote a ‘month’ which is a season. Via the WHOLE FOR PART metonymy, ‘the month’ is further extended to refer to a ‘date’ as in the case of *mweri igĩrĩ* ‘date two’. This shows that the Gĩkũyũ people have clear ways of marking days and seasons which is a social activity. *Mweri* is also extended through the conceptual metaphor A COW IS A MOON to refer to the name of a cow that is white and thus is as bright as the moon or one that is born on a moon lit night. The other term is *njata* ‘star’, a celestial body that illuminates the sky and gives light is another term that is extended through the conceptual metaphor A COW IS A

STAR to the name of a cow. The cow is given this name because it has different patches of colour on its body that resemble a twinkling star. These patches could be black and white or brown and white on the back, the stomach and/or on the head. A second reason for such a name could be that the cow was born on a starlight night. These meaning extensions reflect the social activity of naming which is very important among the Gikūyū as it is not just the people who are given names but also domesticate animals.

Finally, the terms that denote technological innovations are also extended along the socio-cultural process. One such term is *mūgithi* ‘train’ which is a vehicle that pulls carriages along the rail line. This term is, however, metaphorically extended to denote objects and concepts that reflect the cultural concepts. One of its extended meanings is a ‘banana plant’ which has a long stem and long bananas which is motivated through the conceptual metaphor A BANANA IS A TRAIN. The meaning extension here is based on the similarities in length that the train and this type of banana have. This meaning extension reveals to us the social activity of farming among the people. The other extended meanings denote ‘a roadshow’, ‘a singing and dancing activity where vernacular songs are sung and people dance to their tunes’ which are motivated through the conceptual metaphors A ROAD SHOW IS A TRAIN and A SINGING AND DANCING ACTIVITY IS A TRAIN. These meaning extensions arise because of the similarities observed between the train, the roadshow and the song and activity. In these activities the people involved imitate the sounds made by the train as it moves as they sing and dance. Just like the train has many carriages pulled by it, a roadshow has many vehicles following each other in a single file. Through these meaning extensions *mūgithi* gets polysemous meanings that reflect the social activities of the Gikūyū people.

### 5.3. Semantic Extensions into the Social Institutions /Social Groups Domain

There are Gĩkũyũ polysemous nouns whose semantic extensions reveal the institutions of the people. One such noun is *nyũmba* ‘house’ which is a structure for human habitation that provides protection and warmth to the inhabitants. However, to the Gĩkũyũ, *nyũmba* is not just a structure. This term is extended to include meanings that denote the cultural aspects of these people. First via the BUILDING FOR INSTITUTION metonymy, it is extended to refer to the institution of marriage. The Gĩkũyũ traditions prohibit a married man from living in his parents’ house. For, this reason, immediately he gets a wife he has to build his own house where he lives with his wife. Due to this marriage is referred to as *nyũmba* where the two are going to start their own life as a married couple. The institution of marriage brings forth the institution of the family. When the man and the woman move together in their own house, they procreate and bring forth a family which is also referred as *nyũmba* via the INSTITUTION FOR INSTITUTION metonymy. When many families come together, they make a clan, therefore, via the PART FOR THE WHOLE metonymy, the clan is also referred as *nyũmba* based on the close blood relationships that these families have. The clans formed by these families then form the ethnic group which is also via the PART FOR THE WHOLE metonymy is referred to as *nyũmba*. That is why the Gĩkũyũ refer to themselves as *nyũmba ya mũmbi* ‘the house of mũmbi’. Through this semantic extension, the social institutions namely, marriage, the family, the clan and the ethnic group are revealed. All these meanings of *nyũmba* have some common attributes which include protection, warmth and a sense of belonging which are very important to the members of the Gĩkũyũ community.



Similarly, terms that refer to the social activities are extended to refer to the social institutions. An example is *kĩama* which refers to a group or association of people who have similar interests. This meaning is extended via the WHOLE FOR THE PART metonymy to refer to different groups of social institutions. Firstly, the term is extended to refer to the council of elders which is the highest organ that provides leadership and guidance on religious, political, social and judicial matters. The semantic extension of the polysemy of this term can also be attributed to the development of modern politics, religion and education. With the introduction of modern politics, new political organizations came and the denotation of *kĩama* was extended to include them. For example, a political party is referred to as *kĩama kĩa ũteti* ‘association of Politics’ or simply as *kĩama*. This is because it is an association of a group of people with common political interests. Additionally, the religious transformations and introduction of Christianity are other factors that have contributed to the semantic extension of the Gĩkũyũ nouns along the socio-cultural line. Due to this, *kĩama* was extended to mean *kĩama gĩa kanitha* ‘council of the church’ which includes men and women. From the social perspective, other manifestations of *kĩama* were introduced which include men and women such as *kĩama gĩa thukuru* ‘school committee’ and *kĩama gĩa aciari na arutani* ‘Parent-Teacher Association’. In Gĩkũyũ any social group is referred to as *kĩama*. Through the semantic extension of this term, the social institutions and the groups are reflected.

#### **5.4 Semantic Extensions into the Technological Innovations Domain**

The introduction of modern technology is a notable factor that has brought out some polysemous nouns being extended to have new meanings. For instance, *riiko* refers to a building where food is cooked and kept. This term also refers to the hearth which

traditionally was the ground on which fire was lit using fire wood and three stones were included around it to place a cooking pot. When new cooking devices such the gas and electric cookers were introduced riiko was extended via the BUILDING FOR THE DEVICE USED IN THE BUILDING to include these devices based on the similarities in functions between them and the traditional fire place. The traditional fire place and these devices are used for cooking and heating food and they are placed in the kitchen.

The other term is *kamūngūrio* ‘squirrel’, a very small animal which interferes with the peoples farming activities as it eats their maize seeds. It is very destructive as it moves very fast from one farm to the other eating the already planted maize seeds. It is also very cunning as it is always able to evade the farmer’s traps. The term is extended via the conceptual metaphor THE MOBILE PHONE IS A SQUIRREL to include in its denotation a mobile phone. When the mobile phone was introduced, the Gikūyū did not have a name for it. They initially referred to it as *thimū* a word which is borrowed from Kiswahili simu which was used to refer to the land line telephones. Another name they used is ‘mobairo’ which is borrowed from the English word ‘mobile’. For this reasons, they needed a word to refer it. They did not give it a new name, instead they looked for an already existing object which had the same characteristics with the mobile. They noted that the squirrel qualified for this based on the behavioral characteristics of being fast and fast destructive. The same applies to the mobile phone which can be used to spread information very fast all over the world, some of which could be destructive.

In addition, there are other terms whose semantic extension is triggered by the technological changes in the society. One such term is *kameme* ‘gossip, a person who talks too much and has the characteristics of spreading information most of which is in form of rumours and

gossip. This term is metaphorically extended through the conceptual metaphor A RADIO IS A GOSSIP to denote ‘a radio’ which is an electronic device for broadcasting. The meaning extension is based on similarities in functions between the gossip and the radio as both spread information to many people very fast. The ‘radio’ meaning is extended via the GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymy to refer to the ‘microphone’, a special piece of equipment used in public to address large numbers of people.

Similarly, *magego* ‘teeth’ a term that denotes the hard white objects in the mouth which are used for biting and chewing food by animals and human beings, is also extended through the general concept metaphor OBJECT PARTS ARE BODY PARTS and its sub metaphor THE TEETH OF OBJECTS ARE THE TEETH OF HUMAN BEINGS to imply objects that denote innovations technological. The contact with the outside world introduced various objects such as the cars, zips, combs and saws. These objects had some parts which the Gikūyū did not have terms for. For this reason, the term *magego* was metaphorically extended to denote the object parts such as the cogs of the wheels of a car, the teeth of zips, saws and combs. This meaning extension is a result of the people observing similarities in shape and arrangements between these new objects and the teeth. Just like the teeth are arranged in rows and stick out of the gums, these object parts are also arranged in rows and stick out of edges of the objects, just like the teeth.

Lastly, the technological innovations contribute to the semantic extension of terms that denote the concept of time. An example of such a term is *gĩthaa* ‘an extremely good time to do something’ is extended via THE PROCESS FOR THE DEVICE THAT MEASURE THE PROCESS metonymy to refer to the modern devices for measuring time. For this reason, *gĩthaa* is extended to include in its denotation ‘an extremely big clock’, a term which is

further extended via the GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymy to include ‘an extremely big watch which is a special type of clock.

### **5.5. Semantic Extensions into the Economic Activities Domain**

The semantic extension of some Gĩkũyũ nouns can be attributed to the economic activities of the people. One of the terms that is extended to reflect the economic activities is *mbũri* ‘goat’ which is a domestic animal. However, in the traditional Gĩkũyũ society *mbũri* was kept for economic purposes. From this perspective the term means ‘wealth’. This is because wealth was measured in terms of the number of goats one had. The more goats one had, the wealthier he was. This meaning extension occurs via the ANIMAL FOR WEALTH metonymy. With the introduction of the money economy the term was extended to mean ‘money’ as illustrated in the following statement, *rehe mbũringwenderie mũgũnda ũyũ* ‘bring goats so that I sell this land to you’. *Mbũri* in this statement does not mean the actual animal but it refers to money which has replaced the traditional perspective of measuring wealth in terms of animals.

*Ngima* ‘corn bread’ is one of the staple foods is another term that is extended through the conceptual metaphor MONEY IS CORN BREAD to denote ‘money’. This extension is based on the similar characteristic that both objects have. It is depended on for survival. When the money economy was introduced, the term was extended to mean money. This was based on the characteristics that these two objects had in common namely the attribute of being relied on for survival. Without money, people find it very hard to survive in the contemporary society. For this reason, it is common to hear people say, *nĩaraheanirengima* ‘he/she gave corn bread.’ This statement does mean the type of food but it means money.

### 5.6. Semantic Extensions into the Religious Activities/Roles Domain

The introduction of new religions mainly Christianity came along with new objects and concepts related to the Christian faith. These objects and concepts needed to be named. They were not given unique names but the terms of already existing objects and concepts were extended to include them in their denotations. This extension is based on the similarities that the people observed between the existing objects and the new ones. An example of such a term is *mũtĩ* 'tree' was first extended via the WHOLE FOR PART metonymy to denote the 'wood from the tree'. The 'wood' meaning is further extended via the MATERIAL FOR PRODUCT metonymy to denote the 'cross' which is also referred to as *mũtĩ*. This extension is based on the fact that the first crosses were made of wood. The 'cross' is a symbol of the Christian faith which reminds them of the death of Jesus Christ.

The second term is *gĩkombe* 'cup', a container that is used for drinking liquids. The term does not just have this meaning but it has acquired other meanings based on the changes that the society has experienced. One of these meanings denote the chalice which is a special type of cup that is used for drinking wine in formal social and religious functions, Among the Gĩkũyũ, there were containers that were used to drink beer in social and religious activities. For example, *rũhĩa* 'horn'. However, when Christianity was introduced, some of the religious activities of the people changed. Christianity brought new religious activities which the converts had to engage in. One of them was the Holy Communion where they had to take wine. Instead of using their traditional containers for this, the chalice was introduced. Since they did not have a term for it, the chalice was referred to as *gĩkombe*. The prototypical meaning of *gĩkombe* was metaphorically extended on the basis of similarities in shape and

functions. This extension is also an instance of THE WHOLE FOR THE PART and GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymies as the chalice is an example of the many types of cups which are used used in specific events.

The third term is *gĩathĩ* ‘appointment’. In its prototypical sense this term has a social activity perspective. However, its denotation is extended to include other activities. For instance, via the WHOLE FOR THE PART and GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymies, its denotation is extended to include the Holy Communion which is a specific Christian activity. When Christianity was introduced to the Gĩkũyũ, the new converts had to partake the Holy Communion. This was a new activity that did not exist in their traditional religion so they did not have a name for it. *Gĩathĩ* was therefore, extended to include this activity which is mainly referred to as *gĩathĩ kĩa Mwathani* ‘appointment with God’. This is because of the fact that Christians who partake of the Holy Communion are urged to prepare themselves thoroughly before hand. These preparations are in form of cleansing themselves through prayer and avoiding sin.

The last term is *mũthuuri* whose meaning in the traditional Gĩkũyũ perspective does not include women. However, with the social and religious transformations that the society has gone through, it has undergone semantic changes that have made it to acquire more meanings that include women. Firstly, the term is extended to refer to an ‘elder’. The elders are a group of special men who have social and religious roles. Secondly, the meaning ‘elder’ is extended via the WHOLE FOR THE PART and GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymies to denote *mũthuuri wa kanitha* ‘elder of the church’. This meaning is inclusive as it refers to a special group of men and women who play religious roles.

### 5.7. Semantic Extensions into the Taboo System

There are number of Gĩkũyũ nouns that are extended euphemistically along the cultural process in order to avoid taboo subjects. Among the Gĩkũyũ, the subject of death is a taboo and people fear to mention it directly. Due to this, there are certain nouns like *nyũmba* ‘house’ which are extended metaphorically to include matters related to death in their denotation. One of the extended meanings of *nyũmba* is motivated through the conceptual metaphor A GRAVE IS A HOUSE to denote the grave. The term that is used to denote the grave is *mbĩrĩra* but for fear of mentioning it, the people instead refer to the grave euphemistically as *nyũmba* as in the following statement *nyũmba ĩrĩa tũrahurũkia ĩrĩa ũratũtigiri* ‘house where we are going to rest the one who left us’. The grave here is likened to a *nyũmba* where the dead rest and are provided with protection from all sorts of disturbances be it from animals or human beings. *Nyũmba* is also extended through the conceptual DEATH IS THE COMPLETION OF A HOUSE to denote the finality of death as in the following statement.

*Nyũmba yake nĩrarĩkire.*

House his/her was completed.

His/her house was completed.

Just like the completion of a house marks the final stage in its building, death also marks the end of life, which is the final stage in a Gĩkũyũ person’s life. After a house is completed, human beings can dwell in it, rest there and find protection and warmth. The same case applies to a person when he/she dies, it is believed that after death, one can rest peacefully in the grave and find protection there.

*Mweri* ‘moon’ is another term that is extended to avoid taboo. This term is first extended to denote a ‘month’. The extended meaning ‘month’ is further euphemistically extended to refer to the monthly period or the menstrual discharge that women have every month through the conceptual metaphor THE MENSTRUAL DISCHARGE IS A MONTH. Among the Gĩkũyũ, it is a taboo to refer to the reproductive organs and anything that relates to their functions directly. For this reason, the discharge is, euphemistically referred to as *mweri*.

The body part terms are projected on various cultural aspects thus contributing to the motivation of polysemy. Some of the aspects they are projected on are the taboo subjects. Consequently, terms like *kũgũrũ* ‘leg’ which are extended through the conceptual metaphor A GIRL WHO GETS PREGNANT OUT OF WEDLOCK IS A GOAT WHOSE LEG IS BROKEN to refer to the act of getting pregnant out of wedlock as illustrated in the following statement:

*Nĩaroinire mbũri yakwa kũgũrũ.*

He has broken the leg of my goat.

Goat here implies a girl and broken leg implies the act of getting pregnant out of wedlock. Among the Gĩkũyũ, it is a taboo to speak directly of reproductive issues such as one being pregnant. It is even more serious for one to get pregnant out of wedlock. The members of the family of such a girl are too ashamed to talk about it and even to the rest of the community. This is because engaging in sex before marriage was unheard of in the traditional set up. Hence there was no room for a girl to get pregnant out of wedlock. If that happened, it was a taboo to talk about. They would only do so using euphemisms and that is why the statement *kuna mbũrikũgũrũ* was often used to show that such a girl has lost her value. Her value was likened to a goat that has had its legs broken. This means that one would fetch very few, or



no goats as bride price since very few men were likely to marry a girl who had lost her value and dignity in the community. The term *kūgūrū* is also euphemistically used to refer to the male reproductive organ. This extension is motivated through the conceptual metaphor THE MALE REPRODUCTIVE ORGAN IS A LEG. This is because of its position in the human body between the legs, and therefore, being referred to as *kūgūrū gwa gatatū* (the third leg. At the same time, when it is erect it stands straight like a leg. These two extended meanings reflect the taboos regarding reproduction and reproductive organ.

The second term in this category is *mūkingo* ‘an extremely long neck, which is a part of the body that connects the body to the head. This term does not just denote a body part but it has other related meanings that reflect the aspects of the culture of the Gikūyū culture people. In the 1980’s, this term acquired another meaning in reference to HIV/AIDS which then, was a strange disease. Among the Gikūyū, strange diseases are a taboo subject. Since the people did not have a name to refer to it, they looked for a euphemistic term. At first, this disease was referred to as *kagunyū* ‘small worm’, *kīgūtha* ‘catapult’ and *mbembe ndoge* ‘poisoned maize’. These terms have since been replaced by *mūkingo* which was extended through the conceptual metaphor HIV AIDS IS AN EXTREMELY LONG NECK and BODY PART FOR ILLNESS metonymy. It is used to refer to the disease based on the physical effects that are observed on the victims of the disease. The victims who had been weakened by the disease had their necks seeming quite long.

*Mata* ‘saliva’, a liquid that is released from the human body is also euphemistically extended to denote ‘urine’ through the conceptual metaphor URINE IS SALIVA. This is done to avoid mentioning directly, the bodily function of urinating.

Lastly, *mūtī* ‘tree’ a term from the domain of plants is extended to denote the male reproductive organ. This extension is motivated through the conceptual metaphor THE MALE REPRODUCTIVE ORGAN IS A TREE. This meaning is euphemistically used as a way of avoiding mentioning the term *gīthita* ‘penis’ that is used to refer to it. In *Gīkūyū*, it is a taboo to directly mention, matters related to reproduction and reproductive organs. The meaning extensions here is based on the similarities in functions between the tree and this organ. Just like a tree, this organ is a symbol of life. A tree is productive and bears fruit. The same case applies to the male reproductive organ through which humans being are brought into life. These two also are conceptualized to have, the same appearance because when this organ is erect, it stands straight like a tree. The testicles on both sides look like the roots of tree.

From these semantic extensions. It was observed that nouns that denote agricultural activities, body parts, buildings and liquids are semantically extended to have polysemous meanings that are euphemistically used to avoid taboo subjects: These taboo subjects include bodily functions such as urinating and monthly periods, reproduction and reproductive organs, for example, getting pregnant out of wedlock and the male genital organs, death and strange diseases

### **5.8. Summary of the Chapter**

In this chapter, the cultural factors that motivate the polysemy of the *Gīkūyū* nouns have been analysed. It was observed that these nouns from different semantic fields are extended through conceptual metaphor and metonymy to reflect various aspects of the *Gīkūyū* culture. It has also been demonstrated how the linguistic forms, in this case the nouns interact with cultural knowledge to have extended meanings that reflect the social activities, social roles,

economic activities, religious activities and roles, political activities and finally the taboos of the Gīkūyū people. Moreover, it also analyses the Cognitive process that trigger these extensions along the socio-cultural line.

The nouns that are extended to reflect the social activities and the social roles are those that are associated with the semantic domains of plants and fruits, types of foods and liquids, animals, technological innovations, human beings, social activities celestial bodies and body parts. In addition, the social institutions and groups are reflected through the semantic extensions of the nouns from the semantic fields of buildings and social activities. Furthermore, the religious activities and roles. are reflected through the semantic extensions of the terms from the semantic domains of plants, human beings, social activities and containers. The political activities are reflected through the semantic extensions of the terms from the semantic fields of plants, social activities. The economic activities are reflected through the semantic extensions of the terms from the semantic fields of: types of food and animals. The technological innovations are reflected through the semantic extensions of the terms from the semantic fields of animals. Human beings, buildings, human beings and the process of time. Lastly the taboos are reflected through the semantic extensions of the nouns from the semant from the semantic fields of parts plants, seasons liquids and buildings.

In conclusion, the semantic extension of the Gīkūyū polysemous nouns is influenced by cultural factors. The meanings of these nouns change in relation to the changing political, social, economic and religious situations. When new objects enter the Gīkūyū culture, they are not given unique names. Instead terms that are already existing are semantically extended

to include in their denotations these new objects and concepts. For example, the introduction of modern politics has led to the extension of the term *kiama* to include political parties.

The next chapter which concludes the thesis provides the summary and recommends areas for further research.

## CHAPTER SIX

### **6.0 Summary of the findings, conclusions and suggested areas for further research**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This study has carried out an examination into the polysemy of the Gīkūyū nouns using the Cognitive Linguistic approach specifically the Principled Polysemy Model. This concluding chapter provides a summary of the findings from my analysis and areas for further research work on polysemy of Gīkūyū. Remarks regarding the objectives and the research questions are also made. Finally, the recommendations for further research are also given before the final concluding remarks are made.

#### **6.2 Summary of the findings and Remarks on the Objectives and Research Questions**

The aim of this study was to investigate the polysemy of the Gīkūyū nouns using the Cognitive Linguistics Approach. The study is grounded on the Principled Polysemy Model which is one of the central theories in Cognitive linguistics. The findings have revealed that this model is applicable in the polysemy of the Gīkūyū nouns.

The study was guided by the following four specific objectives: To

- I. Describe the ways in which the polysemous Gīkūyū nouns branch to have extended meanings.
- II. Determine whether the extended meanings belong to the same noun categories as the meanings they branch from
- III. Establish how the semantic cognitive mechanisms of metaphor and metonymy motivate the semantic extension of the polysemous Gīkūyū nouns

- IV. Explore how the polysemous nouns are extended along the cultural process to have meanings that reflect the social, religious, economic and political roles and activities and the taboos of the Gikūyū people.

After a comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the data, several observations emerged. One of the observations is that polysemy is pervasive in Gikūyū and nouns are productive sources of this polysemy. Another observation is that the nouns from various semantic fields are extended to have related meanings in different semantic fields. Among these meanings are the prototypical and the extended meanings. The prototypical meaning is the meaning the members of the speech community are likely to give as the meaning of a word if they are asked what a given word means out of context. It was also observed that the meanings of the nouns are not just extended from the prototypical meanings but there are some meanings that are derived from other extended meanings.

For the first objective, several observations were made. One of these is that the Gikūyū nouns are extended to have polysemous meanings that form their semantic networks with the prototypical meaning at the centre. This means that the extended meanings of the polysemous nouns branch directly from the prototypical meaning. In this case the prototypical meaning acts as the basis for extension. The meanings branch in various ways. The prototypical meaning may branch into one, two, three or multiple extended meanings. Some Gikūyū nouns, however, allow for extension of extensions. This is where an extended meaning acts as the basis for further extension. The extended meaning may branch into one, two or three other extended meanings.

Many of the nouns that were analysed belong to the category of count nouns with a few mass ones. However, in the analysis for the second objective, it was observed that when these

nouns were extended, some of them got meanings which belonged to the same category as the meaning they branch from. For instance, *kamungurio* ‘squirrel’ whose prototypical meaning is a small animal and its extended meanings are ‘small person’ and ‘mobile phone’, all of which are count nouns. Nevertheless, other nouns have extended meanings that belong to the same noun category as the meaning they branch from while the others are of a different category. An example is *ngima* ‘corn bread which is a mass noun. This noun has two extended meanings, ‘money’ which is a mass noun while the second one ‘foolish person’ is a count noun.

In regard to the third objective which explores the cognitive processes that motivate the polysemy of the Gĩkũyũ nouns several observations were made. Key among them is that metaphor and metonymy are the two important cognitive semantic mechanisms which play a central role in the process of the formation of noun polysemy in Gĩkũyũ.

In metaphoric polysemy, the mappings operate in two conceptual domains, the source and the target domains. The salient source domains for metaphoric extensions are the body parts, animals, containers, plants and their fruits, human beings, celestial bodies, types of food and liquids, buildings and technological innovations. Their target domains are human beings, body parts, objects and their parts, animals and death. It was also observed that, among the Gĩkũyũ nouns, a source domain can have several targets. For instance, the source domain of the body parts has the object parts, diseases, the source/beginning of something, theme/subject of a topic and abstract concepts, for, example positions of leadership as target domains. Four main types of mappings were exhibited between the source and the target domains. These are the mapping from the animate domain on to the animate domain,

mapping from the animate domain onto the inanimate domain., mapping from inanimate to animate domain and mapping from the inanimate onto the inanimate domain

In this type of polysemy, the characteristics of the source are mapped on to the target. Among the Gīkūyū nouns, the characteristics which include the appearance, the behavior, the position and functions of the source domain object are transferred to the target domain object

In the literature, the source domain is regarded to be more concrete while the target is abstract. It was observed that in some cases, the Gīkūyū nouns have both concrete source and target domains. For instance, *mūĩĩ* ‘tree’ from the source domain of plants has meanings such as the male reproductive organ, which is a body part. Here, the source and the target are both concrete. However, in other cases, the source is concrete while its target is abstract. An instance of this is *mbūri* ‘goat’ from the source domain of animals is extended to denote wealth which is an abstract concept.

Apart from metaphor, metonymy is a vital process that underlies meaning extension in Gīkūyū. Through the metonymic extensions, the polysemy of the nouns is realized. In the metonymic polysemy, the Gīkūyū nouns exhibit systematic patterns in which sets of senses are related in similar ways. These senses cut across different semantic fields such as plants, fruits, human body parts, animals, human beings, buildings, types of foods, containers, liquids and social activities.

There are various metonymic polysemous relationships exhibited by the polysemous Gīkūyū nouns. However, the most typical kind of metonymic relationships exhibited by the nouns is the WHOLE FOR THE PART where the term for the whole is also extended to the part.



This relationship is realized through many sub types. For example, HEAD FOR HAIR, HEAD FOR BRAIN/MIND and TREE FOR THE WOOD DERIVED FROM THE TREE among others. This relationship can also be extended to the GENERAL FOR SPECIFIC metonymy with the part being the specific and the whole the general.

In metonymic polysemy, there are relationships that affect the syntactic behaviour of the nouns. Firstly, there are relationships that help bring out the count-mass noun distinction in Gikūyū. Among these are the HEAD FOR THE HAIR, HEAD FOR THE BRAIN, THE TREE FOR THE WOOD DERIVED FROM THE TREE, CONTAINER FOR THE CONTENTS, THE ANIMAL FOR MEAT DERIVED FROM THE ANIMAL THE SUBSTANCE FOR THE PORTIONINGS OF THE SUBSTANCE. In these relationships, the head, tree, container, animal and the portionings of the substance are instances of count nouns animal, whereas the hair, brain, wood, contents, meat, and the substance are mass nouns. These relationships are common in other languages. Secondly, there are metonymic relationships that help bring out the concrete-abstract noun distinction. For instance, BUILDING FOR THE INSTITUTION and PROCESS FOR THE DEVICE THAT IS USED TO MEASURE THE PROCESS. In these relationships, the terms that denote the building and the device are concrete nouns whereas those for the institution and the process are abstract.

Some nouns exhibit more than one metonymic relationship. An example is *mūtī* 'tree. Through metonymic transfer, the meanings of this noun have the TREE FOR WOOD DERIVED FROM THE TREE, TREE FOR LOVE POTION, TREE FOR HERBAL MEDICINE and WOOD FROM THE TREE FOR THE CROSS.

Some of the metonymic relationships evoke metaphoric relationships. One of the examples is the BODY PART FOR OBJECT PART. Here, the characteristics of the body part are mapped on to the object part on the basis of similarities in shape, functions and position between the body part and the object part. For instance, *kũgũrũ* ‘the leg of an animal or human being’ is one of the long thin parts that is positioned at the bottom part of the body and is used for standing and also walking and they give the human beings or animals support. This term is metaphorically extended to denote the object part, especially the leg of a chair, table or bed. This is because the legs of these pieces of furniture are long, thin, positioned at the bottom of the object and they are used for standing thus giving the object support just like the legs support human beings and animals do. The other relationship is ANIMAL FOR PERSONALITY TYPE where the traits of the animal are mapped on to a human being who has similar traits. For example, when a human being is referred to as *ngũrwe* ‘pig’, it is the traits of this animal such as greed and ugliness that are transferred to a human being.

However, there are also metonymic relationships that are typical to Gĩkũyũ. Examples of these are THE TYPE OF FOOD EATEN DURING AN EVENT FOR THE EVENT and THE TYPE OF BEVERAGE TAKEN DURING AN EVENT FOR THE EVENT. In these relationships, the same word is used to denote the type of food or beverage and the event where the two are taken. Another unique metonymic relationship is BODY PART FOR THE ILLNESS. In this relationship, a body part is associated with a medical condition that is not caused by it. For instance, *mũkingo* ‘an extremely long neck’ is associated with HIV AIDS, yet it is not the cause of this medical condition.

The fourth objective aimed at deducing the cultural factors which motivate the polysemy of the Gīkūyū nouns. First, it was observed that when new objects and concepts enter the Gīkūyū world view, they are not given unique names. Instead of inventing unique terms to refer to them, the Gīkūyū use terms of already existing old objects to refer to them thus making them polysemous. This meaning transfer is based on the observed similarities between the old and the new objects. For instance, when new social organizations and institutions such as politics and religion specifically Christianity were introduced, the cultural importation was not always accompanied by a lexical importation. In order to name, these organizations and institutions, terms of already existing objects were extended to include them in their denotation.

Christianity, for example, brought new concepts such as the Holy Communion. Since there was no term to refer to it, *gīathĩ* ‘appointment’ was extended to include it in its denotation. This extension is based on the fact that those who were going to partake the Holy Communion were perceived to be going to have an appointment with God. A term such as *kamūngūriū* ‘squirrel’ acquired polysemous meanings as a result of technological innovations. The prototypical meaning of this term is a small animal, however, it is extended in its denotation to include the mobile phone. This meaning extension is based on the fact that the mobile phone is a small object just like this animal. At the same time, it can be destructive just like the animal. Through this meaning extension along the cultural process, we get a glimpse of the social, political, religious and economic activities of the Gīkūyū people. In addition, the social, religious and political roles that different people play in the community are also revealed.

Other observations that were made from the analysis and interpretation of the data are that among the Gīkūyū, it is a taboo to speak directly of reproduction and reproductive organs, bodily functions such as the monthly period and urination, death and strange diseases. For this reasons terms of already existing objects from different semantic fields are euphemistically extended to avoid these taboo subjects. This euphemistic extension makes the words to acquire polysemous meanings.

Finally, it is important to consider the relevance and adequacy of the theory that was used. The study utilized the Principled Polysemy which has borrowed its tenets from the Cognitive Linguistic approach. The theory was found to be relevant and adequate as it enabled the researcher to bring out a broad picture of polysemy and capture well the generalizations that can be made regarding the meanings of the polysemous nouns. It provided the necessary tools for the investigation of the polysemy of the nouns. These are an organized semantic network for each of the nouns and the cognitive mechanisms for the semantic extension of these nouns. The cognitive linguistic approach regards meaning construction as a process that depends on conceptual integration of the linguistic and non linguistic factors. It also assumes that meaning can only be examined by taking into account the full context of use which includes the culture of a speech community. This helped the researcher to consider linguistic data using a cultural model that took into account the cultural factors that motivate polysemy in Gīkūyū.

### **6.3 Conclusions of the study**

From the analysis of the polysemy of the Gīkūyū nouns, it can be concluded that these nouns are productive sources of Polysemous meanings. These meanings are mainly extended from the prototypical meanings. However, in some cases, the nouns allow for extensions of

extensions, where an extended meaning acts as the basis for further extension. Metaphor and metonymy are the main cognitive processes that motivate the semantic extension of the polysemous nouns. It is not only the linguistic factors that motivate the polysemy of these nouns but also the socio- cultural factors play a very significant role in the generation of the polysemy of the nouns. This is because some of the nouns are extended along the cultural process to have polysemous meanings that reflect various cultural aspects of the Gīkūyū. These are the social religious, economic and political activities and roles. It can also be concluded that, the meanings of these nouns change over time but a notable factor is that they change in relationship to the changing political, social, religious, economic situations and needs of the people. It can also be concluded that polysemy goes beyond derivation of new meanings for the nouns. It is an attempt by the Agīkūyū to account for meaning through the extension of the already available terms for the objects and concepts in their worldview.

#### **6.4 Recommendations for further Research**

Despite the fact that the phenomenon of polysemy has been investigated by previous researchers, it is still a rich area of research. In the current study, the researcher limited herself to only thirty nouns. A study of this magnitude is not exhaustive. For this reason, it is hoped that it will inspire further research in Gīkūyū polysemy. Firstly, areas on polysemy that need to be researched on include compound nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions and phraseological polysemy. This should be done to ascertain whether they are productive sources of polysemy just like the nouns to determine whether they exhibit the same polysemous relationships as the nouns.

In addition, the notions that are related to polysemy, for example, homonymy, vagueness and distinction between polysemy and homonymy, should also be investigated. A comparative study of polysemy involving Gikūyū and other languages should also be carried out. For example, comparisons made should be made with national languages such as English and Kiswahili with a view to elevating Gikuyu to a similar status

Moreover, the present study has used a semantic approach to polysemy so there is need to conduct research using the pragmatic approach. Research using this approach would help establish the pragmatic processes that motivate polysemy. At the same time, it would give an account of how these processes interact in conjunction with the contextual information and encyclopaedic knowledge operate on the literal meaning of a word thereby changing its denotation considered for further research.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: The Questionnaire

My name is Florence Gathoni Gachugi and I am a PhD candidate of Linguistics at Moi University. I am interested in the study of the meaning of Gĩkũyũ nouns. The following questionnaire will assist me to get the information that I need for this study. For each of the nouns provided give all the meanings that you are familiar with. Kindly, answer all the questions in the spaces that are provided. Note that all the information you give will be treated as confidential and will only be used for the purpose of this study.

#### SECTION A:

Respondent's personal details

1. Name:

.....

2. Age: .....

3. Sex: .....

4. Highest Level of Education:

.....

#### SECTION B:

1. Nouns that Denote body parts

i. a.) Kĩongo means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

.....

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ii. a.) Gūtũ means?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

iii. a.) Kũgũrũ means?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

iv. a.) Magego means?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

v. a.) Mūkingo means

\_\_\_\_\_

b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Nouns that Denote Animals

i.) a.) Mbūri means?

\_\_\_\_\_

b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

ii. a.) Ngūrwe means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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iii.a.).Kamūngurio means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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3. Nouns that Denote Human Beings

i.) a.) Mũthuuri means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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ii.) a.) Kameme means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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4.Nouns that Denote Plants/Fruits

i.) a.) Mũĩ means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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ii.) a.) Irio means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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---

c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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iii.) a.) Gacungwa means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?



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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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5.Nouns that Denote Liquids

i.) a.) Maĩ means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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---

c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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ii.) a.) Mata means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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---

c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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6.Nouns that Denote Types of Food

i.) a) Njenga means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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ii.) a.) Ngima means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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7.Nouns that Denote Containers s

i.) a.) Gĩkombe means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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ii.) a.) Kĩnya means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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iii.) a.) Nyũngũ means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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8. Nouns that Denote Technological Innovations

i.) a.) Mũgithi means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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9.. Nouns that Denote Buildings

i.) Nyũmba means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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ii.) a.) Riiko means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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10.Nouns that Denote Celestial Bodies

i.) Mweri means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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ii.) a.) Njata means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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11. Nouns that Denote SocialActivities of Human Beings

i.) Kĩama means?

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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ii. Gĩathĩ means?

a.)

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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12. Nouns that denote the processes for the measurement of time

i. Gĩthaa means?

a.)

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b.) If you heard the word being mentioned for the first time, which meaning would you give it?

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c.) Out of the meanings of the word you have given which ones according to you are related?

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## APPENDIX II: Categories of the Nouns that have been used in the Study

### i. Plants and fruit

Noun	Gloss
Mũtĩ	tree
Irio	food crops
Gacungwa	small orange
Caai	tea bushes

### ii. Animals

Mbũri	goat
Ngũrwe	pig
Kamũngũriũ	squirrel

### iii. Body Parts

Kĩongo	head
Kũgũrũ	leg
Magego	teeth
Gũtũ	ear
Mũkingo	Extremely long neck

### iv. Human Beings

Mũthuuri	adult male
Kameme	gossip

### v. Containers

Nyũngũ	pot
Kĩnya	gourd



Gĩkombe            cup

**vi. Buildings**

Nyũmba            house

Riiko                kitchen

**vi. Types of Food**

Njenga            particles of milled maize

Ngima             corn bread

**vii. Types of Liquids**

Maĩ                 water

Mata                saliva

**viii. Social Activities of Human Beings**

Kĩama             group/association

Gĩathĩ             association

**ix. Celestial Bodies**

Mweri             moon

Njata              star

**x. Buildings**

Nyũmba            house

Riiko                Kitchen

**xi. Technological Innovations**

Mũgithi            train

**xii. Processes for Measuring time**

Gĩthaa            An extremely good time/hour to do something