COMPREHENSION OF KIKAMBA PROVERBS: A STUDY OF STANDARD EIGHT PUPILS OF THE KAWETHEI PRIMARY SCHOOL, KANGUNDO DISTRICT, MACHAKOS COUNTY

BY

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A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS, DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGES, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

2013

DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for examination in any other university.

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MARY KITHIA MULATYA   Date

This research project has been submitted for examination with our approval as the University supervisors.

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PROF JAYNE MUTIGA   Date

_____   _____

DR MARETE   Date

DEDICATION

To:

My daddy,

Raphael Mulatya

For giving me empowerment through education, for teaching me English at a tender age.

My husband,

Pastor Benjamin Musembi

For your immeasurable support, love and prayers.

My son,

Sifa Ngumbau

For your tender love for me.

My Pastors,

Rev. Dr. Stephen Mutua and Pastor Gladys Mutua

For encouraging me to soar higher and higher spiritually and in other areas of my life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

ABSTRACT

The study is an investigation of the comprehension of Kikamba proverbs, by standard eight pupils of the Kawethei primary school, Kangundo District, Machakos County.

The linguistic data in this study will be analysed using the cognitive semantics approach as described in Evans and Green (2006). Cognitive semantics approach to linguistic research was pioneered by Eve Tweetser (1990) and Leonard Talmy (2000). It was developed to counter truth-conditional semantics. Cognitive semantics approach is concerned with research on conceptual content and its organization in language.

The study has been divided into five chapters. Chapter one captures general background information of the study. This includes background to the language, statement of the problem, objectives, hypotheses, rationale, scope, theoretical framework, literature review, research methodology and the significance of the study.

Chapter two covers the in depth study of proverbs and their general classification. The chapter covers the description of the selected Kikamba proverbs and their classification into broad categories: those that relate to animals, human beings, people and activities, and those that relate to other phenomena.

Chapter four contains the analysis of the findings in terms of correct/incorrect responses and the percentages of correct/incorrect responses. The discussion of the

findings is based on the guiding principles of the cognitive semantics approach to semantic study.

Chapter five gives a summary of the research findings and conclusions by relating the findings to the research objectives and the hypotheses. Recommendations are also presented in this chapter.

Data was drawn from Mutisya, R. (2002) *Kikamba Proverbs and Idioms.*

Information on the meanings of the selected Kikamba proverbs was collected by use of a questionnaire that was administered to twenty standard eight pupils of the Kawethei Primary School. The target of respondents was thirty (the entire class) but on the day of data collection only twenty pupils were available.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Overview

This study is concerned with investigating the comprehension of the allegorical content of Kikamba proverbs by standard eight pupils of Kawethei primary school, Kangundo District, Machakos County.

The aim of the study is to establish whether pupils at class eight comprehend the allegorical content of given Kikamba proverbs.

The study also endeavours to identify difficulties of comprehension of the allegorical content of the various Kikamba proverbs that will be studied as well as establishing how the pupils are taught to know Kikamba proverbs. The Kikamba proverbs that form the data to this study are drawn from Mutisya, R. (2002) *Kikamba Proverbs and Idioms.* Other sources that have been used to give information on proverbs include Kieti, M. and Coughlin, P. (1990), Bukenya, A. et al (1994), Kabira and Mutahi (1988), and Odaga, A. (1984). Arguments on the interpretation of proverbs are the researcher's.

1.2 The Language and the People

The Akamba are said to have come into Kenya from Tanganyika, just North of Tanga. They moved Northwards through Taita hills and into the present Machakos county. They then settled on Mbooni hills in the Eastern division of Machakos

County. It is from here they dispersed slowly first to Kitui. Those who moved to Kitui are said to have been cattle ranchers. This is according to Maundu (1980:5).

Maundu goes on to explain that Kikamba is a language spoken in Machakos, Makueni, and Kitui and Mwingi counties of the Eastern province of Kenya. Kikamba is also predominantly spoken in Kwale, Kilifi and Taita Taveta districts of coast province and Mwea division of Central province.

Lindblom (1926:3) records that the Akamba people are one of the largest tribes in British East Africa and inhabitants, approximately, the eastern portion of East African highlands, between the upper railway. The original root of the word "*kamba*" was "*hamba*" which means to travel or go about. However, "*hamba*" does not exist in the language but can be traced in other Bantu languages, as seen in Lindblom (1926:7).

When marked with various prefixes, the root "Kamba" can give specific meanings.

- Mukamba "one Kamba person"

- Akamba "many Kamba people"

- Kikamba (i) "The name of the language"

- Kikamba (ii) The culture of the Akamba"

- Ukamba/ "The land of the Akamba"

Due to influence from Kiswahili, the prefix "*wa-*"is used by many people to refer to speakers of Kikamba, hence, *Wakamba.* This is according to Kaviti (2004:1).

1.3 The Language and its Dialects

There are many models in which Kikamba has been classified. Genetical classification has it that Kikamba is a Bantu language. According to Doke and Cole (1969:1), the root "-*untu*" in Bantu languages means people.

Guthrie (1948) as cited Munyao M (2006: 3) classified Bantu languages into zones. He put Kikamba in class 50 of E zone, a group which includes languages like Kikuyu (E51), Kiembu (E52), Kimeru (E53), Kitharaka (E51), Kikamba (E55) and Kithaisu (E56).

Heine and Mohlig (1980: 9) record five Bantu groups in Kenya. These are the coastal, Taita, central Kenya, South Nyanza and Luhya.

Kikamba is therefore classified in the central Kenya group with kikuyu, Kiembu, Kimeru, Kimbeere and Kitharaka. Heine and Mohlig's classification is genetic and a real because it distinguishes Bantu languages in Kenya according to geographical proximity.

Kikamba can be classified using phonological, morphological and syntactic parameters. This is typological classification. Phonologically, Kikamba is a seven-vowel system language, it prefers the CV syllable structure, and is tonal.

Morphologically, Kikamba is agglutinative, while syntactically, its sentence structure is SVO, with the NP having a head as its initial parameter.

According to Maundu (1980) as cited in Munyao M (2006: 4) Kikamba has five varieties: the Kitui North, the Central Kitui, Eastern-Southern, Kilungu and Makueni, and Machakos.

Kikamba has three major regional dialects, the Machakos dialect is spoken in Machakos county and a large part of Makueni county. The Kitui dialect is spoken in Kitui and Mwingi counties. The third dialect, Kikilungu, is spoken in a small area of Makueni counties.

Among the three dialects, the Kitui dialect has sub-dialects. The dialectal variations of the three dialects are phonological and are realized through accent and intonation. Even though there are a few lexical variations, they do not affect mutual intelligibility of the dialects.

According to the Kenya National Census of 2009, there are 3,893,157 speakers of Kikamba in Kenya. This study is based on the Machakos Kikamba dialect, which is considered the standard variety.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Kikamba is taught in lower primary level in schools in Ukambani but its use is formally restricted after this level with emphasis placed on the learning of English, since English is the medium of instruction henceforth. Serious punishment is meted on pupils found using Kikamba in the schools.

The restriction of the formal use of Kikamba leads to learners not using the aspects of the language that were taught earlier. It has been also noted that the young generation of Kikamba speakers encounter difficulties of comprehension of Kikamba proverbs even after having learnt and recited the proverbs formally in primary school. It is highly suspected that they rely on memory and recitation to give meanings of Kikamba proverbs, not necessarily on comprehension. However, Kikamba is still relevant for translation and broadcast purposes, among other uses. Therefore, the following research questions arise:

i) Do the standard eight pupils have difficulties of comprehension of the allegorical content of Kikamba proverbs at standard eight, given that proverbs as an integral aspect of Kikamba language were taught formally for three years?

ii) What are the difficulties of comprehension of the allegorical content of Kikamba proverbs that the pupils encounter?

iii) How are the pupils taught to know and to remember concerning Kikamba proverbs?

1.5 Objectives of the Study

In relation to the research problem stated earlier, the objectives of the study are to:

i) Establish whether standard eight pupils have difficulties of comprehension of the allegorical content of given Kikamba proverbs.

ii) Identify difficulties the pupils encounter in comprehending the allegorical content of the given Kikamba proverbs.

iii) Establish how the pupils are taught to know and remember Kikamba proverbs.

1.6 Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested in this study:

i) Standard eight pupils can comprehend the allegorical content of a given list of Kikamba proverbs. However, they sometimes encounter difficulties.

ii) There are difficulties of comprehension of the allegorical content of Kikamba proverbs encountered by the pupils.

iii) The pupils recite and memorize Kikamba proverbs and their meanings.

1.7 Rationale

Kikamba is taught in lower primary level in schools in Ukambani for three years, and then its use by the pupils in school formally restricted; yet, its knowledge is still valid today.

Moreover, proverbs form the essential aspects of the use of the language because they are rich in wisdom and they are used to warn, caution and advise. This study seeks to establish whether pupils in class eight can comprehend the allegorical content of proverbs they learned when they were young in lower primary school.

The study will also establish whether the pupils have difficulties of comprehension of the allegorical content of Kikamba proverbs as well as determine how the pupils are taught to know Kikamba proverbs.

1.8 Scope and Limitation

The study focuses on the comprehension of the allegorical content of a given list of proverbs. Although Kikamba has other linguistic aspects such as grammar, syntax, semantics and auto-segmental features, they will not be studied in this research. On the other hand, the importance of Kikamba for translation and broadcast will not be focused on in this study.

This study covers the population of the standard eight pupils of the Kawethei primary school of Kangundo District, Machakos County only. The Kikamba proverbs under study are drawn from twenty classes of proverbs, although there many classes of proverbs. Then main source of the data is Mutisya, R. (2002). The foreign equivalents for the Kikamba proverbs have been provided in order to reach a wider audience. The selected Kikamba proverbs are further classified into other

classes depending on what they relate to, for example, those relating to animals, human activities and natural phenomena. The cognitive semantics approach to linguistic study will be used in data analysis.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

This research will be treated in the framework of cognitive semantics under semantic theory.

1.9.1 Development of the Theory

"Cognitive semantics began in the 1970s as a reaction against the objectivist world view assumed by the Anglo-American tradition in philosophy and the related approach, truth-conditional semantics, developed within formal linguistics." (Evans and Green 2006: 156).

One of the leading cognitive semanticists is Eve Sweetser, who describes the truth conditional approach in the following terms: "By viewing meaning as the relationship between words and the word, truth-conditional semantics eliminates cognitive organization from the linguistic structure." Sweetser (1990: 4), as cited in Evans and Green (2006: 156).

Therefore cognitive semantics sees linguistics meaning as a manifestation of conceptual structure, i.e. the nature and organization of mental representation in all its richness and diversity, which makes cognitive semantics and distinctive approach to linguistic meaning. Research on cognitive semantic is research on conceptual content and its organization in language.

1.9.2 The Guiding Principles of Cognitive Semantics (Summary)

Evans and Green (2006:164) outline four principles of cognitive semantics:

1. **Conceptual structure is embodied** – The nature of conceptual organization arises from bodily experience.

1. **Semantic structure is conceptual structure** – semantic structure (the meaning conventionally associated with words and other linguistic units) is equated with concepts.

2. **Meaning representation is encyclopaedic** – words (and other linguistic units) are treated as 'points of access' to vast repositories of knowledge relating to a particular concept.

3. **Meaning construction is conceptualization** – meaning construction is equated with conceptualization, a dynamic process whereby linguistic units serve as prompts for an array of conceptual operations and the recruitment of background knowledge.

1.10 Literature Review

i) Proverbs

According to the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary: International Student's Edition* (7th Ed) (2005: 1169), a proverb is a well known phrase or sentence that gives advice or says something that is generally true, for example, '*waste not, want not.*'

In appendix (R49) of the same dictionary, a proverb is a type of idiom. An idiom is a phrase whose meaning is difficult or sometimes impossible to guess by looking at the meanings of the individual words it contains. For example, the phrase '**be in**

the same boat' has a literal meaning that is easy to understand, but it has a common idiomatic meaning: ***I found the job difficult at first. But we were all in the same boat; we were all learning.***

Here, be *in the same boat means* '**to be in the same difficult or unfortunate situation'**.

Some idioms are imaginative expression such as proverbs and sayings:

 Too many cooks spoil the broth.

(If too many people are involved in something, it will not be well done).

In the same light, Kikamba proverbs have idiomatic sense in them such that their meaning cannot be guessed from looking at the individual component words.

For example,

Waema ũkonzwa wĩ mwĩũ wooma ndũkonzekaa

Meaning: **If a twig is not bent when it is green/soft, it cannot be bent when it becomes hard or dry.**

Application: This proverb used is in cautioning parents or caretakers to instil discipline in children when the children are young; if they let the children to grow undisciplined, it will be hard to in still discipline into them when they are of age.

In the comprehension of this proverb, one should be a competent speaker of Kikamba so as to know what the 'twig' part of the proverb is implies.

Dalfovo T. A. in Lugbara Proverbs (1984: 9) says that there is no definition of a proverb that has gained general acceptance. The common preposition of the definition of a proverb is that which resembles the one from the Oxford English dictionary: "A short pithy saying in common and recognized use….. often metaphorical….. held to express some truth ascertained by experience…"

From this definition, Dalfovo says that a proverb may be described as a short, pithy, fixed, popular, experiential, prescriptive, and usually allegorical sentence. Thus, when a proverb is said to be short, it contains five to seven words. Pithiness means that the few words that constitute it are well chosen and related in such a way to convey their message tersely.

In terms of fixity, when a proverb is enunciated, listeners can easily complete it in one of its variants. Variations in proverbs result from the nature of oral literature, the situational context and the diversity of the culture in which they are used.

Proverbs are popular. This is because they are known and used by the majority of the population. The experimental nature of proverbs is seen in the daily experiences of people in the fields, the common instances of social interaction and personal behaviour.

Proverbs not only state a fact or report an experience but also convey a message. This means that they are prescriptive. Finally, proverbs are allegorical in that a proverb may describe a subject under the guise of some other subject, i.e., it develops a metaphor, which is a meaning that differs from the literal meaning of the words used.

To elaborate this detailed description of a proverb, the following Kikamba proverb has been considered:

Ĩlondu ya mana yĩisiaw'a maeo.

Translation: **A free gift sheep is not inspected for teeth.**

Meaning: Do not inspect free gifts for dents; accept them as they are because a free gift is not anyone's right.

This proverb is:

Short: contains five words

Pithy: The words are well chosen: **sheep** and **teeth.**

Fixed: A competent Kikamba speaker can complete this proverb when it is enunciated.

Popular: Many competent Kikamba speakers can use and understand it.

Allegorical: The meaning of '*sheep*' and '*teeth'* is not literal.

Proverbs as a linguistic area of research has been studied by other scholars. For instance, Wanjohi (1997) has studied the wisdom and philosophy of African proverbs in the light of the Gikuyu world-view. The study sought to find out if there is an African philosophy. After investigating Gikuyu proverbs, Wanjohi asserts that the proverbs pointed to basic philosophy such as metaphysics, epistemology and the ethics of the Kikuyu people, as well as the applied philosophies of education, religion, society and politics. According to Wanjohi, proverbs are concerned with giving practical advice on how to view and handle the problems of life. The book is hermeneutical study of Kikuyu proverbs to bring forth their basic and applied philosophy.

Dalfovo (1984) has studied Lugbara proverbs in terms of their description and use. On the other hand, Andambi A and Murono E (2005) have organized 859 proverbs in a new way, according to body parts, animals, insects, birds and so on. By putting the proverbs into classes, it is easier for a reader to identify the class of choice.

Other scholars like Mkota A (2009) have studied over 3,080 proverbs, discussing their meaning and their use.

Proverbs have also been arranged alphabetically showing the place of origin, their meaning and use. Wise sayings have also been covered here. An example of a scholar in this area is Omari C. K et al (1975).

ii) Previous works on Kikamba and other languages

Kikamba is a tonal language. This is proved by Mutiga J. (2002:23-160) when she investigated the tone system of Kikamba in relation to the Mwingi dialect. The study sought to identify and describe the tonal shapes of words and to investigate how these tonal patterns associate with the words. The study was based on auto-segmental phonology framework

Syntactic research framework, also been carried out. For instance,

Kioko A. (2005) studied some of the major issues in the structure of Kikamba. The aim of the study was to integrate the syntax of Kikamba into the general framework of current theory and point at those areas where the structure of Kikamba calls into question some of the generalizations established largely on the basis of works on English. The conceptual framework is on the morphosyntactic and semantic levels of linguistic structure, an assumption that natural languages are systematically structured.

On morphosyntactic studies, Munyao M. (2006:38-124) investigated the morphosyntax of Kikamba verb derivations within the minimalist program framework as outlined by Chomsky.

On Kikamba morphosyntactic studies, Kaviti L. (2004:80-215) investigated the principles and parameters of Kikamba morpho-syntax, based on the minimalist perspective.

14

The above studies on Kikamba show the gap in linguistic research that the study of the comprehension of Kikamba proverbs will bridge.

There is linguistic research on proverbs in Kikamba and other languages. For example, Njurururi, N. (1969) wrote a *Dictionary of Gikuyu Proverbs.* According to him, proverbs are a guideline and cornerstone of Gikuyu wisdom, philosophy and culture.

P'Bitek O (1985: 1-38) has written three chapters on Acholi proverbs. The proverbs are put into classes of what subject they address. For instance, in chapter one, the proverbs covered are those that relate to authority. Chapter two captures proverbs about co-operation, while chapter three is about proverbs concerning personal qualities, advice and words of wisdom. In this work, P'Bitek portrays Acholi proverbs as proverbs which are concerned with the standards of daily conduct of the Acholi people. The proverbs, in other words, are small windows into the soul of the Acholi's philosophy about life.

The study, *Acholi Proverbs*, (1985), relates closely with the present study of Kikamba proverbs in that the Kikamba proverbs, just like the Acholi proverbs, have been classified into categories in terms of the subject they address. The Kikamba proverbs also reflect on the daily conduct of the Akamba people, just as it is the case with the Acholi proverbs.

In *Misemo Na Methali Toka Tanzania* (Kitabu cha kwanza), Omari C. K. et al (1974: 1-62) has done an alphabetical classification of sayings and proverbs of the Tanzanian people. The work displays the origin, meaning and application of each proverb. By origin is meant where in Tanzania the proverb originates. For example, some proverbs originate from places like Chaga, and so they are classified as Kichagga proverbs, and so on. In this work, the function of proverbs in educating society has been portrayed. Proverbs form part of the important element of any language and so they contain folk wisdom which has been handed down from generation to generation. The analyses of these proverbs provide a resource for learners and teachers.

In *Misemo Na Methali Toka Tanzania* (Kitabu cha Pili), Omar C. K. et al (1975: 2-57) has analyzed more proverbs alphabetically. In connection to the study of the comprehension of Kikamba proverbs, the analysis of proverbs from Tanzania is relevant in that just like the main theme is to enhance education, the study of the comprehension Kikamba proverbs studied will contribute in the curriculum in that the findings will rate the significance of the learning of proverbs in the curriculum. The Kikamba proverbs have also been put into classes, although the classification is not alphabetical.

Another study of a detailed classification of proverbs has been done by Andambi and Murono (2005; 1-164), in *Muundo Mpya Wa Methali za Kiswahili*. This work

covers the analysis of Kiswahili proverbs, from proverbs concerning people to proverbs about other phenomena. The proverbs under these broad categories are written in their alphabetical order. This work connects with the comprehension of Kikamba proverbs in that they both touch on meanings and classification of proverbs.

Wanjohi (1997: 19-250) writes on the Wisdom and Philosophy of African proverbs: the Gikuyu world-view. In this work, Wanjohi exposes the Gĩkũyũ world-view which is portrayed in Gĩkũyũ proverbs. The Gĩkũyũ proverbs are discussed as figures of speech, as the source of African philosophy, their relationship with basic philosophy, their epistemological contribution, their ethical teaching and their applied philosophy in terms of society, religion, education and traditional governance. Generally, this work is a hermeneutical study of Kikuyu proverbs to bring forth their basic and applied philosophy. The comprehension of Kikamba proverbs exposes the philosophy of the Akamba people just like the Kikuyu proverbs in this work expose the philosophy of the Gĩkũyũ people.

In the study of Lugbara proverbs, Dalfovo (1984: 31-286) classifies 596 Lugbara proverbs alphabetically. In the analysis, the meaning of each proverb is provided. This work relates with the comprehension of Kikamba proverbs in that the meaning of proverbs is covered.

Ameru proverbs have been studied by Riungu (1985: 31-86). The work covers proverbs in terms of their relationship with other genres, the society, as well as the themes covered in proverbs in terms of the subjects addressed by the proverbs. Meanings of the Kimeru proverbs are discussed along the analysis. Therefore, the study of the comprehension of Kikamba proverbs can borrow a leaf from the study of the usage of Ameru proverbs.

Another research done on proverbs is that of the relationship between the form, functions and figurative meaning of Kisamia proverbs, as found in Maima J. (2004: 28-63). The Kisamia proverbs have been classified to the subjects the themes and the functions they address. They are classified in cautionary, unity, kinship, social decadence, gender and hospitality proverbs. The interpretation and meaning of each of the proverbs is given. Following the description of the work in Kisamia proverbs, it is clear that the study connects with the study of the comprehension of Kikamba proverbs especially because both cover the meaning of proverbs.

Kitula (1982: 67-156) carried as study on "*Uhakiki wa "nthimo" (Methali) za Kikamba*: (*Kwa Kufuatanisha Misingi ya Methali za Kiswahili*). The study covers the classification of proverbs, their meanings and their use. This study connects well with the present study on the comprehension of Kikamba proverbs since it covers Kikamba proverbs and their meanings.

1.11 Semantic Theory

The Nature of Semantic Theory

In a bid to establish a foundation about the nature of semantic theory, Larson and Segal (1988:1) define semantics as the study of linguistic meaning, whose ultimate goal is to provide theoretical descriptions and explanations of all the phenomena of linguistics meaning.

Further, they state: "We can see semantics as a theory of knowledge that underlies our ability to make semantic judgements. Semantic theory addresses one part of our linguistic knowledge: knowledge of meaning." (1988:10).

Larson and Segal argue that viewing the subject matter of semantics as linguistic knowledge means locating the place of semantic theory within the general enterprise initiated by Noam Chomsky (1965, 1975, 1986a). For Chomsky, linguistic theory is a theory of the real knowledge of the speakers. For some, semantics is a theory of semantic relations holding between expressions, while others construe semantics as a theory of relations holding between language and the world. For others, still, since languages are abstract objects, linguistics should be pursued as a branch of mathematics.

However, for Larson and Segal, semantics is part of a theory of speakers' knowledge. Facts about language-to-language and language-to-world relations may furnish important clues about the content of this knowledge – they may

furnish data- but they are not the object of inquiry itself. The object of inquiry is knowledge of language. (Ibid: 10).

The Place and Responsibility of Semantic Theory

The semantic theory framed by Larson and Segal (1988: 1-24) is a component of the larger enterprise of cognitive linguistics. This theory rests on two major empirical assumptions. First, like cognitive linguistics, it assumes that linguistic component consists of an unconscious body of knowledge, what Chomsky has termed the "language faculty."

Second, it assumes that the language faculty contains a specifically semantic module: a particular, isolable domain of linguistic knowledge beyond phonology, morphology, syntax, etc that is concerned with meaning.

Therefore the task of semantic theory is to specify precisely the contents of the semantic module. Further, what knowledge is contained in it must be said, and it must be shown that this knowledge is sufficient to fulfil its purpose and explain semantic facts.

In relation to the study of comprehension of Kikamba proverbs, semantic theory is important in deducing the meaning of the allegorical content in these proverbs.

This is so because the allegorical content is in the words (morphology), which forms part of the semantic module, as seen earlier.

In discussing meanings of meaning, Leech (1974: 1) quotes Ogden and Richard's list of what 'meaning' is:

- An intrinsic property.

- The other words annexed to a word in the dictionary.

- The connotation of a word.

- The place consequences of a thing in or future experience.

- That to which the user of a symbol actually refers.

- That to which the user of a symbol ought to be referring.

- That to which the user of a symbol believes himself to be referring.

- That to which the interpreter of a symbol

    a) Refers

    b) Believes himself to be referring.

    c) Believes the user to be referring.

Leech (1974: 9) makes three points about meaning:

1. That it is mistaken to try to define meaning by reducing it to the terms of sciences other than the science of language e.g. to the terms of psychology or chemistry.

2. That meaning can best be studied as a linguistic phenomenon in its own right, not as something 'outside language.' This means we investigate what it is to 'know a language' semantically e.g. to know what is involved in recognizing relations of meaning between sentences, and in recognizing which sentences are meaningful and which are not.

3. What point (2) presupposes a distinction between 'knowledge of language' and 'knowledge of the "real world." '

In connection to the study of the comprehension of Kikamba proverbs, the meaning of the content words in the proverbs cannot be reduced to the literal meaning that is known in Kikamba, since the proverbs have both literal and deeper meaning. For example:

> ***Kaswii ka nzoka no nzoka.***
>
> The offspring of a snake is a snake.

The word '***snake***' is symbolic of evil character. In its literal meaning, this proverb describes the bad traits of a snake e.g. it bites, it is poisonous, subtle etc. In the deeper meaning, this proverb relates to bad character traits that run in human families from generation of generation. Therefore, the meaning of 'snake' goes beyond the description of the reptile to the relation of its behaviour to that of human beings. There is also the relation of the snake and its offspring '***Kaswii'***, which denotes generational traits.

Once more, in the study of meaning, Leech (1974: 10-27) discusses seven types of meaning: conceptual, connotative, stylistic, affective, reflected, collocative and thematic.

Summary (Leech 1974:26)

Table 1.1 Seven Types of Meaning

1. CONCEPTUAL MEANING OR SENSE			Logical, cognitive, or denotative content
ASSOCIATIVE MEANING		2. CONNOTATIVE MEANING	What is communicated by virtue of what language refers to.
		3. STYLISTIC MEANING	What is communicated of the social circumstances of language use.
		4. AFFECTIVE MEANING	What is communicated of the feelings and attitudes of the speaker/writer.
		5. REFLECTED MEANING	What is communicated through association with another sense of the same expression.
		6. COLLOCATIVE MEANING	What is communicated through association with words which tend to occur in the environment of another word.
7. THEMATIC MEANING			What is communicated by the way in which the message is organized in terms of order and emphasis.

Nida (1975: 25-31) classifies meaning in terms of two intersecting sets of factors: cognitive vs. emotive; and extra linguistic vs. intralinguistic. He further says that referential meaning is based on the relation between the lexical unit and the

referent. The referent itself may be called the denotation, which is not the meaning.

The meaning consists of that particular structured bundle of cognitive features, associated with the lexical unit in question. In other words, the meaning consists of that set of necessary and sufficient conceptual features which make it possible for the speaker to separate the referential potentiality of any one lexical unit from that of any other unit which might tend to occupy part of the semantic domain.

Referential meanings relate to all levels, from bound morphemes to units of entire discourses.
 Nida also points out that grammatical meaning involves the relations between symbols and between sets of symbols, both primary and secondary configurations. Primary configurations involve the relations between events and the entities which participate in these events, (case relations) etc. the secondary configurations involve combinations of events and sets of events, from the initerkernel level of the most inclusive discourse level.

The emotive meanings of expressions are based upon the relation of a semantic unit to the emotive response of the participants in the communicative act. The fundamental differences in the bases for cognitive and emotive meanings are that while the cognitive meanings are based upon conceptual features of the lexical

units or combinations of such units in grammatical constructions, the emotive meaning are based upon people's reactions either to the entities and events of the extralinguistic world as symbolized by language or to the degree of appropriateness or inappropriateness in the use of linguistic forms.

Summary (Nida 1975: 26)

Table 1.2 Types of Meaning

	Cognitive	Emotive
Extralinguistic	referential	Emotive response to extralinguistic factors
Extralinguistic	grammatical	Emotive response to extralinguistic factors

In a nutshell, Leech (1974:10-27) and Nida (1975:25-31) discuss the types of meaning using different approaches. Evans and Green (2006) however, introduce a paradigm shift in semantics study by introducing the cognitive semantics approach to linguistic study. They outline four guiding principles of cognitive semantics. These principles guide the discussion on the comprehension of the allegorical content of the Kikamba proverbs for this study.

The guiding principles of cognitive semantics (summary)

Evans and Green (2006:164) summarize the four principles as follows:

Conceptual structure is embodied – The nature of conceptual organization arises from bodily experience.

Semantic structure is conceptual structure – semantic structure (the meaning conventionally associated with words and other linguistic units) is equated with concepts.

Meaning representation is encyclopaedic – words (and other linguistic units) are treated as 'points of access' to vast repositories of knowledge relating to a particular concept.

Meaning construction is conceptualization – meaning construction is equated with conceptualization, a dynamic process whereby linguistic units serve as prompts for an array of conceptual operations and the recruitment of background knowledge.

1.12 Theoretical Framework

This study will be treated in the framework of cognitive semantics approach.

Development of Cognitive Semantics Approach

According to Evans V and Green M (2006: 156) assert that cognitive semantics began in the 1970s as a reaction against the objectivist world view assumed by the Anglo-American tradition in philosophy and the related approach, truth-conditional semantics, developed within formal linguistics. One of the leading

cognitive linguists is Eve Sweetser, who describes the truth conditional approach in the following terms: 'By viewing meaning as the relationship between words and the world, truth-conditional semantics eliminates cognitive organization from the linguistic system.' Sweetser (1990: 156) as cited in Evans and Green (2006: 156).

In contract to this view, cognitive semantics sees linguistic meaning as a manifestation of conceptual structure: the nature and organization of mental representation in all its richness and diversity, and this is what makes it a distinctive approach to linguistic meaning. Leonard Talmy, one of the original pioneers of cognitive linguists in the 1970s, describes cognitive semantics as follows: '[R]esearch on cognitive semantic is research on conceptual content and its organization in language.' (Talmy 2000: 4) as cited in Evans and Green (2006: 156).

Principles of cognitive semantics approach

Evans and Green (2006: 157) outline four guiding principles of the cognitive semantics approach:

1. Conceptual structure is embodied (the embodied cognition the sis').

2. Semantic structure is conceptual structure.

3. Meaning representation is encyclopaedic.

4. Meaning construction is conceptualization.

Conceptual structure is embodied

This means that the nature of conceptual organization arises from bodily experience, so part of which makes conceptual structure meaningful is the bodily experience with which it is associated.

To illustrate this idea, imagine a man locked in a room. A room has the structural properties associated with a **bounded landmark**. It has enclosed sides, an interior, a boundary and an exterior. As a consequence of these properties, the bounded landmark has the additional function property of **containment**: the man is unable to leave the room. Containment is a meaningful consequence of a particular type of physical relationship that we have experienced in interaction with the external world.

The concept associated with containment is an instance of what cognitive linguists call an image schema. In the cognitive model, the image-schematic concept represents one of the ways in which bodily experience gives rise to meaningful concepts. While the concept CONTAINER is grounded in the directly embodied experience of interacting with bounded landmarks, image-schematic conceptual structure can give rise to more abstract kinds of meaning.

Examples from Lakoff and Johnson (1980: 32) as cited in Evans and Green (2006:158):

1. a) He's *in* love.

   b) We are *out of* trouble now.

   c) I'm slowly *getting into* shape.

   d) He *entered* a state of euphoria.

   e) He *fell into* a depression.

Semantic structure is conceptual structure

This principle asserts that language refers to concepts in the mind of the speaker rather than to objects in the external world. In other words, **semantic structure** (the meaning conventionally associated with words and other linguistic units) can be equated with concepts. However, semantic structure and conceptual structure are not identical. Cognitive semantics claim that the meanings associated with words, for example, form only a subset of possible concepts. After all, we have many more thoughts, ideas, feelings than we can conventionally encode in a language. For example, we have a concept of a palm that has five fingers but we still must have a concept of a palm with six fingers.

This principle is of great significant for a theory of language since semantic structure relates not just to words but to all linguistic units. A linguistic unit may be a word like *cat*, a *bound morpheme* such as *–er*, as in *driver* or *teacher* or indeed a larger conventional pattern, like the structure of an active sentence or a passive sentence.

2. William Shakespeare wrote *Romeo and Juliet.* (active)

3. *Romeo and Juliet* was written by William Shakespeare.(passive)

Because active and passive constructions are conventionally associated with a functional distinction, namely the point of view we are adopting with respect to the subject of the sentence, cognitive linguistics claim that the active and the passive structures are themselves meaningful; in active sentences we are focusing on the active participant in an event by placing this unit at the front of the constructions. In passive sentences, we are focusing on the participant that undergoes the action.

Meaning representation is encyclopaedic

This means that words do not represent neatly packaged bundles of meaning (the **dictionary** view), but serve as 'points of access' to vast repositories of knowledge relating to a particular concept or conceptual domain (Langacker 1987) as cited in Evans and Green (2006:160).

Let us consider the concept BACHELOR. We know that certain unmarried adult males would not normally be called bachelors and we have cultural knowledge regarding the behaviour associated with stereotypical bachelor. It is encyclopaedic knowledge of this kind that allows us to interpret this otherwise contradictory sentence:

4. *Watch out Jane, your husband's a right bachelor.*

On the face of it, identifying Jane's husband (a married man) as a bachelor would appear to be contradictory. However, given our cultural stereotype of bachelors,

which presents them as sexual predators, we understand utterance (4) as a warning issued to Jane concerning her husband's fidelity. As this example illustrates, the meanings associated with words often draw upon complex and sophisticated bodies of knowledge.

Meaning construction is conceptualization

According to this view, meaning is constructed at the conceptual level: meaning construction is equated with **conceptualization,** a dynamic process whereby linguistic units serve as prompts for an array of conceptual operations and the recruitment of background knowledge. It follows that meaning is a process rather than a discrete 'thing' that can be 'packaged' by language.

Methodology

Evans and Green (2006) go on to say that cognitive semanticists study language to reveal about the nature of the human conceptual system. The focus on language is based on the assumption that linguistic organization will reflect, at least partially, the nature and the organization of the conceptual system. Therefore, language is a tool for investigating conceptual organization.

Cognitive semantic approaches to grammar are primarily concerned with studying the language system itself, and with describing that system, and our knowledge of that system, on the basis of the properties of the conceptual system. It follows that

cognitive semantic approaches to grammar are 'two sides of the same coin': cognitive semanticists rely on language to help them understand how the conceptual system works, while cognitive grammarians rely on what is known about the conceptual system to help them understand how language works.

In employing language for the purposes of investigating patterns of conceptual organization, cognitive semanticists rely upon the methodology of seeking converging evidence. This means that when patterns in language suggest corresponding patterns in conceptual structure, cognitive semanticists look for related evidence of these patterns in other areas of investigation. For example, linguistic patterns suggest conceptual patterns relating to time, where PAST is 'behind' and FUTURE is 'in front.' Evidence from gesture studies provides independent support for the existence of this conceptual pattern: while English speakers gesture behind themselves when talking about the past, they gesture in front of themselves when talking about the future. Converging evidence from two distinct forms of communication (language and gesture) suggest that a common conceptual pattern underlies the two different forms. This explains why cognitive semanticists rely upon evidence from other disciplines, particularly cognitive psychology and neuroscience, in building a theory of the human conceptual system.

1.13 Research Methodology

1.13.1 Data Collection

Data will be collected from both primary and secondary sources. The Kikamba proverbs that will be used to formulate the questionnaire will be drawn from a textbook. The information on the questionnaire will be drawn from the standard eight pupils.

1.13.2 Data Sampling

For this study, only twenty Kikamba proverbs from twenty classes of Kikamba proverbs will be selected.

1.13.3 Tools of Data Collection

Data will be collected using a questionnaire.

1.13.4 Data Analysis and Presentation

The questionnaires will be marked for the correct meaning of the given Kikamba proverbs. The answers will be summarized into two tables: one for the correct/incorrect responses and another for the percentages of correct/incorrect responses. An explanation will also be given on the findings. The discussion of the findings will be based on the guiding principles of cognitive semantics approach to linguistics study as outlined by Evans and Green (2006:164).

1.14 Significance of the Study

Although many scholars have studied Kikamba, no research has been done on the comprehension of Kikamba proverbs.

The use of the cognitive semantics approach gives insight into the comprehension of the allegorical content of Kikamba proverbs as conceptual content and its organization in language.

The choice of standard eight pupils as the population represents young respondents who are not old enough to learn, understand and gain adequate proficiency in speaking Kikamba. The understanding they have of Kikamba proverbs is suspected to be drawn from memory and recitation.

This study will contribute to curriculum development in that it will make it possible for curriculum developers to decide if the teaching of Kikamba in Ukambani primary schools is significant. This will in turn help in deciding if Kikamba can be taught as an elective subject or at all levels of the curriculum.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 CLASSIFICATION OF PROVERBS

This chapter will deal with an in depth study of proverbs and their classification. The focus will be on the characteristics, structure, classification, functions and meanings of proverbs.

2.1 Proverbs – Definition and Characteristics

Proverbs have been defined in various ways by different scholars. Some of the definitions as cited in Bukenya et al (1994: 37) are:

"A proverb is usually stated in form of a maxim, epigram or aphorism" (Kipury, 1983).

"A proverb is a short familiar sentence expressing a supposed truth or moral lesson; a byword; a saying that requires explanation." (*Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary*).

"A proverb is a short well-known saying usually in a popular language." (*Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English).*

"A proverb is a short saying of wisdom in general usage." (Akivaga and Odaga, 1982).

A proverb is "a saying in more or less fixed form marked by shortness, sense and salt and distinguished by the popular acceptance of the truth tersely expressed in it." (Finnegan, 1970).

"A proverb is a short pithy statement containing folk wisdom." (Nandwa and Bukenya, 1983).

"A proverb is a terse, compact, pithy statement of popular wisdom accepted as an expression of truth." (Sunkuli and Miruka, 1990).

From these definitions, salient characteristics of proverbs can be compiled in order to get a substantial definition. Therefore, the definitions show that a proverb is:

- Short, terse or brief.

- Indirect, obscure or gnomic

- Relatively invariable/fixed.

- A statement

- Full of wisdom, truth or meaning.

Although many books equate proverbs with sayings, Bukenya et al (1994: 37) declares "saying" as general and vague because it may be regarded as a general category of proverbs, aphorisms, dictum, maxims, slogans, idioms and euphemisms. Proverbs may therefore be called sayings but sayings may not always be proverbs.

Bukenya et al also point out that it is important to consider what each community calls its own and what the names denote or connote. Such considerations help in understanding the relationships among the genres and how the community perceives of its own material.

For example, the Luo use *ngero*, to refer to proverbs, riddles, allegory, parable and allusion. The Kamba use *nthimo* to mean proverb, dark saying, and metaphorical wording. On the other hand, the Baganda use *olugero* to mean proverb, saying, story, parable, while the Fulani of Nigeria have *Mallol* for proverb and allusion and *tindol* for proverb, popular moral story and maxim.

According to Kabira and Mutahi (1988: 37), the Kikuyu use *thimo* to mean proverbs. Kabira and Mutahi define a proverb as a metaphorical statement that summarizes a cultural context, event, a happening or an experience. They go on to say that proverbs are used to warn, advise, inform, clarify, among other uses.

When proverbs are used to warn or advise, they are used for their clarity and deepness, for example:

Mbaa matũ ĩtũlaa kyano na ũtambĩ.

(The one who does not hear involves himself in danger and eventually dies.)

This Kikamba proverb is used by an elderly person to a young one to issue a strong warning over disobedience, and to state the consequences of disobedience, which often result to punishment and therefore pain for the disobedient young person.

Odaga (1984:68) defines proverbs as wise sayings which must be interpreted before their meaning can fully be understood. Every group of people have their

own proverbs, and use them in their daily conversation. Like oral narratives, proverbs touch on every aspect of the life of the people who create them. Therefore, there are proverbs on political, social, educational, religious and economic issues, while others have been passed down from generation to generation. Other proverbs are new, stemming from modern and current life styles and experiences of our time.

The working definition of a proverb for purposes of this study is that ***a proverb is a short, pithy, fixed, popular, allegorical sentence that contains folk wisdom.***

2.2 Structure of Proverbs

When proverbs are defined as brief, terse and invariable, these are called structural features. Brevity means proverbs are short; terseness means that they are relatively fixed. Other structural features of proverbs include abbreviation, wellerism, parallelism, mnemonics, imagery and humour, as discussed in Bukenya et al (1994: 40-43).

a) Abbreviation

Bukenya et al (1994:40) say that a proverb may be abbreviated in that a speaker using a proverb may sometimes choose to deliver one part of the proverb and leave the hearer to complete the rest. The following Kiswahili proverb is an example:

Speaker: *Kwenye miti*   Hearer: *Hakuna wajenzi*

     Where there are trees   there are no builders.

In the selected Kikamba proverbs for this study, no proverb has the structure of abbreviation.

b) Wellerism

Wellerism refers to the aspect of proverbs being presented as quotations from some imaginary or actual characters. (Bukenya et al 1994:40) An example is the following Maasai proverb:

Etojoki pa, "Rip-rrib kiyama, meeta nkenyak."

It has been said, "Marriage is rib-rib; it has no eyes." i.e. it is a matter of luck.

Wellerism is meant to introduce an element of objectivity and authority in the proverb. Using it is like saying "I'm not responsible for this, but the truth is that……" this kind of authority is implied in all Swahili proverbs which start with the phrase *Wahenga walisema…..* (The sages said…). An example in Kikamba is:

Akamba maasya vala nthũ yĩkaw'a tivo ĩvalũkaa.

(Where an enemy was thrown to land is not where he landed).

This can be interpreted to mean that the bad wishes we accord the people we do not like/enemies do not always come to pass.

Wellerism does not occur in the selected Kikamba proverbs for this study.

c) Parallelism

According to Bukenya et al (1994:40), this refers to the use of balancing units in a literary form. A Kiswahili proverb serves as a good example here,

Kukopa harusi, kulipa matanga

Borrowing is a wedding, repaying a funeral.

These two words, which appear before and after the comma, give a neat physical balance. Again, the wedding (a happy occasion) is contrasted with the funeral (a sad occasion). Parallelism is further divided into:

i) **Cross-parallelism or chiasmus**

Bukenya et al (1994:41) explain that this occurs when a significant word or phrase in the first part of the proverb is repeated in the second part for example, the Gikuyu proverb:

Muici wa muthenya ni oio, na muici wa utuku ni oio

He who robs in the day is known, and he who robs in the night is known too.

ii) **Double proposition**

This occurs when the first part of a proverb is a general statement and the second its qualification. For example, the Maasai proverb:

Osima Kishon: Te naa ilmurran, nintaaminyi.

Suffering is a gift, it is caused by warriors, make them your fathers.

This is described by Bukenya et al (1994:41).

iii) **Contrast proposition**

The first part of the proverb is stated in the affirmative and the second in the negative, or vice-versa, as in the Kiswahili proverb:

Kulea mimba si kazi, kazi ni kulea mwana.

It is not (hard) work to nurse a pregnancy, (hard) work is to bring up the child. (Ibid: 41)

iv) Negative axiom

In this class, the proverb is stated in the negative. An example is the Gikuyu proverb:

Iri kuhuma ndiri muti itangigwatirira

There is no tree which a panting animal would not cling to.

The axiom for this would be "A panting dog/animal will cling to any tree: or "A drowning man will catch a straw." (Ibid: 41).

d) Mnemonics

Bukenya et al (1994:41-42) define mnemonics as the aspect of proverbs having poetic qualities, i.e. proverbs and poems have a lot in common in terms of good effects (or mnemonics) which enhance auditory perception. Proverbial mnemonics include alliteration, assonance, rhyme and reduplication.

i) Alliteration

This is repetition of a consonant sound in words that are close together. For example, the Luo proverb;

Jaber jaula

The beautiful one is deceptive

Kiswahili:

Hasira hasara

Anger brings damage.

ii)   Assonance

This is defined as the repetition of a vowel sound in words that are close together. An example is the repetition of *'i'* and **'a'** sounds in the Swahili proverb:

Liandikwalo ndilo liwalo

That which is written (by God) is what is (must surely come to pass).

iii)   Rhyme

Proverbs contain internal rhyme. Internal rhyme involves a word in the middle of the proverbs ending in the same sound as a word at the end of the proverb.

Examples :

Kiswahili: *Asiyesikia la mkuu huvunjika guu*

He who does not heed to elders' word breaks his leg.

English: Man proposes, God disposes.

iv)   Idiophone

An idiophone is an expression involving words whose meanings are contained in their sounds. A good example is the Kiswahili proverb:

Chururu si ndo! ndo! ndo!

Chururu signifies a gush; **ndo! ndo! ndo**! A drip.

The proverb means that a flow of water is not the same as a drip, meaning that things vary in magnitude.

v)   **Reduplication**

Reduplication is defined as the repetition of a word or sound after itself e.g.

Luo: *Wat wat akin*

              Kinship is kinship

Kiswahili: *Bandu bandu huisha gogo*

              Chip chip finishes the log

Baganda: *Bugu-bugu simuliro*

              Splutter splutter isn't fire.

The structure of mnemonics does not occur in the selected Kikamba proverbs for this study.

e) **Imagery**

Proverbs employ a lot of figures of speech derived from social, economic, political, physical and cultural environment. The figures of speech are used to represent certain meanings, in that they are transformed such that the figures used transcend their nominal senses. This is as explained by Bukenya et al (1994:42). Example:

"We are saving a chicken from death and it complains that it is not allowed to go to the rubbish heap to pick up the rubbish."

This is a Yoruba proverb which draws its imagery from the domestic environment of chickens and the village rubbish heap which is always situated near the village. The heap is fertile ground for chicken's food, but it may also have snakes that can harm the chicken. The proverb is used to rebuke someone who insists on doing what he has his heart on, despite the warning by others who perceive the danger he is facing.

The proverbial imagery can be interpreted:

We (those who know, are experienced or have foresight) are saving the chicken (are advising an ignorant person) from death (that he is facing danger), and *it* complains that it is not allowed to go to the rubbish heap to pick up rubbish (and he complains that he is not let to have his heart's desire).

Imagery occurs in all the selected Kikamba proverbs for this study.

f) Humour

Humour is the aspect of creating mirth and is used mainly to pass satirical comments as well as offering an often ignored perspective of things. Proverbs have a lot of humour especially those concerned with subjects of eating and excretion.

The following examples are drawn from Bukenya et al (1994:43) :

Kikuyu: *Mugeni amiaga mbirira*

              The foreigner excreted in the cemetery

The idea here is that the stranger does not know the custom of the people who apparently hold cemeteries in awe. The proverbs makes us imagine the stranger strolling or perhaps rushing into the cemetery not knowing that he is in the company of the spirits of the dead who may start asking him why he is trespassing on their ground.

The interpretation of this proverb should be in the habitual: *The foreigner excretes in the cemetery.*

The interpretation of *mbirira* should be *grave* not cemetery.

Kiswahili: *Amnyimaye punda adesi kampunguzia mashuzi*

He who withholds lentils from a donkey reduces his passing of wind.

Lentils are small, green, orange or brown seed that is usually dried and used in cooking and can be eaten by donkeys. However, the seed causes donkeys a lot of gas in the stomach meaning that the donkey releases wind all the time. Therefore, the releasing of wind all the time due to a bloated stomach is a bother to the donkey and so the lentils cause the donkey more harm than good.

The structure of proverbs displays the different types of proverbs that can be formed depending on their structural characteristics.

2.3 Classification of Proverbs

Odaga (1984: 73) points out that proverbs can be classified according to the themes they depict. Such themes include social life such as marriage, work; health, death life; relationships and emotions, that is, hate, friendship, enmity; political issues, rulers, laws; perseverance, bravery, inconsistence, cowardice, misfortune, fortune, natural phenomena such as day and night, the weather, among other themes. Proverbs are used in conversations, literally or figuratively.

Bukenya et al (1994: 43-44) argue that classification of proverbs should be consistent, comprehensive, translingual and transcendental. By consistency is meant that the fact that if a classification method is using one aspect to classify proverbs, then all proverbs should be classified using the same parameter. For example, if the classification is based on the functions of the proverbs, the functions of the proverbs being classified must be stated.

In terms of comprehensiveness, classification should consider as many, if not all, aspects of the maternal as possible that is, functions, style, context.

On the aspect of a classification scheme being translingual, the classification scheme should be usable whether the proverbs are in the original language or in translation.

Finally, the transcendental aspect of a classification scheme demands that the classification scheme should be able to accommodate all proverbs that are likely to be encountered.

Some schemes may however be used in isolation or in combination depending on the precision one intends to achieve.

2.4 Types of Classification

Bukenya et al (1994: 44-46) discuss four types of classification of proverbs.

1. **Alphabetical classification**

In this scheme, proverbs are classified following the order of the first letters in the original language. This means that proverbs beginning with "A" will appear before those beginning with "B", and so on. This system has been used by G. Barra in *1000 Kikuyu proverbs.* This system does not capture comprehensiveness and translingualism.

2. **Subject, Content or Thematic Classification**

Proverbs are grouped according to what they talk about e.g. religion, politics, marriage, vocation, etc. The major shortcoming of this method is that the classes overlap because some proverbs apply across many subjects and may not be pinned down to any particular one. For example, the following Kikamba proverbs can be classified under "favouritism."

Vati mwana wa ndanĩ na wa mũongonĩ

No child is ordained to be carried in front while another is for the back.

The explanation of this proverb is that people should not play favourites owing to the fact that the back is considered a more vulnerable position for a child. Kieti and Coughlin (1990: 106).

Although this proverb is classified under the subject of favouritism, it can also be classified under the subject of children.

However, it is worth noting that *ndanĩ* (in front) implies special treatment such as attending to the baby after it soils itself or even breastfeeding it. Otherwise, the normal position for carrying a baby in the Kamba community is at the back.

3. Functional classification

This scheme classifies proverbs according to their functions. For instance, proverbs are meant to warn, caution, advise, console, etc. The shortcoming of this form of classification is that a proverb may change functions depending on when, where and by whom it is used.

For example, the following Kikamba proverb:

Nzaũ ndyanasya ĩsyũkonĩ myaka ĩlĩ.

A bull does not moo in the valley for two years.

Explanation: The same thing can be done for so long! A time comes when it has
                to stop. (Kieti & Coughlin1999: 112).

Although Kieti and Coughlin interpret *ĩsyũkonĩ* as '*valley*', the right interpretation

is *the path leading to the watering place for the animals.* 'Mooing' means being 'the one being heard all the time', the implication being that one cannot be the one always in charge, his/her time goes and others take over. This proverb suits those who proudly hold positions of authority as if they will be in those positions forever, forgetting that once their time is done, others should succeed them.

4. Literary classification

Bukenya et al (1994: 45) define literary classification as an entirely new approach which looks at the classification of proverbs from a stylistic-cum-structural dimension. For lack of better terms, the author coins or adopts terms used in other literary contexts to refer to the categories identifiable using this scheme. In this classification, we have schemes like epigrams, allusions and directives.

i) Epigrams

These are defined as longer, poem-like proverbs using amusing idioms to express some clever thought. An example here is the Swedish proverb:

Fear less, hope more; eat less, chew more; whine less, breath more; and all good things will be yours.

Explanation: The point of this proverb is that there is virtue in being moderate, contemplative and realistic. (Ibid: 45).

49

ii)   **Allusions**

Allusion is generally used to mean reference to some familiar concept. A number of proverbs can be classified as such. However, the class can be divided into:

a) **Historical allusions**

Proverbs in this category have specific factual stories behind them. A good example here is the Gikuyu proverb:

Ũkabi nĩ mũhũnu mũtu

The Maasai have had their fill (Ibid: 45)

This proverb is based on the fact that the Maasai used to buy grains from the Gikuyu in the past. If the latter attempted to sell the grains a bit expensively for the Maasai's liking, trade turned into battle.

Another example is the Maasai proverb:

"Ening" siriri king'a"

The clever child hears secrets (Ibid: 45-6).

This proverb captures the famous Lenana Senteu story about how Lenana cheated his elder brother out of the leadership in the same way as Jacob did with Esau in the bible.

b) Fictional allusions

This class captures proverbs that do not necessarily have an empirical base but are allusive. For example, the Luo say:

Kinda ne omiyo opuk oyombo Apuoyo

Persistence made the tortoise defeat the hare in a race (Ibid: 46)

This proverb is based on the familiar fable that while the hare was over confident about winning the race and could afford to stop on the way to browse, tortoise persisted and carried the day.

c) Wellerism

This refers to a proverb in which an attribution of speech is made to an actual or imaginary being. A good example is the following Maasai proverb in which the Hyena is alleged to have said:

Etejo opa olng'onjira, "Mme kamunyak oshi keju maitagol."

They hyena said, "I am not lucky, but I am always on the move."

iii) Directives

Bukenya et al (1994: 46) state that directives (a coinage) are those proverbs that comment of situations, sum up or convey some designated message to the intended audience. Such proverbs occur as tense authoritative statements whose truth is expressly unchangeable. Examples include:

a) **Maasai:** *Meibor ng'ano lukunya*

   Wisdom is not always white-headed.

The proverb puts across the idea that appearance is not equal to being wise and should therefore not be used to judge conclusively.

b) **Luo:** *Olang'o ng'we gi oro, kata koth ochwe.*

The soldier ant smells whether in dry or hot weather.

This proverb tells us that the old habits die hard or that one cannot unlearn what he has been all his life. Put otherwise, would say, once something, always that thing.

c) **Kalenjin:** *Kakile bana it*

We say that the ear is a poor fellow.

This refers to the fact that the ear receives everything but it takes to the mind, not ear, to decipher what is valid, good or true.

d) **Kikamba:** *Nyamũ yĩ mwĩthe ndĩkĩlaa mwaki*

A busy tailed animal does not hop over fire.

Of course the animal knows the danger it faces should its tail catch fire. Likewise, people should know their limits and avoid dare – devilish undertakings.

The correct interpretation of *mwĩthe* is not *bushy-tailed* but a big, fat and heavy tail like that of a sheep. Such a tail limits an animal from jumping high enough to avoid being burned by the fire. If such a tail catches fire, it burns fast because of the fat.

e) **Yoruba:**   *Ibi aja a tin mo onroro apon*

It is from his dog that we recognize a bachelor who is hard to live with.

The Yoruba mean to say here that it is small and apparently insignificant things that give away one's true character.

2.5 Social Functions of Proverbs

Bukenya et al (1994: 47) say that proverbs have functions. The functions of proverbs refer to the social purpose underlying the use of proverbs, whether they are intentional or sub-conscious. Therefore, for such functions have been identified:

i)   Aesthetic functions

The Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe, as quoted in Bukenya et al (1994: 47), said that "Proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten."

The Yoruba, in the same text, have been quoted to have said, "A proverb is the horse which carries a subject under discussion along; if a subject under discussion goes astray, we use a proverb to track it."

These expressions show the importance of proverbs as facilitators of speech. They elevate proverbs from more nominal value of word to a higher plane – aesthetics. It is worth noting that in both speech and writing, and indeed other forms of verbal

communication, proverbs are embellishers. In the Kamba society, proverbs were a preserve of the elders especially when arbitrating a dispute or making a ruling. Proverbs were and still are a source of wisdom that guides people in an inoffensive manner.

ii) Reflecting functions

Proverbs present a codified wisdom of a society accumulated over many years of happy and bitter experiences. Out of these, we see the society's perception of life; such a perception having developed as a result of observation and reflection of the nature of life. For example

Kikamba: *Nyamũ yĩ mwĩthe ndĩkĩlaa mwaki*

A long tailed animal does not hop over fire

The danger signalled by this proverb is that the long tail may catch fire which may lead to the animal getting burned. The proverb uses a local image to caution people to know their limits.

Mwĩthe, as seen earlier, should be interpreted as *a big, fat and heavy tail*.

iii) Summative functions

Proverbs are usually summaries of experiences, real or fictional. Many narratives end with proverbs summarizing their messages or giving credence to the experience narrated about as the origin of the proverb. A good example here is the Kikamba proverb: *"Ndũkatumĩe mwana ngoi ate mũsyae"* as used in the Akamba

story: *The Spilt Dream!,* translated as *Ndoto Yefĩkie!* By Kieti and Coughlin (1990: 102-103), in *Barking, You'll Be Eaten.* This story is in the appendices.

iv)   Normative functions

Proverbs are vehicles of the society's precepts through warning, cautioning, satire, advise, counsel, invective, encouragement, and so on. The presumption here is that the society has certain standards that it cherishes and wishes to perpetuate. Proverbs therefore facilitate the achievement of that goal.

It is worth noting that all the selected Kikamba proverbs for this study represent the social functions of proverbs. For example:

a) *Mũndũ ekĩawa ĩvu nĩ mũnyanyae*

A person is impregnated by his/her friend.

b) *Makwata nde mũũnda.*

He who double- deals lacks a shamba.

(a) Cautions people against being wrongly advised by their friends, eventually falling into problems.

(b) Warns people of double-dealing because when the people one double-deals find out, he is left alone, losing all the benefits of the game and so remaining without anything, (shamba).

2.6 Uses/Meanings of Proverbs

Kieti and Coughlin (1990: 104) state that elders use proverbs to give advice or judge an event or someone's behaviour. The advice often summarizes fables. Proverbs are also used to advise someone in a group, but without identifying them. In such a case, am elder might even severely scold someone, but only the culprit would know for sure that he or she was being addressed. Therefore, the meanings of proverbs are pegged on their uses.

Most proverbs have several meanings. The meanings are drawn from the subject addressed by a particular proverb. Some proverbs caution against bragging, laziness, procrastination, favouritism, presumptions, lies and ill intentions; others encourage obedience or independence and thinking before acting, among other uses.

Kieti and Coughlin (1990: 105-115) explain various meanings of Kikamba proverbs depending on the subject under which the proverb is applied. For example:

a) **Braggarts**

Mũsemba weka aasyaa nĩwe wĩ maaũ.

A lone runner says that has legs (runs fast).

The interpretation of *mũsemba weka* should be the *one who runs alone* but not a lone runner. This means that when one is involved in an activity alone, he does not encounter competition and so he/she regards himself as the best.

56

b) Procrastination

Nzũũ syeeyeteelilye kĩvooi.

Pigeon peas awaited the blight.

Since pigeon peas sprout after the first rain, but are not harvested until after the second, their pods often get blight. Hence, don't procrastinate.

This proverb means that failure to do something at the right time usually leads to that thing being overtaken by other bad things that affect the outcome of the thing that was supposed to have been done. This is the same as having a poor pigeon peas harvest due to the effects of blight which affects the size and the quality of the seeds.

c) Favouritism

Vai mwana wa ndanĩ na wa mũongonĩ

No child is ordained to be carried in front while another is for the back.

The back is considered more vulnerable position for a child. This suggests: don't play favourites. As discussed earlier, the front is a special position for carrying a baby due to the services the baby receives which cannot be done when the baby is carried at the back.

d) Independence and initiative

Mũndũ akolaw'a too nĩ kĩthuma kya ng'ombe yake.

A person can only get enough sleep from their own cow's hide.

Meaning: Independence is the best.

In the traditional Kamba community, hides were used as bedding. If one did not have cattle, he/she did not own hides and he/she slept on borrowed ones unless he bought one. This means there was no luxury in a borrowed hide since the owner would claim it anytime. The fact that one would obtain a hide from his/her own cow, it follows that he/she got the type and the size of a hide he/she required or preferred, while a borrowed one could not exactly suit the needs of the borrower. The borrower's sleep is also cut short when the owner of the hide claims it.

e) Obedience, Disobedience and Punishment

Mbaa matũ ĩtũlaa kyano na ũtambĩ.

One who has lost his ears breaks the shaft of a poisoned arrow with his thigh.

Meaning: A stubborn scoundrel gets punished hard.

This proverb means the person who does not heed advice involves him/herself in dangerous activities that cause harm (just like when the head of the arrow) is inside the thigh while the shaft is out meaning that it is deadly. When the head of the poisoned arrow breaks inside the thigh, the person definitely dies.

f) Wisdom and Stupidity

Nyamũ yĩ mwĩthe ndĩkĩlaa mwaki.

A bushy-tailed animal does not hop over fire.

Meaning: know your limits.

As we have seen earlier, Kieti and Coughlin interpret *mwĩthe* as *bushy tailed* while it should be a big, fat tail like that one of a sheep. It is heavy and swings from side to side and so lifting it fast with the rest of the body over fire would be challenging. It therefore stands a high chance of catching fire at an accelerated rate due to the fat and of course the fur on it.

g) Presumptions

Kĩthimo kya metho kĩ ũvũngũ.

The eyes deceive.

Meaning: Don't underrate someone/something.

The interpretation of this proverb should be *the measure of the eyes is wrong.*

The eyes are used for seeing and making judgement about people, situations and things. For example, one may look at someone and see pride in them yet the assessment could be wrong. This is now the 'measure of the eyes.' This means that the eyes only see superficially not considering what underlies that which is seen. In order to determine the proper judgement about people or situations, it is good to apply another measure, such as putting people to a task to determine their abilities.

h) Abuse, lies and double dealing

Mbũi nzaũ yaaa yenekee.

A white goat gets lost as people watch.

Meaning: A good person can go astray as people watch helplessly.

Mbui nzau is drawn from the context of the way mist disappears in the atmosphere. People wake up and find it in the air but they cannot explain how it disappears yet they see it how it clears away and to where.

Makwata nde mũũnda.

Having many tiny garden plots yields little.

Meaning: Be systematic, focus your energies.

The interpretation of this proverb is: The one who double-deals has no shamba.

This proverb mostly applies to young people when they look for marriage partners. When one dates many partners and they come to know that they are dating the same person, they all quit the relationship leaving that person all alone. Therefore, by lacking a partner, they have no *shamba*, that is, a partner to call their own.

Ũko wa mbiti ũthuaa ũndũ ũmwe.

All hyenas limp alike.

Meaning: Bad traits run in a family.

Hyenas are not held positively in the Kamba society; they are known for greed and glutton. They also walk with a limp which is symbolic of a shortcoming. This is how this proverb applies to a group of people that exhibit similar and negative traits. *Ũko* therefore stands for the group with similar characteristics just as it is known of a family to share characteristics.

i) Fate and bad intentions

Vala nthũ yĩkaw'a tivo ĩvalũkaa.

A bad omen misses its target.

Meaning: Another fate is set. Don't tamper with it. Ill intentions usually don't succeed.

Although this proverb is translated as a bad omen misses its target, a more proper meaning is where an enemy is thrown is not where he/she falls. *Nthũ* in this case refers to *an enemy* not *a bad omen*. In the Kamba culture, enemies are eliminated or driven far off the people. Enemies are wished to perish yet sometimes they do not perish. This proverb is applied in a case where someone wishes another bad things. When the one wished bad thing does not suffer the bad wishes, he/she therefore can use this proverb to prove wrong the one who had wished him bad wishes.

Ĩitho yĩ ĩtonyeka yambĩiaa kũĩa tene.

An eye that will get damaged weeps nervously.

Meaning: Intentions show. They are hard to disguise.

A proper interpretation of this proverb is that an eye that will get damaged to the extent of fluid oozing from it is seen before it does so. This proverb points at the signs and symptoms that precede the occurrence of something. For instance, if someone hangs around the company of ill mannered people and slowly starts copying them, the first signs of bad manners premonition an eventual damage to the previous good character.

j) Courage and power

Wĩsĩ na wĩsĩ maiendaa nzama.

Two experts don't share secrets.

This proverb has better interpretation than the one given by the author, that is, People who know it all do not hold an executive meeting, since each considers their opinion as the best and that of the other not as important. For such people, coming to a consensus over an issue is hard.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the general classification of proverbs. It covers the definition of proverbs as summed up by their characteristics, the structure of proverbs, types of classification of proverbs, social functions of proverbs, uses of proverbs, interpretations and meanings of proverbs. The meanings are drawn from the subjects/ themes the proverbs address.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 DESCRIPTION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS OF KIKAMBA PROVERBS

In this chapter, the selected Kikamba proverbs for this study are discussed. The main focus here is on the description of the interpretations of the Kikamba proverbs based on the subjects they address. The selected Kikamba proverbs are classified into classes of what they relate to.

3.1 Kikamba Proverbs

According to Mutisya (2002), proverbs reveal a lot about the society in which the authors lived. From the proverbs one can deduce the society's attitude towards various aspects of life; the aspirations and prejudices of the people, their daily activities and means of livelihood, their culture and environment.

Mutisya (2002) further notes that a large percentage of the Akamba proverbs have something to do with wild life and nature. A substantial number of the proverbs make reference to home and the family. It is also worth noticing that discipline, respect and wisdom are virtues frequently exhorted.

Kikamba proverbs, "*nthimo,*" are aspects of Kikamba language. Kikamba proverbs contain wisdom handed down from generation to generation. Hence, Mutisya (2002) defines a proverb as a traditional saying which presents a moral in short

and pithy manner. Proverbs offer advice, warnings, predictions and general observations about life.

Mutisya (2002) further says that a proverb is an ornament to language. The use of proverbs was a preserve of the elders in the Kamba community because the elders were the pillars of wisdom.

3.2 Description of Kikamba Proverbs

This study undertakes comprehension of Kikamba proverbs and so the meaning of Kikamba proverbs plays a pivotal role. Meaning of Kikamba proverbs is deduced from the context and the subject a proverb is meant to address. The meaning is the message conveyed by the proverb.

The proverbs to be studied in this research are drawn from Mutisya (2002), *Kikamba proverbs and Idioms*. The proverbs are arranged in subjects according to their metaphorical meaning.

In the preface, Mutisya (2002) notes that:

a) Kikamba proverbs could have the same meaning for example

- **Kanywa wakĩlĩte mwee ndũvuvaa mwaki** (pg. 64 No. 1)

   A mouth stuffed with millet grains cannot blow the fire.

   One person cannot simultaneously perform two tasks requiring equal attention.

- **Mũũi ndũkwatanĩaw'a na kũmia** (pg 64 No. 2)

  One cannot whistle and blow the nose at the same time.

  Specialized work requires undivided attention

The two proverbs discourage greed and over-ambition.

In terms of the comprehension of the allegorical content of Kikamba proverbs, the meaning of some of the proverbs could be interpreted to be having the same meaning.

b) A proverb could have more than one meaning.

   For example

   Mũtĩ ũvalũkĩlaa ũla wĩ vakuvĩ (pg. 58. No 1)

   A tree falls on the person near it.

   In an emergency, those present must deal with the problem.

This proverb could mean that one gains by being present or it may be applied where one is expected to take responsibility on account of one's proximity.

This aspect can be reflected in the study of the comprehension of the allegorical content of Kikamba proverbs in that one Kikamba proverb could be given different interpretations of meaning. More than on principle of the cognitive approach may apply to one Kikamba proverb.

c) Two proverbs may appear to be contradictory.

   For example

Kūya tene ti kūtoona (pg 4 No. 1)

Having early meals is not an indication of one's avarice.

It usually pays to have an early start.

The early bird catches the worm.

Ndanyuka mbola yīsaa kūmelya (pg. 4 No. 4)

The animal that chews its food slowly eventually swallows it.

It is advisable to do things cautiously and at one's own pace.

Slow but sure wins the race.

The first proverb encourages earliness; the second one cautions against unnecessary haste.

In the study of the comprehension of Kikamba of the allegorical content of Kikamba proverbs, some of the Kikamba proverbs may contradict in terms of producing a positive or a negative meaning.

3.3 Description of the Selected Kikamba Proverbs

The data in this study is obtained from Mutisya (2002), *Kikamba Proverbs and Idioms.* This is so because the researcher could not generate all the proverbs required for this study.

This research studies twenty Kikamba proverbs drawn from different subjects which form the classes of these proverbs. Each proverb has three aspects, distinguished typographically:

  i) The Kikamba proverb – BOLD print.

66

ii) Literal English translation – ORDINARY print

iii) General English interpretation including the deeper meaning – BOLD print.

iv) Equivalent or close foreign proverb – ITALICS

1) **Opportunities – Delayed Action** (Mutisya 2002:2 No. 6)

Walea kūkonzwa wĩ mwĩũ wooma ndūkonzekaa.

It is impossible to bend a dry stick.

Hate corrective measures are usually ineffective.

A stitch in time saves nine.

2) **Earliness – Haste**

Kūya tene ti kūtoona. (Ibid: 4. No.1)

Having early meals is not an indication of one's avarice.

It usually pays to have an early start.

The early bird catches the worm.

3) **Advice**

Mbaa matū ĩtūlaa kyano na ūtambĩ. (Ibid: 7. No. 1)

Against, the stubborn fool uses his thigh to break a poisoned arrow.

The people who ignore advice are certain to get themselves in serious trouble.

He who will not be ruled by the rudder must be ruled by the rock.

67

4) **Foresight – Warnings**

Mwĩĩtu wa vaasa asũngaa aisisya sua. (Mutisya 2002: 9 No. 4).

The girl from a distant village frequently looks at the sun as she dances.

One needs to be aware of one's individual limitations.

He that looks not finds himself behind.

5) **Truth – False appearance**

Nguma ndĩana mwene. (Ibid: 14 No. 13)

Fame is usually larger than the subject.

Physical appearance often does not match the reputation.

Fame, like a river, is narrowest at its source and broadest afar off.

6) **Secrecy**

Kĩtheka kĩ matũ. (Ibid: 16) No.1)

The forest has ears

Very often, what is said in privacy soon becomes public knowledge.

Fields have eyes and woods have ears.

7) **Criticism – Complaints**

Mbua ĩilea kua yĩkwatasya kĩseve. (Ibid: 19 No. 5)

The rain exonerates itself by blaming the wind.

One can always find an excuse to avoid doing that which one is not keen to do.

A bad shearer never had a good sickle.

8) **Rivalry – Malice – Revenge**

   Ngũkũ iyũkita iisũvĩanaa metho. (Ibid: 23 No. 10)

   When two cockerels are fighting they make no special effort to avoid inflicting

   eye injuries on each other.

   There is no gentlemanly rule in confrontations.

   All is fair in love and war.

9) **Mistakes – regrets** (Ibid: 25 No. 7)

   Kĩw'ũ kĩnetĩka kĩikolanaw'a.

   Spilt water cannot be collected.

   It is pointless dwelling on irreversible damage.

   It is no use crying over spilt milk.

10) **Habit – Inherited qualities**

    Kaswii ka nzoka no nzoka. (Mutisya 2002: 30 No. 11)

    The young of a snake is a snake.

    Off-springs usually carry the undesirable

    qualities of their parents.

    Of evil grain, no good seed can come.

11) **Unity – selfishness Pride**

    Kwa mwĩkathĩii kũikomeka nĩ ngũngũni. (Ibid: 32 No. 9)

    The boaster's bed is heavily infested with bed-bugs.

    Self praise is usually a cover-up for some short-comings.

    Great boast, small roast.

12) Companionship – Friendship

Vai mbiti ĩte mũnyanyae. (Mutisya: 35 No. 6)

Every hyena has a friend.

There is always someone else in a similar situation.

Everybody has somebody.

13) Trust – Suspicions

Mũndũ ekĩawa ĩvu nĩ mũnyanyae. (Ibid: 37 No. 1)

A person is impregnated by his/her best friend.

People often get themselves into trouble by going out of their way to accommodate colleagues.

When two friends have a common purse, one sings and the other weeps.

14) Giving – Receiving (Mutisya 2002: 39 No 4)

Mũya weka akusaa weka.

He eat alone dies alone.

A person who does not assist others should expect no assistance when in need.

He who eats his cock alone, must saddle his horse alone.

15) Good things

O-na mbaka ngũũ nĩnyusaa ĩia. (Ibid: 43 No. 7)

Even an old cat drinks milk.

No one, regardless of their age or status, is averse to enjoyment.

That cat is out of kind which sweet milk will not help.

16) **Suitability – Value of things** (Ibid: pg 47 No 11)

   Mbũi ntheke yĩ ũa.

   A thin goat produces a leather skin also.

   Everything has some value.

   There is not tree but bears some fruits.

17) **Hardships – Problems – Necessity** (Ibid 2002:49 No. 3)

   Kasaũ kakya nĩko kenyenyaa mũongo.

   The orphaned calf licks its own back.

   He who has none to rely upon must learn to stand on his one.

   Every tub must stand.

18) **Misfortunes – fate – destiny** (Mutisya 2002: 56 No 17)

   Mbee nđi mwene.

   The future belongs to no one.

   What lies ahead cannot be accurately predicted.

   Hope for the best and prepare for the worst.

19) **Responsibility – Proximity** (Ibid:59 No. 6)

   Ũla ũkũnyeewa nĩwe wĩthũaa.

   It is the person who feels the itch that needs to scratch himself.

   Help is sought by the person with a problem.

   Let him that is cold blow the coal.

20) Commitment

Vaĩ kwota na kwĩyĩingya mwaki. (Ibid: 61 No. 1)

If you wish to get warm you might as well sit close to the fire.

There are no half measures on certain issues; you either get fully committed or not involved at all.

One might as well be hanged for a sheep as a lamb.

3.4 Conclusion

This section has dealt with an in depth analysis of the selected Kikamba proverbs. The selected Kikamba proverbs will be used to formulate a questionnaire to be administered to the standard eight pupils of Kawethei primary school to assess if they can comprehend the selected Kikamba proverbs by explaining the meanings of the selected Kikamba proverbs.

4.0 FINDINGS

The findings are captured in the table below in terms of **correct/incorrect meaning** and **no meaning/explanation** given as to why the respondent could not write the meaning of the given proverb. The proverbs and the respondents are written in their logical order, the way they are numbered in the questionnaire.

Table 4.1 Analysis of Correct/Incorrect Responses

	Respondents																			
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Proverbs 1	√	√	X	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	√
2	X	X	X	√	X	√	X	X	X	X	√	√	X	√	√	√	√	X	X	X
3	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	√	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
4	√	√	√	X	√	√	0	√	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	X	X
5	X	0	X	X	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	X	X	X	X	X
6	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	X	X	X	√	√	X	X	√	√	X	X	X	X
7	√	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	X	X	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
8	X	X	X	X	√	√	0	√	X	X	√	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
9	√	X	X	X	X	√	X	√	X	X	√	X	X	√	X	√	X	√	√	X
10	√	X	X	X	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	X	√	√	X	√	X	X
11	√	X	√	X	X	√	X	√	X	X	X	X	√	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
12	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	X	√	X	X	√	√	X
13	0	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	√	X	√	√	X	X	X	√	√	√	√	X
14	√	X	X	X	√	X	√	X	X	X	√	√	X	X	√	√	X	√	X	X
15	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X
16	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	√	0	0	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
17	√	X	√	X	√	√	X	0	√	√	X	√	√	X	√	√	X	√	√	X
18	√	X	X	√	√	X	X	√	X	X	√	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
19	√	X	√	√	√	X	√	X	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	X
20	0	X	X	√	X	X	X	√	0	0	X	X	X	√	X	X	X	√	√	X

KEY: √ - Correct meaning

X -incorrect meaning

0 -No meaning /explanation given

From this analysis, it is clear that the comprehension of the given proverbs by the standard eight pupils varied from proverb to proverb and from respondent to respondent. For some respondents, no explanation/meaning was given to some proverbs and therefore it was not possible to give any reasons for that.

4.2 Classification of the Selected Kikamba Proverbs/Discussion of Findings

The selected Kikamba proverbs have further been classified into broader classes, based on what they relate or allude to. For instance, some proverbs allude to animals or even natural phenomena and human activities. Such use of these words brings in the attribute of proverbs to behave like idioms. This is to say that proverbs have both literal and deeper meanings. Therefore, one cannot guess the meaning of proverbs by looking at the individual content words.

4.3 Proverbs Relating to Animals

These proverbs use animal characters symbolic of human nature/life.

1. **Ngūkū iyūkita iisūvĩanaa metho.**

The use of *chicken* in this proverb stands for people who differ in opinion and eventually a fight ensues. Since the relationship is that of enmity, the two parties fight each other with such zeal as to eliminate each other and so there no carefulness in the fight, for each party fights to finish the other completely.

The mention of '*metho*' (eyes) indicates sensitive body parts that need to be handled with care. From the analysis of responses, 25% of the respondents could get the meaning of this proverb, which is proverb number 8 in the table of responses.

In relation to cognitive semantics approach to linguistic study, there is the principle that *semantic structure is conceptual structure.* This principle asserts that language refers to concepts in the mind rather than to objects in the external world (Evans and Green 2006:158-159).When the above proverb is said, the concept of chicken fighting comes into the mind of the hearer first before the contained meaning is processed.

2. Kaswii ka nzoka no nzoka

The meaning of this proverb is based on the fact that a snake is known to be poisonous when it bites. The creature, snake, is used symbolically to represent evil character traits. When applied to human beings, it is used to state that evil traits run in a family. Therefore, if parents are morally upright, their children have good morals and vice versa.

This proverb is proverb number 10 in the table 3.1. According to the responses, 60% of the respondents got the meaning of this proverb right.

Evans and Green (2006:160) claim that there is the principle that *meaning representation is encyclopaedic*. This means that words are "points of access" to vast repositories of knowledge relating to a particular concept. For example, the concept *snake* is defined as a reptile that is venomous, subtle and so dangerous. It is also common knowledge that the offspring of a snake cannot be a goat, for example. Therefore, the encyclopaedic knowledge enables the listener to interpret the proverb in the sense that evil traits run in a family.

3. **O-na mbaka ngũũ nĩnyusaa ĩia.**

The two key words here were '*mbaka' ngũũ* (an old cat) and *ĩia* (milk). Cats are known to love milk regardless of their age. This proverb is applied to human beings to show that regardless of age, everyone loves enjoyment.

In the table, this proverb is proverb number 15; only 10% of the respondents could explain the meaning.

The principle that *meaning construction is encyclopaedic,* (Evans and Green 2006:160), applies in the analysis of this proverb. The mention of an *old cat that also drinks milk* could be understood in an encyclopaedic manner. The concept an *old cat* may be understood to mean that an old cat has always drunk milk since it was young and so it is expected that it should not compete with young cats for milk. For the meaning of this proverb to be realised, one is expected to go out of

the encyclopaedic meaning since an *old cat that still drinks milk* are only words that are points of access to other meanings.

4. Mbũi ntheke yĩ ũa.

The not obvious words are *mbũi* (goat) and ũa (skin). Animals are known to have by-products such as skin. In the Kamba culture, a fat goat was considered to have good big skin which would be exchanged for money. Animal skin and hide were used for making drums, as mats for sleeping on, among other uses. When a goat looked thin, then it was generally assumed that it cannot produce good quality skin.

However, this proverb is used especially when someone, who, from the look of his stature, is assumed cannot qualify to given standards of a task excels. Therefore, in this case, *the thin goat produces good quality skin.* In the table, this proverb is number 16. Unfortunately, only 10% of the respondents could write its meaning. Evans and Green (2006:157) principle that *conceptual structure is embodied*. This means that the nature of conceptual organisation arises from bodily experience. This represented in the image-schematic concept, which gives rise to more abstract meanings. Therefore, when the proverb says that '*a thin goat has skin'* it literally means the skin is contained in the goat. This is the abstract meaning, while the real meaning of the proverb is that we should not underestimate people's abilities by

looking at their physical appearance because the ability or treasure in them may not be determined by their physical appearance.

5. Kasaῦ kakya nĩko kenyenyaa mῦongo.

Kasaῦ kakya (a poor calf), *kenyenyaa mῦongo* (licks its own back) are the main figurative words here. The back is known to be out of reach from the mouth of a calf and worse still since the calf is orphaned, there is not one to help.

This proverb is number 17 in the table of responses and 60% of the respondents got the correct meaning. Most probably, this is because cattle are common in the environment of the respondents.

This proverb can be discussed in the light of the principle that *meaning construction is conceptualization* as discussed in Evans and Green (2006:162). This means that meaning construction is equated with conceptualization, a dynamic process whereby linguistic units serve as prompts of an array of conceptual operations and the recruitment of background information.

In this proverb, the background information of a *poor calf* can be drawn from the setting that there are cattle in Ukambani and the fact that cattle are known to lick each other's backs especially when they are resting. When in a herd there is a calf that is poor and lonely may be due to being orphaned, then for it, there is on one to lick its back. Therefore, the background information boosts the comprehension of this proverb.

6. Vai mbiti ĩte mũnyanyae.

The animal '*mbiti'* (hyena) is known for being greedy. This proverb means that even in the worst situation, one has the company of someone else in the same situation. More still, it is used to mean that everyone has an accomplice in their activities.

In the table of responses, this proverb is number 12. According to the analysis, 70 % of the respondents got the meaning.

The meaning of this proverb can be analysed using the principle that *meaning representation is encyclopaedic* as seen in Evans and Green (2006:160). The encyclopaedic concept of '*hyena'* is that it is a wild animal, carnivorous and greedy, as it is known from the way it plunders other animal's prey.

To comprehend this proverb, one has to go out of the encyclopaedic meaning and draw from the context in which this proverb can have its meaning explicitly understood.

4.4 Proverbs Relating to Activities

These proverbs use activities done by human beings so as to comment on the human way of doing things.

1. Kũya tene ti kũtoona.

In any culture, meals have specific timings. If anyone is found eating earlier than it is expected, then that is termed as glutton. However, this proverb is used to

79

encourage people to be early risers and to be doing things in time. Being early always has an advantage of getting the best.

In the table of responses, this proverb is number 2 and only 45% of the respondents got the meaning.

In order to comprehend this proverb the principle that *semantic structure is conceptual structure*, as found in Evans and Green (2006:158-159), applies. The concepts of *having meals early* and *not being gluttonous* refer to activities in real life. However, the meaning goes beyond the concepts in that the proverb is meant to encourage people to rise up early when attending to activities because the early riser gets the best.

2. Vai kwota na kwĩỹiingya mwakĩ.

The activity here is sitting by the fire place to enjoy heat by the fire. When somebody is fully involved in warming himself or herself it is '*kwota*' but when they warm themselves briefly, it is '*kwĩỹiingya*.' Traditionally, people would sit by the fire place to warm themselves especially during the cold season.

The aspect of doing things half way and fully is related to warming oneself by the fire place. In this case, when one is not committed to doing something, they sit far off the fire place (the activity) and claim to be doing it fully.

The proverb is used to advise people to declare their commitment in doing things because even if you feel the warmth of fire while afar off, you are warm, just like the one sited by the fireplace. This proverb is number 20 in the table of analysis and only 25% of the respondents gave the right meaning.

The principle that semantic structure is conceptual structure, as discussed in proverb 1 above, applies to this proverb too. The concept of warming oneself halfway (*kwiyiingya*) and fully (*kwota*) go beyond the literal meaning. The meaning is to caution people against being partially involved in doing things. The principle that *meaning construction is conceptualization*, according to Evans and Green (2006:162), applies in the comprehension of this proverb. The background knowledge of warming oneself by the fire place informs the meaning and the application of this proverb.

4.5 Proverbs related to people and activities

1. **Mũya weka akusaa weka.**

   He who eats alone dies alone.

The activity of eating alone indicates selfishness because such a person does not share his food with others. Food, which is implied by eating, refers to the fortunes someone is blessed with but does not extend a helping hand to others.

On the other hand, 'death' is used to stand for bad times. Therefore, when a selfish person is cumbered with a load of misfortunes, he carries his burden alone since association comes through doing something (e.g. eating) together, which he never did during good times. In the analysis, this proverb is number 14; 40% of the respondents got the meaning.

The principle that *meaning construction is conceptualization* applies in the comprehension of this proverb. This is according to Evans and Green (2006:162). In this principle, linguistic units are seen as prompts for an array of conceptual operations and the recruitment of background information. '*Eating alone'* implies doing things alone; '*dying alone'*, the consequences of not having people around you, i.e., being on your own in times of trouble.

2. Ũla ũkũnyeewa nĩwe wĩthũaa.

The human body has needs. For instance, some itch in the body of a person can only be experienced by the person themselves; he/she is the person in need. The itch represents any type of need in the life of a person.

This proverb is used to advise people to master their need(s) and so seek help accordingly. The person himself /herself is the right one to start since he/she experiences the need and not the friends or neighbours around them. At number 19

in the table of analysis, 18% of the respondents wrote the right meaning of the proverb.

In the analysis of the meaning of this proverb, the nature of conceptual organisation arises from bodily experience. This is the principle that *conceptual structure is embodied* as described by Evans and Green (2006:157-158). The image of a person experiencing an itch in their body and being the one to scratch themselves goes beyond the normal scratching of an itchy part of the body. This means one should seek help when in need because the need affects them and they alone understand its magnitude.

3. **Mbaa matũ ĩtũlaa kyano na ũtambĩ.**

'*Mbaa matũ*' is a defiant person, while '*kyano*' is the shaft of an arrow; '*ũtambĩ*' is the inner thigh. In the Akamba community, hunters used poisoned arrows. Therefore, if a defiant person is warned of the danger of such an arrow and goes ahead to try to break it in the inner thigh, he/she stands a chance of being poisoned and eventually dying.

The application of this proverb is to advise people to take heed of advice so that they do not joke unnecessarily. 25% of the respondents wrote the right meaning of this proverb. The proverb is number 3 in the table of responses.

This proverb can be analyzed by applying the principle that *meaning construction is conceptualization*, as found in Evans and Green (2006:162).The concepts of the

one '*who does not hear breaking the shaft of a poisoned arrow with his inner thigh*' are prompts into an array of conceptual operations. The background information of how danger or even death befell a defiant person beefs up the meaning of this proverb, since defiance to authority was not condoned in the Kamba traditional society.

4. Mwĩĩtu wa vaasa asũngaa aĩsisya sua.

'*Mwĩĩtu*' is a young girl '*asũngaa*' means she dances frequently checking how far the sun has gone. The sun '*sua*' represents time. This proverb is captured from the Akamba cultural setting in which young girls would attend dance parties in other villages far from their homes. Since they were under instructions on when to return home, they danced as they kept watch of time so that they do not get late.

Just like the girl from the distance village is challenged by time and distance, this proverb advises people to be conscious of their challenges or limitations so that they master them and therefore excel in their endeavours. In the table of responses, this proverb was at number 4, and it attained 50% correct responses.

The analysis of the meaning of this proverb can be done by using the principle that *conceptual structure is embodied* as seen in Evans and Green (2006:157-158). The image schema plays a role here in that the concept of '*a girl from a distant village dancing while constantly looking at the sun*' comes into play. This is so because it is not about the sun but about keeping time.

5. Kwaa mwĩkathĩii kũikomeka nĩ ngũngũni.

'*Mwĩkathĩii*' is a braggart; '*ngũngũni*' are bedbugs. When someone is a braggart, they talk highly of themselves and forget that they have shortcomings. This proverb is used to warn people against pride and to remind them that amidst a person's strengths are weaknesses. This proverb, at number 11 in the table, attained 30% in terms of correct meaning.

The same principle: Conceptual structure is embodied (Evans and Green 2006:157-158) applies. The image of a *proud person's home being infested by bedbugs* creates an image of a person who esteems himself/herself highly and so looks down upon others without considering his shortcomings. The pride in him cannot allow him to reconcile himself with the shortcomings yet people see them.

6. Mũndũ ekĩawa ĩvu nĩ mũnyanyae.

The literal interpretation is that a person is impregnated by his/her friend. '*Ivu*' stands for pregnancy. In this case, the pregnancy implied is unwanted. When applied in its deeper meaning, the proverb means that one's friend can put him/her into trouble especially if it is about following wrong advice.

Otherwise, it is because of trusting the wrong advice of a friend that one may land into problems. At number 13 of table 3.1, this proverb scored 75% correct responses.

In looking at the analysis of the meaning of this proverb, the principle that *semantic structure is embodied* as described in Evans and Green (2006:157-158) is used. The image –schematic concept of *someone being impregnated* by the friend yields abstract meaning. The real meaning is that one gets into trouble when a friend misleads him/herself.

4.6 Proverbs Related to other Phenomena

This class captures proverbs that feature other phenomena such as fame, discipline, gossip, rain, water and the future.

1. **Nguma nđiana mwene.**

'*Nguma' (*fame) comes with a lot of expectations from people about the famous person. In most cases, society expects a famous person to be outstanding in qualities and especially in their physique.

Fame comes from power within a person, power that executes tasks in an exceptional way. More often than not, people expect a physical sign of this power which is not always the case.

This proverb seeks to advise people not to measure one's fame by how they look because they may be mistaken. In other words, reputation goes beyond physical appearance. Positioned at number 5 in the table 3.1, this proverb got a correct response of 20%.

In terms of cognitive semantics approach, the principle that *meaning construction is conceptualisation*, as explained by Evans and Green (2006:162) applies. The linguistic units in this proverb prompt conceptual operations of its meaning which draws from the background knowledge that the fame of someone does not match their physical appearance.

2. **Kĩtheka kĩ matũ.**

'*Kĩtheka'* refers to a forest, which is known to be a good hiding place. '*Matu'* refers to ears. Therefore, the literal interpretation of this proverb is that '*The forest can hear*.' In its deeper meaning, this proverb cautions people not to talk carelessly even when they think they are hiding because someone may hear them. This someone may be unknown to them and therefore blow the news to the wind.

The proverb also applies to doing things in hiding. The caution is that somehow someone may see what is done in hiding. At position 6 in the table 3.1, this proverb got 30% correct responses.

The meaning of this proverb is guided of this proverb is guided by the principle that *conceptual structure is embodied*, according to Evans and Green (2006:158-158). The image schematic concept of a *forest having ears* gives an abstract meaning.

3. **Mbua ĩilea kua yĩkwatasya kĩseve.**

When rainy clouds gather and suddenly the weather becomes windy, the rain does not fall. In the literal meaning, if the rain was asked why it did not fall, it would blame the wind.

This proverb is drawn from the natural phenomena of the weather. In the deeper meaning, this proverb is about the excuses people give to avoid doing that which they are not keen to do. For instance, if someone is assigned to slash grass and fails to do so, when asked, they say the slasher was blunt. This proverb, at number 7 in table 3.1, got 35% responses of the correct meaning.

Evans and Green (2006:162) assert that *meaning construction is conceptualisation*. The background information that is known of rainy clouds being blown away by the wind causing the rain not to fall informs the meaning of this proverb.

4. **Walea kũkonzwa wĩ mwĩũ wooma ndũkonzekaa.**

This proverb is an allusion to the way a young soft twig can be bent into different shapes as desired. When the twig matures and therefore becomes hard, it cannot be bent. In its deeper meaning, this proverb is used to advise parents/caretakers of children to instil discipline into them when they are young because when they become of age, it is difficult to change or even correct bad behaviour.

The proverb is used to enhance good morals which are one of the functions of proverbs. This proverb is number 1 in table 3.1 and the responses to its correcting meaning were at 80%.

The principle that *meaning construction is conceptualisation*, as seen in Evans and Green (2006:162) suits the analysis of the meaning of this proverb. The background information of a soft twig that can easily be bent into any shape reflects the deeper meaning of this proverb that it is easy to instill discipline in a young child.

5. Kĩwũ kĩneũka kĩikolanawa.

The literal meaning of this proverb is that when water is spilt, it is hard to collect it because it is drained. In the deeper meaning, this proverb means that it is in vain to lament over irreversible damage. The encouragement therefore here is that people should focus on the future since the past is gone. This proverb, at number 9 in table 3.1, attained 66% of correct meaning.

The principle that *conceptual structure is embodied* as described in Evans and Green (2006:157-158) can be used in explaining the comprehension of this proverb. The image schematic concept of *spilt water that cannot be recollected* informs the meaning of this proverb that one should not dwell on the past because that past cannot be salvaged.

6. Mbee nđi mwene.

'*Mbee*' means that the future. The literal meaning of this proverb is that the future has no owner. The deeper meaning is that no one can tell what will happen in the future; what we know/have today may change tomorrow, for better or for worse.

This proverb prepares people for what the future may hold; it could be bleak or bright. It is a warning against over-confidence. The respondents gave 33% correct meaning of this proverb, as seen in table 3.1, number 18.

This proverb can be understood in the light of the *principle that conceptual structure* is embodied, as seen in Evans and Green (2006:157-158). The image schematic concept of the future not being owned by anyone forms an abstract meaning which can be interpreted to mean that nobody knows what happens in the future.

The analysis of the findings into percentages of correct/incorrect responses is captured in the table below.

Table 4.2: Percentages of Correct/Incorrect Response

	Percentage of correct responses	Percentage of incorrect responses
Proverb 1	80%	20%
2	45%	55%
3	25%	75%
4	50%	50%
5	20%	80%
6	30%	70%
7	35%	65%
8	25%	75%
9	66%	34%
10	60%	40%
11	30%	70%
12	70%	30%
13	75%	25%
14	40%	60%
15	10%	90%
16	10%	90%
17	60%	40%
18	33%	67%
19	80%	20%
20	25%	75%

KEY: Below 50% = poorly comprehended proverbs.

Above 50% = well comprehended proverbs.

4.7 Commentary on the Findings

Looking at the disparities in the percentages of correct/incorrect responses raises some sort of curiosity of the allegorical content of the selected proverbs. This argument leads to considering archaisms as part of the allegorical content in the selected Kikamba proverbs that could not be easily understood by the pupils.

91

According to Indangasi (1988: 75) archaic words are those which are no longer in general use, although they are not obsolete.

Examples:

i)   *'Kyano'* in *'Mbaa Matũ ĩtũlaa kyano na ũtambĩ'*

ii)   *'Kũsisya sua'* in *'Mwĩĩtu wa vaasa asũngaa aisisya sua.'*

iii)   *'Kũtũla kyano;* in (i) above.

iv)   *'Ngũngũnĩ'* in *'Kwa mwĩkathĩĩ kũikomeka nĩ ngũngũni.*

Explanations:

i)   Kyano is the shaft of poisoned arrow that was used by Kamba hunters and warriors, which is not practiced today.

ii)   *Kũsisya sua* has been replaced by *kũsisya saa*, owing to the fact that traditionally there were no watches to show time and so people relied on the position of the sun in the sky to tell the time of the day.

iii)   *Kũtũla kyano* means to fail to take heed and proceed to do that which is dangerous. Today, *kũlea kwĩw'a* is used instead.

iv)   *Ngũngũni* refers to bed bugs which were common vermin in traditional Kamba community since people did not embrace the value of cleanliness. Lack of detergents was a major challenge. Today's children may or may not know beg bugs!

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter, this chapter has presented, analyzed and discussed the findings. The findings have been summarized in a table of percentages of correct/incorrect responses in order to show disparities of the responses. The discussion of findings has been done using the guiding principles of the cognitive semantic approach to linguistic study.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The study was on the comprehension of Kikamba proverbs, a study of standard eight pupils of the Kawethei Primary School of Kangundo District, Machakos County. The Kikamba proverbs were drawn from twenty classes as discussed by Mutisya (2002).

The language under study is the Machakos dialect of Kikamba, commonly known as Kĩmasakũ.

The set objectives of the study were:

i) To establish whether standard eight pupils have difficulties of comprehension of the allegorical content of given Kikamba proverbs.

ii) To identify the comprehension difficulties the pupils encounter in comprehending the allegorical content of the given Kikamba proverbs.

iii) To establish how the pupils are taught to know Kikamba proverbs.

The research hypotheses were:

i) Standard eight pupils can comprehend the allegorical content of a given list of Kikamba proverbs. However, they sometimes encounter difficulties.

ii) The difficulties of comprehension encountered by the pupils are as a result of the allegorical content in the given Kikamba proverbs.

iii) The pupils learn recitation and memorization in order to know Kikamba proverbs.

From the data samples, it was noted that standard eight pupils of Kawethei Primary School have learned Kikamba proverbs. There is a strong indication that the standard eight pupils understand Kikamba proverbs because they could supply correct meanings of some of the selected Kikamba proverbs.

On the other hand, it was realized that the standard eight pupils have difficulties of comprehension of Kikamba proverbs. This was indicated by wrong responses and no supply of responses, at all, to some of the selected Kikamba proverbs, as seen in the table of responses, table 4.1 on page 73. Unfortunately, the pupils did not give reasons for not writing the meanings of some of the given Kikamba proverbs. Therefore, it was not possible to establish the source(s) of the difficulties of the comprehension of the allegorical content of Kikamba proverbs.

It was also established that the standard eight pupils have learned recitation of Kikamba proverbs since there was a clear indication that they drew the familiarity of the selected proverbs from memory. The comprehension of meanings and

application of Kikamba proverbs was reflected in the pupils' ability to explain the meanings of some of the selected Kikamba proverbs.

Another outstanding realization of the comprehension of Kikamba proverbs by the standard eight pupils is that some of the selected Kikamba proverbs were more difficult or easier to comprehend than others, as displayed on the table of percentages (Table 4.2 on page 91). The percentages of correct/incorrect responses were found to vary from proverb to proverb.

5.2 Conclusions

Standard eight pupils of the Kawethei primary school comprehend Kikamba proverbs, although they encounter difficulties of comprehension. The difficulties of the comprehension of the allegorical content of Kikamba proverbs by the pupils is seen in the disparities of the correct/incorrect responses and in the percentages of correct/incorrect responses in table 4.1 on page 73 and table 4.2 on page 91, respectively, in chapter four.

Since the use of proverbs was a preserve of the elderly in the Kamba culture, the pupils were not in a position to have wide knowledge of Kikamba proverbs. Another reflection of the inadequate use and comprehension of the selected Kikamba proverbs by the pupils draws from the short exposure to and the use of Kikamba in lower primary school.

The standard eight pupils learnt both recitation and comprehension of Kikamba proverbs, as strongly indicated by the pupils' ability to recall and explain the meaning of each of the given Kikamba proverbs.

Kikamba proverbs are still alive in the minds of the pupils despite the short detailed exposure to Kikamba.

The guiding principles of the cognitive semantics approach came in handy in the discussion and analysis of the findings.

5.3 Recommendations

A few issues arising from the study demand further research. According to Evans and Green (2006:156) say that cognitive semantics sees linguistic meaning as a manifestation of conceptual structure: the nature and organisation of mental representation in all its richness and diversity. Since proverbs are allegorical, the mental representation of their meanings is informed by the conceptual structure hence the difficulty or ease of comprehending Kikamba proverbs.

In the appendix (R49) of the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* (7th Ed), it is stated that a proverb is a type of an idiom in that an idiom is a phrase whose meaning is difficult or sometimes impossible to guess by looking at the meanings of the individual words it contains.

Dalfovo, in Lugbara Proverbs (1984:9) describes a proverb as 'usually an allegorical sentence.'

In the light of these descriptions of meaning of words and the attributes of proverbs, it is important for the pupils to be explained to the possible meanings of the allegorical content in proverbs and the intended meaning of the words used in Kikamba proverbs. This will help in the correct application of the meanings.

In addition to this, some of the Kikamba proverbs are drawn from the past culture of the Akamba people, e.g. the word '*kyano*' in the proverb:

'**Mbaa matū itulaa kyano na utambī'**

'*Kyano*' means the shaft of a poisoned arrow which was used by Kamba hunters and warriors in the past, a practice that is not relevant today. This calls for the use of the elderly people in the Kamba community as resource persons in the teaching of Kikamba proverbs since they are well versed in the culture.

There is also need for Kikamba to be taught throughout the levels of the education curriculum or as an elective subject so that the learners appreciate the language. Media broadcasts on Kikamba lessons should be done in order to sustain as a resource for pupils who want to retain it. Museums should also be equipped with Kamba cultural materials and have pupils exposed to them. Kamba linguists should research, coin and write new Kikamba proverbs based on the current Kamba way of life so that the current Kamba generation identifies with the

allegorical nature of Kikamba proverbs hence promoting the understanding of the proverbs. These recommendations will help in saving the waste currently found in the teaching of Kikamba in schools.

5.4 Conclusion

Chapter five has wound up the study by tying up the research objectives, the hypotheses and the theoretical framework through making conclusions based on the findings. The study has also raised issues that demand further research, which have been summed up as recommendations.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Part A

Do not write your name on this paper.

Supply the required information by ticking (√) appropriately.

Sex: Male ( )   Female ( )

Age: 12 ( )

        13 ( )

        14 ( )

        15 ( )

        16- ( )

Part B

Write the meaning of each of the following proverbs. For the proverbs which you cannot write the meaning, write the reason.

1. Walea kũkonzwa wĩ mwĩũ wooma ndũkonzekaa.

2. Kũya tene ti kũtoona.

3. Mbaa matũ ĩtũlaa kyano na ũtambĩ.

4. Mwĩĩtu wa vaasa asũngaa aisisya sua.

5. Nguma ndĩana mwene.

6. Kĩtheka kĩ matũ.

7. Mbua ĩilea kua yĩkwatasya kĩseve.

8. Ngũkũ iyũkita iisũvĩanaa metho.

9. Kĩw'ũ kĩnetĩka kĩikolanaw'a.

10. Kaswii ka nzoka no nzoka.

11. Kwa mwĩkathĩĩi kũikomeka nĩ ngũngũni.

12. Vai mbiti ĩte mũnyanyae.

13. Mũndũ ekĩawa ĩvu nĩ mũnyanyae.

14. Mũya weka akusaa weka.

15. O-na mbaka ngũũ nĩnyusaa ĩia.

16. Mbui ntheke yĩ ũa.

17. Kasaũ kakya nĩko kenyenyaa mũongo.

18. Mbee nđi mwene.

19. Ũla ũkũnyeewa nĩwe wĩthũaa.

20. Vai kwota na kwĩyĩingya mwaki.

APPENDIX II: KIKAMBA ORAL NARRATIVE

To demonstrate the use of a proverb to sum up the message in a narrative (Kieti and Coughlin 1990: 102-103)

The Spilt Daydream!

People used to profit by trading in cooking fat. One man decided to try his luck at this. Acquiring a tin of lard, he balanced it on his head and set off for the market. He walked for long, planning how he would use the money after selling the lard. "I'll buy and sell four more tins of lard and then buy ten more. I'll earn much money and buy cattle, build a shop and hire workers. I'll not let them take advantage of me by evading their duties. Yes! I can see one of the lazy ones coming to ask me for permission to go somewhere, 'Please, I want to...' I won't even let him finish. I'll be stern. 'No! You're not going anywhere!'"

He shook his head adamantly to refuse the imaginary employee's request. The tin fell. Thud! All the lard, by now melted, spilled out. Frustrated and angry at himself, the man stared dumbly at his spilt daydream!

Don't make a baby carrier (ngoi) *till the child is born.*

Ndoto Yefikie!

Ve ĩvinda andũ mathuaw'a ni kũta mauta. Mũndũ ũmwe nĩwamanthie mauta ausũsya ĩleve na ĩndĩ ailĩila mũtwe atwaĩte akate. Athi, athi na aendete aambĩĩa kũvanga ũndũ wĩĩka amina ũthua. "Yu nĩenda nĩte mauta aa na noosa i mbesa

ndĩũa maleve angĩ ana nĩte na ndĩthooa angĩ ĩkũmi. Nayu mbesa nũndũ nĩ mbingĩ ndyosa imwe nĩũe ng'ombe, na ndyaka nduka na ndiandĩka athũkũmi. Na nũndũ athũkũmi me thĩina ngasisya wĩthĩe mainanthĩny'a. Ĩĩ, nĩnene ũmwe wa mũthemba ũsu okĩte kwĩtya lũũsa wa kũthi akĩe wĩa. 'Mwa nĩenda ũthi….' Ona ndiketeela amine ũndũ ũkwasyaa. Ngatilĩila o katĩ,

'Aiee! Ndwĩthi ….'"

Athingithya mũtwe aleete, olĩtwe kana eekuĩte yĩla ĩleve yĩtuma athua, yamandana na nthĩ. Mbu! Mauta onthe mefĩka nũndũ nĩmavĩe nĩ sua matweka. Asituka eethĩa eotaa aendete na nzĩa.

Ndũkatumĩe mwana ngoi ate mũsyae.