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**SEXISM IN THE SABAOT LANGUAGE: A CASE OF SEMANTIC  
DEROGATION OF WOMEN**

**BY**

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## DEDICATION

To my daughters, Sabaot women and the Kenyan women. I challenge them to stand on the threshold of their intrinsic worth as human beings never burying their minds and talents beneath loads of clay pots and iron kettles. For my daughters particularly: 'Sticks and stones may break your bones, but WORDS CAN NEVER HARM YOU'. For women in general I say:

'Starting with the full text, working down to the individual word level, one can peel back the layers of meaning to reveal the false patriarchal truth and the invisible power of the spoken and written word' (Benokraits 1997).

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## **ABSTRACT**

The work focused on semantic derogation of women in the Sabaot language, a sub-tribe of the Kalenjin community occupying the slopes of Mt. Elgon. The objective was to investigate sexist and discriminative notions of women evident in the way Sabaot language constructs sexist ideologies and images of women. The investigation was necessary because sexist notions of women breed an under-dog feminine position through an offensive, patronizing and demeaning vocabulary. The research suggests why people should adopt and use language forms, which recognize the identities and values of women in daily discourse and a sense of social responsibility towards others in language use. The research was based in Cheptais Division of Mt. Elgon district and drew eighty interviewees from the four locations in the division. It employed use of audio taped discourse-session excerpts from the village heads' and chiefs' Barazas, focus group interviews and observation field notes. Data was analyzed in three thematic categories. Percentages and degrees of the themes were calculated. The research was based on Critical Discourse Analysis model as an interpretive framework. It also incorporated Post-Feminist approaches in the analysis. The analysis revealed that women in the Sabaot community are discriminated linguistically. It is hoped that this work would contribute to knowledge in other disciplines like Anthropology, Sociology and Philosophy.



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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the study

Sexism is any form of discrimination based on one's sex. It is a widespread social problem that exists throughout the world today. It persists within the dominant culture, as well as in various subcultures (Leblanc 1999; McRobbie 1991). Benokraitis and Feagin's (1995) theory of sexism posits that sexism is either subtle or blatant. Subtle sexism is less visible while blatant is often open discrimination of women. Subtle sexism may often go unnoticed, as society has internalized subtle sexist behaviors. Empirical research on sexism has been conducted in various settings, such as the employment, academic and military sectors of society (Benokraitis 1997).

Gender power disparities are blamed on the socio-political and economic patriarchal orders, which endear social stigma against women while reflecting men as the superior group. Feminist linguists have called for a radical 'surgery' on the patriarchal order if women have to be empowered and measured equally on the modern scale of civilization (Mbilinyi and Omari 1996, Nielsen 1977, Richardson 1994).

This study was premised on male-female inequality as manifested linguistically in the Sabaot language. The Sabaots are members of the Kalenjin speaking people. This community is an acclomeration of six sub-dialects which are mutually intelligible. They are: Bok, Kony, Sabiny, Somek, Bong'omek and Mosobisiek. Their territory spreads along the slopes of Mt. Elgon in Kenya and Uganda. Their administrative units are Kapchorwa and Bukwo districts in Uganda, Mt.Elgon and Trans Nzoia districts in Kenya. Some of them spread to Bungoma West district and West Pokot.

The Sabaot community has a strict administrative system and a code of dispensing communal order. It boasts a respected group of jurists called council of elders. Members of this group are respected elderly men drawn from every sub-location. They are headed by a chairperson. They work in liason with the provincial administration (Chiefs, assistant chiefs and district officers). They hold weekly barazas with community members, aggrieved parties and other invited visitors. They solve issues like family squabbles, property issues, community history, culture and ideological debates, forkllore and other

issues deemed necessary. The barazas are attended by all willing members of the community. However, women are expected to play second fiddle knowing where to intervene and not. They have a strict linguistic code governing all the proceedings. They are expected to sit at the back in a separate location. None of them is a member of the council of elders.

Language use is potent with social beliefs and power struggles. Power struggles give rise to social problems, particularly gender disparities, which breed relations of dominance and exploitation of women. Gender inequality exists through linguistic signs like words, longer expressions and discourse practices. Due to such inequalities, many feminist linguists have maintained that men use codes and allusions which have prejudicial tendencies thus lexicalizing their ideological and patriarchal dispensation to the detriment of women.

In the Sabaot community where this research is based, linguistic disparagement of the women is the norm. The language sees women as lazy, weak, inferior, promiscuous, treacherous, jealous, idle, witches, incompetent, kitchen-bound and nagging among other images. Their male counterparts are idolized linguistically as wise, patient, strong, protective and the ultimate owners of women who form part of their vast properties. The overall effect of such linguistic orientations is that men are socialized through language to accept their dominant images while on the other hand, women are condemned to accept their inferior selves. Indeed, the linguistic-based ideological gender constructs are responsible for such disparities because language ideologies construct social identities and perceptions either individually or collectively, which in turn direct gender relationships. Basically then, as a tool representing reality, enacting social relations and constructing identities, there is need to investigate how language produces and manifests a top-dog and under-dog male-female relationship respectively. It was against this gender relationship that this research attempted to unravel the role of language in determining gender disparities.



## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Although many argue that great strides have been made to eradicate sexism in the society, it remains embedded at language level. Sexist language locates and builds discriminatory images of women by trivializing, ridiculing, stigmatizing and rendering women powerless under-dogs. Despite the prominence of semantic aspects in discrimination, little attention is given to it, more so, at production level (Barazas) which has never been done. Ironically, people have turned a blind eye to the intricacies of discourse production and comprehension in determining gender relationships. The sexist notions of women affect women's attitudes, ideological, moral and philosophical judgements particularly when women hear, read and use such discriminative assumptions rooted in their languages. Unfortunately though, there is little published evidence of sexist language in the African perspective. What is available, are arguments based on English experiences. It is thus in the light of the discriminatory linguistic orientation that this work identified the Sabaot language as a case study of linguistic discrimination against women in the African perspective.

## **1.3 Objectives of the study**

1. To identify and describe sexist images of women in the Sabaot languages used during daily discourses and during settlement of family and marriage squabble in chiefs' barazas.
2. To establish female position through semantic derogation of women in the Sabaot language during the settlement of family squabbles and daily discourses.

## **1.4 Research assumptions**

1. The Sabaot language reflects sexist images of women in the settlement of family and marriage squabbles in the chiefs' barazas.
2. There is evidence of under-dog female position through semantic derogations of women in the Sabaot language.

## 1.5 Significance of the study

This study aimed at describing how the Sabaot language shapes or constructs women as particular sorts of social subjects, (i.e Sexist construction of femininity through language). If ideology and power relations are exercised implicitly in language, then a critical orientation of language in one's own speech community is necessary. This is particularly so because language is seen as a powerful tool of socialization which perpetuates sexual prejudices and screens such discriminative realities. The findings and analysis of this study would therefore be important in a number of ways:

It would inspire women to redefine their self images, potentials and strive to measure as equal partners by wrestling for a linguistic control and resisting being disempowered by their language.

The research would also benefit Kenyan feminists by giving them greater insights to language and gender issues. Anthropologists and sociologists interested in the Sabaot culture would focus their attention on this community based on the attention created by this study.

It was envisaged that the study would provide an understanding and basis upon which gender research in other communities can be carried out.

The findings would inform Non-Governmental Organizations, policy makers and other philanthropic organizations about the need to emancipate the Sabaot women and girl-child from the chains of linguistic disempowerment with resultant time-barred practices such as female genital mutilation and wife beating.

It was anticipated that recommendations proposed would be drawn purposely to improve gender equality at the language policy level and the wider socio-economic and political levels.

## 1.6 Definitions of Terms

<b>Baraza</b>	Public meeting (in Swahili).
<b>Construction</b>	How feminine images and perceptions are built up in the Language.



<b>Discriminative items</b>	Words, Phrases, idioms, proverbs and riddles, which perceive women negatively.
<b>Emancipation</b>	Movement towards greater freedom, equality and social justice for all human beings.
<b>Euphemism</b>	Figures of speech by which unpleasant or harsh fact is expressed mildly and gently in roundabout way.
<b>Feminism</b>	A socio-political movement whose objective is equality of rights, status and power for women.
<b>Gender identity</b>	Individual's self-perception as being male or female, as distinguished from actual biological sex.
<b>Ideology</b>	Systems of thought and beliefs, which pertain to social actions or political practices.
<b>Image</b>	Sensuous appeal, vision and mental pictures of a Phenomenon.
<b>Prejudice</b>	Making judgments about individuals or groups of individuals based on inadequate or biased assumptions.
<b>Sexism</b>	Any form of discrimination based on one's sex.
<b>Sexist language</b>	Any discriminative language which expresses stereotyped attitudes, facts and expectations and which presupposes inherent superiority of one sex over the other.

### 1.6.1 Acronyms

**CDA** Critical Discourse Analysis.

**FBI** Federal Bureau of Investigation.

**FGM** Female Genital Mutilation.

**NGO** Non-Governmental Organization.

## 1.7 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This research was conducted in Mt. Elgon District in Cheptais Division. It focused mainly on the Sabaot speaking community and investigated the negative sexist images and semantic derogation of women in the Sabaot language as used during daily talks and on specific occasions. This work also addressed linguistic discrimination featured during

family and marriage squabbles captured during chiefs' and village heads' Barazas. For instance, statements like 'Taraacheet korko..... (A woman is a bridge.....). The contextual analysis showed how the bridge image used here reflected women as beasts of domestic burdens and sources of wealth for their parents. Theoretically then, this single statement attested to the idea that negative images of women spring from the fact that women lack power to define themselves yet power implies the ability to defend the groups interests and even imposing group will by all means. The statement also confirmed theoretically that any language has shades of meaning which are utilized by speakers to change realities as well as create different feelings and reactions within women.

This study had a number of limitations. First, sourcing for appropriate sessions that would have elicited relevant data for the research topic was strenuous. The researcher attended and captured as many sessions as possible to get reliable data. Language related taboos affected the research. Research assistants from both sexes were involved to solve the problem. One major obstacle was the security situation in Mt. Elgon. This delayed data collection and analysis. Another problem entailed translations and interpretations of words, riddles, proverbs, songs and ululations used during such meetings. The researcher captured all such details and interpreted these words in the context of their uses during focus group interviews. The interpretation input gained from the focus group aided in the analyses of the sexist items captured for clear understanding.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to draw attention to the sexist nature of language. The use of sexist language is often unconscious and unintentional but nonetheless damaging. While it is primarily women who are affected by sexism, it can be used to discriminate against either men or women. Equality of opportunity for men and women is committed to working towards creating a society which is free of sexism and sexual harassment. Most languages have developed in a male-dominated society which often renders women invisible. However, language is not static. It constantly changes to reflect the changing nature of society itself. It is important that language facilitates and reflects change towards equality in all areas of life.

In the following sections, focus was put on literature related to the study and the guiding theoretical framework. The first part covers an overview of sexist language: Women Scorned, the second part examines Semantic Derogation and Pejoration of Women. The subsequent sections examine Subtle Sexism, Sexist language in the African Perspective, Post-Feminist text Analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis as the conceptual foundation of this thesis.

#### 2.1.2 Sexist Language: Women Scorned

Sexist language in the words of Goshgarian (1977) is any language that expresses such stereotyped attitudes and expectations or which assumes the inherent superiority of one sex over the other. Now and throughout history, pejorative language has played a major role in the long standing victimization of women. The scope and persistence of oppression against women are grim testimonies of men's relentless inhumanity towards the female members of the human race. The most comprehensive explanation of female disparagement is the centrality of patriarchal ideology.

The concept of patriarchy is based on the notion of male superiority. It is a set of beliefs which maintains that men are stronger, smarter, better and more important than women. The patriarchal ideologies spawn a host of words and expressions intended to



demean and vilify females. The derogatory language in turn functions to solidify the ideology. This in effect sets in motion a vicious self-perpetuating cycle in which ideology and terminology continually reinforce one another. Once operational, the degrading rhetoric furnishes a convenient excuse for female derogation. Patriarchal ideology thus serves as a major source for the construction of oppressive images of women which lead to the implementation of oppressive actions against women. Although not all violence and discrimination perpetrated against women can be attributed solely to a patriarchal mentality, the ideology of male supremacy is so deeply ingrained in many societies and cultures that it cannot help but have a profound impact on how men view and therefore treat women. Historically and currently, an overwhelming preponderance of violence against women has been male-induced. Many perpetrators believe that their status as males actually entitle them to exploit the minds and bodies of women in any way they wish.

Cultural bias is built in the language women learn (Lakoff 1975). Lakoff argues that the nature of subjects girls are allowed to speak about, ways girls are spoken to and how they are spoken of, affect their personalities. She notes how women are encouraged and allowed to make precise distinctions in naming colours yet their male counterparts lack such trivial details in their language vocabulary.

Crystal (1987) while carrying research among the Burundi people observed that the order in which people speak in a group is governed strictly by the seniority principle. Females do not speak at all in the presence of outsiders, unless spoken to, yet males must speak first regardless of their ages. He remarks that upper caste girls in this society do take part in public speaking, but are required to develop effective bargaining language skills for use behind the scenes. Girls are also trained to listen with great care, so that they can recount accurately to the men what the visitors said. On the other hand, boys are given formal speech training and talk to superiors and inferiors alike making speeches for special occasions.

Richardson (1988) observes that interlocutors make use of complex systems of linguistic forms to relate to one another. Such linguistic forms are largely a reflection of systems of social class, gender, caste, sex, age, kinship and religion. However, what is

distinctive about this relationship is the way differences of social positions are so extensively coded in the language grammar and vocabulary. While the language of racial and ethnic oppression is often blatant and relatively easy to identify, the sexist language is more subtle and pervasive. Everyday speeches reflect the superiority of the male and the inferiority of the females who are relegated to the status of children, servants, idiots and invisible second sex. The relegation results to a master-subject gender relationship because it exerts an influence on the males' attitudes towards and control over women and the women's attitudes towards themselves. Importantly, daughters spend more time with their mothers in the homes where they are taught to fit into systems of linguistic oppression like baby nursing and other household chores which stifles their creativity and productivity.

As a means of understanding our society and ourselves and of enforcing if not resolving some of the problems and tensions that arise from human interactions, language provides a unique role in capturing the breath of human thought and endeavours (Crystal 1987). Crystal notes that one important role of language is seen in how it enables its members to pass their messages quickly and exactly. He writes:

A small girl and her mother passed a statue depicting a European man who had bare handedly subdued a ferocious lion. The little girl stopped, looked puzzled and asked; "Mama, something wrong with that statue. Everybody knows that a man can't "whip a lion". "But darling," her mother replied, "you must remember that the man made the statue." (Crystal 1987: 215)

From this quotation, it is evident how human beings abuse the original purpose of language (conveying truth) by turning it into something absurd and stifling: a propaganda function for concealing and preventing women's thoughts. In the statue, the masculine image portrayed reflects traditional notions of gender roles where men are seen as risk-takers and ruthless. The masculine image in the statue serves as yardsticks within which any suggestion of positive feminine qualities is denied and outside which women are subordinated. Through the stereotypes as the ones above, boys emulate such images, messages and masculine characteristics through action and aggression. The statue thus serves as a symbolic way in which language structures our experiences and social positions as men and women by reflecting and recreating our views as women and men.



Stereotyped, biased and often inaccurate assumptions about people are encoded in the languages we use. We read about statements such as 'She is a tomboy', 'She is very masculine', 'What is needed is the feminine touch' and 'He is a sissy'. Similarly, sex-linked adjectives such as feminine, masculine, manly and womanly arise from stereotyped notions about male traits believed to be rooted in strength, assertion and aggression while female traits are seen as passivity, gentleness and concern. Feminist linguists discount such disparaging linguistic orientations and instead advise women to pursue greater things in life:

Women must aspire for greater things in life, a career as fixed and as calmly brilliant as the North Star, the one real thing that money buys, time...and of course, a husband you can look up to without looking down on yourself (Andersen 1995).

Feminist linguists argue that controlling negative linguistic images applied to women are dehumanizing and that women must question what is said and written about them. Most people imbibe gender images because language is an important agent of socialization which models their behaviours, attitudes and philosophies. Learning theorists support this argument (Thompson and Cattarin 2002).

Women are also defined in terms of their sexual desirability to men yet men are defined in terms of their sexual prowess over women. Slang words in reference to women refer to their sexual desirability to men. Lakoff (1975) gives examples of such words as dog, fox, broad, piece, ass and chick.

Women filled with sexual desire are described as 'worse than a tigress robbed of its young' and portrayed as 'bitch on heat wriggling like a worm on the hook and a mass of indefinable contours wriggling and squirming like a piece of fresh bait. The demeaning animal images attributed to female sexuality is heightened further in pornographic magazines where women are shown surrounded by the mounted heads of wild animals and animal skins with their legs open toward a lion. The message is that women see in wild creatures their own primitive lusts and desires.

Pornographers also portray women copulating with animals and painters have created scenes of women being raped by bulls and copulating with goats, horses, kangaroos and other animals. The accompanying commentary emphasizes how women



have abandoned civilization for the 'honesty of wild animal passions'. Furthermore, women are seen as wild creatures with primitive lusts and desires only satisfied with the uninhibited speed of a beast on heat (Borch 2000).

Richardson (1988) argues that certain texts directed to the girl child show how girls should be sociable (read approachable), beautiful, submissive and unambitious. Such texts advise girls to exert no force and talent at all. They are expected to sit back and wait for a man saviour who will make her and her children happy. Young women are frequently exposed to such negative messages and images which reinforce among other attributes, body ideals like thinness and beauty. With continued exposure to such messages and images, women have a greater likelihood of being affected negatively. Richardson gives the following text as an example:

“Smile honey, be nice. But, be careful. Don't act like 'you are asking for it! Do well in school, but not better than your boyfriend! Don't be too successful or no man will want you. Anyway, you will find your greatest joy in being a mother and wife! and Go get 'em Tiger, prepare yourself for a good job so you can be a good provider for your wife and kids. Choose a wife who will be a good helpmate and good mother, but it is ok if you have a little fun on the side. All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy – gets it! Ha! Ha...” (Richardson 1988: 16)

Female bodies are viewed as 'objects' with their physical beauty determining how others should judge their overall value (Pesa 2000). The boy is challenged to seize and practice bravery, industry and to be assertive in life ('go get 'em Tiger, prepare yourself for a good job so you can be a good provider for your wife and kids'). He is socialized to conquer, subdue and nurse a woman. If language is a screen or filter to reality and a strong socialization tool, then children internalize this kind of social outlook and behaviour by building their own focal representations of language which in turn determine how and for what function one uses his or her linguistic knowledge.

The depiction of women as immature, childish beings is another semantic device often invoked to support the doctrine of female inferiority. In line with this perspective, the assumption is that nothing of any consequence can be expected from women since they are irreversibly arrested at an infantile stage of development. Therefore, the best way to handle these 'superficial, frivolous, and emotional creatures' is to indulge, discipline,

overprotect, play with and entice them. A man of sense only plays with them, humours and flatters them as he does with a sprightly forward child not consulting them and trusting them with serious matters. These are some of the words written about women. Defining women as equivalent to young children lowers them to the state of individuals who are incapable of reflection, foresight and depth of thought.

Feminist linguists argue that from home to school, media, government, commerce and law, gender stereotyping thrives. The family provides the most intense and complete experience of belonging and teaches the infant social knowledge to engage in associations outside the family. Through language and wider culture, infants learn to conform to parental and cultural expectations (Richardson 1988). In school, boys are provided with more toys as a means of symbolic language as compared to girls. They argue that not a single girl is given a wagon, a boat, a pistol or a bus, yet baby dolls and toy domestic equipments are rarely found in the boys' rooms. In this way, boys are provided with objects that encourage outdoor activities like sports and military career. On the other hand, girls are encouraged to undertake activities directed towards home keeping and child-care (Richardson 1988). The symbolic language orientations as these above, together with socialization, provide a kind of documentation for sex-stereotyping.

Examining Taarab Music, Mbilinyi and Omari (1996) are critical of the Taarab language where social ills are preferred against women. The social ills include polygamy, where men are encouraged to practice it and women socialized to accept it. They quote:

*Iwawiapo sahili, oani enyi mnasi*

*Wane, watatu, wawili, sawa yenu nafasi*

Translation: (Get married when you find it easy,

Four, Three, Two wives as you can).

Mbilinyi and Omar (ibid) note that no song or poem encourages women to have two husbands. Such poems and songs encourage and socialize women to accept co-wives (*uke-wenza*). They observe that Taarab language reflects women as flowers and ornaments for decoration of men's homesteads. The flower image according to them implies perishability of women's beauty, which rationalizes men's polygamous craving. As if writing a support rejoinder to Mbilinyi and Omari's observations, Patricia (1990)



encourages women to travel a journey of self-definition and forge an identity larger than the one society prefers on them. She observes that women must realize that identity is not the goal but rather the point of departure in the process of self-definition. She argues that women must attempt an understanding of how their personal lives have been fundamentally shaped by interlocking systems of race, gender, and culture and class oppression.

Richardson (1988) argues that media language affects negatively the creativity and sociability of young children through formidable programmes that defend status quo. This is because at each stage of development, young and old people are given media messages to emulate. He argues that just as advertisements have a potential to create, persuade and reinforce the buyers' preferences, so does media influence the shape of the peoples' minds and attitudes. Media formulates opinions and creates awareness on the issues of interest. If media is not well objectified, it can easily foster socio-cultural sphere of dominant gender relations and inequalities. Richardson (1988) gives an example of a caption over a picture of a woman of the FBI's ten most wanted criminals asking: 'Who would marry her?' for the lady criminal and 'Have you seen this killer' message of the male criminal. This is a classic demonstration of how society works with language. It dramatizes the society's norms and values and shows the prevailing outlook and social relations on gender equation.

Magazines portray semi-nude women with 'parted lips and soulful eyes' on their covers, who seem to be asking the viewers to relieve them sexually. The cover message of such magazines would have such headings as: 'Turn women on' (Richardson 1988:72). Feminists argue that portrayal of seminude pictures in contemporary pornography has strong ties to imaging women as animals, non-people and as sexual-object for male pleasure. They argue that contemporary pornography reflects women as pieces of meat and sexual objects awaiting conquest by virile men.

### **2.1.3 Semantic Derogation and Pejoration of Women**

An examination of words associated with males and females testifies how masculine words are given positive attributes. Feminine words are characterized with

negative and pejorative tendencies. For example, personification of inanimate objects arises from stereotyped notions of male and female characteristics. Objects which are strong or powerful are generally personified as male, while those which are weak, passive or receptive are personified as female. That is why the sun is seen to be male while the moon which receives light from the sun is seen to be female. In common usage, vehicles and mechanised objects are often personified and more objects tend to be personified as female than male.

Typically, objects which are containers like ships are personified as female. Phrases such as 'The ship set forth with her sail billowing in the wind' and 'that car is hard to start but just give her a shove and she is up and running' show how women are vilified (Thompson and Cattarin 2002). For males, more examples include: manly virility, masculine strength and masculine courage. All these examples are defined in our dictionaries with positive attributes like masculine strength and masculine courage. Feminine examples include: feminine wiles, womanish fear, a woman-like lack of promptness and down right womanly act. These examples illustrate negative images of women. Under certain circumstances, male associated words are frequently applied to females to describe something that is either incongruous like 'a mannish voice' or presumably commendable as in 'a masculine mind' but female associated words are sometimes abusive to females as well (Goshgarian 1977: 123).

Words like 'whore' once meant 'a lover of either sex' but the sense of this word today is that of a promiscuous woman. Other scholars argue that words which once applied to both sexes and men alone, have acquired abusive associations yet such words are now exclusively used for women. Examples of such words include; Spinster, Prostitute and Harlot. The adjective 'harlot' meant 'a hired man', 'a rascal' and an 'entertainer' in Chaucer's time. The present meaning is restricted to a female harlot and not a man harlot. Other words cited include Master and Mistress. A mistress is a partner in extra-marital affairs. Originally, both words (Master and Mistress) had a common meaning. The words referred to the power held by a person over a servant. With the demise of feudal systems, the meaning changed. Master now refers to power over something and Mistress refers to power over a man sexually e.g. 'She is Tom's mistress'.



Similarly, the word 'Master' refers to an individual with great ability and skill while Mistress refers to an adulterer (Bolinger 1980). He identifies many other loaded terms particularly those reflecting women as sex objects and properties kept and rented for sexual services. Arguing that words used for 'untidy person' go for women, Bolinger gives examples of such words as drab, slut, tramp, dowdy, trollop, drabble tail, bitch and 'Female Eunuch'.

Goshgarian (1977) reports how language creates and maintains sexist myths. He gives words like 'Chicks', 'Dolls', 'Dames', 'Babes', 'Skirts' and 'Broads' as some of the pejorative words or vernacular synonyms for women. Also, demeaning animal metaphors constitute linguistic derision directed against women. In one set of such images, women are depicted as mindless breeders following beastly instincts and performing animal functions of producing and rearing offspring. Women are seen as wild animals in dire need of subjugation, domestication and tight control including a regular physical battering. Women are also viewed as decorative objects, breeding machines and extensions of men. The longstanding tradition of defining women as nothing more than bestial breeders whose function is reproduction and care of the young reduce them to servitude and oppression because such roles are seen as animal functions. These animal images can be found in a wide variety of sources: poetry, satire, politics, drama and pornography. In some circles, women are compared to natural disasters like 'hurricanes' and 'typhoons', which are named after them. Threatening forces are also given feminine names like 'Bitch goddesses'.

Other authors support the claim that sexist language is structured in favour of males. Nielsen (1977) notes that women are imaged as edibles. She gives examples as: 'Potato', 'dish', 'honey', 'sweet-pie', 'sharp cookie', 'peach', 'cheese', 'cake', and 'sugar'. Men cannot be referred to by the same. Nielsen further cites how a woman whose virginity has been taken away is debased as having been 'deflowered'. Nielsen notes that women are also compared to plants and flowers and gives examples as 'a clinging vine', 'a shrinking violet', or 'a wall flower', Nielsen is equally critical of 'aggressive animal image' accorded male counterparts like 'studs', 'bucks', 'lion' and

'wolves'. On the other hand, 'pet-like passive images' are associated with women. Examples include words like 'Kitten, bird, lamb, bunny, beaver and chick.

Bolinger (1980) argues that affixation of morphemes at the beginning or end of English nouns hint that feminine language is 'marked' being a deviation from male language which is always regarded as the norm. Feminist linguists give examples of words like poet/poetess, prince/princess, host/hostess, etc. A poet woman is thus excluded from the class and company of real poets. Another example given is the word 'Aviatrix' for pilot women, equally denying women full status as aviators. Bolinger makes another observation where language reflects women as commodities. He gives examples of such phrases: 'We married off our daughters' 'the brave pioneers crossed the plains with their wives, their children and their cattle', 'we compete for power', fame and women' etc. The perception of women as the men's rightful 'possession' to be used and abused as they see fit is a dominant assumption of the longstanding mentality of male supremacy. It has served as a basis for laws governing male-female relationships inside and outside the family and has furnished a rationalization for wife-battering, rape and other atrocities meted against women. The example below confirms this anomaly:

'Nature intended women to be our slaves.... they are our property; we are not theirs. They belong to us; just a tree that bears fruit belongs to a gardener' (McGregor 2003)

Lakoff (1975) makes a strong case for the euphemistic use of the word 'lady' as opposed to 'gentleman' as if 'gentlewoman' were an unpleasant term to be avoided. She gives examples of other words as bachelor and spinster both for unmarried man and woman respectively. She argues that a bachelor is seen as probably being unmarried by choice and design and living a happy and perhaps somewhat free life. A spinster conjures an image of an old and unappealing woman living a drab and unfulfilled life in consequence of her failure to marry. Other examples include a 'governor' who wields considerable power as the executive of a political administrative unit yet a 'governess' cares for small little children while their wealthy parents employ her. She further gives an example of 'witch' and 'a warlock' both possessing evil supernatural power. No one would think of indicating that some man they know is both ugly and ill-tampered by



calling him an old warlock yet women readily take this label. Lakoff (ibid) observes that certain words have an imputation of sexual immorality to referents of women's term while for the men's terms; such words carry very general if not favourable implications like the use of the word Madam applies to a manager of a brothel yet Sir never applies to a pimp.

On naming, Nielsen (1977) identifies names given to boy and girl-babies. For boys, she sees active names describing active roles like Martin (Warlike), William (Protector) and Ernest (Fighter). Girls are given passive and aesthetic labels such as Joy, Jewel, Pearl, Flora, Ruby, Ivy and Rose. Bolinger (1980) concludes metaphorically that 'the gun of sex-biased language may be rusty, but it is there and the greatest danger is unawareness that it is a gun and is loaded'.

However, other authors have argued that English language is anti-male. It espouses men as inherently evil and dangerous. They note that nearly all criminal labels such as murderers, hoods, swindlers, mobsters, evil one, rapist, killer, mugger etc refer to a man. They argue that language stereotypes are dual-based and should be investigated from both gender angles other than assuming that men control language and that they use it to define women as inferior.

#### **2.1.4 Subtle Sexism**

Subtle sexism is the unequal and harmful treatment of women. It is typically less visible than blatant sex discrimination. According to Benokraitis and Feagin (1995), considerate domination occurs when men often occupy prominent positions and control important decision-making functions (1995:109). Men's positions of power are accepted because domination is institutionalized and internalized. Institutionalized domination occurs as it is built into a culture's language and customs. Therefore, women in positions of power are deviations from the norm. For example, when women are in positions of high status, people tend to apply a hyphen when referring to their occupation, i.e., female-doctor. Benokraitis and Feagin (1995) assert that internalized domination is manifested by interruptions in speech. An example of this is when a woman is speaking; men interrupt, turn away from her, or have side conversations. Exclusion directly relates

to Benokraitis and Feagin's (1995) research. According to Benokraitis and Feagin, collegial exclusion takes many forms like being ignored, isolated, excluded from decision-making processes, overlooked in textbooks and reading materials, or squeezed into small space. They assert that social exclusion occurs when women are excluded both socially and professionally (p. 114).

In McRobbie's research (1991), women are ignored, isolated, and excluded from decision-making processes that give people high status and power in their societies. Exclusion is an effect of considerate domination. An overall effect of an integration of these factors is that women are excluded from socio-economic and political spheres and decision-making processes of the various subcultural institutions.

Most endearment terms are forms of subtle sexism. Endearment terms are debasing and abusive against women but not against their male counterparts. Endearment terms for women seem to have taken a downward trend with examples including words like Tart, Dolly, Kitty, Polly, Mopsy, Biddy and Jill. These examples are sexually derogative words used against women. More examples include words like 'Sir' and 'Mister' which still remain courteous titles for men. However, their equivalents like; 'Madam, Miss and Mistress' have become synonyms for brothel keepers, prostitutes and unmarried sexual partners of men respectively.

The terms Miss and Mrs indicate the sex and marital status of the person while the term Mr indicates the sex only. It is sexism to specify the marital status of women but not of men. Romaine (1994) further observes that there are two contradictions for 'mistress' i.e. 'Miss' and 'Mrs.' but only one for Mister i.e. Mr. He cites this as evidence of linguistic bias against women in the English language. Interestingly, when referring to male species, we call them men but when referring to female species, common forms of address include: girls or ladies. A girl is a young and immature female. On the other hand, a lady is a woman who is perceived to act and behave in a certain socially prescribed way. Thus, by referring to adult females as girls implies that they are not seen as mature and responsible human beings. Referring to them as ladies implies that we feel that they should act in a manner befitting a lady.



Women are also demeaned by veiled courteous dictums such as 'women and children first, 'the infirm, the blind, the lame and women'. These are never accidental utterances but rather a highly conscious strategy to derogate women. Such selectional groupings are powerful forces behind the actual expression of language and are based on distinctions which are not regarded as trivial by the speakers of the language (Milroy 1980). Milroy confirms that women tend to be included in groupings that designate incompleteness, ineptitude and immaturity yet men on the other hand exist as independent category capable of autonomy.

Many other common expressions and sayings are phrased exclusively in male terms and ideology. The following examples serve to point them as forms of subtle sexism: 'Everything comes to him who waits', 'To each his own', 'One man's meat is another man's poison' and 'Time waits for no man. Today 'man' is used sometimes to refer solely to male humans, while at other times it is intended to include all human beings. The generic use of 'man', male pronouns such as he, his and him obscures the presence and contribution of women and conjures up images of male persons only Romaine (1994) contends that such linguistic practices perpetuate among men, feelings of dominance over women by keeping women invisible.

### **2.1.5 Sexist Language: The African Context**

There is not enough documentation on sexist language in the African perspective. However, Yieke (2001) observes that gender is a social-cultural construct overtly expressed through language. She notes that gender is about power and that this gives rise to issues of subjectivity and oppression. Citing Spender (1980), she argues that language is sexist because men have the power to determine the meaning it encodes and that these encoded meanings embody men's perceptions of reality rather than women's. She blames patriarchy for using language as a mechanism of oppression and hiding feminine identities. She argues that language must be looked at critically to unearth hidden gender-based connections and assumptions encoded in it. Asking in her paper 'Are languages guilty of gender insensitivity?' and 'Who created English my second language, and who created Dholuo, my first language?' Yieke, discounts what she refers to as 'Male- As-



Norm' bias, a linguistic phenomenon in feminist terms known as 'MAN' (Frederich 1977). Giving an example of terms of address, Yieke is critical of the offensive nature of the use of the word 'Miss' by those above certain age in the African cultural context.

In her article 'Language, Gender and Law', Omondi (1989) is critical of how language as a resource is taken for granted. She argues that people must carefully consider this linguistic resource when addressing social issues because language is a medium through which individuals acquire all values that governs society. She notes that every child in a speech community goes through a school that teaches it all the society expects it to know about women as opposed to men when acquiring language. In this way, the tyranny of language is acquired as observed in its syntax, vocabulary, lexicon, semantics and ready-made expressions in proverbs and sayings (Omondi 1989). Comparing the verb 'to marry' in English with the verb *Kendo* (to marry in Dholuo), Omondi argues that *Kendo* as a verb is restrictive in use. Whereas in English one can write, 'John married Mary' and vice versa, the trend is never applicable in Dholuo because Mary cannot be the subject of the verb *kendo* and neither can John be its object as in \**Mary kendo John* (Mary married John). The limiting condition here is the gender specific language function where only men can marry and women can only be married. Omondi gives examples of vocabulary relevant in marriage where the chief wife in a polygamous home is called *Mikaye*, the second wife *Nyachira* and the third wife *Rero* yet the man simply remains *Dichuo* (husband). Omondi argues that in the event of death in marriage, the husband does not achieve a new name even if the wife dies. However, if the husband dies, the wife becomes *Chiliel* (the wife of the grave). From this vocabulary, married women remain so as wife to the grave of her husband. She concludes by saying that language is a fundamental and invaluable source of information on gender issues from which children are acculturated to their societies.

Omari (1996) acknowledges that songs, proverbs and riddles are language forms which socialize women and youth to conform to the language-assigned societal roles. She argues that in the traditional African settings, images of women were duly influenced and based on existing divisions of labour. She notes that traditional roles of motherhood and parenthood were fostered through the traditional mass media and strengthened through

language. Omari fails to identify the nature of socialization which language assigns to both youths and women. Indeed, language reflects socially constructed gender relations as biased but natural. The subjective semantic interpretations of reality and value judgments are projected as fact even when women are debased. Ironically, people have turned a blind eye to the intricacies of discourse production and comprehension yet language is a powerful tool which materializes dominant wishes and aspirations. In the words of Van Dijk (2000), the semantic component of any language is used extensively and effectively for these purposes. In regard to this subjectivity, our research investigates how language fosters the dominant representations and facts by investigating the nature of judgments they pass and discriminations against women. Mondoh (2001) argues that children show active interest in the activities they have been socialized to believe. Consequently, girls choose indoor domestic activities while boys choose risky, adventurous and exploring outdoor activities. These choices are conscious products of gender-bias linguistic orientation. Language prepares a boy to be a ruthless and militant personality. A girl is socialized to love and care, to nurse her brother, husband and her children.

Despite the scanty publication on sexist language in the African perspective, the four scholars indicate how African languages are inherently gender-biased and probably as Yieke (2001) observes, there is need for people to sit down and redesign language to be more user-friendly and more suitable in recognizing positive gender identities.

In these sections, we have examined evidence of sexist languages from different dimensions. It is evident that language use is permeated with gender inequality which is rooted in the social disparities of male-female relationship. It is also evident from examples given that language limits and destroys feminine images. This limitation denies them equal social-linguistic images of orientation and ability to exercise their talents favourably because negatively constructed images of women condemn them to accept their inferior subject positions. Women must therefore oppose and resist all forms of linguistic biases which lead them to accept subject positions and fit in the patriarchal frames of thought.



The principal aim of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in our research is to uncover how such representations and opacities in discourse contribute to the exercise, maintenance or reproduction of unequal power relations. In other words, sexist statements as the ones cited are clarified to expose their potentially effective role in the imbalanced power structures of the society. The latent ideologies in these examples are put under CDA scrutiny to expose the falsehoods.

The discussions so far cited and examples given are quite relevant to the research data. The research data provides samples of derogatory items, phrases, idioms, proverbs and riddles in the said language. However, this work is a departure from listing examples of discriminatory items. It scrutinizes the power relations and ideological manipulations evident in the feminine images which these discriminative items construct. It is shown how sets of discriminative statements constituting discourse, are themselves expressive of and organized by specific patriarchal ideologies. Data is tested on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as interpretive framework as discussed in the following section.

#### **2.1.6 Post-Feminist Text Analysis**

This section of the thesis refers to the argument that there is need for a new form of feminist text analysis which takes account of the changes which have occurred in Feminist Theory, Linguistic Theory, Critical Text Analysis and in Sexism itself. Post-feminists demonstrate awareness of the complexity and context-specific nature of the meanings of words within texts. Post-Feminism occupies a critical position in regard to earlier feminist frameworks at the same time as critically engaging with patriarchal and imperialist discourses. In doing so, it challenges hegemonic assumptions held by second wave feminist epistemologies that patriarchal and imperialist oppression was a universally experienced oppression.

Post-Feminists argue that a new form of feminist textual analysis is necessary because feminism has made an impact on the nature of sexism and the way people discuss gender relations, at least within the public sphere. Secondly, feminist theory and feminist linguistic analysis have recently undergone a critical rethinking which has not yet been reflected in feminist text analysis. Importantly, text analysis, particularly Critical



Discourse Analysis, has changed profoundly having major implications on feminist text analysis.

It is true that certain linguistic choices encode a world-view which seems to present women as passive and as acted upon. Furthermore, Post-Feminists agree that the generic pronoun *he*, the semantic derogation of terms associated with females, the demeaning terms used for women and the negative and sexualized representation of females are sexist examples of use of words. However, whilst it is relatively easy to demonstrate a link between the use of certain language items and sexist attitudes, the nature of sexism itself and the linguistic determinism implied in the analysis of sexism has recently come under more scrutiny (Cameron 1990; Mills 1995). For example, Cameron (1990) suggests that although sexism appears to manifest itself in language items, such items are fairly of mixed set. She writes:

There is a slippery heterogeneity about so-called "sexist language": it is not just a case of certain words being offensive, but of sexism entering into many levels of language from morphology (for example, word endings) which is usually seen as part of a language's core, through to stylistic conventions in specific "fields" of discourse, which are much less general, more conscious and more context-bound, (Cameron 1990: 14).

Cameron (1990) cautions that people should not treat examples of linguistic sexism manifested at different levels of language in the same way. It is because such blanket approach is ineffective. She fronts for a range of strategies for dealing with those elements of sexism which are more fixed and those which are more fluid and open to discursive intervention.

In the same vein, Vetterling-Braggin (1981) notes that simple condemnation of linguistic sexism is ineffective since it involves taking a moral and personalized response because people producing sexist language are not given any space for productive change, but may simply become more entrenched in their positions. Attempts at reforming sexism in language are doomed to failure because they do not necessarily involve any fundamental structural change. Vetterling-Braggin proposes that sexism does not consist of a set of language items but rather a set of attitudes and ways of codifying the world

which should be seen as informing those language practices. Thus, a more subtle form of analysis which draws attention to the taken-for-granted status of sexist knowledge is needed. Post-feminists argue that what feminist theory has brought about is rather instability in sexism itself rather than an eradication of sexism. Cameron puts it that:

By coining alternatives to traditional usage ... the radicals have effectively politicised all the terms. They have made it impossible for anyone to speak or write without appearing to take up a political position, for which they can then be held accountable (Cameron 1994: 31)

Post-Feminists acknowledge that sexism has undergone a great change because of feminist theory which has forced sexism to become more indirect or subtle driving overt sexism underground (Benokraitis 1997). Thus, sexism may still be a factor within the production of texts - either because the author wishes to hide overt sexism under a patina of 'political correctness', or because the author has not thought through their ideas concerning sexism in a sufficiently coherent form (Mills 1995).

Post-Feminists postulate that there are still sexist statements in many texts and women are still treated as sex objects, but perhaps what has changed is the form that this expression takes and the possibilities of the responses to sexism. Gender relations, in general, have also changed because of the impact of feminism on society as a whole and because of women's greater involvement in the public sphere.

Early feminist analysis assumed that there was one position from which language items which had been considered sexist could be judged. This was partly because feminist analysts had to develop a new form of analysis within a culture which read those items in very different ways. It is possible to acknowledge the diversity of the possible readings which are available to both women and men. Before, it was assumed that there was a universal feminist position of reading and that all women would read in similar ways; since then, it has become clear that women have different access to education, different experience, different affiliations and also different takes on feminism which colour their readings and their reception of individual language items and the overall message as a whole (Van Zoonen 1997).

Early feminist text analysts assumed a simple binary model of power relations, so that it was possible to talk about patriarchy and oppression and assert that women were



largely powerless. After Foucault's (1979) work, it has become more difficult to hold to this polarized model of powerful and powerless. There has been an analysis of power relations which concentrates on the dispersal of power throughout a system of relations and which stresses the productive nature of power relations as well as their restrictions (Smith 1990). The repressive hypothesis, where power is considered only in terms of the ways in which it restricts people, can no longer be held to. Power is also no longer simply seen to be institutional. Feminist theory, perhaps more than any other, has shown that power is not simply located at the level of the state but is exercised through relations between people and between people and institutions (Smith 1990).

Post-Feminist text analysis is a supplementary approach which recognizes that the context in which texts are produced and interpreted is important. The context of words rather than analyzing words out of it is fundamental. It must analyse words at the level of discourse as well as at the local level of occurrence. This approach considers the relation between lexical items and what are conventionally regarded as extra-textual features. It must be aware of the different levels of sexism within a text, and it must analyse gender in relation to race, class and other variables rather than in isolation. Post-feminist analysis is one which is able to see that there are, within the parameters of the textual and discursive constraints, multiple interpretations of terms and discourses as a whole. It is for this reason that this thesis incorporated focus group discussions to map out the range of possible interpretations of the items gathered. Such analysis must also be able to trace elements which have been omitted from texts yet which may still exert a discursive pressure on the text. In some senses, this is an attempt to mould gender, linguistic and discourse levels of analysis. Chapter four of this work adapts this approach but heavily informed by Critical Discourse Analysis discussed below.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

This study is guided by Norman Fairclough and Ruth Wodak's (1992) approaches to Critical Discourse Analysis (hereafter CDA) as an interpretive framework. The study adopts Van Dijk's (2004) recent theoretical trends in CDA studies. CDA has become an influential model in academic research in social, political, educational and linguistic



sciences. It scrutinizes the power relations, ideological manipulations and hegemony. This study is an attempt to explain how a single reality (the construction of feminine images) in the Sabaot language is presented and viewed. In this study, Van Dijk's (2004) framework adopted from 'Politics, Ideology and Discourse' is used to detect discursive structures which lead to ideologically based parochial, prejudiced as well as discriminative statements.

The feminine images in the Sabaot language underscore the fact that ideological manipulations are expressed, enacted, sustained and at times, inculcated through discursive structures. The macro strategies of positive self-representation and negative other-representation or US-THEM dimensions, have turned out to be very accurate criteria for the evaluation of attitudes and opinions. Derogation of females is thus seen as rife in the ideological manipulations of the texts which leads to the positive self-representation of men and negative other-representation of women. In view of this exposition, the principal aim of CDA is to uncover the opacities in discourse which contribute to the exercise, maintenance or reproduction of unequal relations of power (Fairclough and Wodak, 1992). CDA clarifies words, ambiguous and hazy statements to expose their potentially effective roles in influencing imbalanced power structures of the society.

CDA is considered hyper-linguistic or supra-linguistic because it considers the larger discourse context or the meaning that lies beyond the grammatical structure. This includes considerations of the political, economic and context of language usage and production. Despite common grounds underlying all types of studies carried out according to CDA approach, there is a big diversity in both more general objectives of CDA framework and their more specific aims. Van Dijk (2001) pinpoints that CDA intends to focus on the ways social dominance is secured, sustained and reproduced through manipulation and construction of particular discourse structures. He adds that finding the relationship between the discourse and knowledge is another important issue that CDA examines from different perspectives including a linguistic one.

Van Dijk (2000) holds that texts are not used just to inform us of some reality. They construct the reality based on the ideological standpoints of the person involved in

text production. Thus, one of the main tenets of CDA is to reveal the sources of dominance and inequality observed in the society by analyzing texts (written or spoken). A text, in the words of Van Dijk is merely the tip of the iceberg and it is the responsibility of the discourse analysts to uncover the hidden meanings of the texts.

The basic conceptual and theoretical concepts worked out and used by Van Dijk (2000) in his CDA studies comprise both the micro level and macro level. The micro level comprises language, discourse, verbal interaction and so on, while the macro level has to do with social power and relation such as inequality and dominance. CDA employs both levels because in actual interaction, one can not separate one from the other. Basing on this approach, social power is viewed as a means of controlling the mind and actions of other group(s).

Van Dijk (2002) takes ideology as the attitude a group of people hold about certain issues; hence the analysis of ideology is one of the main concerns of discourse analysis. In order to uncover ideology generated in discourse, Van Dijk resorts to a critical discourse analysis of the text among other approaches. Van Dijk's (2004) framework consists of a number of different discursive strategies. They include positive-other representation and negative-other representation. Van Dijk also examines lexicalization, metaphorical use of language, self-glorification and victimization, self-representation or favouritism and negative other-representation or derogation. He argues that all these are materialized through some other discursive moves such as generalizations or framing, hyperbole or exaggerations, implications or symbolism and irony.

CDA is thus viewed as a socially and politically committed analysis in which language is understood and explained in terms of its key role in maintaining power relations. The model maintains that language embodies ideologies through its linguistic code (i.e. grammar, vocabulary etc). These codes are themselves the fabrics of power relations and social struggles. It captures detailed description of linguistic structures and vocabulary in order to explain how discourse manipulates people and maintains the status quo. Importantly, CDA intervenes on the side of the dominated and oppressed groups against dominating groups by helping them to recognize when and how they are



subjected by language. Generally, CDA is built on several principles briefly discussed below.

### **1. Discourse does ideological work**

Language use is potent with beliefs and power struggles which give rise to social problems. This is so because ideologies are beliefs on which society is represented and constructed. Certain ideologies can produce unequal power relations, domination and exploitation. These ideologies exist through linguistic signs (language) which constitute materials of ideology. In this sense, language use should be seen as an arena of class struggle focused mainly on meaning of words and expressions. Semantic derogation of women attests to this class struggle. The social stigmas against women arising from semantic misinterpretation of women are such false ideological constructs responsible for the rise of top-dog versus under-dog male-female relationship in our society.

### **2. CDA addresses social problems**

CDA examines the linguistic character of social and cultural process in addressing social problems. This is because discourse is socially constituted and shaped. Seen in this context, CDA is used to examine female subjugation as an offshoot of domineering patriarchal systems as shall be seen in the semantic derogation of women.

### **3. CDA sees discourse as a form of social action**

CDA sees itself as a resource for developing the consciousness (individual or collective) particularly of those groups which are dominated in a linguistic way. CDA helps such groups to recognize when they are being subjected by language and shows them when and how to wrest control which works towards greater freedom and respect for humanity.

CDA is premised on developing a sense of social responsibility towards others in our language use and that we must develop critical awareness of the power language has by adopting languages which recognize the identities and values of others in our spontaneous use. CDA is a socially committed discipline which helps people understand the social problems that are mediated by mainstream ideology and power relationship. It unmasks versions of different sexist, racist and other forms of discriminative discourse



practices and strives to change discourse and power patterns in institutions and society at large.

#### **4. Power relations are discursive**

CDA focuses on how power relations are discursive. It argues that power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse. This tenet investigates power over discourses as a matter of the capacity to control and change the ground rules of discursive practices and even the structure and order of discourse.

#### **5. Discourse constitutes society and culture**

CDA acknowledges that discourse constitutes society and culture as well as being constituted by them. In view of this, contemporary social process and power relations emanates from society and culture and their relationship is a dialectical one. Every instance of language use makes its own small contribution to reproducing society and culture including power relations. CDA examines relations between people and peoples' social and personal identities.

#### **6. Discourse does Historical work**

Discourse is produced within a particular context and can not be understood without taking into account the context. Discourse always involves power and ideologies connected to the past and the current contexts. Discourse can be interpreted differently by different people because they have different backgrounds, knowledge and power positions. More so, CDA does historical work because history is considered as ideologically and politically inflicted time.

#### **7. Discourse Analysis is Interpretive and Explanatory**

Discourse can be interpreted invariably due to the different audience, knowledge, background and power positions. Any text is embedded and deconstructed in its social conditions and is linked to ideologies and power relations. Critical reading and thinking in the words of Reinchenbach (2001) involves careful, deliberate determination of whether we should accept, reject or suspend judgment about the truth value of a claim. This marks the difference between critical reading and uncritical one.

The model is used to examine sexist ideological constructs prevalent in the Sabaot language use and the manifestation of power struggles in semantic derogation of women. All these were done against the backdrop of social and historical contexts, which was important for interpretations.

It is important to mention here that doing CDA in this study was made concrete by drawing Fairclough's (1994) model of analysis. According to Fairclough, CDA involves a systematic analysis in discourse practice and production. According to him, every discursal instance has three dimensions; the text (spoken or written word), interaction between people involving the process of producing and interpreting the text and the social action.

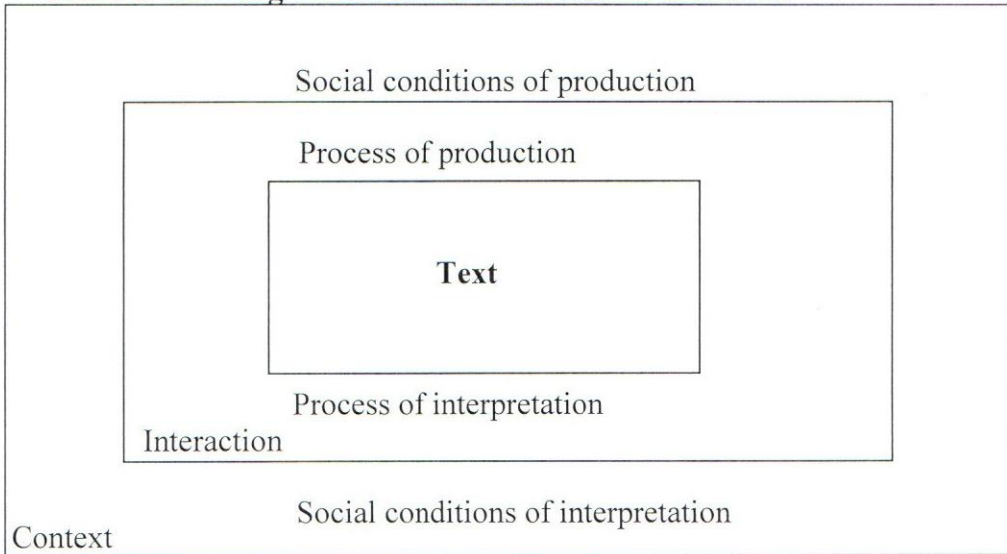
Fairclough (1992) argues that **texts** are what are said in a piece of spoken discourse. They are basic linguistic components having layers of contextual and societal interpretations. He argues that texts are produced within obtaining social conditions of production and interpretation. This refers to the process of **interaction** and **cognitive** process involved in textual understanding. According to him, cognitive process of texts is socially shaped and is relative to the social conventions, philosophies and orientations. Production of the texts in this work will refer to the 'barazas' as interactional level. Interpretations of the texts were drawn from the society's body of knowledge and ideologies. In interpreting texts, we witness speakers' knowledge of language itself, the world around the speaker, gender relations, philosophies, values, beliefs and assumptions. Thus the text cited above where women are regarded as 'mounted beehive' was seen as symbolically demeaning. The assumption in this symbol is that married daughters are treated as bee-hives from which honey (read dowry) is obtained. Using the singular verb '-kyiangaab-' (*I have mounted/attached.....*), shows that daughters are 'married off' and their husbands become trees on which the 'beehives' (daughters) are mounted (married). Note that the symbol treats women as food stuffs (honey). This work invoked focus group discussions which yielded interpretations as shown above.

Fairclough refers to a third **socio-cultural level** where the social conditions of production and interpretation determine properties of discourse, relationship between speakers (see excerpts 4-6) in the appendices. Whatever people speak, write, listen to and



read are determined socially and have social effect. Thus the sexist texts cited in this work affect the feminine socio- political and economic perceptions and attitudes in life because these items are hegemonic in nature and relegate women to the under-dog position. Indeed discourse is socially generated and the very nature of text production is dependent on the social relations and struggles (gender relations and struggles) for this work. All these levels are interwoven. The following figure represents these discussions

**Table 1: Showing Three Levels of Discoursal Instances**



From the figure, every discoursal instance has three dimensions: Text (spoken or written word). In this study, texts shall refer to specific linguistic items, phrases, expressions, proverbs, idioms and riddles cited in examples 1-55 in chapter four. For example married women are regarded metaphorically as ...*Mweenkosyeek chee kyang'aab looyiin...* (Honey-full beehives mounted on trees far away) (Line 240). Interaction between people involving the process of producing the text shall refer to the barazas as the immediate context. Socio-cultural level shall refer to the social conditions of production and interpretation which determine the properties of discourse, relationship between speakers (see excerpts 4-6 in the appendices). Whatever people speak, write, listen to and read are determined socially and have social effect. The focus group



interviews helped to this end. All these levels are intertwined. The analysis in chapter four adopts this approach.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This section highlights research methodology in terms of procedures used in data collection and presents the raw data collected.

#### **3.2 Population and Location of the Study**

This research was conducted in Cheptais division of Mt. Elgon district. Mt. Elgon is situated in the Western Province. The district is made up of four divisions of which the study is based in Cheptais division. This study captured two-discourse sessions drawn from village heads' and Chiefs' Barazas in each of the four locations in the division. The research anticipated eight discourse excerpts in total. Thereafter, twenty interviewees per location were interviewed (focus group interviews). These interviewees aided in the interpretations of the sexist items captured during live sessions. The choice of the four locations constituted samples for the division and a sample study for the district. The four locations were: Sasur, Chesikaki, Cheptais and Chepkube. The choice of the division was appropriate for the researcher because it was most accessible and convenient during the research.

#### **3.3 Sampling Procedure**

Interviews (focus group) were drawn from the four locations as stated above. The choice of the interviewees was based on stratified sampling principles where region, age, sex and social positions were considered. Stratified sampling approach yielded diverse and representative interpretations in terms of how the items gathered were discriminative in terms of the feminine images portrayed and the semantic derogation of women adduced.



### **3.3.1 Sampling Respondents**

Eighty respondents were drawn from the entire division. Twenty respondents represented every location. Twelve men and eight women were drawn from every location thus taking into consideration the sex factor. Women respondents were fewer because the analysis of the discriminatory items affected their very perception and for this reason, women interviewees would remain reserved and contribute less in matters affecting their very images and perception. On the other hand, men were seen as active players in the said discrimination and elicited relevant and enough data for the research. For these reasons, men were more than women.

Respondents were adults aged above twenty-five years. This group was active and conscious in terms of gender perceptions and was 'linguistically aware' of examples and use of the discriminative linguistic items and the sexist images of women. In terms of the social positions, two teachers (male and female), two administrators, one politician and one elite were sampled. The social status factor injected new insights and in-depth perceptions on how such discriminative items operated and their far-reaching consequences in terms of female perception in different cycles. Generally, random sampling procedure was used where members from every sub-location were drawn.

### **3.3.2 Sampling Discourse Sessions**

Discourse sessions were sampled depending on how relevant they were to the research topic and objectives. There were eight sessions captured in the *Barazas* conducted by the village heads and chiefs but only four were transcribed as the database because they had relevant items for our work. Every session lasted approximately one hour.

The discriminative items included: riddles, proverbs, words, phrases, songs and relevant allusions. The discourse excerpts were captured randomly. All discriminatory items sampled were subjected to thorough interpretations during the focus group interviews. The researcher targeted numerous sexist linguistic items from which the constructions of discriminative feminine images were based.

### **3.3.3 Gaining Entry**

With the research certificate, permission was sought from the Chiefs to participate in the meetings. In the meeting, the research assistants were introduced by the presiding officials as observers of the proceedings. Objectives of the study were not spelt out because data was to be captured as natural as possible without undue awareness. Researchers fitted into the discussions without misgiving as members of the community.

## **3.4 Data Collection Techniques**

Data collection techniques involved audio recording of discourse excerpts in the barazas and focus group interview sessions. Field-observation notes were used as a technique.

### **3.4.1 Focus group interviews**

There were twenty members in the focus group interviews drawn from each sub-location. The group was of mixed gender with twelve men and eight women selected. The selection focused on ‘linguistically resourceful’ members of the council of elders and elderly women among others. The researcher made notes during focus group interviews targeting sexist aspects of the discriminative items identified from the discourse excerpts. The sexist items were put to scrutiny to establish the theoretical concerns of the research. Negative images and semantic derogation of women (see appendix I) formed the basis of the interviews. The focus group interviews were conducted after discourse sessions. There were four focus group interviews each lasting a period of one and half hours depending on the number of discriminative items under discussion. Participants were not drawn from the participants in the barazas because they would have been biased in interpreting the items under discussion. As a research technique, focus group interviews provided face-to-face interaction between the researchers and the interviewees. It thus provided in-depth information on the nature of the images and semantic derogation of women captured in the discourse excerpts. This technique suffered taboo-related language use prompting the researcher to look for female research assistants where separate sessions were held. It also saved time.



### 3.4.2. Field Observation Notes

The researcher took notes relating to sexism in language use during his daily interactions with members of his community. The exercise lasted more than three months. Special interest was put on the daily interactions and other relevant contexts. The researcher had a checklist of discriminative items as songs, proverbs, riddles, words and phrases. These sexist items were examined alongside other items gathered in the barazas. This tool elicited data particularly on semantic derogation of women. The technique was highly flexible and reliable.

### 3.4.3 Audio Recording of Discourse Sessions

The researcher captured discussions related to gender issues during village heads' and Chiefs' meetings. These discourse excerpts were eight in total. Only four were transcribed and analyzed to identify use of the sexist linguistic items.

### 3.4.4 Data Obtained

The data was obtained from discourse excerpts in appendices 3-6. These discourse excerpts were captured in the audio-recorded tapes numbered A-L. Examples of sexist items were identified in the context of each discourse excerpt. These examples were categorized into thematic and sub-thematic categories. The thematic and sub-thematic categories were arrived at after examining and interpreting the data collected. The table below presents a statistically abridged version of the data obtained but the bulk data is contained in appendices 3-6. Other examples of the sexist items were drawn from the observation field notes and focus group discussions.

**Table 2: Data obtained**

Tape	Number of recorded discourse session	Number of transcripts (excerpts)	Number of linguistic Items captured
ABC	2	1	14
DEF	2	1	18
GHI	2	1	12
JKL	2	1	15
Others			05
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>64</b>



The themes and sub-themes are shown in the table that follows.

**Table 3: Tabulation of Themes and Sub-themes**

O Thematic category	Sub-thematic category	Number of the sexist items
Societal ideologies and pejoration of women	Women and Power	19
	Marriage and Sex	14
Sexist character labels and images of women	Women as Enemies within	07
	Women as big children	03
Sexist symbolic language	Courtship symbolic language	05
	Symbolic vilification of women	16
Total		64

t

Other than items captured in the audio-taped discourse excerpts, the following sexist items were captured during observation field notes:

1. ...*mataab kiyeeng*....' (Fire place lit outside the house, '...*kikirwookyine monoo mataab kiyeng*....*kikirwookyine mosukoy aak mboo cheebkamaat*...' (You were never instructed outside the open fire but within the kitchen fire with your sisters....)
2. ...*cheemureniis, cheemartooyiisyeek, kotoonko and cheebkandaasyek*' (All different names for female prostitutes), ...*Kiikiiberaaning*' or '*kiikimitiing*', (to be taken away)
3. ...*kaab cheewuuyo*...' (Migrants), '...*boo araan koorko*.... (Women are enrouted), *Meekiine koorko aako kooi* (women never mature up)
4. *Riire kuu kiiyoosweet* (Like an infant, she cries)

*Kiirirchi kwaan* (cries to her father)

*Kiirichi santenyi* (cries to her husband)

*Riirchi lookokyii* (cries to her children)

*Kuriirchi muuchookoorokyii ankuumaa naanyun* (cries to her grandchildren and dies),

5 *iloloonyee koot koorko....*' (... A woman warms the house....)

6 *...keroope kororyaab makanga*, (Guinea fowl feathers)

### 3.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data collected from audio-taped discourse excerpts and observation field notes were analyzed specifically to identify those linguistic items that discriminated and derogated women. These items were analyzed in terms of the negative feminine images they constructed and the ideological functions they served. Three thematic categories were drawn based on the type of linguistic data collected. Tables, graphs and charts were used for easy analysis of the data collected. The qualitative descriptions and quantitative analysis took the form shown below. Several CDA tenets and approaches mentioned earlier guided the interpretation and analyses of the data collected. Post- feminist text analysis approaches informed some of the interpretations and analyses. The research topic and objectives informed every step of the analysis and interpretation. Analysis and interpretation took the format that follows.

**Table 4: Data analysis approach**

Thematic Category	Number of Sexist Items gathered per theme	Percentages of the thematic categories	Sub- thematic categories and number of items gathered	Number of Sexist items per Sub- theme	Degrees of sub-thematic categories (Charts)
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## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

Analysis in this section is presented in three thematic categories. The first theme is Societal ideologies and Pejoration of women. This theme is broken into two sub-themes namely: Women and Power; and Marriage and sex. The second theme is Sexist Character labels of Women. This section is subdivided into two sub-themes namely; Seeing Women as enemies within and Women as Big children. The last theme is; The Sexist Symbolic Images of Women which is divided into two sub-themes namely: Courtship Symbolic language and Symbolic Vilification of Women. The thematic categories provided a broad socio- economic and political arena on which sexism could be described. The themes also relate the objectives and substance of the study.

The analysis of each theme follows the objectives of the research study and theoretical framework (CDA). The analysis of the results is born in the realization that language is a tool representing social reality, enacts social (gender) relations and establishes identity. This work borrows Fairclough's assertion that language reflects, reinforces and structures social relationship (Fairclough 1992). The analysis of these themes is guided by CDA as an interpretive model. The four appendices (3 - 6) is considered as the bulk discourse where in the words of Fairclough (2002), discourse means 'Language used in different sorts of social situations'. For the purpose of this study, discourse is seen as doing ideological work evident in the perceived discriminative images cited later. Guided by CDA, these discourses reflect social problems (gender inequality for the present study) and that CDA is a form of social action raising the linguistic awareness of the Sabaot women and men.

In line with the interpretive model, it is shown how the negative feminine images result into negative ideological perception of women. The work relates how such (as shall be seen later) negative ideological perceptions result into a subordinate status of women relative to men. The research discusses how such relations bear relations of domination and exploitation of women. It follows in the words of Cameron (1988) who argues that



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the minority and subordinate group (women for the study) get stereotyped, prejudiced and stigmatized. The way people write and what they say is purposeful whether or not the choices of words they use are conscious or unconscious (Sheyholislami 2002).

It is argued that discourse does ideological work and constitutes social problems. In view of this assertion, this work sees beyond the sentence and the words used. It bases its analysis on the intersection of language with the social phenomena and the social networks within which discourse is rooted and manifested. It is thus on the basis of a sexist and discriminative orientation of the Sabaot language that this thesis discusses a range of linguistic items which sustain and reinforce female subjugation in the sections that follow. The view is that through CDA, every effort should be made and directed towards investigating what role language plays in reinforcing such discriminations and subjugations of women. This approach is in line with Henry and Tator's (2002) views that we must engage in CDA to make the voice of the marginalized legitimate and heard; to take the voice of those in power into question; to reveal hidden agendas and motives that serve self interests, maintain superiority and ensures other's subjugation

CDA shares a lot in common with critical approaches in their endeavours for people's awareness and ultimate emancipation. CDA is the uncovering of implicit ideologies in texts. It unveils the underlying ideological prejudices and the exercise of power of word. Power relationships, ideologies and identities are created and naturalized by the manipulative styles of language. It is therefore incumbent on women to be able to decrypt and comprehend the basic intentions of the authors and speakers. Women must be aware of detecting manipulative and ideologically biased language. This work thus provides an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the data collected with a view to showing how women are portrayed negatively. Analysis is based on the semantic dimension of discrimination against women. Discriminative language is taken as that which creates or reinforces a hierarchy of difference between people, unequal social status of women and people from various ethnic and social backgrounds (Corson 1995). In the analyses and interpretations, the general Sabaot lexicon, word forms, proverbs, riddles, semantic implications and allusions made during social intercourse are cited.



Semantic implications and sexist images arising from the aforementioned linguistic items are investigated and how they give rise to the negative feminine perceptions by expressing prejudice and stereotypes

It is pointed out how the negatively constructed sexist images serve as unconscious and taken-for-granted items of reference and fabrics of gender relations and social struggles. This work also looks at how the sexist feminine images produce and manifest a top-dog versus under-dog male-female relationship. This is done in view of the fact that language has the power to influence dominant attitudes of the people in the society because these attitudes are expressed and maintained in language (Thompson 2002).

## **4.2 Societal Ideologies and Pejoration of Women**

It is evident from the examples discussed that members of a group represent and reproduce their social positions and conditions in their social cognitions and discourses. That is, ideologies control social representations of groups, and thus the social practices and discourses of their members. This happens through the ideological control of mental models which in turn control the meaning and the functions of discourses, interaction and communication (Van Dijk 2004). Thus, in these examples, an attempt is made to unravel how discourse enacts, expresses, condones or contributes to reproduction of negative sexual images and pejoration of women. However, it is necessary to mention from the onset that this analysis is done in view of the fact that there is a cognitive interface between society and discourse. Speakers understand or interpret their social environment which constitutes the context of their discourse and social practice. Thus, language users adapt what they say or write to what they believe or what the recipients already know. The following examples are drawn in the context of their use. Interpretations are drawn from focus group interviews and CDA tenets.

### **4.2.1 Women and Power**

#### **Example 1**

*...Kyokaas aakweek koorko nyee meetinye biintaa ku Metiryo..?’*

(Where did you see women who have no age-sets leading?) (Line 3 - 4).

Contextually, it was gathered from the focus group interviews that this statement is satirically made and is contemptuous of women who aspire for political leadership and land ownership. Such women are likened to initiates who supposedly remain passive and benefit from patriarchal tutorship and should not stray into the political domain of men. Looking at this excerpt, women are denied the power to lead. They are seen as foreigners and refugees amidst their own people. They are treated as inexperienced pupils and apprentices who should be guided under the ‘seasoned patriarchal tutors’. It was noted that the rhetoric question in the above statement conspired to ask the ‘obvious truth’ about the status of men and women in the society. It is a confirmation of the patriarchal orderliness.

The belief that women without age-sets cannot lead is expressed in the nouns *Biintaa* (age-set) and *Metiryoo* (leader or instructor of the initiates) both having ritual connotations and cultural significance. We gathered from the focus group interviews that an age-set is historically a traditional pool of tribal personnel from which leaders are drawn. It provides a group of men who share similar experiences, hopes, beliefs and philosophies. Members of an age set have a fanatical support for one another and are expected to seize their patriotic opportunities to champion and defend the course and history in their community. The fanatical support for one another is oath-bound and is in recognition of their shared pain during initiation. Such is how important an age-set is. That women do not belong to this important grouping is the genesis of their discrimination. They are thus seen as foreigners who take refuge in their husbands’ age-sets as passive partners and culturally sanctioned to be at the rear.

Importantly, the noun *metiryoo* (leader-instructor) refers to the cultural leader of the initiates who is always a man. The main task of this instructor is to prepare and introduce the initiates into the mainstream adult life and communal norms and secrets, so the argument went. Following this patriarchal and anthropological order, women are denied the valued sense of belonging and opportunities to lead. They are denied opportunities to rehearse their leadership qualities and skills in readiness to defend, chart and champion the course and history of their communities like their male counterparts.



In line with CDA, these words in Van Dijk's (2000) own statement tend to disguise or even mystify the manipulative purpose of inclusion (Us or Them) in leadership while excluding women. The disguise in this case creates positive attitudes for men and negative attitudes for women. Indeed, CDA states that the enormous power of words is seen in the emotional appeals they create, distortion of truth they portend, and manipulation of others' thoughts by inculcation of such patriarchal attitudes as in the example above. Women are thus prepared to believe that leadership is masculine and never feminine. On the other hand, men consider leadership as their inalienable right.

The above explanation is taken to underscore how discourse constitutes society and culture and vice versa. Example one sees women as undeserving foreigners and an out-door class who should be kept off the political systems. This statement attests to how women are distrusted and treated like pupils (read children). It is a form of underdevelopment and oppression when one gender group finds itself forced to relinquish power entirely to another gender group. The most serious blow women suffer from such patriarchal ideologies is being removed from history and from the community. In this way, patriarchy usurps free feminine roles by seeing them as aliens in their very midst. Thus, the ideological assumption in example one shows how those with power use language to sustain their power while condemning the less powerful women to servitude positions.

Thus, the statement attests to how language can play a significant role in discrimination of women by making them socially subordinate and politically invalid. The assumptions in these words are that women are inferior and unable to take worthwhile responsibilities. Like pupils, foreigners and apprentices, women should be put under constant tutorship and 'capable hands and counsel' of the men. The belief is that entrusting women in leadership positions is like entrusting children and apprentices to take charge.

The bridge and beast of burden image of women in the example below shows that women bear all forms of exploitations by their male counterparts. The bridge image of women is sexist and prepares women for political and economic exploitation. Example two below is a case in point.

## Example 2

....*Taraacheet koorko areenyo... keekoone tuukaab muureen aangukworuu tuukaab muureen byii..... Inyiitweech areet maan koorkoob mureen'*

(A woman is a bridge ..... we give out our cattle to have them in our homesteads and they are a source of our many cattle ... they add our clansmen ... a man's woman) (Line 32 - 33).

Contextually so, it was gathered that this statement was made in recognition and appreciation of the role daughters play in advancing family fortunes and lineage. The image of women in the word '*Taraacheet*' (bridge) is largely pejorative at least in the context of its use. We found out that the descriptive metaphor '*Taraacheet*' (bridge) views women as bridges on which men cross to riches and power. '*..aangukworuu tukaab mureen byii*' (source of wealth) and adds our clans men '*inyiitweech areet*' (fills our clan). This example encodes stereotypical and masculinist attitudes towards women and child-bearing. In this example, the bridge image links with the idea and the assumption that women are a source of wealth as products of barter trade. This in turn is a source of power for men.

CDA contends that any language has shades of meanings which are utilized by speakers to change realities as well as create different feelings and reactions within women. The words in example two above attest to how language is an essential tool which materializes patriarchal ideologies and wishes. Thus, the semantic component of the symbol (bridge) above is used effectively for the purpose of exploiting women given the sexist and the derogatory applications of this image.

The negative sexist images of women spring mainly from the fact that women lack power to define themselves. CDA holds that power is the ultimate determinant in gender relationship and implies the ability to defend a group's interests and if necessary impose the group's will by any means available. When the feminine gender is seen in the images discussed above and finds itself forced to surrender to such labels by the patriarchal order, then, that itself is a form of underdevelopment and equivalent to removing women from history and from their communities.

This work further established that the genesis of discrimination of women is rooted in their breast- image as shown in the following example:



### Example 3

*...anyiiny kineetaab moomo...*

(Our mother's milk is sweet) (Line 46)

Contextually, it was reported in the focus group interviews that the statement was used by one man participant to convince the gathering that women can be sweet in leadership the way their breast milk is. However, the analogy confirms that the uncritical use of language blinds people to adopt a particular value laden perspective. Such blindness breeds irrelevant distinctions between sexes. It was gathered in the focus group interviews that women's 'inadequate' role in leadership is seen in terms of the sweet breast-milk. By extension, the breast milk image connotes a surrogate feminine image of a nursing leader. Although the image points faintly at the natural truth (sweet breast milk), it largely admits to the very notion that women cannot provide efficient and adequate leadership. In the focus group interviews, elders argued that just like the breast milk is inadequate in the later development stages of the baby's health, so are women dry of leadership skills! How this analogy measures and attests to the linkage is debatable. The question to ask from the breast-milk image is: Do women leaders wean up eventually in their leadership skills and tactics? Thus, although the image used is true, it critically manifests how certain language conventions and practices are invested with power relations and ideological details which people are unaware of. Importantly, speakers are attuned to the emotive force of words and to the way in which language influences thought and behaviour.

The principal aim of CDA is thus to uncover the implicit messages and power relationship evident in the statement above. Women should be judged as leaders independent of their biological roles. People should not see a mother in a leader but a leader in a mother. The breast-milk measure is used in recognizance of the prevalence of the gender-role stereotypes seen most particularly in the traditional concept of women's role in the domestic spheres viewed as unimportant and not in itself worthy. Importantly, the statement shows how language connects with the social world through being the primary domain of ideology and through being both a site of and stake in struggle for power (Fairclough 1992). Denying women leadership roles on the basis of sex contravenes the Vienna declaration on the rights of women which views equality as the

cornerstone of every democratic society which aspires to social justice. Full and equal participation of women in political, civil, economic, social and cultural life at the national, regional and international levels and the eradications of all forms of discriminations on grounds of sex are priority objectives of the international community (UN- UDHR, Commission for Human Rights, fact sheet No. 22)

Example four below shows men as an endangered ‘service arrows’ who should be protected from immoral women:

**Example 4**

*...Meebtakeetinye weeriik choo kiiwooneekey mbo kuuko kuule; Atinye weerikyuu che kyaakartee kebeen ankukoowuu saaruraak...*

(...Gone are the days when our fathers would boast of having arrows in the arrow cages with protruding feathered tails...) (Line 85 - 86).

Contextually, it was established that this statement was made in regret of the manner in which men (symbolized by arrows) are dying. The arrows stand for the masculine power to defend the people. The manipulation of the gender images in the above exposition, construct a potent patriarchal ideology which makes puppets of the feminine characters by legitimizing the false images of women as killers. Men are given the image of ‘serving arrows’ as means of political and sexual power over women. These arrows should be kept safe in their arrow-cages and away from the graveyards (women thighs).

The gender identities drawn above ( graveyards and service arrows) representing women and men respectively is in support of Fairclough’s (1992) observation that within discourse, are ideologies which are concerned with how meaning of words bolster up individuals who occupy positions of power or condemn the underdogs to be contented with the status quo. Indeed, the model in which an action or reality is presented is not a matter of truth but rather a matter of the way in which the reality as the cases above, fits into the ideological systems of the speaker. Both ideological knowledge and cultural norms allocate a skewed gender relationship born in the social scripts prescribed in the example above.

Example 5 shows how women are seen as ominous and dirty.



### Example 5

*...karaan yuu keenyooi kieenguuni kuuyu yokoonyoo koorko, mwoneech kelyook kumuur yoo koowo aynoo..*

(A woman on her periods arriving earlier in a meeting is ominous) (Line 245 - 246),

Contextually, the statement is uttered by one old man who acknowledges the efforts of a fellow old man who manages to arrive in the meeting before any woman did. From the interviews conducted, the sexist image of women on periods is that of an ‘unclean owl’ portending evil and trouble. Like an evil owl, unclean women should be avoided. The power structure in this society demands that women should not arrive in any important meeting prior to any man as it portends evil. This arrangement allocates women a subject position. CDA argues that words are never far from being neutral ideologically, but are replete with ideologically charged materials which can be brought to the readers’ or speakers’ attention. Unless people begin to debunk misleading patriarchal views as the ones above, they can be misled and duped into embracing the dominant worldview (patriarchal ideologies) at the expense and gains of social justice and democracy.

Similarly, example 6 shows sexist images of women as adduced in the riddle below. The riddle ridicules women by subjecting them to a subordinate position.

### Example 6

*...kaakeeyibe koomat koororooyoote...’*

(...your mother was carried while trickling water.....) (Line 313 - 314)

Contextually, this statement is made by the village head as a counter argument while defending the interests of women. However, he cites a sexist riddle which is itself ironical and demeaning of the power and status of women he purports to entrench. It was confirmed that the answer to the riddle is ‘...Koorosheet...’ (A traditional gadget used to

prepare alkaline and corrosive cooking solution). By implication, it was argued in the focus group interviews that women are seen as ‘corrosive’ (...*keereche koreet*....) and therefore dangerous and destructive. No wonder then, the vision of women’s lives is summed in a discriminatory judgment that a woman’s life is always gloomy and dull (...*tunuusoonoot koorob koorko*...) (Line 315 - 316). Thus, women are only powerful in the way they can manipulate and turn things around. The ideology is that this power should be shunned.

CDA holds the view that social improvement is contingent upon people becoming conscious of the social realities that exploit or dominate them and then demanding liberation from these forces. This way, our model helps women in this case to gain personal freedom from external constraints such as the linguistic biases discussed above and gain social freedom from oppression, exclusion and abuse of power relations as manifested in the discriminatory and sexist images above (Gentzler 1999, McGregor 2003).

It is argued that the real value of CDA as a model depends on its contributions to the insights it gives to gender problems. In view of this assumption, the example 7 below is sexist in orientation. It portrays women as passive, weak and enticing edibles.

### **Example 7**

*...rube saakamiat keet nyoo kooreen*....)

(The bee follows a nectar- sweet flowering plant),

*(...subeentaab keechir*...) (Ewe),

*(...kurkoonkiit*...) (Cock)

*(...nkook nyee kaaswaach kaabsuuntuunyi*...) (Pullet) (line 254-255)

The working presuppositions of gender knowledge in this example are anchored on the shared beliefs of the Sabaot community. Gender ideologies are based on the epistemic criteria of this community which tells its members which beliefs of women are accepted as shared knowledge. This means that gender knowledge is systematically



presupposed in the discourses of the community because all speakers know that all the other members already have such knowledge when speaking. Contextually, these statements are mentioned by one old man as a prelude of the anticipated marriage negotiation.

During the interviews, it was noted that the bridegroom is seen in the images of ‘preying bees’ in search of the sweet nectar, ravaging rams or stubborn he-goats (...*meengit or...kwastaa...*) and crowing cocks (...*kurkoonkiit.....*) (Line 261). All these are power- based images of men. The bride on the other hand, is seen as a ewe (...*subeentaab keechir...*) (Line 254), ‘a pullet’ about to lay its eggs (...*nkook nyee kaaswaach kaabsuuntuunyi.....*) and sweet nectar for the busy bees (read men) (...*rube saakamiat keet nyoo kooreen.....*) (Line 255). By contrast, it was argued during the interviews that all these are weak images of women showing a weak power orientation.

The feminine images in the examples above (sweet nectar, ewes and pullets) transmit negative sexist knowledge about the gender relations. As sweet as nectar, women are hunted by men (the endearing rams or he-goats) for their sexual satisfaction. As pullets, the assumption is that women should submit to the protective claws and crows of ‘the polygamous cocks’ and lay ‘plenty eggs in rounds!’ The assumption is that women should accept the social outlook prevalent in these images yet the realities in such allusions undermine their social identity. These negative images are based on their sex and never on their abilities and talents. CDA guides us in interpreting such demeaning images by helping us to understand the conditions behind the specific social problem – the deep ideological roots of our gender issues (Palmquist 2003) because language is central in the creation of gender reality as opposed to merely reflecting it (Borch 2000).

We gathered that women are seen as making undue demands particularly on spheres restricted to men. In view of this, those women making such demands are condemned collectively as rebellious. This is reflected in example eight.

## Example 8

*...Inyooruu betusyeechu kuule meeche koruuk nkicheek mbareenik... kwiik kaantooyik aak koobur kokweetaab boyiik ...*

( ...Today you find a woman claiming a share of their ancestral land ..... vying for leadership positions and participating in the elders' meetings.....) (Line 7 - 8)

*"...leekwani... konyiite katiit meetiit aab kuunchuut aangeneebe.."*

(.....my child, the neck respects and bears the wisdom and weight of the head....) (Line 197 - 198)

It was gathered in the focus group discussions and interviews that women have no cultural backing to inherit land for reasons that they are aliens, foreigners and enemies among their own people. This belief is evident in the excerpt (*... meketuubche koorko, buunyoo koorko...*) (Line 28). The rebellious nature of women is echoed in the advice given to them: *"...leekwani... konyiite katiit meetiit aab kuunchuut aangeneebe"*. (.....my child, the neck respects and bears the wisdom of the head....) (Line 197 - 198). This work gathered that women are cautioned not to disagree with their husbands over domestic affairs. The image of the 'neck' stands for women who should bear the head naturally and dutifully without challenging its authority and power (*...meetiit aab kuunchuut...*). Those women, who dare challenge this authority, are collectively seen as being rebellious against the natural order as seen in the natural arrangement of the neck and the head. Thus, independent and open-minded women are seen as disloyal, disrespectful and ungrateful because they question the natural order of patriarchal arrangements in terms of the neck-head relationship.

The evidence in this example attests to how subordination of women takes place within a world of ideas, philosophies, attitudes and culture which rationalize gender inequality (Omondi 1989). CDA argues that power is not only a way of controlling the actions of women, but also their minds. The example above gives credence to how the minds of women can be controlled discursively. This way, CDA sees discourse as playing a fundamental role in the cycle of the reproduction of social power.



Another example bringing in the same argument is particularly when women claim ancestral land and other family properties or contest the leadership positions. The example that follows is a case in point.

### **Example 9**

*...Kaab cherungweny'*

(down trodden women) (Lines 278 - 279),

### **Example 10**

*...tosoos awutaab koorko'*

(women's strength is limited) (Lines 141 - 142),

### **Example 11**

*...Kuunkuyee kusekene kuunku koorko kuu sekemia'*

(Like worker bees, women should fetch and toil.....) (Line 147 - 148).

The phrase ...*'kaab cherungweny'* in example nine is a sexist label that shows women collectively as down trodden underdogs. The proverbs '*tosoos awutaab koorko'* (women's strength is limited) in example 10 and '*kuunkuyee kusekene kuunku koorko kuu sekemia'* (Like worker bees, women should fetch and toil for the family.....) in example 11 show women as weak domestic slaves. It was gathered in the focus group discussions that women should toil and fend for their children, husbands and the extended families (*kuunkuyee kuunku*).

CDA argues that the concept of ideology can be used to refer to the ways in which meaning serves to establish and sustain relations of power. We are able to link ideologies with discourse, and hence with the ways they are discursively reproduced in the example 11 above. Women are seen within the family cycles as domestic toilers. The phrase '*...koorko nyee kuunkuyoo kuu sekemia nyee sekene kuunku...*' (A woman toils like a worker bee.....) is derived from a proverb and it symbolically encourages women to be exploited. The adjective '*kuunkuyoo*' (toils) connotes 'enslavement' of women as seen

in the use of the worker bee symbol. The symbol particularly hints at a throne (family), where the king (husband) exploits the dutiful services of the enslaved worker bees (read wives). In this way, the ideological work of the symbol serves to prepare women for exploitation at the family and the societal levels. It is thus the way people understand or interpret their social environment that constitutes the context of their discourse, knowledge and social practices.

The sexist power based symbolic images in example 11 attests to CDA's argument that socially-structured power relations are reproduced and maintained actively in our everyday interactions through language. The ideological propositions and images created in these words designate women as members of the other inferior social group yet the identity as either female or male is one of the most central images of personal identity. What is most important about gender issues is that it affects the very foundation of human societies: the two major kinds of human beings – men and women. Ridiculing and insulting women as toilers and domestic slaves excludes them from the works of producing realistic forms of thought images and symbols (language generally) in which thought is expressed and fairly ordered. The problem with these perceptions is that our societies are patriarchal and do not recognize the involvement of women in determining the language structure and usage. Evidently, the Sabaot language like many other languages is perceived not to reflect and transmit experiences equally well for both men and women. In this way, the perception of women is a biased evaluation of men who hold most of the legitimate positions of authority, superiority and control in their struggle to maintain the status quo.

CDA advocates for removal of such linguistic forms and usages which are seen as contributing to inequality particularly when in acquiring language, every child in a speech community goes through a school that teaches it all the society expects it to know about women as opposed to men. Ideologies control social practices and discourse. This happens through the ideological control mental models (seeing women as cooks, nurses, enemies etc) which in turn control the meaning and functions of discourse, interactions and communications.



CDA holds that the use of language is a meaning-making process. Meaning is constructed and conveyed by the symbolic forms of various kinds (language for the present study) from everyday linguistic utterances to the complex images and symbols (Fairclough 2000). Ideologies are expressed in the meaning of words. The close links between the two treat ideology as meaning in service of power because ideologies establish and sustain relations of domination.

In view of the positive male labels and negative female labels discussed in the preceding example, patriarchy as a power structure is mainly enforced by our own acceptance of its character ideals. For example, the character ideals held up for men in our examples is to reach towards masculinity. This belief is shown in the example below:

### **Example 12**

...*cheebriib koor*.... (Protective)

‘...*cheebkokochiit chiitaab ng’aleek*....’ (Wise) (Lines 118 – 119 and 124)

A masculine (muscle) man is supposed to be tough (Protective) and good at abstract reasoning (Wise) as the above example indicates. In the interviews, it was gathered that men are expected to be hardworking, unfeeling except for anger and sexual desire and habitually taking the initiative. Masculinity only exists in contrast to femininity which is the model for women. Feminine characteristics include: cooperativeness, emotionality, passivity, nurturance and sexual appeal (Andersen 1995). These words are measures and means within and by which feminine characters are modeled. The feminine instinct to assume power is submerged early enough through a linguistic propaganda that teaches women to be contented with the feminine characters listed above.

It was gathered in the field that the question of empowering women is symbolic of making cocks out of egg-laying pullets. In this view, women are seen as the weak breed of human species less endowed intellectually. Their intellectual power is limited and wanting as symbolized by the small comb of the hen. This example is drawn below:

### Example 13

‘.....Uushoo Iturkuuchee subeento? Kyiiyienee yoo keetuurku? ..... Aamwook koonyo kuule kisiich ng’aamyanteetaab nkook nyee subeento....’

(Tradition forbids....when did the hen crow? If it does ..... what is the fate of its head.....? My clansmen... the comb of the hen is smaller.....) (Line 11 - 14)

Ideally, the cock has a bigger comb than the hen. It was gathered in the interviews that the cock’s comb is seen as a symbol of a sovereign patriarchal authority while the hen’s smaller one is symbolic of their intellectual inferiority. Similarly, whereas the intellectual power wrestling between men and women is expressed in the symbolic crowing cocks and egg-laying pullets as power paradigms in example 13, their physical strength is worth pointing out in the example below:

### Example 14

...ntoo subaak kiinkeet biikaab keeny ntarastiit yuu kiiriichee koorko meliilto aankuriichee muureen ng’etuunyto....’

(... The wise old men knew their traditions well by evoking the powers of a leopard for women and a lion for men.....) (Lines 13 - 14).

Contextually, the above example is a subtle discriminatory discourse that maps out bias discursive structures. Women’s physical strength takes the symbol of the weak but agile animal- *meliilto* (leopard) while the physical strength of men takes the symbol of the all conquering king of the jungle ‘*ng’etuunyto*’... (The lion.) It was established through focus group interviews that the leopard and the lion are two animals referred to during after-initiation oath making ceremonies identified as ‘*riicheetaabkeei*’ (Oathing). The allusion of this ceremony shows how symbolic languages reflect men as powerful lions and kings of their ‘jungle homes’ while women are painted as domestic kittens in their kitchens. The two symbols (leopard for domestic cat and the lion for the king of the jungle) are evidence of how the symbolic ideologies relate to the construction of discriminative gender images and issues of power.

CDA portends that speech modes in examples 12-14, relate to behaviour, knowledge and power. The ideological positioning of women in this example sustains



and produces low opinion and domination of women. As the model holds, socially structured power relations are reproduced and actively maintained in our everyday interactions through the language we use. It argues that discourse constitutes society and culture. Every instance of language use makes its own small contribution to reproducing society and the power dichotomy (Fairclough 2000). Reichenbach (2001) further argues that socio-political backgrounds, historical setting, cultural setting are important parameters of any text production and interpretation. Thus, by evoking the symbols above in relation to power issues, language becomes fundamental to dealing with societal issues particularly in understanding and handling women and power and other gender relationships.

In view of more symbolic languages and issues of power; ingenuity, power and patience are male prerogatives. This declaration is found in the example below:

#### **Example 15.**

‘...*Cheebkokochiit chiitaab ng’aaleek...*’

(Ingenuity is a preserve of the tortoise) (Line 124 - 125).

On the other hand, it was argued in the focus group interviews that women are cunning domestic rabbits at worst symbolizing deceit and treachery (‘.....*kuuyu kuuburang’ koorko...*’ (...because women are cunning ....) (Line 124). Other than being patient and wise as symbolized by the tortoise, men are also seen as single heads of their families seen in the symbol of the roof-peaks (...*kipkankauut...*) (Lines 125 - 126) which is cut in the event of the husband’s death leaving behind the widow (...*musukuut.....*) symbolizing dead stumps.

These symbols (Hare/domestic rabbit, tortoise, roof-peaks and dead stumps for widows) are examples that show how symbolic language allocate power and build people’s social identities. The folklore symbolic characteristics and ideologies of the hare and the tortoise constitute shared ideas and beliefs about the nature of gender reality, attitudes and moral judgments. In view of these symbolic characteristics and ideologies, the symbols above point at semantic properties of how certain words have a high

propaganda function in constructing the ideal images and ideas about men while constructing false discriminatory ideas of women.

CDA argues that there is a nested connection between language, knowledge and power. Hence, the ideologies in the symbolic languages in example 14 and 15 create negative meanings of the feminine characters (deceitful, cunning and treacherous). The problem with such symbolic representations is that it creates a domineering patriarchal order over the female counterparts. Such discriminatory symbols have a compound appeal to both feminine thoughts and feelings. Research on formal education demonstrates that sexual differentiation and ideology negatively determine the direction of girls' education and their career choices while boys' educational aspirations are enhanced positively (Omondi 1989).

Within the compound environment '*...mataab kiyeeng.....*' (Fire lit outside the house) is symbolically a cultural parliamentary court where boys are taught the history, philosophy, religion and patriarchal ideologies to dominate womenfolk. It was confirmed in the focus group discussions that the 'open fire' lit outside; culturally symbolized the world burning with knowledge and it also symbolized the unchallenged burning power of men in this society. It is thus mandatory that boys should gather around it to learn while their sisters remained indoors with their mothers. This is demonstrated in example 16:

### **Example 16**

*'...mataab kiyeeng.....'*

(Fire place lit outside the house,

*'...kikirwookyine monoo mataab kiyeng....kikirwookyine mosukoy aak mboo cheebkamaat...'*

(You were never instructed outside the open fire but within the kitchen fire with your sisters....)

From the open fireplace, boys recited the heroic exploits of powerful community leaders and other patriarchal scripts. Those boys not participating actively were told contemptuously; '*....kikirwookyine monoo mataab kiyeng....kikirwookyine mosukoy aak*



*mboo cheebkamaat...*' (You were never instructed outside the open fire but within the kitchen fire with your sisters....). Such boys are despised and grouped together with women. This example treats men as a separate entity whose roles run as makers of history, philosophers and religious saints. These roles are taken seriously and any boy seen to falter is described in the light of the weaker sex referred to as (...*kikirwookyine mosukoy aak mboo cheebkamaat...*) having been instructed within the kitchen fire with your sisters

CDA postulates that in any discourse, knowledge, social relations and power identities are simultaneously constituted or reconstituted (Fairclough 1992, Halliday 1978). The symbolic languages (Kitchen fire and open fire lit outside) have different symbolic meaning for the two sexes. The fire inside the kitchen belongs to women who cook for men. The fire outside is symbolic of an ideological forum where men discuss and exchange ideas. Through CDA, the arrangement above makes us aware of how language shapes or constructs men and women as particular sorts of social subjects which affects their social power and gender identities. The symbolic languages in this case function like euphemisms which create meanings by disguising truth. The power in these symbolic languages camouflage the truth by keeping women at bay and encouraging them to servitude (kitchen) and inferior positions (to pursue kitchen syllabus). They are denied access to the cultural parliamentary courts or open fora (outside fire) where men are prepared to pursue greater issues in life: Politics, history, philosophy and ideologies. Our observation is in support of Mbilinyi and Omari's (1996) observation that feminine images are linked and associated with kitchen and house hold chores while the public life is for men as women remain indoors cooking.

CDA argues that such words above crystallize human behaviour and that knowing what to say and why, people must choose words and symbols with an awareness of their peculiar significance and frames it formulates in our minds. Thus, a semantic awareness of the uses and modes of language should help men against the naive use of words which discriminate women. By studying the ideological works of the symbolic languages above, meaning of words may serve to maintain and produce relations of domination particularly

when ideology is conceptualized as a cluster of values, beliefs and meaning in service of power (Thompson 2002).

In the focus group discussions, it was noted that angry men swear words in defense of their manhood and in readiness to strike. Ironically, these statements are contextually uttered to rebuke the very women on whose laps men are nurtured into power and prosperity. The overall strength of any man is nursed on his mother's laps which are seen as bases on which men must take off to assume and exercise power with pride and face the challenges around them. The example below is a case in point:

### **Example 17**

*'...Kiirantee mboo kamaat kubeesoy.....'*

(.....growing on women laps)

*...Irinee mureen arenyo....*

(Men prosper) (Line 102)

Although the motherly role of nursing her baby on her laps is true, women are treated and reduced to the low status of nursing the young ones. The semantic portrayal of the term 'baby-nurses' in this example, produces the appellation 'hussy' meaning 'worthless women'. Baby nurses and women are one and the same: they are subject to deprivation and patriarchal oppression. The term baby-nurse isolates them from being incorporated into the image and ideology of the wider society because they are seen as family slaves. Such social trivialization of the baby-work (and of women) is partly responsible for the underestimation of women. Discriminative words used against women have a negative compound appeal to their thoughts and feelings.

CDA states that the words used should be a measure of control in as far as ideas and ideals about women are concerned. This is because mechanisms of power and subjection of women are not in conscious control. In support of the class-theoretical thesis, CDA suggests that the social relations (gender relations) which emerge in a society are a reflection of the socio-economic relations which also reflect the interests



and ideas of the dominant class whose views are perpetuated through discriminative language. The example that follows plays this assertion where newborn babies are seen differently.

### Example 18

'...saang....' (Outside),

'..Koo....' (Inside),

'...kibnoong 'iin....' (Defensive) (Line 227- 228)

It was argued in the focus group discussions that boys keep the family mantle burning '..Koo....' (Inside), while girls betray the family by deserting it. Owing to this understanding, women are seen as belonging to the outside world '...saang....' (Outside) where suitors carry them home as shown in the passive verb '*kimiit*' meaning 'to be carried off '. Boys are home grown and bound and remain within the homestead. Meaning of such words lie not in the text but in the social relations in which these words are embedded. Women are seen as outsiders within and boys are seen as permanent members of the family.

CDA model illuminates ways in which the dominant patriarchal forces in a society construct versions of false reality (negative feminine images) that favours the patriarchal interests. Derogation of women is so rife in the above ideological manipulation of words thus leading to intended positive self representation of men (insiders) and negative other representation of women (outsiders). By unmasking these images, CDA aims at supporting the victims of discrimination and oppression by encouraging them to resist subjection and endeavour for ultimate emancipation (Van Dijk 2004). Thus, example 18 confirms that CDA sees social power as not only a way of controlling the acts of other people, but also their minds. Mind control is again at the basis of action control and is largely discursive. In other words, discourse plays a fundamental role in the cycle of the reproduction power.

Contextually, one old man salutes the gathering: '*...Asubooyook kokweet koonkooy Boyiikaab kook aak chebyoosookaab meesikeei.....*' (...I salute and thank the council of

elders gathered here together with women of the kitchen....) (Line 168 - 169) as indicated in the example 19 below:

### Example 19

*...Asubooyook kokweet koonkooy Boyiikaab kook aak chebyoosookaab meesikeei.....'*

(...I salute and thank the council of elders gathered here together with women of the kitchen....) (Line 168 - 169).

It was also gathered that the antonym for '*chebyoosook*' (womenfolk) is '*boyiik*' (Respected elders) (Lines 168 - 169) whose antecedent word is '*kook*' (meaning meeting or gathering) becoming '*boyiik aab kook*' (the council of elders gathered). The phrase thus identifies men as jurists and arbitrators. On the other hand, the antecedent noun '*meesikeei*' (fireplace/kitchen) for women, determines women's work within the domestic circles. The antecedent word '*kook*' for men exalts masculine positions as traditional lawmakers, arbitrators and judges. It was gathered in the interviews that women do not constitute '*kookweet aab chebyoosok*' (council of female elders) or qualify as '*chebyoosook aab kook*' (female jurists) because such institutions do not exist for them.

CDA gives insights to how language use and discursive practices give rise to crucial issues of power relations. The antecedent words in the preceding discussions '*meesikeei*' and '*kook*' are linguistic categories which have ideological effects. Men are positioned as paralegal experts and arbitrators while women are seen as domestic servants. Such linguistic categories have false assumptions about how aspects of social life (male-female relationship) are passed. In view of this, CDA focuses on how power is discursively produced, enacted and legitimated in our societies. CDA argues that examples discussed above enact, express, condone or contribute to the reproduction of gender inequality. It is because the discriminative images used against women in the examples above transform women into people intrinsically different and making their



self-evaluation unreal. It does trivialize the domestic roles of women as seen in the words of Pesa (2000) who wrote:

When women stroke and sooth men, listen to them and accommodate their needs, men of every class return to the work place with renewed energies. When women arrange men's social lives and relationships, men of every class are spared investing the time and energy required to meet the social needs. When women run the households and keep family concerns in check, men of every class are freer than women to pursue other activities, including work outside the home. (Pesa 2000: 98)

The female dedication to serve and care for men and children should not be misconstrued as a natural role. Women should be integrated into a changed situation where people are seen as grappling with equality and sharing of responsibilities and benefits of their work. People steer their destinies through the words they speak and refer to others. Indeed, the great power of words comes from the living force of the words which crystallize human behaviour (Thompson 2002). In view of this renewed and envisaged relationship, women must define their own images and seize the opportunity to liberate themselves by revising their linguistic images that disparage them. People should see beyond what meets the ordinary eyes. They must attempt to create a sensitivity and consciousness about the latent invisible fabrications, misinformation, misdirection and misinterpretations exercised by some speakers and writers.

#### **4.2.2 Marriage and Sex**

The crucial concept of ideology as manifested in the example below is defined in terms of the fundamental cognitive beliefs that are at the basis of the social representations shared by the members of a group in reference to marriage and sex.

##### **Example 20**

..... *Oonyin oonyi* ...

(I give as I take.....) (Line 38 - 39).

Contextually this example above is drawn from a riddle that expresses the status of women in the society as reported in the focus group interviews. It treats women as swallow birds, domestic frogs and exchange commodities in the marital language. Thus, people may have ideologically sexist beliefs which are the basis of sexist prejudices. The prejudices are shared by the members in their group and which condition their discourse

and other social practices. The allusion of the riddle in example 20 above whose answer is ‘the swallow bird’ (*kuubisweet*) shows how the Sabaot language attributes sexist notions to feminine characters. It was established in the focus group interviews that the riddle sees men as exchanging their sisters in marriage. As one man marries, his sister is married by another man making women look like exchange commodities. The notion of exchange commodity implied in this riddle follows in the old traditions of barter trade where women were seen as stocks to be traded. The rhythm in the riddle ‘*oonyiin oonyi*’ (I give as I take) underscores the absurd truth about the insubordinate position of women in this community. The absurdity lies on the ‘commodity status of women’ the riddle connotes. A swallow bird (*kuubisweet*) is a seasonal, agile but opportunistic bird. It sails leisurely in the air when it is drizzling. It was claimed in the focus group interviews that like these birds, women share the characteristics of the swallow birds: swift exchange commodities sailing leisurely in the company of their male lovers. Like whirlwind sway swallow birds, male lovers similarly ‘sway’ women in marriage as seen in the riddle (*Oonyiin oonyin*).

CDA states that accusations, discriminations and derogation of women may be made more effective if they are not made open but in a lighter and milder manner using euphemistic, ironical and sarcastic statements (Van Dijk 2004). The riddle in example 20 proves this assertion. Women are seen as products in the marriage market where dowry is valued against a good ‘product of a woman’. During one of the field observation tours, it was seen how women are put on a moral scale: ‘*Kuuyu raat yoo kaambakaneet chebung’uung’ koone weeritaab ng’oo?*’ (If your daughter is immoral, she is less priced).

### **Example 21**

‘.....aankumwooyee nee mooroocheet wee koonyo?’ (...and what does the bull-frog say?) (Line 38 - 39).

Contextually, the riddle in example 21 was made scornfully in reference to one woman who aspired for power to lead and own her deceased father’s piece of land. Women are scorned and belittled as bull-frogs. It was shown in the interviews that the interrogative tone in the riddle is deliberately sarcastic: (.....*aankumwooyee nee mooroocheet wee koonyo?*) (...and what does the bull-frog say?). It was argued in the



focus group interviews that the answer to this riddle is the onomatopoeic '*ng'o ng'o ng'o*' which refers to the noises made by a family of frogs. The semantic implications of the noises as reflected in the riddle connote how unmarried women are noisy and a nuisance to the family. The disturbance finds expression in the unpleasant onomatopoeic frog sound (*ng'o ng'o ng'o*) which sarcastically again connotes how daughters attract men in their parental homes by drawing their attention as possible husbands. Interestingly, we learnt that by throwing a stone at the noisy frogs, they would all go silent. Semantically speaking, we established that men (suitors) assume the symbolic role of the stone that silences them on impact. Thus, we discovered that when all daughters get married in a family, parents feel relieved of the "burden" daughters cause them. We gathered that the parents instruct their in-laws that their daughter's head belongs to them but the lower part of the body belongs to the marrying clan. The family thus achieves 'silence' by marrying off their daughters and married daughters have no rights to come back home and claim any piece of land.

The assumption in the riddle is that daughters are a "nuisance" in a family. The only solution is for them to get married. By getting married (seen as good riddance), the 'noise' would be no more in their families. This example shows that sexism does not consist of a set of language items alone, but rather a set of attitudes and ways of codifying the world which informs language practices as seen in this example. CDA uncovers the implicit ideologies in such words by unveiling prejudices and the exercise of patriarchal power in this riddle.

Contextually, the statement in example 22 below was said by the host as a greeting complement to his visitor. It meant to inquire about the health status of a woman who gave birth recently:

### **Example 22**

....*koorkeetaab ng'ook*.... (Bitch) (Line 69 - 70)

Newborn babies are regarded as 'puppies'. Semantically, the noun '*koorkeet*' (bitch) also applies to the female dog '*koorkeetaab ng'ook*' as was reported in the focus group discussions. The noun '*ng'ook*' refers to a bitch. It was gathered in the focus group

interviews that women share sexual and anatomical characteristics with the bitches and it is usual to assume that they are one and the same.

It is thus evident that the extent to which linguistic biases are built in the language is shown by the way the expression '*koorkeetaab ng'ook*' is shared with dogs. The bitch image at worst produces the appellation 'doggish women'. In English language also, the noun 'bitch' is marked and not the noun 'dog'. The appellation and the connotative sense of the bitch image reflect the patriarchal perception of the feminine characters. The fact that women are seen as doggish (bitches) is a misrepresentation which serves to put women low in the social ladder. Because of such negative perceptions, women are made subjects of deprivations and oppression in relation to their welfare in our societies. By highlighting these discriminative images, CDA makes clear the use of language and the exercise of power, marriage and sex (Thompson 2002) because our words are never neutral. Words are politicized and carry the power that reflects the interests of those who speak (Fiske 1994).

Contextually, the statement in example 23 below is a metaphorical and euphemistic reference to the miscarriage of one of the participants's daughter during the gathering:

### **Example 23**

...*kooyya seet laakwaataab weertaab araab kirui*  
(Kirui's wife broke her gourd) (73 - 74)

Like the English equivalent, 'miscarriage' portends, pregnant women take the image of a carrier (*siitee*). It was established in the focus group interviews and observation field notes that a gourd is a traditional container for keeping milk sour (*seteet/seet*). Sex and pregnancy is pictured as milk fermenting in the gourd (the newborn baby for the consumption of the family and the clan).

In the post feminism sense, the example above is a token which is indicative of a possible interpretation of the interviews conducted and which is referred to. However, the assumed shared knowledge of this metaphor '*kooyya seet*' (broken gourd) is what counts. Whilst it is clear that each word has limits to its range of meanings, the way those limits are established is contextual. The limits are also within large – scale changes in the general society itself and how they perceive issues. These issues are negotiated by individual speakers in the terms set out within a text and conversation environment.



CDA portends that image as those in example 23, mediate knowledge and value systems which determine the status of women. For one, it shows pregnant women as carriers and fragile tools (gourd), a pejorative reflection which creates and maintains discriminatory and sexist myths. The proposition in the image is biased: Milk is poured into the gourd to turn sour. This way, men's virility is exalted and seen as sweet milk in the women's wombs (gourds) thus confirming the appellation. CDA maintains that any text is a tip of the ideological iceberg (Van Dijk 2004) and people tend to consider texts as true reflections of realities and facts seeing only what meet their eyes. The sexist orientation above supports Brooks (1997) assertion that linguistic forms considered in isolation have no specifically determinate meanings as such, nor do they possess any ideological significance or function. Statements that constitute discourse like the ones above are themselves expressive of and organized by a specific ideology which views women negatively.

In the same vein, words referring to women and their characteristics - both biological and attitudinal, have negative sexual connotation. Contextually, the statement in example 24 is uttered in reference to a woman who miscarried.

#### **Example 24**

(...*keeyiin mwenuut*...)

(Broken wooden hoe-handle) (Lines 77 - 78).

Whereas on one hand, 'Seet' (Milk gourd) image discussed in example 23 makes women's wombs seem fragile containers (...*kooya seet*...), a woman's womb (pregnancy) is seen as delicate and loaded too. The communal intuitions of these symbols connote a frivolous way in which pregnancy is associated. Wombs are seen as delicate containers carrying 'seeds' of life.

Between the wooden handle and the hoe itself, the intuition is that a broken hoe-handle is replaceable (pregnancy) but not the hoe itself (mother's death). Although the idea in the symbols is true, they are derogatory by connotation. Seeing the reproductive roles of women in such 'reproductive images' postulates the idea that women are

reproductive tools. Like hoes used for digging, women are confined to reproductive roles. In the context of its use, this statement is made in reference to women who miscarry but survive death. They are seen as worthy because there is a second chance. It was gathered that pregnant mothers take the image of the hoe-handles which symbolize pregnancy. These handles are readily available and easily replaceable (Read: women have plenty of opportunities to get pregnant again). The hoe is symbolic of the pregnant mother who is not replaceable and should not break (die) during pregnancy. Although such images (handle and the hoe) look relevant, it sees women as worthy only in terms of procreation, seen in the light of 'digging and watering the procreation fields'. In their 'digging services' (births), women have to survive for the next round of digging (pregnancy) than to die during pregnancy. This example shows then that in discourse, there is a range of discursive frameworks which are themselves gendered and which have codified information which work largely in the interest of males.

Ideally, the belief in this metaphorical representation serves in this particular circumstance to establish and sustain relations of sexual dominance of women. The symbols show ways in which meaning is constructed as misdirected systems of the patriarchal dominant thoughts. The ideological loading and the relations of sexual power underlying these sexist symbolic images might seem unclear to Sabaot speakers, but through CDA, such images are seen as bias representation of womanhood. This is because ideologies are viewed theoretically as 'social cement', binding the community members together. In view of this observation, CDA argues that such representations are defined in terms of the fundamental cognitive beliefs which are the basis of the social representation shared by members of a group (patriarchy).

People are linguistically-directed. Through language, individuals internalize systems of beliefs, values and the entire social order. Thus the sexist symbolic images of women have far reaching effects on their self images and confidence. For this reason, linguistic disparagement and denigration of women must be brought to a conscious level. CDA is engaged and committed to this end. The ideological positions of women in such images describe systems of patriarchal thoughts or beliefs which incidentally direct social



actions particularly on gender relations resulting to discrimination of women. The images value masculinity more than femininity. As a power structure, patriarchy gains and directs sexual power. Women play a submissive victim's role of siring while men act out a domineering and oppressive role; supplying 'hoe-handles' every time they break. By accepting masculinity as an ideal for themselves, men buy into a system which keeps women down and invisible (Andersen 1995).

In making these statements, the speaker expresses ideological content and so does the linguistic form of the text. Speakers draw from previously learned discourse thus making discourse a historical phenomenon. In this respect, these examples bring in the socio-cultural knowledge of the speakers because such texts are selected and organized syntactic forms whose content structure reflects the ideological organization of a particular area of social life (gender relationships).

CDA focuses on how such biased social relations, discriminative feminine identities, patriarchal knowledge and power above, are constructed through spoken words in this community. This way above, patriarchy saturates society with their preferred ideological agenda because they control the institutions (including language) which dispense female discrimination.

The context in which the statement in example 25 below is used is to caution men to be wary of women portrayed as deadly killers in the proverb. The thighs of women turn to be enticing graveyards on which men have fallen and perished:

### **Example 25**

.....*Ongeet kulee meunee mureen kubeesokaab kooriin'*

(....men die on the thighs/laps of women.....) (Line 93 - 94)

The statement is in reference to the prevalence of immorality among women prostitutes. It emerged in the field observation notes that women prostitutes are seen in the image of hens lying down ready for mating even before the cocks advance (...*kooriin chee keesirtooy ngweny ku subeentaab ngook*).

CDA contends that one mode of entry for sexual stereotypes is through labeling women. To assume that all women are prostitutes as this example above postulates deletes the female segment of morality. It also reinforces the assumption that men are morally pure. In the words of Van Dijk (2004), ‘ideologies define the identity or self image of a group such as their actions’ as the proverb in example 25 suggests of women.

In the same vein, during field observation notes, it was gathered that female prostitutes are referred differently as example 26 indicates:

### **Example 26**

*...cheemureniis, cheemartooiisyek, kotoonko and cheebkandaasyek’*

(All different names for female prostitutes )

It was noted during focus group discussions that ‘*Cheemureniis*’ refers to female prostitutes while their male counterparts are called ‘*Cheemartooiisyek*’. The adjective ‘*Cheemartooiisyek*’ means ‘men at the sexual service of women’. It was also observed that the adjective ‘*cheemartooiisyek*’ has a positive connotation of ‘serving duty’ while those ‘served’ (women) are labelled ...*kotoonko, cheemureniis and cheebkandaasyek*, (all synonyms for female prostitutes). Syntactically, the prefix ‘*che*’ stands for ‘that of’ and the root noun ‘*mureniis*’ is plural for ‘mureen’ (man). Therefore, the adjective ‘*cheemureniis*’ literally translates to ‘one at the sexual service of men’ but who are branded prostitutes while their male counterparts are exempted from the negative labels.

Thus, the representation of reality in these words shows how patriarchy articulates their preferred systems of thought and ideas. Thompson (2002) argues that ideology may be as necessary to subordinate group with their struggle against the social order as it is to the dominant groups in the defense of the status quo. It is important to note that a characteristic shared by minority groups is their lack of power to define themselves. Often, the names and labels whether derogatory or not, by which they are known have been imposed on them. Imposed labels are frequently used by the majority or dominant groups for convenience and may be alienating for the group it describes (Henry and Tator 2002).



Women are also seen as sexual pets that are hunted for sexual convenience. Contextually, the example below is a sarcastic and contemptuous reference revealing the absurdity of womanhood in the Sabaot community as used in the excerpts:

**Example 27**

*...tibiin chee isokosee mureen.....)*

(Daughters who are hunted by men) (Line106 - 107)

In this example 27, men are portrayed as skilful hunters who prey against the weaker and vulnerable pets (women) by hunting and exploiting them sexually. It was gathered that this statement is symbolic of the sexual exploitation of women. Women are despised and seen in the image of hunted pets. Ironically, the same women are considered as socially lame and morally crippled after the very hunters (men) exploit them sexually. They are less priced and carry the tags of wanton prostitutes as discussed in the preceding example.

CDA argues that language users adapt what they say or write to what they believe or know the recipients know already. Thus, women are supposedly a hunted lot to be exploited sexually. Ideologies in example 27 control social representations of gender relationship, social practices and discourses of their members. This happens through the ideological control of mental models expressed in the metaphorical representation of women. Such sexist representations control the meaning and the functions of discourses, interaction and communication in the Sabaot community.

There is an intense level of sexism in example 28. This example combines five sexist images of women by constructing women within discriminatory pictures.

**Example 28**

*‘ Koot nyoo yataat kuunyenguung ntoo nyoo karaat kubobiich)*

(An open house is yours while a closed one is not yours) (Line 163 – 164)

'...*kawoo koot*.....' (..entered the house),

'saang' (outside),

'*kyooke koorko kiirekto aak kumuuryo*'

(Women are herded by sticks and on bed) (Line 116)

'*keesyebtooy ng'weny koorko kiitinkene*' )

(Women are laid on under a man's weight) (Lines 135 - 136).

Although the full proverb '*koot nyoo yataat kuunyenguung ntoo nyoo karaat kubobiich*' (An open house is yours while a closed one is not yours) is instructive and cautionary to men, it views unmarried women as accessible sexual pets and an open empty house which allows all entries of men to occupy and own the house. On the other hand married women are viewed as enclosed houses '*koot nyo karaat*' and therefore inaccessible. It was noted that boys are encouraged under oath to hunt for their sexual pets (women) but they are instructed to 'hunt' for particular pets – the unmarried girls who are seen as 'open and empty' accessible houses' '*koot nyoo yataat*'. The English language also sees them as 'missing' the husband. They are cautioned never to hunt in an enclosed house '*koot nyoo karaat*' which is symbolic of the married women.

In the Sabaot language, those women getting married are described as '*kawoo koot*' which literally translates as 'getting inside the house'. Through the focus group interviews, it was learnt that unmarried girls are considered as being outside (*saang*) and men must wrestle to keep them in the 'houses' (marry). However, not all women are proper marriage candidates to be kept 'safe' in the houses. Those lucky to marry must have been well 'herded' by their parents. The verb 'herded' gives the unmarried girls the 'rebellious animal image' because they are seen as a wild breed of human beings who should be herded as seen in '*kyooke koorko kiirekto aak kumurio*...' (Women are herded by sticks and on bed) (Line 116). The noun '*Kumuuryo*' is euphemistic for the male sexual organ which is itself seen as a formidable tool for taming women. It implies that women should be satisfied sexually if they have to be managed by men who are considered the single most heads of their families as symbolized in the use of the word



'...kipkaankauut....' (Roof-peaks) (Line 124). The implication is that women are under men the way they are under them sexually (...keesyebtooy ng'weny koorko kiitinkene.....) (Lines 135 - 136). The sexual allusion in the equation of power makes women sexual pets with no authority. They are reduced to the image of beasts of burden condemned to bear all forms of burdens including the sexual weights of men (...kiitiinkeene.....).

The images show how women are socially constructed and treated on the basis of such false assumptions in the images above. It shows how sexual power is realized in the ways people attempt to lexicalize domains of meaning based on the discriminative ideological orientations and perceptions in gender relations and identity. CDA helps speakers to understand that gender inequalities is a social problem which is mediated by mainstream ideology and power relationships all perpetuated by the use of either written or oral texts in daily lives (McGregor 2003). In the words of Omondi (2000), beliefs come as part of language grammar or syntax, vocabulary or lexicon, semantics and the ready-made expressions in proverbs and sayings. Evidently, these sexist images of women enact an underdog female position leading to their oppression. The presupposed group-knowledge emanating from such images function as social cement because the words and language we use shape and constrain feminine identities, relationships and systems of knowledge and beliefs espoused by our language (Fairclough 2000). The feminine social identities arising from the images above give rise to different evaluations of women. The ideological works in these images can never be divorced from the structured social relations because it produces discriminatory forms of thoughts which unfortunately express and order the gender relationship.

In marriage, women are treated as domestic cooks '*cheebay moo*'. They are entitled to smaller units '*koong'uu*' (cottages). The husband is in charge of the entire homestead '*kanyuu*'. Example 29 below brings these arguments:

### **Example 29**

....*cheebay moo*....) (Servants and cooks) (Line 250),

(....*koong'uu*..... (My house) (Line 265),

(...*kaataachaak aam kanyuu*...)

(I receive you warmly in my homestead) (Line 58),

'*kyeenkuut*' (Open and wide compound) (Line 237)

(...*kaabcheeru ng 'weeny aak kaamat keesirtooi*...)

(Sexual pets) (Line 278 - 279).

Women are in charge of the children and domestic chores (...*koong 'uu*...) (Line 265). They are treated as sexual pets with their daughters (...*kaabcheeru ng 'weeny aak kaamat keesirtooi*...) (Line 278 - 279). Their husbands are in charge of the entire homestead (...*kaataachaak aam kanyuu*...) (Line 58) or '*kyeenkuut*' (Line 237) which traditionally comprises of several houses if need be.

It was observed that the words '*kanyuu*' (My homestead and *kong 'uu* (My house) are gender specific and restrictive. Women use the possessive noun *kong 'uu* (My house) while men use the possessive nouns *kanyuu* and *kyeenkunyuu* meaning their homesteads. It was noted in the discussions held that it is demeaning of a man to use the noun *kong 'uu*. Similarly, it is omenious of a woman to use the two nouns '*kanyuu* and *kyeenkunyuu*. It would be revolutionary for them to use the words because it challenges the gendered power structure. *Kong 'uu* (My house) is a subset of '*kanyuu* and *kyeenkunyuu*' which are larger sets strictly administered by men.

The sexist images surveyed in this example largely attest to the objectives and theoretical foundations of this work. These words construct negative feminine images and have far-reaching semantic implications on the perception of women. Ideally, such negative images have working ideologies which form a cluster of values and attitudes that establish and sustain relations of domination against women. Words of those in power are taken as self-evident truths making ideas about women become intuitive and taken for granted by both sexes thus enduring despite reason and logic (Omondi 2000). The negative feminine images discussed above thus serve as linguistic elements which reflect gender prejudices thus bringing about gender disparities.



It was noted in the observation field notes and interviews that marriage is seen as ‘taking away’ a woman as shown by the use of the passive verbs ‘*kiiberaaning*’ or ‘*kimitiing*’ as shown in examples 30. The two examples literally translate to: ‘to be taken away’. Having been ‘taken away’, women become ‘...*kaab cheewuuyo*...’ (Migrants) and ‘...*boo araan koorko*...’ (Enrooted women) in example 31. Their status deny them claim of any form of property in either homes (parental and marital) and they should basically content with ‘filling their marital clans’ ‘...*cheebtaab areet akee ntoo mutaay koonyiit areet aake*...’ as seen in example 32. It is interesting to note that the use of the qualitative verb ‘*koonyiit*’ means to ‘fill to the brim’. Thus, women are encouraged to sire many children like the proverbial wild animal known for producing many offsprings (...*weyii ku tyoony kibyookoso*....) (Line 381 - 382) in example 33.

**Example 30**

...*Kiikiiberaaning*’ or ‘*kiikimitiing*’,  
 (to be taken away)

**Example 31**

...*kaab cheewuuyo*...’ (Migrants),  
 ‘...*boo araan koorko*... (Women are enrouted),

**Example 32**

...*cheebtaab areet akee ntoo mutaaykoonyiit areet aake*....  
 (A foreign daughter filling another clan)

**Example 33**

...*weyii ku tyoony kibyookoso*....)  
 (Proverbial wild animal known for her many offsprings (Line 381 - 382).

It was again noted in the interviews that women giggle and laugh around complementing their laughter ironically by the very discriminatory statement: ‘...*cheebtaab areet aake ntoo mutaay koonyiit areet ake*...’ (... a woman from a

different clan tomorrow fills another clan....) making them victims of their own appellations in example 32 above.

CDA posits that the relations of participants in producing texts are never always equal. There will be a range of complete solidarity for the dominant patriarchal group to complete inequality of women. As the statements in examples 29 -32 above indicate, meanings of the linguistic features come about as a result of social processes which are never arbitrary. This is because feminine images attest to how language represents the ideological reality by enacting discriminatory gender relationships and establishing subordinate female identities: (giggly, gullible, unstable, migrants, marital stocks and reproductive pets).

CDA treats such sexist images as ideological products which serve to establish and sustain relations of domination and exploitation against women. These statements show how gender relationships can be fields of contestation in which gender struggles take informative place through words (Berquist and Szecepauska 2002). What is more, the problem lies on how women accept the subordinate positions created by language appellations (i.e. as shown by the laughter complement above). Acceptance results to the surrender of power to the interpellator (patriarchal order) because there is no ideological domination without acceptance. This shows how women are unaware of the ideological work in the laughter complement cited earlier (...*cheebtaab areet aake ntoo mutai koonyiit areet ake....*' (.....a woman from a different clan tomorrow fills another clan.....) (Line 284 - 285). The laughter complement appears to confirm how, like the proverbial wild reproductive animal (*kibyookoso*), married women should fill their matrimonial clans. This discussion confirms that power relations and gender identities are created and naturalized by the manipulative style of language (Hornby 2004).

#### **4.3 Sexist Character labels and Images of Women**

This section is subdivided into two sub-themes namely, Seeing Women as enemies within and Women as big children. It points out that language perpetuates patriarchal thought forms by reiterating stereotypical and discriminatory character labels of women.



The section unveils a range of sexist character images of women in the Sabaot language. Although the word ‘character’ is a dynamic literary concept, it is compelling to note that riddles, proverbs, words and phrases used in the Sabaoat language point at an inherently discriminative and sexist feminine perceptions by constituting a representative feminine identity. Women are subjected to character stereotypes like such examples as the ‘sexy but evil dragon lady,’ the ‘passive-demure type’ and the ‘exotic-erotic’ type by the dominant patriarchal group. However, such stereotypes do not describe accurately the conditions of particular women. What is more, these character stereotypes and others as shall be seen later, dehumanize women and turn them into objects to be manipulated (Andersen 1995). Women are thus treated in accordance with the messages inherent in the very character labels making them see themselves in the light of these labels and sometimes acting according to the very false labels.

In the focus group discussions, it was observed that although the word ‘*cheebyoosook*’ (womenfolk) is courteous, it is a veiled and deceitful dictum which should be seen against other forms of the antecedent words used with it. For example, it was noted that the antecedent noun ‘*meesikeei*’ (kitchen/fireplace) becomes ‘*cheebyoosook aab meesikeei*’ (women of the kitchen) which locates and trivializes the identities of women as domestic or kitchen servants.

#### **4.3.1 Women: The Enemies Within**

The prefix ‘*mo-*’ in the the word ‘.....*mokeetubchee koorko... mokiyooyee lukeet kumiite koorko...*’ in example 34 below, is a negative form which makes women distinct, treacherous and disloyal characters. In the focus group discussions, it was noted that owing to the purported deceitful feminine nature, the proverb cautions men to isolate and keep women at bay in all matters relating to top communal and family issues:

#### **Example 34**

.....*mokeetubchee koorko... mokiyooyee lukeet kumiite koorko....*’

(‘....women are never our clansmen..... and we can never plan and execute matters of top secrecy with women around..... (Line 23 - 25)

'...*Buunyoo koorko*....' (Women are enemies) (Line 24 and 28).

The operational semantic knowledge in this proverb denies women the valued sense of family identity and belonging. It disowns and treats women suspiciously by isolating them as enemies within who deserve less. This is evident in the statement '...*Buunyoo koorko*....' (Women are enemies) (Line 24 and 28).

Critically speaking, the ideological assumption in the proverb is a social problem between men and women. These two statements are a realization that ideas about gender relationships are deeply embedded in our daily languages which incidentally become non-conscious elements of our thought structure. We recognize the interpellation of women in the proverb because the construction of the feminine images as treacherous, disloyal and deceitful alongside the underlying ideological images, befit the patriarchal order of reducing women to the subject and underdog positions.

The basic ideological works in the proverb are defined within the basic cognitive beliefs that are the basis of the social representations shared by a speech community. In view of this, these proverbs are ideologically sexist and serve to control gender representations. It also controls the social practices and discourses of its members by defining the identities of women, their actions and relations with men and other resources in the society. Thus, through CDA, we are able to analyze, interpret and critique the social reality and power of the spoken words reflected in these proverbs (Luke 1997).

Whereas women are expected to serve men diligently, affectionately and with loyalty, their frame character images are shown as nagging, unscrupulous, troublesome and disobedient. This belief is shown in the example below:

### **Example 35**

...*koorko nyee monoree looyiin*.... *Koonyitee boonteenyii kuuchurta*....

(...women who desert their ancestral homes in search of husbands are refugees in their marital homes and should respect their husbands) (Line 215 - 216).



Contextually, a stern warning to a rebellious woman precedes this statement. She is warned to 'cut her horn' which was gathered to mean 'to behave well'. Later, she is reminded why she should respect the husband. (Women who desert their ancestral homes in search of husbands are refugees in the very home and should respect their husbands). Any woman who fails this duty should be 'dehorned'. The research is not in dispute of the respect, love and loyalty women accord their husbands. The work is critical of the subordinate position women are relegated to. For example the statement that: 'women who desert their ancestral homes in search of husbands are refugees in their very homes'. The proposition in the statement holds women 'hostages' and desperate refugees. The feminine images pictured here and elsewhere in this work, occasion mistreatment of women in their families. The statement portends that women have no choice because they looked for men who should now be seen as their lords and not marriage partners. It was observed that they have to give unequivocal allegiance and respect even in 'marital captivity' as this statement shows: "...*koonyiitee boonteenyii kuuchuurta ...*" (Respects her husband unequivocally) (Line 215 - 216).

Being interpretative, CDA model holds that much of what patriarchy thinks of being manly is really a way of hardening up so as to coerce women through such frame labels into submission. The process of framing or labeling and the ideological works of these frames, force or persuade women socially or economically to go against their best interests. However, the affirmative approach in CDA depends upon the ability of all women to identify and develop new definitions of power, frame labels and new patterns by relating across differences and within equality.

Women are treated as necessary devils in this example:

**Example 36**

.....*aankuu muuskiniit koorko nyee kinaamtaa mureen kinkin....*'

(..... a woman is a necessary devil..... she is a hairy caterpillar in a man's armpits.....)  
(Line 46 - 48)

Contextually, it was gathered that this statement is made to warn men about the inherent and inalienable dangers associated with having a woman in the homestead. It

was learnt in the discussions with the elders that women are indispensably itchy like a caterpillar in the life of a man. The metaphor is reminiscent of the infamous poetic analogy between women, blankets and snakes: “A woman is like an itchy blanket, you throw it away, you feel cold, you cover yourself with it, you feel itchy; or the belief that having a woman in the house is like keeping a snake in the basket” (Finnegan 1980:196)

The discriminatory nature of such derogatory labels used to describe women and other members of the minority groups is often too obvious. Although no person can be exempted from derogatory labeling, women are not only subject to such labeling but also the subject matter of the derogatory labels as can be seen here. Such stereotypical labels above are used not only to insult women but also to derogate and take away their individuality by comparing them to harmful insects (Bourdieu 1995).

The metaphorical comparison sustains the sense of the patriarchal group ideology and perpetuates the polarization of the ‘us-them’ dimensions and the division between ideologies in favour of men and against women. This example has a strong political implication with a pragmatic function of creating fear, suspicion, intimidation and even distrust of women. The metaphorical allusion of the insect confirms that CDA sees language as creating, promoting and exploiting unfair and irrelevant distinctions between sexes.

The assertion in the statement ‘....*kwaamiing kibtiing nyee kyaam tilyaab mureen.....*’ in example 37 shows women as biased, selfish and insensitive lot.

### **Example 37**

*....kwaamiing kibtiing nyee kyaam tilyaab mureen....*

(Women are selfish) (Lines 309 - 310),

The statement applies in rebuke of womenfolk who are seen to help their relatives and not relatives from their husbands’ families. It was gathered that the practice runs across the generations of women.

Women are also reflected as gossipers as indicated in the following examples:



### **Example 38**

*...booytiitaab koorko....'*

(Gossiping women) (Line 200)

### **Example 39**

*...makaankeet.'* (Guinea fowl) (Lines 185)

A domesticated guinea fowl bird in example 39 deserts other domestic chicks and flies into the wildness where it belongs. Historically, it was established that the analogy applies to daughters who desert their families and leap into marriage where they belong. In the discussions and observation field notes, it was established that a family of daughters alone is deserted because daughters are treated as outsiders (*'....saang....'*) while boys are viewed as insiders (*'....koo....'*) as discussed before.

CDA argues that meanings of words carry information concerning the social order and reality. Thus, knowledge of language and about language is part of the social cognition which is only experienced during social interaction with others who use language in its various functions (Fairclough 2002). Thus, representations of language have a social character including symbolic metaphors and how such metaphors influence values, attitudes and norms within our social environments in terms of gender relationship.

Whereas men are seen as patient, wise and far sighted like the proverbial tortoise, women are seen as cunning. This label is shown in example 40:

### **Example 40**

*.....Kuuburang' koorko...'*

(Women are cunning like hares) (Line 124 -125)

Contextually, this example distrusts women vying for leadership in the community. From the focus group discussions and observation field notes, it was established that the

folklore characteristics of the hare include: cunning, mischievous, selfish and susceptible; all representative of the feminine characters. These traits are far much below those of the tortoise.

The tortoise on the other hand is seen as patient, tactful and wise. By using the two animals and their characteristics to represent gender relationship, a true summary of the ideological gender positioning is suggested. The two animal metaphors and their characteristics summarize the deliberations of this chapter. Women are hare-like with all its attendant folklore characteristics.

Evidently, people are in possession of mental models about the world and women. Consequently, discourse is like an iceberg of information and it is really only the tip which is expressed in words and sentences. In view of this, analysis of the implicit sexist languages above is useful in the discovery of the underlying ideologies about the identities of women as inferior others.

CDA holds that language can never appear by itself – it always appears as the representative of a system of linguistic terms which realize discursive and ideological systems. The pandemic patriarchal propaganda marginalizes women (the negative other) through the ideologically loaded sexist words. CDA deconstructs women by exposing the intended patriarchal ideologies. The range of feminine character labels discussed read like a patriarchal feminine character register in the Sabaot community.( see: treacherous, deceitful, nagging, naive, feeble, gullible, gossipers, doggish, susceptible, immoral, rebellious, cunning, selfish and impatient). The semantic derogations and subjugation evident in such labels are a manipulation of gender reality. These prevalent character images construct a dominantly portend patriarchal ideology which helps sustain exploitation and domination of women in the society by making puppets of the feminine characters.

Ideological assumptions in the above character labels are evidence of the false womanhood. These labels constitute means by which words portray women as what they are not or what they are in the eyes of others (patriarchy) because words live in an



environment of social forces and have the potential to penetrate into people's lives. Every character image above is immersed in the value systems carrying within them attitudes which dispose people to act and treat women in a given way (Lee 1995). Thus, the ideologies in these character images are systems of character categorization which are built into particular vocabularies as a means of lexicalizing the discriminative and patriarchal experiences. Women should raise their level of linguistic consciousness, step outside the interpellation by seeing such character subjection and resist the false images of character interpellation.

Language must be seen as a tool that provides acceptance of gender uniqueness and freedom to be and do but should never discriminate against the female characters. Women are encouraged never to surrender to these character stereotypes but walk outside these frames. As a resource, self-affirmation, boldness and vision should be their strength and weapon because language can be so liberating (McGregor 2003). In view of this, CDA propagates the idea that enhancement of critical thinking in language use is conducive to a society in which justice and equality are materialized and power is distributed fairly well among men and women.

All examples discussed under this sub-theme, have ideologies which attest to how linguistic labelling relate to social inequalities between women and men. The feminine images in the symbols act as linguistic yardsticks by which women are perceived and treated. CDA treats these words as materials of ideology which reflect women in the light of the meaning associated with the symbolic language thus contributing to domination and exploitation of women in the Sabaot community.

#### **4.3.2 Women as Big Children**

The Sabaot language portrays women as child-like, immature and ever crying. Women are grouped with children and are treated as big children. The examples that follow, give vivid descriptions of how language can turn sexist in reference to women.

### Example 41

...koorko nyee tiinyee chekaabtiin mwaakiis...'

(*Women never mature up*) (Line 28) and *lakwaataab kang'uung* (*your homestead's child*) (Lines 175, 185 and 213).

Following focus group discussions and interviews made, it was discovered that the ideology in the two statements above, show women as naive and foolish characters who never mature: '*...koorko nyee tiinyee chekaabtiin mwaakiis.....*' (*Women never mature up*) (Line 28). The immaturity of women is alluded to the breast milk '*.....chekaabkitiin....*' which shows how women are similar to their young ones. Similarly, it was noted that women are regarded as childish and naïve which is evident when married women are referred to as '*lekwaani*' (this child) and '*lakwaataab kang'uung*' (*your homestead's child*) (Lines 175, 185 and 213).

Syntactically, the noun '*lekweet*' (child) is expressed in the singular demonstrative pronoun '*-in-*' (this) and the root noun '*lekweet*' becoming '*lekwaani*' (this child) or the possessive '*-aab-*' (your) in '*lekwaataab*' with the root noun becoming 'your child' (*lekwaataab kang'uung*). These labels show how women are seen as immature and who should be treated like children by the men folk.

Example 42 below, captured in one of observation field notes presents another evidence of how women are regarded in the Sabaot community. Women undergo a painful vicious cycle of oppression as demonstrated in the example below- which is in form of a poem. The valuative tone used has its meaning in the discriminative and emotive response it elicits. In the poem, a woman is another big child. People reason by analogy when comparing two or more systems. The worth of any analogy is measured by the degree of sense it holds- the sense that women are children in this example.

### Example 42

*Meekiine koorko aako kooi* (women never mature up)

*Riire kuu kiiyoosweet* (Like an infant, she cries)



*Kiirirchi kwaan* (cries to her father)

*Kiirirchi santenyi* (cries to her husband)

*Riirchi lookokyii* (cries to her children)

*Kuriirchi muuchookoorokyii ankuumaa naanyun* (cries to her grandchildren and dies)

The poem captures the length and breadth of the discriminative ideologies used against women. It sees women as naïve, immature, childish and dependent people. The tone of the poem is sarcastic, cynical and vindictive of the female characters. It illustrates a graphic vicious range of pain women undergo right from their infant days with their parents (line 1 and 2), their marriage life (line 3 and 4) and up to their old age (line 5 and 6). It ideologically represents a vicious, painful and miserable feminine position. Subjected to misery, tears and pain, women are seen in the light of the same treatment which ironically constitutes their frame character labels.

The immature, naïve and tearful pictures of women are theoretically seen as ideological constructs showing how social reality is represented (i.e. gender relationship). For one, it is the construction of the gender identity itself (i.e. women are naïve, childish and immature) which is linked to the question of power and exploitation. Examples of the sexist character labels in the poem above confirm theoretically that social relations and identities are marked in language aspects (i.e. words in the poem above). This assumption attests to how existing social relations and identities are marked in language aspects as apparent lexicalized experiences which are mediated linguistically. In this case, those with power (patriarchy) use language to sustain their power either consciously or unconsciously thus bringing about gender discrimination and inequalities. However, aspects of sexism in language in the post-sexism analysis and post-structuralism sense are much more than a problem with the language we use and our personal attitudes towards women. It is a complex mesh of practices, institutions and ideas which have the overall effect of giving more power to men than women.

CDA is of the view that ideologies behind such traditional poems emanate from the recent discoveries that power relations in the society is reproduced and legitimated at the

ideological level contrary to the traditional theorists of ideology who viewed ideology as essentially false forms of consciousness. In view of the poem above, women are likely to behave out of their own free will in accordance with the interests of the dominant patriarchy because the exercise of power apart from being coercive is also persuasive or ideological. This means that to control people is to control their group attitudes and their attitude producing ideologies.

Participants establish identities for themselves and others in discursive practices. From the interviews, it was gathered that tears are womanly and never manly. In view of this assumption, women are associated with tears as illustrated in the example below:

### Example 43

*...taambo ooriirye nkuubeek lokiichoo kwookok...'*

(You haven't cried yet until you are dry of your womanly tears...) (Lines 106 – 107),  
'...*laakwaani Cheesekuut, ng'alaal baa.... Mokweechooni lang'at iriroonu kuboo...*'

(...this child Cheesekuut, talk ... You came to me yesterday with womanly sobs...) (Line 189 - 190).

Contextually, women are subjected to tears under the cruel hands of men as seen in one encounter of the excerpts: '*...laakwaani Cheesekuut, ng'alaal baa.... Mokweechooni lang'at iriroonu kuboo.....*' (...this child Cheesekuut, talk ... You came to me yesterday with womanly sobs.....) (Line 189 - 190).

Women's complaints against their beastly husbands are termed as 'cries' (*...Iriroonu...*) which is a patriarchal way of addressing problems afflicting women. CDA holds that in most interactions, users of language bring with them different dispositions towards language which are closely related to social positioning. Looking at women as lazy, feeble, weak, naïve, childish and tearful as observed in the preceding discussions, show how CDA treats language as a type of social practice among many used for representation and signification where texts like those above are produced by socially situated speakers and writers.



CDA raises the linguistic awareness of these frames. There is need for a change of attitudes of both men and women to accept equality and overcome prejudices and practices based on stereotypical frames and roles. However, true equality can only emerge from efforts directed towards addressing and correcting such linguistic and other situational imbalances. It is this broader view of equality which should be the underlying principle and goal in the struggle for the recognition and acceptance of the human rights of women.

#### **4.4 Sexist Symbolic Language and Images of Women**

An examination of the sexist symbolic languages used in the Sabaot language shows low opinion of women. The symbolic use of language analysis is in line with the view that CDA focuses on body language, utterances, symbols, visual images and other forms of semiosis (signs and symbols) as means of discourse (Fairclough 2002). The perceptions, information and judgments evident in the symbolic language, show how prejudicial and discriminatory they are against women. In the following section, we give examples of some of the sexist symbols used against women. This section is further subdivided into two sections: Courtship symbolic language and Symbolic vilification of women.

##### **4.4.1 Courtship Symbolic language**

Married women are viewed as ‘beehives full of honey mounted on trees far away’ and guinea-fowl birds flying far distances as in example 44 and 45 respectively:

##### **Example 44**

...*Mweenkosyeek chee kyang 'aab looyiin....*)

(Honey-full beehives mounted on trees far away) (Line 240)

##### **Example 45**

...*Makaankeet nyee kiiwo loyiin kuteerertooy.....*)

(Guinea-fowl birds flying far distances) (Lines 182 and 186)

The guinea-fowl symbol in example 45 gives women the proverbial characteristics of the guinea bird. It was gathered in our interviews that these birds are wild, unpredictable, ungrateful and hard to tame. However, the guinea bird is fatty and sweet to eat. It is every young man's dream to capture the bird and roast it dry. A dream to marry among young men and establish a homestead is alluded to the fatty guinea bird. Importantly, the guinea fowl image is cautionary because from the interviews, it is customary knowledge that guinea fowl chicks should be tamed with a hen's chick with utmost care. The implication is that the guinea fowl chick is a wild domesticated animal waiting to develop full feathers and fly into the wilderness. The hens' chick symbol stands for the home-bound boy child while the guinea fowl chick stands for daughters who desert their homesteads (wild) when they have matured (developed feathers). The relevance of the symbol is that a family without boys will be deserted one day. Thus, the guinea fowl chick symbol is semantically discriminative against women who are seen in the proverbial characteristics of a wild bird.

The 'mounted beehive' symbol in example 44 is most demeaning. It was gathered that the assumption in this symbol is that married daughters are treated as bee-hives from which honey (read dowry) is obtained. Using the singular verb '*-kyiangaab-*' (*I have mounted/attached.....*), shows that daughters are 'married off' and their husbands become trees on which the 'beehives' (daughters) are mounted (married). Note that both symbols treat women as food stuffs (honey and the fatty edible guinea fowl).

The attitudinal assumptions in this symbols point out at the prejudicial language which mirrors patriarchal thinking which perpetuates discrimination of women. The materialistic attitude enshrined in the ideological works of the symbols, assign women edible and property-like status where marriage is seen as an economic entity. Indeed, the parallelism drawn from the beehive, harvested honey (dowry) and the 'mounting' images are all linguistic instruments of maintaining male dominance. In these images, women are scorned, trivialized and seen as under-dogs. Notice too that all these symbols are drawn from the community proverbs thus becoming inclusive and collective representations and constructions of communal ideologies on the perception of women.



CDA states that discourse can never be divorced from society where these symbols are drawn and used. Ideologically, sexist beliefs are at the basis of sexist prejudices shared by the members and which condition their discourse and other social practices. The ideological work of this symbol lies on interpretations and the social effects such symbolic messages have on women in terms of how they receive the appellation. The construction of the absurd gender reality (images) and the construction of the feminine identities in these images are all linked to issues of power between men and women as seen in the collective identities of women. This way, women view themselves in a negative or stereotyped way (Yieke 2001).

What is important about CDA is that such texts do not only inform us of some reality but are based on the ideological standpoints of the person or group of people which in this case discriminates against women. CDA posits that language not only reflects society or culture to which it is linked, it also shapes that society or culture (Wodak and Ludwig 1999). Thus, CDA contends that language and language use can cause discrimination, intensify discrimination or reflect other forms of discrimination in link with the cultural dispensation as shown in preceding examples. These statements constitute the feminine 'myths' about the way women are perceived – indeed the stereotypes about what is common to all women (Anderson and Patricia 1988). Thus, the stereotypical perceptions of women shown here, attest to the view that when people acquire language, they automatically acquire with it the inherent biases and prejudices.

CDA sees the ideological works in these labels as interpretive frameworks which organize sets of attitudes about gender relations thus providing the cognitive foundations for the attitudes of various groups in societies as well as protection of their own goals and interests. Speakers express ideological content in texts and so does the linguistic form of the text. Texts as those above were seen as selected and organized syntactic forms whose content structure reflected the ideological organization of gender relationship.

The evidence of the sexist images of women discussed in example 46 below is in support of the theoretical foundations of this work which in the words of Fairclough (1992), CDA sees language as having a bearing to social life because discourse is

invested with power relations and ideological process. The statement in the example below contradicts the value of women:

#### **Example 46**

....*iloolonyee koot koorko*....’

(... A woman warms the house....)

In this example, women are seen as family ‘warmth’. This expression is a chauvinistic way of stating the comfort, love and happiness women accord their families. The verb ‘*iloolonyee*’ (warms) portrays women in the negative sense particularly because it appraises the sexual connotation of warmth and women. The implication is that women are known to soothe and trick men on their thighs. In this way, men are cautioned to avoid falling as sexual preys as women can turn tragic and dreadful as discussed earlier. The example above confirms that knowledge is based on ideology and that ideology is based on the general, culturally shared knowledge which is presupposed in all discourse of a community. CDA in line with this observation delves into different layers of meaning of such symbols and their intricate network of semantic implications to decode ideological moves and manipulations of this symbolic text.

All the sexist symbolic images cited in this section of this work are vague, false and discriminative feminine images with pejorative meanings. The sexist bias in these symbols shows how language is premised on the belief that language (both in the sense of its abstract system and of language use) is permeated with society’s values and attitudes. The ideological assumptions about women in these symbolic images constitute social problems. The analysis of this work is linked to this problem (gender disparities) and struggles of the male-dominated group (women). The analysis of the symbolic courtship language in terms of meaning and perceptions of women develops a critical awareness of the language use.

In the same vein, women are portrayed negatively as breeding heifers in the example below:



### Example 47

*...moyeek chuyiweech bororieet....'*

(...heifers filling our clans...) (Line 94)

Comparing women with animals in terms of production is dehumanizing. It is evident here that images of women are influenced and based on the existing norms and values. The norms and values are fostered and strengthened through songs, proverbs and sayings like the example above which aims at socializing women to conform to their images and the assigned role of reproduction. Women who are surrounded by such language models are isolated and belittled because their human endeavour is assigned.

In view of example 47, a critical analysis of the text reveals the ideological work of the sexist metaphor (*moyeek*) (heifers) as a patriarchal common code conveying derogatory identities of women. It confirms how this community has negative feminine perception. The ideology in the metaphor presents a biased social order which is in sharp contradiction with the practical reality of motherhood. CDA sees such metaphors as texts which work within socio-cultural practices and serve to show how social and political domination of women are reproduced by talk.

During the focus group discussions and in observation field notes, it was gathered that some of the terms men use while courting women are derogatory. One such statement included the riddle that follows in the example 48. The answer to the riddle is the diminutive statement '*kubeestaab chepkomaat*' (your sister's thighs) which is euphemistically called '*makamweet*' (Mussa species banana-like plant):

### Example 48

*...kweesaab ayneet inyoruu nee?*

(What did you find along the river bank?) (Line 200-201),

It was gathered in the interviews that the implication in finding 'your sister's thighs along the river bank has sexual connotation. The euphemistic answer '*Makamweet*' is symbolically derogatory because it compares women's thighs to the soft

texture of the *Mussa* species banana-like plant. It was gathered in the focus group interviews that the symbolic language further suggests the magic powers of the traditional beer made from the fruits of the very plant (*Mussa* species banana-like plant). In view of this ‘magic power’, women are seen symbolically as drinking sexual stuffs that make men drunk of the sexual desire. This example further suggests that women are defined in terms of their sexual desirability to men while men are defined in terms of their sexual prowess over them.

CDA treats the meaning and ideological work of this symbolic language as socio-cultural knowledge because discourse shapes or is shaped by the society. Such discriminative and sexist statements are socially organized and directed. They carry information concerning the social order where meaning and communicative function of language is shaped by the values, attitude and norms of the social environment which build wider social representations.

#### **4.4.2 Symbolic Vilification of Women**

It was established in the interviews and focus group discussions that women are expected to gather around the fire place lit in the kitchen and during which elderly mothers train their daughters the basics of husbands’ welfare. Within the same environment, women are ‘soothed’ into social and economic exploitation by their male counterparts. They are cheated to believe that their wealth is measured in terms of their kitchen environment as the example 49 and 50 show:

##### **Example 49**

*....moosukookaab koorko...*

(Women’s hearths) (Line 327)

##### **Example 50**

*....atiinye kiiruukyu somook chee kiityeekyiin ameebereekei....*

(...I’ve my three bulls set against one another but never fighting....) (Line 325)



The knowledge that hearths are three bulls belonging to women builds and locates female identities and economic positions. These statements vilify women because it gives great value to negligible kitchen facilities by quantifying hearths as three bulls. Hearths embody the ideology that women are poor, kitchen- bound and are expected to undergo stringent kitchen training so as to qualify as worthwhile wives seen in the statement in example 51 below:

### **Example 51**

*...keny keecheng'e moyeek choo kirwookyine mbo kaamat mosukooy....*

(Better look for women who have kitchen knowledge)(Lines 94 - 95).

The verb '*...kirwookyine...*' (schooled) implies that women who have undergone domestic instructions about the husbands' welfare and kitchen art. The noun '*moyeek*' (calves) is symbolically euphemistic of the young women. It was gathered from the interviews that kitchen instructions are carried within the kitchen school under the seasoned counsel of the elderly women whose assignments include preparing 'good brands of women'. Instructions for girls are done within the kitchen by their mothers while boys are members of the parliamentary court conducted around the fire lit outside as was noted earlier.

Training girls in the kitchen and around the fire-place (hearths) is a means by which symbolic language adduce evidence for how discourse does ideological work. The propositional message conveyed by the symbolic language in these examples, locate the feminine identity and their social status. Women belong to the kitchen 'schools' and must pass a patriarchal- sanctioned 'kitchen syllabus' to qualify as 'worthwhile wives' while boys are trained as policy makers and jurists as was noted earlier.

The three riddles discussed here (i.e. examples 52-54) are examples by which symbolic language use analogy to compare two or more systems by way of vilification of women.

### Example 52

.....*Atinye lakwanyuu nyee yoo kochoo muren kukeeyta ntoo yoo kochoo koorko kukiin...*’ (I have my child who allows men to pass by but implores upon women to cut her hair) (Line 156-157)

### Example 53

....*atiinyee lakwanyuu nyee iweere buliik kween...*’

(I have my brave daughter who dares in the middle of the enemy) (Lines 330)

### Example 54

....*atiinyee kirukyuu somok chee kiiteekiin amaabeerekeey...*)

(I have my three bulls set/poised against one another but never fighting) (Line 326)

### Example 55

... *Sakianteeet...*

(Breed of vegetables) (Line 163)

In the focus group interviews, it was gathered that the answer to the riddle in example 52 (*.....atinye lakwanyuu nyee yoo kochoo muren kukeeyta ntoo yoo kochoo koorko kukiin...* (I have my child who allows men to pass by but implores upon women to shave her), is ‘*sakianteeet*’ (breed of vegetables as shown in example 55. The answer to the riddle in example 54 (*....atiinyee kirukyuu somok chee kiiteekiin amaabeerekeey...*) (I have my three bulls set/poised against one another but never fighting) is ‘*mosokook*’ (hearths) and *Mukaankeet* (cooking stick) for the riddle in example 53 *....atiinyee lakwanyuu nyee iweere buliik kween...* (I have my brave daughter who dares the middle of the enemy).



It was gathered in the interviews that the three nominal responses to the riddles above: *Sakianteeet*, *Mosokook* and *Mukankeet* are used contextually to explain the role and place of women in the Sabaot community. The responses to the riddles are sexist referents and analogous images of women. The worth of any analogy is measured by the degree to which similarity of structure and sense holds. The logic of the premised response in example 52, mocks women as dutiful and devoted servants of men who would not pass by a vegetable field without picking some as shown by the verb ‘*kukiin*’. On the other hand, men passing by the same vegetable field would not notice the vegetables and pick because it is none of their businesses as shown by the word (*kukeeyta*) meaning ‘pass by’. CDA holds that ideologies in discourse should be investigated within the social contexts within which symbolic forms (analogies in our case) are employed and deployed and how meaning from the symbolic forms establish and sustain relations of dominance. Vegetables are handy products for women for their kitchen chores while men are free from kitchen duties.

For the riddle in example 53, ‘...*atiinyee lakwanyuu nyee iweere buliik kween...*’ (I have my brave child who dares the middle of the enemy), the cooking stick which is the answer is a valued kitchen tool. It was gathered in the interviews that a cooking stick strikes in the middle of a hot cooking pan. Ideally then, it was claimed in the interviews that women are expected to emulate the dutiful sacrificed services of their tools of kitchen trade symbolically including willingness to endure pain and sacrifice in their services.

The riddle in example 54 ‘...*atiinyee kirukyuu somok chee kiiteekiin amaabeerekeey...*’ (I have my three bulls set/poised against one another but never fighting) refers to the cooking hearths which are seen symbolically as three bulls belonging to women. Literally, it is disparaging and demeaning of women to be seen as owning three hearths seen as ‘three bulls’. The evidence of linguistic discrimination of women lies on how hearths which are seen as tools of women’s domestic trade. Besides, the three hearths are valued and quantified as ‘feminine bulls’ in a cultural environment where cattle belong to men ‘*tukaab mureen*’ (Line 32)

These riddles belittle and denigrate women right from their homes where they are socialized linguistically to fit into patriarchal systems of beliefs, oppression and exploitation. Sexist messages in these symbolic languages are nurtured at the family level and are enhanced by the established social orders and institutions like marriage. The three examples exemplify the low opinion of women because such ideologies are expressed in the patriarchal forms of thought, images and symbols. CDA treats these discriminatory meanings as socio-cultural knowledge of ideologies and values about the inferior positions of women.

Similarly, the common nouns in example 56-59 are means by which language users manage their discourses as a function of what they know recipients know already. Contextually, it was claimed the speaker invoked the four common nouns as a stern reminder to women to comply and exercise their tools of domestic trade. Proponents of CDA have postulated that what speakers generally accept as knowledge on gender relationship is taken as the basis of all manner of discourse and interaction within gender cycles. It was thus established in the interviews that the girl-child is given the image of a domestic servant working under oath to use certain kitchen tools ranging from *Soosyonteet* (gourd -stick), '*tereet*' (pot), '*mukankeet* (cooking stick) and '*seteet*' (gourd) as indicated in examples below:

**Example 56** ...*Soosyonteet*

(Gourd -stick),

**Example 57** .....*Tereet*

(Pot)

**Example 58** .... *Mukankeet*

(Cooking stick)

**Example 59** .....*Seteet*

(Gourd) (All in line 380-381)



It was gathered in the focus group interviews that contextually, these instruments: 'Soosyonteet' (gourd -stick), *Tereet* (pot) *Mukankeet*' (coking stick) and *Seteet* (gourd) were invoked in their deliberations as a means by which symbolic language defines women within the limits and bounds of their kitchen ware. Women are primarily seen as cooks and domestic servants. These words in the symbolic sense enable women and 'house wives' to make contact with their 'ideal selves': the self which aspires to be a good wife, a good mother and an efficient house maker, all perceived as feminine roles to be perfected. In the words of Mbilinyi and Omari (1996), house-keeping as a domain is exclusive for females. This belief gives females the idea that they are born to keep houses and teaches males the idea that they are automatically entitled to laundry, cooking and house cleaning services from women in their families. It was established elsewhere during this research that while toiling at the service of men, women are expected to perfect their cooking in the kitchen as stated in these statements: '... *Chebyoosookaab meesikeei*... (... Womenfolk of the kitchen....), '.....*kwoong'iinteetaab kaanyi....cheebay moo*.... (....family cooks) (Lines 230, 168 and 250 respectively). The noun '*Meesikeei*' (fireplace) identifies women within the kitchen and kitchen work. The compound noun '*kwoong'iinteetaab*' comprises the noun *kwoongiinteet* (cook) and the possessive (-aab-) (i.e. of).

On the other hand, it was indicated in the focus group interviews that boy-initiates are authorized under oath to use axes, spears, arrows, and shields. Thus the images created of boys by means of this symbolic language are those of defenders and providers. CDA examines these symbolic languages as means by which ideologies therein, locate and build feminine social identity and self definition as women and how different they are from others in terms of values and norms.

Women whose children all die during birth are seen as 'sweeping the ground clean' (...*Imuuch kuchir ngweny*...) as seen in example 60. However, for every death of a child, women readily give birth to new ones '... *keroope kororyaab makanga* in example 61. '*Makanga*' is a short form of the previous noun we discussed '*makankeet*' (Guinea fowl) and '*kororyaa*' refers to the guinea fowl feathers. The working ideology in the

diminutive guinea bird analogy in this example is that for every drop of a guinea feather (read dead child) women grow other feathers (read sire other children). Barren women are seen as hard – eyed or blind eyed (*keeyaam koong*) in example 62. It was also gathered in the interviews that the unfaithful women are seen symbolically as ‘long-eyed’ (... *koyeech kororiikaab koony...*) as shown in example 63. These sexist symbolic languages are illustrated in the following examples:

**Example 60**

...*Imuuch kuchir ngweny...*)

(sweeping the ground clean’) (Line 29)

**Example 61**

....*keroope kororyaab makanga*, (Guinea fowl feathers)

**Example 62**.... *keeyaam koong*’

(Blind –eyed or hard eyed) (Line 230)

**Example 63**

*Koyeech kororiikaab koony...*’

(... long eye lashes) (Line 390)

Symbolically, all the discriminative images above, (long eyed, blind/hard eyed, sweeping the ground and replacing dropping feathers) are a clear manifestation of how language subjects women by vilifying them. The meanings of these words lie on the social relationship in which meaning and ideology are embedded. CDA holds that such discriminative meanings and representation give rise to asymmetric gender relationship particularly in regard to sexual dominance against women as shown in the four examples. Women are forced to surrender to these semantic perception and ideological domination because socially structured power relationship are reproduced and maintained in people’s everyday interaction



The patriarchal judgement evident in the statement in example 64 contradicts the essence of individual differences. The use of '*Kiooke krekta....*' (A woman is tamed with a stick.....) alludes to the animal image of women who are herded and the symbol also legitimizes brutality against women. It was gathered that by extension, '*krekta*' is also symbolic of sexual control of women where men are advised that the way to tame women is through sexual exploitation and control. Thus, men earn women's respect if they can conquer them sexually.

#### **Example 64**

*...koorko ku koorko.... Kiooke krekta....*'

(A woman is a woman, you tame with a stick.....) (Line 229)

*'ameetinye kiraatya....'*

(Disinherited) (Line 215).

Such beliefs reflect and maintain negative social attitudes towards women by fostering unfair gender discrimination and denigration. Not all women are rebellious and if they are, the verdict in the phrase '*.....kiooke krekta....*' (.....you tame with the cane...) condemns them to serfdom. It was gathered in the focus group interviews that the symbolism behind the use of '*ameetinye kiraatya*' confirmed how women are regarded lowly. The noun '*Kiraatya*' was said to imply the 'homestead'. When this noun is used together with the negating word '*ameetinye*' (does not have), the complete sense implies that women do not own the homesteads as pointed elsewhere.

The ideological works in this statement transcends institutionalized forms of power like governance or politics but incorporates the power of the word. CDA maintains that language has a tremendous power to shape and influence behaviour. In view of the ideologies in these phrases, it can be confirmed theoretically that social life to some extent is a field of contestation in which gender struggle takes place through words, threats and even physical force. Thus, such ideological conceptions create and maintain domination of women.

CDA unveils the underlying ideologies in these statements and shows how power relationships, ideologies and gender identities are created and naturalized by the manipulative style of language. Any knowledge (gender knowledge in this case) is based on ideology and ideology itself is based on general and culturally shared knowledge presupposed in all discourses of any community as hinted implicitly in these phrases. These examples show how discourse constitutes society and culture by playing a fundamental role in reproducing social power by vilifying women.

#### **4.5 Quantitative analysis of the sexist images of women**

The information collected is put under three thematic categories. It includes: ideological pejoration of women, sexist character labels and images of women and Sexist symbolic language and images of women

The ideological pejoration of women as a thematic category had thirty three derogatory items. Out of the 33 items, 19 items illustrated the domain of women and power. The remaining 14 items discussed sexism within marriage and sex discourse. The second theme focused on sexist character labels and images of women with 10 sexist items. Out of the 10 items, 7 portrayed women as the enemies within and 3 items showed women as big children. The final theme was sexist symbolic language which enlisted 21 sexist items. Out of the 21 items, 5 referred to the manner of courtship symbolic language and 16 items reflected on the symbolic vilification of women. The total sexist items numbered 64 which were drawn from the discourse excerpts in appendices 3-6 which form the basis of quantitative analysis. However, the work also captured more sexist items referred in the focus group discussions and interpretations. Many of these items were also drawn from observation field notes.

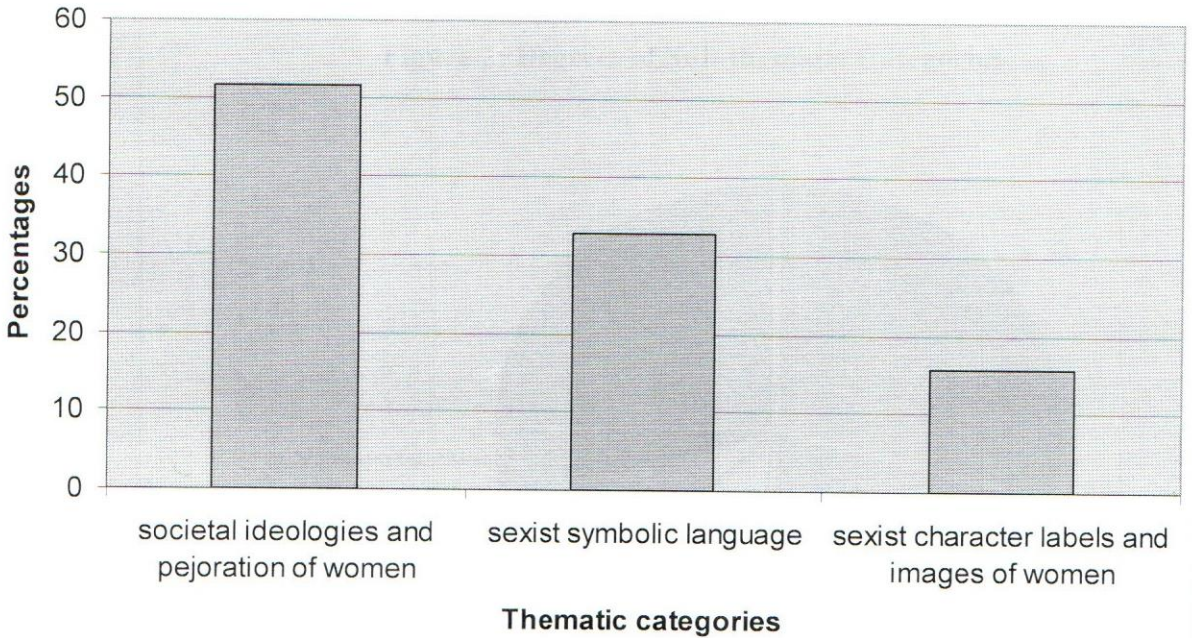
This analysis is tabulated in the following section.



**Table 5: Quantitative Tabulation of Thematic Categories**

Thematic categories	Number of Sexist items gathered	Sub- thematic Categories and number of items gathered	Number of sexist items per sub-themes
Negative sexist images: pejoration of women.	33	(i) Women and Power	19
		(ii) Marriage and Sex	14
Sexist Character labels and Images of women	10	(i) Women: The Enemies Within	07
		(ii) Women: The Big Children	03
Sexist Symbolic languages.	21	(i) Courtship Symbolic language	05
		(ii) Symbolic Vilification of Women	16

**Figure 1: Thematic percentages**

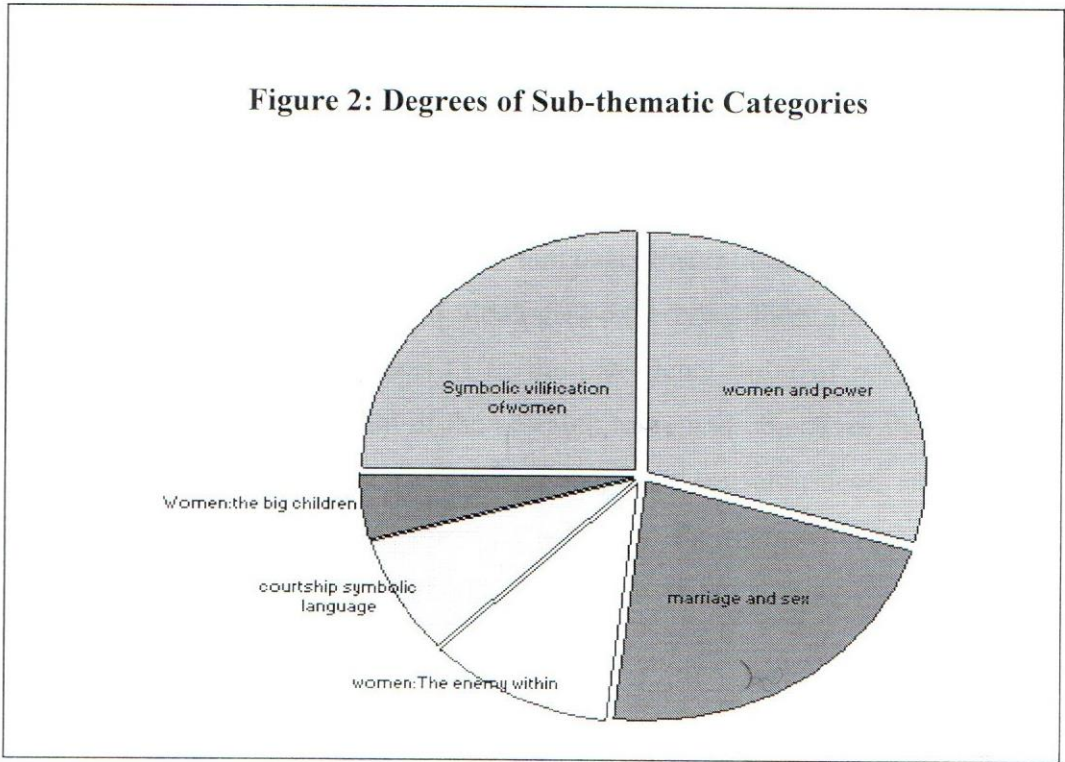


The graph above represents the percentages of the three thematic categories drawn from the discourse excerpts in appendices 3-6. The bulk of the sexist items were

examined in thematic categories for ease of qualitative and quantitative analysis. Out of the sexist items referred, 33 or 51.5 percent showed ideological pejoration of women. Sexist symbolic language constituted 21 items or 32.8 percent of the items examined. Sexist character labels referred to 10 items or 15.6 percent of the total items examined for sexism.

The three thematic categories were further analysed into six sub- thematic categories. The sexist pictures of women lie in these six sub-themes. The six sub- thematic categories included 19 items that discussed issues to do with women and power. Marriage and sex saw 14 items in this bracket. Women: The enemies within and the big Children witnessed 7 and 3 items respectively. 5 items and 16 items illustrated courtship symbolic language and symbolic vilification of women respectively. The figure below shows a representation of sub- theme thematic categories

**Figure 2: Degrees of Sub-thematic Categories**





The figure above represents the grim reality of gender discrimination. It provides different levels upon which discrimination is rife. It ranges from power arrangements, marriage and sexual encounters, symbolic references of women, courtship protocols and general patriarchal attitudes where women are seen as big children and enemies in their homesteads.

It should be noted that the grim pictures of women in this research gains insights with qualitative analysis referred in CDA analysis and Post-Feminist strides borrowed. The true tests of sexist items lie not in the quantification but rather on how subtle and diminutive they are. Indeed, contextual, connotative, symbolic and intuitive values of sexist items underscore the value of sexism.

#### **4.6 CONCLUSION**

The discussions in chapter four tested the hypotheses and objectives of the research. It is evident that the Sabaot language perceives women negatively going by the sexist images, discriminative semantic implications and the insubordinate ideological feminine positions hinted. The images had a high propaganda function in constructing false ideas and perceptions of feminine characters. The ideological assumptions in the images and perception underlie the basic cause of gender inequality in the Sabaot community. It is evident therefore that language discriminates women because the construction of feminine images and ideologies underlying these images, construct the feminine ‘appellation’ which seems to fit the patriarchal order of reducing women to subject positions. It is in the light of the research topic and objectives that linguistically interpellated women must raise the level of language consciousness, step outside the interpellation and see their own subjection and resist the interpellation. CDA is thus a form of social action committed to unraveling these discriminations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on summary, conclusions and recommendations based on the research findings. The summary section highlights a synoptic account of the research findings. The Conclusion section presents the conclusions of the results that were obtained from the whole study. Recommendations section deals with the steps that the researcher felt should be undertaken in order to bring about gender equality in language use. It also suggests further studies deemed necessary because a number of important issues out-stretched the focus of the research topic and objectives.

#### 5.2 Summary

The overall assumption in this research was that the Sabaot language constructed sexist images of women. It focused on the ideological constructs prevalent in the negative images within the wider rubric of semantic derogation of women. The main purpose of this sociolinguistic study was to determine the relative under-dog position of the Sabaot women albeit the top-dog position held by men as reflected in the ideological constructions of the images discussed.

The analysis of the linguistic forms centred on the discourse excerpts drawn from the village heads', sub-chiefs' and chiefs' barazas. Sexist linguistic items, expressions, proverbs and riddles were singled out as texts to determine how sexist they were in constructing sexist feminine perceptions. Sexism was captured under three sub-categories namely: Negative sexist images, Sexist character labels and images of women and Sexist symbolic Language and images of women. These themes were further subdivided into several other sub-themes. The images were drawn from the discourse excerpts in appendices 3-6 and were analyzed within different tenets of CDA as the conceptual



framework. The analysis was done to determine the ideologies of different utterances, the social problems arising from some utterances and the context of such utterances in line with Post-Feminism and CDA analysis. The approach was provided for in the interpretive framework which guided this work. The negative feminine ideological constructs got clearer when the discriminative items gathered in the discussion excerpts were subjected to focus group. The grim reality of how female characters are undermined pervaded all the focus-group session.

Fairclough (1992) observes that discourse does ideological work particularly in the ways in which ideological meanings establishes and sustains asymmetrical relations of power. In doing ideological work in this research, concern was put on how ideologies serve to establish and sustain domination of women. Working along this line of thought, this work investigated the application of this idea in the Sabaot language. Generally, it was conjured that meaning of words is mobilized in the social world and that the ideologies thereby serve to bolster up individuals who occupy positions of power while condemning the underdogs to be contented with their status quo. The feminine ideological constructs become social cement and script from which women read illegitimate patriarchal ideologies which condemn them to servitude. This observation was hypothesized in the statement that the Sabaot language constructed false and sexist images of women.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

The data obtained in the discourse excerpts, field observation notes and the discussions held in the focus-group interviews, showed sexist images of women. These sexist images pointed at how the Sabaot language built a top- dog versus underdog male-female relationship. For example, the proverb '*Taracheet Koorko*' (women are bridges) showed the discriminative underdog feminine role as bridges on which men cross over to sexual pleasure and economic prosperity. Similarly, the noun *Koorko* (woman) is shared with the female dog '*Koorkeetaab ng'ook*' (bitch) because women and bitches share anatomical and biological features and roles thus seen as one. Many of such images in this research warranted the following conclusions:

Words live in an environment of social forces and they have the potential to destroy or build gender relations particularly in the ways patriarchy make puppets of women through their negative ideological constructs. Consequently, women are placed in the illusionary subject position because of the ideological positioning evident in the use of sexist images against them.

During discourse and interactions, participants speak from informed social positions. Participants establish the very positions and identities for themselves particularly the male characters who invoke images that exalt them and condemn women.

It was concluded that people use language to sustain power consciously or unconsciously. In this way, language plays an invisible role in reinforcing existing social and gender inequalities.

Communities should strive to remove the social, cultural and traditional patterns which perpetuate gender-role stereotypes and create an overall framework in society that promotes realization of women's full participation in all spheres of life.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on the objectives of this study. These recommendations are guided by the Post-Feminism, CDA perspectives and some arguments advanced by Critical linguists.

1. Every effort should be directed towards studies about the role language plays in reinforcing discrimination against women by future researchers focusing on interaction.
2. Educationists, schools and other institutions must adopt gender sensitive language policies.
3. Provincial administration should revise the administrative training manual for chiefs to include the place of language in gender and human relations.



## **5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies**

To expound more studies on language and sex, it is proposed that future researchers focus closely on the girl-child language acquisition environment. The language acquisition environment could cover the home and lower primary setting and should focus on how language models and socialization affect the girl-child attitudes, personality and perceptions in life.

A research could be carried to investigate the distribution of gender roles and show if the roles have a linguistic bearing and sanction.

It is recommended that future researchers establish whether Sabaot women are victims of linguistic interpellation by establishing their career choices and occupations.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

#### Interview Schedule

1. Why are women referred to as '*korkeet?*'
2. Why is a female dog known by the same name as '*korkeet?*'
3. A girl is known as '*Cheptoo*' and a boy '*Mureen*'. Why this distinction made and what are the implications of these two nouns?
4. In marriage negotiations, the bride is referred to as '*subeentaab Kechiir*' and the bridegroom '*mengiit*'. Why are the two words used?
5. A new baby boy is referred to as '*sakianteeet*' while a baby girl is referred to as '*boboondeet*'. Why is this distinction necessary and why use the two words?
6. Identify one riddle and a proverb which reflects women negatively.
7. Why do women laugh saying '*Cheptaab areet aake ntoo tuun koonyiit areet aake?*'

## Appendix 2

### Transcription Conventions

#### Character format

Italics	Transcription of Sabaot utterances
Normal	Translation of Sabaot words into English
Bold lowercase	indicates stressed sarcastic utterances
Capital letters	Initial capital letters only used for proper names, language names, titles and months/days of the week.
Uppercase	Indicates use of proverbs
Bold uppercase	Indicates use of a riddle
Bold Italicized	Sabaot utterances indicate formidable swearing

#### Symbols

- = Indicates that the speaker is interrupted by other participants
- ... Indicate pause; the number of dots indicate the relative length of each pause
- { } Curly brackets indicate additional information such as utterances and comments
- ? Indicate a normal question mark
- \* Other punctuation marks serve relevant grammatical functions e.g. Comma, exclamation marks
- [ ] Extended square brackets mark overlap between utterances
- Underline shows that words are uttered with added emphasis
- (pp) precedes words where the speaker speaks quietly
- (( )) Double brackets indicate that there is double about accuracy of transcription.
- ( ) Indicate double about the accuracy of translation i.e. unclear translation

#### Participants

All participants shall be known by the initial capital letters of their names e.g. N. (Ngeeywo).

Where initial letters are identical, the next participant shall have double initials or tripple e.g. **MS, MSS, MSSS** etc.



<b>Ch</b>	Chief
<b>Ach</b>	Assistant Chief
<b>Mvh</b>	Village head
<b>Aud</b>	Mixed Audience (unidentified)
<b>Up</b>	Unidentified participation

### **Transcription of Sabaot words**

The transcriptions partly adapted in this work follow the Sabaot writing system and linguistic conventions developed in 1981-1986 by Sabaot Bible translators. However, this research will not observe strict phonological conventions because it is a sociolinguistic study. We therefore regret the phonetic and phonological anomalies in our work.

Double vowel letters indicating long vowels

A line over vowels indicate the difference between 'light sounds and heavy sounds'

- : Indicate grammatical tone e.g. Kimwoochi: kaamat (his/her mother told him/her)  
Kiimwaoochi kamaat (he/she told the mother)
- / Indicate the passive voice e.g. /kikiibat mbareet (The field was ploughed /dug)  
Kikiibat Mbareet (we ploughed the field)
- Tone of negation e.g. – maamwokwook (I won't tell you)
- + Positive tone e.g. +maamwoowook (I will tell you)
- ! Tone of emphasis e.g. ! Kaakas teeta (I really saw a cow) and Kaakas teeta (I saw the cow)

## Appendix 3

### Excerpt One

**Date:** 5/11/2005

**Place:** Sasur

**Time:** 11.00 am

**Participants:** All participants shall be known by the initial capital letters of their names e.g. **MN**. Where initial letters are identical, the next participant shall have double initials or triple in the second name. **AUD** refers to audience and **CH**—Chief. Participants were eight plus a host of other members of the society constituting the audience.

**Context:** The context of the excerpts below is captured in a local council of elder's court. The discussion centers on local politics and development. Participants included local politicians, elders and interested people in the village.

The excerpts constitute relevant segments (for the research) of the longer discourse excerpts captured at different stages of the talks. It applies to other excerpts i.e 2-6.

**1 CH:** *Osiisyoo araa booyichuu... kaanya kuung'alaal Nkeeywo* (Attention ... let Nkeeywo talk)

**MN:** *Awuukene raat koreet nyee kokubokiit.... nyee meebtakimii baatay aak moo...*

**4** *kyokaas aakweek koorko nyee meetinyee biinta ku Metiryoo?*[I am surprised how the world is drunk and directionless. Where did you see women who have no age-set leading?]

**MM:** *Inyoruu beetusyeechu kuule meeche koruuk nkiicheek mbareeniik..... kwiik kaantooyiik aak koobur kookweetaab booyiik.....* (You find women claiming a 10 share of the ancestral land...vying for leadership positions and even participating in the council of elders' meeting.....)



**MT:** *Uushoo {} – iturkuuchee subeento? Kyiyiee nee yoo keeturuku? .... Aamwook koonyoo kuule KIISICH NG'AAMYAANTEETAAB NKOOK NYEE SUBEENTO ntoo subaak kiinkeet biikaab keeny ntaarastiit yuu kiiriichee koorko meliilto aankuriiche muureen ng'etuunynto..... Ateebe booyiik aam nee?*

**15** [Tradition forbids {} when did the hen crow? If it does... What befalls of its head? I tell my clansmen.... the comb of the hen is smaller.....wise old men knew the traditions well by (evoking) the power of a leopard and the lion for women and men respectively during circumcision oaths... Why was this arrangement necessary?]

**20FS:** *Kuuyu acheek CHEEBYEESOOK KEENG'ALOLOOTI AKOO MOKOTYOONIKYOO* [Because women are traditionally seen as mad people who talk with their traditional blankets (hides)].

**MN:** *Kaaraam anoo koorko raat wee biikyoo.... Moonokaas keemwooyee kuule MOKEETUBCHEE KOORKO NAANYUUN? Ntoo subaak MOKIYOYEE LUKEET*

**25KUMIITE KOORKO?** [... Women are evil my people... haven't you heard our old men saying that a woman is never a clansman and we can never plan and execute matters of top secrecy with a woman around...?]

**NN:** *Maan booyiik....BUUNYOO KOORKO AAK KIITINYEE CHEKAAB KIITIIN MWAKIIS....isonioone ankuu IMUCHE KUUCHIR NG'WENY AAM*

**30 KOONYI** [You are saying plain truth old men... a woman is a man's enemy... she is always like her child... you can't separate them ....]

**MN:** *TARAACHEET KOORKO AREENYO.... Keekoone tuukaab muureen aangukworuu tukaab muureen byii.....inyitweech araat maan koorkoob muureen* [She is a bridge...we give out our cattle to have them in our homesteads but they

**35** are sources of our many cattle...they add our clansmen ....a man's woman.]

**MN:** *Cheepotiangooch koonyoo* [I have a riddle for those of my house]

**AUD:** *Tyaa* [Let it come]

**MN:** *OONYIIN OONYI AANKU MWOYEE NEE MOOROOCHEET WEE KOONYO?* [I give as I take ..... And what does a frog say. Our clansmen?]

**40 MN:** *Oonyiin oonyi kuu kuubisweet ntoo mooroocheet..... mwooyee choo kuule ng'oo*

ng'oo ng'oo.... [I give as I take refers to the swallow bird.... The frog  
sings ng'oo

ng'oo ng'oo...]

**MN...***aamwayii nee raat subaak... koorko nyooto* [I've nothing more to say... that is a  
woman]

**45 CH:** *Kaasiis kuuloyiit aarekeshinee kiyii oomwoyee ntenee.... aamwook kuule  
memoonte koorko koong....aanyiiny kineetaab moomo....aankuu MUUSKINIIT  
KOORKO NYEE KIKEENAMTA KINKIIN-mokyoostoi besyeet aake. Kichuutuneeno  
oonii boo rwonikwaa aamotochwees* [I have kept quiet for long but listening to what you  
are saying but ..... I want to caution all of you never to (use

**50** your eye) to underrate a woman...she is sweet the way her breast milk is sweet...she  
is a necessary devil...like a hairy caterpillar in a man's armpits....for sure we can never  
forsake them....let us pull them from their sleep like Sambroroor said before].

**FS:** *Maan chee keemwaa Alataryaan ntenee kaamechee ateeshi tyaangocheet  
aake....chepetiangooch?* [It is true what the chief observes but I want to add

**55** another riddle for you. ].

**AUD:** *Tyaa* [Let it come]

**FS:** *KYAAWUUY NTOO WAAYEWUU KIIKOONTYII BIIKAAB SAMBUUNEEK  
KANYUU.* [I left my homestead long ago only to come back when foreigners had  
occupied and taken over my homestead....]

**60 AUD:** *Siinakweet.* [Pumpkin-like plant producing gourds].

**CH:** *Kiikoolambuuch siinakweet kooreet ankuu +moochemchiine kuule karaam moomo  
nyee isiise kooreeryiing...* [change is inevitable and very soon all of you will agree with  
me that a woman's milk is sweet and sooths....let's allow them to sooth humanity.....]



**Appendix 4**  
**Excerpt Two**

**Date:** 15/11/2005

**Place:** Chesikak

**Time:** 10.00 am.

**Participants:** All participants shall be known by the initial capital letters of their names e.g. **MM**, **MK** etc. Where initial letters are identical, the next participant shall have double initials or triple in the second name. **VH** refers to the village head.

**Context:** The excerpt involves a domestic dispute. The participants included the parents, local village elders, relatives (eleven in total) and other interested participants. It was an open meeting in the village head's court.

**65 MM:** *Araab kaan.....koochemu nee am keeston oo leyye* [son of kaam....how is everything in your homestead?]

**MK:** *Keechemeekeei icheek....choorweenyu araab Makeet. Yoos akweek aam keestoon?*  
[They were all fine....my (age-mate) son of Makeet...what about your homestead?]

**MM:** *Keechemeekeei icheek.....yoo kakekaas asiista kiitoroore. Ara kocheemunee*

**70 koorkeetaab ng'ook?** [They are all fine if we are lucky to see the sun, we all exalt Him....how is the (puppies' mother?)]

**MK:** *Kemii nee yo kuunyoo aak mureekyii* [She was just there with her small (rats)]

**MM:** *Seere araab kaan....yoo KAKUROOKUNEE KOORKO KEET kukaraam.....  
Kookeemwoowo lang'aat kule KOOYAA SEET lakwataab weeritaab araab Kirui*

**75** [It is alright Kaan's son....if a woman descends successfully from a tall tree, we all celebrate. I was told yesterday that Kirui's (wife) broke her (gourd)].

**MK:** {} *Usho.... Wuunyo koorko. NTENEE YOO KEEYIN MWENUUT AMAAYIIN  
MUUKONGEET MOO MIYAAT.....KYYIYEE MWENUUT AAKE* {} God forbid! That is a woman's fate... but if the hoe-handle breaks leaving the hoe

**80** intact...it is not bad...it is always replaced].

**MS:** *Karaam weriit nyoo tiinye koorko mbuu keestoon kuuyu koorko mbuu bii kworuu yeemeet aak kololonye koto....oriikeey kaakung'asng'asiit kooreet. Yoo kooyeku mbo cheemartooyiisyeek che ruube kooruuk chuu cheemureniis.... koobekuu... Kaameeunee. weerichu kubesokaab koorin meebtateetiinyee weeriik*

**85** *choo kiwoolekeey mboo kuuko kuule **ATIINYE WEERIKYUU CHEE KYAAKARTA KEEBEN ANKOKOOWU SAARURAAK** [The son who (marries) 'is blessed ...a woman drives our relatives closer....makes our homes warm....but watch our dear sons...this world is fragile because of women...those who will behave like cocks chasing (man-hunting women) have a price to pay...*

**90** *the women's thighs have turned to be graveyards for our young men. Gone are those days when our old men would proudly boast of having many arrows in the arrow-cages showing off their feathered tails].*

**VH:** *(pp) woriikeei....koorko nyee chemurenio ku soriin...ongeet kule **MEUNEE MUREEN KUUBEESOI**...acheek keeny keecheng'eee mooyeek...*

**95** *Kiikemwooweech kule keecheeng'ee chee kiirwookyine mboo kaamat moosukooy ankuu kabootin amebere kaabchowineek [(pp) my sons... (A man-hunting woman is evil) let it be born in your minds that women's thighs are our tombs...during our days... while looking for (calves) we were instructed to look for those whose mothers had examined them successfully from the kitchen*

**100** *school....those (circumcised) and not the (sexual wild geese)]*

**FS:** *-Momwooweech acheek tiibin...takeetinyee anoo raat tiibiik **CHEE KOOKORYOOT WEERIN CHEE KIIRANTEE MBOO KAAMAT KUBEESoy KUREENKOY**..... [Don't tell us anything to do with our daughters... we no*

*Longer have them as our pride.....they have been rendered (lame) by our very boys*

**105** *who grew on our laps]*

**MT:** *Taambo oriiryee nkubeek lokiicho kwookok...konee ng'oo tiibiikwook chee kokwiik mbo cheematatyya, cheebongayiisyeek chee isokosee muren? [You haven't cried yet until you are dry of your womanly tears....no man pays dowry for daughters who are constantly hunted by men...]*



**110 KK:** *Abooyi* {} *ntenee kaany amwook tyaankocheet... chebotyaankooch* [*Abooyi* {}...butI should relate the fate of women in a riddle ... riddle, riddle...]

**AUD:** *Tyaa* [Let it come]

**KK:** *SARAA MOKOT ASAAR MOKOT KEEBEKU* [Pull the skin hide that way as I pull it this way and together, we (snore)]...

**115 AUD:** *Rwooniikaab koorko* [a woman sleep]

**KK:** *Kyookee koorko krekta aak kumuuryo sakekweer tukaab mureen bii* [The cane controls women better if they have to add more cattle in her fathers' (kraals)]

**KK:** *Mureen nyee kibnoong'iin komuuch maan komiit chemaratyaa? Nyoonuu*

*cheebriirey kukoonyiit mureen nyee kubteech koor aak cheebriib koor*

**120** [How can a man who is a protector marry a prostitute? It is useful that (tearful) women must be willing to look at men with awe because they are defenders and providers.]

**MC:** *Koomwaay maan booyichu.... Nyoolu akweek mboo moomo okoonyiit CHEEBKOKOCHIIT CHIITAAB NG'ALEEK .... KUUYU KUUBURANG'*

**125 KOORKO .. ateebe anii araab Cheseebe cheebyoosochu mite kule tiinye koot kiibkankawuneeke aata?** [The old men with wisdom... it is (appropriate) that women should recognize the authority and wisdom of the tortoise because unlike the witty tortoise, women are like the cunning hares whose tricks never outmatch the wisdom and patience of the tortoise. Those women gathered here today, I ask you... How many roof

**130** peak points do traditional huts have?]

**AUD:** *Akeenke* [one]

**MC:** *kaarkeey chiitaab kaayta kiibkaankawuut nyii koonyitoot* [the head of a homestead is a man, the peak of authority. Like the peak point of the traditional roof, he oversees everything below him including his women and animals alike.]

**135 FT:** *Ntoo yoo intesee cheebkoochiit aankuu sorooru kesyeekuut*

*KUUSYEEBCHOO TEEREENG?* ( But the tortoise is sometimes unnecessarily too slow and the peak points of the tradition roofs are often the sources of the leaking roofs... the

tortoise can be the source of women's problems by (lying facing upwards and fails to beat his conjugal service]

**140 KK:** *Miyaat yoo moomo... ntee yoo kabooykeey koorko nyee keesyebtooy ng'weny kiitiinkeene aam kaayta... KAAKUBUUN TEERET KUUYU TOSOO AWUTAAB KOORKO...-METOORE YEE LO* [that would be bad our mother... but a woman who are laid on should never despise men who are the heads of their homesteads ... if she does disrespect him, then the leaking pot would have broken .

**145** A woman is weak and strikes not far; she should never usurp the sovereign authority of the man in the home stead]

**TT:** *+Keentaas -komentaas... KOORKO NYEE KUUNKUUYOO KUU SEKEMA NYEE SEKENE KUUNKUU koonyiitee boonteenyi ...neme muukaangenyi NYEE IWEERE BUUNIK kWEERN* [slow or not... women

**150** should toil like bees... they should fend for their husbands and children... they should respect their husbands... and always be armed with their cooking sticks which, like their courageous sons, penetrate in the middle of the enemy...]

**MC:** *Omwoonyee tiibiin kuule TYEENE KAAB WEERIK KAASISYIIN KWAAN... ORIIB KOONWOONG' MOBUUN BEEY... -moobur kuu weriin*

**155** *chee meengete kiyee tesse taay aam koo... Mwooyee tyangocheet aake kuule AATINYEE LAKWANYUU NYEE YOO KOOCHOO MUREN KUKEEYTA NTOO YOO KOCHOO KOORKO KUKIIN* [Tell our daughters that sons sing while their fathers are quite.. let them guard against shame.. they should never emulate their brothers who are ignorant of household chores but players in the outdoor activities... One riddle puts it clear that 'I have my child who would not notice a man passing by but would implore a woman passing by to stop and shave her hair.]

**FT:** *Sakianteeet* (spider plant]

**MT:** *Ntoo yoo obiite weerik omwoochine KUULE KOOT NYOO KARAAT*

*MEWUUT NTOO NYOO YATAAT KUNYEENG'UUNG* (But you commission boys under

**165** oath to fetch women from the open fields and never in their husbands' homesteads)



**KK:** *cheebetyaankooch*, **KAAKEEYIIBE KOOMAT KOROROYOTE** (Riddle Riddle, your mother was carried trickling water)

**AUD:** *Keresyeet* (A traditional gadget used for making alkaline cooking solution)

## Appendix 5

### Excerpt Three

**Date:** 2/12/2005

**Place:** Cheptais

**Time:** 9:30AM

**Participants:** All participants shall be known by the initial capital letters of their names e.g. **MS**, **MB**, **SS** etc. **VH** refers to the village head. They were seven in total plus over thirty members of the public.

**Context:** This excerpt captures a land dispute pitying a married woman- who was the only child to the deceased Father- and her uncle. It occurred in an open forum. The participants included the local chief, council of elders, the aggrieved and a host of other interested villagers and relatives.

**VH:** *Asubooyook kookweet koonkoy Boyiikkaab kook aak chebyoosookaab meesikeei... Araab Simootwo... Chemunee Ngeeywo nyee... koomyoone ambu*

**170** *roorokoonoo mwoong'ong?* (I salute and thank the council of elders gathered here together with (womenfolk) of the kitchen... Simootwo's son, how is Ngeeywo's health over there in your ridge?]

**MS** {} *wuunyi kaakuyeehta koorko ko* [I suppose it is dawn while a woman is still indoors]

**175 VH** *...lekwaani Cheesekut, ng'aalal baa... Mokweechoo langaat irironuu kuubon ng'aalekaab santeeng'uung' {} = [... This child Cheesekut, talk now. You came to me yesterday sobbing alleging that your husband...]*

**MB:** *Samburumo, koonkoy, yu keeyitu tuyooni, koomeebtakeesing' ... kweeboty anoo?*  
[Thank you Samburumo for attending this important meeting. It is long



180 since I last saw you, where have you been?]

SS: *Amiite ntee KYARUUTOO EWEEI WARWAAMATE MWEENKOSYEEKYU  
CHEE KYAANG'AAB LOOYININ* [I have been around only that I had gone to  
(inspect) some of my bee-hives mounted on trees far away.]

VH: *Awooy araaba ... Seree... Araa kweenyooru kuchemunee Mchokorochuuto*

185 *Ongeet booyiik kule mokumakaanket lakwaataabaay nyee kiwoo loyiin kuteertooy =*  
[Truly, truly my brothers, it is fine. How were the grandchildren over there? Now  
members of the council of elders, our daughters are like (guinea fowl,) which abandon  
their homesteads and go into wildness?] ... *Ketaas taay aak*

*Tuuyeeet .... Lakwaani Cheesekuut, Mookweechoo lang'aat iriroonuu kubo*

190 *ng'aaleek aab santeegnguung' kuubsiirmoi* [let us carry on with our meeting. This  
child Cheesekuut came yesterday sobbing and accusing her head of homestead, our son  
kuubsiirmoy.]

FC: (PP) *kwoochonee santeenyuu yeechaay ankutoowu kuwookutyeenoo =* [My husband  
came back in the evening and started quarrelling...]

195 VH: *Mwoowuu maan.....kowookutyeeening kuubokiiynee?* [Come on..... tell this  
gathering exactly why you were quarreled]

MS: *Leekwaani, KOONYIITE KATIIT MEETITAAB KUNCHUUT AANGENEENE* [Child,  
the neck respects and bears the (brainy head)]

FC: (pp) *....kokwaawoo aynoo.... =* [... I had gone to the river.....]

200 MS: [*kookweewoo aynoo ntoo KWEEESAAB AYNEET INYORUU KUBEESTAAB  
CHEBKOMAT NTOO KWEEWOO BOOYTIIT?*] [Did you go to the river or you  
followed the riverbank and found your (sister's thighs) or you went gossiping?]

FC *...Ayeewuu amuu aynoo kaakoroot tuukyii chee iwooleekeyy kuule tuukaab*

**205 mureen.** *Kiing'etii mooyta boroowoweet ankureeri... Kaakosaarweet leekook tukuuk amu Koo... ntosuubaak kiimanayeey amiik... Kutoowunee yoto kuwookutyeenoo ku kuroo ankuuchuuro kule sibiirtiit, cheebuyeey, buraaneet anku birsyeetoo. [ I came back from the river when he had brought back the animals from grazing fields, animals that he is fond of boasting (as men's cattle).*

**210** unfortunately, one of the calves suckled without my knowledge, the children had messed up the house and I had not prepared his food. He started insulting and calling me nasty names: disorderly, lazy and a sluggish woman, kicking me all the time]

**VH:** *Maan abaayaa Kuubiirmooory, ng'aleechu mwoyee lekweetaab kang'ung'uung?*

[Our son Kuubsiirmooy, is what the child of your homestead alleging true?]

**215 SS:** {} *Itiil kuuliet nyoo keebit..... **Koorko nyee monore looyiin kuu iinyiing ameeinyee kiraatya koonyitee boontenyii kuuchuurta.** [You must cut short the horns you've grown of late. A woman who deserts her father's home is a squatter and a refugee in her man's home. You must respect your husband completely...]*

**VH:** *Aabaayaa kuubsiirmooy, iwuuse **MAAKANKAANI KOONE?** (Kuubsiirmooy,*

**220** why do you insult this guinea fowl we give out our animals for?]

**MK:** *Maan Booyiikaab kook .... Kwaabooryee aamu yuu kaayiitu kaa aanyooru manaraat mooyeek, iseerweetootiin tikuuk mbuu koo... Ateebee kiyee kyoomo,*  
***KULENCHOO MO KUMII BUSYEK KOOII CHEE-MAKEKWONYE***

[It is true the council of elders .I fought her because all else in the home stead was

**225** disorderly, and there was no food for me. She said she could not cook because there was no flour but ashes for flour in the house!]



**VH:** *Kaakas ng'aaleek kwook... chee, ikonyit santeet NTOO MII KOOYIIN YOO  
KEESICH SAANG NTOO KOO, keebuuruung koonkei. Inyiing abaaya kuubsiirmooy,  
koorko ku koorko, kiooke keeraktaa, nteenee-mesiin kuuyu*

**230** *buniondetaab meesikeei akuyiweech bororieet, miyaat nyoo keyaam koong';  
ookoonyiitekeey kubakeenge ooriibe saabiikyoo.* (I have followed your arguments  
keenly child, respect your head so that while you bear for us either an (outsider or  
insider) we shall all appreciate. Our son, a woman is a woman, we all use a stick to tame  
**235** her, but don't kill her with the same. She is our enemy in embrace; a cook and one  
filling our clan; a woman who is infertile is valueless. Join hands to take care of the  
offbrings.

**Appendix 6**  
**Excerpt Four**

**Time: 11: 00 am**

**Place: Chepkube**

**Date: 23/12/200**

**Participants:** All participants shall be known by the initial capital letters of their names e.g. **MK, NN**, etc. **VH** refers to the village head and **UP** for unidentified person. Participants were twelve plus over twenty members of the society.

**Context:** The excerpts below are drawn from a marriage negotiation function in the bride's homestead. The function is about bride prize. However, topics change in the course of negotiations including right for inheritance of property by women and wife beating. The participants were family members, friends, village elders, members from the bridegroom's family and other interested community members.

**MK:** *Kaasum aanyoi kyeenkuutaab kaab maaryeen kuubo ng'aleekaab cheebnyii*  
*Tanabaan = [I am the first to arrive in Maaryeen's homestead following issues related to his daughter Tanabaan]*

**240 NN:** {} *Kararaan yoo. Araaba araab Kubooy, IITUCHOOS BIIK CHEEBTA KUU*  
*AAYNEET NYOO ITUUCHOOS CHEEBYOOSOK. Ara miite Maryeen **nakaaytaab***  
*kaayta ntoo karyeen?* = [it is all fine my brother the son of kubooy, a daughter is like a river which gathers women together from far and near. Is Maryeen the head of the homestead around or he is (at large?)]



**245 UP:** *Karaan yu keenyoi kienguni kuuyu yokonyoo koorko tuyeet, mwoneech keelyook aak yoomtos ng'aal kuu kween kuumuur yoo koowo aynoo.* [It is fine and a blessing for a man to arrive first in the homestead before the meeting starts. Women's legs are bitter and it is difficult to handle issues if they arrive first particularly when they are on their periods]

**250 MK:** {} *Miite tuukwaay akoo kwong'inteeaab kaanyi Tamnaay cheebaay moo.* [He is around together with the cook of his homestead, (our feeder).

**MM:** *Awooy booyiik koobuur kiyeeng'... kaataachaak aamu kaanyuu. Seree boonteetaab kook araaba keekany bbyiik alaak kuyiit sakung'et keetooy ng'aaleekaab subeentaab keechiiryooni kaanoonkyikeet meengiit kuuyu subaak rube*

**255** *saakamianteeet keet nyoo kaleel* [Welcome old men in my homestead...I embrace you wholeheartedly. I particularly recognize the presence of our village head, my brother. Let us wait for other old men before we embark on these issues relating to our daughter. Elders you are all aware that the bee fetches nectar from a tree of its choice and that a 260ram stubbornly pursues (a ripe sheep) we are gathered for that]

**MN:** *Weemway nkook nyee kaaswaach kaabsuuntuunyii kuuruube kurkoonkiit kooturkuchee.* [What would one say about the (hen which is ready to lay eggs) the cock gives it company always crowing].

**VH.** *Unyooto booiik.* [...That is true our old men]

**265 FT:** (pp) *kaatoroochaak boyiik koonkooy yu kooyiitu koong'uu.* [I welcome and thank the old men. You are all welcome in my house]

**VH** *...Yoo tekekenyee boyiik alaak, miite ng'aalak aeengu chee kiimuuche kesaat kunyoo kuruuptakeei laakwaani Kaabkarich aako neetaabkamatiib kwaan Nkameet.* [...As we wait for other old men to arrive, I wish to draw your attention to an issue 270affecting this child Kaabkarich together with his uncle Nakameet].

**MM:** *Cheebyoos Tamnaay amokaakukwa booyiik. AARA MEEKATWEECH  
KIIRUUKUUK CHEE KIITEEKIIN KUUCHUR KUUT BOOYIICHU?*

(My wife Tamnaay, now that the old men are gathered here, could you kindly intervene  
275 and stop your (warring bulls from fighting) so that the old men can wash their  
mouths?)

**VH:** *Ng'alaal Nakameet.* [Let Nakameet talk]

**MN:** *Yoo teebe laakwaani kiikochii mbareetaab kwaan, mwooweech kaabcheeru  
ng'weny aak kaamat keesirtoi kuchakeey bintaab somoonyeen, ng'oo koorko*

280 *nyeekiinyoor mbareetaab kwaan?* [If indeed my (daughter child) demands her  
father's land, I want to know when, (a daughter who like her mother lies down under a  
man's weight, got a share of her father's land since time immemorial?)]

**MM:** *Aroobe ng'aleekaab boontonoo kuuyu boo araan koorko kaab cheewuuyo  
ankoonkete buchuubeen yoo rooryee kuumwooye kuule cheebtaab areet aake*

285 *ntoo mutaay koonyiit areet aake.* [I concur with the observations of the aggrieved  
uncle. Women are enrouted domestic migrants. They are all incidentally aware of their  
status particularly when they laugh their hearts out saying 'a woman of a different clan  
tomorrow fills another clan'.... Why is this child demanding her father's land when she is  
(filling her man's clan?).]

290 **FK: (pp)** –*Maachamee ng'aleekwook, nteenee ntoo kyayeekuu weero aam kanyoo  
ntoo +kyookoonob Mbareet? Nteene ntoo yuu meetinyee kwaan weero, aam nee yuu –  
mokonoo mbareet* = [I don't agree with your stand. Suppose I was a male child in our  
home, couldn't I have been given a portion of my fathers land? Now that my father died  
without a son, why can't I inherit his land as his daughter?]

295 **MM:** *Siis kaabkarich ankiikaab kuutit.* –*meenyooruu mbaar kuuyu kiikiiberaniing  
inyiite araat aake, miite mbeereng'uung' aako siintaariikab leekookuuk kaab*



*saanteenguung... Keekaas?* [Shut your mouth and cut your mouthy beak, you certainly won't get his land. You have left this homestead forever and now you know that both **300** your grave and your children's placenta are in your husbands homestead, do you hear!

**FK:** *Nkaab kikiimuta manang'aat sintareetaab kanyoo aakoi akaam mbeereet aab Baaba.* [So long as I remain my father's child and you all know that my placenta is buried here, I have the rights to claim my father's land even if I am married]

**MN:** ...Abeesye noongin, maanyooru yoo abusee [I swear by my spear, as long as **305** I live, she won't get...]

**FK:** *Anyooru kuu chekaab moomo che kiareerii... mbareetaab baaba manuuchee? Kwaam sorintooni* = [I swear by (the breast- milk of my mother), my father's land to be taken by this (devil) no way=]

**MM:** (pp) *kuubwaaneening... KWAAMIING KIBTIING NYEE KYAAM TIILYAAB*

**310 MUREEN** [It is upto you and your fate. Guard against going (desolate like the fate of man's relative in a homestead) in the hostile face of his wife.

**VH:** - *Mookweesyii ng'aaleekaab cheebnyoo kaabkaarich. Nkaab oochuure kooruuk omwooye kule KAAKEEYIIBE MKOOMAT KOOROROYOOTE, oonkeet kuule kookuweek ng'aleek nteenee aam beetusyeechuu leekwa ku leeka,*

**315 KUUYU -METUNUSEENE KOORO MWAAKIIS, NG'OONYEE KUUYE BOOLIK** [ take note all elders gathered here, never undermine her complaints, I know gone are days when women were compared to animals, however things have changed, a child remains a child with her rights, the sky is never always cloudy, it opens giving in...

**320** light and warmth as they shift]

**MM:** *Keemwaai maan boonteetaab kook, aaniraat kaakany santeetaab cheebnyu kyii*

*Koechoo, nteenee kaameechee amwoochi leekookaabaay tyaangocheetaab koorko*

*Cheebetyaankooch:*

*Tyaa*

**325 INYE KIIRUKYUU CHEE KIITEEKIN AAMAABEEREKEEY**

*(Mosukook)*

*Awooy koonyoo, moosukook chuu kiruukaab koorko*

*Cheebetyaankooch subaak*

*Tyaa*

**330 Aatinye lakwaanyuu nyee iweere buulik kween**

*(Mukanmkeet.)*

*Aamwai nee raat subaak*

*Onkeet kuule kurooktaab koorko mukankenyii nyee aakee kiiruukyii Mukankeet*

[The village heads has spoken well. Even as we are gathered here in

**335** my homestead as we await the visitors for my daughter's marriage negotiation,

She won't be in the meeting as we deliberate on her bride prize; I want to say a riddle...

Riddle riddle

**AUD:** Let it come

**340** I've my bulls set against one another but never fighting

**AUD:** Hearths



That is right; hearths are a woman's fighting bulls, her prized kitchenware.

I have another riddle for this gathering

Riddle riddle

**345 AUD:** Let it come I have one courageous son who strikes mid the enemy camp

**AUD:** Cooking stick What can I say now...? Know henceforth that a woman's cooking stick is her tool and kitchen hearths... her bulls...]

**350 MK:** *Keemwaay maan Nakameet... chesook kuuchaakee keeny toososeech ameeitiinye tinyaa mbuu kaamwaa, tyiinyeenyii leekook aak saantentyii...*

– *mekuumeechee kutoontenyii mbuu kuuyuu boontooibiich, chee kaabkarich, mii mbareetaa leekoookuuk kaab saanteengu'uung'* [you speak so well my brother Nakameet... since those good old days, women have been without value

**355** and considered weak, she has no relationship with her family because she is enrouted... when she comes back home claiming a portion of land,...then her (shadow) in the homestead haunts and is omenious to the entire clan... our daughter... Kaabkaarich ... your children's land is with your husband... do you hear...

**360 VH:** *Nakameet aako Kaabkarich, koobo raat tuuyeet kooyeeytaab chebee Maryeen ...ooba kaa, oong'alaal bikaab areet, Oosit ng'aleekwook soborwoo ooni wuu keekaas... Mii Seembeen yuu akoo mboo bamwaay ikyii Tawarar akoo Wantyeema... nee nyii kwakaas mbuu akweek?* [Nakameet with our daughter Kaabkarich, your issues can be tackled at the clan level, go home... settle it there

**365** and let me inform ... I can see Seembeen with her in-law Tawarar and Wantyeema, What is it hear about your children]

**FS:** *kaayeey kulee nee senteetaab cheebnyuu nyee kyaatoree choonyeetaab kubooreet*

*nyii kesaakiiit chebnyuu...* [I fail to understand my daughter's husband has turned a beast against my (prized) firstborn daughter whom we proudly sang and danced

**370** (the traditional song) after her circumcision.]

**VH:** *Maan kiyii mwoyee baamwaayiing 'uung?* (Is what your inlaw says true?)

**MW:** *kootooy weeri buunyoontiit nkiit, ntee yoo keebiite weeriin, keebiityiine ayweet, aruumet ...nong'eet kuriib kaanyii aako yeemet. Manakaas mureen nyee isoree koorkenyii arumeet* [My son has suddenly proved cruel and beastly. It is true that

**375:** men are given authority under oath to protect and fend for families using the spear, shield and an axe. I am puzzled... why my son wants to use the very weapon for protecting his wife and family against them.....]

**VH:** *Miite weeriito yuu...?* [Is he around with us today?]

**MW:** *Kaamweeii mbuu muung'aanyuneek nkiinee* (He is ashamed and has taken off)

**380 FS:** *Maan yoo Baamwaay ... keebiite nkiinee cheebta. Keebiityiine soosyoonteet, teeret, aako seeteet keebiite keemwoochiine kuule WEEYII KU TYOONY KIBYOOKOOSO ankuubwa tuuka byii... iriib saanteet akoo leekook... ikoonyiit kaamwa tuukul...kianeet laakwanyuu kuunyoota mbuu nee raat yuukakeenemchi longeeet?* [That is true my in-law... equally a girl is given authority under oath to

**385** protect and use a bowl... pot...gourd... and the (gourd stick). She is told to respect her husband and the new clan and protect her children... she is besieged to sire and produce more children for her new clan like (a wild animal)... I have prepared my daughter in kitchen school... what hurts most is why should he want to kill my daughter with the very weapon he should protect her with?]

**390 FT:** *Keeba wooliil aak kookeetaab koorko nyee kooyeech koorooriikaab koonyaak. Kiimeerwookyinee cheebng'uung' moosukoou nyee tiliil... nteenee Kiikeemwoochikey .kuule KOORAAT KEESYO...* [Leave my son alone...your daughter



is a wild sexual goose)... you didn't give her enough instruction in the fireplace ... I wish I knew ...my

**395** son would have married elsewhere... However...Marriage is blind...]

**VH:** *Maan yoo... KOORAAAT KEESYO nteenee teeche tiinianaateet. Aamechee oketee leekook... moowuruuree... ntenee kuuyu tuyooni kobo cheptaab Nakameet... mokaany kiriontee sabweetaab chepnyoo nyee mii mukwooruu tuuka karii raat... Kekaanya teek ... mokwaa kaasii aeeng keesaat ng'aaleek kwook ... Wantyeema*

**400** *ichoonteekei weriit ... Keekaas?* [It is true that marriage is blind but marriage is blind and builds relationships .... Always ensure that we control small feuds in our families.... Never set couples against one another... now that the meeting was meant for Nakameet daughter's marriage negotiations, let us (not spoil it) with such small feuds, our daughter today is enriching this family with more animals

**405** and enlarging our kinship network, let us treat the day with utmost respect... for this young couples...let us guide them the following week...)

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