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Significance of the CONTAINER Image Schema in the Conceptualization of Selected Ekegusii Male Metaphors

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ABSTRACT

Language is used for communication. There are terms that are employed to describe members of different gender in Ekegusii. Since metaphors pervade human language, most of these descriptions are metaphorical. Metaphor use may, however, present difficulties in objective comprehension due to the various interpretations that may be assigned to each of them. It is, therefore, possible to have Ekegusii male metaphors whose meaning might be elusive to the native speakers of Ekegusii because metaphor is primarily a matter of thought and action whose meaning is normally situated in a specific context. This study, thus, employed Image Schema Theory to evaluate selected Ekegusii male metaphors within the Cognitive Linguistics paradigm. An interview schedule was administered to 48 Ekegusii native respondents of different gender to collect the terms used to describe the males in Ekegusii. The data collected was then subjected to MIPVU in which four annotators were used to identify Ekegusii male metaphors. Through MIPVU, 52 metaphors were identified. The study then selected six Ekegusii male metaphors which allude to the CONTAINER image schema for analysis. The study reveals that there are Ekegusii male metaphors that are essential in the construction of masculinity in Gusii. In addition, the IN-OUT, the FULL-EMPTY, the CONTENT and the EXCESS subsidiary image schemas which are orderly activated by the CONTAINER image schema are significant in explaining the place and role of the males in Gusii. The research concludes that metaphors are integral components of communication and should be explained using the Cognitive Linguistics approach.

Keywords: *Cognitive Linguistics, Ekegusii, Image schema, Male metaphors, MIPVU*

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1. Introduction

Image schemas are pervasive organizing structures in human cognition which emerge from our bodily and social interaction with the environment at a preconceptual level (Santibanez, 2002). Oakley (2012) notes that image schemas are resourceful in describing perceptual experience by facilitating mapping of spatial structures onto the conceptual ones thus aiding in the comprehension of abstract entities. Oakley further notes that image schemas emerge as meaningful structures for us chiefly at the level of our bodily movements through space, our manipulation of objects and our perceptual interactions.

Moreover, image schemas function as 'distillers' of spatial and temporal experiences (Gathigia, 2014). The distilled experiences, according to Oakley (2012) form the basis for organizing knowledge and reasoning about the world. Otieno (2019) also provides that image schemas represent schematic patterns that arise from imagistic domains such as paths, links and balance among others which recur in a variety of embodied domains. This implies that image schemas structure our bodily experience and, thus, enable us to understand abstract concepts like metaphors. The present study, therefore, undertakes an image schematic



analysis of selected Ekegusii male metaphor to reveal meaning.

The Ekegusii male metaphors are explained through the Cognitive Linguistics (CL) framework. CL is an approach to the analysis of natural language that was founded by linguists such as: George Lakoff, Ron Lagacker and Len Talmy among others in the late seventies and early eighties (Geeraerts & Cuyckens, 2006). CL considers language as an instrument for organizing, processing and conveying information. Barcelona and Valenzuela (2006) posit that CL began as a protest against the formal approaches to language. The generative grammar by Noam Chomsky, for instance, proposes an approach which makes very strong commitments about the primacy of syntax, thus, leaving out the significance of semantics and pragmatics in linguistic theorizing. According to Langacker (1987), meaning is what language is all about and concentration on the form of language rather than its meaning impoverishes the subject matter and distorts the intended message. Meaning, which is the core of CL, is considered to be a product of a nexus which exists among language, the mind and social-physical experiences.

In Cognitive Linguistics (CL), metaphor is considered as a specific mental mapping which significantly influences the way people think, imagine and reason in everyday life (Geeraerts & Cuyckens, 2006). According to Barcelona and Valenzuela (2006), metaphor is not only just a rhetorical device nor a matter of words only but also mental projections of one domain of experience onto a different domain of experience. The mental projections are normally carried out unconsciously and effortlessly. Onchoke (2018) also notes that metaphor is at the centre of speech production, communication and processing of meaning which is dependent on mappings between different domains. Nyakoe, Oloo and Ongarora (2014) identify the different domains of experience as the source and the target domains. The source domain is what is physical, familiar or concrete while the target domain is the abstract one. In the cross-domain mappings, the features of the source domains are mapped onto the corresponding ones in target domains to reveal the meaning of a metaphorical expression.

The study focuses on metaphor because, as pointed out by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphor is ubiquitous not

only in language but also in thought and action. There are terms which are employed to describe members of different gender in Ekegusii. Most of these descriptions are metaphorical because Nyakoe, Oloo and Ongarora (2014) opine that metaphor use is pervasive in Ekegusii. The use of metaphor may, however, result to difficulties in meaning formation due to various interpretations that may be assigned to each of the metaphors. Some of the interpretations may, for example, introduce properties which are not part of a speaker's mental representation. Consequently, the terms employed to describe members of different gender may be represented and interpreted differently by the native Ekegusii speakers. The present study, therefore, uses image schemas to unveil the incisive meaning of the selected Ekegusii male metaphors.

Otiso (2017) posits that men are socialized to gather food in Gusii (the region where Ekegusii is predominantly spoken). The term *omosacha* (a man) not only refers to maleness but also the roles the men are expected to play. According to Otiso (2017), the name *omosacha* (a man) is derived from the verb *gosacha* which means to look for or gather. A man who does not strive to gather the necessary resources for his family is not considered as having attained the definition of *obosacha* (maleness) in Gusii. Culturally designed terms are normally used to belittle such a man. In addition, Onchoke (2017) also posits that Gusii is generally a patriarchal society where most males dominate majority of the females. Consequently, some words and expressions have been devised to portray the males as the superior ones in comparison with the females in Gusii. This research, therefore, identified the terms that are used to describe the males in Ekegusii through an interview schedule. The identified words and expressions were then subjected to the Metaphor Identification Procedure *Vrije Universiteit* (MIPVU) by Steen et al. (2010) to test for their metaphoricity. The MIPVU is a method of identifying metaphors that provides clear analytical procedures that are used to identify exact metaphors for study. The identified Ekegusii male metaphors were then comprehensively evaluated for meaning using Image Schema Theory.

Ekegusii is a Bantu language predominantly spoken in Kisii and Nyamira Counties of Kenya. The 2019 population and census report approximates the native

speakers of Ekegusii at 1, 872,385 people (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). Magachi (2015) notes that Abagusii (the native speakers of Ekegusii) are believed to have migrated from their original homeland in Congo Forest through Uganda and entered Kenya through the western part. Abagusii are not bordered by other Bantu speakers but by Nilotic speaking communities which are: the Kipsigis to the East, the Luo to the West and the Maasai to the North (Magachi, 2015). Otieno, Mecha and Ongarora (2019) provide that Ekegusii has two dialects namely: *Rogoro* (Northern) and *Maate* (Southern) dialects. *Rogoro* dialect is spoken in the northern parts while *Maate* is spoken in the southern parts of Gusii. This study employs *Rogoro* dialect because it is considered the standard form. It is, for instance, *Rogoro* dialect which is extensively used as a medium of instruction to teach Ekegusii to lower primary pupils at rural areas in Gusii.

2. Theoretical Framework for the Study

The research adopts Image Schema Theory (IST). The main proponent of IST is Johnson (1987). Johnson provides that image schemas are recurrent skeletal patterns of a preconconceptual nature which arise from our everyday bodily and social experiences. However, once the recurrent patterns of sensory information have been extracted and stored as an image schema, sensory experience gives rise to a conceptual representation (Gathigia, 2014; Mandler, 2004; Otieno, 2019). IST provides a framework of explaining abstract concepts like metaphors on the basis of human embodied experiences. Through IST, the spatial entities which are concrete or physical are mapped onto the entities that are abstract to reveal meaning. For example, the concept of movement can be accounted for based on the logic of the path schema through IST. IST, therefore, enables us to make sense of abstract linguistic phenomena such as metaphor. This is authenticated by Santibanez (2002) who postulates that IST provides a framework that enables us to understand abstract concepts which makes it easy for us to comprehend the world around us. According to Krzeszowski (1993), image schemas present a bipolar property of assigning either a positive or negative metaphor value. This facilitates the conceptualization of the selected Ekegusii male metaphors based on the negative or positive metaphor axiology.

Hampe (2003) posits that there exists numerous image schemas that are applicable

in revealing the meaning of abstract entities in the field of Cognitive Linguistics. This has motivated different scholars to devise various ways of classifying image schemas as exemplified by Clausner and Croft (1999); Gathigia (2014); Johnson (1987); Santibanez (2002) and Peña (2003) among others. Most scholars are, however, in agreement that there are basic image schemas and subsidiary ones which are orderly activated by the basic image schemas. This study mainly employs the CONTAINER image schema to analyse the selected Ekegusii male metaphors. This is motivated by Otieno (2019) who argues that the CONTAINER image schema is essential in the comprehension a human being as a container of power, feelings, emotions and status. Santibanez (2002) also points out that the CONTAINER image schema orderly activates the emergence of subsidiary image schemas such as: IN-OUT, FULL-EMPTY and EXCESS which are vital in giving an account of various abstract phenomena on the basis of containers. The CONTAINER image schema is also appropriate for this study because, according to Vernillo (2019), it allows us to reason about abstract entities in three dimensional spatial terms.

3. Research Methodology

This research employed descriptive research design to reveal the significance of the CONTAINER image schema in the conceptualization of the selected Ekegusii male metaphors. McCombes (2019) posits that descriptive research aims at accurately and systematically describing a population, situation or a phenomenon. The study also purposively selected 48 Ekegusii native respondents on the basis of gender to identify the terms used to describe the males in Ekegusii through an interview schedule. The gender variable was considered significant because Huma (2010) notes that people normally form different impressions on abstract concepts based on their gender. In addition, Hendrick and Hendrick (1995) also argue that gender provides us the lens through which we perceive various issues in society. The study, therefore, gathered sufficient data that factored the impressions, thoughts and views of members of different gender on the males in Ekegusii.

The identified words and expressions which are used to describe the males in Ekegusii were then subjected to Steen's et al. (2010) the Metaphor Identification Procedure *Vrije Universiteit* (MIPVU) to establish precise metaphors for study. The MIPVU is a reliable tool which is



resourceful in identifying linguistic metaphors from written or spoken discourse (Karola, 2017). Four annotators (including the researchers) were employed to establish the Ekegusii male metaphors through the MIPVU. A word or an expression was annotated as a metaphor if : one, its basic meaning in the dictionary contrasted with its contextual sense and; two, if at least three annotators in an inter-rater reliability test, as pointed out by Cameron (2003) and Ntabo (2019), marked the word or expression as a metaphor. This study identified 52 Ekegusii male metaphors through the MIPVU. Six Ekegusii male metaphors which are activated by the CONTAINER image schema were then selected for analysis (cf. Table 1.1). This study focuses on the CONTAINER image schema because Vernillo (2019) notes that the CONTAINER image schema is one of the basic, natural and embodied image schemas which is resourceful in explaining abstract entities based on the concept of containment.

4. Research Findings and Discussion

The study selected six Ekegusii male metaphors for analysis through the CONTAINER image schema. Specifically, the IN-OUT, the FULL-EMPTY, the CONTENT and the EXCESS subsidiary image schemas which stem from the CONTAINER schema were helpful in the conceptualization of the selected metaphors. The study notes that the CONTAINER image schema and its subsidiary schemas are ubiquitous in everyday conceptualization and reasoning. Table 1.1 below presents the six Ekegusii male metaphors which are conceptualized by the CONTAINER schema and its subsidiary image schemas.

Table 1: Ekegusii Male Metaphors Conceptualized by the CONTAINER Image Schema

No	Ekegusii	Gloss
1	<i>Omosacha n' enywomo</i>	A man is marriage
2	<i>Omosacha ange Omotwe</i>	A man is like a head
3	<i>Omosacha n' eriso</i>	A man is an eye
4	<i>Omosacha n' ekemincha</i>	A man is a penis
5	<i>Omosacha n' omobuko</i>	A man is a pocket
6	<i>Omosacha n' enyomba</i>	A man is a house

The CONTAINER image schema was used to give an account of the instances which allude to masculinity in Ekegusii as entities with borders. For example, the IN-OUT subsidiary image schema that is orderly activated by the CONTAINER image schema was resourceful in explaining who *omosacha* (a man) is based on *enywomo* (marriage) as indicated in metaphor (1) below. Thus:

(1) *Omosacha n' enywomo* –‘a man is marriage’. Otieno (2019) posits that the IN-OUT subsidiary image schema takes into account the notions of IN, OUT, INTO and OUT OF. In metaphor (1) above, a man who is described as marriage is instantiated as a container that has the capacity to either take in or release some content. Gathigia (2014) argues that the institution of marriage can be understood as a container that one can either get into or move out. For example, it is revealed in Genesis 1:27 that God created Eve because it was not good for Adam to live alone (the Holy Bible, 1982). Eve, therefore, came into Adam’s life as a companion. This union is interpreted as marriage where a bride in this case comes into a man’s life. It is, for instance, a bride who moves into a groom’s home as a wife after the groom has fulfilled the societal obligations such as payment of bride price to the bride’s family in Gusii. Consequently, *omosacha* (a man) is culturally expected to marry in Gusii. Metaphor (1) above, therefore, suggests that a man in a marriageable age who fails to marry is normally disgraced in Gusii. In addition, a man who is instantiated as *enywomo* (marriage) can release some content which suggests the notion of OUT in the IN-OUT subsidiary image schema. For example, a man is expected to sire children because procreation is one of the key roles of the institution of marriage in Gusii. According to Akama (2017), Abagusii believe that children are important in the continuity of family lineages apart from being key agents of safeguarding the family values and cultural heritage. There are, however, some men who are unable to sire children due to: physical, psychological, personal or medical reasons (Lindsay & Boyle, 2017). Metaphor (1) above, therefore, suggests that the men who are unable to sire children are abhorred regardless of the reasons because the chief roles of marriage in Gusii is procreation. Another illustration for the OUT notion in the IN-OUT subsidiary image schema is the fact that a married person can move out of a marriage especially in divorce or separation. Santibanez (2002) argues that there can be an interplay of image schemas in metaphoric comprehension. Consequently, the FORCE image schema was also helpful in the conceptualization of metaphor (1) above. The dynamics involved in the FORCE image schema include: the exertion of force, resistance to force, overcoming resistance, blockage of force or removal of blockage

(Gathigia 2014; Johnson, 1987; Otieno, 2019). In this case, marriage can be accounted for by the BLOCKAGE subsidiary image schema which stems from the FORCE schema. According to Johnson (1987), the BLOCKAGE subsidiary image schema emerges when a moving entity encounters an obstacle which prevents it from making further movement. Marriage, for example, can act as an impediment to a married person's freedom to engage in what is considered undesirable to the marriage partners. Therefore, marriage partners are often obstructed from engaging in activities that breach the vows of marriage. This is exemplified in Hebrews 13:4 that explicitly provides that marriage is to be honoured by all and the marriage bed kept undefiled (the Holy Bible, 1982). The marriage partners are, therefore, occluded from vices such as infidelity. Contravention of the marriage oath often leads to conflict between the marriage partners.

Metaphor (2) below describes *omosacha* (a man) as *omotwe* (a head) which also subscribes to the internal logic of the CONTAINER image schema. According to Lakoff (1987), the CONTAINER image schema consists of 'an interior, an exterior and a boundary' (p.116). Therefore:

(2) *Omosacha n' omotwe* – 'a man is a head'.

The human head is positioned at the top of the human body. It is protected by the skull which also encloses the brains within the human head. The head is home to the human sensory organs which include: two ears, two eyes, a tongue in the mouth and a nose. Metaphor (2) above portrays the human head as a container because it is characterized with an interior part, an exterior and a boundary. The entities in the exterior part can reach the interior part of the head which is made up of the brains through the sensory organs. This insinuates that the IN-OUT subsidiary image schema can be employed to understand *omosacha* (a man) based on *omotwe* (a head). Maris and Oliver (2018) note that the sensory organs, most of which are located in the head, receive information and relay it to the brains for processing. The reception of signals through the sensory organs instantiates the IN concept in the IN-OUT subsidiary image schema. This suggests that *omosacha* (a man) is an important member who receives vital information which concerns the operations of his family. The received information is then directed to the human brains for processing. According to Maris

and Oliver (2018), the human brains undertake crucial roles of: translating sensations from the human senses, thinking, coordinating movements, controlling sleep and breathing patterns among others functions. The brains also have billions of nerves that communicate processed information as instructions to other body parts through trillions of connections referred to as synapses (Maris & Oliver, 2018). This exemplifies the OUT notion in the IN-OUT subsidiary image schema. A man who is described as a head in Ekegusii is, therefore, assigned a positive metaphor axiology because the head is revealed as a very vital human body part. This is in line with Krzeszowski (1993) who opines that image schemas present a bipolar property of assigning either a positive or negative metaphor value.

An eye is a vital body part that allows us to mentally structure our experiences and perceptions. Labelling *omosacha* (a man) as *eriso* (an eye) in Ekegusii is, therefore, acceptable. Thus:

(3) *Omosacha n' eriso* – 'a man is an eye'.

Eyes are very important organs which provide human beings and animals with the sense of vision. They also have the capacity to receive and process visual information and, therefore, facilitate photo response functions like impression formation. Eyes normally receive light from the environment and convert it into electro-chemical impulses. The impulses are then transmitted to the brains as an image for resolution. The CONTAINER image schema which, according to Basson (2008) structures the metaphorical language is employed to reason about *omosacha* (a man) who is portrayed as *eriso* (an eye) in (3) above. *Eriso* (an eye) can be attributed to the features of containment. For example, human eyes can sometimes be said to be overflowing with tears. Teary eyes can be explained using the EXCESS subsidiary image schema which stems from the CONTAINER schema. The EXCESS subsidiary image schema is invoked by expressions that convey that something is in a large amount than the desired (Peña, 2003). A watery eye is often an indication of extreme emotional situations that cause pain and anguish. Human beings in agony usually lack the capacity to effectively take charge of their mental faculty and, thus, most of their actions are unregulated. This is in line with Otieno's (2019) argument that, when the content of the container exceeds its



capacity, the container usually becomes uncontrollable and, hence, loses balance. Other causes of overflowing of tears include: sickness, extreme weather conditions and eye strain. According to Otieno (2019), the EXCESS subsidiary schema is usually associated with a negative axiological value. In reference to this, a man who is correlated with teary eyes is one who is fiery and, therefore, derogated in Gusii.

The IN-OUT subsidiary schema which is also activated by the CONTAINER image schema can be used to conceptualize metaphor (3) above. Some objects such as dust particles or some insects can accidentally get into the human eye. Such objects and insects normally cause irritation in the eye and are, therefore, supposed to be gently removed to ease discomfort. In addition, the human eye can also emit tears which are clear salty liquids found in all the eyes of mammals. Moreover, eyes also take in light and then convert it into impulses that are then sent out to the brain. The brain processes the impulses into the images that we visualize. This suggests the emergence of the IN-OUT subsidiary image schema where the entities that normally enter the eye are explained using the IN concept while those that get out of the eye instantiate the OUT notion. The eyes, therefore, help us to form visual-perceptual patterns as we track the movement of objects into and out of the eyes. This conceptualization is also in line with Basson's (2008) argument that the container image schema structures the metaphorical language employed to reason about embodied experience of being in containers or the body acting as a container. The eye metaphor (3) above is, hence, effectively accounted for in terms of a bounded container. *Omosacha* (a man) who is labelled as *eriso* (an eye) is, in this case, complimented in line with the eye's vital role of facilitating vision.

The *ekemincha* (a penis) Ekegusii male metaphor (4) below is useful in revealing people's perceptions about men in Gusii. *Ekemincha* (a penis) is a male sex organ which is indispensable in the human reproductive system. Thus:

(4) *Omosacha n' ekemincha* – 'a man is a penis'.

The CONTAINER image schema which, according to Peña (1999) alludes to entities within a bounded space that can also be emitted was used to explain who *omosacha* (a man) is based on *ekemincha* (a penis) in this study. A penis is a very

important body part that functions in involuntarily releasing of urine from the urinary bladder through the urethra to the outside of the body. In addition, a penis is also essential in depositing sperm cells into the female reproductive duct during copulation. Jones (1987) notes that one of the released sperm cells may fuse with an ovum to form a zygote cell. The zygote develops into a foetus that is eventually born as a child. The release of urine and sperm cells from a penis activates the OUT concept in the IN-OUT subsidiary image schema. Akama (2017) posits that Abagusii consider children as important assets that not only expand family lineages but are also essential in safeguarding family values and traditions. *Omosacha* (a man) who is contrasted with *ekemincha* (a penis) is, therefore, honoured in Gusii. This is in line Peña's (1999) argument that the entities that leave a bounded space can arouse either a negative or positive impression depending on their effect in the environment.

The meaning of metaphor (4) above can also be revealed using the LINK subsidiary image schema which stems from the OBJECT image schema. According to Santibanez (2002), the LINK schema consists of two or more entities that are connected with each other through a linking device of some kind. Human beings, as pointed out by Vernillo (2019) are involved in an ongoing process of linking, connecting and bonding which gives them their identity. A penis is a useful organ that physically links a man and a woman during copulation. In addition, sexual intercourse, according to Gathigia, Ndung'u and Njoroge (2015) is a necessary means of creating close ties between the marriage partners. Gathigia, Ndung'u and Njoroge further note that the inability to consummate marriages is one of the major causes of conflict in marriages. This means that *omosacha* (a man) who is unable to take part in sexual intercourse due to personal, medical, psychological or physical reasons is degraded in Gusii. The use of the CONTAINER and the OBJECT image schemas to conceptualize metaphor (4) above also validates Santibanez's (2002) provision that image schemas can be integrated to facilitate metaphor interpretation.

Omobuko (a pocket) is also revealed as a fundamental object that is useful in structuring the concept of masculinity in Ekegusii. Pockets often serve as useful containers for holding valuables such as

money, handkerchiefs and keys among others. According to Gathigia (2014), containers that can carry sufficient amounts are the ones that are normally desirable in society. The *omobuko* (a pocket) metaphor (5) below is, therefore, appropriate in highlighting the perceptions about *omosacha* (a man) in Gusii. Thus:

(5) *Omosacha n' omobuko* –‘a man is a pocket’.

Oneya (2018) argues that society often defines manhood by the property a man has, his education and financial status. This means that a man's worth is often measured by: one, the size of his pocket; two, what he brings home at end of the day and; three, the handouts and treats he gives his loved ones. Oneya further notes that if a man is unable to provide for his household, then he is often stripped off his manhood. Masculinity, in this context is portrayed as a cage that most men are put in. Most men are, therefore, forced to sacrifice by doing whatever it takes to care for their families. The situation is made worse by the current economic situation in many countries of the world where joblessness among most men is on the rise.

This conceptualization motivates the emergence of the FULL-EMPTY subsidiary image schema which is orderly activated by the CONTAINER image schema. Szwedek (2017) posits that the FULL-EMPTY concepts represent states of the container which are only used with reference to what is contained or missing from a container. A container that has sufficient amount of something is, therefore, said to be full while the one with nothing is empty. Any three dimensional object such as a pocket, according to Szwedek (2017) can be conceptualized as a container regardless of being empty or full. 1 Timothy 5:8 reveals that any man who does not provide for his relatives especially members of his household has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever (the Holy Bible, 1982). This implies that a man is expected to work diligently and selflessly to gratify his loved ones through the provision of basic needs. Akama (2017) authenticates this assertion by noting that men are expected to preside over their families and are responsible for the provision of the basic necessities of life in Gusii. This means that a man is traditionally assigned a role of providing for his loved ones.

Omosacha (a man) who is contrasted with a pocket in the Ekegusii metaphor (5) above can, therefore, be described as FULL

or EMPTY. A man who, on one hand, has the capacity to provide for his family is instantiated by the FULL notion in the FULL-EMPTY subsidiary image schema. Such a man is esteemed in Gusii because Gathigia (2014) notes that it is a full container that is normally desirable in society. The one who, on the other hand, fails to provide for his household is associated with the EMPTY concept in the FULL-EMPTY subsidiary image schema. Such a man is characterized with poverty and is mostly disparaged in Gusii. It is worth noting that poverty in men can be caused by unemployment, sickness, disability or laziness. Men should, therefore, be diligent, creative, focused, active and dedicated to earn the necessary means to provide for their loved ones.

Enyomba (a house) is another metaphor related word (MRW) which is also employed to describe *omosacha* (a man) in Ekegusii. A house refers to both a physical unit that delimits space and the family members who constitute a household (Lawrence, 1987). Labelling *omosacha* (a man) as *enyomba* (a house) suggests that it is a man who is normally responsible for the provision of the basic necessities of a household in Gusii. Thus:

(6) *Omosacha n' enyomba* –‘a man is a house’.

Lawrence (1987) also argues that a house not only provides shelter and protection for family members but it is also a place where the norms, values and what defines members of a household is developed. According to Basson (2008), it is a house which leads to the emergence of the concept of a home. A home is defined by cultural, socio-demographic, psychological, political and economic aspects that are unique to different families (Lawrence, 1987). It is, for example, in a home set-up where members of the household have safe space to communicate, love and care for one another.

Juxtaposing *omosacha* (a man) with *enyomba* (a house) as indicated in the Ekegusii male metaphor (6) above activates the CONTENT subsidiary image schema which stems from the CONTAINER image schema. Peña (2003) posits that the CONTENT schema is invoked by the state of the structure or elements of what is contained in a bounded space. For instance, it is the members of a family, according to Basson (2008) that constitutes a house. Rundell and Fox (2007) also note that content is a state of peaceful co-existence or



satisfaction by members of a household. Members of a family are, thus, contented if they are pleased with their situation. According to 1 Timothy 3:4, a man is instructed to manage his household with dignity (the Holy Bible, 1982). This places a man at the centre of the provision of basic needs, mentorship and carrying out the leadership role within a household. Proverbs 11:29 also provides that whoever causes discontentment in his own household will have nothing at the end and that foolish people will always be servants to the wise ones (the Holy Bible, 1982). This suggests that a man who fails to adequately provide the basic necessities of life such as shelter can cause trouble in his household. Metaphor (6) above, therefore, indicates that *omosacha* (a man) who causes contentment in his house is the one who is described as *enyomba* (a house) in Gusii. Such a man evokes pleasant emotions among the Abagusii (the native speakers of Ekegusii). A man who, on the other hand, causes discontentment in his household by failing to provide, mentor and effectively lead members of his family is, therefore, detested in Gusii.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study reveals that Image Schema Theory (IST) is significant in the interpretation of the selected Ekegusii male metaphors. Through IST, the meaning of the selected Ekegusii male metaphors is deciphered on the account patterns of perception and bodily movement. This reveals that our mind is embodied. The CONTAINER schema and its subsidiary image schemas are specifically disclosed to be pivotal in the comprehension of the selected Ekegusii male metaphors. The IN-OUT, the FULL-EMPTY, the CONTENT and the EXCESS subsidiary image schemas which are orderly activated by the CONTAINER schema are divulged to be helpful in revealing the crucial role and place of the males in society. Moreover, the present study concludes that integration of various image schemas is vital in comprehensive interpretation of metaphors. The research, therefore, recommends that the CONTAINER image schema, which is pervasive in everyday conceptualization and reasoning, should be employed in metaphor analysis. Furthermore, since metaphors are integral components of communication, they should be explained using the Cognitive Linguistics paradigm which avails

appropriate cognitive models for metaphor conceptualization.

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