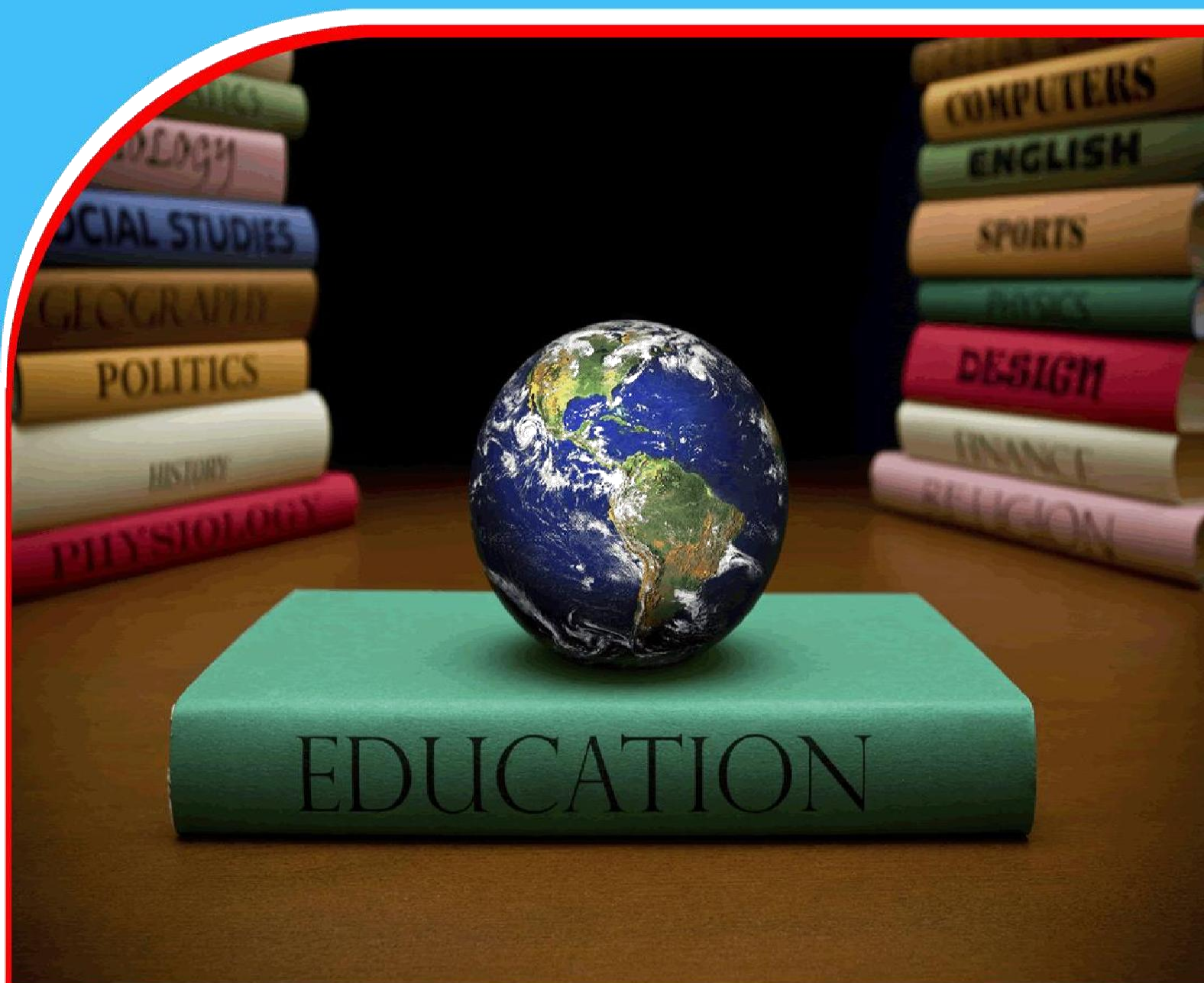


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PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF MARRIAGE DOWRY NEGOTIATIONS IN
LOCAL COMMUNITIES AFRICA

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Abstract

Purpose: Kenya's foreign policy has largely rested with the presidency as has been shown by the analysis of the Uhuru Kenyatta Regimes. The general objective of the study was to examine pragmatic analysis of marriage dowry negotiations in local communities Africa.

Methodology: The paper used a desk study review methodology where relevant empirical literature was reviewed to identify main themes and to extract knowledge gaps.

Findings: The study concludes that for good negotiations to take place, interpersonal relationship has to be realized and this was done by using relevant lexical items. The lexical items that showed interpersonal relationships created a good environment for the negotiators to speak their minds. Some lexical items which are used in marriage negotiations are also in daily usage but their meanings differed according to the context of use. Several lexical items were used in marriage negotiations but five lexical items were used both in the marriage negotiations and also appeared in everyday usage but their meanings varied. The lexical items were analysed using Lexical Narrowing. Lexical Narrowing increases implications and the hearer is entitled to narrow the interpretation that satisfies his expectation.

Recommendations: The study found that marriage negotiations involved the use of sayings and proverbs especially from the bridal side. The study, therefore, recommends that further research can be done in those areas and also on the symbols that every form of dowry entail in Africa local communities and other communities abroad.

Keywords: *examine, pragmatic analysis, marriage dowry, negotiations, local communities, Africa*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

According to Needham (2015), the history of marriage customs in Africa, has taken on at least three principal forms, namely; marriage by capture, marriage by purchase and marriage by choice. He argues that marriage customs in other parts of the world have patterns that are (or were) very similar to the history of marriage customs in Africa. In marriage by capture, the bride to be may be either kidnapped or captured prior to the official wedding ceremony or at some point during the wedding. At the time of the wedding festivities, friends of the couple may kidnap the bride and will release her only after the groom negotiate for, and pays, her ransom. Needham (2015) says, marriage by purchase vary from tribe to tribe in Africa. In Zaire, for example, the groom brings two copper rings or an arrow to the bride and her family. Upon acceptance of the gifts the couple becomes officially betrothed. More gifts are exchanged during the actual wedding ceremony, one of which is a knife given by the groom to the bride's father.

The knife signifies that the new husband is now responsible for the wife's safety and well-being. In Kenya, Marriage Act (2014) recognizes systems of marriage namely: civil, Christian, customary, Hindu, and Islamic marriage. In customary marriage law, the marriage is performed according to communities of one or both parties and the parties must notify Registrar within months of completing steps required to complete marriage as per the community. A declaration is also required to show that customary requirements by the parties have been undertaken. The declaration has to contain signatures or personal marks of two adult witnesses who played crucial cultural roles in marriage. Cultural practices like marriage dowry negotiations are done before any of the system of marriage is performed. The customs relating to such marriage vary among communities, but the payment of bride price is a common practice.

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 8th edition (Hornby, 2010), negotiation is a formal discussion between people who are trying to reach an agreement. Negotiation, therefore, involves exchange or conversation and hence the words used in the discussion will be studied in this research. Yule (1996) explains that language is analysed in context, meaning the situational environment within which an utterance is made. Katz (2006) further observes that there is a large body of evidence as well as theoretical argument that people need to analyse the literal meaning of an expression before arriving at its intended non – literal meaning. Harb (2014) studies how two lexical entries; that is Biblical Soul and Qur'anic Ruh are defined in religious discourse. He argues that word meaning is one of the central aspects of understanding the fundamental essence of any language. This study was significant in the current study of lexical items even though Mustafa focused on the religious domain context while this study focused on the marriage domain context.

Johnson (1993) says negotiation is a process in which individuals or groups seek to reach goals by making agreements with others. This process often includes offering concessions and demanding them from other parties, but it functions best when it serves as a method of discovering mutual interests and joint pay offs. In this study, negotiation occurs between parties because both have

something to offer and gain. The parties are willing to invest in the relationship and would like to use negotiation as a means to maintain a long-lasting relationship

Marriage negotiation is an aspect of culture; therefore, language is used as a form of expressing it. Kiriroti (2011) defines culture as the totality of a people's way of life and values as influenced by the process of continuity and change dictated by the environment. It includes all aspects of human life like language, beliefs, taboos, behaviour, religion and literature. Culture, therefore, plays a role in the way linguistic items are chosen and used as per their meanings.

Posel, Rudwick, & Casale (2011) say the custom involving the provision of marriage payments in cattle or cash, from the groom's family to the parents of the bride, is widely practiced in Southern Africa and has various names among African Language speakers; *ilobolo* in Zulu, *roora* in Shona and *bohali* in Lesotho. Historically, the practice was an essential part of marriage negotiations, the wedding itself and was known to retain significance for the duration of marriage.

Evans-Pritchard (1931) suggested the term 'bride wealth'. Among the Zulu, successful *ilobolo* practice is a symbol of pride and respect, most of all for the groom and bride, but also for the parents and relatives involved. In simple terms, women regard being *lobola'd* as a reward for their good conduct and proof of their own value as well as the worth of their groom's, while many men interpret the ability to pay *ilobolo* as a marker of their Zulu manhood and capability to be a 'provider'. These gendered constructions are consistent with Hunter's notion of 'provider love' where a man's ability to provide for a wife, signalled by the payment of *ilobolo*, has become entwined with romantic love (Hunter 2010). Ohta (2007) says that the Turkana transfer livestock as bride wealth. The number of animals sometimes amounts to two thirds of the property of the groom's family. Both the groom's and the bride's families seek support from all the people with whom they have established social relationships. People also pay great attention to the future relations with their in-laws at the time of bride wealth negotiations.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Marriage negotiation is a significant cultural practice and a lot of events transpired in the process. Marriage negotiation in itself is a speech event as negotiations are done through language. The lexical items used in the negotiations created a bonding between the negotiating parties as a consequence; the terms used during negotiations could be in daily usage but acquire specific use in the context of marriage. There exists research on proverbs where a list of the proverbs and their meaning has been given. Research has also been done on the stylistic and pragmatic aspects of circumcision songs which looked at the images of the environment. However, attention has not been given to marriage negotiation lexicon which is equally important and there is need, therefore to analyze them. Marriage negotiations also involve a lot of figurative use of language and the meaning had to be encoded to make a conversation meaningful. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the Lexical items used in marriage negotiations with the intention of giving their meanings according to the context of and well as the meanings of those lexical items in everyday use. The study will add knowledge to the existing database which can be referred to by scholars and researchers who are intending to carry out further related research

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to examine pragmatic analysis of marriage dowry negotiations in local communities Africa.

1.4 Justification and Significance of the Study

Research has been carried out on oral literary genres from oral narratives, songs, proverbs and riddles Chesaina (1991). However, little attention has been paid to the language marriage negotiation process and yet it is equally an important process. It was hoped that the findings of this research study might provide useful linguistic information on the use of lexical items which were encountered in daily usage and were also used during Kipsigis marriage negotiation. The findings of this study will enhance the appreciation of the African cultural practice of marriage to non – native speakers.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical review

The theory found to be relevant in examining examine pragmatic analysis of marriage dowry negotiations in local communities Africa. The theory that was found to best inform the research constructs is the Lexico Pragmatic Theory (Grice, 1991).

2.1.1 Lexico – Pragmatic Theory

The lexical-pragmatics model comprises of two tenets namely: the lexical semantics and conversational implicature. Lexical semantics refers to word meaning while conversational implicature refers to the relationship between what is meant in a conversation and what is said, (Grice, 1991). A conversational implicature deals with what is inferred from the use of a certain utterance from the context. The Lexico Pragmatic Theory was proposed and developed by Blutner (1998) in the Journal of Semantic. The recent development states that the meaning of words are frequently pragmatically adjusted and fine-tuned in context, so that the proposition expressed is different from their lexically encoded sense and function in a context to express meanings that a speaker intends to convey. The researcher used Lexical-Pragmatic Theory in order to find out how metaphorical language function in a context to express meanings that a speaker intends to convey to listeners in a conversation. The Lexico Pragmatic Theory was chosen because of its capability to explain how lexical items in the selected marriage negotiations are affected by the discourse context. Context plays a major role in meaning as some lexical items acquire different meaning under certain contexts. The contexts expressed by use of a word may go beyond the concept that was initially encoded.

The theory applied in the study because the study dealt with analysing the meaning of the lexical items which are used both in the negotiation process and also appear in the day-to-day usage of the language. In the Lexical Pragmatics, the lexical items in a language were analysed in a systematic manner and interpreted according to a particular context. The theory combined the idea of semantics under specification in the lexicon with a theory of pragmatics. It handled issues on lexical semantics, nature of concepts, their role in communications, utterance meaning and how they are processed, as well as development of lexical pragmatic abilities. In lexical pragmatic, the concepts communicated by the use of words may differ from the concepts encoded in the following

ways: lexical narrowing, lexical broadening and lexical borrowing. Semantics is a concept that is abstract in nature. It simply means the study of meaning but in pragmatics, the meaning of a lexical item is analysed in context. Semantics deals basically with the mind to give appropriate meaning to a word or an expression.

According to McGregor (2009), the notion of meaning in linguistics concerns that which is expressed by sentences, utterances and their components by language. The message or thought in the mind of a speaker is encoded in a way that it sends a signal to the hearer in a way that the message can be got. He explains further that the context which is being communicated in a language is meaning which makes a language effective. Sperber & Wilson (1986) developed relevance theory. In the fields of pragmatics and semantics, relevance theory is the principle that communication process involves not only encoding, transfer and decoding of messages, but also numerous other elements, including inference and context but still argue that relevance is conceived as relative or subjective, as it depends upon the state of knowledge of a hearer when they encounter an utterance. This study, therefore, used Lexico –Pragmatic Theory which deals with seeking meaning as per context and not based on the knowledge of the hearer.

2.2 Empirical Review

Wanyeki, (2020) conducted a study to explore the effects of community empowerment on child marriage in Kilifi County, Kenya through four specific objectives that explored: the factors influencing child marriage; the effect of knowledge empowerment on child marriage; the effect of scholarship empowerment on child marriage; and the effect of economic empowerment on child marriage in Kilifi County, Kenya. The study adopted a cross-section research design and was informed by primary data obtained through in-depth interviews. The study was carried out in Magarini Sub- County, Kilifi County leveraging multi stage sampling design. Research findings indicated that Knowledge empowerment, age at first got married, household composition, access to financial support services (Economic empowerment), access to school feeding programs, access to monetary support to facilitate education, accessibility to schools (Scholarship empowerment) and household incomes, significantly influence child marriage decisions in a household. Based on the findings the study recommendations are: more awareness creation initiatives around abuse reporting channels and legal laws around child marriage, accommodation of interested child brides into the education system either through adult literacy or vocational training programs, access to more favourable and context based financial support initiatives as well as community participation in development through enhanced citizen participation. The study identified gaps in the link between child marriage and devolution as well as climate change, and recommended for further research on the impact of devolution and climate change on child marriage.

Kinyua, (2017) undertook a lexico–semantic analysis of the language of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender (LGBT) speech community in Nairobi. It sought to achieve the following objectives: Identify and describe the lexical items used in specific ways by the LGBT speech community; to determine the word formation processes involved in the development of lexical items in the language used by the LGBT speech community and finally, to identify the Socio-psychological factors that govern the use of those particular lexical items by the LGBT speech community. The study utilized a purposive sample of 44 participants who were members of the LGBT community. Data was collected using a brain storming session, questionnaires administered

to all the participants, an interview with the leaders of the various categories in the entire LGBT community and also the researcher's participation in the WhatsApp group whose membership drew from the categories of the LGBT. Guided by Carol Myers-Scotton (1993) Markedness Model (MM), data from respondents was analysed in various ways. Data from questionnaires was analyzed descriptively and presented in terms of percentages and frequencies while data from the interviews, brain storming session and the WhatsApp conversations was presented in form of a list of lexical items together with some qualitative verbatim expressions that provided a context within which the semantics of such lexical items can be appreciated.

The findings indicated that lexical items commonly used by the LGBT speech community are in seven broad categories including those describing sex roles/acts, those that are discrete/unique to the speech community, those that describe the sex organs/body physique, those that identify the various categories of the LGBT from their mode of dressing, those that reveal the socio-economic status of the members of the LGBT community among others. The study also established that the main word formation processes involved in the LGBT lexicon mainly include; same word acquiring different meaning, borrowing, coinage, compounding, acronyms, abbreviations, blending and clipping. Finally, the study revealed that the main socio-psychological factors that influence the use of the LGBT lexicon include the creation of a sense of belonging and to conceal their identity for fear of arrest, oppression or stigmatization. Findings indicated that the formation of the LGBT lexical items follows similar processes like any other mainstream languages hence there is every possibility for the lexicon to develop into a discrete language, despite the social stigma associated with its speakers

Chepkwony, (2016) conducted a study aimed about analysis of Kipsigis speaker's interpretation of selected lexical items and phrases in the Kenya Constitution published in 2010. The main objectives of the study were to: i) identify and analyze lexical items and phrases in the constitution that were wrongly interpreted in Kipsigis. ii) describe the challenges faced in the interpretation of selected lexical items or phrases. iii) assess whether the variables of gender and age influence the interpretation of selected lexical items and phrases. The study focused mainly on the Chapter Eleven on 'Devolved Government'. The motivation of this study is hinged on the fact that ideally, interpretation from one language into another or other languages should be possible. Relevance Theory and Interpretive Theory give the various maxims interpreters or translators should obey while engaging in interpretation. Relevance theory explains aspects of inferences based on context and other elements while Interpretive Theory emphasizes on the notion of resemblance, that is, the meaning in one language is transferable to another language.

The study employed qualitative research techniques in analyzing and describing the data. This study used a group of twenty respondents of class eight level of education purposely sampled in Kembu location of Bomet County, which was the area of study. This study group was sampled bearing in mind the social variables of gender and age. Another four specialized respondents were also interviewed in the process. The study also utilized a combination of tape - recording, use of questionnaires and interview schedules for data elicitation from the respondents and interviewees. The researcher presents a detailed analysis of the data collected based on the stated objectives of the study. This study has found out that some lexical items such as 'Devolution', 'Gender', 'Integrity' and 'Transition' among others in the constitution were wrongly interpreted in Kipsigis; language differences, ambiguity, word borrowing, lack of equivalents and nativisation were some of the challenges in interpretation of the lexical items in Kipsigis; that gender but not age had a significant influence in the interpretation of the selected lexical items. In

addition to other recommendations, this study further proposes that analysis of interpretation of lexical items in the constitution into other languages can also be studied. In this study the 'Interpretation' was taken as synonymous with comprehension such that, correct interpretation meant that the studied population comprehended the elicited lexical items better.

Aunga,(2014) conducted a study to identify and analyze homonymous and polysemous sense relations in Ekegusii. The two sense relations are problematic and confusing as seen from the studies conducted in the Indo-European family of languages like English. The study is based on the premise that the two sense relations are also problematic in Ekegusii, an African Bantu language spoken in Kenya. The research objectives are: to identify and explain Ekegusii words that have more than one meaning; to determine the extent to which polysemous words can be distinguished from homonymous ones in Ekegusii and lastly, to establish the extent to which polysemy and homonymy in Ekegusii can be accounted for within the Sense Relations Theory. The literature review provides insights from related studies on meaning, sense relations and in particular on homonymy and polysemy. The Sense Relations Theory forms the theoretical framework used to account for the data. In methodology, the study adopted a qualitative research design which outlines how the research was conducted. The study was carried out in Nyamira County in Kenya where there are Ekegusii native speakers.

An interview schedule was used to collect information from 20 elderly native Ekegusii speakers of between 50 and 70 years of age who were chosen using judgemental sampling technique. Their intuitions about the relatedness or otherwise of words with more than one meaning were captured and analyzed within the Sense Relations Theory. The study findings revealed that there are Ekegusii words with multiple meanings; some of these words are as a result of the process of borrowing. Drawing a distinction between homonymous and polysemous words, sometimes, can be very difficult. The study, therefore, concluded that the two terms are confusing and ambiguous. The study contributes to the field of lexical semantics and so related studies may find the information it provides relevant for reference. The information gathered could also enrich Ekegusii semantics and make a contribution to the teaching of the language in rural primary schools where the language is used for instruction.

Kailiti, (2011) conducted a study on the contextualization of lexical items in Chinua Achebe's literary work, *Arrow of God*. The objectives of the study were; to identify the lexical items which reflect the society's worldview in *Arrow of God*, to find out the similarities and differences in the semantic and pragmatic use of lexical items in the literary work and to explain the features of context brought about by the use of the lexical items by the writer. The social language theory and the Sapir - Whorf hypothesis in Gumperz and Hymes (1986), the literary theory, (SIL, 2005) and The Language variation theory posited by Labov (1966) guided the study in identifying the contextual features of the sampled lexical items. The analysis of the lexical items was also guided by the same theories. The lexical items confirm that the writer is influenced by the societal worldview as revealed in the findings. The research design adopted was extensively qualitative with some aspects of quantitative design used in the process of data analysis. The qualitative design used was content analysis as the research identified lexical items which had contextual features through inference and they were subjected to descriptive analysis to identify the aspects of the

Igbo worldview and contextual features that they represented. The researcher read through the novel and randomly sampled five chapters from which the lexical items were purposively sampled. The sample consisted of twenty lexical items.

The lexical items were subjected to qualitative analysis. Inference was used to determine the contextual use of the lexical items to reveal the Igbo worldview. The meaning, both semantic and pragmatic was portrayed and was compared to a prospective reader's interpretation without considering the context. Features of context were identified by a close examination of the phenomena referred to by the lexical items. The findings revealed that Achebe uses lexical items as dictated by the worldview of his society. The lexical items show different aspects of the Igbo worldview. However, the semantic and pragmatic use of the lexical items does not show great differences which can interfere with a reader's comprehension. Readers can understand the pragmatic use of the lexical items when they refer to the greater linguistic context. Features of context have been brought out by the use of lexical items. These are race, societal practices, the family and gender issues. These findings are of importance to pedagogy as they provide a basis of understanding literary texts both for studies leading to examinations and for research. Readers need to identify the lexical items whose usage is 'marked' in a text and interpret them in context hence comprehending the literary work

2.2 Research gaps

Geographical gap is a knowledge gap that considers, the untapped potential or missing/limited research literature, in the geographical area that has not yet been explored or is under-explored. For instance, Wanyeki, (2020) conducted a study to explore the effects of community empowerment on child marriage in Kilifi County. The study adopted a cross-section research design and was informed by primary data obtained through in-depth interviews. Research findings indicated that Knowledge empowerment, age at first got married, household composition, access to financial support services (Economic empowerment), access to school feeding programs, access to monetary support to facilitate education, accessibility to schools (Scholarship empowerment) and household incomes, significantly influence child marriage decisions in a household. The studies presented a geographical gap as it was conducted in Kilifi County while our current study focus on examining pragmatic analysis of marriage dowry negotiations in local communities Africa.

Methodological gap is the gap that is presented as a result in limitations in the methods and techniques used in the research (explains the situation as it is, avoids bias, positivism, etc.). Aunga,(2014) conducted a study to identify and analyze homonymous and polysemous sense relations in Ekegusii. In methodology, the study adopted a qualitative research design which outlines how the research was conducted. The study findings revealed that there are Ekegusii words with multiple meanings; some of these words are as a result of the process of borrowing. The studies presented a methodological gap as it used a qualitative research design while our current study adopted a desktop literature review method

Conceptual gap arises because of some difference between the user's mental model of the application and how the application actually works. Chepkwony, (2016) conducted a study aimed about analysis of Kipsigis speaker's interpretation of selected lexical items and phrases in the Kenya Constitution published in 2010. This study used a group of twenty respondents of class eight level of education purposely sampled in Kembu location of Bomet County, which was the area of

study. This study group was sampled bearing in mind the social variables of gender and age. Another four specialized respondents were also interviewed in the process. The study also utilized a combination of tape - recording, use of questionnaires and interview schedules for data elicitation from the respondents and interviewees. This study has found out that some lexical items such as 'Devolution', 'Gender', 'Integrity' and 'Transition' among others in the constitution were wrongly interpreted in Kipsigis; language differences, ambiguity, word borrowing, lack of equivalents and nativisation were some of the challenges in interpretation of the lexical items in Kipsigis; that gender but not age had a significant influence in the interpretation of the selected lexical items. The study focused on analysis of Kipsigis speaker's interpretation of selected lexical items and phrases in the Kenya Constitution published in 2010, while the current study examining pragmatic analysis of marriage dowry negotiations in local communities Africa.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop literature review method (desk study). This involved an in-depth review of studies related to analysis of marriage dowry negotiations in local communities Africa. Three sorting stages were implemented on the subject under study in order to determine the viability of the subject for research. This is the first stage that comprised the initial identification of all articles that were based on analysis of marriage dowry negotiations in local communities Africa from various data bases. The search was done generally by searching the articles in the article title, abstract, keywords. A second search involved fully available publications on the subject on analysis of marriage dowry negotiations in local communities Africa.

The third step involved the selection of fully accessible publications. Reduction of the literature to only fully accessible publications yielded specificity and allowed the researcher to focus on the articles that related to analysis of marriage dowry negotiations in local communities Africa which was split into top key words. After an in-depth search into the top key words (analysis, marriage, dowry negotiations, local, communities, Africa), the researcher arrived at 5 articles that were suitable for analysis. The 5 articles were findings from Wanyeki, (2020) who conducted a study to explore the effects of community empowerment on child marriage in Kilifi County. The study adopted a cross- section research design and was informed by primary data obtained through in-depth interviews. Research findings indicated that Knowledge empowerment, age at first got married, household composition, access to financial support services (Economic empowerment), access to school feeding programs, access to monetary support to facilitate education, accessibility to schools (Scholarship empowerment) and household incomes, significantly influence child marriage decisions in a household.

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4.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

4.1 Summary

In the Lexical Pragmatics, the lexical items in a language were analysed in a systematic manner and interpreted according to a particular context. The theory combined the idea of semantics under specification in the lexicon with a theory of pragmatics. It handled issues on lexical semantics, nature of concepts, their role in communications, utterance meaning and how they are processed, as well as development of lexical pragmatic abilities. In lexical pragmatic, the concepts communicated by the use of words may differ from the concepts encoded in the following ways: lexical narrowing, lexical broadening and lexical borrowing. Semantics is a concept that is abstract in nature. It simply means the study of meaning but in pragmatics, the meaning of a lexical item is analyzed in context. Semantics deals basically with the mind to give appropriate meaning to a word or an expression.

4.2 Conclusion

The study concludes that for good negotiations to take place, interpersonal relationship has to be realized and this was done by using relevant lexical items. The lexical items that showed interpersonal relationships created a good environment for the negotiators to speak their minds. Some lexical items which are used in marriage negotiations are also in daily usage but their meanings differed according to the context of use. Several lexical items were used in marriage negotiations but five lexical items were used both in the marriage negotiations and also appeared

in everyday usage but their meanings varied. The lexical items were analysed using Lexical Narrowing. Lexical Narrowing increases implications and the hearer is entitled to narrow the interpretation that satisfies his expectation.

4.3 Recommendations

The study found that marriage negotiations involved the use of sayings and proverbs especially from the bridal side. The study, therefore, recommends that further research can be done in those areas and also on the symbols that every form of dowry entail in Africa local communities and other communities abroad.

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