

# **PRAGMATIC LIMITATION OF TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FIRST LANGUAGE UTTERANCES INTO SECOND LANGUAGE**

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## 1.0 ABSTRACT

The study reported in this paper investigated the intralinguistic and crosslinguistic pragmatic limitation of translation and interpretation of Gĩkũyũ based conceptual metaphoric utterances into English. The study was designed to establish whether a descriptive explanatory mechanism was available which could be supported by existing linguistic insights and theoretical frameworks. The study used cognitive model of Conceptual Metaphoric Theory, the Speech Act Theory by Austin and others, Gricean Theory of Implicature in order to determine the extent to which crosslinguistic and intralinguistic interpretation of Gĩkũyũ utterances can be supported by a coherent, rational and legal mechanism. The study findings revealed that Gĩkũyũ figurative expressions and utterances are consistent with the interactive communicative effectiveness in the context in which they are used. The study also revealed that translation and interpretation of the figurative expressions and utterances cannot achieve the intended objectives due to crosslinguistic and cultural differences leading to unreliability and misrepresentation of the linguistic phenomena.

**1.1 KEY WORDS:** Utterances, language diversity, politeness principles attitudes, hate speech, incitement, governance, discourse, ethnographic approach, Speech Act Theory, symbiotic relationship, pragmatics, semantics, presupposition, cohesion, coherence, informativity, lexical relations.

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION

### 1.3 Background of the Study

Subjective representation of Gĩkũyũ discourse utterances in Kenya invariably lead to violation of constitutional provisions that subsequently give rise to irrational adjudication of speech communicative behavior. This assertion is premised on the perception that utterances and discourse related to intra-ethnic social, relational, ideological, cultural and political interaction creates fertile ground for triggers of inter-ethnic hate speech presupposition and assumptions.

The last 50 years have not been uniformly positive in terms of constitutional empowerment and participation of ethnic languages in the discourse of governance and administration of justice. Whereas language diversity among African countries should enrich the pool of visions and national aspirations which in turn ought to mediate the relationship between meaningful inter-ethnic democratic practices, it is perceived to be antagonistic. Perceptions and attitudes about hate speech, incitement and provocative utterances in ethnic languages are viewed within the lenses of a by-product of unrealistic expectations emanating from degraded governance practices, moral principles and values. Since ethnic languages have decisively dominated the cultural life of most communities in Kenya, they have become a defining feature of the discourse of political landscape with widespread linguistic ramifications.

The Kenya Constitution for example, has explicitly defined the extent to which individuals and institutions may exercise their freedoms of expression in order to participate in their socio-cultural life. Basic ethnic communicative speech forms that comprehensively address the ethnographic perspective of the interactive discourse of events, acts and styles, remain unrestricted in all contexts of cultural representations.

According to Schieffelin, and Ochs (1986), language and culture, is viewed as *bodies of knowledge, structures of understanding conceptions of the world and collective representation which are extrinsic to any individual and contain more information than any individual could know or learn.*

This perspective means that language and culture coexist in intimate and symbiotic relationship in which language serves as a means of cultural transmission as well as a reservoir of ethnic knowledge.

For the purpose of this study, these forms of knowledge are primarily anchored in pragmatic, semantic and presuppositional notions of knowledge of ethnic language. It is necessary to make a clear distinction between the field of pragmatics and the scope of semantics together with constitutive concepts that are the subject of this study. According to Morris (1938), pragmatics as a field of study is concerned with the relation of signs according to interpreters. This definition restricts pragmatics to the study and analysis of language use to only context-dependent aspects of language structure and the principles of language usage according to Levinson (1983). Semantics is the study of the relations of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable. This suggests that semantics is concerned with meaning as a product of the linguistic system and is part of the grammatical competence. Therefore, semantics covers truth conditional aspects of the sentence meaning. This is in sharp contrast of pragmatics studies which deal with all aspects of utterance meaning according to Leech, (1983).

An utterance is defined as the issuance of a sentence, a sentence analogue or a sentence fragment in an actual context. The study of the phenomena of utterance situates it in the field of pragmatics since its main concern is the study of relations between language and context that are critical to an account of understanding how ethnic communities use the total knowledge of context to construct meaning. The notion of context should be understood to mean the social, cultural, ideological, psychological, moral and political representation of human experience through linguistic forms.

In order to situate this unique coalescing field of both pragmatics and semantics to a spectrum of approaches and analysis that are relevant in the understanding and adjudication of what constitutes incitement and hate speech, scholars have attempted in different platforms, to unravel the complex aspects of utterances discourse in specific ethnic languages without much success. This study contributes further perspectives to this complex field.

In many countries of the world, political rivalry, competition for resources and domination have resulted to pervasive use of figurative expressions which are perceived to contribute to incitement and hate speech leading to destruction of property and loss of life. Although practices of freedom of expression, media rights and association are guaranteed in for example, the Kenya Constitution for purposes of rational regulation of society and maintenance of national ethnic cohesion as well as integration, the constitution has imposed limitations in the exercise of these freedoms. This is not unique to Kenya since many countries the world over have made similar constitutional provisions that govern language communicative practices and behavior in a variety of contexts such as economic, social, cultural, political, governance and liturgical religious practices.

In the case of Rwanda, for example, genocide is believed to have originated from ideological ethnic and cultural relations, based on historical domination and church-supported functionaries where toxic language was spewed by political rivals in order to maintain political domination. Further, failure to address historical injustices and socio-cultural relationships as well as balanced ideological political direction was the main catalyst which led to the infamous genocide of 1994.

Additionally, scholars have provided evidence to show that the Serbo-Croatian and Rohingya ethnic cleansing was driven by a multiplicity of factors including extreme hatred, purely ideological religious differences and deep-rooted ethnicity and not necessarily linguistic behaviour alone.

The inability to address historical injustices in respect to political rivalry and competition for access and control of national resources by past governments since independence in 1963 in Kenya perpetuated unsustainable perception of political stability. Failure to contain simmering discontent among ethnic groups became a catalyst for the disintegration of national cohesion leading to 2007/2008 post-election violence.

Language use in a variety of transient contexts has been identified as a catalyst for political, ethnic, social, ideological and belief system that leads to political instability. Ethnic languages are predominantly used by communities for social interaction and other communicative needs to convey shared knowledge, rituals, attitudes and social conventions. It remains a puzzling question how language of an ethnic community is translated into English or any other language and is portrayed as a vehicle for fostering inter-ethnic violence.

Linguistic markers of social appropriateness and adherence to grammatical proficiencies of sentences in ethnic languages during interaction are not necessarily in violation of discourse cohesion, coherence and informativity. Semantic studies of every ethnic language and social constructs are significant since they provide context in which pragmatics and semantics constraints as well as attitudinal-related perceptions impose profound limitations to non-native speakers of an ethnic language. Ethnic language discourse patterning of utterances and style of each language vary enormously from one ethnic language to another. The differences cannot be taken for granted irrespective of whether or not they violate legal, social or cultural norms of conversation and interaction. Additionally, translation and interpretation of ethnic language, for whatever purposes, assigns unrealistic attribution of cultural, social, moral and political meanings which affect patterns of lexical relations and representations of communication intent.

The envisaged study was conceived to investigate pragmatic constraints and semantics limitations of translation and interpretation of ethnic language utterances into second language in a variety of contexts. For the purpose of this study, data was drawn from the perceived hate speech and incitement expressions from Gĩkũyũ and translated into English which have been given both political and legal prominence as a result of widespread use in the media, leading to subjective signification and representations which may be deemed to be internally offensive and contradictory. Although hate speech, or incitement discourse practices may present themselves as legally true or socially appropriate in the ethnic language, their experiential origins defy explanatory theoretical framework when translated into English or any other second language. Inter-linguistic distortion of relational meanings is driven by limitations of human perception, intuition and cognition.

#### **1.4 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Although the phenomenon of ethnic hate speech receives prominence in the public domain in Kenya, it has not been adequately investigated or described both from linguistic and socio-cultural perspectives. Consequently, literature and analysis of the communicative behaviour of the ethnic communities in their socio-cultural practices, rituals and events concerning oral traditions and expressions including traditional music, norms and mannerisms of interaction is not fully documented.

It is these social events that are the bedrock of shaping attitudes and perceptions of awareness of inter-ethnic relationships leading to implicit representation and signification of socio-cultural variables. According to Woolard and others (1989), *communities not only evaluate but may*

*appropriate some part of linguistic resources of groups with whom they are in contact and in tension refiguring and incorporating linguistic structures in ways that reveal linguistic ideologies.*

Intra-ethnic socialization and interaction in a multilingual language context is responsible for the assignment of both socio-cultural and linguistic attributes, which in turn shape assumptions and belief systems about other communities. Attempts to assign objective evaluation of translated linguistic expressions from an ethnic language for purposes of judicial determination often creates empirically disturbing and subjective consequences due to the complexity of language functions and its interrelationship with culture as well as indexical character of language. This begs the question whether the translated and interpreted versions of hate speech in an ethnic language into English is done in a manner that is socially acceptable and legally appropriate to sustain criminal charges against the presumed offenders.

The study reported in this article presents empirical evidence of the linguistic complexity of translating and interpreting pragmatic and semantic utterances in ethnic language into English. The perception that hate speech utterances in ethnic languages lead to animosity and incitement thus generating inter-ethnic conflict and tension does not reflect the correct representation of reality of how language functions in social interaction. It remains an assumption driven by both falsity or truth conditional parameters of the utterance. The Gíkûyû utterance for example *kuoniongangambute* is neither true nor false within the context in which it is used in discourse by speakers. It certainly sounds ridiculous and meaningless when its participants in social discourse share beliefs, assumptions and form attitudes in which the speaker has both informative intent and communicative intent. Additionally, utterances and discussive discourse communicate more than what is said through implicature and not necessarily through semantic-sense relations of words used.

In order to determine the feasibility and practicality of objective assessment of what constitutes linguistic-based hate speeches which are deemed to potentially trigger inter-ethnic incitement and conflict, this study used the Ethnographic Approach. This includes but not limited to both observational approaches and interviews for elicitation of research data from the structure of utterances, communicative acts and informative speech events. The Gíkûyû ethnic-translated and interpreted versions of utterances was intended to unravel the limitation of pragmatic and semantic processes as well as linguistic features that have effect both in communicative effectiveness and informative intent.

### **1.5 OBJECTIVES**

Considering that pragmatic utterances in ethnic language invariably create anomalous perspectives with semantic operative meaning in all contexts of Gíkûyû discourses practices, semantic rules limit the scope of communicative intent and informativity of the utterance. Participants in the discourse situation whose relationship, ethnic language acumen, beliefs, presuppositions and assumptions are never taken into consideration, yet they are active participants in the total speech acts and events in an utterance. The following objectives were used to provide an explanatory framework and guide the study:

1. To identify and describe Gíkûyû language discourse utterances that are perceived to be ethnically offensive and their specific semantic and pragmatic characteristics.
2. To explain the practices and nature of Gíkûyû discourse communicative effectiveness and their informativity in a variety of cultural, social, ideological and linguistics contexts.

3. To investigate the pragmatic and semantic limitations of translation and interpretation of discourse-related utterances into English.
4. To discuss and analyse the extent in which the construct of hate speech and incitement utterances create discordant, asymmetrical and dissimilar interactional perspectives.

The assumptions that the field of translation and interpretation from one language to another is premised on the notion that it is possible to apply semantic rules of one language and transfer them to conform to a number of textual principles of which the most important is adherence to informativity, communicative effectiveness in addition to coherence and cohesion is inconsistent with interactional processes of message interaction. Although aspects of analysis of textuality and its manifestation in discourse and utterances primarily fall within the critical part of pragmatics and semantic studies, scholars have identified explicit semantic limitations of cross-linguistic translation for establishing the meaning of intra-culturally and situationally communicated utterances whose meaning is dependent on context.

In order to situate this coalescing field of both pragmatics and semantics to a spectrum of explanatory approaches, and galvanize it into a scholarly system, this study sought to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Is there any linguistic relationship between translated Gikuyu discourse utterances that are translated and interpreted into English version?
2. To what extent does pragmatic and semantic principles provide a coherent and systematic theoretical explanatory framework for explaining the discordance of Gikuyu and English discourse utterances?
3. How do pragmatic and semantic constraints impose irrational representation of reality after translation and interpretation of utterances of an ethnic language?
4. Why do the theoretical constructs of hate speech and incitement utterances generate asymmetrical and dissimilar interactional perspectives in legal adjudication?

## **1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **1.7 INTRODUCTION**

The theoretical framework on which this study was based is derived primarily from The Speech Act Theory by Austin (1962), Searle J. (1969), Gricean Theory of Implicature (1975) and the Cognitive Model of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The focus on Grice Theory is deliberate because it provides an explanatory framework of politeness principle. The concept of politeness is implicated in social interaction through approbation, tact, generosity and modesty. The application of specific form of politeness is connected to the nature of cultural, social, ideological and linguistic determinants which interact among the participants in a speech event.

The Speech Act Theory is associated with Austin (1962) and Searle (1969). The duo postulated in their theory that speech acts are performed in uttering words, phrases or expressions. The elaboration of the theoretical insights show that four main categories of the speech acts were identified in which the utterance act is critical to the communicative intention of the speaker. Utterance acts refer to the acts of production of meaningful sounds, words, syllables, sentences and phrases from a language that is shared by participants.

Utterance acts are central in human communication because participants in the production of utterance are able to perform the following acts:

- 1) Illocutionary acts which refer to the act performed in the production of an utterance. These acts are performed through communicative verbs such as reporting, requesting, threatening, promising, suggesting, stating, asking, ordering, telling or proposing. The illocutionary acts are considered central in the Speech Act Theory because participants in a speech event use explicit performative verbs in order to achieve their beliefs intentions in an appropriate context. It is through illocutionary acts that proposals, directives, requests, statements, suggestions and even greetings are communicated by participants in transactional communication.
- 2) Perlocutionary acts. This term refers to an act that is performed by uttering or producing a speech act that has an effect on the listeners. Since perlocutionary acts are concerned with the effect that a participant in the speech act derives as a listener, their communicative responses are restricted to the reaction of the participants in conversation on the basis of the context. The interpretation of the utterance by listeners is considered as perlocutionary because of the effects it has on the feelings, thoughts and actions emanating from the speaker. It is on the basis of the context of the utterance acts that listeners form assumptions, beliefs, opinions, attitudes and produce varied reactions because of being inspired, irritated, persuaded, intimidated, impressed, misled, deceived or even embarrassed.

Note that perlocutionary acts are not communicative because it is not possible for participants to form similar assumptions. Spontaneous response to a crisis is not a perlocutionary or linguistic response but rather an intuitive psychological human response to danger leading to defensive mechanisms.

In a discussion of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural interference in interaction, Gumperz and colleagues (1982b), (1978a) state that in interaction the rhetorical structure of an argument can systematically differ between majority and minority of the same language with the consequence that exasperation, incompetence, aggression and so on may be unintentionally signaled (Brown P. and Levinson S. pp33). In his attempt to substantiate the opinion of scholars in this field, Goffman introduces the notion of virtual offence and suggests that it predicts that *the non-communication of the polite attitude will be read not merely as the absence of that attitude but as the inverse, the holding of an aggressive attitude* (In Brown P.33& Levinson).

Grice (1975) proposed a general Cooperative Principle and identified four critical maxims that people follow for efficient communication. The Cooperative Principle postulated that participants in interaction should *contribute what is required by the accepted purpose of the conversation*. Together with the Cooperative Principle, Grice proposed the maxim of quality in which he suggested that speakers should make their contribution true and should not convey what they believe to be false or unjustified.

In his Maxim of quantity, it was suggested that speakers should be as informative as required. In his third maxim, Grice suggested that speakers should be relevant in their contribution. This maxim is also interpreted as the maxim of relation and has gained prominence because it is concerned with the way participants in the conversation process information and operates, within certain practices of reality while allowing evaluation of the relevance or appropriateness of the utterances. Despite the significance of the Relevance Theory, questions of its ability to account for all the interacting factors in the Cooperative Principle have been raised by philosophers of language.

Grice's fourth maxim of manner is concerned with the way participants engage in conversation by being perspicuous and specifically should avoid obscurity and ambiguity while striving to be brief and orderly.

This study's interest in maxims emanates from the fact that translation and interpretation of Gíkûyû utterances are largely inconsistent with literal semantic rules of translation. Additionally, the questions of implicature and their reliance on conversational meaning of the words used together with the identity of the participants mean that an utterance interpretation is not likely to receive a comprehensive and rational consideration. Lastly, participants in a speech situation are conscious that indirect speech acts are not necessarily predictable across languages but are a matter of idiosyncratic idioms due to presupposition processes.

### **1.8 ASSUMPTIONS OF PRAGMATIC THEORIES**

The Conceptual Metaphor Theory by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) was used in this study since it was considered relevant, appropriate and systematic in understanding language usage. The Cognitive Model was identified as a conceptual system that has capacity to provide a suitable framework for interpreting the relationship between speech communication practices and the reality of interpretation of utterances in intra-ethnic discourse structure. Cognitive linguistics is recognized as a viable approach for studying human language in its different manifestations and representation of reality. It is for this reason that this investigation was designed to fill the existing gap and to provide new insights into limitations of translation and interpretation of Gíkûyû pragmatic utterances into another language.

The Pragmatic principles present unique explanatory framework for translation and interpretation of Gíkûyû. Grammatically, the sentence sense is realized through communicative constructions because the assignment of meaning is in the field of semantics while the ability to comprehend and produce communicative speech acts is exclusively in the field of pragmatics. The linguistic point of reference for comprehension and production of communicative messages is in the domain of cultural knowledge and fundamentals of social institutions which include gender relations as well as the participants' internalized aesthetics knowledge and incorporation of pragmatic principles of interaction. It is through creating authentic contexts for verbal environments that folklore, artistic cultural folksongs, idioms, riddles, proverbs and performative recitals achieve communicative and culturally appropriate and relevant effects.

The Gricean Cooperative Principle (1975) and his related Speech Act Theory (1988) provides further theoretical insights which have served as a paradigm for research in pragmatics. The Gricean Theory has triggered more interest in the study of language interaction phenomenon practices. He has proposed that maxims are not theories but are suggestive of how participants in speech act converse cooperatively, effectively and meaningfully. This study attempted to apply Gricean principles in order to unravel the unique patterns of Gíkûyû pragmatic utterances and their complex translation and interpretation limitations (Robert Park 1950 et.al).

### **1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **1.10 INTRODUCTION**

The ethnographic data for this study was provided by sixteen elderly Gíkûyû informants whose grasp of linguistic practices, cultural norms and construction of social communicative meaning processes are above reproach and are recognized as resourceful cultural experts.

They were requested to identify Gikũyũ pragmatic utterances which are popularly used in cultural narratives in different conversational contexts to convey varieties of shades of social, moral, political, and cultural signification without showing any symbolic reference to the entities to which they entail. The data of Gikũyũ pragmatic utterances the groups were requested to provide excluded idioms and proverbs as a result of their close symbolic signification and attribution of meaning to socio-cultural events, symbols and rituals.

The informants were able to compile an inventory of two hundred Gikũyũ utterances which included words, expressions and sentence fragments which were considered relevant and significant for this study. The identified data were listed and coded for the purpose of this study. The sixteen informants were divided into four groups and each group was assigned a specific thematic topic and requested to engage in an interactive conversation which was considered to be consistent with the selected utterance and would appropriately be used by the participants in the dialogue. The four topics which were thematically coherent, syntactically cohesive and textually informative and communicative were recorded on tape and then transcribed for further analysis.

### **1.11 THE DATA IDENTIFICATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The thematic contextual titles of the conversations which were assigned to the groups were coded as follows:-

Conversation - A1 - GũtwarãNdũmũrĩriyaIhu (Literal English translation): The Girl's Cultural Pregnancy Resolution Practice.

Conversation - B2 - HaaroyaNjoohiHwaĩ-inĩ (Literal English translation): Evening Beer Drinking Brawl.

Conversation - C3 - GũthurãnoĩArĩmi a Kahũa (Literal English translation): Election of Coffee Farmers Officials.

Conversation - D4 - WanangiwaMũtitũwaNyandaruanĩAhahami (Literal English translation): Destruction of Nyandarua Forest by Illegal Invaders.

From each group, the participants freely created an interactional dialogue and used pragmatic utterances which were identified and analysed in terms of their appropriateness, informativity and adherence to some aspects of textuality such as cohesion, coherence, situationality and other unique properties. For purposes of this study, the unique properties referred to were communicative effectiveness and informational intention. From the four thematic topics, twenty metaphoric utterances were identified for explanation, elaboration and description of their unique properties.

The identified utterances which were used in the conversation and formed the basis of this study were analysed for explanatory descriptive pragmatic unique properties of Gikũyũ utterances.

The study used both case study and qualitative observational approaches to collect data. Interviews and questionnaires were also used to augment data collection from the informants.

The data for this study was culled from sixteen elderly Gikũyũ native speakers whose knowledge of the language, cultural practices and whose social interactional relationships were known, recognized and appreciated. They had variously participated on different occasions in cultural, social and symbolic rites and ceremonies and had enormous linguistic experience in for example,

negotiation, persuasion, dispute resolution, arbitration and socio-culturally based advisory counseling services.

The Gikuyu elders' sociolinguistic competence enabled them to use powerful metaphors and pragmatic representational symbols as well as conventionally-shared beliefs with acumen, and this made them reliable for data collection. Their communicative versatility in Gikuyu language use made them suitable candidates as a major resource for identification of Gikuyu unique pragmatic utterances. The utterances were pervasive in interactional Gikuyu discourse practices. The surface realization of utterances have no relationship with the referent objects or events. The informants were required to identify and provide those utterances which deviate from the popular well-known Gikuyu proverbs and idioms. Proverbs and idioms are explainable within the framework of their philosophic thematic context as a result of their close affinity to associative meaning derived from the context in which they have been experientially constructed Fr. G. Barra (1939) Wanjohi (2001, 2008). For this reason, it is possible to situate the meaning of a proverb and an idiom in a specific context. This permits semantic logical intra-linguistic interpretation and translation in order to establish equivalent context.

Gikuyu pragmatic utterances behave differently in context because pragmatic rules which rely on information structure and subject content is heavily dependent on parameters of context. The need to identify suitable informants who have participated in discursual dialogues in unique circumstances, became apparent because experience, communicative effectiveness in Gikuyu and socio-cultural sensitivity of language use in context are premised in shared attitudes, beliefs and presuppositions but not necessarily on Gikuyu linguistic structure. The focus was on the social uses of language for the purpose of maintaining for example, social relationship through challenging, requesting, teasing, sharing etc. in rituals, ceremonies, events, cultural performance and negotiation skills.

The uniqueness of Gikuyu utterances in intraethnic interaction becomes complex when cross-cultural communication studies of translation and interpretation reveal non-representational contradictory perspectives. In recognition of the challenges that are involved in navigating cultural and linguistic barriers, Robert Park (1950) pointed out in his *Role of Culture in Communication* that, *one can transport words across cultural boundaries (Like bricks) but interpretation will depend on the context which their different interpreters bring to them. And that context will depend more on past experience and present temper of the people to whom the words are addressed to them on the goodwill of the persons who report them.*

The propositions that utterances express can only be determined by pragmatic principles that have objectivity to fix the reference of referring expressions. Therefore, pragmatics enters this unique arena twice; first it fixes the proposition expressed by what is said. Secondly it has the capacity to calculate the indirect or contextual implications of the proposition expressed, according to Sperber D. & Wilson (1986). The conversations elicited from the four groups A1, B2, C3 and D4 provide explanatory understanding of the pragmatic processes involved in determining the propositions expressed by utterances within the parameters of translation and interpretation of Gikuyu to English. The conversations A1, B2, C3 and D4 provided the requisite Gikuyu utterances for systematic description, explanatory framework and principled elaboration.

### 1.12 DATA IDENTIFICATION

A sample of two hundred utterances that were identified were coded for purpose of further analysis and description. It is not practicable to use all the listed utterances in contextual conversational interactions for the purpose of establishing a systematic interpretation and consistency in proposition. A random procedure was applied to identify the utterances which each of the four groups would use in a narrative to prepare an interactive conversation.

The data we have compiled excludes idiomatic expressions and proverbs and their exclusion was deliberate even though they may serve as indicators of conversational structure. It was anticipated that informants might naturally choose to use them as relational socio-linguistic markers. The listed two hundred Gikûyû utterances represent only a fraction of data that was available in Gikûyû lexical repertoire to the speakers to choose from and use them in a variety of conversational contexts in the study as indicated:

A 1 - GûtwarãNdûmîrîriyaIhu (Gikuyu Girls' Cultural Pregnancy Resolution Practice)

U103 - Kuna MbûriKûgûrû-

B 2 - HaaroyaNjoohiHwaî-inî  
(Evening Beer Drinking Brawl)

U160 -NgangaMbute

C3 - GîthuranogîaArîmi a Kahûa  
(Election of Coffee Farmers Officials)

U 107 -Kûnyitambaru

U023 -Gûkinyaikara

U095 - Kûhûramaaîndârî

U050 - Ikûmbîrîtarîrio

U083 - Agerwongero

D 4 - WanangiwaMûtitûwaNyandaruanîAhahami  
(Degradation of Nyandarua Forest by Illegal Farmers)

U018 - Gûikiakaaritho

U024 - Gûkinyaikara

U017 - Gûcokiaguoko

U157 -Ndîrakunyîirwonîkanyoni

U198 - Wegawarîrekarigû

U023 -Gûcemandeto

U040 -Gûthînjîrangoma

U003 - Ciawamarirûitanarirûka

U021 - Gûitaûkîonoria

U057 -Kaihûnakwao

U100 -Kumbîkîrwokîihû

U020A -Gûitanandumo

U020 - Gûthînjîrangoma

The underlined thematic topics provided the contexts for verbal interaction in discourse taking into account grammatical features which freely allowed uses of euphemistic metaphors and irony in A1, B2, C3 and D4

A literal translation of the contextual thematic topics into English was provided in each conversational topic. In each conversational topic specific culturally occurring utterance with a clearly marked communicative intention were identified and coded. A total of 20 coded utterances were listed for further discussion and analysis in relation to translation and interpretation theory as well as consistency with pragmatic processes. These utterances showed grammatical consistency and adherence to conversational structure in terms of sequencing of events, cohesion, coherence, informativity and situationality according to Gîkûyû text linguistics.

### 1.13 RESEARCH FINDINGS

#### 1.14 Introduction

This study was planned to investigate the pragmatic limitation of translation and interpretation of Gîkûyû utterances into English or any other language for purposes of legal adjudication of hate speech, incitement and provocative speeches. The utterances were perceived to trigger ethnic tension leading to violence and inter-ethnic animosity.

In order to provide an objective assessment of what constitutes linguistic-based hate speeches, the study sought to answer a number of pertinent questions. The first question sought to establish whether there was any linguistic relationship between the translated Gîkûyû discourse utterances and the translated and interpreted English version. The study further sought to establish whether pragmatic and semantic principles can be applied to provide a rational, coherent, consistent and systematic processes for analysing and explaining the mismatch of Gîkûyû pragmatically translated utterances and their corresponding English semantically interpreted versions.

*The principle of rational inferential mode of reasoning can conventionally impose irrational representation of reality after translation and interpretation of ethnic language utterances.* The data sought to demonstrate significantly the constraining pragmatic and semantic rules that were inconsistent and asymmetrical since logical reasoning in group-specific and culture-specific propositions were idiosyncratic in terms of inferential and representational relations.

In the next section part one of the study provided a discussion of representational semantic realization of the speaker's intended meaning of utterance in Gîkûyû where appropriate. Part two of the discussion focused on cross-linguistic translation and interpretation of the identified utterances into English within the context in which they had been used in relation to the grammatical structure of English. Interpretation and translation theory presents major challenges which are not within the scope of this paper since its intention is to provide an overview of pragmatic limitation of translation and interpretation of ethnic language utterances into English as a second language.

The study was therefore limited to implicatures of linguistic communication and pragmatic theoretical framework. (Brown P. & Levinson, (1978), Leech 1977 & 1983 Grice (1975), Austin, Searle (1969) Sperber & Wilson (1981, 1984, 1986).

The study was premised on the assumption that cross-cultural speakers' communicative intention that is based on the utterance message (Pragmatics) and sentence meaning (semantics) are unrelated due to a number of pragmatic principles and semantic referential rules. Semantics is concerned with

the study of attribution of meaning to objects and entities and signs which are applicable to them. This implies that semantics is concerned with the truth conditional aspects of events, objects and representational symbols.

It is generally accepted that conventional meaning in a sentence due to its compliance with syntactic rules provides easily interpreted sentence constructions. A conventional implicature in a conversation containing utterance where metaphorical expressions and euphemism have been used presents challenges of conveyed meaning because of the significance of context.

The notion of context of utterance is critical since pragmatics is concerned with performance principles of language used. This suggests that contexts do a lot more than sorting out the meaning from available semantic reading of sentences and this creates challenges for the use of certain forms of utterances such as understatements, irony, metaphors, euphemisms and other forms of figurative language. Since *semantics is essentially concerned with context-free assignment of meaning to linguistic forms in relation to the structure of language used* while pragmatics is concerned with interpretation of utterances of the forms used in relation to the context then pragmatic interpretation create discordant semantic representation of what words denote or connote.

Intra-linguistic cross-cultural interpretability of utterances significantly limits the communicative effectiveness of participants in interactive conversation due to figurative expressions and metaphorical euphemisms and use of the abstract culture-specific symbols. Translating Gikâyû utterances and expressions into English or any other language does not necessarily give the authentic meaning or the communicative intention of the speaker.

The fact that mutual knowledge and shared linguistic practices as well as assumptions can provide clues for interpretation of conveyed meaning of utterances to participants who share a common language, it should be appreciated that context as well as deixis also specify both the spatio and temporal aspects of every speech event. Additionally, they specify the participants in the speech event during the unmarked deictic centre relations. For this reason, metaphors appear to violate a number of maxims particularly the maxim of quality which states that *make your contribution true; so do not convey what you believe to be false or unjustified*. Therefore maxims of quantity, relevance and manner as well as quality are flouted during conversational interaction but participants mutual knowledge, shared cultural practices, belief systems, conventional implicature, presuppositions and the assumptions of the Cooperative Principle enables the participants to negotiate meaning of utterances in reference to the context.

- [1] Mbûrinyunekûgûrû (U103)
- [2] Nguoniengangambute (U160)
- [3a] Mûkanyitambaru (U107)
- [3b] Ûtumîrieta matu (U039)
- [3c] Gûkinyaikara (U023)
- [3d] Maaîturaahûranandîrî (U095)
- [3e] Ikûmbîrîtarîrio (U050)
- [3f] Agerwongero (U083)
- [3g] Akageramagendambîa (U187)
- [4a] Gûikiakaarariitho (U018)
- [4b] Gûcemandeto (U023)
- [4c] Tûgacokerieciibûguoko (U017)
- [4d] Ndirakunyîrwonîkanyoni (U157)

[4e] Gûthînjîrangoma	(U020)
[4f] Ciawamarirûitanarirûka	(U003)
[4g] Gûitatûkînonoria	(U021)
[h] Kaihûnakwao	(U057)
[i] Gûitirendumo	(U020A)
[j] Kumbîkîrwokîhû	(U100)
[k] MbûriyaIme	(U131)

Sentences that have been used by the participants in the four groups express different propositions in reference to specific communicative social context and make indirect allusion of events, symbols, acts, occurrences of persons which are considered socially unacceptable in a conversation. The meaning of an utterance is essentially a function from context to propositions which are in turn considered from two possible perspectives namely, the truth conditional aspect and the values that provide the means and clues for comprehension.

Since pragmatics is about how given a sentence uttered in a context is intended to mean, context therefore plays a central role in specifying what proposition the sentence expresses on that occasion of the utterance. Context in this case refers to a set of pragmatic indices which serve as reference points and these include, participants in the conversation or speakers, the addressees or listeners, the times of the utterance, the places of the utterance and indicated objects.

In the case of the four groups of participant in the conversations, the speakers and the addressees were clearly identified in addition to times and places of the utterance while the specified objects were given and coded as A1, B2, C3 and D4. It is the specific context that express the state of affairs where context achieve this by filling in the pragmatic parameters in which the indexicals were variable for demonstrative pronouns which may also involve gestures as part of the deictic reference. Given the importance of deixis, Buller (1934) Fillmore (1966), Lyons (1969) have demonstrated that indexical expressions are significant in linguistic and coding of a pragmatic utterance.

Five main categories of deixis which are central to the encoding of the role of participants in the conversation have been identified as person deixis, place deixis, time deixis, discourse deixis as well as social deixis which also include honorifics. Deitic systems in human natural languages are organized in a variety of aspects of social relationships between the participants in the speech event and context in which a specific ethnic language is used.

Interpretation of an utterance therefore, required general physical monitoring of speech event as well as gestural signals. Additionally, interpretation of an utterance required understanding of culturally-based abstract representation of both cultural knowledge of basic spatio-temporal parameters of the speech events, participants role, the discourse practices in specific subject and social parameters including, general location.

Given that the four conversations generated utterances in different contextual interactional propositions, participants in discourse practices maintained rational and consistent application of maxims. Adherence to the Cooperative Principle while avoiding violation of maxims where metaphoric euphemisms and other forms of figurative expressions may be inconsistent with the communicative effectiveness. This was resolved by the Politeness Principle, the shared knowledge, presuppositions and use of implicature to provide clues and signals of the intended message.

In the case of the data of Gîkûyû utterances that have been captured in the four conversations the metaphoric expressions and euphemistic words provided a potent source of figurative language

which showed discernible linguistic disconnection with the sign and the referent. Grammatical cohesion was maintained by imposition of verbal restriction in utterances which were introduced by a functional and operational verb such as 3A, 3C, 3F, 3J, 4A, 4B, 4C, 4E and 4G.

These metaphoric expressions were introduced by an operational verb in order to restrict it to the applicable deictic context in which it was used. Our data shows that a number of metaphoric euphemisms such as (U103) graphically illustrated the discordance of pragmatic processes of interpretation and semantic rules of translation.

**TABLE OF PROCESS DETERMINANT INDICATORS OF TRANSLATION**

1.	Truth conditional relationship
2.	Symbolic ideological objectivity
3.	Implied indirect Linguistic representation of reality of events, objects acts and styles.
4.	Conventional interpretative filter of language and social relations

**EXPLICATION TABLE**

Code	A	B	C
	Figurative Cognitive Metaphoric Utterances	Conversational contextual Domains of interaction	Pragmatic communicative parameters of interpretation
U018	Gûikiakaararitho	B.(1) Relational	PC. (1) Mutual Knowledge
U103	Mbûrinyunekûgûrû (not truth realistic)	B. (2) Linguistic specificity	PC.(2) Shared Cultural Practices
U160	Nguoniengangambute (unrepresentational)	B. (3) Cultural conceptualization	PC.(3) Common Ideological Belief System
U107	Mûkanyitambaru (Symbolically nonconventional)	B.(4) Economic	PC. (4) Conventional Implicature
U039	Ûtumîirie ta matu (unconventional)	B.(5) Communicative Social Practices Reification	PC. (5) Presupposition
U023	Gûkinyaikara (unconventional event)	B. (6) Political	PC (6) Speech Acts
U095	Maaîtûrahûranandîrî (unrepresentative of event reality)	B.(7) Healthcare and Environment	PC.(7) Grice Maxims and Cooperative Principle
U050	Ikûmbîrîtarîirio (unconventional objectification of symbol)	B. (8) Justice Administration	PC.(8) Deictic Referential Indicators

**TABLE OF GĪKŪYŪ PRAGMATIC DECODING AND INTERPRETATIONS OF UTTERANCES**

	Cognitive Metaphoric Figurative Utterances	Realization of Pragmatic Interpretation
U083	Agerwongero (Un-representation of truth condition of alarm raising).	Gŭtihio, Kŭhŭrwo kana Kŭragwo (To injure or kill)
U187	Akageramagendambĭa. (Symbolically unrealistic)	Gŭthiŭranjĭraŭtooŭrŭgwati (Escaping through a dangerous unfamiliar route).
U018	Gŭikiakaararitho (Unconventional event)	Guthoria, gucogotha (Provoke to violence)
U013	Gŭcemandeto (Misrepresentation of the truth condition)	Kŭheanaŭhorouŭtakwenda (Approaching issues cautiously)
U017	Tŭgacokeriecibŭguoko (symbolically unrealistic)	GucokiaNgatho (Express appreciation)
U157	Ndŭirakunyŭirwonŭkanyoni (Misrepresentation of reality of event).	Ndŭiramenyithirionŭmŭratakwa (Informed by an anonymous person).
U020	GŭthŭnjĭraNgoma (Unconventional objectification of event).	Gŭtuga kana gŭtanahŭrathŭ (to appease an enemy).
U003	Cia marirŭitanarirŭka misrepresentation of the truth condition.	Thiriitanoimbuka (before the truth is known)
U021	Gŭitatŭkionoria (Misrepresentation of event)	Gŭthŭkiamŭnoŭkŭgeriagŭthondeka (causing more damage while salvaging).
U057	Kaihŭnakwao (Symbolization of event)	Gwŭthara o mŭndŭnagwake freeing to one's safehouse
U020A	Gŭitireandumo (Unconventional event)	Gŭthondekawegagŭgŭthŭkagamŭno (Causing more damage by repairing)
U100	Kumbŭkŭrwokŭhŭ (Misrepresentation of event)	Kŭhithwoŭndŭrŭaŭharŭirio (Getting into secret trap unknowingly)
U131	Mburiyaimo (Representation of unrealistic symbol).	Ndocoyakŭrŭhaathuariarŭamarokiandŭmŭrŭiyaihu (Imposed penalty for compensating pregnancy message-taking elders).

## 1.15 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### 1.16 Introduction

This research study was designed to investigate the pragmatic limitations of translation and interpretation of first-language utterances into a second language in reference to both GĪkŪyŪ and English. The study was guided by four questions in which the first question sought to establish any apparent existence of linguistic discourse relationship between translated GĪkŪyŪ utterances into English. Additionally the study attempted to also establish whether pragmatic and semantic

principles can provide a coherent and systematic theoretical explanatory framework for explaining perceived discordance of Gikûyû utterances and their English-translated versions.

Since the study was aware of the complexities of pragmatic interpretation of utterance and limitation of semantic grammatical translation processes, the study attempted to unravel the underlying critical issues in which hate speech and incitement prosecutions were premised. The last question in our study sought to establish the extent to which the theoretical construct of hate speech and incitement utterances generated asymmetrical legal discordance and dissimilar interactional perspectives in judicial practices.

The ethnographic data of 200 utterances from four Gikûyû interactive conversations comprising words, phrases and expressions were identified and coded for analysis and discussion. The discursal dialogues were based on four thematic contexts namely social, cultural, political, ideological as well as shared rituals, ceremonies and events. The conversations provided a rich arena for unique communicative utterances which became the subject of systematic description, principled elaboration and basis for explanatory framework.

The use of intra-ethnic Gikûyû pragmatic data for analysis was deliberate since pragmatic competence and communicative proficiency in the use of abstract metaphoric utterances was acquired experientially and intuitively by adult native speakers through extensive participation in interactive cultural activities, rituals and ceremonies.

Semantic processes were deemed appropriate to provide a reliable mechanism for establishing equivalent relationship between sentences that were consistent with the grammatical structure in terms of conveying the intended meaning. Additionally this mechanism gave equivalent representation of meaning which the Translation Theory can account for. Political discourse and socio-cultural interactions in ethnic language mainly used sentences which were semantically consistent with the grammatical structure in order to be able to communicate efficiently and effectively. Therefore, they were amenable to translation into another language for the purpose of establishing the propositional content through sense relations, which may have equivalent structure or synonym.

Any hate speech and incitement discourse that wholly used semantically-based sentential construction could easily be restated in another grammatical form in Gikûyû or translated into another language as illustrated in the following examples:

Sentence [A] *Ndîrecirianîmwahîtiâmûcî* expresses a similar *proposition as sentence [B] Ndîrona ta atarîgûkûmûgûkaga*.

These two sentences express the same meaning because of the deep structure of semantic relations. Each of them can be translated into English where sentence [A] proposition is rendered as: *I think you are in the wrong home* while sentence [B] may be rendered as, *It is apparent that you were not coming to this home*, because syntagmatic relations of words at the surface level make it possible to translate the sentences into English or any other language.

In the case of Gikûyû pragmatic utterances, the words and expressions that were used have no semantic relations with what they represent. Their interpretation was only possible in relation to the context. Utterances communicative intention was anchored not only in words, sentences and phases but also in the mutually shared knowledge and presupposition of the participants.

Pragmatic processes operate at different levels where the speech acts through the illocutionary acts perform communicative functions such as reporting, requesting, threatening, suggesting, ordering

or proposing. The Speech Act Theory by both Austin (1962) and Searle (1969) indicate that utterance acts are critical in the comprehension of the communicative intention of the speaker's message. In the case of participants in a speech event, the term *perlocutionary* was used to refer to acts that are performed by producing the speech act. This suggests that participants in speech acts derive their communicative responses and reactions on the basis of the context in which the utterances were produced.

The term *perlocutionary* was used since the effects of the utterance cause participants to react to their feelings, thoughts and actions as a result of the utterances from the speaker. The participants in the speech event formed their own assumptions, opinions, beliefs and attitudes while producing valid reactions in response to the utterances. Spontaneous responses to any crisis by participants was neither a perlocutionary nor a Linguistic response but rather a psychological intuitive human response for triggering avoidance, politeness or defensive mechanism.

Perlocutionary responses made participants to form assumptions, beliefs, opinions, attitudes and their reactions were concerned with the character of the utterance and they classified the speech as inspiring, irritating, persuading, impressing, intimidating, misleading and sometimes embarrassing. The formation of assumptions and its relations to presupposition takes understanding of an utterance to another level which is proposed by Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle and the use of maxims by speakers. Since semantic rules operate within the grammatical processes of a language, they are incapable of creating an explanatory mechanisms for interpreting a pragmatically-based utterances which are context-dependent. The pragmatic Gikuyu utterance *Ngoma Cia Akaw* whose literal semantic sense is rendered as *women madness* has nothing to do with the words used because pragmatically it signifies the symbolic representation of *whirl-wind*.

None of these reactions amounts to hate speech or incitement by participants in a speech event because they were based on individual assumptions and opinions, which were inferred in relation to the context as well as their deictic relations with the speaker. Deictic relations specify both the spatio and temporal relations of every speech act. The clues provided for the purpose of interpretation of the meaning conveyed by an utterance in interactive conversation becomes complex because of the uniqueness of figurative expressions and Gikuyu metaphoric euphemisms which were anchored in abstract culture-specific symbols. The participants in interactive dialogue employed shared linguistic practices of Gikuyu language as well as mutual socio-cultural knowledge for purposes of fulfilling all the parameters within the framework of Cooperative Principle and Principles of Implicature as well as fulfilling the intentions of politeness Principle and Relevance Theory in order to sustain meaningful communicative effectiveness.

In the data comprising four thematic conceptual titles in which conversations by groups of Gikuyu informants, we culled Gikuyu utterances comprising figurative words and metaphoric phrases and expressions whose semantic translations cannot be rendered meaningfully without producing unrealistic and discordant message content.

In conversation [1] about Gikuyu Girl's Cultural Pregnancy Resolution Practice, the utterances (U023) *tondûtûkikwendagûcemandeto*, and (U103) *mbûriitûnînyunekûgûrû*, do not represent the reality that is expressed in the words because they are utterances that are conceptual and metaphoric expressions do not represent the truth conditional aspects of the words used. Conceptual metaphoric Gikuyu utterance permits morphological grammatical operators for specification of tense, number or negation so that they are grammatically cohesive.

Conversation [B2]-*HaaroyaNjooHiHwaî-inî* (Evening Beer Brawl) and conversation (C3)-*GîthuranoGîaArîmi a Kahûa* (Election of Coffee Farmers Officials as well as (D4) -*WanangiWaMûtîtûWaNyandarua* (Destruction of Nyandarua Forest by Illegal Invaders) contain conceptual pragmatic utterances which are consistent with aspects of textuality because of their communicative effectiveness and informational intention as well as conversational interaction.

According to Robert Park (1950) *One can transport words across cultural boundaries like bricks, but interpretation will depend on the context which their different interpreters bring to them.* This statement is consistent with the proposition that utterances can only be determined and interpreted by pragmatic principles, which can objectively make appropriate reference to what is signified in the act of referring expressions. Pragmatics plays two important roles in the interpretation of an utterance. First, it fixes through signification and reification the proposition expressed by what is uttered. Second, it has the capacity to estimate the indirect or contextual implications through implicature and presupposition of the propositional content according to Sperber Wilson (1986).

Conversations A1, B2, C3 and D4 contain metaphoric utterances which are semantically unrealistic such as:

[1]Mbûriyaimé	[U131]
[2] Kuoniongangambute	[U160]
[3a] Mûkanyitambaru	[U107]
[3g] Akageramagendambîa	[U187]
[4a] Gûikiakaararitho	[U018]
[4d] Ndirakunyîirwonîkanyoni	[U157]
[J] Kumbîkîrwokîhû	[U100]
[4e] Gûthînjîrangoma	[U040]
[4c) Tûgacokerieciibûguoko	[U117]

The utterances provided in these examples have no semantic relationship with what was expressed or symbolized. Any attempt to provide semantic translation either in Gîkûyû or any other language including English, presents ridiculous and meaningless message content which participants in interaction would find incomprehensible and a violation of the maxims of quantity, quality, manner and relevance in addition to politeness principle.

### 1.17 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The findings and analysis of utterances and metaphoric expressions in different contexts present a strong reliance on pragmatic penetration where context is a major determinant of how the conceptual metaphoric Gikuyu utterances are conventionally perceived, represented and responded to by participants in a speech event. Based on this observation, we have reached the following conclusions:

1. Gikuyu translated pragmatic utterances and their corresponding English version cannot be accounted for through semantic rules.
2. The pragmatic interpretation of conceptual metaphoric Gîkûyû utterances is incapable of providing effective and reliable classification of what is considered as hate speech, incitement and provocative speeches for purposes of determining criminal intentions.
3. The participants' intentions are to communicate messages and propositions based on mutual knowledge, cultural belief systems and social conventions which empower Gîkûyû speakers

to use their linguistic resources communicatively and effectively while maintaining rational inferential reasoning without infringing upon Cooperative Principle and related maxims. What is presumed to be provocation, hate speech and incitement utterances are in conformity with the principles and practices of pragmatic interaction, politeness and relevance theoretical presupposition and relevance theoretical presupposition and assumptions within Gîkûyû discourse.

4. The use of figurative expressions and metaphoric euphemisms and abstract culture-specific symbols limits the interpretability of utterance significantly since semantic grammatical rules can be applied.
5. Gikuyu pragmatic utterances employ understatements, irony, metaphors, euphemisms and other forms of figurative expressions whose intended communicative intention is unrelated with the truth condition and the reality of the message in for example, *Thîganîaru* whose literal translation is rendered in English as *Thiga has been circumcised!* This translated version has nothing to do with the person named and the event referred to. In another example, *Kuna mburikuguru* whose literal English translated version is rendered as *breaking the leg of a goat* has nothing to do with the object referred to or the event described because pragmatically and conceptually it is actually interpreted and mutually understood to refer to the act of impregnating a girl.
6. The perception that hate speech and incitement utterances can be effectively translated from one language to another is unsustainable. The sustenance of a credible criminal charge of hate speech and incitement utterances based on the translated version of Gîkûyû utterances cannot hold because pragmatic principles and processes are discordant with semantic grammatical rules of both intralinguistic and crosslinguistic representation of conceptual metaphoric utterances.

### 1.18 RECOMMENDATIONS

The complexity of both intralinguistic and crosslinguistic translation and interpretation of Gîkûyû hate speech, incitement and provocative prosecutorial practices in Kenya needs to be revisited, redefined and re-examined through extensive studies with a view to establishing a rational reliable mechanism for creating national cohesion without infringing on freedom of expression.

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