

Language and Representation: Framing of HIV/AIDS Discourse in Gikuyu “Mukingo” Songs and Common-Talk by Public Transport Operators in Nyeri Town

Mary Kamunyu¹; Phylis Bartoo²

^{1,2} Egerton University, Kenya

Corresponding Author Email: phylisbartoo@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT:

This paper aims to uncover representations and framings of the HIV/AIDS phenomenon. The paper asks: What are the representations and framings of the HIV/AIDS phenomenon in HIV/AIDS discourse in Gikuyu AIDS "Mukingo" songs and common-talk by public transport operators in Nyeri town? Although HIV and AIDS are biomedical and social phenomena that affect Kenyan society to the core, HIV/AIDS discourse has not been investigated adequately, especially with regard to how its discourse is represented in the African languages. The language and topics of research on HIV/AIDS, based on Western perceptions of reality, continue to exclude and marginalize the Third World's own perceptions of reality and what counts as knowledge in the fight against HIV/AIDS. The paper is hinged within the frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics Theory (SFL) as the theoretical orientations to the study of HIV/AIDS discourse. To get the needed data, the paper used purposive, and snowball sampling was used due to the mobile nature of public transport operators. Structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) was also used for data collection. Data analysis was done using a traditional thematic analysis. Unpacking the social constructions of HIV/AIDS in this paper sheds light on the ways in which laypeople construct "common sense assumptions", of the epidemic in the public realm.

Key Terms: Representation, Framings, HIV/AIDS, Gikuyu AIDS, Mukingo

How to cite this article in APA (6th Edition)

Kamunyu, M. & Bartoo, P. (2019). Language and Representation: Framing of HIV/AIDS Discourse in Gikuyu “Mukingo” Songs and Common-Talk by Public Transport Operators in Nyeri Town. *Editon Cons. J. Lit. Linguist. Stud.*, 1(3), 78-94.

Introduction

The language and topics of research on HIV/AIDS, based on Western perceptions of reality, continue to exclude and marginalize the Third World's own perceptions of reality and what counts as knowledge in the fight against HIV/AIDS. When people give their meanings of HIV/AIDS based on their life experiences and perceptions of reality, Western-trained researchers - often operating within the dominant HIV/AIDS language - label them as misconceptions or cultural ignorance (Bennell et al., 2001). The question that comes to mind is this: what are the consequences of using imported frameworks of knowledge in the struggle against HIV/AIDS in Africa? Ideally, indigenous ways of knowing should form the basis for understanding people's perception of realities and informing education, communication and information strategies on the prevention of HIV/AIDS. It is in light of this marginalization of African languages in HIV/AIDS research that this current study has decided to uncover the constructions of HIV/AIDS discourses and their implications on sex, gender and power inequalities as portrayed in Gikuyu AIDS "Mukingo" songs of the Kikuyu people of Kenya.

In Africa, there is an indication of neglect of the language question in issues of national importance in many multilingual nations. Language appears to have little or nothing to do with the "real" and burning problems of economic development, the spread of HIV/AIDS and poverty alleviation (Wolff, 2006). In this light, it is unfortunate that many issues, including the issue of HIV/AIDS, have been discussed with little or no attention being given to the role of language. In addition, the climax of Western hegemony has orchestrated marginalization of local languages, especially in matters of national expression in Africa (Waitiki, 2009). Colonial languages like English, French and Portuguese etc. have become Lingua Franca in most African states. There is an assumption that

everybody uses these languages. Ordinarily, a majority of the citizens in these countries have low or no competence in these languages (Kembo, 1996). It is good to mention that majority of the information, education and communication materials aimed at preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS are written in foreign languages, often insensitive to the context and culture of the people. It is the thrust of this study to show how socio-cultural dimensions captured in common talk among public transport operators in Nyeri County and Gikuyu "mukingo" AIDS songs aired by radio expand Agikuyu people's knowledge base on prevention and control of this disease.

The two-prong communication strategy of common-talk and use of songs can play a significant role in behaviour change for an effective communication campaign. Interpersonal communication and use of mass media offer a combined effort of raising awareness about the pandemic as well as protection strategies. For this research, common-talk offers interpersonal communication forums where the message is shared by persons who belong to that particular group. The message content shared in these common-talk forums is more harmonized with local culture, tradition and norms and values. Again, common-talk forums have been considered a successful context of addressing sensitive issues of sexual behaviour. "Mukingo" Songs aired from the mass media to inform people on HIV/AIDS pandemic are crucial in AIDS education; however, they are typically limited in duration. Therefore examining people's knowledge, understanding and interpretations of these songs in common-talk forums can be very enriching. Therefore for a successful examination of Agikuyu people's knowledge, attitudes and perceptions about HIV/AIDS from common-talk and songs is necessary for finding out how they facilitate behaviour change in HIV/AIDS prevention campaign.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Coupled with language disadvantage, Sub-Saharan Africa is where HIV/AIDS is most prevalent (UNAIDS/WHO, 2007). There, high infections and mortality rates, limited access to treatment, and widespread social and economic disadvantage having a negative effect on the lives of many African people (UNAIDS/WHO 2007). Treichler (2011) argues that until we understand AIDS' dual life both a material and a linguistic reality-a duality inherent in all linguistic entities but extraordinarily exaggerated and potentially deadly in the case of AIDS-we cannot begin to read the story of this illness accurately or formulate intelligent interventions. It is from this background that this study seeks to unravel, from a Gikuyu language standpoint, the meanings, knowledge, understandings and interpretations of HIV/AIDS discourse outside biomedical science and foreign language expression. □

The dominant discourse on HIV/AIDS in Africa habitually privileges certain models and interpretations while ignoring other potentially significant lines of inquiry (Packard, & Epstein, 1991). Stereotype derived from colonialism permeate popular understanding of the epidemic, resulting in the prevailing paradigm fixated on African heterosexual behaviour. For instance, (Gesheker, 1994) dismissed the notion that males from Africa are more addicted to sex than those other continents because testosterone levels, the measure of sexual vigour in men, never vary more than a tiny fraction of a per cent anywhere in the world. Again, no national sex surveys have ever been carried out in Africa, yet AIDS researchers blithely assume that heterosexual HIV transmission in Africa parallels the dynamics for HIV among homosexual men in the West. This has led to the invention of 'African AIDS' (Patton, 1997). This is an expression of the Africans as the 'social other' in the form of a myth of hypersexualised Africans as opposed to idealized European sexuality (Lyons, & Lyons, 2004).

Such notions are responsible for laying blame on Africa on HIV burden and a skewed presentation of African sexuality based on African permissive sexuality theses (Kamanzi, 2008). It is vital to note here that the existence of African sexual permissiveness cannot be supported by empirical evidence; such a view is a profound Eurocentric and racist (Stillwagon, 2004). With such limited knowledge and ignorance on African sexuality, there is a need to engage alternative, complementary discourse to address HIV/AIDS within African sexuality theses. This current study aims at unpacking representations of sexuality in HIV/AIDS discourse in Gikuyu songs since sex has a direct or indirect link to HIV/AIDS. □

With heterosexual explanations of the HIV/AIDS spread in Africa, inequalities in gender relations, often supplement this framework by focusing on differences between men and women. The UNDP report of 2000 states that gender inequality is the main cause of higher infection amongst women in Africa. Through examining men and women separately, one can only understand just half of the whole dynamic (Dion, 2011). Recognizing and understanding men and women as individuals is important, but cannot supplement the full understanding of men and women within larger social contexts, such as the relationships in which sexual encounters occur. This study is committed to exploring the commonalities in the presentation of gender power relations as well as focusing on men and women collectively as they are represented in HIV/AIDS discourse in Gikuyu songs. □

In literacy promotion on HIV/AIDS prevention, the government of Kenya has employed Eurocentric communication approaches like brochures, posters, radio, newspapers and television more than indigenous modes of communication strategies such as narration, singing and

dancing. Mounting evidence shows that these Eurocentric Communication modes have the potential of disempowering and alienating the people intended to be informed because the communication process does not begin from within their experiences and, usually, are incapable of giving full respect to their values (Wenje, Nyambedha, & Muhoma, 2011). Upon this realization, this study has embarked on examining the HIV/AIDS discourse as portrayed through Gikuyu “mukingo” songs with a view of capturing Kikuyu peoples’ experiences, beliefs and values about the pandemic. Chilisia (2005) argues that songs are an illustration of how Africans communities have collected analyzed, deposited, retrieved and disseminated information. Songs are central to collecting and depositing social knowledge, socialization, analysis of social reality and commentary on social/family/social relations. This study will examine figurative language. e.g. metaphors, proverbs, etc., which are key in problem identification and meaning-making as they are interwoven together by various communication strategies.

Against this background, it is evident that language gaps exist while constructing on HIV/AIDS in Kenya. In Kenya, there is a mismatch in HIV/AIDS mass media campaigns, especially in language front; most mass media campaigns primarily use English and Kiswahili at the expense of indigenous languages. Yet, the majority of the citizens have low or no competence in these languages (Kembo, 1996). This study has therefore explored the peculiarities of using Gikuyu language in constructing HIV/AIDS discourse through “Mukingo” songs and common talk among public transport operators in Nyeri Town. The study has examined how framings and representations of HIV/AIDS phenomenon are constructed, the use of figurative language in HIV/AIDS discourse, as well as constructions of sex and gender within the Gikuyu cultural framework. In addition, constructions of gender power inequalities within

the HIV/AIDS discourse have received a thorough investigation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Representations and Framings of Nature and Origin of HIV/AIDS

In its effort to unravel the mystery behind HIV/AIDS, HIV/AIDS discourse has postulated a lot of explanations that seek to create understanding and establish clarifications about the pandemic. Treichler (2011, p.267) affirms that until we understand AIDS' dual life as both material and a linguistic reality-a duality inherent in all linguistic entities but extraordinarily exaggerated and potentially deadly in the case of AIDS- we cannot begin to read the story of this illness accurately or formulate intelligent interventions. It is in this regard; we embark on identifying the representations and framings which include but limited to nominalization of AIDS disease, HI-virus, PLWHA and HIV/AIDS symptoms. The representations and framings will also explicate other discourses-immersive and counter immersive discourse, discourse of fatality, discourse of warning and self-protection, discourse of HIV-antibody testing and discourse of ARVs uptake and administration. These evolving and interlocking concepts hinged in HIV/AIDS discourse reveal, capture and express the rich repertoire of knowledge, perceptions and attitudes towards HIV/AIDS phenomenon in common-talk and ‘mukingo’ songs among the Agikuyu people. From the findings of this research, it has been discovered that Agikuyu people hold differing worldviews and knowledge about HIV/AIDS. It is commonly held that HIV/AIDS is a debilitating disease by such expressions as:

1a. Mukingo ni murimu muru, uthiaga mundu mahinda na ogakonyora njoka maraini > *A bad disease that grinds the bones to a pulp, it purges worms from the Intestines.*

1b. Mukingo uninaga ugitiri wa mwiri ugatuma mundu agwatwo ni mirimu miingi mwiriini > *People say AIDS is lack of immunity in the body. When one contracts the HIV, the defence system of the body is destroyed, leaving one prone to invasion and attack by all types of diseases.*

1c. Mukingo ni mutino > *HIV/AIDS is an accident.*

The representations in (1a) imply that HIV/AIDS is a very dangerous disease that can completely exterminate someone's life, hence the use of the lexical terms *guthia mundu mahindi* (to grind one's bones into pulp) and *gukonyora njoka maraini* (to strain out worms from the intestines). The same worldview is extended in (1b) when HIV/AIDS is depicted as a destroyer of the human body by attracting more diseases through a compromised immune system. In expression (1c), when people claim AIDS is an accident, the underlying notions is that HIV/AIDS is inevitable and unpreventable. This justifies human weakness and frailty, which makes HIV contagion to be accommodated. The world view created by these representations is that AIDS is a dangerous, dreadful, fearful and invincible; a man's fate. The knowledge of HIV/AIDS is not complete without illuminating people's perceptions of its origin. The evolutionary narrative of HIV/AIDS remains mere speculation gleaned from media outlets, religious postulations or mere opinions and conjectures. People hold the following views about the origin of HIV/AIDS.

2a. Gutiri mundu ui kuria mukingo woimire > *Nobody knows where HIV/AIDS comes from.*

2b. Mukingo wa thondekirwo ni athungu thini wa laboratory niguo une mundu muiru > *AIDS was manufactured in*

laboratories by some white people to wipe out the black people.

2c. Mukingo woimire kuri nugu; athungu nio makomire na nugu makigwatwo ni mukingo > *AIDS originated from monkeys. The white men had sex with monkeys and contracted HIV.*

2d. Mukingo ni ihura ria Ngai niundu wa uremi wa utharia > *God brought AIDS as a punishment for people's promiscuity.*

In the context of the origin of HIV/AIDS, its origin seems to baffle people. In expression (2a), the origin of HIV/AIDS is unknown. People submit that they have no clue where AIDS came from. This information gap becomes not only the basis of fear and mystery surrounding HIV/AIDS but also the reason for the mutating superstitions and spawning myths surrounding the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Some people view HIV/AIDS as a foreign disease that was manufactured by whites. In expression (2b), AIDS is depicted as an African genocide instigated by Whiteman with an imperialistic interest. Such representations are fed by the colonial history of exploitation and suspicion of the whites who would like to depopulate Africa and recapture it. In this 'othering' process, the white man is depicted as an anarchist hell-bent on wiping away mankind reckless and hedonistic experiments. The worldview expressed by such knowledge is that AIDS is a weapon of mass destruction meant to wipe out black man so that their land and resources can be recaptured by the west. The presence of HIV/AIDS in Africa is then viewed by Agikuyu through their songs and common talk as malicious, deliberate and willful effort to destroy black man's race and society by the Western world.

Besides the contemporary views on the origin of HIV/AIDS, the religious thesis constitutes the repertoire of HIV/AIDS knowledge on its origin among the Agikuyu. The expression (2d) shows the cosmic and supernatural forces behind the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The common world view is that AIDS is as a result of divine retribution due to the sin of promiscuity. This interpretation bears Christian moral judgments on the People Living with HIV and AIDS (PLWHA); they are held responsible for contagion with HIV/AIDS through their immorality, and so they should be punished. Such a worldview reveals people ignorance or denial of other pathways of getting infected with HIV/AIDS- mother to child, blood transfusion, contamination with used needles and sharp objects etc. In addition, holding the view that HIV/AIDS is a result of divine wrath depicts people as helpless, resigned and hopeless stance because they feel they can do nothing to overcome the temptation of immorality which leads to contracting HIV/AIDS.

The origin of HIV/AIDS is also explained from Whiteman's sexual permissiveness theory. From expression (2c), people claim that a certain white man out of curiosity made love to a monkey wanting to establish if a monkey could yield sexual pressure like human beings. The worldview established bears racist undertones, for white people are portrayed to tolerate sexual perversion and aberrations, which attracted divine wrath to mankind. In addition, such worldviews promote the 'othering' of HIV/AIDS as they perceive it to be foreign and western.?

From these representations and explanations, there is an indication that the Agikuyu people hold multilayered and divergent, at times conflicting and overlapping explanations of existence and origin of HIV/AIDS ranging from experiences of colonial history to religious beliefs. Although there is no unanimous agreement about the origin of HIV/AIDS, the dominant view is that AIDS comes as a result of people's unrestrained and unbridled sexual lusts. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) say that CDA focuses on the social problem. In the context of HIV/AIDS as a social problem that needs to be unraveled, the HIV/AIDS discourse has helped to shape, produce and reproduce texts on the origin of HIV/AIDS, some of which reveal assumed power abuse and domination by whites in manufacturing HIV/AIDS to decimate the black race.

1) Nominalization of HIV-Virus

In their quest to conceptualize and represent HIV/AIDS phenomenon, a lot of discourse has evolved on its causative agents, prognosis, interventions as well as the formation of attitudes and stereotypes on PLWHA. Trenchler (2011, p.269) affirms that HIV/AIDS is a nexus in which multiple meanings, discourses and stories intersect and overlap, reinforce and subvert each other. In a more examination of linguistic representations of HIV/AIDS phenomenon, we move on to focus on other discourse that offers explanations on the naming and description HIV-virus, linguistic characteristics of HIV/AIDS and its symptom, as well as linguistic constructions of PLWHA. The representations of HIV-virus are shown in Table 1 below. These include:

Table 1: Nominalization of HIV- Virus

No.	Gikuyu expression	English gloss	Interpretation
3a.	Kigutha	Slingshot	AIDS gives a sudden hit which is very painful.
3b.	Murogi	Witch	HIV is malicious and evil.
3c.	Thumu	Poison	The HIV virus is fatal.

3d.	Nyoka	Snake	HIV is fatal like snake poison.
3e.	Ngoma	Demon	HIV is malicious and tempting.
3f.	Igunyu/kigunyu/kagunyu	Worms/a worm/a small worm	Once inside the body, HIV is damaging like worms; It hurts.
3g	Mdudu.	A borrowed Kiswahili word for vermin.	HIV is a pest that hurts the body.
3h.	Githemengu	Sorcery	HIV is malevolent and malicious
3i.	Kiura kinene kia muriu	Big chameleon-like frog	HIV is a weird and unfathomable entity.

In the naming and representation of HIV/AIDS viruses, both living and non-living references have been used to describe the virus. For instance, the lexeme (3a), the virus has been referred to as 'slingshot'. A slingshot hits tragically and can be very injurious and fatal. In the same way, the HIV virus is perceived to cause pain, injury and death to its victims. The world view created is that one's realization of having contracted HIV-virus will not only hit one's body with devastation but also one's psyche and emotions destabilizing every facet of one's life. HIV virus has also been represented in (3b) as *murogi* (witch/sorcerer) and *ngoma* (demon). Such portrayal depicts HIV- virus as sadistic, malicious, evil supernatural entity that chooses to destroy people's lives. Similar to HIV-virus representation in (3b), is that HIV-virus has been represented as *nyoka* (snake). Just like a single bite from a snake is enough to send somebody to the grave, a single infection with the HIV virus is equally fatal. ☐

HIV- virus has also been described in (3c), as pests, grubs and vermins that invade people's bodies to eat them inside out. The choice of the lexical items in (3f) *igunyu* or *kagunyu* and *kigunyu* to translate to 'worms', 'a small worm' and 'a worm', all have negative connotations. The HIV-virus is perceived to be a parasite or pest that will multiply and colonize the victim's body. Just like the way worms bore through and consume crops, the HIV virus is also perceived to invade and multiply in a victim's body, eventually consuming it completely. Therefore HIV virus is

extremely dangerous, and people are being warned to avoid it by every means. HIV virus is also represented as a mysterious thing that defies description when it referred in (3i) as *kiura kia murio* ('chameleonfrog'). In Agikuyu's quest to understand HIV- virus, it is apparent that this is quite baffling engagement because the construction of such a creature that is both and a frog is quite unfathomable. This worldview captures the people's fears and uncertainties of what HIV-virus is. Because African languages sometimes do not have scientific words or terms, diseases or their causative agents are given names that best reflect what people fear or feel. African languages generally do not have words for 'immunodeficiency' or 'virus' (Mawadza, 2004, p.423). In this regard, HIV-virus, as a biomedical phenomenon, has been described as dangerous animals and supernatural entities with malevolent intents. Within the framework of CDA, the nominalization of HIV- virus supports how discourse helps to constitute society and culture. Discourse shapes people's minds about HIV/AIDS, and the same time society knowledge and social cognition shape HIV/AIDS discourse. ☐

2) Nominalization of AIDS Disease

Whenever a new disease appears, it has been given names that closely reflect what the local speakers think about it (Mawadza, 2004, p.423). This view is supported by Tretchler (2011, pp.263-277), who asserts that we struggle to achieve some sort of understanding of AIDS through multiple, fragmentary and often contradictory ways, a

reality that is frightening, widely publicized, and yet finally neither directly nor fully knowable. Table 2. below shows the linguistic constructions which are thought to transmit pre-existing frames and representations of real-world entities that describe AIDS disease among the Agikuyu.¶

Table 2: Nominalization of AIDS Disease

No.	Gikuyu expression	English gloss	Interpretation
4a.	Karuhuhu/ Kiruhuhu	A small storm/ A big storm	AIDS spreads fast causing injury. AIDS is calamitous.
4b.	Githingithia	Earthquake	AIDS causes untold suffering.
4c.	Kihuruto	Coccidiosis	AIDS is a plague and a catastrophe.¶
4d.	Kahoma	A little flu	AIDS is unavoidable and commonplace.
4e.	Mwaki/ Ruoro	Fire/ Branding gun	AIDS is injurious. AIDS is painful.
4f.	Kimiiri/ Githii	Guillotine/mill.	AIDS kills. It will grind someone's life to nothingness.
4g.	Ruo rutonyu mahindini	A pain that creeps in the bones.	AIDS punishes.
4h.	Mutego muuru wa ngoma/ Mutego.	A dangerous trap of Satan/ Trap/snare ¶	AIDS is dangerous. AIDS is a misfortune and destructive.¶
4i.	Rwenji ruriaga nginya butu.	Razorblade that shaves even the eyelashes¶	AIDS is hazardous.
4j.	Mangu ma Naaman	Naaman's leprosy	AIDS is a curse.
4k.	Chuma ihegethaga iria ingi nginya cigaturika	A metal that drills through others.	AIDS defies all odds.
4l.	Mugithi utaumwagwo na muigi wa chabi ni mwene nyaga.	A train you cannot disembark, and the keeper of the keys is the creator.¶	AIDS is a journey to the grave.
4m.	Kurwara kahacho	A sick appendix	AIDS hurts a lot.
4n.	Gwikora hatikaini	To be in a fix	AIDS is opportunistic.
4o.	Ndia ndiku	A deep dam/chasm	AIDS is a misfortune and injurious.
4p.	Muuro/ Muthiro	Disaster/ Plague/desolation	AIDS is a catastrophe. AIDS is fatal.
4q.	Murimu	disease	AIDS kills.
	Murimu utarahonwo	Incurable disease	AIDS is a prolonged suffering
4r.	Murimu mweru/ Murimu wa	A modern disease/ A foreign	AIDS kills. AIDS is opportunistic

	guuka	disease.	
4s.	Murimi muuru muno/ murimu wa maraya/ Murimu wa waganu/ Murimu wa kuonana kimwiri	A very dreadful disease. A disease of prostitutes/A disease of promiscuity/A disease of sexual contact.	AIDS is fatal. AIDS is retributive. AIDS is divine punishment.¶
4t.	Murimu wa hindi ya muico/ Murimu wa muthiro	End-time disease. A disease of catastrophe/desolation.¶	AIDS is catastrophic. AIDS is ruinous.
4u.	Murimu wa kumakania/ Murimu wa kurigithia/ Murimu wa kieha.	A scaring disease. A mysterious disease. A disease of sorrow and grief.¶	AIDS is a shocker. AIDS bewilders. AIDS is grievous.
4v.	Muniko/ Muthariko	disaster/ Sudden destruction	AIDS is catastrophic. AIDS is ruinous.
4w.	Mugui/ Munugu	Of the dog/of the monkey	AIDS is shaming and contemptuous. ¶
4x.	Kirumi	Curse	AIDS is a curse
4y.	Kamuhare/ Muchari	Scabies Smallpox /.	AIDS is suffering.
	Gathua/ Guthechwa ni mbucha	Termite/ To be infested with weevils.	Just like the termites and weevils will invade and consume the crops, AIDS will destroy and consume people's lives.
4z.	Direct	direct	AIDS is a direct ticket to the grave/heaven.
4ai	Mukimo	Pulp	Something that pounds one life into pulp.
4aii.	Muneki	Modification of the English word 'neck.'¶	This is due to the lengthening of the neck of AIDS sufferers due to thinning and weight loss.¶

One of the words used to refer to HIV/AIDS is *karuhuho/kiruhuho*, which means a small storm/big storm, respectively. The word *karuhuho* (a small storm) is used to refer to the silent and oblivious ways AIDS permeated into the society. A similar lexeme which also shows the invisible and ubiquitous existence of HIV/AIDS is *kahoma* (little flu). These two references mask the harsh reality of HIV/AIDS. Further, these two lexemes bear undertones for

they minimize, dilute and hide the fatal realities inherent in HIV/AIDS by framing it as a small harmless wind or little flu which is just passing. A similar word is *kiruhuho* (big storm/wind) which depict the hefty devastations and destructions effects of AIDS. Just like the way sweeping storm destroys everything in its path, HIV/AIDS also does not discriminate whomever it gets into contact with. People of all walks of life are affected regardless of age,

sex, tribe race or religion. In this respect, AIDS is further represented as a disaster by the use of expression *githingithia* (earthquake) which can subjugate a nation or region by killing many people whenever it strikes. AIDS has also been represented as a plague by the use of lexeme *kuhuruto* (Coccidiosis), a disease of poultry that kills them in large numbers, at times wiping the whole lot. In this regard, more terms that describe AIDS as plague include *muthiro* (plague/desolation), *muuro* (devastation), *muniko* (disaster), and *muthariko* (sudden destruction), and *mukimo* (to be pounded into pulp) which all show the catastrophic nature of HIV/AIDS.

Dowling (2004, p.3) cited in (Mawadza, 2004, p.423) notes that HIV/AIDS is seen as a plague because it seems able to subjugate a nation by dramatically reducing its numbers. Another term used to refer to AIDS in Gikuyu is *mwaki* (fire). It alludes to the fact that AIDS can spread like a bush fire, burning and devastating mankind. Just like dying through burning is such a painful thing, dying of AIDS is equally painful and torturous. AIDS has also be described as a deadly weapon by such terms like *ruoro* (branding gun), *githii* (mill), *kimiiri* (guillotine), *mutego muru wa ngoma* (a deadly trap of the devil), *rwenji ruriaga mbutu* (razor blade that shaves even the eyelashes), and *chuma ithegethaga iria ingi nginya igaturika* (a metal that drills through others). The references (4e), (4f), (4i), and (4k) objectifies HIV/AIDS as a lethal weapon that can cause bodily harm in a person. Like a branding gun, AIDS leaves its victims with a mark through emaciation and wasting of the body, so anybody can tell that the victim is sick with AIDS. Such terms are likely to create self-stigma and AIDS stigma, making the people living with AIDS to be isolated and discriminated as

well as reject themselves. Expression (4f) and (4h) show that HIV/AIDS will gradually kill the victim by snuffing out the victim's life. ☐

Other words in Gikuyu that refer to HIV/AIDS tend to represent the disease as *kamuhare* (scabies), *muchari* (smallpox), *murimu utarahonwo* (an incurable disease), *murimu wa guuka* (foreign disease), *murimu mweru* (modern disease), *murimu muuru muno* (a very dreadful disease), *murimu wa waganu* (a disease of promiscuity), *murimu wa kumakania* (a scaring disease), *murimu wa kurigithia* (a mysterious disease), *murimu wa kieha* (a disease of sorrow), and *murimu wa muico* (an end time disease). Although AIDS is perceived as a disease like any other, such framings make AIDS to be viewed as dangerous, destructive and incurable. AIDS is also labelled as a moral disease by use of terms like *murimu wa maraya* (disease of prostitutes) and *murimu wa kwonana kimwiri* (a disease of sexual contact). By moralizing the disease, the victim is blamed and condemned for a moral lapse, and so is responsible for his/her own suffering. ☐

3) Expressions that Depict Symptoms of HIV/AIDS.

Expressions referring to physical self as outward manifestations of HIV/AIDS are also typical. These signs show the various devastations and levels of prognosis of the disease in the victim's body. The images of despair and helplessness conveyed by such express fuel the already powerful images of stigmatization existing in the larger social frames. Table 3 below shows the linguistic constructions which depict people's explanations on HIV/AIDS symptoms

Table 3: Expressions that Depict Symptoms of HIV/AIDS

No.	Gikuyu expression	English gloss	Interpretation
5a.	Ngingo ndaihu na mwiri muhinju utari muigananu	A long neck and unproportionally thin body☐	The debilitating effect of HIV/AIDS.

5b.	Njuiri ndaganu, iramunyuka, na ndunihiriru	Thinning and falling of hair with greyish-brown hues.	Wasting effects of AIDS.
5c.	Thiya nyumiru na maitho mahorokeru uthiuni muhinju.	Protruding jawbones, sunken eyes and gaunt facial muscles.¶	Wasting effects of AIDS.
5d.	Kuhinja ta rwagi	To be thin like a mosquito.	AIDS causes one to be unhealthily slim.
5e.	Homa na ruhayo rutathiraga,	Suffering frequent and prolonged colds and flu.	Attendant sufferings of AIDS.
5f.	Mahuha mwiri matara thira	boils all over the body that resist therapy	The sufferings and pain that attend to HIV/IDS.
5g.	Ironda cia Ayubu	Wounds like biblical Job's.	AIDS makes one undergo excruciating pain.¶
5h.	Muico ironda itarahona kanua na mwiri wothe.	Final stages of AIDS-sores in the mouth and the whole body.	Extreme sufferings of HIV/AIDS.
5i.	Kuharwo gatema	Severe dysentery	AIDS causes people to have great suffering.
5j.	Ruharo ruteguthira/ rutegutuma	Unending diarrhoea.	AIDS causes great suffering to its victim.
5k.	Gutharikirwo ni mirimu miingi ta cancer itarahona	Infestations by multiple diseases like cancers which don't get cured.	AIDS became incurable.
5l.	Kuhinyiririka na kwaga hinya mwiri muico kuhoria matawa	To be highly weakened and lastly death.	AIDS can create shame and disgrace and finally, death.¶
5m.	Mukingo uikaraga muno mwiri ta miaka.	HIV/AIDS incubates in the body for a long time like ten years.	AIDS is deceptive and confusing.

From the references given on the symptoms and signs of HIV/AIDS, reference (5a), (5b), and (5c) and (5d) all show negative body transformations that are caused by HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS seems to alter someone's looks which will cause fear, confusion and shame to the victim. Expressions like *njuiri ndaganu*, *iramunyuka*, *na ndunihiriru* (thinning and falling of hair with greyish-brown hues) would make people panic and distance themselves from the AIDS victim. HIV/AIDS is manifested by the deterioration of physiological processes as captured by expression

(5e), (5i), (5j), which all depict the body functions are failing. Other scaring symptoms that may make the AIDS victim be ostracized and shunned by people include *ironda cia Ayubu* (wounds like biblical Job's). Religious discourse sourced alludes the plight of this pandemic to the dreadful disease that struck Biblical Job. Job was shunned by his friends and his wife. The worldview created that AIDS is a shameful disease that will create stigma, discrimination and isolation. Such a view is buttressed by expressions (5d), (5h), (5k), and (5l) which all depict the heavy toll that HIV/AIDS will

have on an individual. The expression *mukingo uikaraga muno mwiri ta miaka ikumi* (HIV/AIDS incubates in the body for a long time like ten years) proves that AIDS is a hideous, deceptive, confusing and creepy disease that will only manifest during the final throes to finish off the victim. This worldview represents HIV/AIDS as a silent enemy. [2]

4) *Nominalization of People Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWH)*
The AIDS language does not just represent the condition: it constructs it in different ways. Words and images create different conceptual realities of the phenomenon and people. These both determine and reflect the way we understand and feel about the condition (Horne 2004, p.401). Table 4 below shows the various linguistic constructions to describe and frame people with HIV/AIDS. [2]

Table 4: Nominalization of People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA)

No.	Gikuyu expression	English gloss	Interpretation
6a.	Kwihumba ta puppet.	Dressing like a puppet	A haggard look.
6b.	Kuhinja ta marionette	Thin like a marionette	A hopeless look.
6c.	Andu akuo	Dead people	Hopeless and useless people.
6d.	Andu akuo mari muoyo	Living dead	People with no future prospects. [2]
6e.	Andu akuo maragia	Dead people who talk.	Hopeless and useless people.
6f.	Andu marakua.	People who are dying	Doomed people with no future.
6g.	Coffin iretwara	Walking coffin.	The HIV infected person is already deemed dead.
6h.	Kiruru	Shadow	AIDS victim is reduced to a mere caricature.
6i.	Kuhinja ta rwagi	To be thin like a mosquito	The person is thin, gaunt and emaciated.
6j.	Kuhinja ta rukonda	To be thin like a grass.	The person is skinny and wasted
6k.	Guthie na ruhuho	To be blown away by the wind.	The person is so bonny and weightless.
6l.	Gukinga	To have long and sticking out neck.	A thin person unproportionally long neck.
6m.	Kunyuika	To be atrophied and undernourished.	The person is simply unhealthy.
6n.	Kuhinja muno muno	To be scrawny and attenuate.	The person looks like a skeleton.
6p.	Kumagara	To be cadaverous	Looking like one is dead.
6q.	Mundu uregete ngima	Someone who has refused food.	Looking wasted and thin.
6r.	Mundu uregete githeri	Someone who has refused corn.	Someone nearing death.
6s.	Siloo puncture	Slow puncture.	Debilitating effects of the disease

6t.	e rugendo ini	s/he is on a journey	Someone approaching death.
6u.	Ni agututiga	S/he will leave us soon.	Someone whose death is certain.
6u.	Kuugira ngima	To refuse ugali.	A dying person.
6v.	Mundu ari kuinama	The person has drooped.	Someone who is dying.
6w.	Mundu urathie kwa huko	One who is going to sleep with moles.	Someone about to die.
6x.	Uyu thiku ciake ni ndare	This person has his/her days numbered.	Someone who has just a few days to live.
6y.	Anyihite ta mwana.	He is small like a baby	Someone who lost so much weight and now looks like a minor.
6z.	Mundu ucio e mtandao ini	The person is connected into AIDS internet.	The person is ill-fated and is in connection with other AIDS victims.

In a quest to frame and describe PLWHA, their physical appearances and demeanour have been used in to nominalize them. The expressions *kwiumba ta puppet* (to dress like a puppet), and *kuhinja ta marionette* (to be thin like a marionette) all point to the denigrating references to PLWHA due to the toll HIV/AIDS on them. The same view is buttressed by expressions *andu akuo* (dead people), *andu akua mari mwoyo* (living dead), *andu akua maragia* (dead people who talk), *andu marakua* (people who are dying), *coffin iretwara* (walking coffin), which portray a deathly appearance and demeanour that is scaring. In references (6h), (6k), (6m), (6n) and (6p), PLWHA are portrayed as worn out, weak and incapable persons. Being worn out and incapable has the implication of making somebody not manage his own affairs hence becoming a burden to other people. The worldview created is that PLWHA are perceived to be social, emotional and economic burdens and liabilities to people.

The references *kuhinja ta rukonda* (to be thin like grass), *kuhinja ta rwagi* (to be thin like a mosquito) emphasize how AIDS drains one's vitality by wasting their flesh. More expression that portrays the PLWHA'S destroyed physical appearance includes *gukinga* (to have a long and sticking neck), *kunyuika* (to be atrophied and undernourished) as

well as *kuhinja muno muno* (to be scrawny and attenuate). All these references create a worldview of helplessness and hopelessness that accompany PLWHA that they are useless individuals. Yet it is a fact that while PLWA may be weak, they may not be necessarily worn out by their condition. Some of them are strong working for their livelihood and households just like anybody else.²

HIV/AIDS is depicted as a sucker of one's life and vitality. The references *tuthie* and *ruhuho* (to be blown away by the wind) and *kiruru* (a shadow), *kunyiha ta kana* (to be small like a baby) show that PLWHA are weightless persons, caricatures of their former self. People who will eventually die because *their* days are numbered. The world view created is that these people have been reduced to nothingness through wasting and emaciation, making them unable to work, and will finally die out their helplessness. Due to continued devastation and atrophy of the body, PLWHA are described based on eating habits. Expressions like *mundu uregete ngima* (someone who has refused maize meal), *mundu uregete githeri* (someone who has refused corn), *kuugira ngima* (to refuse ugali) all point to the thinning process of AIDS victims because of atrophy.²

PLWHA are framed as people on a slow but gradual journey to the grave. Expressions like *siloo puncture* (slow puncture), *e rugendoini* (s/he's on a journey), *ni atutiga* (s/he will leave us soon), *mundu urthii kwa huko* (going to sleep with moles), *mundu ucio e mutandaoini* (the person is connected into AIDS internet) show painful death that the sufferer. The attitudes created by these references show that dying of HIV/AIDS is considered a shameful and demeaning because they bear connotations of PLWHA being an outcast, burden, and liability. From a linguistic point of view, these expressions provide great evidence to the fact that languages and societies are dynamic entities with a dialectical relationship. The two are always undergoing change with the cultural practices impacting on language, while language reflects the culture. These expressions point to the culture of Agikuyu, while Agikuyu's culture and world view define their language. ☐

5) Immersive Discourse (Discourse of Harshness) in HIV/AIDS Discourse

From the preceding representations and framings of the HIV/AIDS phenomenon, it is apparent that explicit references and blunt expressions about the AIDS phenomenon, PLWHA and other social conditions that surrounding pandemic have been used. The term 'immersive' and 'counter-immersive' are majorly used to describe the way the subject of AIDS is treated in different discourse. Immersive ways thrust the listener into a direct imaginative confrontation with the special horrors of AIDS and require (him or her) to deal with them with no relief or buffer provided. This discourse is immersive in that it confronts the illness, the patients and the scale of the epidemic in blunt and graphic terms. It neither evades the actual physical effects of the disease; displaces the people who suffer; nor underplays the number involved. In the following representations, HIV/AIDS discourse is steeped in acerbic terms and blunt descriptions of the pandemic of PLWAs as well as their conditions. ☐

8a. Mundu wina muingo agiriirwo ni kuragwo >PLWHA should be killed.

8b. Mundu wina muingo agiriirwo ni kurathwo >If one contracts HIV/AIDS he should be shot dead.

8c. Mundu wina muingo agiriirwo ni kuimwo irio na mai akue >PLWHA should be denied food and water and left to starve to death. ☐

HIV/AIDS discourse reveal people's disdain for this pandemic. All these expressions show that the PLWHA are being blamed for contracting the virus and have become a threat to society. Spelling death sentence should be pronounced to PLWHA to prevent them from bringing trouble to 'clean' people. The world view created in these discourses becomes the basis for discrimination and prejudice against PLWHA as well as denigrating attitudes and perceptions. ☐

8d. Mundu wina muingo ni mwaki agiriirwo ni kwehererwo biu >A PLWHA is a dangerous fire that people should avoid at all costs.

8e. Mundu wina muingo ni rori ihuire muingo agiriirwo ni kwehererwo biu >A PLWHA is a lorry carrying viruses, kindly keep off.

8f. Mundu wina muingo agiriirwo ni kuhingirwo gicagini giake >HIV/AIDS victims need to be quarantined in an isolated private village. ☐

8g. Mundu wina muingo agiriirwo ni kwohererwo mutiini akue >A PLWHA is a

useless person who should be tied to a tree in the forest and left to die.

8h. Mundu wina mukingo agiriwo ni kuimwo dawa akue >A PLWHA should be denied medication and left to die.☐

8i. Mundu wina mukingo agiriwo ni kuorwo thithi >A PLWHA should be branded on the forehead.

8j. Mundu wina mukingo agiriwo kwohererwo tubugi maguru.>A person with AIDS should be tied some little tolling bells on their legs.

8k. Mundu wina mukingo agiriwo ni kwanikwo ta muhia riwani nja> A PLWHA should be displayed under the sun like drying millet outside the house.

8l. Mundu wina mukingo agiriwo ni kubutwo wira > A PLWHA should be sacked from their jobs.

From the above references, the ignorance of people about the nature of AIDS is reflected heavily in these references. According to the perceptions and attitudes gleaned, PLWHA is deemed to be useless, worthless and incapable of living a productive life. However, PLWHA are useful people who take care of themselves and their families. Reference (8h) implies that since it is assumed a PLWHA will become incapacitated he'll soon become a liability to the organization, and in case of death, new recruitment will be hired which will destabilize the smooth flow of the organization. The PLWHA should, therefore, meet very severe and inhuman mistreatments of sacking,

ostracization and banishments because they are responsible for being infected with HIV/AIDS. ☐

In reference (8h) a PLWHA should be denied medication because once his/her health improves after taking ARVs, s/he will confuse those who do not know his/her status and end up infecting them. This shows that people's negative attitudes and ignorance of HIV/AIDS therapy. This view is supported by the need to 'brand PLWHA on the forehead'. In reference (8j) by 'tying little tolling bells' on the PLWHA's legs, this shows that PLWHA are like leprous untouchables, impure, and dirty. This only serves to fuel stigma and discrimination against them. The worldview created by these immersive discourses is that by ostracizing, mistreating and harassing these persons, relief will be obtained and survival of the society guaranteed. Yet, these barbaric measures not only dehumanize the PLWHA but only serve to promote HIV/AIDS spread. These harsh measures would discourage anybody from revealing his/her serostatus or seeking treatment for fear of discrimination and punishment, causing the HIV/AIDS pandemic to go underground mutating and spreading. ☐

CONCLUSION

This paper has described the results of the data generated from structured interviews and focused group discussions. The significance of chapter four is that engaged meaningfully in examining HIV/AIDS discourse from AIDS Gikuyu "Mukingo" songs and common-talk. Within this HIV/AIDS discourse, framings and representations of HIV/AIDS phenomenon, figurative language use, sexuality and gender, and gender power dynamics in discourse have been given an in-depth investigation. It has been found that framings and representations of HIV/AIDS captured nominalizations of HI-virus and AIDS as potentially dangerous entities causing death. HIV/AIDS is speculated to have originated from many sources; however, the actual origin remains unknown and elusive. Nominalization of

people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) constructs fear, isolation and stigma. Therefore HIV/AIDS discourse becomes one that perpetuates gender inequality by constructing references that place the blame of HIV/AIDS contagion on the female. Immersive and counter-immersive discourse revealed the harsh references made

on people with HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS phenomenon, while counter-immersive discourse was the euphemistic expressions used to lighten the harsh references for HIV/AIDS and its carriers. ☐

REFERENCES

- Bennell, P.S., Chilisa, B., Hyde, K., Makgothi, A., Molobe, E., & Mpotokwane, L. (2001). *The impact of HIV/AIDS on primary and secondary schooling in Botswana: Developing a comprehensive strategic response* (London, Department for Internal Development), Serial number 45.
- Chilisa, B. (2005). Educational research within postcolonial Africa: A critique of HIV/AIDS research in Botswana. *Internal Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 18(6), 659-684.
- Dion, T.M. (2011). *Missing Relationships in Discourse on HIV/AIDS in Africa*. Falmer Press: London.
- Dowling, T. (2004). Uqesidizwe. *The finisher of the nation: Naming and talking about HIV/AIDS in African Languages*. Unpublished paper
- Fairclough, N., & Wodak, R. (1997). Critical Discourse Analysis. In T. van Dijk (Ed.). *Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction* (Vol. 2, pp. 258-284). London: Sage.
- Gesheker, C. L. (1994). Myths of AIDS and Sex. *Forum*, 1, 32-41.
- Horne, F. (2004). Some aspects of AIDS-related discourse in post-Apartheid South Africa culture. *Alternation*.11 (2), 401-419.
- Kamanzi, A. (2008). Evolution of HIV/AIDS Discourse among the Haya on Ten Landing Sites on the Western Shores of Lake Victoria, Tanzania: Need for a shift from biomedical to a meaningful life Discourse. *Healthy Policy and Development*, 6, 95-101.
- Kembo, S., E. (1996) Expression of national ethos in a non-native language. *Journal of Third World Studies*, 8(2), 189–208.
- Lyons, A. P., & Lyons, H. D. (2004). *Irregular connections: A history of anthropology and sexuality*. Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press.
- Mawadza, A. (2004). Stigma and HIV/ AIDS Discourse in Zimbabwe. *Alternation*, 11(2), 420-439.
- Packard, R., & Epstein, P. (1991). Epidemiologists, social scientists, and the structure of medical research on AIDS in Africa. *Social Science and Medicine*, 33(7), 771-783
- Patton, C. (1997). Queer Peregrinations. In Oppenheimer, J., & Reckitt, H. (1997). *Acting on AIDS: Sex and Politics*, (pp. 235-253). London: Serpent's Tail.
- Stillwagon, E. (2004). Racial Metaphors: Interpreting Sex and Aids in Africa. *Development and Changes Journal*, 34(5), 809-832.
- Treichler, P.A. (2011). AIDS homophobia and Biomedical Discourse: An epidemic of signification. *Medical Heritage*, 2(1), 263-305.
- UNAIDS/WHO (2007). *AIDS Epidemic Update: December 2007*. UNAIDS: Geneva.

- Waitiki, S. (2009). Language as a tool of stigmatization, discrimination and marginalization in response to HIV/AIDS in Kenya. *Maarifa Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(2), 117-128.
- Wenje, P., Nyambedha, E., & Muhoma, C. (2011). “Wende Luo’ (Luo Songs) as an intervention tool in the fight against HIV/AIDS among the Luo of Western Kenya. *Journal of AIDS and HIV Research*, 3(8), 151-160.
- Wolff, P. (2006). “Language in Discourse on education in Africa”. In: Sure, K., Ogechi, N., & Mwangi, S. (Eds) *Language Planning for Development in Africa*. Eldoret: Moi University Press.