



## Research Article

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## Critical Discourse Analysis in Ekegusii Circumcision Songs

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**Abstract:** Language acts as a primary vehicle for transmitting cultural norms, values and expectations even the thought paradigms from one generation to another. The study investigated the link between language and gender in Ekegusii circumcision songs, guided by Fairclough's tenet (1993) which states that discourse constitutes society and culture. The study found out that the Ekegusii circumcision songs are loaded with cultural stereotypes which propagates male dominance. This study applied descriptive research methodology and purposive sampling method to select statements which demarcates gender roles with the intention of elevating masculinity in the community. The analysed song reveal that the Ekegusii male circumcision songs are sexist and obscene creating masculinity dominance in defining the gender roles. This study thus has empirical contribution on research on language, and gender as major concepts in society and academics. The study is beneficial to the stakeholders who are charged with accelerating national efforts to achieve gender equity and towards attaining the Sustainable Development goal of gender equality

**Keywords:** autonomous, adulthood, subordinate

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## INTRODUCTION

This study was meant to analyse the language of the Abagusii circumcision songs and pick out the elements which are meant to elevate the male gender in preparedness to adulthood roles in the community. The community recognizes male circumcision as a major and serious component which must be carried out as the age of 12-14 years. The songs are sung by a collection of men from the villages involved in the exercise. The circumcised boys are hidden at the midst as they are escorted to their respective homes. The study was guided by Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (1989)

## Theoretical framework

The study adopted the theoretical frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (2001) and Wodak (1997) in data analysis and interpretation. CDA recognizes language a social practice. Therefore, this study was meant to unearth the hidden ideologies in the Ekegusii circumcision songs which propagates male dominance and built a patriarchy community. According to Fairclough, through CDA all injustice will be addressed. Therefore, this study applied Fairclough's tenet that states that discourse constitutes society and culture

## FINDINGS

## Men and Leadership

According to Fairclough (1989) CDA addresses how dominance is enacted in the society. Though Ekegusii circumcision songs, the study found out that, the songs uplift the boys and inform them that they are

no longer boys and they can now take active roles in the society.

Example

*Obeire omomura x2*

He is now a man x2

The songs imply that the boy has been transformed from a young boy(lad) to a senior youth. The youth can be sent anywhere where the community may need his contribution like defending the community against the raiders or even escort the bridal during the payment of the dowry. The lexical "omomura" (adult youth) carries the magnitude of recognition that he can now perform a heavy task in the community. The term "oberie omomura" (he is now an adult youth) is a simple sentence which is meant to give informative information to both men and women in the community to imply that he has been empowered.

The community becomes confident that all aggressors will be dealt with, since the circumcised boys will do all the necessary to deal with the enemies as the example given below alludes;

*Arwane sigini na botende*

To fight the Kipsigis and the Kuria

The statement is a compound sentence which may be broken down as follows;

*Arwane Sigisi* (To fight the Kipsigis)

*Arwane Botende* (To fight the Kuria)

This implies that the young man is empowered to protect the community whether from one neighbouring community or all of them.

### Men and Marriage

The language is used prepares young men into marriage. The community perceives that after circumcision, the young men can be able to start their own families and take care of their wives as adult men as the example given below indicates.

*Omoisia ngorera are aegwe omokungu*

The young man is crying to be given a wife

The lexical “*omoisia*” (lad) “*aegwe*” ( be given) “*omokungu*” (a wife) are used to indicate that the lad sees himself that he is no longer a lad ,instead should be recognized as an adult ready to take up family responsibilities. The lexical “*ngorerare*”( he is crying) insinuates that, the young boy (lad) is tired of being demeaned and therefore should be regarded as an adult. The song further warns the circumcised boy that he should now get out and look for food for his family as the example below indicate;

*Otige kominyokia ebimoni ogende otware chingabi*

Should now stop chasing cats and go for antelopes

The song empowers the young man that now that he is an adult,he can go out and hunt for big animals. Connotatively ,the young man,after circumcision, he can now move far from home to look for a wife and also to become autonomous in looking for a proper way of providing enough for his family.The sentence;  
*Atige gotwara ebimoni (To stop hunting cats)*

According to Moore (1994), gender roles refer to the culture’s understanding on socially assigned roles. Therefore, the Ekegusii circumcision songs tells a man that his position is not to stay at home to be fed, but be an active partner in building the community. The “*ebimoni*” (cats) are domestic animals and are associated with inactively people at home that is, lazy people waiting to be fed and guided especially women and children. Therefore, the song warns the grown-up men that after circumcision, they should work with vigour to effectively feed their families. That is why the second part of that sentence reads;

*Agende atware chingabi (To go and hunt the antelopes)*

The antelope is a bigger animal compared to cats and it has enough meat to the people to consume for a number of days. Therefore,the lexical “*chingabi*” (antelope) informs a man that he should go out not just to come out with something, but something substantial. The statement goes ahead to demarcate gender roles by saying;

*Omokungu oo nakoganyete buna omosacha*  
You wife is waiting for you to return as a man

The wife is in this instance domesticated and the man goes out to look for food or wealth. This gives men a superior role compared to women who should be waiting to be fed or provided for. Therefore, topicalization “*omokungu oo nakoganyete*” ( you wife is waiting for you) puts a place of a woman in a subordinate position as a weak vessel which need to be provided for. Returning home empty-handed is not allowed for a man That is evident through the proposition of the statement “*oirane buna omosacha*” ( to return like a man) .This statement indicates that laziness is not tolerated and at all costs a real man must return to his family with something.Without with, the man carries a feminine attributes and therefore, despised.

### Symbolic Leadership

As the men sing escorting the circumcised to his home, the symbolic language is expresses to prepare the young man as a protector. For instance, the mother of the circumcised carries( *omoro*) a machete and leads the singers and they ululate. The (*omoro*) machete is a sign of bravery that the young man can now protect his family and the community. It also marks responsibility that the young man having graduated to adulthood, can now work independently.

## CONCLUSION

The thematization and the analysis of the Ekegusii circumscion songs , the study critically paid attention to how masculinity is permeated in Ekegusii circumscion songs .The analysis also revealed the effect of discourse in Ekegusii circumscion songs with regard to the roles society assigns to men and women and how these assignments or representations result in perpetuating gender.

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