

THE ROLE OF INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN UNDERSTANDING KISWAHILI PROVERBS

**Prisca Jerono
University of Nairobi**

This paper endeavours to show how Kiswahili students can be able to conceptualize and understand the uses and meanings of proverbs by drawing on the similarities of the meanings and uses of the proverbs found in their indigenous languages. An indigenous language carries a person's identity and world view. The world view is formed by the norms, culture and beliefs associated with the language. In Kenya the official languages are English and Kiswahili, with Kiswahili carrying a second function of a national language. Together with English, Kiswahili is a compulsory examinable subject in primary and secondary schools in spite of its being an indigenous language only to a small percentage of the population. Most of the students learn it as a second or third language. Part of the Kiswahili syllabus entails learning aspects associated with Kiswahili culture. One of these entails the uses and meanings of proverbs. Students learning Kiswahili as a second language often have difficulties understanding the uses and meanings of the various proverbs because they are associated with a culture and an environment different from theirs. Using examples showing the similarities found in the uses of proverbs and their meanings, the paper demonstrates how speakers of Tugen (one of the languages within the Kalenjin macro language) learning Kiswahili can benefit from some awareness of such similarities between Kiswahili and Tugen proverbs. By so doing it attempts to show why teachers should encourage students to draw on their indigenous languages to facilitate their conceptualization and understanding of words of wisdom that are presented in Kiswahili proverbs.

1. INTRODUCTION

In Kenya there are about 42 indigenous languages which are used by different ethnic communities as their mother tongues. These languages serve as identification markers for their respective communities. Kenya, being a multi-racial country also has foreign languages which are used variously for instance Arabic in Islamic religion, English as a medium of instruction, Hindi by the Indian community, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, German and others for business activities. Kenya's language policy gives Kiswahili and English the roles of official languages with Kiswahili taking an added role of the national language (Republic of Kenya, 2010). According to Ogechi (2009: 14) there are three linguistics zones in Kenya namely: 1. The rural areas that are typically inhabited by ethnically homogenous communities that use indigenous languages; 2. Peri-urban areas which though rural have ethnically diverse occupants and therefore use Kiswahili as a language of wider communication

and 3. Urban areas that comprise towns and cities with people from a multiplicity of ethnicities in which Kiswahili and English are the languages of wider communication. From this perspective, it means that English is used as a minority language despite its official status as the language of official communication. Kiswahili on the other hand is used as a lingua franca for inter ethnic communication.

Indigenous languages however are used mainly for intra-ethnic communication. Out of the 42 indigneous languages only 22 of them have publications for teaching. The language policy on education in Kenya envisages some of the indigenous languages as mediums of instruction for lower classes in areas where they are dominant.

2. ROLE OF AN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE

An indigenous language is a language that is native to a country or region (Collins 2012). An indigenous language is one which is innately acquired. According to Chomsky (1975:4) a speaker of an indigenous language has competence of the language. This competence enables the speaker to construct an unlimited number of sentences some of which he/she may never have heard uttered by someone else; to understand new sentences that are spoken by other speakers of the language; to identify grammatical and ungrammatical sentences.

An indigenous language is acquired within the setting of a particular environment. That means that the environmental context dictates the lexical items that are acquired and later used in a particular language. Users of an indigenous language therefore use lexical items particular to a given speech community. An indigenous language carries information about the user's environment, his/her beliefs, cultural practices, history etc. The language represents a way of looking at the world. A user of an indigenous language is able to create a thought and spontaneously express it in a way that may not be possible in any other language. Thus, one who uses an indigenous language rarely, if ever, thinks of how to construct sentences when using his/her language. This is different for an L2 (second language) user, who often has to think of issues of grammaticality in terms of tenses, structure, vocabulary, etc. Various studies have been undertaken on the importance of using indigenous languages in early education (Clegg (2007), Cummins (1984; 2000). The reason for this is that education builds on experience that a learner has already acquired. According to Collins et al. (1992), learners bring in different aspects of expertise to the learning task. For example, they bring different childhood experiences, cultural backgrounds and assumptions about the world. Such experiences can have a significant impact on how learners interpret new information.

When learning is meaningful, learners are able to make connections

between new information and prior knowledge. In particular, if learners already have background information on the meanings and uses of proverbs in their indigenous languages, they can be able to use this knowledge as they try to learn the meanings and uses of Kiswahili proverbs. According to the cognitive perspective, learning is a process of constructing meaning from informal experiences and formal instruction. While indigenous proverbs are learnt from informal experiences, proverbs from an L2 such as Kiswahili (to many Kenyans) are learnt through formal instruction. Learners combine some of what they observe in the learning context with their existing knowledge and beliefs about proverbs in order to create and expand their understanding of proverbs to include those in the target language (for instance Kiswahili proverbs). This, for instance, may happen to L1 speakers of Tugen (a Southern Nilotic language within the Kalenjin macro-language nexus in Kenya) who are learning Kiswahili proverbs.

In such a situation, there is transfer of knowledge involving the meanings and uses of proverbs from the Tugen language to the proverbs in Kiswahili. The transfer involves similarities along cognitive dimensions such that a proverb with a particular meaning in one language can be compared with another proverb with the same or similar meaning in another language. Moreover, a particular situation that is associated with a given proverb in an indigenous language can serve as a source of another related proverb in a second language.

Teachers in this setting can be able to use such situations to enable the student to come up with appropriate proverbs in an indigenous language and later on teach them equivalent proverbs in the target language, in this case, Kiswahili. They can also be encouraged to make comparisons between proverbs that are found in their indigenous languages with the Kiswahili proverbs.

2.1 Indigenous languages and education in Kenya

The policy on the medium of instruction in Kenya in the lower grades entails the use of Kiswahili and English in urban areas while indigenous languages are to be used in (especially rural areas) where a particular indigenous language is prevalent Republic of Kenya (1981; 1999). English is supposed to be used from Class 4 onwards, with Kiswahili continuing as a compulsory examinable subject up to form 4. In practice however, the situation is different. Most of the schools prefer English and do not use indigenous languages or Kiswahili in the lower grades. This means that many learners are not given the advantage of using and developing their indigenous languages.

The use of indigenous languages is only relegated to intra-ethnic communication at home and in the vernacular media. Kiswahili, being a national language, is a compulsory subject. However, it is an indigenous

language to a very small percentage of the population, mainly at the coast and in urban centres. Webb & Kembo-Sure (2000), cited in Ogechi (2009:143) argue that Kiswahili itself is as alien to most rural peoples as English is and even those who claim to speak it only to a small extent consider themselves fluent enough to engage in serious discussions.

According to Kadurenge (2007:187) the results of secondary school examinations for Kiswahili show that very few students are able to master Kiswahili and have enough competence in it to be able to communicate fluently. The reason is that to most of these students the language is alien, and some teachers do not understand some of the issues pertaining to the subject. One of the challenges that many teachers have is the teaching of oral literature (Odeo 2007:197). Kiswahili as a subject encompasses the teaching of various aspects of the Swahili culture. One of these aspects is oral literature, in which one of the genres expected to be mastered by the learners is the meanings and uses of the proverbs in used comprehension texts, conversations and literary texts.

2.2 Proverbs in Kiswahili and indigenous languages

“A proverb is a saying in more or less fixed form marked by shortness, sense and ‘salt’ and distinguished by the popular acceptance of the truth tersely expressed in it.” (Finnegan (1976:393) Proverbs occur almost everywhere in Africa. In many African cultures a feeling for language, imagery or expression of abstract ideas through compressed and allusive phraseology comes out particularly well in proverbs. Proverbs have a close connection with other forms of oral literature. For instance, a story may end with a proverb for emphasis. Proverbs are usually connected with riddles and general conversation, and are frequent in songs and poems. They are therefore used in a variety of ways, including to advise, to rebuke, to educate and in oratory to colour language. They can also be used to ridicule and to persuade. In most cases proverbs are said to represent a people’s philosophy (p.416). According to Mkota (2009: iii) proverbs are basically a tool for disseminating education and folk art. They can be used to give important messages about the morals, beliefs, culture, history and the general world view of a community. They also serve to show important linguistic aspects of various languages.

Structurally proverbs have two parts, the first part that gives a statement and the second part that completes it. They may also use rhythm and repetition of sounds, words or phrases. Proverbs are known to be figurative. They employ the uses of various stylistic devices to bring out the literal and metaphorical meanings. Proverbs have many meanings or interpretations representing many issues depending on the goal of the user. One proverb can be understood in different contexts, including: situational, geographical,

cultural and historical. Proverbs also emanate from the culture of the community concerned. It is part of the language of the community in question.

Kiswahili proverbs are part and parcel of the Swahili language just as the Tugen proverbs are part of the Tugen culture. They draw their lexical items and metaphorical meanings from the relevant historical, geographical and cultural contexts. However most of the proverbs in the Kenyan context are related cognitively in their meanings and in their usage despite the differences in the language-based lexemes and structures. For example the proverb: *Maameirorion koi* (Laughter does not affect a stone) is similar in meaning and usage with the Kiswahili proverb: *Mcheka kilema hafi hakijamfika* (Whoever laughs at a cripple will not die before it gets to him/her). These proverbs carry the meaning that it is not good to laugh at someone who has a condition and is used to warn those who engage in the vice that they risk being affected by the condition too.

2.3 Proverbs and cognition

Proverbs are phrases which express some truth about aspects of human life. They are coined as a result of experience gained from certain actions that are common to a community. In their expression they use metaphoric language. According to Croft and Cruse (2004:55), a metaphor involves a relationship between a source domain (literal meaning of the metaphoric expression) and the target domain (the domain of experience actually being described by the metaphor). The literal meaning of the proverb provides the source domain which is used to express a different meaning that is represented by the activity being targeted by the proverb in question, thus providing the intended meaning.

The choice of a proverb to describe a particular situation in a particular domain represents a conceptualization of the structure of that context in a particular way that differs depending on the proverb chosen. That is, there may be different proverbs that could be used to express a certain action. The source domain and the target domain of the proverb interact in such a way that there is mapping between the two conceptual domains in the human mind. In this sense therefore one thing is seen in terms of another where the literal meaning of the proverb is mapped onto the intended meaning.

According to cognitive linguistics, the conceptualization and understanding of language is based on experiences derived from language use. The cognitive categories (abstract mental constructs) are cognitive tools which are used for learning, which arises from relating past experiences to the present through a process by which they are assigned similar conceptual categories. New knowledge also can be generalized to other members of a similar category. All aspects of conceptual structure are

subject to construal. That is, how an experience is expressed depends on how the speaker conceptualizes it for the understanding of the hearer. Words and constructions evoke an understanding (frame). A hearer invokes a frame upon hearing an utterance in order to understand it. A frame is a coherent region of human knowledge (Croft & Cruse 2004:17). The identification of the frames is based on the linguistic meanings of a word or a linguistic unit. The concepts symbolized by the words are known as profiles. They express the relationship between a word form and word meaning (Croft & Cruse 2004: 15). Concepts exist in reference to profiles and frames (domains) in order for them to be understood. A proverb is made of linguistic profiles which are understood with respect to their frames. Profiles are expressed in capital letters. The frames also describe differences in community or social contexts. Communities involve the possession of shared knowledge that is acquired by engaging in activities that define that community. This shared expertise is found in frames of concepts symbolized by the specialized vocabulary shared by the members of the community. In school, learners can be able to learn more about meanings and uses of various Kiswahili proverbs by using their indigenous proverbs. Tugen learners use the proverbs that are specific to their community. These proverbs have profiles which are understood with respect to their frames which embody the Tugen culture, economy and geographical environment. Some of these frames are similar to other proverbs used by other communities in Kenya. For example the Tugen proverb: *Anyiny kobo mosongwan kobo chi* (It is sweet when it is for the monkey but painful to a person). This proverb has the profiles ANYINY KOBO MOSO NG'WAN KOBO CHI. This profile provides the frame that compares a person and a monkey. A monkey is believed to have no feelings probably because it lives in the forest. It is one of the animals found within the Tugen environment. The proverb is used to refer to situations where when a human being is affected by a situation it appears painful but not when the situation affects an animal. This proverb can be contextualized to the meaning of the Kiswahili proverb: *Mkuki kwa nguruwe kwa binadamu niuchungu* (A spear for the pig but for a human being it hurts.) In the Kiswahili proverb the profile MKUKI KWA NGURUWE KWA BINADAMU NI UCHUNGU provides a frame similar to that of the Tugen proverb only that in this case the animal of reference is the pig, which is found within the environment of the Kiswahili culture. These two proverbs are therefore similar in their profiles and usage. The knowledge about aspects of Tugen proverbs can be generalized to the understanding of the meanings of the various Kiswahili proverbs by contextualizing the profiles of the Kiswahili proverbs with respect to the frames that are relevant to the geographical location and culture of the Swahili people. The knowledge that learners gain by unraveling the meanings of the Tugen proverbs can be transferred to the understanding of the meanings and uses of Kiswahili proverbs. This can be done by putting the

proverbs into similar conceptual categories as well as generalizing new knowledge from Tugen proverbs to proverbs that are of a similar nature in Kiswahili.

2.4 Tugen and Swahili proverbs

Tugen proverbs just like Kiswahili proverbs are used to refer to certain actions that people undertake in various contexts. The meaning of a proverb determines its choice to be used in a particular situation. Meanings of most of proverbs that are found in Tugen are also similar to the ones found in Swahili proverbs. A learner who knows the meanings and uses of Tugen proverbs can easily transfer this knowledge to the meanings and uses of Swahili proverbs. Although their geographical and cultural contexts are different, the uses of the proverbs are similar for Tugen and Kiswahili. The only difference being the choice of the linguistic resources that are used in the coining of the proverb. This similarity is seen in the proverbs below which show how proverbs are conceptualized and used to map onto various activities in which people engage, including advising, warning, rebuking, teaching or encouraging others.

(1) *Makimelchindos kirokwo aeng'* - One does not heat two sticks at ago

In this example the profile MAKIMELCHINDOS KIROKWO AENG' evokes the following frame: <activity is not burning but heating, activity done in the past, activity is negated, heating involves two sticks, heating involves fire, fire is dangerous, sticks are from trees, sticks used for beating, walking or herding; stick for walking or herding needs removal of bark, heating removes the bark, if two sticks are heated at a go there is likelihood of burning etc>.The profile/frame domain gives the literal meaning of the proverb that one does not heat two sticks at a go. This literal meaning is the source domain which is mapped onto the target domain. The target domain would involve a situation where one attempts to accomplish two activities at ago which might result in a loss. This proverb is invoked in order to warn people against the risks associated with such an attempt.

Once a learner cognitively understands the use of this proverb he/she can transfer and generalize this knowledge to any other similar situation in another language. The target language will provide a proverb similar in meaning but using different profiles and having different frames. For instance in Kiswahili we have the proverb: *Mshika mawili moja huponyoka* (anyone who tries to catch two things will miss one).

In this proverb the profile MSHIKA MAWILI MOJA HUPONYOKA is associated with the following frame: <one has two hands, one can only hold something properly with two hands, one hand is weak, hands are weak, they only catch light things, a hand can catch only one thing, another thing will

not be caught, the missing of the other thing is unintentional, something worthwhile will be missed, it is not a good experience etc>.

The frame in the source domain provides the idea of someone who tries to catch two things and failing to get one. This information is mapped onto the target domain which has a situation where someone attempts to do two things at ago and is warned of the risks involved using this proverb. This proverb is also similar to: *Karamu mbili zilimshinda fisi* (Two feasts defeated the hyena).

The profile KARAMU MBILI ZILIMSHINDA FISI has the following frame: <hyena is an animal, it is a glutton, a hyena tries to get food wherever it is, a hyena attempted to seek food in different directions, it was impossible to get any food etc>. The information from the source domain is mapped onto a target situation where an individual attempts to juggle many activities at ago and is warned of the impossibility of such attempts. From such examples, we can see that the messages in the Tugen proverb and the Kiswahili proverb are similar. Once a student has learnt that it is futile to attempt to do two things at ago, the same knowledge is transferred to the meaning and the use of the Kiswahili proverb.

(2) *Mokirorien kelda ne bo chi* - One does not laugh with another person's tooth

In this proverb the profile MAKIRORIEN KELDA NE BO CHI provides the following frame: <laughter is good, people laugh with teeth, one needs his/her own teeth in order to laugh, it is not possible to laugh while using another person's tooth, somebody's tooth is precious etc>. This information from the proverb is mapped into a similar situation where one attempts to do an activity while using resources that are not his/hers. For one to succeed one must depend on his/her own resources. This proverb is used to rebuke people who depend on things that are not theirs or who don't appreciate what is theirs. The knowledge gained from this proverb can be generalized to another proverb with a similar meaning in Kiswahili, for example: *Dau la mwenzio halivushi* (Another person's dhow will not take you across the sea).

This proverb provides the profile DAU LA MWENZIO HALIVUSHI. This profile invokes the following frame: <a dhow is used in water, it is used for transport, one can only use another person's dhow by paying>. This frame, which is part of the source domain, is used to refer to situations in the target frame where an individual depends on another person's vehicle or resource to do an activity which can only be possible if he/she commits himself/herself to pay for the service. The use of this proverb is also similar to the proverb: *Nguo ya kuazima haisitiri matako* (Clothes that are borrowed do not cover your nakedness).

The frame that is invoked by the profile NGUO YA KUAZIMA HAITIRI MATAKO is: <that clothes are used to cover nakedness, it is good for someone

to have his or her own clothes, clothes that are borrowed have limitations, one may be asked by the owner to return them and so one should not depend on them to cover his/her nakedness>. This information from the source domain is used in the target domain to admonish people who depend on other people's resources by telling them that such behavior has its own risks.

These Swahili proverbs would sound familiar to the Tugen because they teach people to appreciate what they have instead of craving for things that are not their own, an idea that the Tugen are quite familiar with.

(3) *Makiminei sunet cheragan* - One does not stuff fatty meat in a thin animal

The profile MAKIMINEI SUNET CHERAGAN provides the following frame: <fatty food is used to fatten, to fatten one needs to feed or stuff with food, a skinny animal will always be skinny, it is useless to try to fatten it etc>. The frames provide the source domain of the proverb, which is that even if you stuff a skinny animal with food it will not grow fat. This frame is mapped on to a target frame which involves somebody doing an activity that will not yield any results. This proverb is therefore used to caution people against undertaking activities that are of no value. Knowledge gained from this proverb can be generalized to similar information provided by similar proverbs in Kiswahili, for example: *Mpiga ngumi ukuta huumiza mkonowe* (Someone who hits a wall with a fist hurts his/her hand).

The profile MPIGA NGUMI UKUTA HUUMIZA MKONOWE provides the following frame: <a hand is delicate, a hand is not an object for hitting hard surfaces, a wall is a hard surface, hitting a wall with a fist will not break the wall, if one uses the fist to hit a wall, he/she will be hurt or injured etc>. This information from this frame is mapped to a target frame where one attempts to do things that might be injurious to them. Although this proverb is not similar to the Tugen one in the use of profiles, it provides a frame similar to it. One therefore can relate the uses of the Tugen proverb to the one that is used in Kiswahili. It advises that some activities are impossible to undertake, therefore, one should not struggle with them because doing so will only hurt them.

(4) *Maruei kuut ndara*- Regrets do not miss

In this proverb the profile MARUEI KUUT NDARA provides the following frame: <*ndara* is regret, regrets are always in abundance, regrets come after an activity, to regret is not good>. This frame provides the source domain in the sense that people often have regrets over some action. The regrets always come after an action. This information is mapped on to a target domain where somebody regrets over some experience. This insight can be related to the insight contained in the Swahili proverb: *Majuto ni mkujuu huja kinyume* (Regrets are like a grandchild, they come later).

The profile MAJUTO NI MJUKUU HUJA KINYUME provides the following frame: <regrets are like grandchildren, regrets come late, just like grandchildren, people usually have regrets>. Regrets characteristically come after the corresponding actions and therefore people become aware of them too late to avoid them. This proverb is used to teach people to think carefully before undertaking activities which they may regret later.

(5) *Muitai kiruk*- Perseverance is bulls

This proverb provides the profile MUITAI KIRUK, whose frame is: <perseverance is painful, it comes through a challenging process, it is equated to bulls, bulls usually fight, bulls persevere pain in order to win>. The information provided from this frame is mapped on to a target domain where it is used to encourage an individual going through a tough situation to persevere like a bull that bravely bears pain while fighting in order to win. What one learns from this proverb is that one can only overcome the hardships of life through perseverance. Such knowledge helps one in appreciating the insight contained in a similar proverb in Kiswahili, for instance: *Mvumilivu hula mbivu* (A person who has patience/perseverance gains (eats ripe fruits)).

This proverb provides the profile MVUMILIVU HULA MBIVU, which invokes the frame: <perseverance is not easy, perseverance is important, one who perseveres finally eats ripe fruits>. This information from the frame is also mapped on to a target domain where one is encouraged to persevere when faced with a difficult situation.

6. *Ngo samis muryan kobo kot ne bo* - Even if a rat is smelly it belongs to a particular house

This proverb provides the profile NGO SAMIS MURYAN KOBO KOT BE BO, which invokes the following frame: <rats are destructive, rats invade houses and live there, they are part of the house, every house belongs to somebody, even if it is smelly a rat will be associated with a particular house etc>. This frame provides information in the source domain which is mapped on to the target domain. That is, even if there is a defect in whatever belongs to someone, it is still part and parcel of that person. This can be used to remind one that if something is associated with them, however bad it may be, it will not be separable from them. For instance, if one has a wayward child, the child will still belong to him/her. It can also be used to refer to situations where one protects what is his or hers despite having defects, usually in disregard of what others might think. The knowledge carried in this proverb is that one will always value what is theirs and this can be mapped to information carried by a similar proverb in Kiswahili, for example: *Chako kikioza hakinuki* (when something of yours is rotten, it does not smell).

This proverb provides the profile CHAKO KIKIOZA HAKINUKI, which

provides the frame: <*chako* is what a person owns, whatever one owns is valuable, the value does not depreciate in the eyes of the owner even if it spoilt, one cannot see the defects of what is theirs>. This information is mapped on to a target domain where one endeavours to protect what is theirs even when it is seen to have some defect. This proverb teaches that one cannot see his/her own shortcomings and as such even when somebody is on the wrong those related to him/her will always defend him/her. This information is also carried by the proverb *Nyani haoni ngokoye* (a monkey does not see its behind), which provides the profile NYANI HAONI NGOKOYE, whose frame is as follows: <a monkey is an animal, it lives in the forests, its behind is ugly, it uses it for sitting, it is not able to see it>. Other monkeys are able to see this behind but it does not bother them. This information from the source domain is mapped on to a target domain where an individual fails to see the wrong that they do however bad it might be. It is used to admonish those who always defend their actions or the actions of those related to them however repulsive the actions might be.

7. *Kichulei keet ko mining* - A tree is straightened when small

This proverb provides the profile KICHULEI KEET KO MINING', which provides the following frame: <a tree is old, it is important, a good tree is straight, a plant will take any shape on its own, the shape of a tree can be directed, a plant can be straightened only before it is fully grown, once grown it will not be possible to change its shape>.

The information from the frame is mapped on to the target domain where it is used to provide the insight that one prepares something early enough if he or she wants it to develop into something good. Otherwise when it is too late, nothing much can be done to change the situation. This proverb is mostly used to teach people that behaviour is moulded when children are still young because, once someone is grown up; it becomes very difficult to change what is undesirable in their behaviour. This knowledge can be related to the insight carried in the Kiswahili proverb: *Samaki mkunje angali mbichi* (You fold fish when it is still fresh).

This proverb provides the profile MKUNJE SAMAKE ANGALI MBICHI, whose frame is as follows: <fish lives in water, fish is alive in water and dies out of water, fish dries when left out for long, one folds fish while it is still fresh, it cannot be folded once it is cooked>. This frame entails the wisdom of taking the necessary action in good time. Some situations are impossible to handle once they have developed to a certain stage. This information is mapped on to the target situation where one attempts to do something when it is too late. A speaker may also use it to give advice on the importance of addressing issues early enough. Generally, the proverb advises that it is wise to intervene in a given situation before it is too late.

3. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing discussion, we can see that the wisdom learnt from the proverbs of the learner's L1 may facilitate the appreciation of similar wisdom in the proverbs of the target language (L2). This point has been demonstrated using the proverbs of Tugen (a Nilotic language spoken only as a mother tongue in Kenya) and Kiswahili (a Bantu language, which is Kenya's national language and, together with English, Kenya's official language). Most of the Tugen proverbs have similarities in meaning with the corresponding Kiswahili proverbs despite their different lexical items and syntactic structures. The proverbs in both languages use metaphoric language, in which an attribute of one thing (the target domain) is expressed in terms of the attribute(s) of something else (the source domain), within the relevant norms of construal. At the conceptual level, it is the information contained in the frames provided by the corresponding proverb profiles that constitute the source and target domains linked by a figurative mapping relationship. This relationship is subject to contextual considerations. Thus, a Tugen speaker who understands how metaphors are brought about in Tugen proverbs is able to transfer the same knowledge in understanding the metaphoric language in Kiswahili proverbs. The uses of proverbs in both Tugen and Kiswahili are similar. They are used to advise, rebuke, warn and teach. This phenomenon is not unique to Kiswahili and Tugen. It can be generalized to all situations in which an L1 speaker attempts to learn the proverbs of an L2 as his/her target language in a particular L2-learning situation.

REFERENCES

- Chomsky, N. 1975. *The Logical Structure of Linguistic Theory*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Clegg, J. 2007. "Moving towards bilingual education in Africa." In H. Coleman (ed.). *Language and Development in Africa and Beyond*. Proceedings of the 7th International Language & Development Conference. Addis Ababa: British Council. pp 49-64.
- Collins Concise English Dictionary* (2012) 8thEd. Glasgow: Harper Collins Publishers.
- Collins, A., J. Greeno, L.B. Resnick, B. Berliner and R. Calfee. 1992 "Cognition and Learning." In B. Berliner and R. Calfee. *Handbook of Educational Psychology*. New York: Simon & Shuster Macmillan.
- Croft, W. and D. A. Cruse. 2004. *Cognitive Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cummins, J. 1984. "The Role of Primary language Development in Promoting

- Educational Success for Language Minority Students: A Theoretical Framework.” *Bilingual, Bicultural Education*. Los Angeles: Evaluation, Dissemination and Assessment Centre.
- _____. 2000. “Language, Power and Pedagogy: Bilingual Children in the Crossfire.” *Multilingual Matters*. England: Clevedon.
- Finnegan, R. 1976. *Oral Literature in Africa*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press
- Kadurenge, M.K. 2007. “Utahiniwa Kiswahili Vyuoni.” Katika K. Njogu (Mhr.) *Kiswahili na Elimu Nchini Kenya*. Nairobi: Twaweza Communications.
- Mkota, A. 2009. *Kamusi ya Methali-Maana na Matumizi*. Nairobi: Vide-Muwa Publishers.
- Odeo, I.I. 2007. “Utekelezaji wa Silabasi Mpyaya Somo la Kiswahili katika Shule za Upili: Mtazamo wa Walimu.” Katika K. Njogu (Mhr.) *Kiswahili na Elimu Nchini Kenya*. Nairobi: Twaweza Communications.
- Ogechi, N. O. 2009. “The Role of Foreign and Indigenous Languages in Primary Schools: The Case of Kenya.” *Stellenbosch Papers in Linguistics PLUS* Vol 38:143-158.
- Republic of Kenya. 1981. Second University in Kenya. Report of the Presidential Working Party. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- _____. 1999. Totally Integrated Quality Education and Training (TIQET)-Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Education System of Kenya. Nairobi: Government Printer.
- _____. 2010. *Constitution of Kenya*. Nairobi: Government Printer.

Author's address

Prisca Jerono
Department of Linguistics and Languages
University of Nairobi
P.O. Box 30197 - 00100
Nairobi, Kenya
E-mail: prisca.jerono@yahoo.com