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A pragmatic analysis of some kirundi proberbs depicting gender differences

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UNIVERSITY OF BURUNDI

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

AND LITERATURE

A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF SOME KIRUNDI PROVERBS DEPICTING GENDER DIFFERENCES

By

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A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of the Degree "Licence en Langue et Littérature Anglaises"

Bujumbura, October 2005

DEDICATION

To you my late father,

my mother,

my brothers and sisters,

my wife and boychild,

my friends and relatives,

I warmly dedicate this thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been what it is without the contribution of many people to whom I owe a lot of gratitude.

First and foremost, I am particularly indepted to Dr Herménégilde RWANTABAGU , Senior Lecturer at the University of Burundi who kindly accepted to supervise this work. May he find here my heartfelt gratitude.

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My profound gratitude to all my teachers from the Primary school to the University for the formal education they provided me with.

Last but not least, I can not lack to express a feeling of sincere thanks to my parents, friends and relatives who helped in a way or another all along my education.

Deus BIGIRIMANA

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

F.W : Folk Wisdom

i.e : id est

L.M :Literal Meaning

P.M : Proverbial Meaning

R : Rodegem

Z : Zuure

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CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction

When people are in contact, they need to communicate with one another through language in order to fulfil various purposes. They need to convey ideas, to express different needs and interest, etc. Thus, depending on the kind of message they want to transmit, people may use many various ways such as riddles, tales, discourse, songs, proverbs, to name but a few.

With regard to Kirundi language, it is known to fall among the Niger-Congo- Cordofanian family as classified by Greenberg (1955:3), one of Africanist Linguists. This linguistic family of Bantu languages which includes Kirundi, Kikamba, Kikuyu, Kinyarwanda, Lunyoro and Lunyankore are African languages spoken in the Great Lakes Region and which share various similarities such as nominal classes, tones etc. Hence,Burundian style of life is carried out through language especially proverbs. It is not only used everywhere in Burundi, but also in some neighbouring areas namely Bugufi and Buha in Tanzania. It is also considered as one of the most structured languages and acknowledged to belong to languages with classes and tones. Hence, Burundians are carried out through Kirundi language especially proverbs. The latter constitute a cultural store although this wealth is not directly apparent. Some of them are loaded with various kinds of advice, request, and admonition.

As far as this study is concerned, it consists of a pragmatic analysis of Kirundi proverbs depicting gender differences, in order to identify their implications and possible effects on society's beliefs and views about them. To achieve this, we made use of samples of native speakers and books. In addition, some socio-cultural and socio-linguistic phenomena underlying the use of Kirundi proverbs were taken into account to fully grasp and reveal their

structure and interpretation. It is worth mentioning that the study of proverbs is more or less difficult by the complexities of factors which constitute the speech community in which proverbs are performed.

1.2. Background to the Study

From time immemorial, sex-roles have been the differentiating factor between males and females. The question that one may ask is to know how it could occur to children of opposite sex, but growing in the same environment to act differently.

First and foremost, what we are quite sure about is that all children are exposed to the same input, that is the female language as stated by Lakoff (1975:47) boys and girls learn women's language from their mother and female figures, that is nursery are usually female). Later on, these boys and girls, under the influence of Burundian culture, begin to play separately at a certain age as they grow up. The more girls grow older, the more they strengthen this way of talking, while boys will try to shift to male forms largely influenced by their peers. Since this type of grouping begins at the early stages of childhood, they will be much more reinforced with the appearance of secondary sexual characteristics.

On a larger scale, if we follow the same line of thought, we come up with the idea that this type of behaviour is associated with the different roles assigned to boys and girls. Indeed, while boys were trained to hunt, to protect their families, to have control over their sisters, to speak well on social occasions, girls were taught to take care of the household, to obey their brothers, to cultivate, to cook, and other chores. In addition, girls were prevented from

speaking in public in the presence of men as illustrated by this proverb 'Nta nkokokazi ibika isake iriho'/ a hen does not crow in the presence of a cock/.

However, these gender differences mostly loaded in Kirundi proverbs and which sometimes result into gender prejudices refer mainly to the roles assigned to people according to their sex, in accordance with traditional customs. The popular view is that women have been disadvantaged and subjugated by men. One of the many channels through which this view is conveyed is proverbs for they are taken to embody a people's philosophical outlook as stated by Schipper, (1991:28). *No great deeds, works of Literature or books of History reveal so much about a culture and so briefly and memorably (...) as its proverb*
The quotation above comes to emphasize the close relationship between culture and proverbs since the understanding and interpretation of any work of art or proverb are facilitated by the culture which supports them.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Among the subjects dealt with in proverbs, gender stereotypes take a great place. Despite national and international concerns and the various activities aimed at sensitizing society about gender imbalances and different proposed solutions, the problem of prejudice in male-female relationships has not yet reduced noticeably.
Cameron, (1992) emphasizes the above situation when she states that

> *even the most moderate 'liberal' feminist which has its main goal, the free entry of women to traditionally male domains,this will sometimes doubt as to whether our current values and yardsticks of success are really ideal for anyone, male or female*

In a number of cases the female side is disadvantaged but there are cases where the male side is also negatively affected. There are cases where the efforts to remove gender imbalances are resisted by the very people who are supposed to benefit from such efforts. This study approaches the problem from a linguistic point of view because language analysis is one of the important ways of discovering people's beliefs, views, and attitudes of which the proverbial lore of language is a very significant vehicle.

1.4. Aims of the Study

The purpose of the study is to carry out a pragmatic analysis of a variety of Kirundi proverbs which have a direct or indirect reference to gender differences. These proverbs are compiled from both the respondents and available documents. After collecting them, I not only tried to translate them to reveal their literal and proverbial meaning but also to identify the various possible interpretations, the implications, and effects in relation to society's views towards gender differences.

In a nutshell, the study aims at displaying how Kirundi language especially proverbs can reveal, disseminate, and perpetuate gender-related stereotypes. It is hoped that the results of this study will contribute towards the formulation of appropriate policies on gender issues concerning both male and female members of the community.

1.5. Motivation

Proverbs are known as vehicles through which everyday life and culture are portrayed. This means that every Burundian, whether old or young, male or female, poor or rich, kind or unkind, stupid or clever, with this or that quality or

defect finds his/her place in proverbs that Burundians express only on what they like or dislike, how things have to be or should not be. In few words, the Burundian culture and social life are mainly expressed in proverbs.

Moreover, it is the wealth of proverbs that attracts our interest and hence, our motivation to carry out research of this kind. In addition, proverbs are widely used in oral literature where their value is of a paramount importance. Murekambanze, (1989:9), talking about proverbs, says that 'they are to oral literature what children are to parents'. Achebe (1985:6) shares this view and stresses their importance for oral literature in these words 'proverbs are palm oil with which words are eaten.'

Nevertheless, the understanding of Kirundi proverbs in general is not an easy task. It is a privilege of people who master fully the Burundian culture. It has been mentioned that proverbs transmit the experience of people in the sense that they contribute to educate, advise, judge, criticize, and disseminate their views and beliefs.

Thus, undertaking a study on such a Rundi literary genre would be a modest contribution in the sense that it highlights the different society's views and beliefs about gender stereotypes as revealed and disseminated through proverbs so as to find out an issue to such a misconception among Burundians.

1.6. Justification for the Study

Proverbial lore is as old as the languages which use it. Proverbs have been of great interest for various scholars who have attempted to compile and analyse them from different points of view. Gender relationships have also become a popular topic from both the public and the scholarly point of view.

The justification for this study is that the latter is intended to show how the Pragmatic Speech Theory can reveal the relationship between proverbs and gender-specific differences, with a view to contributing towards socio-linguistic awareness.

1.7. Research Questions

This study aims at answering questions related to the understanding and perception of Kirundi proverbs related to gender differences and way that perception influences people's attitudes towards those differences. The study intends to answer the questions as to the relevance of speech acts theory to the analysis of proverbs.

Thus, the following are our research questions:

i/ Do Kirundi proverbs express clearly the views that Burundians have on men and women

ii/Do gender related proverbs clarify the different social roles assigned to and men and women

iii/ Are there any effects of the deep implications of gender related proverbs on the attitudes of men and women?

iv/ What is the importance of the Speech Act Theory as far as the analysis of proverbs is concerned?

1.8. Definition of Key Terms

Giving definitions for different key terms contained in our topic is useful in the sense that one may ask himself what is meant for instance by gender, pragmatics, gender role, to name but a few. The key terms of this topic are defined according to the way they are used with a subject. In fact, we do not

intend to provide all definitions suggested by scholars in a detailed way for many of them are expected to be focussed on in the following section.

i/Pragmatics. It has various possible definitions but, generally it deals with the analysis of language in context. According to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English(1987), Pragmatics is the study of the way words are used in conversation to express meaning, feelings and ideas which are sometimes different from the actual meaning of the words used. In the same respect, Traugott, and Pratt, (1980:226) state that Pragmatics is that part of Linguistics that deals with language use, that is the knowledge that enables speakers to produce and understand utterances in relation to specific communicative purposes and specific speech contexts.

ii/Gender. It may mean sex that is the character of being male or female. However, while sex is biological, gender reflects the social assignment of roles to people according to their sex.

iii/ Proverb. It is a short, well-known sentence or phrase that states a general truth about life or gives advice. It is a habitual general saying for all people.

iv/ Language. A number of researchers have made an attempt to define a language but to find a satisfactory definition is not an easy task. Hall(1968:158) for instance views language as "the institution whereby men communicate and interact with each other by means of habitually used oral-auditory symbols".

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0. Introduction

In the present chapter, we would like to analyse how the Burundian people through Kirundi proverbs, view gender differences, with reference to the Speech Act Theory.

As a matter of fact, gender differences can be traced right from the beginning of mankind as illustrated by various proverbs, tales, and other literary forms. It should be noted that gender issues are extensively dealt with in Kirundi proverbs and other literary media particularly through the assignment of roles to people according to their sex. The assignment of roles according to people's sex can be identified in the African traditions in general and Kirundi tradition in particular, and the teaching of different religions namely Christianity and Islam. The ideology on which male and female relations in Burundian society are based is similar to that of most African societies in stressing male dominance and superiority over women.

2.1. Gender Stereotypes

As it has been mentioned in the point 1.7 i.of this study, gender reflects the social assignment of roles to people according to their sex. In order to specify the different roles assigned to men and women in Burundian society, we have to take into account their social status as well as their political status.

2.1.1. The Attitudes towards both Burundian Men and Women

2.1.1.1. Socio- Political Attitudes towards Burundian Men

Every member of the family has responsibilities towards other members. Therefore, duties and roles are assigned differently to men, women, and children for the sake of an efficient organization of family life. Indeed, when it comes to the husband, Nsabimana(1991) quoted Harerimana(1998:59) finds that a husband is above everyone in the family. He is first of all the head who supervises work and management of the family assets. He is also the one who is primarily concerned with the welfare of the family hold, needless to recall that he must be authoritarian. To succeed in his task of keeping order in the family, a man must have a number of virtues such as: truthfulness, courage, firmness in character and wisdom. He must be intelligent and must have a strong personality to settle a quarrel or legal dispute. He must be ready for self-sacrifice towards his family and his community. His attribute as protector is illustrated by Abdoullah, (1938-IV.34) when he states that, "men are protectors and maintainers of women because God has given the former more strength than the latterand because men support women from their means".

The above observation shows that Islam as a religion depicts women as being subordinate to men who are viewed as the stronger sex and protectors of women. This does not mean however that men have the right to oppress women. The recognition of men's authority does not mean that men are masters and women slaves. It is simply a way to keep order and avoid anarchy.

Still talking of the superiority of man, and his strong personality to settle quarrels or legal disputes in society, Nancy, and Edna, (1976:85) state the following:

> *Unless the male members of a liberation movement, a ruling party or government themselves develop commitment to male-female equality, women would end up where they have always been: invisible except when men, for their own purposes, personal or political, look for female bodies.*

These two authors illustrate men as superior to women in the sense that he participates actively in the achievement of female liberation. In other words, a man is called to guide and supervise all female initiatives in all circumstances.

As far as Kirundi proverbs are concerned, the way they depict the image of men is another matter. As the above mentioned writers, Kirundi proverbs allocate an important place to men except for some cases. Take for example, the following proverbs: 'Ahavuye umugabo hasigara umugayo/ Where a man dies follows contempt/, 'Urugo rurimwo umugabo runywa amata'/ A family led by a man is prosperous / etc, praise so much man as if his absence in family were harmful.

Socially speaking, these proverbs may have originated from the conception of gender roles. In fact, it is supposed that when a husband dies, much disorder and poverty follow.

In the political domain, men have played a key role. The kings were the only heads of the states. Their personality was sacred and crowned by numerous qualities. However, the king in the Burundian traditional society was considered as source of peace, order, and prosperity. Apart from kings, there were princes, regional chiefs (abishikira), and other important men in the country (abatware) who were supposed to be the "eyes" of the king. All of them had the role of acting like the king who himself was not only the supreme judge and a warrior, but also the organiser of political and ritual ceremonies.

Regarding the negative side of men vis-a-vis the community, previous researches on Kirundi proverbs reveal nothing except a few proverbs which criticize husbands in polygamous situations as for instance: 'Umugabo gito agaya ubwo yaraje' / An unwise man despises the food he leaves over for the next day /. Which proverbially denotes that an unwise man mistreats his wife accusing her of oldness and ugliness in order to marry another one.

In short, we can conclude that Kirundi proverbs are favourable to men in general. They conclude that men are flawless. The reason is that man, in the patriarchal system is the master of everything and everywhere. He is present everywhere in the family as well as in the socio-political institutions.

2.1.1.2. Socio- Political Attitudes towards Burundian Women

To begin with, one can attempt to define the term 'woman'. According to the *Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (1971) a woman is defined as an adult female human being, the female part of the human race, the female sex.

Among Burundian people, there are some who talk of certain realities about women on the positive aspects , while others consider them on the negative side.

a. The Positive Side of Burundian Women

Many authors present a woman as an important figure in society to be loved and respected. Traditionally, a woman was viewed as a housewife whose place was at home. At the beginning of the 19th c, Romans declared that 'a woman is to her husband what a child is to her mother'.

This motherly aspect of a Burundian woman is stressed in Gatimantangere (2000:16) for whom the image of the mother is given a great importance. She says that,

> it was found out that the role of women is still connected with procreation, considering the primary meaning of the concept 'umuvyeyi' (parent). It is ultimately related to fecundity which generates life and perpetuation.

According to the New Testament, Mathew (20-23) we discover Mary as the mother of the Saviour of mankind and Joseph plays the male role as protector of the mother and the child Jesus.

Still, the motherly aspect of the woman is also stressed in Ba, (1979-36) for whom the image of the mother is assigned an important place. He says that, 'la femme est la racine première, fondamentale de la nation où se greffe tout apport, d'où part aussi toute floraison.'which is: 'the woman is the nation's fundamental root from where stems any fruit, from which begins any flowering.' The traditional woman as well as the modern one, is the source of all development of not only the family but also the nation as a whole.

With regard to Kirundi proverbs, Burundian people portray the woman as a useful human being to be appreciated. We discover this through various proverbs as for instance: 'Utongana n'ishiga ukarya bibisi/ who quarrels with a cookingstone eat raw food/ also Inkokokazi irapfa amagi akabora/ when a hen dies, eggs rot/, etc.

These proverbs present us a woman of great importance in the sense that she takes part in organisation of the family as well as the rearing of children. She bears the burden of motherhood, and assumes responsibilities for support of the

family and the whole community as well. In short, the Burundian woman, wife and mother, thanks to her numerous qualities, appears as an undisputed pillar for the development of the family and of the nation.

In politics, even though there was no apparent role for women they are not alien to the Kingdom's administration. Mworoha (1989:54) shows the political status of women in the following words :

> *La Reine-mère et la Reine-Sœur paraissent jouir d'un statut particulier leur permettant d'influer sur le cours des affaires du royaume,...*
> *Au Burundi, la reine-mère (MUGABEKAZI) participait au pouvoir par des conseil prodigués au Mwami,...*

which is :

> *The Queen Mother and King's Sister seem to possess a particular status allowing them to exert much influence on the running of kingdom's affairs. In Burundi, the Queen Mother (MUGABEKAZI) participated on the power process by giving advice to the King...*

The above above quotation points out that women played an important role in politics. Their politics only surfaced in their husbands. They were advisers to their husbands and the latters' reputation was attributed to their wives. In the same line, Gahama(1979:10)shares this belief by stating that, *'apart from the direct influence of women in politics and administration, the woman considered as a spouse played an indirect role which was of no less value'.*

From the above quotation,we conclude that even though girls and women are qualified as a 'weak sex' or 'second sex' to mean that their value does not equal that of men, the Burundian society does not deny their value.

Consider for instance some important women cited by Harimenshi (1974:27) namely Inagiswaswa, Nteturuye, Hicuburundi, Ririkumutima. They are said to have occupied high positions in Burundian Traditional Society. They assumed political and administrative responsibilities in the country while their husbands or brothers were absent or ruled other territories.

As time progresses, experience has shown that there is an increase in the number of women in politics and other economic and social institutions in Burundi. In addition, recent developments prove that women have been given a place in traditional house. They are called 'abapfasoni' and can fulfil the functions of the traditional judge(umushingantahe).

b. The Negative Side of Burundian Women

Although a woman in Burundian society is portrayed by some people as a mother to be loved and respected, there are some others who portray her negatively under the influence of various writings.

According to the Christian tradition, as illustrated by the Books of Genesis, (III 16-18), 'it was Eve, the wife of the first man, Adam, who ate the forbidden fruit and also tempted Adam to eat it'.

The above quotation accuses the woman of being the source of all evils. This act of disobedience resulted into punishment by God, making woman subordinate to men.

In the same respect, Awa (1980:155) demonstrates the subordination and inferiority of women in the following terms:

> *Elle est toujours sous le joug de l'homme: frère ou mari; désirée, elle est l'objet de la satisfaction sexuelle du mâle et fait partie de son apparât d'aisance. En un mot, elle est boniche et fétiche.*

which is: *She is always dependent of man: father, brother or husband; desired, she is the object of sexual satisfaction for the male and she is part of his leisure apparatus. In short, she is a housemaid and figurative person.*

The author confirms that woman is a domestic servant and figurative person. She demonstrates that the wife is perceived jointly by his husband as a houseware and an artistic work that he can exhibit with pride. In fact, man is proud to own her but he does not want to treat her as his equal.

In short, the image of a woman is somehow darkened by men who show us woman as a person of no dignity, a vicious one and one who is able of nothing. Nevertheless, women whose behaviour is appreciated in society are given great respect.

Generally speaking, most societies especially African ones, tend to give more authority and more socio-political value to the roles and activities of men. Moreover, those societies are characterized by a common factor of subordination of women.

2.2. Proverbs

2.2.1. Definition

Many attempts have been made to define a proverb but it is not easy to provide comprehensive definition. In fact, proverbs contain a very complex cultural and literary linguistic reality that make them not to be fully defined, if not impossible. Among the definitions thought out so far, a few of them are given here in order to explain the concept of proverb. In the Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary (1971), the definition provided reads as follows:

> *a proverb is a short pithy saying in common and recognized use, a concise sentence, often metaphorical or alliterative in form, which is held to express some truth ascertained by experience or observation and familiar to all; an adage, a wise saw.*

From the previous quotation, it can be noticed that a proverb is a devise in a short form which makes use of specific literary devices such as metaphor and alliteration.

Nadwa, et al(1997:48) define a proverb as 'a brief, clearly expressed figurative comment on a situation.'Talking about the use of proverbs, they add that a person observes a situation in real life and wants to assess it or pass judgement on it, but instead of discussing it directly, in plain terms, he compares it indirectly to a conventional or custom-established situation. The above quotation expresses the importance and relevance of proverbs in revealing people's views on given issues.

Still talking about the definitions of a proverb, Okpwho (1992:8) considers a proverb as 'a piece of folk wisdom expressed with terseness and charm'. He goes on explaining each of the key terms in his definitions as follows: the 'terseness' implies economy in the choice of words and sharpness of focus, while 'charm' conveys the touch of literary or poetic beauty in the expression. 'Folk wisdom' on the other hand, refers to the fact that every proverb must have started its life as the product of the genius of an individual oral artist. In the same respect, Agglemagnon (1996:99) defines a proverb as follows:

> *Le proverbe est une expression contenant ou visant la connaissance, la sagesse et la compréhension des structures sociales et les types de comportement humain dans la société.*

which is :

> *The proverb is an expression containing the knowledge, wisdom, and comprehension of the social structures and the types of human behaviour in the society*

In fact, this above definition shows us that the proverb is a revelation of the social organization of the people, the ethics, wisdom, and norms that lead them in their everyday life.

Generally speaking, even though theses definitions are provided by different scholars, we notice that their contents are alike when it comes to such words like conciseness, wisdom, truth, etc. which are the main features of Kirundi proverbs.

2.2.2. Linguistic Features of Proverbs

Although no single author has succeeded in giving the accurate definition that reveals the reality of the proverb, we notice that the different definitions suggested for proverbs clearly show their main features.

Finnegan (1970:393) points out that there are some general characteristics of proverb and, in a way, she sums up the various definitions of a proverb in the following words, 'it 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.'

The above quotation emphasizes the fact that even if not taken as current, the truth of proverbs remains popularly accepted. Proverbs, therefore, reveal a speech community's views on given issues, including gender biases.

Finnegan (1970:391) also points out that proverbs frequently occur in general conversation to embellish, conceal, or hint. If one does not want to speak directly in passing on a message, one can easily apply a proverb and the intended recipient quickly registers the message which may remain concealed from the others in the situation. Finnegan (1970:411) further observes that proverbs use figurative language which is based on various motifs such as similes, metaphor, hyperbole, irony, sarcasm, paradox, and comparison of people with animals and other objects.

The linguistic features of proverbs have also been discussed by Schipper (1991:7) when she observes that African proverbs can be roughly divided into 'clear and direct statements on the one hand, and others used in metaphorical form on the other hand.' She adds that it is impossible to provide a completely satisfactory classification of proverbs as they tend to overlap in a number of ways.

Indeed, as observed by Finnegan (1970:404 -410) proverbs include every aspect of human condition: death, love, laziness, conflicts inherent in marriage, etc.

2.2.3. The Importance of Proverbs in Relation to Gender

African proverbs in general and Kirundi proverbs in particular play an important role in the communication process. Not only they appear as vehicles and preservers of people's beliefs and views, but also can be used to shape people's habits, attitudes, and beliefs. Proverbs help a speaker to explain crucial and complicated issues in few words. One can learn a lot about the tradition of Burundians through Kirundi proverbs.

Finnegan 1970:410-412) points out that proverbs are used to advise, rebuke, or shame another person ; comment or persuade, add colour to every conversation, etc.

She observes that proverbs may be a particularly suitable tool of communication in situations and relationships of potential and or latent conflict.

Even when a proverb appears to have gone out of fashion and probably been abandoned, the truth of its content will remain preserved. This is revealed in Muranga (1996:118) when he states that, 'though the old proverb may be given up, it is none the less true'. Through the above quotation, Muranga (1996:118) emphasizes the power and role of proverbs in society. According to him, proverbs are repositories of old truth and future generations may have recourse to them. From this, one realizes the need to collect proverbs of all times and cultures. Notice that old people are supposed to be knowledgeable and skilful in the classification and interpretation of proverbs.

In connection to gender differences, Kirundi proverbs are greatly used in oral literature where their value is of paramount importance. Depending upon circumstances, suitable proverbs are performed to fulfil a number of goals such as advising like in 'Umusore ahumura ahumiwe'/ A bachelor becomes wise after encountering proverbs/, 'Utongana n'ishiga ukarya bibisi'/ Who quarrels with a cooking stone eats raw food/; also criticizing as in 'Umugore ni ndyana n'uwejeje' /A woman associates with anyone with material prosperity/, 'Akagabo karaje akaguru hanze kitwa imburakimazi'/ A man who lodges a leg outside is called useless/. Kirundi proverbs also perform a speech act of praising as in 'Urugo rurimwo umugabo runywa amata'/ A household in which there is 'a man' is prosperous/, 'Inkokokazi irapfa amagi akabora/when a hen dies, eggs rot/; etc.

To emphasize this, Schipper (1991:4) observes that in relation to the context, in spite of different cultural and geographical backgrounds, a number of similar traits are assigned to men and women in proverbs.

In a nutshell, the function of proverbs in general and those related to gender in particular, is to describe society's experience of life and communicate it to all people of various generations. Moreover, they teach morality in a wise manner, even by laughing or joking, they exhort everybody to regulate their everyday conduct.

From the foregoing related literature, we can conclude that a lot has been done about gender bias and proverbs that are relevant to it. It shows the contribution of linguistics, particularly socio-linguistics, to people's understanding of the dynamics of gender related language, especially stereotypes within that language. With regard to proverbs, many characteristics make of them what they are and thus distinguish them from other forms of folk literature.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

2.3.1. Introduction

The major aim of this study is to find out whether proverbs embody, reveal, disseminate, and perpetuate a speech community's beliefs and views in relation to gender-specific differences.

For analysis and interpretation of the data, this study applied one of the Pragmatic Theory Components namely Speech Act Theory in order to make a systematic analysis of the collected proverbs and reveal their hidden or implied meanings and possible effects in relation to gender differences.

2.3.2. Pragmatics as a Sub-discipline of Linguistics

When scholars talk of Pragmatics, they mean that study of utterances in relation to a specific speech context. In fact, modern usage of the term 'Pragmatics' is attributed to the philosopher Morris(1938) who was concerned with the science of signs, that is, with semiotics.

According to Levinson, (1983:236), Morris (1938:6) distinguishes three branches of inquiry, which actually illustrate the difference between Syntax, Semantics and Pragmatics as follows:

i/ Syntax: is described as the study of the formal relation of signs to one another.

ii/Semantics: is the study of the relation of signs to the objects to which the signs are applicable.

iii/Pragmatics: is the study of the relation of signs to interpreters.

Still, Levinson (1983:5) states that Pragmatics is concerned with the disambiguation of sentences or utterances by the contexts in which they are

uttered. Therefore, the notion of context is a cornerstone of Pragmatics and it refers to all that is around the utterance that we need to interpret. This includes settings, common background knowledge, medium, to name but a few.

Emphasizing on Pragmatics, Leech (1983:2) states that Pragmatics was passing from 'a narrow sub-discipline dealing with the physical data of speech to a broad discipline taking in form, meaning and context.

2.3.3. The Notion of Context

It would be misleading not to give the context of utterance of proverbs because, unlike tales, proverbs do not have one physical location for utterance. They can be said whenever people are conversing. In any kind of speech act, they are given a very important place for they carry truth, advice and are used to give strength to what people are saying. They embody precision and warning, we use them whenever we want to convince.

Through proverbs therefore, people communicate not only their thoughts and ideas, but also traditions. To succeed the communication process, there must be a relationship between the participants that is the speaker and the hearer. There must also be a situation of proverb use and the context which is regarded to be any background knowledge assumed to be shared by both the speaker and the hearer.

The mastery of the context contributes to the hearer's interpretation of what the speaker intends to mean by a given utterance as stated by Wardhaugh(1985:102) in the following words:

> *it is the context which creates possibilities for interpretation and help remove the multiple ambiguities that utterances would have if they occurred in isolation. Once in context, sentence's possible interpretations are limited and even disambiguated.*

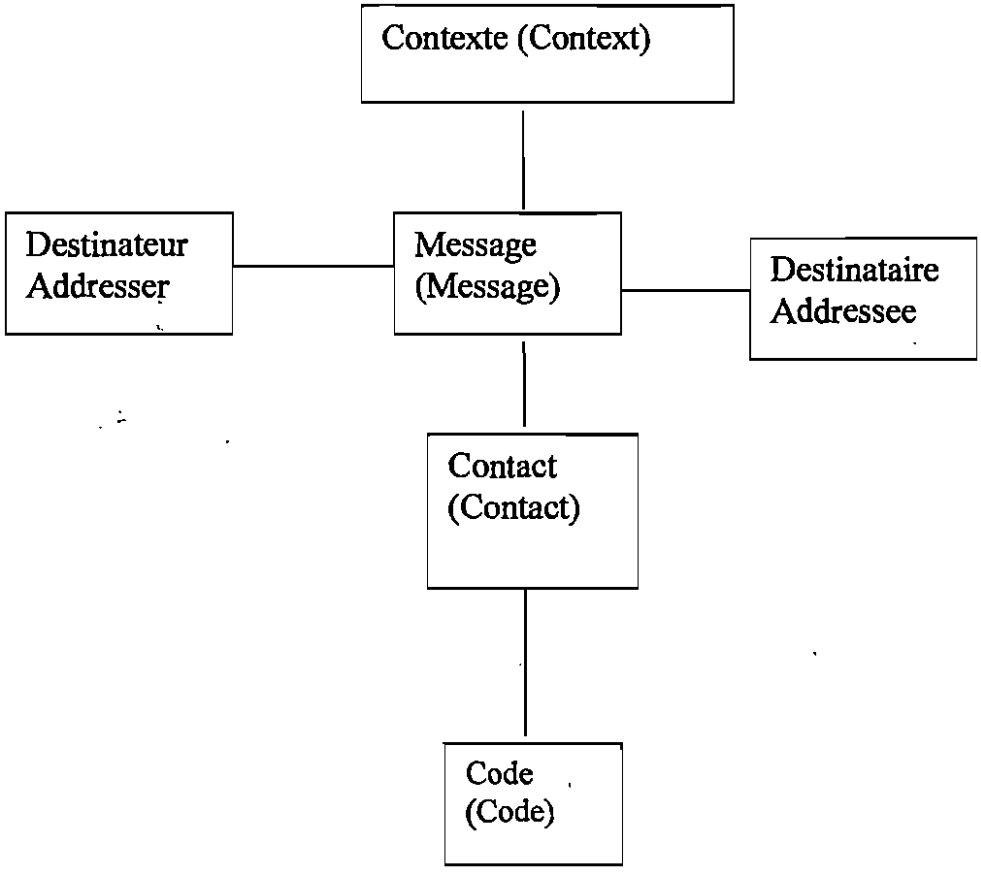
So far, the important role of the context when it comes to interpretation of proverbs has been a remarkable preoccupation of many other linguists. According to Hymes (1962:60) quoted by Brown and Yule (1983:37), the role of context is not only to limit the range of possible interpretations, but also to support the intended interpretation.

He asserts that in the following terms:

> *the use of a linguistic form identifies a range of meanings. A context can support a range of meanings. When a form is used in context, it eliminates the meanings if possible to that context those the form can signal: the context eliminates from consideration the meanings possible to the form other than those the context can support.*

In proverbs, probably more than any other folk literature, the context plays a primordial role in interpretating and understanding meaning. In fact, it is through the context that an illocutionary act of a proverb can be determined. Otherwise, it would be captured as any declaration with a descriptive meaning.In spite of the fact that a context plays an important role in a proverb's interpretation, it cannot be used in isolation. It is always associated with other imperative aspects such as 'code', 'contact', etc.

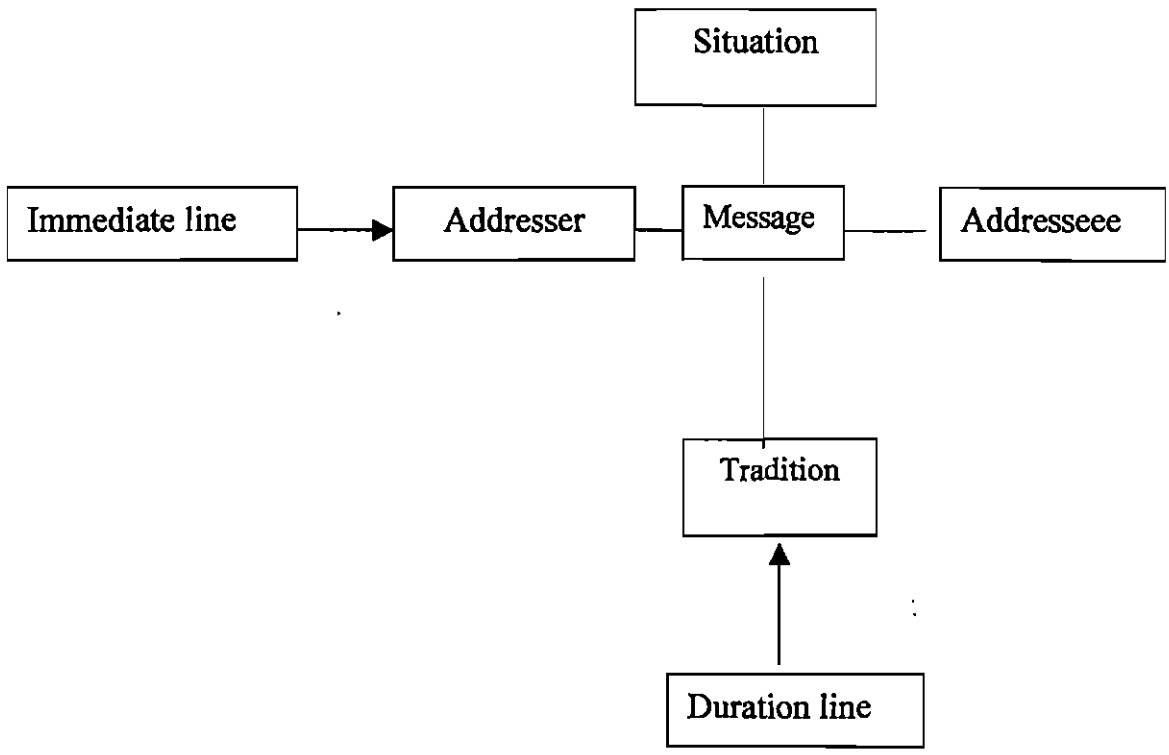
As far as Jacobson (1963:23) is concerned, he distinguishes six major factors involved in every act of verbal communication, each of them loaded with a linguistic function. These are schematically represented as follows:



In the above chart, Jacobson (1963) introduces the notions of 'context', 'code' and 'contact' of being three important factors in the communication process. The message sent by the addresser cannot be understood by the addressee without a well-known 'context' both to the speaker and hearer. A common 'code' is also imperative. To establish and maintain the communication process, the speech participants refer to the 'context'.

According to Cauvin (1980:48), the message uttered by the addresser must be considered between two lines. First, we have the immediate line

between speaker and hearer; we also have the duration line between the tradition and the situation.



Indeed, when a person utters a proverb, he consciously or unconsciously connects the addressee to the tradition and the latter must first know what symbol and images contained in the proverbs referred to. Proverbs, are constructed on symbols which definitely refer to the culture and philosophy of the society which use them. Hence, the meaning that a proverb carries is different from that of other ordinary sentences. Therefore, the analysis of proverbs is interpretative because a proverb is a conveyor of a moral message as in the example:'Umugoré musângira amatá ntimusângíra amazi'/You share milk with a woman but you do not share water/. The term 'amata', 'milk' culturally symbolizes wealth while 'ámâzi': water stands for poverty.

Therefore, the understanding of this proverb requires the knowledge of 'amatá' and 'amâzi' and all their implications in the cultural context. The actual meaning is /Women are cooperative during times of prosperity (happy moments) and leave you during poverty (hard times)/. Through this example, we see that the speaker relates this symbolic meaning which he gets by relying on tradition for the present situation of use.

However, this present situation of use which occurs within a context, has interested a good number of scholars. Finnegan (1970:26), talking about these situations of use of proverbs, asserts that,

> *we can then sum up the various ways in which proverbs are used in Africa by saying that they really occur in all occasions when language is used for communication either as an art or as a tool, that is on every sort of occasion imaginable*

As far as Gashikanyi (1986:7) is concerned, he also gives his own account on the way proverbs are used. He says that,

> *the proverb is used in all domains of activity. It depicts people at work, in church, in court, at school, at hunt, in every kind of conversation, whether formal or informal*

He concludes by saying that 'proverbs, unlike other forms of oral literature, do not require specific situations to be uttered, they are practical, easy to learn by heart, hence ready to be used on any occasion when needed. Both precision and concision embedded in them render them capable of setting arguments in impressing, praising, warning, advising the targeted listener or audience.

In conclusion, we can say that an effective understanding of proverbs requires a sufficient background knowledge of the tradition and the context of use for both speaker and hearer. But generally speaking, it is through context that

the interlocutors should identify the referent while the uttering of a given proverb will be inspired by its relevance to the situation and the addressee's will to maintain the conversation. In fact, people especially Burundians use proverbs to mean much more than what they say. Hence, recourse to other methods of language study such as speech Act Theory should be of a paramount importance to provide some explicit account of utterances.

2.3.4. The Notion of Speech Act Theory

This study applies one of the Pragmatic Theory Components, namely Speech Act Theory, in order to make a systematic analysis of the selected Kirundi proverbs related to gender.

However, Speech Acts constitute a very important approach in language study. According to Traugott and Pratt (1980:229), Speech Act Theory is among the different Pragmatic frameworks proposed for describing language in context. It treats an utterance as an act performed by a speaker in a context with respect to an addressee. In addition, they state that Speech Act Theory was developed in the 1960^{s} by a group of linguists and philosophers, among whom Austin (1962), Searle (1969), have developed the notion of Speech Acts as the basic unit of communication.

In fact, Austin (1962:56), and Searle (1969:) made a classification of the different types of action caused by utterance of a sentence in a different but complementary way. Austin (1962), as stated by Levinson (1983:236) isolates three kinds of acts that are simultaneously performed. These are:

i/Locutionary Act which is the semantic aspect, that is, the utterance of a sentence with determinate sense and reference.

ii/Illocutionary Act which is the force or intention of the speaker, i.e, the attempt to accomplish some communicative purpose such as warning, informing, advising, threatening, etc.

iii/Perlocutionary Act which is the effect brought about by what the utterance makes the hearer do. Such effects are special to the circumstances of the utterance.

As far as Searle(1969) 's classification is concerned, he also distinguishes three kinds of acts.

Firstly, the utterance acts which correspond to the simple utterance of words and sentences.

Secondly, the propositional acts which correspond to referring and predicting. They consist of the literal meaning of words and sentences.

Thirdly, the illocutionary acts which consist of performing conventional activities such as stating, questioning, commanding, etc.

Moreover, Searle(1969) believes that the interpretation of Speech Acts is allowed by the locution, the proposition, the context, and such an interpretation may or may not correspond to the one intended by the speaker. On this point, Austin (1962) differs from Searle (1969). He assumes that the illocutionary act is performed only when the illocutionary force intended by the speaker is recognized by the hearer/interpreter. By saying so, Austin (1962) meant that to one illocutionary acts corresponds necessarily one illocutionary force; contrary to Searle (1969) who assumes that one illocutionary act may correspond to one or many illocutionary forces.

In conclusion, we can say that the notion of Speech Acts is very useful to the study of proverbs for the latter use a figurative language which is characterized by many illocutionary acts. The applications of this component: Pragmatic Speech Act Theory, makes it possible to reveal the indirect Speech acts and possible effects embedded in the subtle language of proverbs in relation to gender-specific differences.

2.3.5. Conventional Implicature

2.3.5.1. Notion of Conversation

To begin with, one can attempt to define the term 'conversation'. According to the Longman Dictionary of Applied English, a 'conversation' is defined as 'an informal talk in which people exchange news, feelings and thoughts'. The same Dictionary defines the verb 'to exchange' as to give and receive in return (something of the same type/equal value)'. As an exchange then, conversation requires at least two participants who are expected to cooperate equally in order to maintain and carry out their friendly conversation.

Therefore, there are many strategies which can help speakers to achieve cooperativeness during their conversation. We can cite among others, the fact of avoiding unpleasant words by resorting to a figurative language. One can indirectly express thoughts and feelings without offending other interlocutors. Another important strategy is to avoid permanent silence which prevents the dialogue form being active.

On this point, Ronald (1986:2) asserts that,

> involvement in conversation therefore requires the two parties to be conscious of each other's needs, particularly the need not be offended. Public life is possible only when the opportunities for being seriously offended are reduced to near zero.

He argues that conversation is then an activity which makes use of many devices in order to reduce the risk of misunderstanding to participants. Therefore, the literal meaning of an utterance is misleading, for people mean more or different things than what they say.

2.3.5.2. Notion of Implicature

By the method of implicature, hearers can understand the indirect illocutions of utterances. The term 'implicature' is used by Grice (1975:45) to account for what a speaker can imply, suggest, or mean as distinct from what the speaker literarily says. It is derived from a general principle on conversation called 'The cooperative Principle'.

Grice's Cooperative Principle

According to Leech (1983:82), the Cooperative Principle enables one participant in conversation to communicate on the assumption that the other participant is being cooperative. Leech (1983)'s Cooperative Principle is presented by Brown and Yule (1983: 31-32) in the following terms,

> make your conversational contribution such as required at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of talk exchange in which you are engaged

Such a principle is supported by four conventions also called maxims.

1° The Maxim of Quantity

Make your contribution as informative as required (for current purposes of the exchange).
Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.

2° The Maxim of Quality

Do not say what you believe to be false. Do not say that for which you lack adequate evidence.

3° The Maxim of Relation

Be relevant

4° The Maxim of Manner

Be perspicuous
Be brief (avoid unnecessary prolixity)
Be orderly
Avoid obscurity of expression
Avoid ambiguity

According to him, the above maxims constitute a description of the norms speakers operate within a conversation. They are used to highlight the different ideas conveyed by speakers beyond their literal meanings. They indicate what participants have to do in order to achieve good results in their cooperative endeavour. Once speakers flout these maxims, they automatically become uncooperative. To be more specific, the same authors, Brown and Yule (1983:33) precise that conversational implicatures are pragmatic aspects from the meaning of an utterance, produced in a specific context. This context is therefore shared by the speaker and the hearer, and depend on a recognition by the same participants of the Cooperative Principle and its implicatures.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

As a requirement for any academic endeavour, the aim of the present chapter is to define the methodology adopted and to show the different steps followed to collect and analyse effectively the data. Thus, this chapter presents the adopted procedures of data collection and analysis.

3.2. Data collection procedures

In this section, we are concerned with the collection of data from the research field and the procedure used to present and analyse it. In fact, there are many procedures for collecting data. The example which can be mentioned here are tape recorded conversations, questionnaires, interviews and material collected from books or other documents such as speeches or newspaper articles.

As far as the topic under study is concerned, data collection involves sources such as speeches, conversations with people and library research as well. The kinds of proverbs that appear herein were mainly collected from books respectively by Rodegem and Zuure. The choice of Rodegem (1961) as the main source in our research was dictated by the fact that the proverbs he studied explore all the domains and show how all aspects of life and their considerations are given to them by Burundians. Another reason is that Rodegem classifies proverbs according to their themes and at the end he makes general functions. In addition, Rodegem has the advantage of being non-native and therefore, his study runs less risks of taking things as evident, contrary to a Burundian studying Kirundi she or he may project his own perception into his or her investigations.

As far as Zuure (1932) is concerned, the way he studied some Kirundi proverbs is not far from Rodegem.

In a nutshell, the available literature and documents related to the different proverbs and study were reviewed for the purpose of obtaining more background information.

3.3. Data Analysis Procedure

After data collection, the following step was analysis and interpretation of all the proverbs involved in the study. First and foremost, I began by drawing an exhaustive list of adequate proverbs. The corpus I used is made of fifty proverbs related to gender.

In order to make this work clear and coherent, I decided to classify them into three main categories namey proverbs about men, proverbs about women, and proverbs about parents and their children i.e parental relationships. In addition, each category of proverbs has been divided into small sub-categories according to the people they talk about. Once proverbs were classified, they were translated into both literarily and proverbially. Besides, the same data was analysed by means of the Pragmatic Speech Act Theory to identify the locutionary force that is semantics, the illocutionary force that is intention, and the perlocutionary force that is possible effects of each proverb. In short, the Speech Act Theory is a useful and effective tool in analysing proverbs as it reveals the hidden meanings, intentions, and possible effects imbedded in the subtle language of proverbs in relation to gender differences.

3.4. Methodological problems

No researcher can conduct a study without facing problems of various kinds. As far as this study is concerned, I came across a number of problems like the ones related to collection and translation of data. It is worth mentioning that providing a word by word translation of proverbs into another in with different origins or refer to different cultural realities is not an easy task. In fact, this problem of translation consists in the sense that Kirundi and English are two languages belonging to different families. The first belongs to the group of Bantu languages whereas the second is from the Indo-European Languages. Then, translating proverbs from Kirundi to English proves problematic as some of them are based on cultural concepts alien to English. To solve this problem, where some expressions have equavalent in English, the only thing I did was to find an appropriate equavalent meaning in paraphrasing. Another important constraint was that some subjects were suspecious about the aims of the research and were not willing to cooperate. However, I tried to deal with each of the above problems as the situation required.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The present work aims at displaying how a proverb can reveal, disseminate and perpetuate gender-related stereotypes and a number of research questions namely:

-Do Kirundi proverbs express clearly the views that Burundians have on men and women? -Are there any effects of the deep implication of gender-related proverbs on the attitudes of men and women? - What is the importance of the Speech Act Theory as far as the analysis of proverbs is concerned? – Is there any ambivalence in proverbs depicting gender differences? , were raised to this end.

Under this section, they are going to be answered and my hypotheses will be proven right or wrong. In fact, so as to give a clear picture of what is reflected in collected proverbs, they were classified thematically according to the people they talk about, and translated. Then, after providing their literal and proverbial translations, they were analysed according to the Pragmatic Speech Act Theory to identify their literal meaning, their intention, and their possible effects on society.

4.2. Classification and Interpretation of the Data

Indeed, according to the type of people they talk about, the following categories were identified:

1. Proverbs which specifically talk about men:
   a. Proverbs about married men,

b. Proverbs about unmarried men (bachelors),

c. Proverbs about married men in polygamous situation.

2.Proverbs which specifically deal with women:

a. Proverbs about spinsters,

b. Proverbs about lazy women,

c. Proverbs about married women in polygamous situation.

3.Proverbs about parents and their children, i.e. parental relationship.

4.2.1 Proverbs which talk about Men

From the verb 'Kugaba'/ to have right to /or to own/, a man is first of all an adult male human being. Culturally speaking, someone who can be called 'umugabo' / a man/ must be mature. Furthermore, he must be in possession of wife with children, a big property and cattle, etc. In fact, as we said it before, this category of proverbs includes proverbs which talk about married men in general, bachelors, and married men in polygamous situation.

4.2.1.1. Proverbs about Married Men in general

Under this category of proverbs, the research focussed mainly on married men. Various speech acts such as encouraging and praising men with desirable behaviour, as well as criticizing and warning against the eventual dangerous trends among men are performed.

R.2761 1. Umugabo ntapfira izuba rimwe

LM/ A man cannot die under one sun/

PM/ A brave person stands both physical and moral sufferings/

Through this proverb, we come up with an idea that a man can not give up his struggle within one single day. He can fight on even during many days unlike

women and children whom, once they meet a challenge give up immediately. In fact, this situation is compared to the hard moments when a man is to confront a serious matter or a strong enemy. He has to be brave and cautious and endeavours to overcome the situation.

The speech acts performed through these proverbs is to praise and encourage men not to despair in front of any kind of danger or difficulty. It also confronts men in their challenging situations and encourages them to persevere through difficulties (even in extremely difficult cases).

R.1425.2. Umugabo ntatwagwa n'uruzi aba atwawe n'urubanza

LM/ A man is not carried by the river,rather he is carried by a duty/

PM/ When a man is drowned away by a river, he is carried away by the aims that push him to cross it/. For a river to kill a man must have overflawing water. This situation is generally apparent during the rainy seasons when people have to stay in their houses. So a dutiful man will brave the river in order to carry out his duties.

This proverb points out the fact that men cannot be frightened by whatever happens, when they have to fulfil important goals.

The speech act performed through this proverb is to encourage men to overcome fear in the face of any kind of danger and hence achieve important goals.

F.W 3. Ntusuzugure umugabo mutayakozemwo

LM. /Do not despise a man if you have not tested him/

PM/You have to respect everyone you are not acquainted with/

Most of the time, some people in society consider themselves as being stronger than others, forgetting that each one has his own limitations. The above proverb then warns against aggressive behavior which can be overcome.

On the other hand, it encourages caution and humility among men and mutual respect in the community.

R.2736 3. Umugabo arinda akaje

LM/ A man faces up to whatever happens/

PM /A courageous person should face up to whatever matter he encounters/

In everyday situation, men encounter problems and most of the time, they do all their best to overcome them instead of surrending. The proverbs especially on men so as to trust to their role as protectors while women expect to be assisted in hard situations by men.

The speech acts performed through this proverbs are to make men feel deserted by society in their time of need and encourage them to be brave. The proverb focussed especially on men because women expect to be assisted out of hard situations by men. They have to fight for the protection of their families and their own survival.

R.3318 5. Urugo rurimwo umugabo runywa amata

LM/ A household, where there is a man, drinks milk/

PM/ A family in which there is a respectful man has everything/

Burundian culture assigns an important place to men as if they were small 'kings' to a certain extent. Through the above proverb, we discover that a family headed by a respectful man cannot lack wealth and prestige. The proverb metaphorically compares 'milk' to wealth. This implies that only men are able to breed cows and other domestic animals. Therefore, a man with many cows and a large property has a high standing in the Burundian society.

The speech acts performed through this proverb are to praise serious men and emphasize on their role in the family. Furthermore, the proverb makes men feel superior to women and act accordingly.

R.132 6. Ikobero ry'umugabo ryamako ijisho

LM/ A spear of a man remains on an eye/

PM / A man's spear remains under his control/

In traditional customs, 'ikobero'(a spear) is associated with man's strength that characterizes his power to rule.

As far as speech acts are concerned, the proverb is used to suggest that a man of honor is always ready to face up to whatever may come to disturb him and his family. Furthermore, it warns husbands to be vigilant in whatever they engage in especially being ready to defend their families in any attack.

F.W 7. Nta nka zitagira impfizi

LM /There is no cows without a bull/

PM/ A family without a strong man is not a family at all/

The proverb metaphorically associates 'a bull' with a strong man who is the archetype of strength and power.

The speech act performed through this proverb is to praise men by highlighting their prestige and high consideration as compared to women. It highlights the importance of men as leaders and protectors of weak people especially women and children.

Before putting an end to this category of proverbs, we endeavoured to analyse some other proverbs -among the few existing ones- which reveal the negative side of men even though it is neglected by tradition. This was done in order to avoid any kind of subjectivity.

R.1987 8. Inkingi iryana ntiyegamirwa

LM /A voracious pillar is not lent on/

PM /A brutal man does not make his family feel secure/

A husband in the family, compared to the pillar of the hut, occupies the central place. The pillar must be strong enough to support the rest of the hut. Once it becomes weak or old, there is a risk that the entire hut collapses. Likewise, a

husband with bad behaviour inspires no security to his family. He cannot afford either to give a good example, or to protect his family. The speech act performed through this proverb is to criticize some undesirable attitudes observed among some husbands and consequently warns the rest of the family against totally trusting in a brulal head of the family.

R.3948. 9. Wirukana umugore aguguna igufa bwaca ukazana uwurimira imirunzwa.

LM /You chase away your wife for picking a bone and you bring one who swallows it without chewing it/

PM / A wise solution is never taken in a brutal way.

The proverb points out the fact that some husbands act in a brutal way, what is not expected of them. If so, it always results into troubles, even more complicated, rather than finding an appropriate solution. The proverb is intended generally to married men, calling them to come to reason and tolerate the imperfection of their wives.

The speect acts performed through this proverb are to criticize and warn aggressive and reckless people especially men that they can lose their precious possessions and regret when it is too late to save the situation.

F.W. 10. Bifungiro aruta bihengeri: umworo yizigamye aruta umugabo yiyobewe.

LM / Knots are better than holes: a poor person who cares about himself is better than a rich man who is careless/

PM /A wise poor person is better than a dishonest wealthy man/

Each society all over the world is made of poor and rich people. Sometimes, the way they live and behave is quite different under the influence of their living conditions. For instance, people of high social position are always enjoying some

privileges to the detriment of other ordinary people who own their life by working hard.

The speech Acts performed through this proverb is to warn some people of high status against misbehaving and despising other simple citizens. This may be the source of misfortune rather than being source of happiness and social esteem.

Moreover, this proverb praises poor and honest people who demonstrate a sense of humanity vis-à-vis their neighbours. They may in return receive help from them in case of need.

4.2.1.2. Proverbs about Unmarried Men (bachelors)

Kirundi language has several critical proverbs about unmarried men. The speech acts performed through those proverbs is to point out some of numerous problems faced by most of the bachelors in age of getting married and hence discourage them from remaining single, which leads them to be more aggressive.

R.3008 11. Umusore ahumura ahumiwe

LM/ A young recovers sanity after a disaster/

PM/A strong and irresponsible person learns the reality after having faced problems/

There are some aggressive young men whose unacceptable behaviour leads them to harmful consequences, even death. If by good luck they do not die, they get an opportunity to make their mind up and then become useful for their family.

As far as the speech acts are concerned, this proverb is used to criticize any people –young or old- who rather than adopting responsible behaviour, indulge in useless and harmful actions. Furthermore, the proverb warns against evil manners such as wandering about, stealing, consuming drugs, etc observed among some lazy people in general.

F.W. 12. Ukuboko kumwe kuriyaga ntikwimara uburyi

L.M. /One hand scratches itself but does not end the itching/

P.M. /A single person is unable to perform much: cooperation is always necessary /

One hand can never make worthwhile work as a single person, relying only on himself. For Burundians, to get married is an imperative law for an unmarried person, however old s/he maybe, is always considered as a child.

As far as the speech acts are concerned, the proverb appears as a warning to single persons especially bachelors to think about marriage as a way of getting a partner. It is applicable not only to young bachelors but generally to any other person who has no one around to cooperate with in hard times.

F.W 13. Usembera umusore bwaca akagusohora.

L.M./ You give shelter to a bachelor and he chases you out the next day/

PM /We should avoid to cooperate with arrogant and unfaithful persons/

Burundian tradition does not allow a bachelor to own a house unless he expects to wed; otherwise he has to stay in his father's home. Once there is misunderstanding between him and the rest of the family, including his father, he is obliged to search for a dwelling elsewhere. However, experience has shown that bachelors do not accept to be dominated wherever they are.

The speech acts performed through this proverb are to satirize about the absurd situations which bachelors sometimes face and criticize them for their tendency to behave aggressively or carelessly. In addition, the proverb warns bachelors against behaviour which causes embarrassment and those who shelter bachelors and other arrogant and these dishonest persons against having total trust in them.

The use of this proverb may aim at sensitizing people about the importance of proper conduct that will not engender friction in social relationships.

R.3011 14.Umusore ntiyicwa n'inzara yicwa n'inzigo.

LM / A young boy does not die of hunger but of sloth/

PM /A strong person like a bachelor can earn living provided he accepts

to cooperate with other people.

Young men are strong people who are able to work for themselves and for the nation. If a young boy decides to work, he cannot lack food or whatever he needs. The big problem he has to face is not that of food, but the lack of stability and esteem within the family. He is always considered as a child to be controlled and assisted. As he is struggling for his freedom, he refuses any kind of advice, food, etc and may face serious problems.

The speech act performed through this proverb is to criticize and warn bachelors or any other persons of low morality who ignore their elders' advice against the consequences of such behaviour. It advises bachelors in age of getting married to bear their parents' authority to avoid frustration in the future.

R.59 15.Umusore ntagorobeza aba agomba kurongora.

L.M. /A young man does not stay out for too long /

PM / When a young boy begins to come later in the night, it is a sign that he is searching for freedom/

In Burundian culture, young boys and girls are not allowed to go out during the evening. They have to stay at home and fulfil some duties such as cooking, and milking cows. Only men have the right to go out to know about what is happening around.

With regard to the speech acts, this proverb is used to warn parents especially heads of household against this bad behaviour especially when they begin to spend evenings outside of the family. This is a sign of their search for freedom, which means acquiring their own house and wife.

4.2.1.3. Proverbs about Men in Polygamous Situation

In Burundi, a man with large pieces of lands and cattle would traditionally marry more than one wife to have many children especially boys, to inherit from them. Polygamy was seen by some men as a way to strengthen their power in their families. But with time, the experience has shown that polygamy appeared as source of many problems such as quarrels between co-wives and their children.

There are a number of proverbs about this category of men and these generally perform the speech acts of criticizing and warning against the rivalry between co-wives and efforts made by these men to establish peace and order between families.

R. 2001 16. Akagabo karajije akaguru hanze kitwa imburakimazi

L.M/ A man whose leg lodges outside his home is called useless/

P.M/ A married man who spends nights outside his family running after other women, is irresponsible/

A married man who runs after other women is irresponsible. To spend the night outside his home, cheating his wife implies the lack of self-respect and responsibility. Burundians consider him as someone of no value, without consideration for his family.

The speech act performed through this proverb is to criticize some men of low morality who dares spend nights away from their homes and consequently misuse their fortune. It also encourages men to create a favourable atmosphere in their homes so as to gain confidence as husbands. On the other hand, it discourages married men and other people from indulging in the habit of deserting their families.

F.W 17.Nta wuta agatarotaro ngo intaro zasheshe.

LM /No one can reject an old van for the simple reason that there are many newfashioned ones/

PM /Old wives should be not abandoned in favour of new generations/

The previous proverb associates 'agatarotaro'(old van) to an old woman of non value. This is generally apparent when a polygamous man gets his second or third wife. His tendency is to neglect and despise his first one who is accused of being too old.

The speech act performed through this proverb would be to advise married men not to despise their good wives for the simple reason that they are old for old things can still be useful.

R.2726 3. Umugabo aharitse ahorana induru

LM /A polygamous man has a troublesome household/

PM /A polygamous man can not lack problems brought about by his wives/

A man should not marry a second or third wife if he does not want to live in difficulties because even with one wife, there are already problems.

The proverb reveals the disadvantages of marrying many wives as far as conficts between co-wives are concerned. Generally, co-wives together with their numerous children are not willing to cooperate. Most of the time, this rivalry between co-wives is born by the husband who will be obliged to stand in the middle.

As far as the speech acts are concerned, this proverb sends a warning to men who have a tendency to befriend several women. It also warns them against eventual conflicts which may lead them into trouble or even death.

R.1997 19. Umugabo gito agaya ubwo araje

LM /A stupid man despises the food he kept for the following day/

PM /Men of low morality accuse their own wives of oldness while they tend to reach them/

The proverb above associates 'umutsima waraye' with aging wife which means a wife who is no longer attractive. Like the food one day after its preparation, the aging wife is accused by her husband of not being attractive after years of their marriage.

The speech acts performed through this proverb are mainly to criticize men of low morality who disdain their wives in order to cheat them. It discourages men from being dishonest vis-à-vis their legal wives.

R.2600 21. Umwonga umwe wonza inyoni

L.M. /One valley makes a bird grow thin/

P.M. /A single wife cannot satisfy a man's sexual desires/

Some married men have the bad habit of cheating their wives pretending that the latter cannot respond fully to their sexual needs. Therefore, they spend the most of their time running after other women rather than attaching great importance to their own. In fact, this was a reality in traditional Burundi as far as the so-called "Gushinga icumu" (to drive in a spear) was a reality and somehow acknoweledged.

The speech acts performed through this proverb would be give reason to some husband who do not appreciate their own wives and cheat on them forgetting that they can run the risk of becoming prostitutes and encountering numerous problems which may ruin their family.

F.W 22. Impfizi ntiyimirwa

L.M. /A bull has no limits/

PM /A man is free to woo and marry women he likes/

The proverb above is like the preceding one in the sense that it tends to justify men's bad behaviour of being unfaithful to their wives as if polygamy and sexual promiscuity were part of the natural order of things.

The speech acts performed through this proverb would be to justify the practice by men and boys of going out with many girls and women as if one was not sufficient. Furthermore, it offends women and young girls as far as human rights are concerned.

To conclude, we can say that men in a patriarchal system are concerned with all matters of the family and society. This power attributed to men from birth has many consequences. Not only they are the only responsible for the socio-political organization, but also they are at the top of everything In one word, Kirundi proverbs portray men as powerful human beings with wide ranging privileges, and attributes.

4.2.2. Proverbs which talk about Women

Gender differences as expressed through Kirundi proverbs concern both males and females and consider them differently. As far as proverbs about women are concerned, they are subdivided into more categories than those about men. These include those which talk about women, women in polygamous marriages and other sub-categories.

4.2.2.1. Proverbs about Married Women

The traditional woman in ancient times has a special role of educating children and keeping the household for the welfare of the whole family. The use of different Kirundi proverbs about women mainly tends to fulfil various speech acts such as: advising, warning, and correcting.

R 1735 1. Nta bugirigiri bwigirwa umugore agirwa n'umugabo

L.M. / Cooperation does not make itself, a wife is completed by her husband/

PM /In a family, a wife needs her husband and vice versa/

In a home, there should be a wife and a husband for both make up a homestead. The above proverb is used to highlight the important place of a husband in a family. This proverb can make husbands to feel important in the family. It implies a certain belittlement of women dependent upon men.

As far as the speech act is concerned, this proverb may be to criticize women for their weakness and inability to organize their homes and to satisfy all the family needs.

R.2610 3. Umugore mu kuzigama inkono abanza urujo

L.M./A woman in carrying for a pot begins by the pot cover/

P.M./A woman first cares for simple things before she endeavours to look for important things in the family/

Simple things like 'urujo' (pot cover) have their appropriate roles in the family depending on the way they are used. Therefore, as keepers of the household to, women are called to keep everything safe, from the simple things to great ones.

The speech act performed through this proverb is to warn women against neglecting simple mothers, calling upon them to pay attention to everything.

R. 2509 4. Umugore ni ndyana n'uwejeje

L.M. / A woman is I share with whoever is about to harvest/

P.M. /Women's materialism is the source of their unfaithfulness/

Generally, women like good things that make them feel comfortable. Then, in many families, men cannot help doing all their best in order to please their wives. But once the poverty knocks at the door, that same wife begins to despise

her husband and after a certain moment, she leaves or divorces him and joins other men with material possessions.

As far as the speech acts are concerned, this proverb would be used to warn men not to trust their wives for even after staying together for long because they can still go with other men. In addition, it criticizes some greedy women who always find pleasure in enjoying other people's possessions

R.1978 5. Umugore ntaganza urwarwa aba ashaka inzira ija iwabo

L.M. /A woman does not seek to own banana-wine, otherwise she is seeking the way to her parents' home/

P.M./ Women have no right to important things in the family/

In Burundian culture valuable things such as 'honey', 'banana wine', and 'spear' are under the control of the head of the family. Therefore, banana-wine is a symbol of wealth in the family which regularly produces it. Men feel they are the only ones who have the right to manage this precious product. For women, to pretend having right to valuable things such as spear, honey, including banana wine mean that she is trying to equal her husband which can result in divorce.

The speech act performed through this proverb is to warn married women about the consequences that would result from their intentions to manipulate a precious thing in a family. Such women are said to be arrogant and are finally sent away by their husbands.

F.W. 6. Umugore musangira amata ntimusangira amazi

L.M. /You share milk with a wife but not water/

P.M. /Women cooperate with their husbands when they are rich but as soon as they become poor, some may abandon them/

We have already said that 'milk' stands for prosperity while 'water' is associated with poverty.

Therefore, in various families, tradition has established that some women cooperate harmoniously with their husbands during the period of prosperity.While poverty brings about discontent and even separation.

With regard to speech act, this proverb may be to encourage faithfulness among wives and also to warn husbands about the treacherous nature of some wives who value only material wealth.

R.2057 7. Urongoye umugore mwiza ntaba arongoye umutima

LM /Who marries a pretty wife does not marry a heart/

PM /Beautiful women are not always good-hearted/

To be attractive for a woman does not necessarily imply to be good-hearted for a woman can have a good physical appearance but at the same time lack virtue and good character. This proverb reveals that in the thinking of Burundians, more value is attached to one's good behaviour rather than to mere physical appearance.

The speech act performed through this proverb is to warn young men about getting married. Men should not consider mere beauty when choosing a future wife. One can marry an ugly but good woman and find his family well organized with everything in order.

R.2601 8. Umurindi w'umukecuru uhinda uhera

L.M. / An old woman may walk vigorously but her strength is declining/

P.M. /The high speed at which a woman starts a work

disappears in a while/

Generally speaking, women are physically weaker than men because of their biological make-up. In old age, their strength withers may still further.

The speech acts performed through this proverb may be to criticize arrogant women in order to tell them that their strength and energy are declining. It may also be to discourage them from searching for their emancipation and equality with men.

R. 1936 9. Nta nkokokazi ibika isake iriho

L.M. /A hen does not crow when the cock is there/

P.M. /A woman cannot deliver a speech in the presence of a man/

Each human community is a mixture of male and female members with various appropriate roles assigned to them. Nevertheless, according to Burundian culture, women are mainly concerned with the household while men are needed to supervise all activities at home including social ceremonies and other important functions where speeches delivered.

The speech act performed through this proverb may be to comment on and criticize some women who tend to take the place of their husbands. It makes them feel subordinate to men.

R. 1980 10. Umugore ntasutamanga aba ashaka imyuga ibiri

L.M./A woman does not sit on her heals repeatedly if she does not want perform two jobs/

P.M. /A woman should behave like one and not assume the role and attitudes of man, otherwise, there is trouble/

In a family, there should be a husband, a wife and children and they have to obey one another. The proverb metaphorically compares 'gusutamanga' with inappropriate and indecent behaviour in the part of a woman.

With regard to speech act, the proverb can be used to blame women who do not conform to traditional norms of behaviour such as sitting down properly. Furthermore, it condemns women's incorrect-manners in the family, telling them about the consequences they would run if they do not follow right ways.

Through this category, we have been dealing with proverbs which mainly portray the image of women in a negative way. But, there are also proverbs which praise the woman as a mother of mankind and a very important person to be loved and respected. A woman of good morality is the one who

participates in production, endeavours to educate children, assists her husband, and undertakes all the household chores as illustrated by the following proverbs.

F.W 11 Umugore arakama intare

L.M / A woman can milk a lion /

P.M / Women's qualities such as tenderness and patience can make her overcome difficulties and succeed /

The proverb metaphorically compares a 'lion' to difficulties including difficult and brutal men. In fact, to milk a lion is not an easy task as to deal with a difficult man is not a simple matter. But the experience has revealed that a tender and patient woman can succeed in changing him.

With regard to speech act, this proverb may be to encourage woman and girls to be patient, tender and brave in the face of problems and obstacles.

F.W 12. Ibisate bifatishwa n'inyabara

L.M / Big logs are burned thanks to small pieces of wood /

P.M / The success of men is always conditioned by the support of their wives. /

The proverbs metaphorically associate 'small pieces' with women, while 'big logs' are compared to men. The small pieces are put under the big logs. Then, without the smaller pieces of firewood catching fire first, the big logs would not be able to burn easily.

The speech act performed through this proverb may be to praise women of good morality for their crucial role in assisting their husbands. The proverb emphasizes on the obvious complementarity existing between a man and his wife.

R.1992 13. Utongana n'ishiga ukarya bibisi

L.M. /Who quarrels with a firestone eats raw food/

P.M / A man who ill- treats his wife has no happiness at home./

In Ntahokaja (1978:39), we are told that women have only the right to valueless things such as cooking pot, a piece of cloth used as belt, what she got as a gift from her parents and the like. The proverb is based on traditional customs of Burundians where women play a crucial role in the family. Hence, 'ishiga' (firestone) is associated with a wife because of her vital role of cooking. Indeed, if one stone is missing, the cooking is impossible.

The speech acts performed through this proverb would be to reveal the important place of a woman in the family as collaborator to her husband. In addition, it warns some husbands against ill-treating their wives to avoid eventual problems.

R.1846 15. Inkokokazi irapfa amagi akabora;

L.M. /A hen dies and its eggs rot /

P.M. / When a mother dies, immediately her children begin to suffer /

Actually, eggs are the product of hens as children are the production of parents especially the mother. Hence, 'a hen' in this proverb symbolizes a mother while 'eggs' stand for children. Then, mothers have their moral responsibility to provide a good education to their children. Once they give up their task or die, their children undergo many difficulties. In other words, we notice what a mother is capable of after her death or when she is temporally absent.

With regard to the speech acts, this proverb would be to emphasize on the traditional view that mothers have the crucial and important role of raising

children. It also praises mothers for their noble mission not only for the family but also for the whole country.

4.2.2.2. Proverbs about Barren Women

Barren women in the Burundian community have no value. They are considered as worthless persons. The acts performed through Kirundi proverbs of this category of childless women are generally inclined towards criticizing, despising or insulting.

F.W 16. Ingumba itazi ikibi irigata ishenyo

L.M / A barren cow which does not know about evil licks an axe /

P.M / Stupid people play with fire/

In the Burundian society, cows are given great importance for the role they perform. But a cow which does not give birth to calves has no value. It is raised only for meat.

The speech act performed through this proverb would be to warn barren women against being quarrelsome towards their husbands. As she has no children to tie her to him, her husband will never hesitate to get rid of her. Furthermore, this proverb would also be used as a warning towards a stupid people who pretend to cooperate with the enemies forgetting that they can revenge.

R 2536 18. Ingumba irira ku mvyeyi

L.M./ Where a fertile cow is eating, the barren one also benefits/

P.M/ Bad people benefits from the blessings bestowed on good ones/

Burundian society like other parts of the world acknowledges the existence of bad and good, poor and rich people who succeed to live despite their different behaviour. The reality is that those bad people are sometimes obliged to benefit from the blessings bestowed upon good ones in order to survive.

As far as the speech acts are concerned, the proverb would be used to emphasise the fact that a barren is of no value and does not deserve to enjoy any benefit. In addition, it makes barren women feel stigmatised and despised by the society to which they belong.

4.2.2.3. Proverbs about Lazy Women

Normally, wealth in a family is a result of much efforts made by husbands together with his wife. In fact, a woman who does not like to work is qualified as harmful and source of all evil in the family and Burundian culture does not tolerate such behaviour. The following are proverbs which are used to criticize lazy women and warn men against marrying such wives.

F.W 19. Umugore mu gucura umugabo amucura umuniho

L.M / A greedy woman takes her husband's portion by pretending to be ill/

P.M / Lazy wives spend all the working time lamenting about ill health to escape from house chores/

Laziness among Burundian women is a very serious matter because it cannot help affecting the whole family. The first target to be affected is the husband. A lazy and woman does not feed her husband and children to their satisfaction. Instead, she bothers her husband.

The speech act performed through the proverb would be to criticize a lazy and quarrelsome woman who fails to feed her family. In short, it warns women against laziness.

F.W 20. Umugore agona agoramira umugabo

L.M / A wife who snores and oversleeps does so at the expense of her husband /

P.M / A lazy woman causes problems to her husband /

The snoring that this proverb talks about is the one that takes place during the day. The proverb is based on the traditional custom which prevents people, especially hard-working women from snoring during the day. If they do so, they cause annoyance to their husbands as the latter will be obliged to work alone.

With regard to speech act, this proverb would be used to discourage laziness among women and incite them to work hard in order to enhance welfare in their family.

R.1977 22. Umugore ntaririmba aba akumbuye iwabo

L.M / A woman does not sing if she is not nostalgic about her Parental home /

P.M / A woman should avoid expressing her emotions loudly if she does not want to be sent home/

For a Burundian woman, to express loudly her emotions, and deliver a speech on public occasions are a sign of lack of respect. In fact, a woman who starts singing aloud maybe lazy and may clash with her husband.

With regard to speech acts, the proverb generally criticizes some wives who, instead of working hard for the family, care about useless mothers such as expressing emotion. Furthermore, it encourages women to endure eventual difficulties and keep on working.

F.W 23. Imburakimazi y'umugore ibagara umushatsi

L.M / A lazy woman weeds hair /

P.M / A lazy woman wastes her time doing useless things/

Women who do not want to work engage in useless things. In fact, to arrange one's hair during working hours is one of those useless activities, which is a sign of laziness.

The speech act performed through this proverb would be to criticize laziness among women.

4.2.2.4. Proverbs about Women in Polygamous Situation

As we said it earlier in the section about men, polygamy in Burundi is an important issue that needs to be seriously tackled. As far as co-wives are concerned, they are involved in many problems like hatred and jealousy between co-wives and their children.

The following proverbs reveal in more detailed way hatred and other numerous problems encountered by women sharing the same husband.

R.3155 24. Utambana na mukeba ntakubita urugohe

L.M./ She who dances with her co-spouse does not close even one eyelid /

P.M./ One should keep on alert when dealing with his rival/

Women never trust their co-wives. It is rare that people find co-wives sitting or walking together and chatting in a friendly manner. The proverb points out some of the disadvantages of polygamous marriages namely jealousy, strain, and mistrust.

With regard to speech acts, the proverb would be to warn wives about the jealousy of co-wives even though they seem to cooperate. Furthermore, the proverb could be used to send a warning towards other people in situation of misunderstanding.

R.3120 25. Ukira mukeba ntukira ico yavyaye

L.M./ You get rid of a co-wife, you do not get rid of her offspring/

P.M./ Revenge among members of the family is an everlasting matter /

The proverb emphasizes the rivalry among co-wives by pointing out that even in the absence of a co-wife; her children may still pose a threat to you.

As far as the speech acts are concerned, the proverb is used to criticize the jealousy and malicious nature of co-wives towards their rivals. In addition, it warns step-mothers to handle with care the child left by a co-wife.

R.1157 27. Inkoni ikubiswe mukeba uyirenza urugo

L.M./ A stick which beats a co-wife, throw it over a fence /

P.M./ We should avoid to laugh at the misery of the other,
even our enemy because this can happen to us /

Through this proverb, 'the stick' is associated with the relationship existing between a wife and her husband while 'mukeba' stands for someone whom you share a number of things with and about whom you have to pay much attention.

The speech acts performed through this proverb would be to warn people not to laugh at the misfortune of others, even their bitter enemies. It also warns and advises a wife to pay attention to problems occurring between her husband and her rival. On the contrary, this gives her an idea of not repeating the same co-wife's mistake.

R.2573 28. Ukebanya mukeba ntumumara ibikumbi

L.M./ You shake down your co-wife, you cannot get rid of her
bad temper/

P.M / A co-wife is so hard to live with that she is never happy,
satisfied, however much you can work for her /

The proverb points out the fact that a co-wife is very difficult to deal with. She cannot be satisfied even when you do all your best to please her. She can pretend to be cooperative but deeply she remains with grudges and acrimony.

With regard to speech acts, this proverb would be used to warn and advise wives to be careful towards their co-spouses for their bad temper. She pretends to show good cooperation but at the same time her heart is full of hatred and jealousy.

4.2.2.5. Proverbs about Married Women and their In-laws

When a woman gets married, she automatically changes her social status. Then, she no longer belongs to her father's family but to her husband's family.

Therefore, Burundian people pay much attention to the relationships between married people and their in-laws. Note that this concerns both wives and husbands. The following proverbs are established to perform the speech acts of warning and advising women about their relationships with their in-laws.

Z.170 29. Nyokobukwe ntakuzimana impengeri agusiganya gusya

L.M./ Your mother-in-law does not welcome you with roasted grain; she tells you to grind the corn/

P.M./ Your mother-in-law makes you work and suffer instead of making you enjoy her hospitality/

Once a girl is married, she enters a new family where she has to be in permanent contact with her in-laws. In normal conditions, tradition suggests that the bride has to spend at least three months doing light works and eating what has been produced by her new family. In fact, the proverb points out the fact that some mothers-in-law can make themselves undesirable neighbours for their daughters-in-law due to their harsh attitudes. They make life for their daughters-in-law unbearable by the inhuman treatment they inflict on them.

As far as the speech act is concerned, the proverb would be used to warn young wives about the likelihood of having difficult mothers-in-law so as to be more careful and react consequently.

4.2.2.6. Proverbs about Spinsters and Girls

Girls and old unmarried women constitute a very important group in Burundian society which consider them as crucial them. While girls are allowed to stay in their parents' home, spinsters are obliged to stay in their own. All of them have both qualities to be appreciated and imperfections to be criticized. Therefore, the proverbs about this category perform two main speech acts: criticizing and warning.

R.60 31. Umukobwa ntagorobeza gusenya aba ashaka gucikira

L.M./ A girl who comes home late from collecting firewood wants to elope /

P.M./ It is not tolerated for a girl to come late in the evening, otherwise, she is suspected of having a lover to elope with /

The proverb is based on traditional values in Burundian society where decency is the norm. Culturally speaking, girls who are aware of their responsibilities cannot endeavour to go out the fence during evenings.

With regard to speech acts, the proverb would be used to warn against the lack of responsibilities and decency among girls as they may go out to perform certain duties such as collecting firewood but end up by visiting their boy friends. This warning is also addressed to parents to be more vigilant about the possible misbehaviour of unmarried girls. Furthermore, the proverb makes unmarried women to be vigilant about their behaviour.

R.2514 32. Umukobwa ni akarago kabaraye

L.M./ A girl is a mat for guests /

P.M./ A girl does not belong to her own family but to her future in-law family /

The proverb metaphorically compares a young girl to a small mat for visitors who spend the night at her parents' house. They may propose her and into marriage and take her away.

As far as the speech acts are concerned, the proverb would be used to remind parents that girls are not equal to boys as their future belongs to another family.

R.2368 33. Umukobwa atazi ikizoza atwenga intama iriko iravyara

L.M./ A stupid girl laughs at a sheep which is giving birth /

P.M./ An irresponsible woman rejoices at people's misery /

In Burundian culture, 'a sheep' is compared to humble people who do not cause any harm to others, who accept everything as it happens.

The speech act performed through this problem is to criticize and advise some ignorant girls who cannot think about problems namely the problems she will face while giving birth.

R.1166 34. Umukobwa w'umupfu yirahira impfizi ya se

L.M./ A stupid girl swears by her father's bull /

P.M./ A stupid girl does or says what is culturally unacceptable/

The proverb is based on the Burundian tradition stating that a girl or woman belongs more to her husband's family. Hence, her father's fortune belongs totally to his sons who are allowed to inherit from him.

With regard to the speech acts, this proverb would be used to warn silly young girls not to consider their father's fortune as theirs. It also warns them about their illusions of inheritance since Burundian culture does not give girls the right to inherit their father's fortune.

Z.166 35. Ubwana buva kubukobwa

L.M./ Children are products of girls /

P.M./ Mothers give birth to all generations /

All over the world, children are born from mothers and girls as future mothers are warned about their responsibilities. So, according to this proverb, a generation without girls is said to be vanishing.

The speech acts performed through this proverb would be to praise and encourage girls to get married and feel proud of their social status as mothers and educators.

To conclude, we can say that the way they are portrayed through Kirundi proverbs is far different from the way men are. A great number of proverbs depict women more negatively than positively, contrary to men. They present us a woman of little value, qualified as meaningless in the society and who has 'no word to say' in the public life of the country. Her place is only at home and she is considered like a child as she deals mostly with young children. She has to seek man's support, needless to say that she is qualified as 'second sex' or 'weak sex'.

Nevertheless, despite all her numerous limitations, few assign an important place to her as being a good educator of children and a support for husband, a food producer and advisor of her husband.

4.2.3. Proverbs about Parents and their Children: Parental Relationship

One cannot talk of parents and forget about children. Kirundi language has a number of proverbs which illustrate such a link in performing various speech acts. Some advise; warn while others complain about the wrong-manners observed among both parents and children.

R.2418 1. Umuvyeyi atari nyoko ntakumenya inzara

L.M./ A mother who is not your mother does not know how you are hungry/

P.M./ A mother who is not your mother does not care about your problems /

This proverb points out the fact that while your mother worries about whether you are in good living conditions and has pity upon your dire situations; one who is not your mother is only concerned about her own children.

With regard to the speech acts, this proverb would be used to remind about the relationships existing between a child and his step mother. In addition, it warns children about the indifference of step-mothers regarding their problems.

R.3103 2. Nta rwica ururа ngo rusige umukondo

L.M./ The death that kills the entrails, kills also the navel /

P.M./He who does harm to parents does not spare children /

The proverb metaphorically compares 'ururа' to a parent, while 'umukondo' (navel) stands for 'a child'. In a family, there are parents and children. Parents are responsible for the education of their children. Then, problems or other dangerous situations such as the attack by enemies, when they affect parents, they also affect children.

The speech acts performed through this proverb would be to emphasize the fact that parents and children are just one and that they are mutually dependent.

R.1840 6. Nta wanka kwonka nyina ngo arwaye amahere

L.M./ One should not refuse to suckle one's mother's breast because The mother suffers from a rush/

P.M./ We should not abandon or neglect those who have cared about us , like a mother, when we were still helpless/

None can ignore the value of mothers as far as children's education is concerned. Mothers are incomparable people when we consider their role vis-à-vis their family in general and children in particular however old, destitute or defective, they may remain very respectable people.

With regard to the speech acts, this proverb would be used to warn and advise young people about their eventual ungratefulness towards their old parents. A parent remains a parent, whatever happens to him or her.

R.1982 7. Umwana arya inkoko nyina akayiruka amoya

L.M./A child eats a chicken and his mother vomits its feathers/

P.M./ When you are responsible for someone you love, you cannot help paying for his mistakes /

A child who misbehaves shares upon his mother rather than his father. This choice of mothers over fathers is dictated by the fact that mothers are supposed to spend more time with their education, influence their behaviour.

With regard to the speech acts, the proverb would be used to emphasize the mother's role in shaping their children's behaviour and character to avoid disappointments in the future once they neglect their children's good education. It is a warning to mothers that if their children misbehave, the mothers are blamed more than the fathers.

R.1856 10. Umwana w'imbeba azira urwanko rwa nyina

L.M./ A baby mouse is victim of hatred against her mother/

P.M./ Innocent persons are guilty of what was done by their parents or the community they belong to/

This proverb metaphorically associates a 'little mouse' with a weak or young person who has not offended any body but who is harmed. He is the victim of mistakes made by the group or family he belongs to when it comes to revenge.

With regard to the speech acts, the proverb would be used to criticize some wicked and irresponsible people who harm innocent human beings for the simple reason that their relatives were wrong doers.

R.1926 11. Umwana ni uwa se

L.M./ A child belongs to his father /

P.M / All children belong to their father's lineage/

The proverb is based on traditional custom that points out that children belong to their father's clan than their mother's. They are born and grow up there. Sometimes, they are assigned their father's last name to perpetuate it.

The speech act performed through this proverb would be to emphisize the cultural belief that children belong more to their father's clan. In a way, it alienates children from their mother's family while mothers themselves are denied their full right as parents.

In brief,with regard to parental relationships, Kirundi proverbs have revealed that both father and mother assume all responsibilities regarding child rearing. However, the mother assumes more responsibility in the shaping of young children's character. When the child develops but character, the mother is blamed first. Generally speaking, proverbs about parents and their children favour women as the prime educators and worthy of high respect.

General Conclusion and Recommendations

All along this study,I have attempted to find out whether proverbs embody, reveal and validate a speech community,s beliefs and views in relation to gender-related differences.In fact,this has been achieved though a process built upon four main parts.

The first Chapiter which is a "General Introduction" concerns the statement of the problem .Also,the aims of this study have been defined together with definitions of key terms relevant to this study which have been provided.

The second one is entitled Review of Related Literature .It provides an account on the existing literature in this area of research.That is to say that it reviews the contribution of other previous researchers who worked in this domain.

As far as the third is concerned, it is entitled " Methodology" and it has been described.That is to say that I have described and justified the procedures according to which the data has been collected and analysed. Furthermore, the problems encountered have also been presented.

As for the fourth and last "Findings", it is the closing chapiter and at the same time the core of the study. In fact, it clarifies the different categories in which men and women can be classified and reveal the different social roles assigned to them.

In fact, Kirundi proverbs in general and those depicting gender differences in particular make clear the beliefs and views that Burundians have on men and women, as members of the community. According to the research, men and women in Burundian society are both negatively and positively portrayed in oral literature especially in proverbs. Even though these wise sayings assert the superiority of man explicitly, both of them are depicted as capable of many important achievements. They are all useful to the society and their existence and activities are closely interrelated.

During the analysis of the findings, the Speech Act Theory was applied in order to identify their meaning, intentions and possible effects. However, being aware that the most effective use of this theory requires not only the real-life situations in which proverbs are used, we also combined it with the discursive interpretive approach in order to illuminate the semantic and pragmatic values of proverbs.

In view of the findings of the study and the above conclusion,the following recommendations can be formulated.

-Languages and proverbs in particular are among the major means of expressing and revealing people,s views, beliefs and attitudes about gender differences.Hence, the analysis of this kind of proverbs could be a very powerful tool for the people concerned with gender issues and the linguists interested in investigating and knowing more about the power and effects of language in society.

-Education through proverbs should be included in the school curricula at various levels in order to expose members of the community to this important cultural resource.

Talking about the aim of our study, we can confirm that it has been achieved. However, we can no way pretend to have exhausted this study of this literary genre, and the work to be done is still enormous. There are legends, songs, folktales which deserve a thorough analysis as far gender inequality is concerned.

Therefore, this study focuses on a particular literary form with special emphasis on its pragmatic aspects to reveal the intentions and possible effects of its application on the society. In a nutshell, it is not only a contribution to what has been done so far in this area, but also it may act as a basis for further research. For instance, further research may extend their tenacles to morality and people's awareness of this media of communication.

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CORPUS

PROVERBS RELATED TO GENDER,THEIR LITERAL AND PROVERBIAL MEANINGS

1. Umugabo ntapfira izuba rimwe

L.M/ A man cannot die under one sun/

P.M/ A brave person stands both physical and moral suffering/

2. Umugabo natwarwa n'uruzi aba atwawe n'uruzi

L.M/ A man is not carried by the river, rather he is carried by duty/

P.M/ When a man is drowned away by a river, he is carried away by the aims/

3. Umugabo arinda akaje

LM/ A man faces up to whatever happens/

PM/ A courageous person should face up to whatever matter he encounters/

4. Urugo rurimwo umugabo runywa amata

LM/ A household where there is a man drinks milk/

PM/ A family in which there is a respectful man has everything/

5. Ikobero ry'umugabo ryamako ijisho

LM/ A spear of man remains on an eye/

PM/ A family in which there is a respectful man has everything/

6. Nta nka zitagira impfizi

LM/ There is no cow without a bull/

PM/ A family without a strong man is not a family at all/

7. Inkingi iryana ntiyegamirwa

LM/ A voracious pillar is not lent on/

PM/ A brutal man does not make his family feel secure/

8. Wirukana umugore ngo aguguna igufa bwaca ukazana uwurimira imiruzwa

LM/ You chase away your wife for picking up a bone and you bring one who swallow it without chewing it/

PM/ A wise solution is never taken in a brutal way/

9. Bifungiro aruta Bihengeri: Umworo yizigamye aruta umugabo yiyohewe

LM/Knots are better than holes: a poor person who cares about himself is better than a rich one who is careless/

PM/ A wise person is better than a dishonest wealthy man/

10/ Umugore ahumura ahumiwe

LM/ A young recovers sanity after a disaster/

PM/ A strong and irresponsible person learns the reality after having faced problems/

11. Ukuboko kumwe kuriyaga ntikwimara uburyi

LM/ One hand scratches itself but does not end the itching/

PM/ A single person is unable to perform much: cooperate is always necessary/

12. Usembera umusore bwaca akagusohora

LM/ You give shelter to a bachelor and he chases you out the next day/

PM/ We should avoid to cooperate with arrogant and unfaithful persons/

13.Umusore ntiyicwa n'inzara yicwa n'inzigo

LM/ A young boy does not die of hunger but of sloth/

PM/ A strong person like a bachelor can earn living provided/

14. Umusore ntagorobeza aba agomba kurongora

LM/ A young man does not stay out for too long/ otherwise, he wants to marry/

PM/ When a young boy begins to come late in the night, it is a sign that he is searching for freedom/

15. Ntawuta agatarotaro ngo intaro zasheshe

LM/ No one can reject an old van for the simple reason that there are many new-fashioned ones/

PM/ Old wives should not be abandoned in favour of new generations/

16. Akagabo karajije akaguru hanze kitwa imburakimazi.

LM/ A man whose a leg lodges outside his home is called heartless/

PM/ A polygamous man has a troublesome household/

17. Umugabo aharitse ahorana induru

LM/ A polygamous man can not lack quarrels brought about by his wives/

PM/ A polygamous man has a troublesome household/

18. Umugabo gito agaya ubwo araje

LM/ A stupid man despises the food he kept for the following day/

PM/ Men of low morality accuse their own wives of being too old/

19. Umwonga umwe wonza inyoni

LM/ One valley makes a bird grow thin/

PM/ A single wife cannot satisfy a man's sexual desires/

20. Umugore mu kuzigama inkono abanza urujo

LM/ A woman in carrying for a pot begins by the pot cover/

PM/ A woman first cares for simple things before she endeavours to look for important things in the family/

21.Umugore ni ndyana n'uwujeje

LM/ A woman is I share with whoever is about to harvest/

PM/ Women's materialism is the source of their unfaithfulness/

22. Umugore ntaganza urwarwa aba ashaka inzira ija iwabo

LM/ A woman does not seek to own a banana-wine, otherwise she is seeking the way to her parents' house/

PM/ Women have no right to important things in the family/

23/ Umugore musangira amata ntimusangira amazi

LM/ A wife may share milk with you but not water/

PM/ Women cooperate with their husbands when they are rich but as soon as they become poor, she may abandon them/

24.Urongoye umugore mwiza ntaba arongoye umutima

LM/ Who marries a pretty wife does not marry a heart/

PM/ Beautiful women are not always good-hearted/

25/ Umurindi w'umurindi uhinda uhera

LM/ An old woman may walk vigorously but her strength is declining/

PM/ The high speed at which a woman starts a work disappears in a while/

26. Nta nkokokazi ibika isake iriho.

LM/ A hen cannot crow when the cock is there/

PM/ A woman cannot deliver a message in the presence of a man/

27. Umugore ntasutamanga aba ashaka imyuga ibiri.

LM/ A woman does not sit on her heals repeatedly if she does want to perform two jobs/

PM/ A woman should behave like one and not assume the role and attitudes of a man, otherwisė there is trouble/

28. Umugore arakama intare.

LM/ A woman can milk a lion/

PM/ Women's qualities such as tenderness and patience can make them overcome difficulties/

29. Ibisate bifatishwa n'inyabara

LM/ Big logs are burned thanks to small pieces of wood/

PM/ The success of men is always conditioned by the support of their wives/

30. Utongana n'ishiga ukarya bibisi.

LM/ Who quarrels with a cooking stone eats raw food.

PM/ A man who illtreats his wife has no happiness at home/

31. Inkokokazi irapfa amagi akabora.

LM/ A hen dies and its eggs rot/

PM/ We notice what a mother is capable of after her death/

32/ Ingumba itazi ikibi irigata ishenyo

LM/ A barren cow which does not know about evil licks an axe/

PM/ Stupid people play with fire/

33. Ingumba irira ku mvyeyi

LM/ Where a fertile cow is eating/

PM/ Bad people benefit from the blessings bestowed on good ones/

34. Umugore mugucura umugabo amucura umuniho

LM. A greedy woman takes her husband's portion by pretending to be ill/

PM/ Lazy wives spend all the working time lamenting about ill health to escape from house chores:

35. Umugore ntaririṃba aba akumbuye iwabo

LM/ A woman does not sing if she is not nostalgic about her parents at home/

PM/ A woman should avoid expressing loudly her emotions if she does not want to be sent home/

36. Imburakimazi y'umugore ibagara umushatsi.

LM/ A lazy woman weeds hair/

PM/ A lazy woman wastes her time performing useless things/

37. Utambana na mukeba ntakubita urugohe.

LM/ She who dances with her household do not close even her eyelids/

PM/ One should keep on alert vis a vis his rival when dealing with/

38/ Inkoni ikubiswe umukeba irenzwa urugo.

LM/ A stick which beats a co-wife, throw it over a fence/

PM/ We should avoid to laugh the misery of others, even our enemy for this can happen to us/

39.Ukebanya mukeba ntumumara ibikumbi/

LM/ You shake down your co-wife, you cannot get rid of all her bad temper/

PM/ A co-wife is so hard to live with that she is never happy, satisfied, however much you can work for her/

40. Nyokubukwe ntakuzimana impengeri agusiganya gusya.

LM/ Your mother in law does not welcome you with roasted grain, she tells you to grind the corn/

PM/ Your mother in law makes you work and suffer in stead of making your hospitality/

41.Umukobwa ntagorobeza gusenya aba ashaka gucikira.

LM/ A girl who comes home late from collecting firewood wants to elope/

PM/ It is not tolerated for a girl to come home late in the evening; otherwise she is suspected of having a lover to elope with/

42. Umukobwa n'akarago kabaraye.

LM/ A girl is a mat for guests/

PM. A girl does not belong to her own family but to her family in law/

43. Umukobwa atazi ikizoza atwenga intama iriko iravyara.

LM/ A stupid girl laughs at a sheep which is giving birth/

PM/ An irresponsible woman rejoices at people's misery/

44. Umukobwa w'umupfu yirahira impfizi ya se.

LM/ A stupid girl swears by her father's bull/

PM/ A stupid girl does or says what is culturally unacceptable/

45. Ubwana buva ku bukobwa.

LM/ Children are products of girls/

PM/ Mothers give birth to all generations/

46. Nta rwica ururа ngo rusige umukondo.

LM/ The death that kills the entrails kills equally the navel/

PM/He who does harm to parents does not spare children/

47. Nta wanka kwonka nyina ngo arwaye amahere.

LM/ One should not refuse to suckle one's mother's breasts because the mother suffers from a rush/

PM/ We should not abandon or neglect those who have cared about us like a mother, when we were still helpless/

48. Umwana arya inkoko nyina akayiruka amoya.

LM/ A child eats a chicken his/ her mother vomits its feathers/

PM/ When you are responsible for someone you love, you cannot help paying for his/her mistake.

49. Urukwavu rurakura rukonka umwana.

LM/ An old sucks its own offspring/

PM/ Children must take care of their parents when they grow old/

50. Umwana ni wa se.

LM/ A child belongs to his father/

PM/ All children belong to their father's lineage/