

Metaphorical Construction of Marriage among Kenyan Swahili Speakers

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Abstract: This study investigates how Kenyans conceptualize marriage. It employs Metaphor Identification Procedure in identifying metaphors on marriage as they are used by Kenyan Swahili speakers. Data for this research is drawn from “*Mawaidha na Bi. Msafwari*” a programme aired on Citizen TV (a Kenyan TV station) every Saturday evening after the seven o’clock news. The metaphors are then subjected to analysis using The Conceptual Metaphor Theory. The study concludes that marriage is construed in different ways by Kenyan Swahili speakers, it is conceptualized as a house, an eatery, a prison, a school, a journey, a road, a body, a government/ kingdom, a garden, a war, a relationship and as a baby. The various conceptualizations by Kenyans determine their attitudes and general orientation towards marriage.

Keywords: conceptual metaphor, conceptual domain, conceptualization, mapping

1. Introduction

The classical Aristotelian scholars paid little attention to Metaphors. They viewed them as mere linguistic decorations (Fainsilber & Ortony, 1987) or as violations of linguistic norms. The Chomskyan School, views metaphors as violators of semantic and syntactic rules (Chomsky, 1961; Katz, 1964; Kintsch, 1974). In the Gricean school of thought, metaphors are regarded as violators of conversational maxims (Grice, 1975, 1978; Searle, 1979). Metaphors were also ignored in philosophy because philosophers felt that metaphors played a major role in confusing thinking. Hobbes in (Skinner, 1996), argues that metaphor is an abuse of language and believes that words have ordained meaning whose change or imprecision is a case of semantic rebellion. Though this has been the case in the past, the perspective has changed as more researches have evinced that metaphors are an essential tool in language. Numerous studies (Cameron, 1999, 2003, 2007; Cameron & Deignan, 2003; Chilton, 1996; Steen, 2006, 2007) have revealed the importance of metaphors as figures of thought which enhance communication and enable retaining and passing of a

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vast wealth of linguistic knowledge to consecutive generations. Currently, metaphors have become an indispensable communicative function of language.

Metaphors serve at least three communicative functions: (1) Metaphors may allow one to navigate the restrictions that occur when non-figurative language is used. (2) They provide for conveying a myriad of information as contrasted to the information given by units that are discrete. (3) Metaphors enable the provision of vivid mental pictures of phenomena as opposed to the provisions of literal language. Metaphors enable us to think through various phenomena that we are exposed to by leading us to imagine and speculate. (Fainsilber & Ortony, 1987; Glucksberg, 1989; MacCormac, 1985:160)

Cognitive linguists believe that metaphors influence the way people engage reason, think and do imagination by engaging neural mappings. Metaphors are not merely aesthetic elements but reflectors of how we conceptualize phenomena in our daily lives. Concepts in our daily lives are structured metaphorically hence the language used to describe them is structured metaphorically too. Our perceptions are shaped by the metaphors we use in our casual everyday conversations. All our conversations are centered on our daily lives. (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 1999; Steen, 2007)

Marriage is one aspect that dominates our daily conversations. Conversations on and about marriage are greatly affected by metaphors. Mwangi (2012) analyses metaphors as realized in marriage negotiations of the Gikuyu (a Bantu language spoken in Kenya). He realizes that conversations in Gikuyu marriage negotiations are rich in metaphor; of all the words used, an average of 36% was metaphorical in nature. Mwangi's study however did not show how the Gikuyu conceptualized marriage by the use of metaphors.

Another study on metaphors on marriage was done by Dunn (2004). The study analyses speeches given during wedding receptions of the Japanese. This is done through metaphor analysis. The study realized that marriage is conceptualized metaphorically as a JOINT CREATION, a PHYSICAL UNION, and a JOURNEY. Dunn's study is of relevance to this study as it evinces how the Japanese conceptualize marriage. Considering the difference in cultures, this study will lay focus on the conceptualization of marriage among Kenyans.

Sabry (2015) carried out a study on Conceptual Metaphor in Egyptians' Internet Language of Marriage. The study analyzed the concept of marriage through applying conceptual metaphor theory to the internet language of Egyptian youth. It sought to find out: First, what are the most common marriage metaphors among Egyptians? Second, what metaphors reveal about Egyptians' opinions of marriage? Third, what do Egyptian proverbs reveal about marriage? And fourth, does gender difference play a role in the metaphors used? The study reveals most prevalent concepts about marriage are: TRADE, JOURNEY, STUMBLING BLOCK, and STABILITY. The first and third conceptual metaphors, namely, MARRIAGE IS A TRADE and MARRIAGE IS A STUMBLING BLOCK

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uncover a lot of social problems that affect the way Egyptians perceive marriage.

This study relates to the studies above in the sense that it discusses metaphors employed in marriage discourses. Its point of departure however is anchored on assertions by Lakoff & Johnson that culture determines and greatly affects the crafting and use of conceptual metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:9). It studies how Kenyans conceptualize marriage in their conversations. The main question this study strives to answer is: do the metaphors used by Kenyan Kiswahili speakers about marriage provoke a predisposition of marriage in certain ways?

The focus of this study is on conceptual metaphors and not discourse metaphors (Koteyko & Ryazanova-Clarke, 2009; Musolff, 2010:158). The study uses as its source of data, the marriage conversations in the programme “*Mawaidha na Bi. Msafwari*” (Counsel by Mrs. Msafwari). This is a programme aired on Citizen Television (a Kenyan television station owned by Royal Media Group) every Saturday evening after the 7 o’clock news. Statistics indicate that Citizen TV viewer population of over 60% of the Kenyan population. The programme is run in Kiswahili (Kenya’s national and official language) and normally runs for between 15 and 30 minutes (or up to 50 minutes in exceptional cases). In this programme viewers (presumably married people) are counseled on how to handle different situations and challenges that they encounter or are likely to encounter in the marriage life. The main presenter in this programme is Mrs. Zighe Joyce Msafwari, commonly referred to as Bi. Msafwari. Bi Msafwari received a state commendation (civilian Division) on 20/12/2019 for her distinguished service rendered to the nation in her capacity as a marriage counselor. The most common topics among others include parenting, men’s misbehavior at home, how to identify a good husband or wife, how to handle in-laws, etc.

The study, which falls under cognitive linguistics, aims at identifying the metaphors used and analyzing them in order to understand how Kenyans conceptualize marriage as an aspect of life. Thus, this study, by setting out to investigate the use of sampled Swahili metaphors, tries to find out the impact these metaphors have on Kenyans’ cognitive habits, concerns, goals and worldview on marriage life. It also makes a contribution to CL by analyzing Swahili metaphors within the Conceptual Metaphor Theory.

2. Conceptual domains

A conceptual domain is regarded as a coherent mental organization of human experience; it is the way in which our minds construe particular phenomena in particular situations (Kövecses, 2002:4; Radden & Dirven, 2007). Conceptual domains emerge when a set of concepts is used to construct another concept which, under normal circumstances, is totally different from it. An example of this could be when LIFE is construed as a JOURNEY, in order to understand life, one has to have an understanding/knowledge of the concept of a

journey. Life, therefore, becomes the target domain whereas the journey becomes the source domain.

2.1 Conceptual metaphor

A conceptual metaphor is a construction in which one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another conceptual domain; it is a model of cognition that is expressed linguistically and that is used to shape our understanding and perception of realities through orientation, structurally or ontologically (Kövecses, 2002:33; Cazeaux, 2007:101; Lakoff & Johnson, 1980:23-27; Lakoff & Turner, 1989:59). This study analyses the structural metaphors used in marriage discourses.

2.2 The Conceptual Metaphor Theory

This study lays its basis for analysis, The Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). CMT has predominantly been employed in researching metaphors (Gibbs, 1994; Deignan, 2005; Charteris-Black, 2006; Semino, 2008). CMT holds that in our minds, there exist conceptual metaphors that are conventional and that are greatly determined by our culture (Lakoff, 1993:206; Lakoff, 1988:121).

2.3 Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP)

Considering that there lacks an agreed criterion for identifying metaphors, and complications arising from determining the frequency of occurrence of metaphors as argued by Cameron (2003), Semino, Heywood & Short (2004), this study employed Metaphor Identification Procedure (MIP) (Pragglejaz Group, 2007) as a method for identifying words that are used metaphorically in discourse.

3. Methodology

This study adopted a qualitative research design. A purposeful sampling of eight recordings of the “*Mawaidha na Bi. Msafwari*” programme was downloaded from YouTube. The sampled recordings had topics regarding marriage life and responsibilities of men and women in marriage. The sampled recordings are presented in the appendix.

The research relied on a small sample to enable investigations and data analysis that is in-depth. The recordings were later transcribed and the metaphorically used items were identified using Metaphor Identification Procedure as outlined above in section 2.3. The conceptual metaphors were then presented to eight respondents who through the aid of an interview schedule offered their conceptualizations of the metaphors – how they understood the metaphors. The eight respondents comprised 4 men and 4 women. All of them married people who were between the ages of 40 and 50. To give a deeper insight into the conceptualizations (interpretations) of the respondents on the various conceptual metaphors that were identified, the research used an interview schedule that had open-ended questions. From the information gathered, the study established relationships and

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patterns. In order to increase the level of accuracy and not to interfere with the process, the study had to augment the interview schedule with tape-recording (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999).

Swahili orthography was used to present the obtained data and a translation was provided in English. During the recordings references that were unclear had to be supplemented with field notes. Later the transcribed data were subjected to editing and proper organization in order to facilitate easier recall of information. The collected metaphors were then sorted and categorized according to their relations. The categorizations of the metaphors led to the emergence of patterns which provided for the mapping of the metaphors between source domains and target domains. CMT was then used to show how the metaphors are conceptualized in Kenyan society.

4. Conceptualizations of marriage by Kenyan Swahili speakers

The study revealed that various conceptual metaphors were used to construct marriage among the Kiswahili speakers. The crafting and use of these conceptual metaphors among Kenyan Swahili speakers are affected and governed by culture; this is in agreement with assertions by Lakoff & Johnson (1980). The Swahili by nature is polite and diplomatic in their language use. Most Kenyans who use Swahili, by extension, have adopted the diplomatic use of language, they avoid language that would cause embarrassment especially when communicating with people of different age groups. Due to the sensitivity of marriage topics, and the bid to ensure language diplomacy, the Kenyan Swahili speakers employ marriage conceptual metaphors. Considering that the programme “*Mawaidha na Bi Msafwari*” is aired in the evening when children are still awake, conceptual metaphors are employed in order to navigate restrictions that would otherwise have occurred if non-figurative language was used. For instance, in section 4.2 below, examples 2 (in which a man is referred to as a spatula) and 5 (in which a woman is compared to a vegetable) would elicit a lot of embarrassment were it not for the use of conceptual metaphors.

The source domains employed in the marriage conceptual metaphors among the Kenyan Swahili speakers provide vivid mental pictures of the marriage phenomenon (Fainsilber & Ortony, 1987; Glucksberg, 1989; MacCormac, 1985). Most of the source domains that were employed in the conceptual metaphors collected and analyzed in this study were drawn from objects and phenomena that are readily accessible in both the speakers’ and listeners’ environments. Such include a house, an eatery, a prison, a school, a road, a human body, a garden, a baby, etc. Their interaction with these objects in their environment enables them to construct knowledge about them hence be able to use such knowledge in mapping the different source domains to the target domain (marriage). The speakers’ and listeners’ experiences of journeys, war and how governments/kingdoms operate, also enable them to

decipher the marriage conceptual metaphors that employ such source domains.

The use of various conceptual metaphors to describe marriage among the Kenyan Swahili speakers enabled conveying of a myriad of information in regards to how Kenyan Swahili speakers construe marriage. Most Kenyan communities are socialized to respect marriage hence every person who has obtained the age of marrying is encouraged to find a partner and marry. Divorce is not readily advocated for among most Kenyan communities. This seems to be the reason why most marriage conceptual metaphors that were realized in this study encourage tolerance and patience among couples. Marriage is construed as a school {(15)-(18)}, a journey {(19)-(21)}, a garden {(27) & (28)} and a baby (31). This evinces that a people's socialization affects how they conceptualize various phenomena.

The various conceptualizations of marriage by Kenyan Swahili speakers are presented and analyzed as follows.

4.1 MARRIAGE IS A HOUSE

Kenyan Swahili speakers view marriage as a house. This could be seen in constructions such as (1)-(7).

- (1) *Mwanamke mpumbavu huibomoa nyumba yake kwa mikono yake mwenyewe*
Woman stupid destroys house hers using hands hers herself
mwanamke mwerevu huijenga nyumba yake kwa mikono yake.
woman prudent builds house hers using hands hers
'A stupid woman destroys her house using her own hands, a prudent woman builds her house using her own hands.'
- (2) *Maisha ndani ya nyumba ...*
Life inside of house
'Life inside a house...'
- (3) *Ukijenga nyumba unajenga na kibanda...*
When you build house you build also a stall
'When you build a house build a stall also...'
- (4) *Mume wangu amekuwa akitoka nje.*
Husband mine has been going out
'My husband has been going outside.'
- (5) *Watu wanataka kukuvurugia nyumba yako.*
People want to destroy for you house yours
'People want to destroy your house.'
- (6) *Unakaribisha shetani kwenye nyumba, huenda akaivunja.*
You are inviting satan into house likely he destroys it
'You are inviting the devil to your house, he is likely to destroy it.'
- (7) *Nyumba ina madirisha, ina milango, ina pembe nne. – ina siri kubwa.*

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A house has windows, has doors, has corners four. – has secret big

‘A **house** has windows, it has doors, it has four corners. – it harbors a big secret.’

Using the MIP the study identified conceptual metaphors in (1), (2), (5)-(7) to be “house”. In (3), the conceptual metaphors identified were “house” and “stall”. In (4) the conceptual metaphor identified was “outside”. The conceptualization of marriage as a house is shown as below.

Source domain: HOUSE→Target domain: MARRIAGE

[Shelter→Warmth/love]/[Secret→Hiding one another’s shortcomings]/[Protection→No interference from outside]/[Living in/accommodation→Couples accommodating one another]/[Rooms→Different situations]/[Building/construction→Unity of the couples]/[Comfort →Love among the couples]

Among Kenyans, marriage is conceptualized as a structure that can either be built or destroyed. It is assumed that the man and woman are entities that can either make or destroy the house; they can either get into the house and be accommodated in it or leave the house as is the case in (4) above in which being in a marriage is envisaged as being inside whereas not being in a marriage or having an extramarital affair is seen as being outside or going outside. Although “house” is not mentioned in (4), the metaphorical linguistic expression used – inside-illuminates the conceptual metaphor of house (Kövecses, 2002:3). A house seems to be hiding a big secret considering the rooms it has. This secret is seemingly known only by the insiders who in this case are married couples. Through this conceptual metaphor MARRIAGE IS A HOUSE, couples are encouraged to nurture their marriages since starting them is as hectic as it is when building a house. On the other hand, breaking a relationship is seen to be easy just as it is when demolishing a house however the consequences are not desirable.

In (3) a metaphor (stall) emerges. This puts emphasis on the conceptual metaphor MARRIAGE IS A HOUSE. A stall is not permanent and can be demolished anytime as the need may arise. Moreover, it lacks the specifications attributed to a house. The stall is a metaphor referring to a side chick. Although men may have side chicks, they are regarded as being temporal and are not accorded the same treatment as the main wives in the same manner stalls lack the complete specifications of the house. Although the linguistic expressions in (3) (4) above do not outrightly mention the house, they point to a conceptualized metaphor that exists in the speaker’s mind: MARRIAGE IS A HOUSE. This provides evidence that Kenyans understand marriage in terms of a house (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

4.2 MARRIAGE IS AN EATERY

This study also realized that Kenyans conceptualize marriage as an eatery. Consider the

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constructions below.

- (8) *Wanawake wa pwani walitokota wakaiva.*
Women of coast boiled fully cooked
'Women from the coast are fully cooked.'
- (9) *Usipokosha mwiko, wengine watakukoshea.*
If you do not clean cooking stick others will clean for you
'If you do not clean the spatula, others will clean it for you.'
- (10) *Sukuma ni mboga, mchicha pia ni mboga.*
Kales are vegetable amaranth also are vegetables
'Kales are vegetable, amaranths are also vegetables.'
- (11) *Mwanamume ni kama mkate, kwenye kikombe cha chai ananywea.*
A man is like bread in cup of tea dissolves
'A man is like bread, when dipped in a cup of tea, he dissolves.'
- (12) *Wanawake ni chakula kwa wanaume – huwezi kula biryani peke yake.*
Women are food to men – you cannot eat biryani alone
'Women are food to men you cannot eat biryani all the time.'

The conceptualizations for (8)-(12) are presented as follows.

Source Domain: EATERY → Target Domain: MARRIAGE

[Food→Couples]/[Well cooked→Well behaved]/[Half cooked→Not well Behaved]/[Consumption
→Living together]/[Delicious/yummy→Satisfaction]/[Not delicious→Lack of satisfaction]

From this study, it emerged that Kenyans see marriage as an eatery from which food is prepared and consumed. It can either be fully cooked or half-cooked, delicious or not delicious. When either the man or woman is not able to carry themselves perfectly (as expected) by their spouse, they are termed as being half-baked or half-cooked. In construction (11) a man is seen as a loaf of bread. When exposed to difficult situations they become hard and rough but when put in a cup of tea, they become dissolved and weak. In this regard, women's humility and treatment of their men is envisaged as tea. Their stubbornness on the other hand is seen to be the harsh conditions that make men harsher and rough. They become harsh towards women and even run away from them. Mark that when bread is dipped in tea it dissolves in it and may not be easily removed from the tea. Men are also portrayed as a spatula (9). Women are supposed to use the spatula and clean it after use. It is supposed to be handled properly. If not cleaned after use, it is believed someone will clean it on the owners' behalf. Through this construction, Kenyan women are warned not to neglect their husbands. They should take good care of them because if they don't then they are likely to be snatched by other women. Women are construed as food for their husbands. Consider construction (10) in which women are referred to as *sukuma*

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'kales' and *mchicha* 'amaranths'. *Sukuma* 'kales' is a kind of vegetable that is taken in Kenya by many households. Considering its affordability in comparison to other kinds of vegetables, it is seen as a common vegetable. It is assumed that any household can afford kales. Wives are seen as kales since they are readily and always available for their men. It is assumed that one is likely to yearn for either meat or some other vegetable to substitute the kales. Amaranths can be seen to be such an alternative to fade monotony. In this regard, the woman in marriage is supposed to carry herself in a manner that would not make the man bored as to look for another woman, who in this case is constructed as the amaranths. In (12), a wife is construed as *biryani*, a type of food (mixed rice). Though tasty, one cannot eat it on a daily basis. In the same regard, the assumption is that one cannot bear the monotony of staying with his wife all through. This becomes a justification for the men to have relationships outside their marriages or even to be polygamous. Couples' living together is construed as the consumption of food and their satisfaction in marriage is construed as the deliciousness of the food.

4.3 MARRIAGE IS A PRISON

One other conceptualization that was realized in this study is that of marriage as a prison. This is presented in (13) and (14).

(13) *Ndoa ni jela....*

Marriage is prison....

'Marriage is a prison...'

(14) *Wakati mtu amefunga pingu za maisha.....*

Time person tied hand-cuffs of life.....

'When one has been hand-cuffed.....'

In (13) and (14) prison has been identified as a conceptual metaphor. The conceptualization of marriage as a prison is shown as follows.

Source Domain: PRISON → Target Domain: MARRIAGE

[Holding captive→Holding captive]/[Getting arrested→Getting married]/[No freedom/confinement/restrictions→Restrictions]/[Prisoners→Couples]/[Undesirability→Unpleasant responsibilities]/[Long term→Life long]

Kenyans envisage marriage as a prison ((13) (14)). Although in (14) the domain "prison" is not outrightly mentioned, it is alluded to through the use of "hand-cuffs". Once one is married, they are seen as being in a prison. It is seen to be a life – long union and one is not free from their spouse. The wedding is seen as a court from which the jail term (Life – long) marriage is pronounced. One is left to get out of prison when a spouse dies or when a divorce takes place. In prison, one has no desire to do as one pleases. Their actions are determined by others, in the same sense in marriage, one has no freedom to do as one

pleases; their actions are determined and mainly seem guided by the desires of their spouses. Marriage life is portrayed as being undesirable since one lacks the freedom to do what one pleases. They are supposed to remain within the confines of the marriage and abide by the laws and rules that govern marriage life just as prisoners remain in the confines of prison and abide by the prison laws and rules. Unlike the normal prison where one is arrested against their wish, in marriage, the couples willingly get themselves into it. It, however, emerges that the restrictions they encounter in marriage coupled with various challenges bring about the undesirability of marriage.

4.4 MARRIAGE IS A SCHOOL

From this study, it was also realized that Kenyans conceptualize marriage as a school. This is presented in the constructions below.

(15) *Kuna mitihani mingi katika maisha haya....*

There are exams many in life this

‘There are many exams in this life....’

(16) *Mitihani ni kasoro za mwenzio.*

Exams are problems of partner

‘Exams are your spouse’s limitations.’

(17) *Tunahitaji kutambua kuwa ndoa ni shule.*

We need realize that marriage is school

‘We need to realize that marriage is a school.’

(18) *Mtu anatakiwa kumsoma mwenzake.*

A person is supposed to read partner

‘One is supposed to learn their spouse.’

In (15)-(18) marriage is conceptualized as a school; marriage has many challenges and many experiences. The conceptualization of marriage as a school is shown as below.

Source Domain: SCHOOL → Target Domain: MARRIAGE

[Participants (teachers and students)→Married couples]/[Lessons →How to cope with one another]/
[Exams→Different situations]/[Graduation from one level to another→Ability to handle different challenges]

Marriage is seen as a school and the couples are seen to be the students. They are seen to be in different stages of learning and move from one stage of learning to another. Just like in a school setting where students go through lessons, do exams and graduate from one level to another, married couples go through various situations as they learn from one another. Spouses are seen to be the books that are to be read by their spouses. Each member of the marriage is supposed to study their spouse to know them in-depth so that when difficult situations come, they are not disoriented or dismayed. Some of these situations

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could be the misconduct of one's spouse. Couples face challenges and once they handle those challenges it is presumed they have graduated from one level to another.

4.5 MARRIAGE IS A JOURNEY

It also emerged from this study, that Kenyans view marriage as a journey. The constructions below attest to this.

(19) *Mwenda tezi na omo marejeo ni ngamani.*

One who goes to and fro return is center

'He who goes to and fro, comes back to the center.'

(20) *Ndoa ni safari ndefu mno.*

Marriage is journey long very

'Marriage is a long journey.'

(21) *Hii ni safari ambayo imejaa changamoto nyingi.*

This is journey that is full challenges many

'This is a journey that is full of obstacles.'

In (19)-(21) journey was identified as the conceptual metaphor. The conceptualization of marriage as a journey is shown as below.

Source Domain: JOURNEY → Target Domain: MARRIAGE

[Has a start→The beginning of marriage life]/[Has obstacles→Challenges]/[Stop overs→Various situations]/[Has a destination→Good life]/[Distance covering→Marriage life]/[Travellers→The couples]/[Uncertainties→Unforeseen eventualities]

One of the main metaphors that Lakoff & Johnson (1980) reckoned on while explaining CMT is that of LIFE being a JOURNEY (LIFE IS A JOURNEY). Marriage, being a basic component of life, is also conceptualized as a journey. Based on the corpus of data collected in this research, marriage is represented as a journey that has multiple stages and each stage is different from the other. Married people are seen to be on a journey. The journey has a start and a destination. It also has various stopovers. Marriage can be smooth, without challenges or rough and full of challenges. One of the prevailing images found in this corpus is that both males and females share the feeling of fearing marriage. The unpredictability of the future and the fear of the unknown do influence the thoughts and emotions of Kenyans in regard to marriage. It was realized that there are many factors that contribute to creating this image of fear. These include, among others, economic problems, unfaithfulness and mistreatment from one's partner.

4.6 MARRIAGE IS A ROAD

In Kenya, marriage apart from being viewed as a journey, it is also viewed as a road.

(22) *Ndoa ni barabara ambayo haiko laini.*

Marriage is road that is not smooth

‘Marriage is not a smooth road.’

In (22) marriage is envisaged as a road on which couples tread in their journey. The road is seen to be long, winding and full of obstacles. It could also be smooth, meaning that the couples do not have any problems in their marriage life. It could be rough, meaning there are obstacles on the way. The conceptualization of marriage as a road is shown as below.

Source Domain: Road → Target Domain: Marriage

[Long→A life-long state]/[Winding→Uncertainties]/[Obstacles→Challenges]/[Smooth→A Harmonious relationship]/[Rough→A troubled relationship]

4.7 MARRIAGE IS A BODY

Another conceptualization of marriage by Kenyans that was realized in this study is that of Marriage as a body. The construction below evinces this.

(23) *Mwanamume ni kichwa naye mwanamke ni shingo.*

A man is head and woman is neck

‘A man is the head whereas the woman is the neck.’

In (23) “head” and “neck” have been identified as conceptual metaphors. The man and the woman are seen as body parts performing varied functions. Just like the human body cannot be complete without its parts, marriage cannot be termed complete without husband and wife. Consider the conceptualization below.

Source Domain: BODY → Target Domain: MARRIAGE

[Various parts→The couples]/[Physical frame→The engagement/bond]/[Coherence→Agreement]/[Unity→Togetherness]/[Functionality of each part→Different roles]/[Health and sickness→Good moments and troubled moments]

Marriage is seen as a body. The body has various parts and each part of the body has a specific function. A part cannot play the function of another part. For example, a hand cannot effectively perform the function of a mouth. In the same regard, in marriage, a man has specific functions he is supposed to carry out and the same applies to a woman. In (23) the man is presented as the head of the family whereas the woman is presented as the neck. The head cannot perform its work without the neck. The neck on its part can also not work minus the head. In as much as the head is seen as the control point, it cannot stand without the neck which ought to be strong enough to be able to hold the head in its position. Kenyans believe that in marriage, the man cannot succeed without the support of his wife. The functionality of the body is determined by the wellness of the various components; when one part of the body is affected, the whole body gets affected. When one of the spouses has a problem, the other spouse is also adversely affected.

4.8 MARRIAGE IS A GOVERNMENT/ KINGDOM

Marriage being viewed as a government or a kingdom is another conceptualization by

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Kenyans that was realized in this study as is portrayed by the constructions (24)-(26).

(24) *Ndoa bila mpango wa kando ni sawa na serikali bila upinzani.*
Marriage without side chick is equal to government without opposition
'Marriage without a side chick is like a government without opposition.'

(25) *Baba ni rais na mama ni makamo.*
Father is president and mother is vice president
'The father is the president and the mother is the vice president.'

(26) *Mwanamume ni mfalme.*
Man is king
'The man is a king.'

The conceptualization of marriage as a government/ kingdom is presented as below.

Source Domain: GOVERNMENT/KINGDOM → Target Domain: MARRIAGE

[President/ruler/king→The man]/[The governed/subjects→Wife and Children]/[Power→Authority]
/[Laws to be followed/adhered to→Set Guidelines]/[Administration/ management→Management]
/[Tenure →Permanency]

Kenyans see marriage as a government or a kingdom. The man is portrayed as the king and the woman together with children, if they are there, are seen as subjects. Every kingdom has its own rules different from any other. The king is assumed to be the one giving the orders/ laws to the subjects and the subjects have an obligation to follow. The king has all rights in his area of jurisdiction and is seemingly not restricted by anything as long as he is in his territory. In the absence of the man, the woman takes charge (consider (25)) which indicates that the man is the president and the woman is the vice president. Although in examples (25) and (26) the conceptual metaphor government or kingdom is not used, the linguistic expressions used to draw us to the conceptual metaphor government or kingdom (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

4.9 MARRIAGE IS A GARDEN

Among Kenyans it was also discovered that marriage is conceptualized as a garden. Consider the constructions below.

(27) *Ndoa ni shamba linahitaji kupaliliwa.*
Marriage is garden it needs weeding
'Marriage is a garden that needs weeding.'

(28) *Ndoa inahitaji virutubishi.*
Marriage needs fertilizer
'Marriage needs fertilizer.'

In (27)-(28) the conceptual metaphor garden was realized. Marriage is conceptualized as a garden. Different types of crops and plants can be grown in the garden and its

productivity largely depends on how it has been tended. The conceptualization of marriage as a garden is presented as below.

Source Domain: GARDEN → Target Domain: MARRIAGE

[Gardener→Man]/[Plant→Woman]/[Planting/sowing→Starting a family/marrying]/[Weeding→Nurturing]/[Fertilizer→Providing for the wife]/[Harvesting→A harmonious relationship]

Marriage is seen as a garden by Kenyans. The man is seen to be the gardener and the woman is the plant that is planted in the garden. Fertilizer is seen as the good things that sustain a good relationship in marriage. In the absence of the good things, it is likely that the marriage will suffer discomfort and lack of harmony. If good cultivation is done the harvest will be good. Fertilizer is supposed to be administered by the gardener implying that a lot of responsibility is put on the man who is supposed to ensure that he provides for his wife (the plant) – it is no wonder that among Kenyan Swahili speakers women are seen to be flowers. Having planted and taken good care of his garden, the man anticipates a good harvest. If he was not responsible for his gardening, it is likely the harvest will be poor. In the same regard, if the man takes good care of his wife and the marriage as a whole, it is presumed that he will gain harmony and joy in his family. Contrary to this, the man will suffer disharmony and conflicts in his marriage.

4.10 MARRIAGE IS WAR

Marriage being seen as war is another conceptualization of marriage by Kenyans that was realized in this study. The construction (29) below attests to this.

(29) *Mume wangu akinikosea nasikia kulipiza kisasi.*
Husband mine hurts I feel to pay revenge
'When my husband annoys me I feel like revenging.'

The conceptualization of marriage as war is shown as below.

Source Domain: WAR → Target Domain: MARRIAGE

[Fighters→Couples]/[Conflict→Disagreement]/[Confrontations→Wrong doing by a spouse]/[Fighting→Physical, verbal or psychological fighting]/[Revenge→Revenge]/[Victory→Domination]/[Losing→Submission]

According to Fitzpatrick (1988:137) close relationships are not always harmonious but are bound to experience conflicts. Such conflicts may arise due to differences in people's ambitions, desires or needs. Among Kenyan Swahili speakers, marriage is portrayed as war. It is seen to have conflicts and the couples seem to be fighting with each of them intending to obtain victory. In case one partner loses in a particular fight, the other party is likely to organize a revenge. This therefore makes the spouses the fighters and marriage a battlefield. Any wrongdoing by a partner is seen as a confrontation. This confrontation can be countered or even revenged.

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4.11 MARRIAGE IS A RELATIONSHIP

The construction below provides evidence to the fact that Kenyans view marriage as a relationship. In (30) marriage is regarded as a relationship. In its conceptualization, the couples are seen as members who are bound to live together harmoniously.

- (30) *Ndoa ni uhusiano.*
Marriage is relationship
'Marriage is a relationship.'

Consider the conceptualization below.

Source Domain: COMMUNION/RELATIONSHIP → Target Domain: MARRIAGE

[Participants→Couples]/[Union/association→Living together]/[Affinity→Closeness of the couple]
/[Partnership →Sharing responsibility]

Marriage is constructed as a relationship in which each member is expected to have equal rights and enjoy a sense of belonging. The couples are assumed to be driven by the desire to live together and to love one another. They also have assigned responsibilities which they have to perform to enable the relationship to continue existing.

4.12 MARRIAGE IS A BABY

Kenyans also view marriage as a baby that needs to be taken care of. The construction below illuminates this finding.

- (31) *Ndoa inahitaji kulelewa vizuri hadi ikomae.*
Marriage needs nurtured well till it matures
'Marriage needs to be taken good care of until it matures.'

In (31) baby has been identified as a conceptual metaphor. Marriage is seen as a baby. The baby is born and has to be taken care of till it matures. The conceptualization of marriage as a baby is presented as below.

Source Domain: BABY → Target Domain: MARRIAGE

[Tender→Delicate]/[Needs protection→Guarding]/[Vulnerable→Easily attacked]

Marriage is construed as a baby. The baby is delicate and needs nurturing. The baby can also be unnecessarily nagging. It is also construed as being vulnerable and is likely, if not well taken care of, to die. The baby needs protection and care. In the construction of marriage as a baby, Kenyan Swahili speakers presume that marriage is delicate and needs to be taken good care of; it needs to be guarded from external interferences which are likely to destroy it. The couples are seen as the parents who are supposed to take care of the baby.

5. Conclusion

Primarily this study sought to analyze how Kenyans conceptualize marriage in their discourses. This study provides proof that among Kenyans metaphors pervade marriage

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discourse. From the study it is evident that marriage is construed in different ways by Kenyan Swahili speakers, it is conceptualized as a house, an eatery, a prison, a school, a journey, a road, a body, a government/ kingdom, a garden, war, a relationship and as a baby. The various conceptualizations by Kenyans determine their attitudes and general orientation towards marriage. This study provides evidence that metaphorical realizations are formed by cultural, environmental and social realizations. Moreover, this study realized the metaphors on marriage helped in constituting communication means which convey information about how Kenyans regard marriage. In addition, the metaphors have helped in providing vivid phenomenal experiences of Kenyans on marriage.

Appendix

The Sampled Recordings (Topic, Minutes, Date, Presenters): (1) *Majukumu ya mwanamke* 'A woman's responsibilities', 22.07 Mins, 01/10/2016, Bi. Msafwari. (2) *Maswali kuhusu masuala ya ndoa* 'Questions about Marriage', 20.41 Mins, 22/06/2019, Bi. Msafwari and Bwana Mkala. (3) *Je, mume akienda nje ya ndoa, wa kulaumiwa ni nani?* 'Who is to be blamed when a man engages in an extra marital affair?' 19.29 Mins, 19/01/2019, Bi. Msafwari. (4) *Mbinu za kuboresha ndoa* 'Strategies for improving marriages', 16.41 Mins, 23/3/2019, Bi. Msafwari & Bwana Mkala. (5) *Majukumu ya mume katika ndoa* 'Responsibilities of a man in marriage', 14.29 Mins, 13/7/2019, Bi. Msafwari & Sheikh Juma Amir. (6) *Katika ndoa ni vitu gani huchukiza wanaume?* 'In marriage What annoys men in marriage', 18.00 Mins, 09/05/2020, Bi Msafwari & Mariam wa Migomba. (7) *Ni mambo gani huwachukiza wanawake katika ndoa?* 'What annoys women in marriage?' 26.36 Mins, 16/5/2020, Bi Msafwari & Mariam wa Migomba. (8) *Mambo 11 ya wanaume kuzingatia na 13 ya wanawake kuzingatia* '11 things for men to consider and 13 things for women to consider', 20.50 Mins, 7/6/2020, Bi Msafwari & Bi. Mariam wa Migomba.

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