

The Role of Plantosemic Metaphors in the Conceptualization of the Males in Ekegusii: A Cognitive Linguistic Approach

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Abstract

Plants are fundamental in the transference of semantic aspects that are helpful in structuring maleness in society. As a result, plantosemic metaphors which enhance conceptualization of *omosacha* (a man) are ubiquitous in Ekegusii. This study employed conceptual mappings to evaluate Ekegusii plantosemic metaphors. The study adopted descriptive research design. First, an interview schedule was utilised to establish the terms used to describe men in Ekegusii from 48 Ekegusii native respondents purposively sampled using the criterion of gender. The collected terms were then subjected to the Metaphor Identification Procedure *Vrije Universiteit* (MIPVU) in which four annotators undertook the MIPVU procedure. Through MIPVU, ten metaphors were identified. The study then selected three metaphors that describe a man as a plant hence the Ekegusii plantosemic metaphors for analysis. The study reveals that Ekegusii plantosemic metaphors are critical in validating the culturally assigned roles to men among Abagusii. Moreover, the principle of conceptual mappings is useful in divulging critical issues concerning gender relations between men and women in Gusii. The paper concludes that metaphor is a valuable tool of communication and should be explained using the Cognitive Linguistics framework.

Keywords

Plantosemic metaphor, Conceptual Mappings, Cognitive Linguistics, Ekegusii, MIPVU, Culture

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Introduction

There has not been equal focus on men and women in most literature on gender and gender relations in society. The females have often been at the centre of scholarly investigations with little attempt on studies that focus on the males. This means that the worldviews, perceptions and concerns about most males have not been exhaustively addressed in research. Kigaya (2021), for example, argues that issues regarding men such as victimization of men in domestic violence are less explored in scholarship. Men are instead largely depicted as societal patriarchs who are often regarded as strong enough to overcome the challenges of life. Silberschmidt (2001) also notes that there is inadequate research on who the males really are and the motivation for their actions in society. It is on this basis that this study evaluates how men are structured in Ekegusii to unveil societal construction of maleness by Abagusii.

Ekegusii, like other languages, is resourceful in communicating the thoughts, perceptions and feelings about members of different gender. For instance, Ekegusii can be used to reveal the place, role and the position of members of different gender in Gusii. Among Abagusii (the native speakers of Ekegusii), the males are traditionally expected to gather food or wealth for their households (Otiso 11). The Ekegusii term *omosacha* (a man) not only refers to maleness but also to the roles the males are expected to perform in society. According to Otiso (2017), the noun *omosacha* (a man) is derived from the verb *gosacha* which implies to look for or gather wealth. This means that the males in Gusii earn the definition of *obosacha* (maleness) after gathering wealth and providing the physical, economic, psychological and social needs to their loved ones.

Ombongi (2015), however, notes that the traditional role and place of most men among Abagusii has waned due the changing social and economic status of members of different gender. This claim is buttressed by Silberschmidt (2001) who posits that social-economic change in rural and urban East Africa has increasingly disempowered most men. Most men, who are traditionally assigned the role of providers and decision makers in their households, are increasingly losing their social value. This leads to loss of the

affected men's self-esteem. According to Onchoke (2017), women are increasingly taking over the traditional roles of men in Gusii households due to the inability of most men to meet their family obligations. Most women are forced to serve the role of breadwinners in their households despite being subject to a large number of oppressive practices legitimized by the ruling patriarchy system among Abagusii. Silberschmidt (1999) also opines that most men in Gusii seem to have withdrawn from their traditional role of gathering wealth for their households due to social, psychological, economic, health and physical factors. As a result, the role of providing for families has been relegated to most women in Gusii. Consequently, most affected men are often met with contempt from their female spouses for subjecting their wives to men's traditionally assigned tasks in Gusii homes.

It is important to note that men are traditionally expected to engage in wealth gathering activities in order to earn respect in Gusii. A man who does not work hard to earn wealth for his family is not considered as having attained the definition of maleness in Gusii (Otiso 6). In this regard, men are expected to strive in order to attain the means with which to meet the needs of their loved ones. Consequently, there are terms that are designed to celebrate the males who meet the societal expectations among Abagusii. It is also apparent that the Abagusii men who are unable to attain the definition of maleness are also disparaged through use of belittling Ekegusii terms.

In addition, Abagusii use their cultural practices and language to construct, represent and maintain gender order (Otiso 8). For example, there is clear division of work between the males and females among Abagusii. However, being a patriarchal and patrilineal community (Onchoke12), the males are elevated to the position of dominance against women. For instance, Abagusii construct a patriarchal order through which men occupy a higher status both socially and economically. Some culture specific terms are often used to extol the males whose behaviour and actions resonate with the privileged cultural position of the males in Gusii. There are male members who, however, fail to conform with the esteemed societal expectations of the males in Gusii due to personal, physical, psychological, emotional or health reasons. Specially localized terms are often used to allude to them.

The present study, therefore, sought to establish different terms that are used to describe men in Ekegusii. The identified terms were subjected to the Metaphor Identification Procedure *Vrije Universiteit* (MIPVU) by Steen et al. (2010) to test their metaphoricity. The identified metaphors were marked as Ekegusii male metaphors and classified into the conceptual domains of human being, animal, plant and objects based on the principle of Great Chain of Being metaphor (GCBM). According to Krikmann (2007), GCBM is a coding principle which elucidates that everything which exists in the universe constitutes a hierarchical structure in which all things occupy certain levels of the chain. God occupies the highest level, and then followed by the universe, society, human beings, animals, plants and physical objects in that order. The features of one level are often used to make sense of the entities in other levels.

This paper then evaluated Ekegusii male plant metaphors to divulge the resourcefulness of plants in structuring masculinity in Ekegusii. The choice to study plant metaphors was motivated by Kövecses (2002) who argues that plant metaphors are often employed to make sense of abstract phenomena in society. Ungerer and Schmid (2001) also posit that it is acceptable to understand human beings in terms of plants because human beings have sufficient experience on Agriculture. Ungerer and Schmid

further note that all the merits and demerits of human beings can be found in plants. This means it is natural for human beings to find similarities between plants and themselves hence the need for this study. According to Kleparski (2008), the process of transference of plant names to describe different qualities of human beings is referred to as plantosemy. In plantosemy, therefore, the names of plants are used to instantiate human beings. Noteworthy is that plant metaphors have both universal and culture specific conceptualization. The present research is, however, based on Ekegusii culture specific plant metaphors. This is because research on Ekegusii culture specific metaphors is at its infancy stage. This study, therefore, forms a basis for investigation on the value of plantosemic metaphors in enhancing communication in Ekegusii.

Metaphor is the main thrust of the present study. Sukirman et al. (2022) define metaphor as an expression whose meaning cannot be reached from the symbols used alone. This is because the intended metaphorical meaning is often contained in the prediction of linguistic expressions used that require cognitive effort to enhance interpretation. Sukirman et al. further note that the history on metaphor research has seen it evolve from being treated as an esoteric poetic technique to one that plays a pivotal role in our conceptual system. Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) ground breaking research led to a paradigm shift in the study of metaphor. Metaphor began to be treated as a conceptual phenomenon rather than a mere rhetoric tool. As a conceptual phenomenon, metaphor is regarded as a cognitive model which is used to understand one domain of experience (target domain) in terms of another domain of experience (source domain). In this case, the target domain which is abstract is partially understood on the basis of the source domain that is often concrete.

According to Kövecses (2005), a metaphor is basically a conceptual tool which is manifested not only in language but also in symbols, behaviours and thought. This suggests that metaphorical processing involves an interpretation of language information with perceptual experiences. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) also point out that metaphor is part and parcel of our daily life and it exists not only in language but also in our thought and behaviour. This means that we pervasively use metaphor in our daily conversations in society. The use of metaphor may, however, lead to difficulties in comprehension due to the multiple interpretations which may be assigned to each of the metaphors. In addition, the meaning assigned to each of the metaphors may result to a conflict of what is said and what is meant especially if it fails to introduce properties that are part of the addressee's mental representation. Consequently, the Ekegusii plantosemic metaphors may be represented and interpreted differently by the native speakers of Ekegusii. The addressee, therefore, needs cognitive effort to figure out what is referred to and the relevant properties being shared to comprehend and interpret metaphors. It is on this basis that the present study analysed the Ekegusii plantosemic metaphors to unearth the value of plants in unpacking metaphorical meaning.

The present study is anchored within Cognitive Linguistics (CL) framework. According to Rao (2021), CL is an interdisciplinary branch of Linguistics with a combination of knowledge from different sources such as Cognitive Psychology, Neuropsychology and Linguistics among others. Langacker (1987) also notes that CL was developed as a reaction to the generative grammar by Noam Chomsky that proposes an approach which makes very strong commitments about the primacy of syntax, thus, leaving out the significance of semantics and pragmatics in linguistic theorizing. CL holds the view that meaning is what language is all about and concentration on the form

of language rather than its meaning impoverishes the subject matter and distorts the intended message. CL also suggests that language is an instrument for arranging, handling and passing of information (Geeraerts & Cuyckens 10). This means that CL provides a framework on thought which enables us to uncover the mechanisms at work in high-level cognitive processing. CL is, therefore, important in studying abstract linguistic units such as Ekegusii plantosemic metaphors which are employed to express the ideologies relating to men in Ekegusii.

The study is based on Ekegusii. Otieno and Mecha (2019) opine that Ekegusii is an under-described Bantu language predominantly spoken in Kisii and Nyamira Counties of Kenya. The native speakers of Ekegusii are known as Abagusii. The 2019 Population and Census Report approximates the native speakers of Ekegusii at 1,872,385 people in both Kisii and Nyamira Counties. Otieno and Mecha (2019) also observe that Abagusii are bordered by Nilotic communities which include: the Kipsigis to the East; the Luo to the West, and; the Maasai to the South. Abagusii form a significant part of local and international immigrants. It is, therefore, common for Ekegusii to be spoken in major towns in Kenya and many parts of the world.

Theoretical Framework

The present study was framed within the theoretical pillars of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). CMT first came into light in 1980 in Lakoff and Johnson's research paper titled *Metaphors we Live by*. Prior to this, metaphor was regarded as an ornamental feature that was used to make reference to one thing in terms of another. With the introduction of CMT, metaphor acquired conceptual features where one domain of experience is partially understood in terms of another one as facilitated by the human mental processes. As such, one of the basic tenets of CMT is that metaphor is primarily a characteristic of human language that belongs to the realm of thinking (Khasandi & Barasa 7). This means that metaphor is a conceptual system which is resourceful in understanding one concept in terms of another one.

Another fundamental tenet of CMT is the provision that there are two conceptual domains which are: the source domain (SD) and the target domain (TD). The SD is the conceptual domain from which the metaphor is drawn while the TD is the conceptual domain to which the metaphor is applied (Khasandi & Barasa 8). Gathigia, Orwenjo and Ndung'u (2018) also posit that the SD is what is usually concrete, tangible or physical while the TD is what is abstract and intangible. According to Kövecses (2005), the SD and the TD are also mental representations in which the TD is understood based on the characteristics of the SD.

The existence of conceptual mappings between the SD and the TD is another significant pillar of CMT that forms the basis for this study. Conceptual mappings are systematic set of correspondences that exist between the constituent elements of the SD and the TD (Gathigia, Orwenjo & Ndung'u, 2018). The concept of conceptual mappings provides a model of thinking which links two levels that include the SD and the TD with the end result being meaning formation in which one thing is understood in terms of another. The present study subjected the Ekegusii plantosemic metaphors to the principle of conceptual mappings to unpack the worldviews about men in Gusii.

Research Methodology

The present study was guided by descriptive research design. Ansari et al. (2022) defines descriptive design as a type of research project that aims at obtaining information to systematically describe an object, situation, or population. The design is helpful in answering questions about what, when, where, and how about a research problem rather why. Ansari et al. further note that a researcher in descriptive design reports about a study problem as it is without taking control of any variables. This means that what a researcher in a descriptive research needs to do is to collect the available data through the use of research instruments and faithfully describe it to reflect a research phenomenon as it is. The study employed an interview schedule to collect terms used to describe men in Ekegusii through 48 purposively sampled Ekegusii native participants selected on the criterion of gender. The gender variable was considered significant because men and women, according to Astuti (2016), often use different terms to talk about abstract concepts in society. Koller and Semino (2009) also note that we often form different worldviews about people and other things such as plants based on our gender.

The study employed the Metaphor Identification Procedure *Vrije Universiteit* (MIPVU) to identify metaphors from the data collected through an interview schedule. The MIPVU is a valid, transparent and systematic method which provides a clear procedure for establishing metaphors for study. To establish the metaphoricity of the research data, a term was, first, considered metaphorical if its contextual sense contrasted with its dictionary meaning as provided by the MIPVU (Ntabo, Onyango & Ndiritu 13). Secondly, the same term was also subjected to an inter-rater reliability test in which four annotators (including the researchers) assigned scores to the terms that were considered metaphorical. In this case, a term was marked as a metaphor if at least three annotators were in consensus in the inter-rater reliability test. Therefore, a term was considered metaphorical if it scored at least 0.75 or 75% in the inter-rater reliability test. This means that each annotator was required to assign 0.25 or 25% to a word or expression that was considered metaphorical. According to Cameron (2003), three annotators out of four are considered sufficient to mark a term as metaphorical.

The study established 52 Ekegusii male metaphors through the MIPVU. Three Ekegusii metaphors that label a man as a plant (cf. Table 1) were purposively sampled for study. This is because the plant domain, as provided by Klepanski (2008), is resourceful in the transference of salient semantic aspects of plantosemic metaphors which are critical in the interpretation of abstract concepts such as masculinity. Ungerer and Schmid (2001) also posit that the concept of plants is a widespread source domain that is useful in making sense of various abstract concepts. This is due to human being's most fundamental experience with different types of plants. The metaphors in this study were also coded into the dichotomy of plants based on the levels of the Great Chain of Being metaphor (GCBM).

Findings and Discussions

The research subjected three Ekegusii plantosemic metaphors to the principle of conceptual mappings for analysis. The choice to study plant metaphors was informed by Klepanski's (2008) argument that plants can be used as source domains to give an account of human behavior and relations in society. The study found that the names of selected plants are fundamental in foregrounding Ekegusii culture specific connotations about men in Gusii. The plantosemic metaphors in Table 1 below are also resourceful in communicating the worldviews concerning men on the basis of the selected plants in Ekegusii.

Table 1: Ekegusii Plantosemic Metaphors used to Describe Men

No	Ekegusii	Gloss	Conceptual Domain
1	<i>Omosacha n' omote</i>	A man is a tree	Plant
2	<i>Omosacha n' enyanduri</i>	A man is a stinging plant	Plant
3	<i>Omogaka n' omori</i>	An elderly man is a root	Plant

Use of plantosemic metaphors, as exemplified in Table 1 above, indicates that Abagusii have sufficient experience on different kinds of plants. This enables them to devise an experiential model of comprehending the behaviour of different human beings in Gusii. For instance, *omosacha* (a man) may be referred to as *omote* (a tree) especially when making reference to a man's expected roles in Gusii. Thus:

(1) *Omosacha n' omote* – 'a man is a tree'.

In (1) above, *omote* (a tree) is the SD while *omosacha* (a man) is the corresponding TD in accordance with the tenets of CMT. The conceptual mappings between the SD and the TD for (1) above include: one, *omote* (a tree) which is classified as a plant correlates with *omosacha* (a man) whose taxonomy is a human being on the basis of the principle of Great Chain of Being Metaphor (GCBM); two, the value of trees in society which is equated with the central role *omosacha* is expected to play in Gusii; three, the euphemistic reference of the male sex organ as a tree in Gusii is mapped onto the expected procreative role of a man in Gusii, and; four, deforestation which is outlawed in Kenya corresponds to the diminishing trend of most men in terms of the expected roles in Gusii. The cognitive meaning which emerges from the conceptual mappings for (1) above is that a man like, a tree, is expected to be a useful person in Gusii homes. The conceptual meaning is in consonance with *omosacha*'s traditional role as a gatherer of wealth in Gusii homes. According to Otiso (2017), a married man is culturally expected to serve as a breadwinner for his household by gathering and providing the material needs for his loved ones. One who fails to provide for his family not only brings dishonour to himself but also subjects his household to unnecessary anguish. This hints that it is men who are expected to grow useful trees in an effort to provide for their loved ones in Gusii.

The aspect of deforestation as suggested in the fourth conceptual mappings for (1) above introduces some flaws which are characterized with some men in Gusii. On the basis of the context from which data for the present study was drawn, it is evident that some men have abdicated their culturally assigned obligations of providing the needs for their households. This claim is buttressed by Silberschmidt (2001) who opines that majority of men cannot fulfill masculine roles and responsibilities as head of households and breadwinners in many Gusii homes. Silberschmidt attributes this phenomenon to the changing social-economic trends in most East African countries. As a result, the diminishing employment opportunities and the increasing cost of living has adversely affected most men's capacity to appeal to the material, psychological and social needs of their households. This has prompted some women to undertake the Gusii masculine role of serving as breadwinners for their families. The source of data for the present study also indicates that most women unhappily undertake the unexpected role of providing for their families. They lament that most men have become extra babies in the house as they contribute nothing in Gusii homes. This has resulted to squabbles which often result to gender based violence in Gusii homes.

The third cognitive mapping for (1) above also underpins the essential procreative role husbands (men) are expected to perform in Gusii homes. In this case, a man's sex organ is euphemistically marked as a tree on the basis of the context from which data for the present study was drawn. According to Matagaro (2005), Abagusii often resort to euphemism to avoid using words which are considered taboo. Taboo words are those that relate to the subject of death, human excretion, sexual intercourse and human sex organs among others in Ekegusii. Euphemistic expressions are in this case used to avoid unpleasant, embarrassing or sad expressions. In Gusii, maleness is also constructed on the basis of a man's capacity to sire. This means that it is a man whose tree (sex organ) is able to cause procreation who is respected in Gusii. It is important to note that procreation is considered as the core obligation of marriage in Gusii. Failure for a grown up man to marry and sire is often regarded as catastrophic. As a result, men are greatly concerned about their potency. Men who are suspected to be impotent are often deserted by their wives. This action normally subjects the affected men to shame and loss of self-esteem. Noteworthy is that vitro fertilization, which is a modern process that involves uniting the male and female reproductive cells in a laboratory, is a foreign concept which is unheard of in Gusii. This underscores the indispensability of men in the human breeding system in the context of Gusii.

Metaphor (2) below draws a subtle parallel between *enyanduri* (a stinging plant) and *omosacha* (a man) in Ekegusii. Since stinging plants are often harmful to human beings, a man who is assigned (2) below is disparaged in Gusii. Thus:

(2) *omosacha n' enyanduri* – 'a man is a stinging plant'.

Enyanduri (a stinging plant) is the SD while *omosacha* (a man) is the TD for (2) above. The conceptual mappings which correspond between the SD and the TD in this case are: one, *enyanduri* which is classified as a plant correlates with a man whose taxonomy is a human being based on the principle of GCBM, and; two, the pain and irritation that is characterized with *enyanduri* is mapped onto the physical, economic, social and psychological pain that most women are subjected to by some men in Gusii. The cognitive meaning that emerges from the conceptual mappings for (2) above is that some men abet gender based violence (GBV) in Gusii.

The climate in Gusii is conducive for a variety of stinging plants to thrive. Many of the stinging plants that grow in Gusii have nettle leaves that contain hair-like barbs. Humans can be stung by the barbs when in contact. The stings are often irritating and painful. They result to rashes, bumps, hives and itchiness on the human skin. Sometimes the stings may result to severe allergic reactions that can be life-threatening. Comparing a man with a stinging plant, therefore, suggests that some men cause pain and irritation to members of their households in Gusii. This claim is authenticated by Silberschmidt (1999) who notes that some women are subjected to physical, economic, social, and psychological abuse by their fierce husbands in Gusii. Some of the affected women have, according to Silberschmidt (1999), resorted to secretly using *kababa* (traditional herbs) to 'soften' (subdue) their fierce husbands.

Ombongi (2015) corroborates Silberschmidt's claim by noting that some of the women have secretly used too much *kababa* (traditional herbs) which has either incapacitated or caused the death of some of the affected men instead of 'softening' them. Some women, according to Silberschmidt (1999), mischievously use *kababa* to subdue their fierce men so that they can easily rule, command or direct them to undertake

responsibilities such as cooking for the family. Tasks such as cooking are traditionally assigned to women in Gusii. This means that the women who are alleged to have used *kababa* on their husbands are those that have suffered from some men's aggression. Such women have, therefore, resorted to using the traditional herbs as a means of confronting some men's wicked behaviours such as transgression of GBV in Gusii.

It is, however, important to note that use of *kababa* is normally revealed through rumours and innuendoes in Gusii. There is no known conviction of any woman in Gusii who has used *kababa* on her husband by either the Gusii customary legal system or the Kenyan judicial system. The respondents for this study also revealed that GBV is endemic in Gusii. Most women who attempt to challenge the dominant male patriarchy structure in Gusii are often punished through beating. This is an indication that the men who subject women to torture have fallen short of the Gusii cultural provision that requires a man to provide, protect and lead members of their households. The present study notes that wife beating is a vice that adversely affects women's well-being in Gusii. Consequently, the Ekegusii plantosemic metaphor (2) above is resourceful in revealing that gender relations and co-existence of members of different gender is often negatively affected by some men's aggression in Gusii.

Use of (3) below indicates that some metaphors can serve as a good resource for the comprehension of the cultural norms expressed in language. For example, in (3) below, analogous situations are highlighted in the *omori* (a root) Ekegusii plantosemic metaphor as an elderly man is referred to as *omori* (a root). Such metaphors are normally considered as a repository of a community's way of life. Therefore, a person who is instantiated as *omori* (a root) is usually assigned a positive metaphor axiology in Ekegusii. Thus:

(3) *Omogaka n' omori* – 'an elderly man is a root'.

Omori (a root) is the SD while *omogaka* (an elderly man) is the corresponding TD as per CMT. The cognitive mappings between the SD and the TD for (3) above include: one, a root which is part of a plant is mapped onto *omogaka* who is regarded as a source of a family tree; two, the value of roots for plants which is comparable with the resourcefulness of *omogaka* (an elderly man) in Gusii; three, the adverse effects of human activity on the environment which often interferes with the growth of roots corresponds to the mistreatment of some elderly men in Gusii, and; four, the act of deforestation to pave way for human activities can be equated with the ultimate death of *omogaka* in Gusii. Based on the conceptual mappings for (3) above, an elderly man who is described as a root is unveiled as one that is regarded as an essential reference for Abagusii's wisdom. This is in line with the usefulness of plant roots in absorbing, offering anchorage for a plant in the soil, and storing plant nutrients. Since they are considered as the custodians of the cultural wisdom of Abagusii, it is *abagaka* who are often consulted for guidance on important cultural matters.

Traditionally, it was *abagaka* who led Abagusii in important cultural practices such as offering sacrifices and libations to *Engoro* (God). This means that *abagaka* are vital religious leaders in Gusii. Being a patriarchal community, *abang'ina* (elderly women) were excluded from leading Abagusii in worshipping God. The role of elderly women was to serve as home-makers and mentors for young women and girls. Most elderly men are, therefore, awed for the critical role they play in Gusii.

A family tree, which is pointed out by the first conceptual mapping for (3) above, refers to members of an extended family whose relationship is traceable and attributed to an elderly man in Gusii. It is common for members of the extended family to use an elderly man's surname as a family name in Gusii. The elderly man in question is often the elderly father or grandfather in an extended family. This means that the extended family members who use an elderly man's name as their referent are descendants of the elderly man. It is not common to use a woman's name as a family name in Gusii. This explains why it is an elderly man who is marked as a root in Ekegusii.

The metaphoric conceptualization for (3) above is also vital in foregrounding the place of human procreation in Gusii. For example, it is often an elderly man who sires children that can earn the tag of a root in Ekegusii. The elderly man's children are also expected to enter into marriage relationships when they come of age and bear grandchildren for the elderly man hence forming an extended family. On this basis, an elderly man is considered as the source from which members of his extended family originate. This reveals that an elderly man who is unable to raise a family due to personal, medical, psychological or physical reasons is disgraced in Gusii. As the base of his extended family, an elderly man is expected to serve as a counselor, mentor, leader and nurturer for members of his family. He is also expected to facilitate the physical, emotional and religious well-being of members of his extended family.

Conclusion

The study makes the following conclusions based on the research findings: one, plants metaphors are relevantly used to explain the worldviews about men in Ekegusii. In particular, the culturally assigned roles for men which include gathering wealth and offering protection for their loved ones are relevantly highlighted through Ekegusii plantosemic metaphors; two, the principle of conceptual mappings by Conceptual Metaphor Theory is appropriately used to give an account of Ekegusii plantosemic metaphors, and; three, MIPVU is revealed to be an effective method for identifying Ekegusii plantosemic metaphors. MIPVU provides clear analytical procedures which aid in the identification of metaphors for study. The study recommends that the meaning of metaphorical expressions should be explained using the postulates of Cognitive Linguistics.

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