Ecolinguistic Analysis of Kalenjin Narratives: Illustrations from Discourses on River Protection

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Abstract

This paper ecocritically analysed the language forms chosen by the folk narrative composer to establish how the language is used to contribute to the protection of water sources. Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach was adopted as the method of analysis. Results indicate that there are experiential, relational and expressive values embedded in the folk narrative while verbs and the active voice are the language forms employed. In addition, representation of actions as material processes and foregrounding of agency are language strategies that play an important role in aiding the protection of the environment. Besides, punishment, a non-linguistic strategy is used to persuade listeners to avoid actions that pollute water sources.

Key Words: CDA, Ecolinguistics, Kalenjin narratives, values, water protection

Introduction and Literature Review

Folk narratives make part of a community's discourses that are used to propagate beliefs, values and knowledge. They are used to teach about the need to stop people's actions that result in destructive effects. In the global world today, there are concerns about the negative effect of destructive human actions that are changing the face of the earth at a very fast rate (Gerbig, 1997). The physical environment, just like the biological environment, has suffered the destructive effects of humans (Stibbe 2012, 2015). This major global environmental crisis has necessitated great effort and financial resources from government and non-governmental bodies to ensure the environment is protected. They include international organisations like Earth System Governance Project (ESGP), Global Environment Facility (GEF), World Nature Organisation (WNO) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and governments. In Kenya, a number of governmental bodies that deal with environmental issues include the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources that comprises five semi-autonomous agencies namely National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), Kenya Water Towers Agency (KWTA), Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and Kenya Forest Research Institute (KEFRI). In addition, non-

governmental organisations, activists both at individual and community levels have made efforts to identify ways of solving this problem. Whereas environmental scientists have researched and proposed solutions, this can be said to require a further approach as seen in what Pepper (1984:3) states:

> Sheer volumes of data- of facts and figures- are unlikely to be persuasive in themselves for contemporary environmental debate has shown that people have an almost infinite capacity either to ignore or to heed selectively the facts of the matter.

To bring in a new dimension to the discourse of the environment, Harré *et al* (1999) propose that environmental issues ought to take a linguistic turn. They add that studying language aids in and greatly enhances the understanding of environmental phenomena as language is mainly used in discussing matters that affect the physical and biological environment. This is in tandem with Mülhäusler and Fill's (2001) timely call for a 'study of language systems as well as texts' in a 'field of study worth being considered by linguistic talent'. The field referred to is Ecolinguistics, the branch of linguistics concerned with language of the environment. Fairclough (2003) also asserts that one productive way of doing social research is through a focus on language. Therefore, this justifies the need for an ecolinguistic study of Kalenjin folk narratives to discover the Kalenjin community's values on water sources, identify the language forms preferred by the folk narrative composers to establish how the language used contributes to the protection of water sources.

Kalenjin Folk Narratives

The Kalenjin have a large number of acknowledged folk narratives as is the case in Africa and in other parts of the world. The Kalenjin community is made up of eight culturally and linguistically related ethnic groups that include Nandi, Keiyo, Kipsigis, Tugen, Marakwet, Sabaot, Pokot, and Terik (Chesaina 1991). In addition to animal tales, there exists narratives that are set in the human world. These narratives can be interpreted literally or metaphorically. Depending on the level of interpretation, both types of narratives are used to teach various categories of people in the community. According to Kipkorir (1985), the main task of folk narratives in the community is to pass on to the next generation the oral traditions of the community. Besides, Chesaina (1991) asserts that the content of oral narratives is derived from the community's day to day experiences and so they reflect the world view of the community. This means that the events presented in narratives are happenings that occurred at particular times in the community and are therefore not fiction. In the case of this paper, it is possible from the analysis of the folk narrative to tell how the people treated river water, an aspect of the physical environment. This results in exposing the relationship between language, social actors, and the treatment these people accord to water sources. In addition,

the values and beliefs embedded in the narratives can be identified alongside the language forms.

Ecolinguistics

Generally, ecolinguistics is the study of two elements: ecology and linguistics. For Stibbe (2014), the 'eco' side of Ecolinguistics provides an ecological framework needed in the identification of the role of worldviews in preserving or destroying conditions that support life. Ecology is a way of understanding natural resources and the place of humanity in the conservation of natural resources (Gumo *et al* 2012). It is the study of interactions in nature across many levels of biological organisation (Cain *et al*. 2011). These include all levels of species, population, biotic community, or ecosystem (Cunningham *et al.,* 2007). Ecological studies at the population and community levels often examine not only the effects of the living beings or biological environment which include animals and vegetation but also those of the physical environment like land, water and air. Ecology implies attitudes, values, perceptions, beliefs and practices of a society and its relation to the natural resources of the world (Gumo *et al* 2012: *op cit*). Stibbe (2015:1) postulates:

> Ecolinguistics can explore the more general patterns of language that influence how people both think about, and treat, the world. It can investigate the stories-we-live-by- mental models that influence behaviour and lie at the heart of the ecological challenges we are facing. There are certain key stories about economic growth, about technological progress, about nature as an object to be used or conquered, about profit and success, that have profound implications for how we treat the systems that life depends on.

In addition, ecolinguistics targets the sophisticated analysis of the linguistic mechanisms by which worldviews are constructed, reproduced, spread and resisted (Stibbe 2014). In this paper, analysis involves grammatical choices and how they are used to aid in the protection of the environment. Harré *et al* (1999), suggest the term 'Greenspeak' "as a catch-all term for all the ways in which issues of the environment are presented, in the written, spoken or pictorial form. According to them, any discourse that talks about the environment may include the speaking and writing of those in favour of preserving the conserved or destroyed environment, as well as all the works of critics of the bad practices of destruction and those whose aim is to encourage conservation (*op cit*). It attempts to identify some of the philosophical, psychological and political implications of the 'greening' of languages and the choice of specific vocabulary in discussing and talking about environmental matters (Harré *et al.* 1999). It studies internal factors of a language like the lexical and grammatical choices, presuppositions and ideology.

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Framework

In his framework, Fairclough (1989) purposes to 'examine how the ways in which we communicate are constrained by the structures and forces of those social institutions within which we live and function.' He suggests a framework for the analysis of texts whereby he gives his views on what discourse and text analysis entail. He presents three levels of discourse which include discourse as text, discourse as discursive practice and discourse as social practice. Figure 1 below shows Fairclough's three dimensional conception of discourse:
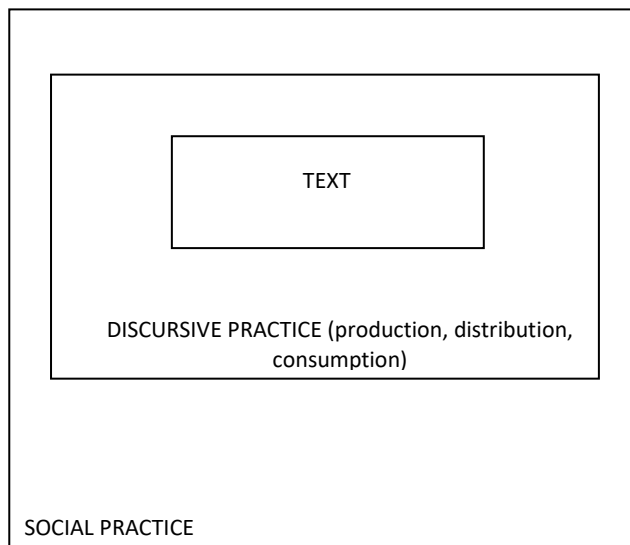
Source: Fairclough (1992:73)

Discourse as Text, Discursive Practice and Social Practice

Discourse as text sees language in its verbal form; in terms of words and sentences called text. Text is, according to Fairclough (2003), the spoken or writen language produced by a writer or speaker in a discursive event. For Fairclough (2003), in order to have a real understanding of the social effects of discourses, a close look at what happens when people talk or write is necessary. Discourse as discursive practice is an instance of discourse practices involving the production and interpretation of text. In this domain, focus is on the detailed explanation of how participants produce and interpret texts and the relationship of the discursive event to the order of discourse (all the discursive practices of an institution - or community in the case of this work, and the relations between them). According to Fairclough (1992:65), discursive practice is constitutive in both conventional and

creative ways in that it contributes to reproducing society (social identities, social relationships, systems of knowledge and beliefs).

Discourse as social practice sees language as a form of social practice (Fairclough, 2003). It is interested in the relationship that exists between society, humans, and language. Social context takes into consideration the fact that humans use language and that language is an important part of society. Discourse is not only about thinking and producing meaning but 'linguistic phenomena are social phenomena of a special sort; when people speak, listen, write or read, how they do it is determined socially and has social effects. There is an internal relationship between language and society; language influences society and people while people and society influence language. There is an interaction as language influences people and society while people and society influence language. In this way, language is seen as a part of society and not as independent of it; language aids in constituting knowledge and social practices like power relations and social identities. In line with the three dimensions of discourse discussed above, Fairclough (2001:21) further gives three stages of discourse discussed below:

Stages of Fairclough's CDA

i.   Description deals with the analysis of the text and is the stage concerned with formal properties of the text (text analysis). It involves the linguistic description of the language employed in a given text in terms of language choices in terms of vocabulary, grammar and textual structures.

ii. Interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction/discursive processes. It sees text as a product of a process of production, and as a resource in the process of interpretation (processing analysis). This is to do with the relationship between text and social structures which is an indirect one and so has to be mediated by the interpreter.

iii. Explanation is interested in the social determination of the processes of production and interpretation, and their social effects (social analysis). It deals with analysis of social practice which is concerned with explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context (Fairclough 2001). Interaction is about the discursive processes while the social context is about the social effects of the discourse.

In addition, Fairclough (2001) provides a list of ten main questions and a number of sub-questions that need to be addressed when analysing texts. He however points out that the list is not intended as an exhaustive or all-encompassing list, but a suggested list of possible directions or areas that could be investigated. These ten questions are divided into three main categories: vocabulary 1-4, grammar 5-7, and textual structures 8-10. Since this work is interested only on grammar, below are questions 5-:8:

Fairclough's questions 5-7 of the Ten-Question Model

Grammar

Question 5: What *experiential* values do grammatical features have?

What types of process and participant dominate?

Is agency unclear?

Are processes what they seem?

Are nominalizations used?

Are sentences active or passive?

Are sentences positive or negative?

Question 6: What *relational* values do grammatical features have?

What modes (*declarative, grammatical question, imperative*) are used?

Are there important features of *relational modality*?

Are the pronouns we and you used, and if so, how?

Question 7: What *expressive* values do grammatical features have?

Are there important features of *expressive modality*?

In order to understand the framework, the definition of the following three terms used in the questions above is important: experiential, relational and expressive value (Fairclough 1989). Experiential value has to do with contents, knowledge, and beliefs. According to Fairclough (2001), a formal feature with experiential value is a trace of and a cue to the way the experiences of the text producer are represented. What this suggests is that as a text is composed, the words and expressions selected by a speaker or writer reflect the way s/he views the world. This is possible because the choice of words used in a given text represent the knowledge, beliefs, ideas, values, and attitude of the speaker since some of the words are unconsciously associated with certain ideologies. Besides, as Fairclough adds, "the occurrence of particular words will uncover the discourse types the words are drawing upon and contributing to". A formal feature with relational value is a trace of and a cue to the social relationships. Relational value may identify the perceived social relationship between the producer of the text and the listener or reader. Lastly, a formal feature with expressive value has to do with *subjects* and social identities in addition to subjective values. Expressive value facilitates insight into 'the producer's evaluation of the bit of the reality it relates to. Any given formal feature may simultaneously have two or three of the above values (Fairclough, 1992).

Methodology

The data is made up of the Kalenjin folk narrative *Atindiot ap araraitap Bokoria* (The story of the origin of lake Bogoria). It was used in the community to teach the

necessity of generosity and being mindful of other's welfare. It is 473 words and was deliberately chosen because it was found suitable for the purposes of this paper as it represents events relating to people pouring substances into the river, an act which is perceived as destructive to the water source as it potentially leads to pollution. The narrative indicates the events in the fabula and the story and as a result contributes to the criticism of human's destructive actions. According to Fairclough (2003), "the fabula is the 'material or content that is worked into a story', a 'series of logically and chronologically related events'", while "the story is a fabula that is presented in a certain manner" – this involves the arrangement of events in a sequence providing the social agents of actual events with 'distinct traits' which transform them into 'characters' and focalises the story in terms of a particular 'point of view'.

Besides, in the folk narrative under analysis there are embedded experiential values which are determined by its composer(s) as seen through the language used. The folk narrative embeds beliefs, knowledge and values. In addition, the composer(s) determine the context of the narratives by making choices in the material or content worked into the story (the fabula) and subjects to include and the point of view from which to describe the events. Elements of social events which are represented are forms of activity that include people getting hold of milk, fat, blood and honey and pouring them into river water, god appearing to Sokomo, god promising to send punishment, rain pouring heavily, people screaming, people getting submerged, those not deemed as destructive not being submerged. The story places events in a sequence that is similar to their chronological order

To be able to decode the knowledge, beliefs and values in the Kalenjin narrative to facilitate exposure of the relationship between language, discourse participants and protection of the environment, the study used Fairclough's (2001) three stages of discourse analysis namely description, interpretation and explanation. Besides, Fairclough's (1992) three dimensional model as the analytical framework was used for the analysis.

Analysis and Results

Experiential Value of Grammatical Features

Through the use of verbs, the composer of the Kalenjin folk narrative under analysis is interested in expressing actions of humans that result in expression of knowledge and social values as shown in the following extract:

1. *Kimeng'isie biik eng' emet ne kikikuren* Bokoria ...

1. ... People lived in the land called Bokoria ...

2. *konam cheko, mwaita, korotik ak kumiat ak*

2. **(**they got hold of milk, fat, blood and honey and)

3. *korong'chi beek ap ainet che kirwoei ma*

3. (poured them into a fast flowing river).

In this extract, elements of social events represented are forms of activity. The social event is represented as a concrete action as seen in (2) the verb *ko<u>nam</u>* (took hold of) involves the action of the participants of emptying of *cheko, mwaita, korotik ak kumiat* (milk, fat, blood and honey) into *beek ap ainet* (river) (3), which is the Circumstance. For the protection of water discourse, a person's action that has a material result can affect water positively or negatively resulting in protection or destruction respectively. From background knowledge, we know that ordinarily, these substances are not poured into the river as they are substances which lead to the pollution of water.

Besides, the inclusion of the activities can be connected to the grammatical structures employed. In (1)-(4) above, use is made of active clauses with material Processes, for *ko <u>rong'chi</u>* (poured), and in terms of Participants as Agents with time and place. verbs are represented as material processes. According to Machin & Meyer (2012), material processes describe processes of doing and they are usually concrete actions that have a material result or consequence. In (3), the pouring of milk, fat, blood and honey into the water source by *biik* (the people) is a material process. The act has a concrete result, it potentially pollutes the river water and makes it unfit for drinking. In addition, it destroys the habitat of living organisms some of which are too small to see with the naked eye. There are many possible material results or consequences depending on the social significance on the representation of pouring substances into a water source if the consideration of the important topic of pollution of water sources that is today of great concern in society. Pollution of water is considered a destructive practice which needs to be curtailed.

Represented also are the objects of these forms of activity. We note that there are persons who have beliefs, desires, values ... histories (Fairclough 2003). In the narrative, agency is foregrounded due to the use of the active voice which provides for knowledge of the people responsible for the pouring of the substances into the water source. In (1), we noted that the subject is *biik* (the people), the verb is *konam* (took) and in (2) the object is indicated as *mwaita, korotik ak kumiat* (milk, fat, blood and honey). According to Machin & Meyer (2012), agency in texts is about how people's actions are represented in a manner that either specifies or on the contrary hides the agency of actors and what the social and political significance of this textual choice might be. Those involved in the action of polluting the water source are *biik* (the people). In the language of the environment, knowing those responsible for destructive actions is very crucial. Wood & Kroger (2000) state that

if somebody is constructed or positioned as an agent, s/he can be assigned responsibility, blame, or credit for his or her actions. These people who see themselves as wealthy and therefore feel powerful and can choose to act as they wish by disposing their extra food into the river are constructed as wrongdoers and so they are punished as we further below.

However, if the passive voice had been used instead of the active voice, (1) would be: *kikinam cheko, mwaita, korotik ak kumiat ak kerong'chi beek ap ainet* (milk, fat, blood and honey was poured into a fast flowing river). In this example, the agent is unknown and so agency is obfuscated. Using the passive form makes the world a place of inaction and "calls attention away from the action, which can make a cause-and-effect relationship unclear (Crystal 1995:140). Besides, in the passive the "fact is stated with no actor" (Mülhäusler (2003:94). As Wood and Kroger (2000:101) state, the designation of the person as the object or verb (action) rather than as the subject (the agent of the action) can serve to position the person as dependent, as a patient. Berger (1992:167) cited in Mülhäusler (2003:94) postulates that the passive voice deceives us. Since the actor is hidden, s/he aids in the destruction of the environment. As a result of the destructive act, in (4), god is constructed as unhappy. The annoyance results in god promising to take action against the people as seen in the following extract:

Extract 2

4. *Ikere tukche yoei biik i.*	4. You see what the people are doing)
5. *Ng'emei biik cheko, mwaita, korotik, ak kumiat ak kongen kole kikirei.*	5. They are spoiling the milk, fat, blood and honey and they know it is taboo
6. *Kwanerech ak ayokchini biret.*	6. I am annoyed and I will punish them)
7. *Ako amu iimie eng' biik tukul, mising ko chenyalildos, komatesten eng' pironi.*	7. But because you are good to all people, especially the poor, I will not punish you.

In (6) the word *kwanerech* (I am annoyed) marks god's negative feelings towards the destructive act of *biik* (the people). His annoyance is triggered by the wasteful and destructive deed of *biik* (the people) which we saw in (2 and (3) involves getting hold of milk, fat, blood and honey and pouring them into the water source. The act constructs them as having power to decide what to do with the milk. In the discourse of the environment and its protection, the act is destructive because it potentially leads to water pollution. As a result, in (6), the verb *ayokchini biret* (I will punish them) marks god's intent to punish *biik* (people) for polluting the water source. However, in (7) we note that god absolves *Sokomo* since he is generous and shares his food with the needy instead of pouring.

In addition, in (4) god's question *"ikere tukche yoei biik i?"* ("Do you see what the people are doing?") to Sokomo marks relational value. Whereas questions are aimed at eliciting information, this question does not seek information since the question presupposes a known answer from Sokomo "yes, I see what the people are doing, they are pouring milk, fat, blood and honey into the water source." According to Fairclough (1992:60), because the anticipated answer is known in advance, such questions are asked to demonstrate affinity and solidarity rather that to get information". The sense of solidarity between god and Sokomo against the pouring of substances into the water source is expressed.

Besides, the question marks the presence of two categories of people. The first is the 'we' category composed of *biik* (the people) who detest water pollution and are represented by Sokomo and *Cheptalel* (god). The second one is the 'they' category represented by *biik* (the people) who assume they have the power to act as they desire and so pollute water. This according to Steciag (2010) is categorisation. This way of representing social actors and events is advantageous for the narrator whose aim is to affect the feelings of the listeners with the intent of persuading them to align themselves with Sokomo and god and therefore identifying with the category of good people. By so doing, they desist from annoying god as we see them doing in (14) *"Kwanerech ..."* ("I am annoyed ..."). Pouring of food items and by extension any other substances into water sources is unacceptable. Furthermore, in (4) god's direct speech *"Ikere tukche yoei biik i"* (you see what the people are doing?"), indicates that the narrator does not claim responsibility for the words but attributes them to god who is constructed as a powerful being.

In addition, Fairclough (2003:48) citing Volosinov (1973) states that 'when the speech or thought of another is reported, it ensures nobody mistakes two different voices brought into dialogue, and potentially two different perspectives, objectives, interests and so forth'. It is therefore clear that the words used emanate from god and nobody else. The aim is to make the concerns sound more plausible, since god's word is supposed to be taken more seriously as opposed to human's words. This has further implications for the listeners as they are persuaded to believe what is said about the need for care of water and the resulting punishment if it is polluted.

Additionally, grammatical choices that aid in constructing the identities represented in the folk narrative are noted. In (4) *ikere tukche yoei biik-i?* Cheptalel's (god's) question marks His authoritative identity. The identity of *biik* (the people) who are being spoken about is constructed as water polluters. They are accused to Sokomo whose identity is constructed as responsible and does not engage in bad practices like *biik* who pollute water. Expressive value is important in this work as it evaluates the identities within the text under analysis and places them within the virtues of wrong or right, good or bad. It is about depiction of the worldview that is connected to the different participants.

Another expressive value is noted in (5) through god's statement *ng'emei cheko...akongen kole etan* (they waste the milk ... and yet they know it is taboo). Through the lexical item *akongen* (yet they know) *biik* (the people) are constructed as careless, forgetful and opting to act in the wrong, unacceptable way. However, Sokomo is depicted as responsible as he respects what god and the society expect of him. In this way, God is depicted as an overseer of material and natural resources, the river in this case. Through the statement, we can conclude by stating that expressive value gives a clear picture of how god views the importance of values. In the following extract we note that god makes true his promise which he made in (6) to punish the *biik* (the people):

Extract 3

8. *Kiiyok Cheptalel ropta ne oo.*	8. god <u>sent</u> very heavy rain
9. *Kirobon beet ak kemoi. ...*	9. It <u>poured</u> day and night...
10. *Kale kiropon anyun ropta ne oo ne kitomkekerei besiet ake*	10. It is said that it <u>rained</u> very heavily like never before

In this extract, god's power to act is seen through the rain which pours immediately after He expresses his intention to punish the people. In (8), *ropta ne oo* (heavy rain) is the actualisation of god's promise to punish the offenders who pollute water. The magnitude of the rain is seen throught the words *ne oo* (heavy). Very heavy rain is understood as severe punishment. Through connective value, the severity is further emphasised in (9) through the verb *ki<u>robon</u>* (it rained) which is qualified by *peet ak kemoi* (day and night) and in (8) *ropta ne oo* (heavy rain) followed by *ne kitomkekerei besiet ake* (like never before) which further emphasises the magnitude of the rain which further represents severe punishment. The severity of the punishment sends a message that god has power to ensure that what He has provided must be taken good care of. More punishment for polluting the river is further noted in the following extract:

Extract 4

11. *Kotoi kopotan emet!*	11. the ground started trembling
12. *Kemoi kwen koandup*	12. At midnight it sank
13. *... biik che kiwaktos eng' arokenet.*	13. … scared people screamed
14. *kolukui korik ak tukuk tukul kopoto biik.*	14. and the houses sank with everything including the people

In (11) the verb *kopotan* (trembled) marks a material process. A shaking ground has a concrete consequence as it potentially disintegrates as we see happening in (12) *koandup emet* (the ground gave way). This trembling and sinking of the ground could be said to be further punishment. In (14) we note that the people and all they own are submerged. This is understood as further punishment.

Besides, when *biik* (the people) are punished, the listener potentially perceives them as bad people worth disliking as they felt they had the power to disregard the community's practices. Machin & Mayr (2012) state that how the words chosen to represent participants, events, and circumstances can signify discourses that shape the way that we perceive them. In the narrative, the intention of the narrator is for listeners to perceive *biik* (the people) as bad and as a result align themselves against them. However, since he constructs Sokomo as good, they ought to align themselves alongside him. We note that his goodness saves him from getting submerged, an indication that he escapes punishment as we see in the following extract:

Extract 5

15. *Matwa kiy kot ap Sokomo…*	15. (Sokomo's house remained untouched.)
16. *king'et oret ne tenden ne kiituiyo Kap Sokomo ak emet ne yamat*	16. (a narrow path that joined his house to the mainland remained)

In (15) *matwa kiy* (remained untouched) indicates that *Sokomo* is absolved from god's punishment. We saw earlier in (7) *Ako amu iimie* (because you are good), Sokomo is constructed as belonging to the good category of people who do not pollute water. In (16) a provision is made for Sokomo to move safer ground from his flooded house which is now a dangerous place. This is the point from which we get the moral of the story which suggests that people who pollute water sources will be punished but those who do not will be saved from suffering. This is the knowledge the speaker wants to share with the listener.

In addition, we note relational value. Relational value concerns the manner in which a text producer chooses words in such a way that social relations are created among social participants in a particular society. With regard to the social dimension, by representing actors as wrongdoers and having them get punished, emotive coercion is achieved. According to Hart (2010) 'emotive coercion involves producing 'emotive effects' in text consumers'. When the listeners hear that those who poured substances into the water source were submerged in water, they become fearful that if they act in the same way, they too will be submerged. Whereas Hart (2010) states that emotive coercion is an ultimate goal for strategic text-producers and implicitly lies behind most political communications, the notion can be borrowed in the case of the discourse of water protection in this paper.

Besides, emotive coercion is intended when fear of annoying god is targeted. In (4), the verb *ikere* (do you see) marks (god's) disbelief at the people's destructive action

of pouring substances into the river, an act that makes god unhappy. The narrator's intention is to affect the beliefs of the listeners about the need to avoid pouring substances into water sources and as a result persuade them to adopt beliefs and values that result in avoidance of the practice. According to Hart (2010), coercion is a given writer's/speaker's intention aimed at affecting a readers'/listener's beliefs, emotions and behaviour in such a way that suits her/him. *Cheptalel* (god) is a spiritual being believed by the Kalenjin to be the giver of all things on earth (Sambu, 2007). This therefore explains why He is shocked at the way the people mishandle the water source. The fear of annoying god potentially makes the listener change his beliefs about the need to avoid polluting water. These beliefs potentially lead to change in the listener's behaviour and as a result s/he is persuaded to ensure water is protected from pollutants.

However, surprisingly whereas the people submerged in the water are ideally supposed to drown, the narrative has it that they do not do so. Instead, they continue living happily underneath the water as they normally did while on the land. This way of representing events reveals the moral of the story; punishment for those who engage in actions that result in water pollution is inevitable but they have another chance to allow them to reform after the punishment has been administered. The preservation of *biik* (the people) from getting drowned indicates the narrative producer's beliefs about forgiveness. The suggestion is that when people protect water sources they are also preserved; preservation of the self as well as preservation of the community in general.

Conclusion

This paper has shown that grammatical choices used in Kalenjin folk narratives have experiential, relational, and expressive value. Experiential value was seen through the narrative composer's expression of his knowledge, values and beliefs about the need to include participants in social practices. He clearly points out agents responsible for material processes like pouring of substances in water. This he does through inclusion of social actors and foregrounding their agency through the use of active voice constructions. Relational value was seen through god's power over *biik* (the people) who He punishes for their supposed power to decide to pour food substances in water, an act which is extravagant but also pollutes the water. Expressive value was revealed through the implied use of the pronouns 'we' for both *Cheptalel* (god) and Sokomo who were constructed as good because they treated water with respect. This is a value that plays a role in ensuring water sources are protected from impurities. The 'they' group is constructed as bad as they are responsible for water pollution. In this way language serves as a resource in the creation and maintenance of social events and value systems. We can conclude by saying that the use of language forms by a composer of a discourse plays an important role in ensuring the protection of the environment.

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