1.   GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Studies on the status of women vis-à-vis men in society are neither new nor have they been fully exhausted. Research findings have begotten further studies. The emergence of feminism has added impetus to the above situation.

Language has been associated with the processes that result into gender divisions and, particularly, those that enhance social inequalities. Speech not only reflects a person's place in culture and society but also helps to create that place. (Graddol & Swann 1989:10). This position is being challenged especially by feminist. Especially feminist is challenging this position.

Despite rapid changes occurring on linguistic landscape, the Waswahili still use apt female metaphors in their communication. The relative abundance of Kiswahili metaphors used in reference to women and the lack of the same for men is a sociolinguistic situation that calls for attention. While metaphor is a venerable topic, researchers have tended to ignore it. Consequently, this research was inspired by a quest for meaning of Kiswahili female metaphors. It has as its main concern, the objective and analytical study of the nature and function of Kiswahili female metaphors.

1.2 Research Question

This study represents an attempt to critically analyze sexist overtones evident in Kiswahili metaphors. Specific interest is focused on attitudes towards women questions of central focus for the research includes: What are the most frequently used metaphors in reference to women? What are the principles underlying such language usage? What are the feelings, attitudes, and opinions towards such lexical items? Would it sound <u>natural</u> for the same or similar metaphors to refer to men? Does the female metaphor repertoire in Kiswahili language represent the conciseness and clearness of thought of Swahili men? Does Swahili men? Does Swahili community use metaphors of the same or similar kind? Why?

This research set forth to study in depth Swahili metaphors used in reference to women. It undertook to identify and describe detailedly main characteristics of specific female metaphors. As the linguistic items were dealt with, the study unravelled shreds of sexism and their contextual implications.

1.3 Research Objective

For quite sometime now, a systematic analysis of Kiswahili female metaphors has been lacking. This study was an attempt to fill such a gap. Its principal aim was to identify Kiswahili female metaphors and to critically analyze attitudes of both men and women towards them. A number of similar studies would contribute to a better understanding of how women are regarded by their male counterparts.

Foremost among fundamental goals of the research was not simply to describe but to explain and analyze aspects of female metaphors in Kiswahili language. The objective for the research was the formulation of clear and satisfying explanations of this language behavior.

By placing women and their referents as the central focus, the study sought to explore wider dimensions of the topic and open it up for further investigation.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

In the light of the knowledge and theories of Kiswahili culture available, and as a basis for the research on the sexist nature of Kiswahili metaphors, the following premises were held to be true:

First, metaphors used in reference to females in Swhaili community define ideas about what a woman is what she may or may not do.

Second, that meaning of metaphors in Kiswahili is not an inherent but an emergent property of words and sentences.

Third, sexist metaphors, more than any other linguistic device, underscore the abominable male chauvinism that characterises Swahili societal life.

Fourth, generally, sexist metaphors work against women: they make them appear subordinate to males.
Fifth, metaphors in Kiswahili are related to a complex framework of the knowledge, experience, expectations, attitudes and beliefs that Kiswahili users have and share.

1.5 Theoretical Framework

A wide body of research has been done on the status of women in society. Linguists, ethnographers, literary critics, aesthecists, philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists and historians, among other social scientists, have explored various aspects of social life and how they affect the social-cultural development of women. These scientists have endeavoured to formulate theories to explain their findings. However, conditions that make deductively formulated theory appropriate as a model of explanation have not yet been approached in Kiswahili linguistics. This unfortunate and deplorable state of affairs is largely attributable to the scarce, uncoordinated and undeveloped linguistic and applied researches in Kiswahili.

This research, therefore, adopted the "genderlect" theory (Haas, 1979). According to Haas' exposition, male and female speeches differ in their form, topic, content and use. Haas posits that a comprehensive theory of generlect must include information about linguistic features under a multiplicity of conditions. In Kiswahili, a theory is desideratum still undeveloped. Consequently, it is envisaged that findings in this study will be a contribution to a comprehensive genderlect theory not only in Kiswahili, but also in universal linguistics.

Brown (1980) recommends that an explanation of linguistic sex differences should consider the possibility that one reason for these differences may lie in the fact that women and men may be trying to achieve different things through language.

Against this background, therefore, it became imperative to study Kiswahili female metaphors with a view to finding reasons to why the tropes are used. Questions were asked as to possible aims of men using these linguistic items and the ramifications upon women who are the referents.

Nevertheless, this study was cautious of Moulton's (1981:109) warning that:

> …one cannot account entirely for the meaning of a term by the intentions of the speaker on particular occasion. The meaning of a term involves, among other things, its expected interpretation, the way it functions with other terms, and its use in linguistic enterprises such as reasoning.

Kiswahili female metaphors were analyzed with due consideration given to their form, topic, content and contextual use. The discussion of the structural organization of the metaphors was done so as to arrive at the expression of their content and the uniqueness of the metaphor as opposed to other tropes. On the topic of the metaphors, it is revealed in this research that they are mainly used to show a strong and passionate personal affection and attachment. However, in some instances, some of the metaphors are vilifications. The content of the metaphors was found to be descriptive and evaluative. It attempts to evoke a dual interest, one in the objects presented, and the other in ideas communicated – by their users. Lastly, it is was discovered that female metaphors are used by men in reference to women so as to inform, persuade, reassure, soothe, cajole, ridicule and assert.

1.6 Literature Review

Generally, there is a lot of research on language and meaning (e.g. Bloomfield 1914, Hymes 1964, Chomsky 1972 & 1976, Williams 1973, Hoover 1975, Halliday 1978, Haas 1979, Moore & Carling 1987, Hill 1988). However, there is no specific and detailed body of literature focusing on metaphors, leave alone female metaphors.

The concept of "metaphor" has been elusive to anthropologists, philosophers, linguists, critics, aestheticists and psychologists. Despite its common place and apparent familiarity, this trope has defied any lucid definition. As a result of this fluidity, it's meaning, nature, operation and function have remained subject of much speculation and disagreement.

Aristotle (Poetics) 1458b; cf. Rhetoric 1405a) defined metaphor as the recourse to a name of another type, or as the transferring to one object of a name of another. He went further and said thus of the metaphor:

> …the greatest thing so far is to be a master of metaphor. It is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and it is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars.

The picture Aristole is painting here is that knowledge of use and meaning of metaphor is an exceptionally great mental or creative ability. This is so especially in the light of the fact that a special character of the metaphor is the transference of a

name – and by extension behavior – of one object to another. One needs the power of understanding the metaphor immediately without the need for conscious reasoning or study.

In his examination of metaphor, Murry (1931) observes that its investigation is curiously like the investigation of any of the primary data of consciousness. He sees metaphor being as ultimate as thought. Murry's observation distinguishes metaphor as an intricate and intriguing trope. The metaphor is difficult to understand because it is the greatest or most fundamental power or act of speaking and thinking. Yet naturally, being the most advanced speech or thought, metaphor arouses interest and fascination in people.

As Murry points out "if we try to penetrate beyond a certain point, we find ourselves questioning the very faculty and instrument with which we are trying to penetrate them. A metaphor's charm is in its creation of a new reality from which the original appears to be unreal (Stevens, 1957). Like Henle (1958) contends, it is a way of using the sense of something familiar or concrete to refer to something remote or unfamiliar.

Richards (1965) points out that metaphor involves a comparison, which arises from the interaction between the "tenor" and "vehicle". According to him, the two are the most essential elements of a metaphor. The tenor is the discourse or subject which the vehicle illustrates or illuminates; or stated another way, the tenor is the idea being expressed. A metaphor is therefore said to be operational both in the speaker's perception of the world and how they affectively experience themselves in that situation. Leech (1974) concedes that through its power of realigning conceptual boundaries, metaphor can achieve a communicative effect which in a sense is beyond language. Preminger (1974) argues that metaphor is used for adornment, liveliness, elucidation, or agreeable mystification. He further asserts that metaphor not only transfers and alters meaning but may also pervert it. That metaphor is a decorative but inexact alternative to what honest and forthright consideration would disclose in a literal form.

Writing on "The Social Function of Rhetorical Forms" Crocker (1977: 46) quotes Kenneth Burke thus:

> Rhetoric persuades; it engages the active intellectual attention, as well as the emotive responses of the listener … Figurative language does not just express the pertinence of certain cultural axioms to given social conditions; it provides the semantic condition through which actors deal with reality, and these conditions are general to all social contexts and all actors within that society.

From the foregoing, it becomes clear that when used, metaphor is meant to convince. The conviction is realized through its activity and effectiveness on the part of the learner's emotions and feelings. The socio-cultural background then forms a crucial context within which beliefs and attitudes of the hearer are based. Used in this situation, a metaphor then is a reflection of the user's subtle worldview.

Metaphors have the role of defining a relationship between the tenor and the vehicle. However, they cannot be logically defined by paraphrase nor put to test over their truthfulness (Sapir, 1977: 3). On his part, Gossen (1979:716) calls a metaphor a Kingpin in the game of human meaning and creative thought.

In Kiswahili literature, very little has been written on the metaphor as a distinct figure of speech. This is in spite of the ubiquity of the trope in everyday Kiswahili usage. The scarcity of pertinent literature on metaphor in Kiswahili is attributable more to the ambiguity that the concept creates than to unwillingness on the part of scholars to delve in it. The confusion in terminologies and explanations of Kiswahili equivalents of such tropes as synecdoche, metonymy, simile and personification attest to this claim. Nevertheless, two Swhaili scholars, Shariff (1983) and Chacha (1987) have attempted to elucidate this linguistic phenomenon which little has been said about although there is a lot to say.

Shariff (1983) praises metaphor as having an overriding cultural purpose in Swahili society. He cautions that Swahili metaphor seldom, if ever, allows one to limit meaning to a specific incident, providing it with only a single interpretation. Among the reasons he mentions for the heavy use of metaphor in Kiswahili are the cultural norms that moulded and equipped the language with ways and means of expressing thoughts and feelings on sensitive subjects. This is meant to conceal real meaning from being public. The reader or listener has the right to give a metaphor any specific meaning he/she wishes so long as their thoughts do not go beyond the perimeters set by the context in which the metaphor is used (Shariff, 1983: 23-24).

Sheriff's exposition, albeit narrow, is an invaluable basis for the understanding of the use of Kiswahili metaphors. This study, specifically dealing with female metaphors, details, clarifies and shows cultural use of the trope, its various interpretations, thoughts and feelings on sensitive issues, and the limits of such interpretation.

Chacha (1987) lauds the role played by the history of the Waswahili and their environmental realities in interpreting metaphor. Within the Swahili community, there is a specific category of metaphors that are employed for women as opposed to the ones for men.

Metaphors that are used to refer to women are those on which an action can be done. They are victims and recipients of an action while men are the doers and instigators. This study is concerned with a specific category of metaphors – female metaphors. It shows the place of history and particular circumstances influencing the interpretation and meaning given to them.

Lakoff (1975) asserts that the marginality and powerlessness of women to the serious concerns of life is reflected in both the ways women are spoken off. Lakoff further claims that as a result of language working against treatment of women, their personal identity is linguistically submerged. This study, dealing with how women are spoken off, shows how they are isolated, looked down upon and viewed as insignificant. This is done within the perimeters of Kiswahili female metaphors.

Bllom and Lahey (1978) point out that language use consists of the socially and cognitively determined selection of behaviours according to the goals of the speaker and the context of the situation. Research findings in this report have contextualized female metaphors with significant emphasis on social dictates upon users.

1.7 Significance of Research

The Feminist Movement has opened people's eyes to the deep and varied ways in which the ideals and institutions of their cultures oppress women. Consequently in recent years there has been considerable interest on studies related to women. However, most studies have tended to discuss the status of women in general or are concerned with sexist language in general. Nevertheless, one of the major recent developments in linguistics and its neighbouring disciplines is the increasing attention being paid to the relevance of various kinds of context. Attempts are being made in sociolinguistics, and the social sciences at large, to define the systematic relationships between social and cultural contexts and the structure and functions of language.

Today there is a charming curiosity in the relationship between language and society. As a tool of communication, and being the most intimate manifestation of the culture by which it has been created, concern is with how language affects its creators who are also its users. It is common knowledge that the fundamental purpose of language is to transfer meaning between interlocutors. Kiswahili female metaphor serves this purpose. But for any language to have meaning, human knowledge, skills and attitudes are crucial. In Kiswahili language, metaphors are both abstract and concrete referents. The terms do not mean the same thing to all people everywhere. Each individual is forced to refer the symbols to his/her own experience, and certainly no two persons have the same background of experience. Even in circumstances where the metaphor used represents approximately the same concepts of different people, their reaction may differ considerably.

Notwithstanding the effort in sociolinguistics and social sciences, research has not yet gone far enough to answer satisfactorily all the questions about female language. Particularly wanting is a systematic diagnosis of female metaphors characteristic of most, if not all, societies. This sensitive issue has not received objective attention. This particular situation in Swhaili community is very widespread, although it is rarely mentioned, let alone satisfactorily described. A full explanation of it is of considerable use in sociolinguistics and Social Sciences in general.

While the issue of attitudes towards women based on sexist overtones in Kiswahili metaphors is not the primary concern of criticism, it cannot be completely ignored. For instance, the question of how typical a female metaphor is a Sociological one. But the suitability of the metaphor to the women and her role in society are questions that should fascinate a literary critic as much. Discrimination against women in language has to be regarded as a social issue as much as a linguistic one.

This study is educative in its own right, but it is even more valuable as a tool in illuminating the social importance of Kiswahili language. The purpose of the project

is to introduce scholars interested in Kiswahili to a vital but little-known genre – the female metaphor.

The metaphors help to elucidate the intricacies of certain actions and motives, and to explain the attitudes of individuals. Metaphor is of immense functional importance in Kiswahili language. Exploration and discussion of this trope points up some continuities in the use of the device and further throws light on probable contextual progeny of the same.

This study is meant to open up discussions, arguments and more refined researches in similar, if not the same, aspects of language use world. Not only is the research a valuable contribution to the literature on women, it also points out an important direction in which to focus some of the current studies and generalizations about women.

1.8 Study Design

1.8.1 Pilot Study

Thirty Swahili volunteer respondents of varying ages were interviewed as to their attitudes towards Kiswahili female metaphors. This was a preliminary step towards the formulation of an interview guide, detection of discrepancies and polishing of the questionnaire. The exercise also helped secure a pool of details which deepened perception and understanding of the community setting.

Results of the pilot study were utilised in the general polishing and improvement of research procedures, techniques and tools. For instance, when respondents appeared unclear over exactly what female metaphors were, the interviewers propped them by giving some examples. Further, it was evidently clear that interviewees were not at ease talking over the subject of female metaphors. This made it imperative for the research team to rely more on questionnaire as a tool of collecting data and avoiding inter-personal contact, which instigated shyness. This problem was more prevalent with women than men, explanation being that "love" is a taboo subject not to be engaged in freely.

Field researchers were strict in their observation of paralinguistic features, which formed a source of information too.

1.8.2 Method

1.8.2.1 Sampling

Kiswahili speakers are many and dispersed far apart. As such, it was decided that attitudes towards female metaphors be collected from part of this large population. The main objective was to secure a sample, which would reproduce characteristics of the whole population as closely as possible. Mombasa Island was chosen to

represent the whole Swahili populace. Several factors contributed to the choice of the isle.

First, the indigenous Kiswahili dialect spoken at Mombassa, Kimvita, is central among Kiswahili dialects. Being a city experiencing immigration, Mombassa may be considered to be a home to most of the dialects of Kiswahili spoken along the East African coast. Consequently, it was felt that most, if not all, of the common Kiswahili female metaphors were present. On this premise, data collected was envisaged to be representative enough.

Second, Kiswahili language is reputed to have originated in the central part of the East African Coast. Precisely, it is alleged to have its genesis at Ngozi, which is not far from Mobassa.

Third, fully and truly developed Swahili culture is to be found in the coastal towns of East Africa, of which Mombassa is one.

Lastly, due to a limited area of operation, careful execution of fieldwork was carried out and processing of data collected done more accurately to produce better results. Findings are considered sufficiently accurate and adequate to permit valid generalizations.

A total of 200 respondents were chosen and contacted. There were 100 male and an equal number of female respondents.

1.8.2.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was designed and distributed to experts for comments before distribution. Thereafter, it was drafted and pre-tested. It was then revised and polished before being sent to people who could not be reached physically by the research team. The questionnaire was a mixed one.

Questions asked were definite, concrete and direct. For instance, respondents were asked to name any metaphors used in reference to women known to them. Further, the interviewees were asked to check in their years and sex.

Apart from closed questions, there were open-ended questions which elicited free responses. These were framed so that respondents could freely express their minds and reasons for giving particular answers.
Lastly, some of the questions needed specifics in form of opinions and attitudes. For example, respondents were asked their opinions toward use of Kiswahili metaphors.

1.8.2.3 Interviews

Non-formalized interviews were executed with some respondents. In one planned interview, two resource persons were interviewed on a wide range of issues concerning Swahili culture. The discussion,

which was tape-recorded, provided a wealth of information, which was corroborated against collected data. Specifically, the interview served to elucidate a number of issues, which were contentious yet useful and integral to this research.

In order to implement the research project more expeditiously, the interviewers were trained in the art of science of interviewing. First, the objectives of the research were outlined and explained to them. Specific skills, like building rapport, probing and recording of responses and self-confidence, were emphasized.

The interview was based on determined questions. The ultimate goal here was to achieve greater uniformity and precision, and at the same time eliminating self-bias. However, interviewers were cautioned against being mechanical and rigid. Thus, they were allowed to be flexible without distorting questions and aims of the research.

1.8.2.4 Observation

Participant observation technique was employed where structured procedures would not be utilised. Accurate watching and noting of respondents' para-linguistic characteristics was done with regard to the phenomenon of Kiswahili female metaphors. As interviews were conducted, reactions and responses were noted. Glances, bodily movements and gestures were found to be good cues as to the opinions and attitudes held by respondents.

1.8.2.5 History

Documentary data sources were utilized in this study. Records, reports, autobiographies and pictures were consulted, analyzed and evaluated. The aim was to gain a clearer perspective of the Swahili people and their culture in general, and language use in particular. Findings were subjected to careful criticism and corroboration so as to authenticate their contents.

2. THE WASWAHILI

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this section is to shed some light on three major areas which are felt to be central in the understadning of Kiswahili female metaphors. The components, introduced in this section and discussed more in detail later in the chapter, are the culture of the Waswahili; Kiswahili language, and Swahili women in profile. Background to Swahili society and culture will contribute to a broader appreciation of hidden meanings of their metaphors. It can substantially enhance one's understanding and enjoyment of the metaphors discussed.

2.2 Swahili Culture

To a large extent, Swahili culture has been influenced by Arabic culture. The long association of the Waswahili and Arabs has had a lasting bearing on Swahili life. However, Arabic influence never destroyed the identity of Swahili culture.

Among the indigenous Swahili, carpentry, masonry and smithing were rated very highly. The Waswahili were also expert dancers and poets, who praised virtues of their life. Poetry as an art is reputed to have its origin among the northern Kenya coastal towns of Lamu and Pate from where it spread to Mombassa, Tanga, Zanzibar and Pemba. Kiswahili poetry was, and indeed still is, rich in homiletic works, historical chronicles, heroic songs, lyrics, love-ballads and humorous dialogues. The whole range of Swahili poetry was a perfect reflection of the Swahili life.

The Waswahili lived in earthen walls and stone-bulit towns. Their house plans were decorated with plasterwork that gave them a conspicuous and admirable appearance.

The religion of the Waswahili was Islam, which they embraced after the coming of Arabs. As a result of the meeting of Arabs and indigenous Africans at the coast of East Africa, most Waswahili became Moslems. This religion spread deep in the interior of East Africa and with it the Kiswahili language.

2.3 Kiswahili Language

Kiswahili is one of the world's major languages. In 1992, it was estimated to have a total number of speakers close to 70 million people all over the world, a majority of whom are found in East Africa (Mulokozi, 1992). It extends northward into southern Somalia, southward to northern Mozambique, eastward to Pemba, Zanzibar, the Comoros and Madagascar, and westward into Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and eastern and southern Zaire.

In Kenya and Tanzania, Kiswahili enjoys twin advantages of being the national and also official Language. Owing to its status and role on the African continent, the language has the distinction of being recognized by the Organization of African Unity (O.A.U.) as an official language. The importance of this language is reflected in the manner in which it is gaining wider use worldwide. The language is broadcast on many international radio stations and also taught in quite a number of European and American Universities.

Kiswahili s one of the most creative and dynamic of African tongues: its musical ring and graceful diction, poetic eloquence and richness of vocabulary, its remarkable heritage of a large body of literature as well as its ability to express extraordinarily subtle shades of meaning are today widely recognized not only in Africa but throughout the world (Shariff, 1983:1) Culturally, Kiswahili is a major language because of its age and influence of its cultural heritage. It is an ancient literary language. Communication and transport networks accelerated the spread, development and use of Kiswahili in many parts of eastern Africa. It is a neutral

unifying language devoid of political domination. It is the language that freedom fighters used to rally support against white domination.

The term Kiswahili covers a series of about 16 dialects spread mainly along the coast of East Africa (see appendices II & III). Some of the dialects have become extinct while others are fast disappearing. Standard Kiswahili developed by European colonialists in the 1930s, is the dominant one. Although Kiswahili faces a problem of adequate scientific and technological vocabulary, this does not mean that it is simple. Concerted efforts by individuals and organizations are determined to cancel the deficit. Like any new national language, Kiswahili is ably grappling with the problem of scientific and technological terms.

Various theories have been advanced by a cross-section of people claiming that Kiswahili is either an Arabic language or a cross-breed between Arabic and Bantu languages. These hypotheses have been discounted by linguistic, archaeological, documentary and oral-traditional evidence (Nurse 1985, Bernd 1970, Khalid 1986, etc). These researchers have argued that the ancestors of the present Waswahili were Bantus who spoke a Bantu language at the coast many centuries before the coming of Arab colonialists. Their earliest language is said to have been Kingozi. Kingozi (language) has since undergone fundamental linguistic metamorphosis, rendering it hardly intelligible. However, this variety of Kiswhaili language can still be traced in the most treasurable of the Pre-Twentieth Century Swahili literature – poetry.

Bernd (1970) traces the origin of Kiswahili language to between AD 700-800 around the Tana River delta. When Arabs came around AD 500 they enriched the indigenous language (Kingozi) with a heavy dose of Arabic words and structure. This situation is not unique to Kiswahili language to warrant it qualify as a foreign or even a hybrid language. It is natural for languages that come into contact to influence each other. English, Germany, French are not exceptional.

With a need to harmonize communication among the various speakers of Kiswahili language along the East African coast, Christian missionaries picked and developed the Kiunguja dialect spoken at Zanzibar into the standard Kiswahili. At present, Kiswahili has taken on many foreign words from not only Arabic but such languages as Persian, Hindu, Germany, French, Portuguese and English as well. All the loan words, blended with indigenous orthography and pronunciation have given Kiswhaili a large pool of vocabulary. With the current spread of Kiswhaili, it is only safe to say with confidence that this language is destined to grow richer linguistically.

The very wide territorial domain of Kiswahili language renders the issue of who the true Waswahili are a very contentious one. Abdallah Khalid (1979) has two versions of answers to the question. First, he says a true Swahili is a speaker of any one of the <u>true</u> Swahili dialects who has learnt it as his first language in life or knows it better than any other language. This explanation is as difficult to grasp as it is elusive. The issue of dialectology is itself a tricky one. How true a dialect is not easy to discern. Secondly, Khalid sees true Waswahili as those who live on the coast

of East Africa, and or off-shore islands, between Barawa in Southern Somalia and Tanga on the northern Tanzania coast. However, regardless of who the true Waswhaili are, it is not wrong to say that Kiswhaili language has been embraced by many people in Eastern Africa where its use is becoming ubiquitous. With its international status, the language is bound to belong to more people not merely the coastals and islanders of East Africa or any particular group of people as such.

Generally, the language presents many challenges of a sociolinguistic kind: some have already received a good deal of attention; others have so far been comparatively neglected. For instance, Kiswahili language is highly figurative, the most common figure of speech used being the metaphor. However, as pointed earlier, no research worthy a name has been done on this aspect of language use.

2.4 Swhalili Women in Profile

The picture of a Swahili women that will emerge in this section is bound to be very general. It is an image borne out of culture. It is hoped that the discussion will acquaint the reader with the necessary background information to understand the state of a woman in Swahili society in a chronological manner.

As pointed earlier on in this work Islam had an immense impact on the social life of the Waswahili. As regards women, the religion affected their lot in several crucial ways. It accepted women in society and recognized their privileges and rights. The ideal image of women held by Swahili society is primarily one transmitted by tradition and custom. This section looks at women in childhood, courtship, marriage and divorce. These are envisaged to be the most crucial phases of a woman's social life.

2.4.1 Childhood

Religion, education and family are institutions that greatly influence the life of a new born baby girl. It is them that impart into the girl the notion that girls were expected to grow up to become wives and subsequently mothers. As a result, girls in their early childhood were not supposed to be assertive. Rather, they were required to submit to male authority right from their homes. Fathers and brothers were to be highly respected by their daughters and sisters. Any behaviour to the contrary earned the victim the wrath of the society who viewed her suspiciously.

The patriarchal practices in the girls home were a prelude to what she would expect upon marriage where her husband perpetuated them.

From birth throughout their youth, girls were always under constant care of family members especially females. Their socialization included preparation for female gendered roles in society. Central to this process was the awareness that a girl's ultimate aim was marriage. Thus, girls were expected to be of good conduct so that they could succeed in securing right husbands. This preoccupation with later marriage did interfere with female

education as this was relegated to the periphery resulting in high illiteracy rates for Muslim women.

On reaching puberty, every family was concerned of its girl's marriage. This was especially so considering societal expectation upon a girl on marriage. Virginity was revered an a girl who maintained it not only earned herself respect in society, but also bestowed her parents' reputation. It was a sign of good upbringing and religious observance of morals. However, in cases where parents (fathers) feared that their daughter were endangered as concerns moral values, they were permitted by religious law to marry off minor girls to forestall impending dangers.

2.4.2 Courtship

The coming of age by a Muslim girl was normally an anxious moment not only for the girls alone but also their family members. It was at this stage that a suitor was expected to make a proposal for marriage. Failure for any man to register interest in a young girl did not augur well for her as spinsterhood was stigmatized.

A Muslim girl was normally not expected to conclude her own marriage. The practice was that her guardian, who was the father or his designate, was supposed to execute it. However, where a girl went ahead and entered a marriage contract with a man, such a marriage would only be valid through the father's approval or that of his appointee. Women did not have role to play as far as the formalizing of a marriage contract was concerned.

In case a girl did not have neither a father nor a designate guardian, or when either of the above refused to validate a marriage contract without a just cause, a Kadhi was normally the final arbiter.

2.4.3 Marriage

Swhaili society is a married society. The socialization of a girl was geared towards having a partner sooner rather than later. A Muslim woman was expected to marry a fellow Muslim man. Marriage to any other man was not well reviewed. This rule, however, was not based on Islamic religious teaching. But it was generally thought that a non-Muslim husband would coerce his wife into joining his religion, which was against the Kuran. Further, it was believed that a non-Muslim man would not understand properly a woman's natural weaknesses and thus may mistreat her. This again is against Islamic teaching.

Before entering marriage, a woman had to be permitted by her father or his designate guardian. Marriage contract was no woman's affair. However, in case a woman concluded her marriage without prior involvement of her guardian, his word was sought in validating it. But where a woman did not have a father, a male relative or when the above refused to sanction marriage without reasonable ground, a Muslim woman was expected to turn

to a judge to perform this function. With the latter possibility failing, Islamic religious tenets, under the principle of general guardianship, empower any Muslim man of sound mind to step in. Marriage contract entered by the woman without a guardian consent, but based on genuine fear and suspicion that further dilatory would likely affect adversely the woman had to be respected.

Once married, a woman's major role was two-fold: wife and mother. These were complimentary roles with the former automatically leading to the latter. The contrary would be a contributory factor to co-wifery. A married woman may have up to four co-wives. It is acceptable. While men enjoy the privileges of marrying up to four wives, the same could not be said of married women. It is argued that a faithful woman does not serve two or more husbands. She is not expected to give her love to any other man apart from the husband.

Procreation is considered almost the most important aspect of a marriage. Apart from pleasing her husband and caring for his needs, a wife was expected to bear children. This was important in perpetuating the husband's name and that of his clan. For women, having children was considered the essence of marriage as it provided security and pride. A childless marriage was stigmatized, pitied and even ridiculed.

Upon marriage, a woman was expected to execute a number of the institution's duties. She is expected to be always reserved and smart. A husband's word, they were trained, was to be observed with religious obedience. Behaving to the contrary was viewed suspiciously by society. In most cases, Muslim men had the right of stopping their wives from working as long as there was reason for this and that in that case the husband had to provide for her. This did not mean that Islam forbade women from employment where and when necessary. The roles of a woman in society as a mother and wife were considered as the most sacred and essential ones. The need to bring up upright, complex-free, and carefully-reared children cannot be done by substitutes (Badawi: 1981:21).

A woman well schooled in Islam understands upon marriage that society allows her husband to marry up to four wives. Therefore, Moslem women are prepared for a polygamous marriage. Nevertheless, before this arrangement is arrived at, the husband must give reasonable grounds warranting another marriage. Among the common reasons for polygamy include sexual dissatisfaction, barrenness, rudeness and illness. When a man finally picks on another woman for marriage, he is expected to provide for them equally without favour. However, due to human weaknesses, this need is almost impossible to satisfy.

2.4.4. Divorce

Divorce among Moslems is detested, but not always unavoidable. Non-fulfillment of marital social obligations by either spouse is a recipe for separation. As Badawi (1980:19) rightly observes:

> As the woman's right to decide about her marriage is
> recognized, so also her right so seek an end for an unsuccessful
> marriage is recognized. To provide for the stability of the family,
> and in order to protect it from hasty decisions under temporary
> emotional stress, certain steps and waiting periods should be
> observed by men and women seeking divorce. Considering the
> relatively more emotional nature of women, a good reason for
> asking for divorce should be brought before the judge. Like the
> man, however, the woman can divorce her husband without
> resorting to the court, if the nuptial contract allows that.

From this quote, it is evidently clear that men still enjoy privileges over women as far as divorce is concerned. Whereas a man can divorce his wife "freely", a woman cannot do the same to her husband unless she gives a good reason because of her "more emotional nature". Further, divorce cannot be effected by a woman if nuptial contract does not allow it. Not even sexual dissatisfaction! That is not "a good reason". On the contrary, a man is free to marry a second wife if the first does not fully satisfy him sexually.

Nevertheless, when divorce is sought as a last resort, all channels toward reconciliation should have been explored and exhaustively exploited. Marriage is never a man-wife affair alone. Consequently, family members from both sides have crucial roles to play in moderating uneven relationships. However, with modernization and less observance of religious rules, a divorce unilaterally taken is not uncommon among Muslims. Generally, a husband can divorce his wife three times. Women have such rights too. In most cases, either spouse may finally end up at the Kadhi's court for a final decision to be taken. Grounds for divorce on the part of women include impotence, incurable diseases, non-maintenance, desertion and cruelty and mistreatment. In all these instances, a wife is required by law to prove by evidence or the husband admits liability. In the event of the above cases being proved, court decrees an irrevocable divorce. This decision is taken considering that sincere matrimony becomes almost impossible and temptation to adultery almost irresistible.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter gives a background against which Kiswahili female metaphors may be analyzed, understood and appreciated. It shows that Arabic way of life has had a profound influence on the Waswahili of Mombassa. The ways of worship, socialization and family system of the Waswhaili resemble to a large extent those of the early Arabs. The early contacts these two groups of people had not only influenced their cultural ways, but also economic life.

It has been shown that metaphors can only be properly understood with a thorough knowledge of the language, which is its medium of expression. Kiswhaili has been shown to be one of the world's major languages. This is especially so considering its territorial domain, historical and cultural importance.

The image drawn here of a woman from childhood to marriage is a general one. It shows the importance attached to females throughout their lives. Socialization agents like the family and religion greatly influence a woman's latter outlook in life.

3. EXPOSITION OF KISWAHILI FEMALE METAPHORS

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain the nature of Kiswahili female metaphors and their themes, showing the meaning of the tropes and reasons for their use. Central ideas dominating this figurative language are concretized through identification, classification, definition, illustration and critical analysis.

The metaphors have been arranged systematically in classes of 31 tropes according to common characteristics. The reason for the categorization is to bring together metaphors, which most resemble and to separate those that differ for the purpose of convenient interpretation. Each metaphor has been transliterated in English from Kiswahili with an explanation of the meaning of each. The general group to which the metaphor belongs is identified and the specific ways in which the metaphor differs from others within the general class explained. Where necessary, some metaphors are made clear by means of examples, comparisons and contrasts. It should be noted that based on the purpose of this research, and in light of research hypotheses, only the useful and usable Kiswahili female metaphors are analyzed. Outstanding factors and trends, similarities and differences in the metaphors are given prominence.

3.2 Varieties of Kiswahili Female Metaphors

It is assumed in this research that every category of female metaphor is unique in Kiswahili language. Therefore, it has become necessary to describe metaphors identified separately. The grouping adopted here is considered most important to anyone interested in the nature of female metaphors in general and in Kiswahili language in particular.

Afu-Jasmine

Jasmine is a shrub with white or yellow sweet-smelling flowers. As a metaphor "afu" denotes cleanliness and beauty. Waswahili people value cleanliness so much that for married women, this is almost a must for them. It is held that a clean wife will more likely keep her husband than an untidy one. Consequently, women are encouraged to remove all extraneous hair from their limbs and body so that they remain smooth and uncluttered as a child before puberty.

To soften and lighten their bodies and give them a distinct smell, Swahili women massage themselves with oil and a blend of perfumes. As is customarily expected, a wife in Swahili society is to be reserved. Thus, she applies "henna" to her hands and feet as a symbol of blessing. Henna is made from the leaves of a fragrant tree or shrub like jasmine. Complex patterns of flowers, leaves and scrolls are made on the palms of the hands, feet and legs. To add pomp on her attractive body, a woman is

expected to don acceptable dresses that do not expose her body. Gold jewelry is worn in abundance over the dress, a string of beads and other charms that are meant to beget good luck.

On the whole, therefore a woman is supposed to be as attractive to the eye as she is appealing in (her) smell. But while these are expectations of society on women, it is not always that all women will live up to them. Financial expenses involved in keeping oneself clean and attractive puts off most people. Further, intricate designs and perfumes take a lot of time to perfect. Therefore, there are only a number of women who would keep themselves to the standards required of them. These women are not as common. The metaphor is used to praise women who keep themselves clean, attractive and admirable.

Asali = Honey

Honey is a sweet substance made by bees by extracting nectar from flowers. Honey is supposed to be food for the social and hard-working bee.

Used figuratively, "asali" refers to a woman a man likes or loves very much. Her love to the man is also supposed to be excellent. Consequently, the man in love is delightful and pleasant. Honey is a metaphor of endearment.

Just like bees guard their beehives against intruders who may want to tap their sweet food, so do men to their loved ones. A man who has got a good woman does not allow any other man to take advantage of her. He is ready to sting to ensure her security and availability to him alone.
As used in Swahili community, in reference to women, this metaphor is flattery and sentimental. Women are to men what honey is to bees; juicy and delicious. They are considered as men's food that has been looked for, found, collected, prepared and so has to be jealously guarded. Just as bees do not collect honey but nectar, so are men who hunt and get women in the raw on whom a lot is spent so as to turn them into the succulent substance they are viewed. In this light, it can be argued that men look at women as valuable possessions which sustain their lives.

Bao la Mkahawani = An hotel bench or a pebble game

"Bao" is a board usually of a special kind found in a hotel to be used by hotel goers. Another meaning for "bao" is a playing board for draughts or cards. The Waswahili have a habit of playing a pastime game called "bao" which has 64, and sometimes 32, holes for squares, and seeds or pebbles for counters.

The Waswahili, especially grown up men, like a variety of foods. As they are out for meeting in the evenings, they discuss a myriad of issues: in these public places fitted with benches (mbao) for customers.

As used here, a woman who is referred to as "bao la mkahawani" is equated to an hotel bench which does not belong to any one particular person but to all who are interested in going to the place. Such a woman is considered a utility woman. She is known to everybody or/and anybody. She is a woman with very loose morals which

is repugnant to Swhaili social life. Welcoming and entertaining any man or many men by women in Swahili society is disgusting and therefore abhorred. This metaphor is used to scorn at women with moral decadence. Men use such a woman to quench their love lust and without the remotest intentions of marriage. This game is open to all and only the very expert one would not be easily knocked out.

On the other hand, the second meaning emerging from "bao la makahawani" is related to a woman's social behaviour as in the foregoing explanation. The game of "bao" is a group play with rules to be observed by all participants. General consensus emerging from interviewees was that "bao la mkahawani" would mean a woman who dresses and perfumes herself immaculately for the sake of luring men. Asked of what translation pebble could be given, one respondent replied, tongue-in-cheek, that there are women in society who would not be satisfied by one man alone. Such women, it was alleged, are capable of entertaining multiple men and sustain them all. Conversely, only tough men capable of satisfying such women and capable of meeting their needs are able to survive the onslaught from others. In Mombassa, there are women, not necessarily from the coast, who prostitute and hardly keep men permanently. This activity is meant to generate them an income. The ease and will with which they engage themselves is comparable to a pastime game of "bao". However, there are few men who are capable of keeping some of the prostitutes for considerable time depending on their power of the purse and physical prowess.

This metaphor is used in reference to a woman who does not stick to one man. She is viewed as evil as she is capable of breaking marriages.

Bidhaa = Property

The act of paying dowry makes a Swhaili woman become part of a man's possessions. Whereas the practice is meant to be a token of appreciation to the woman's parents and family for bringing up a good woman, some men misconstrue it to be a price they pay to acquire the woman. As such, a married woman is like an owned property. Not only is she a property of the husband, but she is also considered to belong to the clan as is evident on the active role they play in arranging for marriage and wedding. In this sense she becomes a communal property.

A woman as property is supposed to obey her husband without question. She is to conduct herself with utmost humility and respect. Failure to observe these requirements often results into conflict. This is the worst state a relationship should go: for such a woman does not expect leniency either from her in-laws or own parents. Dowry having been paid for her, a married woman is not supposed to leave her husband unless on acceptable and verifiable grounds such as impotence and incurable disease.

This metaphor is used mostly by men to remind women of their social status. Often, it is applied to women seen to be going against the age-old tradition of being unquestioningly submissive.

Chiriku = Finch

A finch is any of several types of small songbird with short, stubby bills.

A woman referred to, as "chiriku" is one that likes making noise over issues that are considered trivial. Garrulity in Swahili women is looked at as bad manners. A chatterer is normally scorned at and not desirable.
This metaphor is used generally to refer to women who have the habit of poking their noses into other people's affairs. In most cases, such women capitalize on minor issues building mountains out of them. This is not good behaviour and is discouraged.

Dawa – Cure

"Dawa" is anything that makes somebody healthy again. Women are seen as having the ability to find a successful remedy for a man's social and spiritual illness.

Whenever a man is in psychological torment, a woman is normally looked at as a solution to this problem. Through her tender care, love and soothing words, a woman is capable of resorting a man's spirits and healing his broken heart. Traditionally, every man is expected to marry, as this is believed to affect his mental faculty. Not only will such a man be seen as an acceptable member of society, but he will also be expected to prove his manhood by bringing forth a family and caring for them. An unmarried man is looked at as immature and not capable of leadership.

Being the closest person to her husband, a wife is expected to understand him fully. This knowledge enables her gauge the man's mood and counsels him promptly and accordingly. Some problems may inflict a wound in a person's life that no medical practitioner will ever heal. It is only through talking over them that they may be solved.

Men use this metaphor when in praise of their spouses or fiancées. It shows a sense of pride a man has in the woman as a partner. She is more than a personal physician or a priest to the man.

Debe (bovu) – (Old) tin can

This is pejorative phrase used by men to express criticism or scorn over women considered being of ill manners. In Swahili community an old tin can is used for collecting and disposing garbage from houses. Such collected rubbish is not considered of having much use. In this context, therefore, a woman comparative to a tin can is one that is viewed to have outlived her usefulness. Such women are seen as easy lays. They have no place among respectable women who are supposed to be reserved and pure.

Fingo (la nyumba) = A (house) charm

"Fingo" is an object worn because it is believed to protect the wearer from evil and bring good luck. Thus, a woman seen as "fingo la nyumba" would be one that is

looked upon as a protector of her house. A married man is not worried about the safety of his house, as there is somebody always to take care and ward off any attempts by enemies to bring bad omen (to the house). Among the Waswahili, there is a strong belief in witchcraft.

It should be noted that this metaphor stands out of time with current times. Nowadays, women are not just expected to be housewives and housekeepers. Many have received education and have ventured into income generating activities like employment and business. However, some respondents were of the considered opinion that whether employed or not, women are still a charm to their houses and husbands. They argued that a married man is less likely to be tempted into engaging into affairs than one who is not. As stated earlier on, morally loose women are viewed with ridicule. The practice is not only loathed but also seen as a sign of weakness and wickedness.

Ibada = Worship

Among Muslims, it is expected of the devoted ones among them, to religiously observe worship. It is a practice that testifies one's commitment to religion. A woman as "ibada" is a saying that invokes two possible interpretations.

First, it means that men adore women so much that they would pray to them the same way they do to God. In this way, men worship women so as to be given conjugal satisfaction. Here a woman is looked at as being powerful and decisive. Her consent to a man's demand is to be implored and even supplicated.

On the other hand, this metaphor assumes a derogatory interpretation and meaning. A woman who is men's worship is considered cheap. She is easy for any man to get and make love with. It only needs a witty man to outmaneuver her and have his share. Like all embracing religious worship or service, all men are welcome. She is not choosy with her partners.

Jabari = Stubborn person

It is generally held that when determined, women never let go. They are strong-willed in their steadfastness. This determination is sometimes interpreted to mean obstinacy which causes friction in a social relationship. A woman of this kind is normally seen as being stubborn. This view is held by men who view women who are not meek as rebellious.

Asked to comment on this claim of stubbornness, a cross-section of women denied it categorically maintaining that it is a wrong and misplaced judgement by some men who want to be ever domineering. Their argument was that with an increase in the awareness and realization of their rights, women are demanding for a fair and just society. It is this group of women who are mistakenly viewed as stubborn, nay rude, to their husbands. They quickly pointed out that the fact that the metaphor has been in vogue for a long time, and considering that feminism as a recent phenomenon, attests to the truth that women all along have known their rights. That

the war against male – domination has been on albeit subtly, and what feminism has done is to catalyze it.

The view that women are stubborn is held by men who argue that women are at times sulky, moody and nagging. It is within this context that the metaphor best befits them.

Mwana/Mtoto = Baby/kid

This metaphor has got two possible interpretations. A woman referred to, as "mwana" is one that is held in high esteem by men. Normally, this metaphor is used to refer to a young woman who is looked at as being innocent. "Mwana wa watu" means a lady born of very good social background and reared in a most upright manner. Thus, mwana may be used to mean her beauty or/and good behaviour.

When a woman is said to be a kid in essence it means that she has not matured in life. If it is in marriage, the man who is the husband is assumed to be mature and experienced. He is expected to care for and protect his wife. It follows then that a woman is held in a subordinate position being dependent on the husband for overall direction of her life. Like a child who is to be reared by caring parents, so is the woman who is supposed to be brought up by the man. Such a woman is supposed to be respectful and obedient.

On this issue, the Quran states thus: "And they (women) have right similar to those (of men) over them, and men are a degree above them". (Quarn 2:228). It would appear that this metaphor has some footing in Koranic teachings. However, commenting on the issue of maintenance and protection, Badawi (1971:17) says that the natural difference between sexes entitles the weaker sex protection. It implies more superiority or advantage before the Islamic law.

Johari = Gemstone

"Johari" is any kind of gemstone. These precious stones are of various types, viz lulu (=pearl), feruzi (=turquoise), almasi (=diamond), Yakuti (=ruby or saphire) and Zumaridi (=emerald). A woman referred to by any of the kinds is one that is beautiful and considered the best by the "owner". The Waswahili have a saying that "Johari za mtu ni mbili: akili na haya", and whose etymology could be traced in the precious stones. Literally translated the saying means that in life, there are only two most precious qualities intelligence and modesty. Possession of these virtues by a woman add lustre to her name. Coupled with her beauty, these attributes make a woman to be highly regarded in society.

A woman with great power of learning, understanding and reasoning is highly valued among the Waswahili. It is such a woman that will care for her husband, her house and be a source of pride for the whole community. Furthermore, a Swahili woman is supposed to show respect for conventional idea of decency and purity. Careless dressing that is provocative will earn her both the scorn and wrath of

society. It portends vulgarity of behaviour. She is a disgrace to members of her family.

From the foregoing, therefore, to be referred to, as "johari" is perhaps the highest honour a woman may be bestowed. This opinion is an awe-inspiring regard. It is a challenge that the concerned woman strives to maintain and even better.

Joka = Serpent

A serpent is a fierce reptile. Since Biblical times it is feared to be sly. It is believed that it tempted Adam and Eve to sin.

Used to refer to a woman, serpent means a sly person capable of tempting others, especially of the opposite sex. A woman of that character is not only mischievous in behaviour but also wicked in deeds. She flirts with men and in this way causes harm to her reputation and social status. It is an act of immense shame for a woman, especially a married one, to engage in promiscuous affairs. Conjugal dissatisfaction is supposed to be solved following laid down procedures.

Further discussion on this topic elicited sharp criticism of society's moral values from a cross-section of women. Singled out for strongest opposition was the practice allowing men to marry up to four wives. This tendency was viewed as giving men leeway in case of sexual discontent. This privilege is not extended to women. It was pointed out that due to man's nature, having multiple wives denies him the needed opportunity to attend to each more intimately. Most women interviewed saw this as a possible cause of unfaithfulness among women.

The freedom of a wife seeking divorce was seen as being the remotest alternative a woman would go for. Certainly not because of sexual dissatisfaction! Coupled with the ridicule and stigma that go with singleness, women were of the view that divorce was out of question, unless, of course when inevitable. A woman seeking separation on the above ground is both unusual and unconventional. This demand would not only shock the woman's audience but also cause her untold embarrassment. The picture painted is of a woman with too strong sexual desires. As much as this may be natural, it is as loathsome as it is ridiculous.

Men and women interviewed were all agreed that extra-marital affairs have occurred and still occur. Although both men and women may commit the same sin, society penalizes women more.

Karata = (playing) card(s)

In Swahili community playing cards is a popular pastime of the youth and the old. It is comparable to "Bao" discussed above (cf. Pg. 23). A pack of playing cards is called "jozi" and may comprise any of the following: pips (=nganda or ganda), ace (=rea or rei); spades (=shupaza)= hearts (=kopa); clubs (=pao); diamonds (=uru); king (=mzungu wa nne or basha); Queen (Mzungu wa pili or bibi): Jack (Mzungu wa tatu or ghulamu). This is an amusing game that demands witty brains.

Metaphorically, a woman is a "Karata" when men flirt and flatter her. She is like any card that is played by many people. Many men are said to be of uninhibited amorous behaviour. This propensity to love drives most men to engage in a game

with women reminiscent to playing cards. Men who keep changing women derive a lot of amusement in this practice.

Most are not serious in their love affairs. Having flirted with one for enough time, such men normally dismiss them without much care. Men who exchange women as pleasure tool always keep secretive their activities.

Kapu = (Big) basket

"Kapu" is a big wide-mouthed flexible basket used for all purposes. It is a container made of reed, cane, thin strips of wood or wire among whose many sues include holding various items such as fish, coconuts, cashew nuts, chicken, etceteras.

Figuratively used, "kapu" refers to a woman who is ugly or whose behaviour is rotten. Any woman, regardless of age, who does not care about her appearance is regarded as a basket. However, the metaphor is appropriately applied to a big, ugly looking woman. The way a woman dresses matters a lot for her appearance and to all those who see her. She is expected to put on clothes of very refined material so as to add on her beauty.

Considering the multipurpose use of a basket in Swahili community, a woman termed "Kapu" is one who is indiscriminate in her sexual relationships with men. She accommodates men of all ages, sizes, tastes and social backgrounds. This is what is least expected of a Swahili woman. Being open for grabs by all means is a sign of indecency and immorality.

Kiatu – Shoe

This is a derogatory metaphor. A shoe is used in all sorts of places and conditions. Many a time a shoe is used to step in dirt. It does not complain nor is it choosy.

A woman referred to as kiatu is one that is not choosy in her relationships with men. She welcomes and entertains all and sundry. With a thorough brushing, an old shoe will look new again. In the same way, a woman who may be old uses make-up to keep herself in tune with the times.

Kibiriti = Match

A woman is said to be a match-stick when she wields a lot of influence over her man. A man in this case is likened to fuel which can easily be set aflame by the match-stick. Women of this type are said to be able to ignite their men and make them act tough on all those who go against them.

Simply put, this metaphor means that when annoyed, a woman is capable of causing a lot of trouble to her tormentors.

Kidege – A (little) bird

Among the many meanings that the morph "ki-" has in Kiswahili, is that denoting affection for beauty. Thus, "kidege" is a diminutive of bird, and it means a small lovely bird.

Birds occur in various kinds: birds of prey, water birds and sea-birds, game birds, farm-yard birds and garden and woodland birds. It is this last group of birds that often has many small, multi-coloured and variedly singing birds. The other groups normally have birds that are not so beautiful.

When a woman is referred to as a bird, the referee has in mind such elegant birds as the dove (=njiwa) and the peacock (=tausi). Such a woman is normally seen as a pleasant one to her lover. She is immaculate in her appearance and peaceful and composed in behaviour. As a result then, a bird woman is a darling to the beholder. She is charming.

There are other times when a woman is referred to as chick (=kifaranga). Whenever used this metaphor mostly denotes young girls yet to marry. It is meant to describe a woman in her tender years who is elegant and stylish. Because of her age, such a woman is considered pure and unsoiled. The intending man sees in her a promising wife.

Kimbichi = A (little) canoe

"Kimbichi" is a little, slender, open canoe, propelled by paddles. It is normally made of dugout logs. Before the advent and use of motored boats, these particular boats were very dependable among fishermen of the East Coast. Due to its toughness to endure sea conditions, it was liked especially when sailing through rough waters. It was a long lasting tool of trade.

This metaphor was known only by a handful of old people. The only logical explanation is that since modernization has seen introduction of new fishing techniques and machines, paddle-propelled canoes are out of fashion. It is a metaphor that is fast disappearing from Kiswahili daily use. Its use is now a preserve of conservative poets.

 "Kimbichi" when referring to a woman alludes to her faithfulness and steadfastness in her relationship with a lover. It is used for those women who respect their husbands and do not go out with other men. Such women are said to make an enjoyable and lovely home. They provide love and comfort that are so desirable for a congenial relationship.

Kipusa = A rhino's horn

"Kipusa" is a bony outgrowth that is not fully grown on a rhino's head. This tusk is highly valued among many communities in the world. It is believed that among the many uses of such a horn, it contains medicinal value. Some communities even hold as true charges that a rhino's horn is a powerful love potion that a small dose sends the user feeling horny. This belief could easily account for the rarity with which rhinos are found all over the world, and efforts made to preserve the animals from being extinct through poaching.

"Kipusa" is a metaphor used by young men in reference to their highly valued girlfriends. Such women are viewed by their proud owners as not only being good in appearance, but also as rare species to be guarded selfishly. It is believed that

young elegant girls will hypnotize men by their love. This fascination at times translates into infatuation.

Kobe = Tortoise

The Waswahili usually talk of a person being as secretive as a tortoise. This terrestrial reptile is reputed for its slowness in action. It is a very composed and reserved animal.

It is good manners that a married woman keeps secrets – whatever they are – of the home without exposing and involving outsiders in them. Talking to others about one's husband's conduct does not earn her respect among her peers. Instead she is seen as a careless woman. She is an embarrassment. On the other hand, a woman who rarely talks much about her home's secrets is praised and said to be secretive as a tortoise. It is a cherished virtue.

Malaika = Angel

Angles are revered creatures. This reverence is associated with purity of spirit and holiness.

"Malaika" alludes to a beautiful and kind woman. Her virtues and charms are only comparable to heavenly angels. It is this set of characteristics that earn her respect from her lover. If the woman so referred to is not married, than she is considered innocent.

Mungu modgo – A goddess

It is not uncommon among the Waswahili to find as a local brew. Fibres are used for weaving baskets and mats. The nutty part is used for cooking while at times it is dried and sold as copra.

To refer to a woman as "nazi" recognizes her various roles in society. She is valued from the time she is born, through marriage till she dies. As a girl, bride prize paid to her family is highly valued. In marriage she is expected to please and obey her husband for a successful marriage union. Further, society expects her to perpetuate it through procreation. These are some of the crucial roles society assigns to a woman in her lifetime.

Nyota = Star (Nuru = light)

A star is a point of light. It denotes something famous or brilliant. As a metaphor, a star alludes to somebody who is capable of influencing another person's life, luck or personality. Such a person is normally successful and happy. He/she attracts special attention from others as a point of reference.

Used in reference to a woman, star means one who is distinct by her good character. She is normally cheerful and optimistic. She is romantically enthusiastic and conspicuous. Due to these features, she is able to influence the behaviour of the spouse. The public also acknowledge her brilliance. She is a helpful wife who advises and guides the husband through marriage.

Panya = Rat

A rat is a destructive rodent. It eats cereals and can destroy important documents. However, rats are cats' delicacies.

Used as a metaphor, this reference describes a woman who is capable of pretending to be good when the opposite is true. The Waswahili have a popular saying that "Panya hula huku akipuliza". This means that while a rat gnaws its food, it at the same time anaesthetizes it. This simply means that a woman causes continual torment and distress to her husband but strives to ensure that he does not leave her. In such a marriage, relationship is not a genuine one; rather it is marriage for convenience – especially for the woman. When a woman deserts her husband during times of difficulty, she is also called a rat.

This metaphor is used to express annoyance and contempt to the despicable behaviour of a woman.

Punda = Donkey

"Punda" as a female metaphor is used out of annoyance. In normal circumstances, a donkey is considered ungrateful to the owner who despite feeding it, it sometimes kicks him very hard. As a result of this experience, the Waswahili have a saying that "fadhila za punda ni mateke." This means that instead of appreciating whatever good is done for it, a donkey kicks in turn. This saying explains the bizarre behaviour of the ass.

A woman likened to a donkey is one that does not appreciate anything good done for her sake. Instead she engages a man into arguments and unnecessary quarrels. It is this grotesque attitude that earns her the metaphor "punda." She is seen as obstinate to handle.

On the other hand, this saying may be used to summarize a woman's overburdened role in society. She does a lot of work which includes taking care of the husband, rearing children, looking for food and feeding the family. These duties make her comparable to a beast of burden that a donkey is. She works on domestic chores for a long time.

Tata = Puzzle

Among the Waswahili, credit goes to a man who manages to keep a happy family. This is true in view of the generally held belief that a wife is so intricate a person to live with. One needs to think deeply in order to understand and appreciate her. Consequently, a happy and successful marriage is a test of a husband's knowledge, ingenuity and skill in discovering and resolving the mystery that marriage is believed to be. Women are thought to be puzzling.

Waridi – Rose

Rose is an attractive flower with a thorny stem. Its colour is pinkish and is used as an ornament and also to make a perfume. Despite its bright colour, this flower lasts only a short time after blossoming. Roses are either cultivated or grow wildly.

Used in reference to woman rose flower compares well with a woman on several accounts. A woman is looked at as being attractive due to her beauty. A man who possesses a beautiful woman either as a fiancée or spouse is like one putting on an ornament. And like most Waswahili women, who are proud of their husbands, a woman is supposed to ensure that her man is always smart and attractive.

In spite of her good looks, a woman's character is not without blemish. As the Swahili adage goes, "Mwanamke mzuri hakosi kasoro". This means that regardless of her beauty and reputation, no single woman will pass without a fault of one kind or the other.

This same metaphor also reminds users that whereas a woman may be good looking, of good character and reputation, these attributes have a very short life span. They will only bloom and shine for a while before shedding off.

Zulia – Carpet

"Zulia" is a thick woollen or synthetic fabric for covering floors. This is very valuable among the Waswahili who use them for covering floors in Mosques and houses. This fabric is meant to collect all dirt and keep floors clean.

Figuratively used, a carpet is a woman with very loose morals. She collects all the dirt from anybody who enters her "house". Therefore, such a woman is not selective in her sexual partners and behaviours.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted an explanation of the nature and theme of some thirty-one Kiswahili female metaphors arranged according to commonness in character. Metaphors identified here are not the only ones in Kiswahili. Rather they are the most commonly used. What has been discovered is that the metaphors are of different varieties? Further, it has been shown that some of the metaphors are basically similar in their content and use despite their difference in form.

4. ANATOMY OF KISWAHILI FEMALE METAPHORS

4.1 Introduction

An understanding of Kiswahili female metaphors must begin with the following fundamental questions: what form does Kiswahili female metaphors take? What topic do the metaphors address? What is the subject matter of the topic? How are the metaphors used in a situational context?

In this chapter an attempt is made to analyze aspects which are considered central to the understanding of Kiswahili female metaphors. These features are form, topic, content and use. A detailed account of how each one of the above characteristics is given and shown how they manifest themselves in various female metaphors. Lastly, attitudes towards this linguistic use are given.

4.2 Form

Language manifests itself in various forms. An understanding of forms metaphors take must refer to the properties of referent and perhaps contents. As used in this context, form means the manner in which female metaphors appear as opposed to their subject or substance. The latter give meanings of the trope and will be examined in Section 4.3 under content.

Under form, the choice and use of words will be discussed. Analysis of Kiswahili female metaphor's structural organization is aimed at arriving at the expression of the content in relation to its total effect. Further, common attributes that distinguish female metaphors from other tropes are explored with a view to understanding the peculiarity of the former. Nevertheless, it should be noted at the outset that many of the qualities discussed will be characteristic of most, and not necessarily all, of the Kiswahili female metaphors.

Implicitly, Kiswahili female metaphors are typically descriptive. The descriptions are statements comprising words or sentences, which are poetical. There are basically two strategies used in naming metaphors. First, description is made where a whole referent alludes to a woman. Apart from being graceful, the metaphors are aesthetically pleasing. In most cases the metaphors are short in form. For instance:

Kiswahili	English
Asali	Honey
Mwana	Baby
Nyota	Star
Malaika	Angel
Kidege	A (Small) bird
Ua n.k	Flower etc.

These examples show that these metaphors encompass a number of physical and behavioural characteristics of these objects. An interpretation and understanding of the metaphors' meanings must take into account the two factors.

Second, nouns may be used as metaphors to refer to what the contents of the object are. The following four examples represent this group of metaphors.

Kiswahili	English
Debe	Tin can
Asali	Honey
Kipusa	Rhino's horn
Nazi, n.k.	Coconut etc.

From the above instances of descriptions, it becomes clear that metaphors are given taking into account nature of the things to be used as referents. Also considered are other factors taking into account context and intention (This will be elucidated in Section 4.4)?

Kiswahili metaphors have both morphological and syntactical features characterizing them. They are single words (as above) or phrases. Phrasal metaphors would include the following examples.

Kiswahili	English
Bao la makahawani	An hotel bench or bebble game
Debe bovu	Old tin can
Fingo la nyumba	A house charm
Mungu mdogo	A goddess

These phrases are used and understood by their users to say succinctly what women are.

Apart from being either single words or phrases, Kiswahili female metaphors may also take on the form of single simple sentences. The sentences are normally formed from using single-word metaphors or phrasal metaphors. Whenever used with single word metaphors, the sentence is a possessive or demonstrative one as can be seen in the following instances:

Kiswahili	English
Ua langu	My flower
Kidege chake	His little bird
Malaika wao	Their angel
Punda yule	That ass

Unlike other tropes where what is conveyed or signified is overt, meaning in Kiswahili female metaphors is only implied. Normally, the metaphors do not present their tenor and vehicle. The absence of these two notional elements causes obscurity of sense and so lends analysis and understanding of the tropes extremely difficult and subjective. In such case, tenor – that which is actually under discussion is implicitly understood. For instance, in this study of female metaphors, the tenor is a woman. Whereas the tenor is implied and mildly understood, the total absence of the ground is an issue that has opened wide the interpretation of Kiswahili female metaphors. For instance, a metaphor "ua" (flower) presents only the vehicle of comparison. Any logical and meaningful metaphoric transference can only occur if some resemblance is perceived to exist, between tenor and ground. In the absence of the two, and which is the case with most, if not all, Kiswahili female metaphors exact meaning remains a matter of conjecture.

Having said that the tenor of Kiswahili female metaphors is assumed to be known to be a woman, then the following examples are valid:

Mwanamke ni ua – A woman is [like] a flower. In this example women are the tenor, and flower the vehicle. Naturally, it would be asked: A woman is like a flower in what respect? This is the crux of Kiswahili female metaphors. Although difficult to guess with certainty, it is vital that the ground of the metaphor is

understood to facilitate plausible interpretation of the metaphor in question. Unfortunately, that is not always easy to fathom. Consequently, the unclarity of ground in metaphoric transference of meaning has led to many speculations and even wild interpretations. Nevertheless, in case of a woman being compared to a flower, as in the example above, its meaning would rely heavily on an interpreter's knowledge of woman's behaviour and the characteristics of flowers. A possible commonality that quickly comes to mind is beauty. Therefore, it can be said that a woman is a flower in respect to beauty. In this scheme, the metaphor is explicated by translating it into a predicative form that reveals relation of resemblance.

The above interpretation is by no means the only one. Depending on the experience and intention of the interpreter, and the context within which they are working, the ground of the above metaphor could be anything from such attributes as delicacy, temporariness or even mystification to usefulness. It is likely that the obscurity in demystifying metaphor is what led Aristotle conclude that "[metaphor] is the one thing that cannot be learnt from others; and its is also a sign of genius, since a good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars". (Poetics 1458b; cf. Rhetoric 1405a).

4.3 Topic

Topic is used here to mean the subject matter of Kiswahili female metaphors. It is that the metaphor is about.

In Kiswahili linguistic community, metaphors manifest themselves profoundly in both written and spoken discourses. Female metaphors mostly deal with love affairs. Whenever used, the metaphors show a strong and passionate affection and attachment for a friend. As shown in the discussion of individual metaphors, the topic of love dominates most of them. However, in few circumstances, there are metaphors, which are not concerned with deep affection but rather are used as expletives. Generally, they are used in reference to feelings, emotions and anger. As will be illustrated under context, emphasis through Kiswahili female metaphors of different forms in an effective way of adding force and clarity on the position of woman.

The users of Kiswahili female metaphors assume that receivers have large background knowledge about the vehicles through which ideas are communicated. It is this information that is to be exploited for the full understanding of the metaphors in question. The knowledge gathered is expected to come from social life. The topic of a metaphor forms the ground of comparison between the tenor and the vehicle.

4.4 Content

The manner in which the more general concept of how the topic is referenced is what is meant by content in this report's context. It is concerned with ideas contained in Kiswahili female metaphors.

As can be seen from arrangement in Chapter 3 of this report, Kiswahili female metaphors may be grouped in the same category based on simlarity in themes or meanings. For instance, it was shown that a woman may be referred to by any one of the various types of precious stones: lulu (=pearl); feruzi (=turquoise); almasi (=dimaond); yakuti (=ruby or sapphire) and zumaridi (=emarald). Basically, what all these variants of the same metaphor communicate is beauty and prestige. This instance suggests that there is some basic sense that can be preserved in different renderings of similar metaphors. Other examples of this type of classification include "bird", and "flower".

In this report, a total of thirty-one metaphors have been discussed. Although these are different metaphors rendered in a different style, the content is invariant. Principally, all the metaphors centre on a woman's image as seen by men. It is known that a woman is an adult female human being. However, apart from these features, users of female metaphors have a multitude of additional physical, psychological, social and typical characteristics that they use to identify woman. They embrace the viewpoint held by an individual, a group of people, or the whole society in respect of woman. The metaphors reflect personal feelings of the users and his attitude to the person in question.

The rendering of Kiswahili female metaphors differently, does not change the content a great deal. For instance, whether referred to as jasmine, gemstone, little bird, angel or flower, all these metaphors are alternative conceptualization of a woman's beauty. They are stylistic variants, which can be seen as equivalent in terms of their referential reality. They are both descriptive and evaluative. The metaphors at once evoke a dual interest, one in the objects presented, and the other in the ideas they are intended to convey or the significance they bear. Meanings so conveyed may be affectionate, moral, or satiric. Generally, however, female metaphors in Kiswahili are full of embellishments.

The discussion in Chapter 3 of individual metaphors, and as corroborated by interviewers, reveals that their meaning is multivalued. The metaphors allow freedom of imagination and interpretation, both of which must lie within acceptable logical bounds. The subject matter of female metaphors is usually personal. There is also a degree of license in the subject matter. For instance, one may, if he wishes, refer to one's sexual talents. Such remarks may be approving; they may also be insulting and used for reproof. However, what is evidently clear is that the metaphors point to a coalescense of concepts normally distinct. Consequently, the metaphors involve alteration of the normal meaning of an expression. Vehicles used in female metaphors are instrumental. Therefore, they focus more on these objects and actions related to these objects. In most cases, it is impossible to learn the meaning of a metaphor from the word alone. Its referent: must also be known. In this case, the various words used all point to one referent woman.

Over and above its conceptual meaning, a female metaphor in Kiswahili has a communicative value by virtue of its reference. For instance, although the denotation of such a word as "johari" (gemstone) is a precious stone, its connotation as a pet name may be different from one individual to another. The metaphors play

on people's emotions: they make them proud, happy, etc. by what they suggest. The central factor in metaphoric communication is its denotative meaning. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the two meanings are not easily delineable.

4.5 Use

Use of Kiswahili female metaphors implies the purpose for which the tropes are employed, and there power and effect. In this section, some metaphors are analyzed so as to understand why they are used and when.

Kiswahili female metaphors are usually regarded as a male preserve. This figurative language has a long traditional use. Much of the language used is materialistic in nature. It then follows that men must be having some information and fact, which they wish to be passed over. According to field interviewees, the purposes the metaphors are used for by men are to persuade, inform, flatter, cajole, ridicule, reassure, soothe and assert. For instance, the metaphor "ua langu" (= my flower) shows how much love the users have to the referent. The love is seen in terms of her beauty. The presence of the personal pronoun "my" is a linguistic clue to the relationship between the addresser and addressee, which in this case is definitely very intimate. The use of such metaphors is meant to cement and better the relationship of the two. The possessive pronoun "my" shows the power men weld over women as being owned.

It is known to be the case that no name belongs to any particular thing by nature, but through association. The habit and custom of those who employ the name and who establish its usage are the basis. This is also true of Kiswahili female metaphors. What a receiver of a metaphor gets from it is not alone what is said, but also certain connotations, which affect her consciousness from the manner in which the metaphor is used. Although a metaphor may refer to a bird, fruit, or flower of a sort, no two birds, fruits or flowers are alike. Kiswahili female metaphors were found to exist in a social context that gives them form and meaning. Taken out of this context by social reality, female metaphors remain in an atomistic state. Therefore, it can be safely stated here that whatever meaning exists in metaphors exists contextually.

Asked to comment on why men call women such names as flowers, fruit, angel, etc, interviewees gave almost same answers. A cross-section of the answers received is reproduced here:

- because they perceive them [women] as beautiful and good looking
- because they are the only creatures that can satisfy [sic] a man fully
- because women like to be praised and coloured.
- it is because of their beauty, good manners and smiles.
- these metaphors are used as endearments to make women feel loved or appreciated, as well as compliments.
- because they [men] see them [women] as being beautiful and delicate, and with beautiful voices which are appealing to them.
- to please them and to express their love and appreciation. Sometime to flatter them.

Asked further if these types of metaphors could be used in reference to men, the respondents, both male and female, answered in the negative. Why? Are men (or some of them) not good looking? Do they not like to be praised and coloured? Are they not good mannered? Can't they afford a smile or be appreciated? The interviewees were categorical that these particular metaphors are for women only. What became clear is that female metaphors assume a collective meaning. The metaphors' meanings can only be associated with women on account of their occurrence. Whereas men and women share some attributes, the two are distinguished by the range of metaphors with which they are likely to collocate. Flower or bird may be "acceptable" as male metaphors but they suggest a different kind of meaning because of collection. This explanation leads to a possible conclusion that meanings given to female metaphors are idiosyncratic properties of individual words. The metaphors are sex exclusive. And, apart from the use of metaphors being dictated by sex, other controls include era, discourse, province and status.

The provenance of Kiswahili metaphors is not certain. They may be as old as the linguistic discourse through which they are expressed. Their use is fairly stable and ubiquitous. A diachronic study of this linguistic item would probably be more illuminating. An undertaking of this kind is definitely not possible in a project of the kind under study. However, what can be said with certainty is that with modernism some metaphors may not pass the test of time. Some like "kimbichi" (little canoe) are already threatened with extinction from commonplace use. Such metaphors may just remain treasures in the annals of Kiswahili literature. It is telling that respondents, when asked to say how users got to know these tropes, they pointed out to such sources as books, peers and own creation.

Although there is no complete parallelism between spoken and written varieties of Kiswahili language, the medium through which Kiswahili female metaphors are expressed is the written discourse. Men use metaphors to communicate to their counterparts, the women, or to pass some information about them to third parties. It becomes obvious that participation in this communication operates at the more general level of abstraction. Metaphors used are meant for receivers to ponder and digest them. In most cases, metaphor used has a wide enough application to be recognizable and in this case the user's intention may be clear. However, in some other cases, the meaning of the metaphor may be discerned depending on some inside knowledge.

The linguistic domain in which female metaphors are used is love. Regardless of users involved, whenever used, female metaphors in Kiswahili language always evoke passionate feelings. Among the many factors that contribute to the province of love in this linguistic discourse include such attributes as beauty, delicacy, temporariness, cleanliness, pride, adornment, innocency, faithfulness, etc. Any Swahili woman commanding such features may qualify for any one of the many praise Kiswahili female metaphors.

Participants in the linguistic use of Kiswahili female metaphors are normally involved in intimate contacts. Usually, the metaphors are used in a one-to-one personal communication. The communication involved in most cases is informal exuding respect, love, moral decadence, dependency, garrulity, happiness, pretence, etc.

An important role of female metaphors is to state an emotional feeling of the user. As a linguistic instrument, the metaphor is both a tool of offense and defense. Men use harsh metaphors to vilify women. The slander is meant to be a corrective measure.

What emerges from the use of Kiswahili metaphors is that they assist in understanding the values that Swahili society upholds as important and critical concerning women.

4.6   Attitudes Towards Female Metaphors

The concept "attitude" has been defined in many different ways over the years. Many social science disciplines, including sociolinguistics, have grappled with the important problem of understanding the precise meaning of this crucial concept. It has formed the basis of many researches.

Ferguson (1972) defines language attitudes as elicitable shoulds on who speaks what, when and how. He looks at attitudes in terms of their consequences: those attitudes which influence language behaviour and behaviour toward language. On his part, Williams (1974) considers attitude as an internal state aroused by stimulation of some type and which may mediate the organism's subsequent response. This is a typical mentalist view as opposed to a behaviourist one that treats attitudes simply as responses people make to social functions. Blum and Naylor (1984) sum up attitudes as beliefs, feelings, and action tendencies of an individual or group of individuals towards ideas and people. Concerning the feelings, Husen and Postlethwaite (1985) view them as being either positive or negative and generally enduring though modifiable by experience and/or persuasion. The feelings are said to be learned rather than innate.

In this project report, attitudes are taken to mean tendencies of an individual or individuals to react in a given manner towards a linguistic phenomenon. Both the views held by men and women are analyzed in light of the social function of Kiswahili female metaphors. Of particular interest to this research are consequences believed to result from this language usage to womenfolk. Also considered essential are women's emotional responses to these particular linguistic items. Acquisition of attitudes, their endurance and changeability are also considered.

In an effort to gain a better understanding of attitudes, Anderson (1980) isolated five features he considered crucial. These are emotion, consistency, target, direction, and intensity. Each of these characteristics is exposed in detail against the background of Kiswahili female metaphors. Looked at in totality, attitude is a complex of feelings, desires, fear convictions, prejudices, or other tendencies prompting an

action based on experience. Many interviewees held the notion that men use female metaphors for their own selfish ends. The question "what are your opinions towards such metaphors?" aroused strong emotion especially of disapproval and resentment. It was generally felt that while the meaning per se of individual metaphors could be okay and acceptable, men were said to be flatly insincere in their use. One respondent said thus: "They are alright when used in the right context, sincerely and with proper intentions; but wrong and degrading if used with insincere motives like to flatter, deceive and exaggerate what a woman is."

From the above explanation, it was desirous of women that men be sincere in their use of Kiswahili female metaphors. Instead of flattering women, men should not pretend, but be genuine and only say things one really means or believes. Straightforwardness was considered a good virtue and not insincerity. Women's fears were that continued use of these linguistic items would perpetuate the downgradation that they have been subjected to. Use of female metaphors was felt to be symptomatic of the socio-cultural values woman are seen. Due to their insincerity, the metaphors were considered prejudicial to women's real social status.

It was also observed that men's use of female metaphors is not always consistent. Whereas a man may call a woman a flower when he wants to win her over, it is not unusual for the same man to call the same woman with any of the expletives like a playing card. This changing habit on part of men while dealing with women was seen to be determined move by factors external to the persons involved than factors internal to them. Genuine love is lacking on part of men whose only interest would appear is to have advantage of unsuspecting women. Women were said to be easily taken in by the sweet names used in their praise.

Generally, and despite their discontent with the use of female metaphors, women's degree of emotions was found not be to be very intense. For instance, many of them commented that the metaphors are "not good" or "do not like them" or "are bad". Certainly these emotions are less intense than "I hate them" that was found to be held by a negligible number of respondents – actually two. On their part, male respondents said that the metaphors were "good". However, none of the male respondents said that any of the metaphors used in reference to women would be applied to them. Not even women considered these metaphors appropriate to men. Most were categorical that men could not possibly be associated with meanings of these tropes. Witness the following responses; the first from a male respondent, and the second from a female one.

– Very few [men] would accept them, and so they would mostly brush them off. Men would prefer to be referred with tougher things and not things like flowers and birds. If referred to as "ndovu" [= elephant] "chui" [= leopard], "Kifaru" [= rhinocerous] etc, most men would accept them depending on the intention of the user.

– Some [men] would feel insulted mainly because the metaphors are associated with beauty, while many men prefer to be associated with strength and success. The feminine nature of (women create) room for such

comments but the authoritative nature of men does not necessarily demand such metaphors. Men would probably laugh them off.

These two examples are quite revealing. First, it is unlikely that men would like such metaphors as flowers, honey, bird, etc. to refer to them. They consider their use to be appropriate to women. Men's view is rooted deeply in societal expectations. Otherwise, if the intention is not a serious one, that is, if the user does not really mean men are what they are referred to, then they do not mind their use. Second, men feel they are stronger and tougher than women. Therefore, a prevailing view is that distinction should be maintained and be seen even in language use. What emerges from this discussion is that all people have attitudes which result in tendencies – to respond positively or negatively to a situation, a person or a group of people or an idea. The attitudes held have a strong bearing to an individual's motives, values, personality and emotions. For instance, answers received for questions on whether men would accede to being identified with female metaphors, tell that, although informally, men and women recognize and want to be identified with their respective groups, a woman feels that because of their descriptive and evaluative nature, the metaphors under discussion are suitable for them. Men, on the other hand, identify and feel belonging to a tougher group that needs tougher metaphors.

Another question that elicited various answers was about the mode of acquisition of female metaphors. Major objective was to inquire into reasons or factors that lead to the development and organization of female metaphors used in Swhaili society. It was observed that metaphors are learned through various social experiences. Institutions that were felt to contribute significantly in passing on knowledge were the family, the peer group, school and religion. In Swahili society, as pointed earlier on, women are expected to be respectful to any male member of their family. This type of upbringing has a definite impact on the opinions that males form about women. They are seen as subservient and not equal. Women felt it is in bad taste for them to behave like a man. Family is a place where most people live. It therefore follows that it has a crucial role in attitude formation and maintenance.

On the other hand, membership of the same age group has its role in attitude formation also. Peerage groups in the neighborhood, school, and society at large perpetuate ideas and convictions gained through various sources. These sources include fellow peers, family, school or religion. It is known to be the case that at teenage state, boys have a propensity towards machismo. Incidentally, it is at this same age that they come to know of sex affairs. Probably unconsciously, and aiming to please their girlfriends, boys prefer using decorative language that include female metaphors. As they fantasize about their affairs, they use comparisons that summarize their feelings at the same time keeping them a grade higher than their friends.

At school, all sorts of experiences come to bear on attitudes held by boys about girls. Schools curricula, teachers, and fellow learners all influence opinions held. In many schools, especially at primary level, there are gendered roles and practices that put girls and boys in distinct groups. While girls will engage in cleaning their

classrooms, fetching water and playing particular games like nteball, boys will be involved in tougher jobs like fencing and playing football. In most instances, school and class prefects are normally boys. What girls feel is that it is only boys who can lead. For them, they are seen as being delicate and not fit to engage in particular activities. Being members of a society that discriminates women, teachers, especially male ones, carry on their prejudice up to school. Their position of role models is crucial to their pupils who aspire to be like them. The same could be said of learning materials like books, most of which are prepared by men and reflect their attitudes. Portraying women as insubordinate through pictures and language is characteristic of most books used in schools. Pupils pick on the written word without question.

Whereas Islam recognizes the importance and equality of women and men before God, certain privileges and exemptions are misconstrued to mean inequality. Badawi's (1980: 13-14) explanation sums it all:

> In some cases indeed, woman has certain advantages over man. For example, the woman is exempted from the daily prayers and from fasting during her menstrual periods and forty days after childbirth. She is also exempted from fasting during her pregnancy and when she is nursing her baby if there is any threat to her health or her baby's. If the missed fasting is obligatory, she can make up for the missed days whenever she can. She does not have to make up for the prayers missed for any of the above reasons. Although women can and did go into the mosque during the days of the prophet and thereafter attendance at the Friday congregational prayers is optional for them while it is mandatory for men (on Friday).

Badawi hastens to remind that these are tender Islamic teachings, which are considerate to women, taking into account their physiological, and psychological changes associated with nature.

While it has been pointed out that attitudes are acquired through such sources like family, peerage, school and religion, it was interestingly noted that some of the metaphors are men's own creation. Be that as it may, a valid conclusion to be drawn from this scenario is that men's ingenuity has a strong connection with their social experiences. This creativity is motivated and controlled by ideas, opinions and facts of their lives. On the whole, many respondents were not exactly sure <u>when</u> and <u>how</u> they acquired the metaphors. This leads to opinions held by some of the interviewees and discussants that the process of acquiring attitudes is a subtle one.

It can be said that attitudes held by men influence their use of Kiswahili female metaphors. They believe that women are not like them on several accounts. This they rationalize by reasons based on social realities. Whereas some of the attitudes held are based on truth, many are based on unjustified opinions, whose genesis is the socioeconomic background of the Swahili society. It was also observed that attitudes towards women were generalized. Many female respondents were

strongly against use of female metaphor claiming that they were not genuine and so served to meaningful purpose.

4.7 Conclusion

There are a number of important aspects of female metaphors, which have been dealt with in this chapter. These are form, topic, content and use. Properties of female metaphors have been discussed with central emphasis being placed on choice, structure and use of words – used in reference to women. It has been shown that female metaphors are always descriptive single nouns, phrases or single sentences. Meaning of the metaphors was found to be subterranean due to the absence of the ground and the tenor. However, ground and tenor in female metaphors is assumed to be present. Interpretation of Kiswahili metaphors also requires a comprehensive knowledge of not only the social-cultural background of the Waswahili, but also the behaviour of women and characteristics of their references.

It has also been shown that female metaphors dwell on love as their subject matter. The tropes are used to express feelings, emotions and sometimes anger in the latter case the metaphors villify. The topic of the metaphor is the link between tenor and vehicle.

Regardless of differences in form some metaphors have been shown to be similar in themes and meanings. These two factors are hinged on various characteristics of vehicles, which may be physical, psychological, social or typical. The metaphors summarize users' viewpoint of women in society. They are both descriptive and evaluative. By instrumentality of vehicles which focus on objects and actions, meaning of Kiswahili female metaphors is dependent on a host of factors including the referent and the interpreter.

This research has established that Kiswahili female metaphors have been used by men for a very long time now. Generally, the tropes are mostly used to win women over. Nevertheless, occasionally they may be employed as expletives. Whenever used, the metaphors have a collective meaning. Among the controls of metaphor use were found to be age, sex, area, discourse, province and status. Acquisition of metaphors is rooted in the whole cultural fabric.

Attitudes towards female metaphor use were found to be negative. Most respondents rejected men's use of metaphors as being insincere; and meant to flatter, deceive and exaggerate. Apart from insincerity, men are accused of inconsistency in their determination to please women. To prove that female metaphors were degrading, both male and female interviewees were against their use, with the former showing greatest disapproval for such metaphors used in their reference.

5. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study set out to inquire into the sexist overtones evident in Kiswahili metaphors with women as subject of focus. It undertook to describe in detail some of the metaphors used to describe women, specifically their characteristics, principles underlying their use, conditions of their application and attitudes they evoke.

The objective of the study was to describe, explain and critically analyze aspects of female metaphors in Kiswahili language with a view to formulating clear and satisfactory explanation accounting for this linguistic behaviour. The purpose of the project was to introduce scholars interested in Kiswahili to a vital but little–known genre which is female metaphor.

Adapting a sample study design, Mombassa was chosen to represent Kiswahili linguistic community. Factors considered in the choice were its centrality among the family of Kiswahili dialects, historical and cultural backgrounds. Fieldwork took the form of questionnaires, discussions and observation. Data collected were carefully analyzed and inferences made.

Guided by a genderlect theory, the study analyzed female metaphors considering their form, topic, content and use. Whereas these were considered to be critical factors in understanding peculiarity in metaphor use between sexes, this research went ahead and interpreted the above features against the social–cultural background of the speech community. It was the conviction of the research team that in order to understand and appreciate uniqueness in language behaviour, causal factors at play on the linguistic landscape have to be considered in their proper perspective. Language is part of culture. Therefore, the total fabric, no doubt, has a bearing on this important expressive artifact. Against this background, the project report was organized in sections highlighting crucial points.

Chapter one was introductory. It gave a general view of the research which formed the foundation of investigation. Factors leading to the study, purpose for the research and value and significance attached to the problem were all highlighted. Also considered was the study design. In chapter two, this research looked at the Waswahili as the linguistic community in which the whole project was based. Specifically, their culture and language were examined in detail, with a special section devoted to women in profile in this coastal society. The research discovered that the Swhaili way of life resembles somewhat that of the early Arab settlers at the coast with whom they interacted and lived together. The impact of Arabic way of life was seen to manifest in Kiswahili language. Considered to be normal and characteristic of all languages the world over, the research observed that Kiswahili is one of the world's major languages. This claim is backed by a number of reasons outlined in this report. As for the image of a Swahili woman, it was reported that despite it being general, it represents an ideal picture. Her life is shaped and

directed by societal norms. However, with modernism, this picture is bound to change in a big way.

In chapter three of this project, an exposition of individual female metaphors was attempted. Similar metaphors were categorized and translated into English from Kiswahili. These linguistic items reflect deep-rooted and systematized cultural stereotypes held by Swhaili society about women. Men's views and attitudes are as a result of socialization. However, it was shown that it is not always that whenever used Kiswahili female metaphors carry disparaging overtones.

While dealing with anatomy of Kiswahili female metaphors in chapter four, this study specifically dwelt on form, topic, content, use and attitudes held by either sex. The metaphors were found to be structurally analyzable and that they are both descriptive and evaluative. Whereas love dominates female metaphors, exact meaning of individual metaphors is so subjective that no single explanation should be accepted as universal. Metaphor users employ same linguistic items which may mean different things depending on circumstances prevailing at the time of use and interpretation. In a word, most female metaphors are polysemous. Analysis of individual female metaphors has shown that these terms are gender-specific. Men use them mostly in attaining extralinguistic goals. Considering that the metaphors refer to a very large extent to the properties of the objects, or their content, it is logical to conclude that the tropes are noted in physical and cultural experiences. They are not randomly assigned. Basically though, it became evident that metaphors are used to reinforce one's message and intention.

5.2 Recommendations

On the basis of this research and conclusions drawn thereof, it is believed that there is still room for more research to be undertaken. Since the issue of language and gender still has a universal and continuing importance and appeal, serious scholarship should be devoted to the area. Such a study definitely needs a wide scale, long-term multi-disciplinary approach to fully understand and appreciate the status of women in society. The present study has just contributed towards that goal in a modest way. The issue of language and sex calls for concerted efforts of such social scientists like anthropologists, sociologists, aesthesticists, psychologists, linguists, literary critics, archaeologists and historians. However, this enormous task may not be realized without a strong financial back up. The current report should be viewed as one that has opened up this interesting linguistic behaviour for research by other investigators not only in Kiswahili but all over the world that this language behaviour manifests. This report is by no means exhaustive.

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APPENDIX I
RESEARCH SCHEDULE

Under the auspices of OSSREA sponsorship, we are carrying out research on attitudes towards women as evidenced in Kiswahili metaphors.

Kindly supply us with answers to the following questions. Responses will be held in strict confidence and will be used for no purpose other than this research.

1.   Sex   F   M   (Tick as appropriate).

2.   Age: below 20 years

        Between 20-40 years

        Above 40 years.

3.   Name any Kiswahili metaphors you know are used in reference to women.

        ………………………………………………………………….……………
        ………………………………………………………………………………….

4.   Why should men call women flowers, birds, honey, sweet, etc?

        …………………………………………………………………………………
        …………………………………………………………………………………

5.   How do you think users acquired these metaphors?

        …………………………………………………………………………………
        …………………………………………………………………………………

6.   In what context are the metaphors used?……………………………………………

7.   What are the implications of this use?

         …………………………………………………………………..……………
         …………………………………………………………………………………

8.   What is the intention of the users of these metaphors?

         …………………………………………………………………….……………
         …………………………………………………………………………………

9.   What are your opinions towards such metaphor?

         …………………………………………………………………………………
         …………………………………………………………………………………

10.   What do you think is the effect to this language use of womenfolk.

         …………………………………………………………………………………
         …………………………………………………………………………………

11.   Do you think other kinds of metaphors could be used?

         …………………………………………………………………………………
         …………………………………………………………………………………

12.   If yes, which one; If not, why not?

         …………………………………………………………………………………
         …………………………………………………………………………………

13.   Do you think it makes a difference for women to be referred by these metaphors?

         …………………………………………………………………………………….
         ………………………………………………………………………………….

14.   What do you think would happen if men were referred to by the same metaphors?

         …………………………………………………………………………………
         …………………………………………………………………………………

Thank you.

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Eldoret</div>

APPENDIX II

MAJOR SWAHILI DIALECTS ALONG THE COAST OF EAST AFRICA

Northern Coast

Chimwini (also known as Chimbalazi or Kibarawa)

Kitikuu (Kigunya)

Kisiu

Kipate

Kiamu

Central Coast

Kingozi

Kingare

Kimvita

Kijomvu

Chifundi

Southern Coast

Kivumba

Kimtang'ata

Kipemba

Kitumbatu

Kihadimu

Kimgao