

A LEXICO – SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF EKEGUSII
CIRCUMCISION SOCIAL VARIETIES

by

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Declaration

I declare that *A Lexico-Semantic Analysis of EkeGusii Circumcision Social Varieties* is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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Sign 

Date

Beatrice Kemunto C. Obwoye

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Dedication

For my grandmother, Jerry Kwamboka Oreng Gichana and my daughters;- Rebin Raveena
and Raby.

Summary

A Lexico-Semantic Analysis of EkeGusii Circumcision Social Varieties

The study is based on the lexical choices in the social context of *EkeGusii* circumcision and the meaning of the various lexical items used in the social context of circumcision and gender differentiation in the choice of the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision. This special variety is also used within *EkeGusii* standard variety but when used in the context of circumcision, the meaning of the lexical items is understood based on context. It is believed that language embodies traditional values and that these values are socially conditioned. This study considers the social conditioning of the circumcision social varieties. Linguistic traditional values of *EkeGusii* language are reflected in, among others, gender differentiation in the choice of the lexicon in the social context of circumcision. The study was based on two theories; the social theory and contrastive lexico-semantic theory. Social theory was useful in analyzing language in society and what language means to its users while contrastive lexico-semantic theory was useful in analyzing *EkeGusii* culture-specific meaning which does not translate readily to English. Participatory observation, interview schedules, informers, questionnaires and introspection were used to collect data. Data was analyzed qualitatively in view of the choice of the lexicon within language variation. Findings showed that the sound plays an important role in postulating meaning of *EkeGusii* Circumcision Social Varieties (ECSV) through vowel lengthening. The lexicon of ECSV comprises nouns and verbs and that this lexicon is a style as well as register of *EkeGusii*. Gender differentiation in the language is a case of socialization rather than biological. Finally, meaning relations established by the lexicon of ECSV include synonymy, hyponymy, polysemy as well as antonymy. It is recommended in this study that teachers should be trained on Sociolinguistics, carry out classroom research to identify the learners' sociolinguistic culture and integrate an individual learner with others in the same level especially since the school has taken the role of socialization of an individual.

Key words

Circumcision, clitoridectomy, euphemism, gender differentiation, lexico-semantics, register, sense relations, social variation, style

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Preamble

The study analyzed the reflection of various semantic categories through word stems of *EkeGusii* lexemes used in circumcision social varieties. The lexical items are used in the social context of circumcision and their meaning is context specific. Circumcision is a general term that is used to apply to both male circumcision and female clitoridectomy. Within *EkeGusii* circumcision, language use is based on gender as well as age of the user. In this research, the lexicon used in *EkeGusii* circumcision is a variety of *EkeGusii* because it is a special variety that is used within *EkeGusii* standard variety. *EkeGusii* culture and traditional values are also reflected in the way each gender uses language. The term *EkeGusii* is in italics because it is the language under investigation.

Apart from identifying the lexical choices made in circumcision that are different from everyday use of *EkeGusii*, the research set out to determine lexical patterns as influenced by circumcision, describe gender differentiation in the choice of the lexicon and account for the different patterns of gender differentiation in *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. The language under investigation is *EkeGusii* while *AbaGusii* are the people who use *EkeGusii* and that *Gusii* is the region where *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties are likely to be found.

Language or lexical choices as well as lexical-semantic analysis cannot be studied in isolation; partly for this reason, extension is made with regard to gender differentiation in the choice of the lexicon in the social context of birth/naming, marriage and death. In the contexts of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties (ECSV), the males use a different variety from that used by their female counterparts. The focus of the current study is *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties rather than the standard variety of *EkeGusii*. In this regard, a variety of language follows the definition by Hudson (1996:22) who defines a variety of language as “a set of linguistic items with similar social distribution.... A variety can be much smaller than a language....” While studying *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties, context of use also determines meaning rather than what the lexical items mean in conventional reference. Along the same lines, Trask, (1997:93) makes reference “... of language according to use in social situations as diatypic variation.”

At present, a lot of the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties is in the minds of older native speakers because of the ban on Femal Genital Mutilation (FGM), modernization of male circumcision and death of older members of *EkeGusii* speaking community. Due to the fact that the lexicon is not documented, studies carried out regarding the topic have not described the meaning of individual lexical items with regard to *EkeGusii* circumcision. This may partly be because word meanings are sometimes left largely unanalyzed, or as Cruse (2000:87) argues the word items are reduced to mere skeletons of their true selves (Cruse, 2000:87).

The current study focused on lexico-semantic analysis of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. This is a variety of *EkeGusii* rather than a dialect because it operates within *EkeGusii* language but is used for a specific purpose. However, ECSV may not feature in the standard variety outside the context of circumcision. Lexical items used in ECSV give different conceptual meanings when used in contexts other than that of circumcision. In the context of circumcision, the meanings of the lexical items used take a contextual dimension. The analysis of lexical semantics of ECSV therefore, centred on aspects of language such as lexical choice, use and meaning realization in context.

The study aimed at identifying the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision with a view of classifying it. The classification of *EkeGusii* language in this particular study was based on whether ECSV is a dialect of *EkeGusii* language, a variety or register. *EkeGusii* language classification took a sociological dimension for the simple reason that the study is sociolinguistic in nature. The focus of sociolinguistic studies is on social characteristics of language. These social characteristics rely on other aspects of language to be fully realized. As a result, the aspects of lexical-semantics of ECSV analyzed include: grammar, vocabulary, discourse, phonology and morphology. Aspects of culture, gender, ideology as well as social ranks also formed part of the lexico-semantic analysis of ECSV.

An important consideration with regard to language and circumcision is the fact that circumcision is an aspect of culture. The study analyzed the relationship between culture and language and specifically *EkeGusii* language and *EkeGusii* culture. The study basically investigated lexical choices and patterns of lexical choices as influenced by the circumcision domain in *EkeGusii* language. Culture being a way of life as lived by a people in a particular moment in history has a role to play in the way linguistic items are chosen, used and meaning realized within it. In the study, it is realized that culture and language are not static and as a result circumcision among the *AbaGusii* has been evolving and most of the lexical items

related to circumcision social variety are vanishing. As people stop a particular cultural practice, words associated with that culture cease to be useful and with time, their lexicon dies.

Another consideration is the role of gender in the context of ECVS. Men use language differently from women. Studies carried out by Okindo (1995) and Choti (1998) depict a woman as being positioned lower than a man in the *Gusii* society. The current study however attributes the low status accorded to women in *Gusii* society to the limited access to the lexicon of ECSV and the cultural definition of the *Gusii* society. Culture is dynamic. Being dynamic, the situation in Ekegusii culture is bound to change. The change will capture events such as the ban of circumcision by the Government of Kenya.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

This research attempted to identify and unravel different patterns of lexical items and meanings of *EkeGusii* as reflected in the male and female circumcision contexts. The study was undertaken at a time the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision is likely to be experiencing meaning change due to the ban on female genital mutilation (FGM) by the Government of Kenya (GOK). Male circumcision has also been modernized to conform to current practices arising from the need to embrace hygiene during the cutting and heavy Christianization-cum fading away of *Gusii* cultural practices. Studies that have been carried out by scholars on *EkeGusii* circumcision have left out lexico-semantics of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties (ECSV). For example Monyenye (2004) studied rites of passage and the role of circumcision among the *Gusii* community. Akama and Maxon (2006) have also written an extensive ethnography of the vanishing cultural heritage of the *Gusii* among others. Many of the studies did no in-depth determination of lexical choices and gender embedded meanings with regard to the context of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. The *Gusii* circumcision songs (*chisimbore*) that accompany circumcision have been in existence and are metaphoric in nature owing to the fact that their surface meaning differ from the underlying meaning. However, their linguistic value has neither been explored nor exploited or has had their metaphoric importance studied.

There are three aspects of *EkeGusii* speaking people that make the *Gusii* unique; First their plurilinguistic characteristic which is shared within the sociolinguistic profile of Africa (Batibo 2005:1) and secondly, their highly unquestioned traditional values that are socially conditioned. The traditional values are symbolic and instrumental in the society's linguistic

development. Thirdly, Abagusii men choose the lexicon differently from their female counterparts.

1.3. Background to the Study

EkeGusii is spoken in south-western Kenya in Kisii and Nyamira counties. Other speakers have migrated and settled largely in Trans-Nzoia, Nakuru (Molo) and Kajiado counties of Kenya. *EkeGusii* is used for intra-ethnic communication and is closely related to Igikuria, Ngurimi, Zanaki, Shashi and Nata (Ogechi, 2002). The language itself is fairly homogeneous. Amid the absence of isoglosses, the language is not free of variation. Varieties would normally be referred to as dialects and registers (Mulaudzi, 1999:22). Following this, it can be said that there is the existence of Ekerogoro (northern) and Ekemaate (southern) dialects in *EkeGusii*. Ekerogoro dialect is considered to be the standard variety. It is the variety in common use in domains such as the media, church (Bible, hymn and liturgy) and is also the one used as a medium of instruction for lower primary school (grade one to three). For instance, phonologically, Ekerogoro dialect uses the plosive sound /t/ while Ekemaate use /d/ in place of /t/ in oral communication. However orthographically, the same sound is represented as /t/. There are also differences in some lexical items which make the two dialects of *EkeGusii* to be classified as Ekerogoro and Ekemaate respectively. Generally, *AbaGusii* speak a single unified language unlike their western Bantu counterparts (the Luhya) who speak a cluster of closely related languages with clearly marked isoglosses (Simpson, 2008:237).

The current research investigates *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties that are socially determined. Such socially-determined variation includes language forms used in birth/naming, marriage, death as well as variations determined by gender differentiation. Thus, circumcision social varieties belong to this cluster.

In the present research, *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties are studied as a variety of *EkeGusii*. This study is based on a premise where a variety is seen as a smaller unit than a dialect (Mulaudzi, 1999; Peytit, 1980). *EkeGusii* may not be an endangered language. However, Crystal (2000: vii) has observed that:

...Although its exact scope is not yet known, it is certain that the extinction of languages is progressing rapidly in many parts of the world, and it is of the highest importance that the linguistic profession realizes that it has to step up its descriptive efforts.

Sometimes, it may be difficult to really identify when a specific language is becoming endangered. The current study is as a result of the call to carry out research on the endangered languages of the world (Crystal, 2000: vii) and the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties is one of them. Indeed, *EkeGusii* language may have been studied from as far back as 1960 with Whiteley, (1960) studying the tense system in *EkeGusii*. Nevertheless, not all aspects of the language seem to have been carried out. Other studies on *EkeGusii* standard variety have been carried out by Mbori (1994) on the *EkeGusii* noun phrase and Okindo's (1995) exploration on the representation of gender in *EkeGusii* proverbs. Choti (1998) studied language and hierarchy with regard to the portrayal of the Gusii woman. More recent studies on *EkeGusii* standardization and harmonization have been carried out by among others Ogechi et al (2012).

Research centering on social varieties in *EkeGusii* has received minimal attention. The social varieties may contain items that are also found in *EkeGusii* standard variety but are not considered standard *EkeGusii* variety because of a number of reasons. First, it is not the variety that may be exposed to those who have not been circumcised. Second, it is not the variety that is considered by other people to be *EkeGusii* standard language and, third, it is not the variety for day-to-day use of *EkeGusii*. The current study therefore, makes an analysis of a restricted form of *EkeGusii* social variety from a lexico-semantic perspective

1.4. Justification and Significance of the Study

The study will provide useful linguistic information on language and society. The study is based on the sociolinguistics of *EkeGusii*. Sociolinguistics is a branch of linguistics which investigates the individual and social variation of language. The study set to find out the interaction between language, the structures and functions of *EkeGusii*. It also investigated how people use language at a given time and within the circumcision domain.

The findings of this study are expected to provide a linguistic perspective of *EkeGusii* circumcision and suggest ways of preserving the language. The little information existing regarding the topic is not linguistic in nature. The study will provide a linguistic explanation regarding circumcision. This information is important to sociolinguists, anthropologists, planners and educationists.

The current study expands the sociolinguist's perspective on the language variation with regard to the context of circumcision among *EkeGusii* speakers. A sociolinguist is concerned

with getting more information on language and society, analyzing variations within a language, outlining divergences between men's and women's language among other concerns (Hudson, 1996). The behaviour of the lexicon of *EkeGusii* will be examined to explain why lexical items behave rather differently in terms of use according to context and gender. The inquiry will shed more light into *EkeGusii* whose lexico-semantics of circumcision social varieties have not been extensively studied.

It is possible that part of the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision is bound to fall out of use. Two of the reasons for the fall out of usage stem from the ban of FGM by the Kenyan government, as enshrined in the Kenyan constitution (2010) and secondly, the departure from the traditional method of male circumcision to the conventional ones. The result of the lexicon falling out of use is that it will not be effectively passed on to the next generation. It needs to be noted that one critical property of language is cultural transmission. There was need, therefore, for research into a linguistic analysis in the context of *EkeGusii* circumcision to be carried out as a way of preserving the linguistic aspect since not all cultural practices may be harmful. Preservation of the lexicon used in the domain of circumcision is useful for future references.

The study will contribute to teaching African cultures in the English language and also serve as a tool for cohesion and conflict resolution in a multi-cultural society such as Kenya. At the moment, teachers who come from communities that do not practice FGM may find it difficult to socialize learners from communities that go through the rite of FGM. If the teacher understands how language works in *EkeGusii* society, s/he will have insights at his/her disposal and in turn foster confidence in these learners.

Finally, the current study gives an analysis of the way in which language is affected by differences in region /gender/ context of use since as Trask (1997:202) points out '... variation of language is the central part of sociolinguistics'.

1.5. Objectives of the Study

In order to unravel the various lexical patterns and meanings in *EkeGusii*, the inquiry sought to:

- i. Identify lexical choices in circumcision that are different from everyday use of *EkeGusii*.
- ii. Determine lexical choices and patterns as influenced by the circumcision domain in *EkeGusii* language.

- iii. Describe the patterns within the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties.
- iv. Account for the different patterns of gender differentiation in *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties.

1.5.1. Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- i. What are the lexical choices made in the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties?
- ii. What sociolinguistic background supports the lexico-semantics of the *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties?
- iii. Which kind of lexico-semantic patterns exist in male and female *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties?
- iv. What sociolinguistic role does gender differences exhibited in the choice of the lexicon in the context of *EkeGusii* circumcision institutions play?

1.6. Scope of the Study

The study looked at language variation that is socially determined. The study was therefore, limited to *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties which include the sub-varieties of birth/naming, marriage and death as well as variations determined by gender differentiation. The study also covered the lexical choices made by the males in the male circumcision school and the females in the female circumcision school of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. Additionally, the study accounted for the different patterns of gender differentiation in *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. Extension was made to the sub-varieties of marriage, death and birth/naming since it is assumed in this study that their lexicon is acquired at circumcision schools. Further, the study investigated the extent to which there exists regional variation in *EkeGusii* social varieties. Considerations were made to the role of lexical phonology in constructing word meaning.

Lexico-semantic analysis of ECSV touches on meaning of words and how some word meanings are related to others. It also studies language variation that is socially determined. In ECSV, meaning is realized partly based on context. The study of meaning(s) derived from context is usually handled under pragmatics.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

The current study deals with lexico-semantic analysis of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. The study is based on two theories: social theory and contrastive lexico-semantic theory. Social theory is derived from Boasian anthropology and it is fundamental to this study because the study focused on the ethnography of *EkeGusii*. The social theory will be useful in analyzing language in society and what language means to its users. While Fairclough (1992) has listed many principles of the social theory, the principles of the theory that are fundamental to the study state that: In analyzing language in-society, the focus should be on what language use means to its users. Language operates differently in different environments and that, in order to understand how language works, we need to contextualize it properly, to establish the relations between language usage and the particular purposes for which, and conditions under which, it operates. The contextualized forms of language that occur in society focus on varieties in that language, for such variation is at the core of what makes language and meaning social. Language users have repertoires containing different sets of varieties, and these repertoires are the material with which they engage in communication. The distribution of elements of the repertoires on any society is unequal and that communication is influenced by the structure of the world system.

The social theory by theorists such as Foucault, Bourdieu and Habermas address language from a broadly social-semiotic viewpoint. In socio-semiotics, meaning is explained based on context specific social as well as cultural circumstances. Social semiotics considers meaning as being a social practice. The current study follows the social-semiotic viewpoint since *EkeGusii* circumcision is a social practice whose code of communication is formed by the social practices accompanying it. *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties is studied under two aspects of language namely lexicology and semantics. Therefore, the contrastive lexico-semantic theory by Goddard was used to analyze meaning from an interaction convention and contextual construct. Since lexico-semantics is studied under sociolinguistics in this research, the theory will enable us to analyze the relationship between language and culture. This is because vocabulary of any language will reflect the culture of its speakers (Goddard 1998: 2). The theory will also be useful in analyzing *EkeGusii* culture-specific meaning(s) which do not translate readily into English. We will in this case use English as a meta-language to describe *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties amid the existence of obstacles in differences in culture and grammar of *EkeGusii* and English. Lexico-Semantic theory will be used because meaning the way it is understood in English has got no equivalent in ECSV. However, we will use the item 'meaning.' The direct translation of meaning in *EkeGusii* is *eng'encho yaye/ende* (its

reason/another reason) when using English as a meta-language.

The lexical items used in *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties may also be found in the standard variety. The meanings of these lexical items however differ based on context. The contrastive lexico-semantic theory will therefore help to draw a distinction between meanings which are encoded in the structure of the language, as opposed to meaning which can be derived or deduced from how language is used on a particular occasion, in a particular context since the theory considers that meaning is differentiated in certain contexts. Language is embedded in some context (Hartman, 1983: 109) hence meaning is understood based on context. Further, Hartman (1983:109) argues that:

Language is a rule-governed behaviour in interactive context. The communicative competencies of native speakers include the ability to vary their usage according to the situation in which they find themselves.

The contrastive lexico-semantic theory will enable us provide an analysis of lexical items with more than one semantic specification on one hand, and lexical items that have the same spelling but different semantic representation, on the other.

1.8. Literature Review

This section reviews literature on thematic basis in relation to:

Social variation in language

EkeGusii Culture and Lexico-Semantics

Gender differentiation as well as lexical choices.

The discussion below reflects reviewed literature on the identified thematics

1.8.1. Social Variation in Language that Foreground the Gaps in the Current Study

As mentioned earlier in this study, *EkeGusii* is fairly homogeneous. Even with the absence of sufficient evidence of isoglosses in the language, *EkeGusii* is not free of variation. The term ‘variety’ includes what would normally be referred to as dialects and registers (Mulaudzi, 1999:2). The current research investigated ECSV which include those varieties that are socially determined and would include: birth/naming social varieties, marriage varieties and varieties relating to death. In this regard, ECSV is studied not as a dialect of *EkeGusii* but as a variety of *EkeGusii*. Varieties are said to be smaller than dialects Mulaudzi, 1999: 3). A

variety is also homogenous and semantically broad enough to function in all contexts of communication (Mulaudzi, 1999).

ECSV can be said to possess broad enough semantic scope. However, ECSV does not function in all normal contexts of *EkeGusii* communication since it is limited to the context of circumcision only. When ECSV is used within the context of circumcision, it marks off those *EkeGusii* native speakers who belong from those who do not. In other words a Gusii who is not circumcised will not understand the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision. However, this kind of variation does not fragment *EkeGusii*. Unlike regional variation where the language becomes fragmented through dialect variations, ECSV has not fragmented the language; instead it enriches *EkeGusii*. However, with the GoK ban on FGM as well as modernization of male circumcision, the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision is bound to be affected negatively. Variation, apart from fragmenting the language, leads to the creation of varieties of that language.

The current study is concerned with the variations within *EkeGusii* and specifically, ECSV whose linguistic study have not been carried out. The kind of variation that forms the backbone of this study is not regional but social. The variety is socially determined and as such the definition given by Trudgill (1980:5) will be used for the purpose of specificity in the current study:

We shall use variety as a neutral term to apply to any particular kind of language which we wish, for some purpose, to consider as a single entity. The term will be used in an ad hoc manner in order to be as specific as we wish for a particular purpose.

Meaning of the lexical items used in the context of *EkeGusii* circumcision is understood based on context. In support of this view, anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowsk of 1884-1942 in Kramsch (1998:26) discovered that

language was key to understanding the meaning but he realized that, in order to understand what was going on, it was not enough to understand and write down the meaning of words. One had to understand why, what and how in a specific context of situation. In addition, one had to link their words, beliefs, and mindsets to a larger context of culture such as tribal economics, social organization, kinship patterns, fertility rites, seasonal rhythms, concepts of time and space. Thus the semantic meanings of verbal signs had to be supplemented by the pragmatic meanings of verbal

actions in context.

This is because *EkeGusii* circumcision takes place in a spatio-temporal situation. In this regard, meanings of the lexical choices have to be understood based on the social context of situation in which they are used.

As much as there are those essential elements of culture that will be static, culture keeps on changing in line with changing societal environment. For *AbaGusii*, some aspects of their culture are dynamic and yet there is something in *Ekegusii* culture that remains permanent.

Further, the study is concerned with the cultural features that determine the choice of the lexicon by the females as well as the males in the social context of *EkeGusii* circumcision rather than the genetical make-up that may be behind linguistic gender differentiation. In many speech communities, women and men don't speak identically (Finnegan, 2004:377). Therefore, ECSV cannot be studied in isolation of gender differentiation. Choti (1998) carried out a study in *EkeGusii* and attributed differences in men's and women's social ranks to social forces rather than biological ones. Men and women are socially different in that society lays down different social roles for them and expects different behaviour patterns from them (Trudgill, 1973:88).

1.8.2. EkeGusii Culture and Lexico-Semantics

Culture has been defined in this study as a way of life as lived by a people in a particular moment in history in response to social, political and economic challenges. The concern of this study with regard to culture is to determine the relationship between language and culture by getting evidence from ECSV. Culture and language are inseparable. Indeed the lexico-semantics of *EkeGusii* circumcision may basically be a reflection of the linguistic culture of *Abagusii*. Akama & Maxon, 2006:5 explain that:

When a child was born into the Gusii community, his/her life was already predetermined by existing social forces. This was due to the fact that a child was born into an already existing distinct cultural system... The child is caught up in a complex cultural web that s/he cannot alter. Culture in this sense is a social phenomenon; it is a social heritage and ... it exists before the individual who, on his arrival in the world, participates in it and leaves it behind when s/he dies.

The Gusii child is born into an already set up linguistic culture that in itself is distinct from other linguistic cultures that this child may encounter. The child acquires the linguistic culture and grows up with it; practising it and eventually leaving it behind for others.

Once cultural systems have been established and/or institutionalized, they are fixed and objectified in the course of temporal disposition. In this case, culture entails connotations of being static. If the objective dimension of culture is anything to go by, one needs to understand why the Gusii have, for instance, continued to practise female circumcision (clitoridectomy), do not give any family inheritance (especially land) to the girl child and recognise marriage for women who are unable to give birth to their own children so that other women may bear children on their behalf to perpetuate their lineage. Culture also required that if a Gusii man who had attained the requisite marriage age died without a wife, he was married by his kinsmen to a particular woman so as to keep his clan alive. This was known as '*okonywomera embera*' which literally translate '*to marrying the grave.*' All these aspects of Gusii life demonstrate the objectivity or the static nature of culture, those aspects of people's way of life that refuses to change despite their inherent misnomer of such practices in the rapidly changing modern society. These cultural practices are internalized by Gusii men and women during circumcision. Language was used to convey the cultural practices from generation to generation.

1.8.3. Gender Differentiation and Lexical Choice

Gender is partially composed of one's biological sex. However, gender also entails psychological, social and cultural features and characteristics strongly associated with the biological categories of male and female (Gilbert, 1993:11). Further, Gender refers to the cultural understanding and explanations that people have for sex (Moore 1994).

This study is concerned with the cultural features that determine the choice of the lexicon by the female gender as well as by the male gender in the social context of circumcision among *EkeGusii* speakers rather than the genetic make-up that may be behind linguistic gender differentiation. While sex describes the biological distinction between men and women, gender describes a cultural system. The concern of the present research is however for linguistic purposes whose focus is on the meaning of individual words (Akmajian et al, 1990) or lexical items chosen by the female gender as well as the male gender in the context of circumcision.

The study did not aim at extending the argument that "...men and women come from separate

cultures” (Stewart, 2006: 367). Rather, the study attempted to give a justification for the existence of gender differences in the choice of the lexicon. In the current study, gender is defined as not only being male and female but also as a cultural/social construction in which men and women are assigned certain roles. It is assumed in the current study therefore that the gender differences exhibited in the choice of the lexicon are as a result of different roles played by each gender.

Linguistic differences in the choice of the lexicon and resultant meaning do not give/provide a justification for the existence of separate EkeGusii language for men from that of women, neither do they support the analogy by Gray (1992) that ‘...men are from Mars and women from Venu. Therefore, it will not be important to rely on traditional sex stereotypes when constructing the ‘difference’ argument (Stewart, 2006: 367). Choti (1998) has explored the issue of ‘language and hierarchy’ with regard to the ‘portrayal of the Gusii woman’. His work centres along the analysis of *EkeGusii* language forms and looks at words and phrases as well as semantic derogation of women by *EkeGusii* language speakers. He posits that the words he studied revealed that ‘nouns are intrinsically linked to the different social roles that are ascribed to Gusii men and women’.

Based on the same argument, (Choti, 1988:17) did argue that:

Women talk and think as much as men do, and with few exceptions we all ... learn to talk and think in the first instance largely from women, usually and predominantly our mothers. Our first tongue is called our ‘mother tongue’ in English and in any other language ... There are no father tongues ...”

Choti (1998) attributes differences in men’s and women’s social ranks to social forces rather than biological ones which is actually the basis of gender differentiation in the current study. His point of departure is the notion of hierarchy which is not the interest of the present study. Further, Wardhaugh (1986) says that ‘...any views that women’s speech is trivial, gossip-laden, corrupt, illogical, idle, euphemistic, or deficient is obviously false; nor is it necessarily more precise, cultivated or stylish, or even less profane than men’s speech’. Wardhaugh does not commit himself to show whether these features place women lower or higher in society than men. It is assumed in the present study that in *Ekegusii* society, each gender is socially conditioned to show linguistic differences as soon as one is circumcised. This is in line with Wardhaugh (1986:13) who contends that:

‘... Boys and girls are brought up differently and men and women often fill different roles in society ...’ He attributes the differences between men’s and women’s speech to one factor, ‘socialization’.

Socialization is the epicentre of the current study. Trudgill (1973:88) says that ‘...men and women are socially different in that society lays down different social roles for them and expects different behaviour patterns from them.’ These behaviour patterns go as far as lexico-semantic in social contexts. The social context of *EkeGusii* circumcision forms the basis for gender differences exhibited in *EkeGusii* sociolinguistics. Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:224) assert that ‘rites of passage are important parts of the social structure ... lexical items connected with these rituals have specialized meanings and their usage is restricted to circumstances connected to these rituals.’ It has been claimed that: ‘...if it is agreed that this lexical disparity reflects a social inequality in the position of women, one may ask how to remedy it’.

Holmes (1992) has written extensively on linguistic sexism in both spoken discourse and linguistic forms. Drawing examples from different communities of the world;- England, New Zealand, America, Malagasy and Malaysia, she summed up her views thus;

The relative status of the sexes in a society may be reflected not only in the ways in which women and men use language, but also in the languages used about women and men. Gender, apart from being a biological construction, is an aspect of culture which assigns men and women certain roles that causes variation in lexical choice based on context.

This section has reviewed related literature with regard to social variation in language and examined studies carried out on *EkeGusii* circumcision in relation to gender differentiation and lexical choice in *EkeGusii* with a view to explain the lexicon of ECSV.

1.9. Methodology

This section provides the methods and procedures that were used to collect data and data analysis. This is an ethnographic study. Ethnography has been referred to as a curious blending of methodological techniques (Gilbert 2008:270).The study analyzed lexico-semantic patterns of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. Two questionnaires,

conversations involving informants, interviews and participatory observation were used to collect data based on the argument in Gilbert (2008: 270); that

Some amount of social interaction in the field with the subject of the study is necessary as well as direct observation of relevant events and a great deal of informal interviewing.

1.9.1 The Sample

It has been mentioned in this study that EkeGusii is fairly homogeneous and therefore, free of variations. It would be very easy to collect data from a population with this characteristic. However, with the ban on FGM by the government of Kenya the lexicon is seldom heard being used. If a lexicon is not put to use by the language users, it dies gradually from the minds of the users. The lexicon of ECSV is not found in the linguistic archives and therefore, when the generation that uses it pass on the lexicon of ECSV will achieve sudden death as illustrated in fig.8.

As a result, data was collected from native speakers based on a sample population of *EkeGusii* L₁ users. Stratified random sampling using snowball method was used to select the population that comprised the sample. Snowball is used in obtaining a sample when there is no adequate list to use a sampling frame (Gilbert, 2008:179). It involved contacting a participant and asking if s/he knows anyone else with the required characteristics. The nominated individuals were interviewed in turn and asked to identify further sample members in a network within the selected centres. This is because the population selected contained elements found in the entire group (Kombo and Tromp, 2006:77). The sample population was kept small in order to make it manageable, intensive as well as comprehensive considering that the study was ethnographic in nature. The sample population was selected based on age, gender, expertise in the language, proximity to the sites where circumcision and clitoridectomy takes place, region (dialect) and status regarding circumcision. Informants were selected based on their expert knowledge of *EkeGusii* language. The total number of respondents was 49 while 4 informants were used in the study. One male research assistant was also used to collect data from the males during the male circumcision at the site of circumcision and in the male circumcision rituals and ceremonies that are out of bounds to women. The researcher, being a woman, was going to find it difficult to collect data during the male circumcision as well as collect data during the rituals and ceremonies that require only circumcised men to attend. This is the

reason as to why having a male research assistant was important. A total number of 54 participants participated.

This sample was considered adequate owing to the fact that the study is an ethnography and that the researcher passed as a participant. The researcher used an observation checklist to collect data that are paralinguistic in perspective. A similar participatory observation schedule was used by the male research assistant to collect paralingual behavior patterns during the male circumcision. A full description of their profiles is presented in Appendix E as well as the codes for the informants.

Attention was paid to administrative demarcations and proximity to the locations where traditional circumcisers are stationed. This is because it was assumed in the study that the circumcisers were likely to influence the language since they disseminate aspects of *EkeGusii* culture. The researcher being a native speaker was able to comprehend the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision and put it in perspective of the current study. The researcher also shared linguistic insights with native speakers of *EkeGusii*.

1.9.2 Sampling Areas

In order to make the sample be more representative of the characteristics found in the entire group, the following areas were selected as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sampling areas

Larger Area	Data collection Regions
1. Marani area	Marani
2. Kisii central area	Kisii town
3. Kisii south area	Kerina
4. Nyamira area	Nyamira
5. Gucha area	Ogembo
6. Nyamache area	Nyamache
7. Borabu area	Nyansiongo
8. Masaba North area	Keroka
9. Masaba south area	Masimba
10. Gucha south area	Nyamarambe
11. Kenyeny area	Kenyeny
12. Manga area	Manga

1.9.3 Research instruments

Questionnaires were formulated after their validity and reliability had been tested. The purpose of the questionnaire was to collect data on the lexicon used by men and women in the context of ECSV. The interview was used to collect data relating to the lexicon of ECSV;- lexical choices that are different from everyday use of *EkeGusii* and lexical choices that show gender differentiation in the social context of ECSV. A pre-test was carried out to test their validity in terms of how they captured the linguistic culture of *EkeGusii* speaking people, word clarity and interpretation by respondents.

The questionnaires were divided into three parts. The themes in the questionnaires are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Themes in the questionnaires

<i>Section in the questionnaire</i>	<i>What the questions set to find out</i>
Part one	Questions were close ended. Questions included name and gender which were optional. The information was treated confidentially.
Part two	Questions were close-ended. Question items included whether the respondent was circumcised and if yes, at what age, what happens to one who refuses to be circumcised as well as the participants in circumcision.
Part three	Questions were open ended and centred on meaning of lexical items used in circumcision school, including meaning elicited from <i>EkeGusii</i> circumcision songs.
Part four	Questions were open-ended. Questions centred on gender differentiation in the choice of the lexicon of ECSV as well as aspects of culture.

The interview schedule on the other hand was used to collect data based on the following sub-themes.

1. Gender differentiation

2. Meaning of specific lexical items in ESCV
3. Variation of *EkeGusii* depending on context
4. Meaning in context
- 5 Language and culture
6. *EkeGusii* phonology
7. *EkeGusii* dialects
8. The process of *EkeGusii* male/female circumcision

Extensive research was carried out in the library to relate the theories of language used in the study with lexico-semantic analysis of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties.

Participatory observation schedule was used during the actual male circumcision by the male research assistant to collect information about actual linguistic as well as paralinguistic behaviour during the process of circumcision. Paralinguistic behaviour is important as it aids core context of circumcision. The research assistant attended the *esuguta* ritual (ritual of uprooting and planting grass) in which the dragon visits to scare and test the initiate's bravery. In addition, the research assistant used participatory observation to elicit other linguistic behaviour patterns exhibited by men during male circumcision ceremonies that take place during seclusion. The researcher on the other hand used participatory observation to elicit linguistic behaviour patterns exhibited during clitoridectomy and other rituals during seclusion. The rituals include; *esuguta* (uprooting and planting of grass), *enyabububu* (when the dragon visits the initiate to test her bravery) and *gosichwa* (being flowered). Flowering involves preparing a circumcised girl for marriage by decorating her with ornaments, red ochre and attractive garments. The getting out of seclusion ceremony was a celebration attended by all. Direct observation was used because it allows the researcher to put behaviour in context and thereby understand data being collected better. An observation checklist was used to collect paralinguistic behavior such as gestures, movements and tone variation during female circumcision.

1.9.4 Data Collection Procedure

A pilot study was carried out in Nyakenogo village, Marani area for the male and Kiomooncha for the female to rule out deficiencies such as unclear/ wrong phrasing of

statements in the interview schedules. The procedures that were used in the pilot study were identical to those that were used in the actual study. Only one female and one male respondent were used in the pilot study. The respondents that were used in the pilot study did not participate in the actual study. The pilot study was useful in pre-testing the face validity of the research instruments. The respondents were scored manually to test reliability/dependability of the techniques used. Observation method was used to collect data during the actual circumcision at the circumcision sites. Extensive research was carried out in the library to relate the theories with the topic. Data was also collected by reading texts written on *EkeGusii* ethnography, culture and rites of passage.

Texts written on *EkeGusii* that conformed with the current study were two, namely: Akama & Maxon (2006) *Ethnography of the Gusii of Western Kenya: A Vanishing Cultural Heritage* and Monyenye (2004) *Rites of Passage: Ceremonies for Cultural Identities among some Kenyan Societies. The Case of Abagusii Community of South Western Kenya*. Data was also collected from texts with useful information on the syntax, phonology and morphology of *EkeGusii*. These texts included Cammenga (2002) *The Phonology and Morphology of EkeGusii – A Bantu Language of Kenya*, Komenda (2011) *A Morphophonemic Analysis of Compensatory Vowel Lengthening in EkeGusii*, Mbori (1994) *A Study of the Noun Phrase among Standard Seven Pupils in Kisii District*, Nash (2009) *Tone in EkeGusii: A Description of Nominal and Verbal Tonology* and Whiteley (1960) *The Tense System of Gusii*.

The sub-chiefs of the respective areas where the research was carried out were approached for permission to carry out the research before collecting data. Data was collected in the months of November-December. This is the time when circumcision is carried out in Gusii. Circumcision is also carried out in the month of August but the school calendar has allocated a short break of three weeks. This was considered too little time to carry out a comprehensive study as it would be strenuous. It was considered that November - December holiday was long enough to collect data in all the ceremonies associated with *EkeGusii* circumcision. A male research assistant was used to collect data from the male respondents because Gusii statutes do not allow women to visit male circumcision sites during circumcision. The researcher collected data from the female respondents and also conducted the interviews.

Findings were analysed in view of the choice of the lexicon within language variation of *EkeGusii* using narrational analysis. Narrative approach is concerned not only with the story-telling component... of an account, but ... with the social interaction between interviewer and interviewee (Gilbert, 2008:428). The narrative approach was used because of the presence of story-like elements that were realized while collecting data. Data collected from texts were

also narrations by native *EkeGusii* speaking scholars and researchers. The narrative approach is also easy to use together with qualitative methods to analyze data. Narrative approach of data analysis was motivated by the fact that the study is ethnographic. Firstly, ethnography researches on people's culture. The present study focused on the lexicon of ECSV in which Gusii culture is encompassed. Secondly, ethnography emphasizes on depth, context and intensity (Gilbert, 2008:268). Partly for this reason, the sample size of the study was limited. Thirdly, ethnography involves studying behaviour in 'natural settings', as opposed to experimental settings. Fourthly, an adequate knowledge of social behaviour cannot be grasped until the researcher has understood the symbolic world in which people live (Gilbert 2008: 270). Lastly, ethnography requires that the researcher takes part through participatory observation, interviewing and content analysis of documented works. In other words, the researcher is supposed to take a role in the natural setting and see how events unfold. Being a native speaker of *EkeGusii*, the researcher passed as one of the participants.

1.10. Conclusion of the Chapter

In this chapter, the motivation of the study has been established. The background to the study has been discussed, statement of the problem, justification and significance of the study presented. The objectives and questions that guided in the study, as well as theoretical framework and literature review with regards to social varieties of language are discussed. Culture and lexico-semantics as well as gender differentiation in language use have also been discussed. The methodology that was used in data collection has been discussed with regard to the sample, sampling areas, themes in the two questionnaires as well as the interview schedule and observation checklist.

Chapter Two

***AbaGusii*: History, Socio-cultural Perspectives and Geographical Distribution**

2.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the area in which research was carried out by explaining who the Gusii people are, their historical origin, migration patterns and the route followed during migration as well as where they are found in Kenya today. The Kisii, also known as *AbaGusii*, is a community of Western Bantu-speaking people. They occupy South-western Kenya in Kisii and Nyamira counties. The discussion of *AbaGusii* history, socio-cultural perspectives and geographical distribution is significant in the current study because they make Lexico-Semantic analysis of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties possible. The female and male institutions within *EkeGusii* are discussed with regards to *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. Seasons being important markers of various social and economic as well as political activities in Gusii are also presented.

2.2 *EkeGusii* Language

EkeGusii language belongs to the Bantu language group and is classified as E42 according to Guthrie's (1967) classification system. The number of *EkeGusii* language speakers (ELS) may not be known but *EkeGusii* Language Native speakers (ELNS) are estimated to be about 2.6 million based on statistics provided by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (GoK, 2010). In a country with a population estimated to be about 38 million people, ELNS account for 6.8 percent of the languages found in Kenya. The main language groups found in Kenya are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Presentation of languages found in Kenya

Language	Percentage (%)
Kikuyu	20
Dholuo	14
Luhya	13

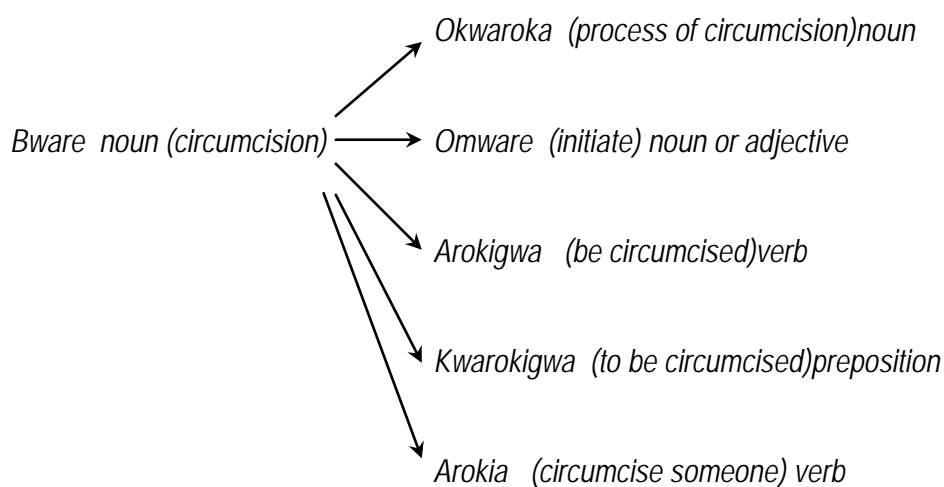
Language	Percentage (%)
Kamba	11
Kalenjin	11
EkeGusii	6.8
Others	24.2
Total	100

(Kenya National Bureau of Statistics: 2002)

Most *EkeGusii* language speakers are multilingual maybe because Kenya, where *AbaGusii* are found, is a multi-lingual country with most of the people speaking more than one language. The lexicon of ECSV however, does not feature outside the context of *EkeGusii* circumcision and therefore, is not used within the multilingual contexts. The lexicon may not be known by ELS who are not circumcised because it is used as an identity marker to include or exclude members of the group.

The morphological behaviour of *EkeGusii* makes it to be classified as an agglutinating language (Webb and Kembo-Sure, 2000). Most words, typically, consist of a basic root followed by one or more affixes. These affixes are argument structure changing as illustrated using the lexical item *bware* (circumcision) shown in Figure 1.

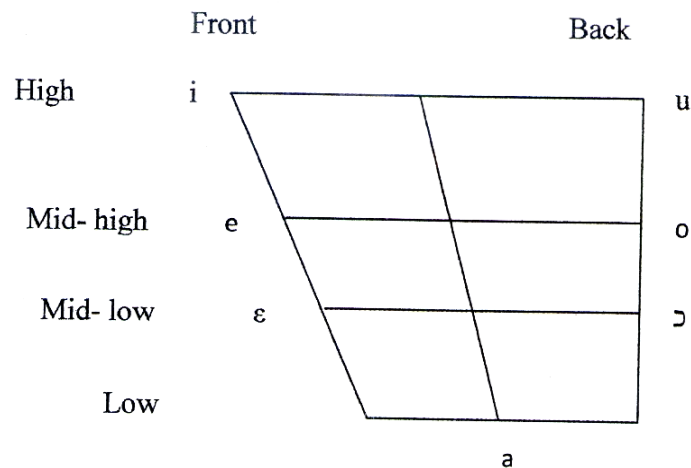
Figure 1: The Representation of argument structure changing suffixes of the lexical item 'bware'(circumcision)



EkeGusii Language Expert

EkeGusii has twelve consonant sounds and seven vowel sounds (Komenda, 2011). For the purpose of this study, the focus is on the vowel sounds since a single vowel sound can make one word to be perceived differently from another word while phonemic vowel length helps to distinguish word meaning (Komenda, 2011) (see also chapter 3.3.1). For this reason, *EkeGusii* vowel sounds are presented in figure 2.

Fig 2) *EkeGusii* vowel trapezium



(Komenda, 2011;28)

2.3 Historical Perspectives of *AbaGusii*

AbaGusii are believed to have moved together with other Bantu-speaking people from the Congo according to historians (Akama and Maxon, 2006). They ended up settling in a geographical location which is unique in the sense that the surrounding communities are unrelated to the *Gusii* linguistically. *Gusii* are part of the Bantu speakers.

Linguistic research has demonstrated that the ancestral Bantu language – Proto-Bantu, originated in the grassland area of Cameroon and the adjacent Benue region of Nigeria in West Africa. These researchers base their argument on the fact that linguistically, the current Tiv, Efik and Duala languages of this region are the closest relatives to Proto-Bantu (Akama and Maxon, 2006:19).

The *Gusii* people interacted with many communities en-route their present home. They may have acquired some of the cultural practices of these people. Some of the people that the *Gusii*

interacted with include: the Central Sudanic, Southern Cushitic and Eastern Sahelian speakers. The Gusii would have acquired some of the cultural practices of these people. One of the practices that the Gusii acquired from the people they interacted with is the rite of passage of circumcision which is an annual event that takes place in the months of November – December followed by a seclusion period. The Gusii circumcise the boys while the girls undergo a form of circumcision called clitoridectomy.

According to the Male Informant number one M.INNF. I, circumcision was highly regarded by Gusii because this is the time cultural knowledge was passed on to the individual preparing for circumcision. Circumcision was therefore, aimed at transforming an individual using elaborate initiation ceremonies and rites of passage. Apart from the individual acquiring new linguistic knowledge of the society, aspects of sexuality and gender specific roles were stipulated. Each gender acquired a new lexicon which s/he would later use. The individual learned various social varieties of EkeGusii language. The most important social varieties related to birth/naming, circumcision, marriage as well as death. For example, the males acquired the language of men such as that of war. The males would be given oral narrations of important events that have shaped the Gusii society, legends of the community and the various symbols of the Gusii society. The knowledge of the history of AbaGusii is important in this study because it puts the lexicon of ECSV into perspective.

2.4 Social Cultural Perspectives of the *AbaGusii*

Culture is the integrated sum total of learned behavioural traits that are manifested and shared by members of a society (Akama and Maxon, 2006). *Chinsoni* (statutes) defined social behaviour of the *Gusii*. *Chinsoni* (statutes) are a collection of un-documented code of social conduct that govern Gusii behaviour. They stipulate various ways in which people belonging to different generations relate in different social settings. The application of this code of social conduct start from the basic Gusii social unit. These set of rules, roles and functions guide people's daily ways of life and provide motivation to undertake accepted avoidance practices and behavioural restraint that are crucial in maintaining appropriate moral and social order at the homestead level and other immediate social grouping extending to the whole of the *Gusii* community (Akama and Maxon, 2006:11). *Chinsoni* (statutes) is acquired by every individual at circumcision schools and are used by every adult *Gusii* to teach and bring up their children in what is considered rich moral norms.

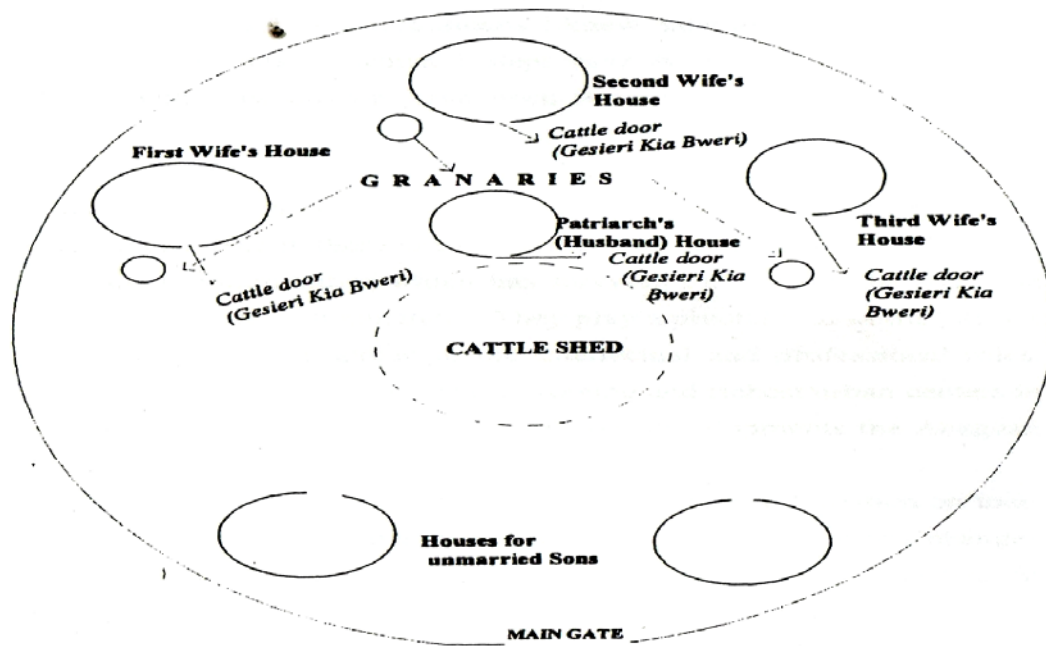
A *Gusii* homestead is designed based on the *chinsoni* (statutes). There is a hut for each

member of the home. The patriarch has a distinct hut called *etureti* (elder's hut) where he holds council meetings with his peers, entertain visitors and friends. Each wife owns her own hut with an expansive yard. The cultivated land for each wife is located adjacent to her house. There are houses for the initiated sons called *chisaiga* (boys' hut). Older unmarried sons from one clan, *riiga/egesaku* (age-set/tribe) stay in called *egesarate/bisarate (kraals)*. It is from *gesarate* (the kraal) that defence against cattle raids and any other form of attack is conducted. *Chinsoni* (statutes) play a prominent role in designing the houses in the homestead. With regard to the designs of the *Gusii* houses, it is argued in Akama and Maxon (2006: 12) that:

...the interior spaces and external placement of *Gusii* houses conformed to a design in which every detail was endowed with significance for social interaction and ritual. Each role, each stage and transition in life was defined by assigned and forbidden spaces and by customary actions performed in those spaces using traditional objects. The domestic organization of life constituted a heavily prescribed and proscribed world for residents of the homestead and/or their guests as well, which were treated according to equally detailed normative prescriptions [as was contained in the *chinsoni* (statutes) code of conduct].

The physical layout of a *Gusii* homestead as governed by *EkeGusii* *chinsoni* (statutes) is presented in figure 3.

Figure 3: The physical layout of a traditional Gusii homestead as governed by the Chinsoni concept



(Akama and Maxon, 2006:14)

The concept of *chinsoni* (statutes) is disappearing from the minds of the *Gusii* together with the lexicon that was acquired in the male circumcision school as well as that of the female circumcision school.

Chinsoni (statutes) were carried out through language. Language is the medium through which social lives (culture) are carried out. Human beings become what they are through socialization and that socialization takes place using language. This is because language is intimately linked to the culture of the imagination that governs people's decisions and actions (Kramsch, 1998). It is language that carries the people's beliefs hence it expresses cultural reality. Members of a language group express their experience through language and give meaning through the medium they choose to speak with one another. For example, *Abagusii* people identify themselves as a people through the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties and call themselves *mwanyagetinge*. *Egetinge* [s] is a round ring worn around the left-foot by married women. The language users would use this term to lock out other language users.

2.5 The Clan System of the *AbaGusii*

Initially, *AbaGusii* belonged to one large clan claiming common ancestry from *Mogusii*.

Later, a new clan structure emerged. The *Gusii* are divided into eight clan clusters, namely:

1. Omogetutu
2. Omogirango (Maate & Rogoro)
3. Omomachoge
4. Omonchari
5. Omobasi (Abaitangare & Abasansa)
6. Omonyaribari (Ba'maate na Rogoro)
7. Omogusero
8. Omosweta/basweta

EkeGusii language expert aged above 80 years (ELE80⁺)

A clan consisted of an extended family called *eamate*. Eamate was essentially a segmentary lineage system in which units from the clan cluster and clan segments become defined according to a genealogical grid with an eponymous ancestor at the top.

Specific lineal terms are used to denote the immediate family as shown in table 4.

Table 4: Specific terms used to denote the immediate family in the lexicon of ECSV.

Tata	one's father
Baba	one's mother
Momura/mosinto	Son of
Mosubati	Daughter of
Tatamoke	paternal uncle
Makomoke	paternal aunt
Mame	maternal uncle
Magokoro	Grandmother
Sokoro	Grandfather
Omochokoro	grandchild (unisex)

People of the same lineage/clans undertake certain assignments together. These assignments include initiating their young ones at the same time. No marriage is allowed within the clan members because the members are said to be related to one another. The clan members refer

to each other as brothers and sisters or mothers and fathers or as grandparents.

Chinsoni (statutes) guide how people of different generations within a clan relate. The *chinsoni* (statutes) provided an ideal social model of moral governance. As a result of this, a name can be used to trace one's ancestry and help prevent people who are related by blood from getting married even today. For instance, *Abasweta* clan members in *Gusii* do not intermarry with *Sweta* of the Kipsigis because *Sweta* in Bomet region of Kenya and *AbaSweta* from *Gusii* are regarded as being brothers and sisters. By extension the *Sweta* in Kipsigis observe the *Gusii chinsoni* (statutes).

2.6 The Female and Male Institutions as Part of the Gusii Social Activities

Traditionally, *Gusii* women had no right of inheritance because the society was patrilineal. This is because inheritance of property, children, wives and power came from the male side and was passed on from father to son. The man was/is head of the family. A *Gusii* homestead is a military, political, economic and social unit in which the roles of each gender are defined culturally.

The female institution is a busy one since the woman is involved in the socialization of the children. Once a child is born, it is the role of women to provide a suitable name from among the dead relatives based on gender. Men are not allowed to be present at naming ceremonies. Names are chosen based on the following factors: weather – at the time of birth, important recent event(s), recent dead relative(s), sex of the child and fallen prominent people at the time of birth. In the case of dead relatives, naming a child depends on the character of the dead person. If the relative died unmarried, it is considered taboo to name a child after him/her.

Warrior-hood is the preserve of the male members of the family. The man/father is in most cases the ruler of his homestead. The father teaches his children the laws and customs of the community. He punishes minor offences while the major ones are punished in consultation with his relatives or elders (Male informant no.2).

2.7 The Existence of other Social Activities among *AbaGusii*

Apart from circumcision, *AbaGusii* practise other social activities such as *ribina* (rain dance or special harvest ceremony), *enyameni* (wrestling), *chinyangi* (weddings), birth and naming *ogotakerwa* (to be wanted) and death/burial ceremonies. *Ogotakerwa* (to be wanted) for

instance is a ceremony in which a child whose siblings die soon after birth is presented to the gods for protection. A ring is tied round his/her waist to prevent evil spirits that cause death.

Ribina (rain) dance occasion is observed between the harvest and the next planting period. It also celebrates a good harvest. Ribina dance is performed by mature married women and it was followed by *enyameni* (wrestling) matches performed by young unmarried men from different clans. Ribina is initiated by women from one clan challenging those from the opponent clan(s) by what is termed as *koruta enungu* (throwing the club). Instruments accompanying ribina dance included *ekondu* (drum) and *esirimbi* (whistle). Participants in *ribina* dressed in costumes called *chingobo* (clothes made of animal skins) and decorated themselves with *amandere* (wild seeds), *chinchabo* and *chinchigiri* (folded metal or iron). The dance initiated the young unmarried men into *enyameni* (wrestling) by throwing pebbles (*chinche*) at them. The clan that wins the wrestling match is respected and feared and also married from the most prominent homesteads. (Male informant no 2)

Traditionally, Marriage activities were initiated by the groom's family through *omosigani* (matchmaker) who selected a suitable bride. After successfully identifying the bride, *ekerorano* (getting to know each other) ceremony followed. *Okomana* (selecting bride price in form of cows) ensued led by *omokundekane* (one who tied together). On the wedding day, the bridegroom dressed in a special attire called *esumati* (special dress worn by the bride) and *ekiore* (part of the special attire worn by the groom) as well as special adornments such as *chindege* and *chinchigiri* (which are part of the special attire worn by the groom) when going to the bride's home. The groom entourage would normally get barred from accessing the bride's home by young men from the bride's clan – through a wrestling match called *omwanania* (a wrestling match between young men from the bride's clan and young men from the groom's clan). Once inside the homestead of the bride, *obokano* (eight-stringed instrument) was played and the bride danced. On the way to her new home, she was dressed in the best *engobo* (special attire for the bride), *egesembe* (part of the special attire worn by the bride) and *omoyaba* (part of the special attire worn by the bride). The bride also carried *enkondo* (a small gourd decorated with cowrie shells that the bride carried on her marriage day). This is what the bride presented to her mother-in-law on arrival at her matrimonial home. (Male informant no 2)

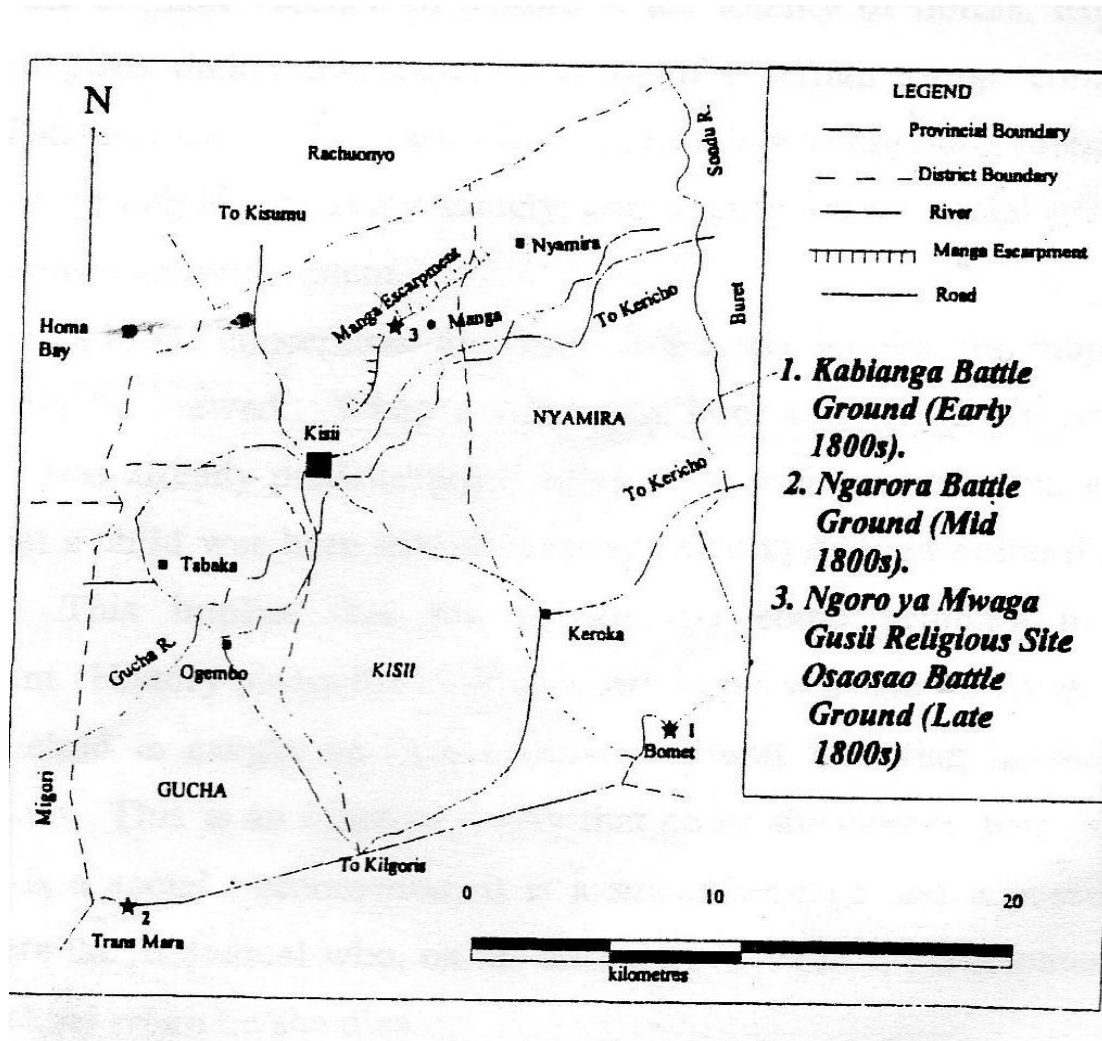
2.8 Geographical Distribution of EkeGusii Speakers

The *Gusii* occupy Kisii and Nyamira counties (Kenyan Constitution, 2010). They cover

Marani, Kisii Central, Kisii South, Nyamira, Gucha, Nyamache, Borabu, Masaba North, Masaba South, Gucha South, Kenyena and Manga districts. Gusii neighbours are Rachuonyo and Homa Bay districts to the west and Migori district to the southwest. These are regions occupied by Luo-speaking people. Gusii border Kipsigis speakers to the North and Maasai to the South. Besides, some of the Bagusero and Basweta are found in the middle of the Kipsigis especially in Bomet District. The clan members in both Bomet and Gusii refer to one another as *Kamama* but pronounce it as '*Gamama*'. It means 'where my mother comes from.' This indicates the close-relatedness of these groups of people.

Figure 4 shows a map with a geographical distribution of *AbaGusii* in Kisii and Nyamira counties. The old map of *Gusii* was adopted in the research because the new demarcations came much later while the study was underway. Currently there are two counties in *Gusii*, namely, Kisii and Nyamira. Circumcision rite of passage follows the location of circumcisers rather than political demarcations. Centres for data collection were selected based on the availability of EkeGusii language expert male and female circumcisers and circumcision sites. The locations where circumcision rite of passage take place are clearly designated hence the old map of *Gusii* was used rather than the new demarcations that were effected with the new constitution in 2010. Sampling of areas was carried out using Snowball method which ended up selecting participants from various circumcision locations that are strategically positioned to serve any Gusii irrespective of whether political demarcations place them in Kisii or Nyamira County. The map in figure 4 illustrates this further.

Figure 4: Map showing geographical distribution of AbaGusii (Akama and Maxon, 2006)



The Manga escarpment, River Gucha and River Sondu are some of the prominent physical features in *Gusii*. *Gusii* has fertile soils which are suitable for farming. The population of *AbaGusii* is very high. *Gusii* is near the equator but because the region is hilly, the climate is cool with plenty of rainfall. There are two peak rainy seasons; the long rains that begin in February to June and the short rains from August to November making *Gusii* to have two major ecological zones. These ecological zones are called Masaba and Chache. The language variations visible between Ekerogoro and Ekemaate dialects follow these ecological zones. Circumcision rite of passage and other socio-cultural activities take place in the month of November and December because there are less farming activities. November is referred to as *egesunte gia chache* (darkness of the lower region). At this time of the year, nights in Chache region are very dark and cold. The same weather is experienced in December in Masaba which is referred to as *egesunte kia Masaba* (darkness of the upper region). This kind of weather is ideal for circumcision because the initiates do not experience a lot of bleeding. The

names of the other months of the year are presented as follows:

Months of the Year

<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>
Monugunu o' barema	January
Egetamo	February
Esagati	March
Amaumuntio	April
Ebwagi	May
Enkoromomi	June
Engatia 'to	July
Riete	August
Rigwata	September
'Tureti ya 'kebaki	October

Source: EkeGusii Language Expert aged.70+

2.9 Conclusion of the Chapter

The chapter discussed *AbaGusii* history, sociocultural perspectives and geographical distribution with regards to *EkeGusii* language and how the ecological zones affect the rite of passage of circumcision in which ECVS is used. Within *EkeGusii* language, *EkeGusii* vowel sounds have been identified. The vowel sounds of *EkeGusii* are useful in distinguishing meaning of words within the lexicon of ECSV. *EkeGusii* ecological zones and names of *EkeGusii* seasons have been presented in relation to how they affect the socio-cultural activities such as circumcision rite of passage.

Chapter Three

Conceptual Framework with Reference to Male and Female Circumcision Social Varieties in EkeGusii

3.1 Introduction

Isoglosses within ECSV are minimal and are considered insignificant in the current study. In regional variation, the language becomes fragmented through dialect variation. Ryan and Giles (1982:1) observe that language variation within and between speech communities can involve different languages or only contrasting styles of one language. For the purpose of lexico-semantic analysis of ECSV, the definition provided by (Trudgill, 1980:5) shall be considered;

...We shall use variety as a neutral term to apply to any particular kind of language which we wish, for some purpose, to consider as a single entity. The term will be used in an ad hoc manner in order to be as specific as we wish for a particular purpose.

The current study considers ECSV as a variety of *EkeGusii* because it is a contrasting style of one language. *EkeGusii* circumcision is one such context in which the males and females use contrasting styles of *EkeGusii* language.

3.2 Context of Situation and Meaning in Social Contexts

This section focuses on lexical semantics of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. *EkeGusii* circumcision ceremonies take place once a year and the lexical choices made in the context of *EkeGusii* circumcision are based on the context of the situation. Meaning of the lexical items used in *EkeGusii* circumcision is understood based on context of use. In support of this view, it has been argued from as far back as the time of Malinowski (1884 – 1942) that:

language was key to understanding the meaning... but (Malinowski) realized that, in order to understand what was going on, it was not enough to understand and write down the meaning of ... words. One had to understand why ...what... and how... in a

specific context of situation. In addition, one had to link their words, beliefs and mindsets to a larger context of culture such as tribal economics, social organization, kinship patterns, fertility rites, seasonal rhythms, concepts of time and space. Thus the semantic meanings of verbal signs had to be supplemented by the pragmatic meaning of verbal actions in context (Kramsch, 1998:26)

EkeGusii circumcision takes place in a spatial temporal situation and thus meanings of the lexical choices made have to be understood based on the social context of situation in which they are used. Language varieties characteristic of particular social situations are called styles or registers (Finnegan, 2004:314). The lexical items are used in these situations to carry associated social meaning as well as referential meaning. Within the linguistic repertoire of ECSV are sub-varieties of marriage, death, birth and naming that guarantee the use of styles/registers. Therefore, it can be argued that besides code-switching between languages, there exist lexical/language internal switching conditioned by context of situation. This can be illustrated using the linguistic repertoire of *EkeGusii* by the lexical item *nyomba* as shown in table 5.

Table 5: EkeGusii linguistic repertoire

<i>Lexical item</i>	<i>Situation</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
Nyomba	Conceptual	House to live in
	Circumcision	Seclusion
	Marriage	One's wife
	Death	One's grave
Omong'wansi	Conceptual	One who sacrifices an animal to appease the gods
	Circumcision	One who gives himself to guide the initiate in the male circumcision school
	Marriage	The best man

These social contexts are considered important to the societies involved. Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000:224) assert that;

...rites of passage are an important part of social structure....lexical items connected with these rituals have specialized meanings and their usage is restricted to circumstances connected to these rituals.

Lastly, the argument of Leech (1968:410) that “...it is often impossible to give the meaning of a word without putting it in a context” has been used to argue for looking at meaning within social context further.

3.3 Contrastive Lexico-Semantic Analysis of *EkeGusii* and English

Lexico-semantics studies the meaning of words including the way in which some word meanings are related to others (Trask, 1997). Since ECVS is context specific, the lexical items used carry associative meaning. In the present study, the context of reference is *EkeGusii* circumcision whose lexicon carries social meaning which is the meaning that a piece of language conveys about the social circumstances of its use. This kind of meaning is a style.

According to Mbori (1994:32) *EkeGusii* and English belong to two different language types; viz, agglutinating and isolating. An agglutinating language such as *EkeGusii* makes words by combining two or more words; it forms words from morphemes that retain their original forms and meanings with little change during the combination process. However, in both *EkeGusii* and English, context of use is important in postulating any semantic relationships that lexemes enter into.

Agglutinating languages have words containing several morphemes that are always clearly differentiable from one another in that each morpheme represents only one grammatical meaning and have a large number of morphemes per word. An agglutinating language, and specifically, *EkeGusii*, also has a large number of enclitics that are separated from the word root. An enclitic is a word which enjoins itself to another word so closely as to lose its prosodic independence. The word to which an enclitic is joined to is the host word though orthographically, the enclitic is presented as an independent word. Some of the enclitics in *EkeGusii* include:

Mbwengete (you have brewed)

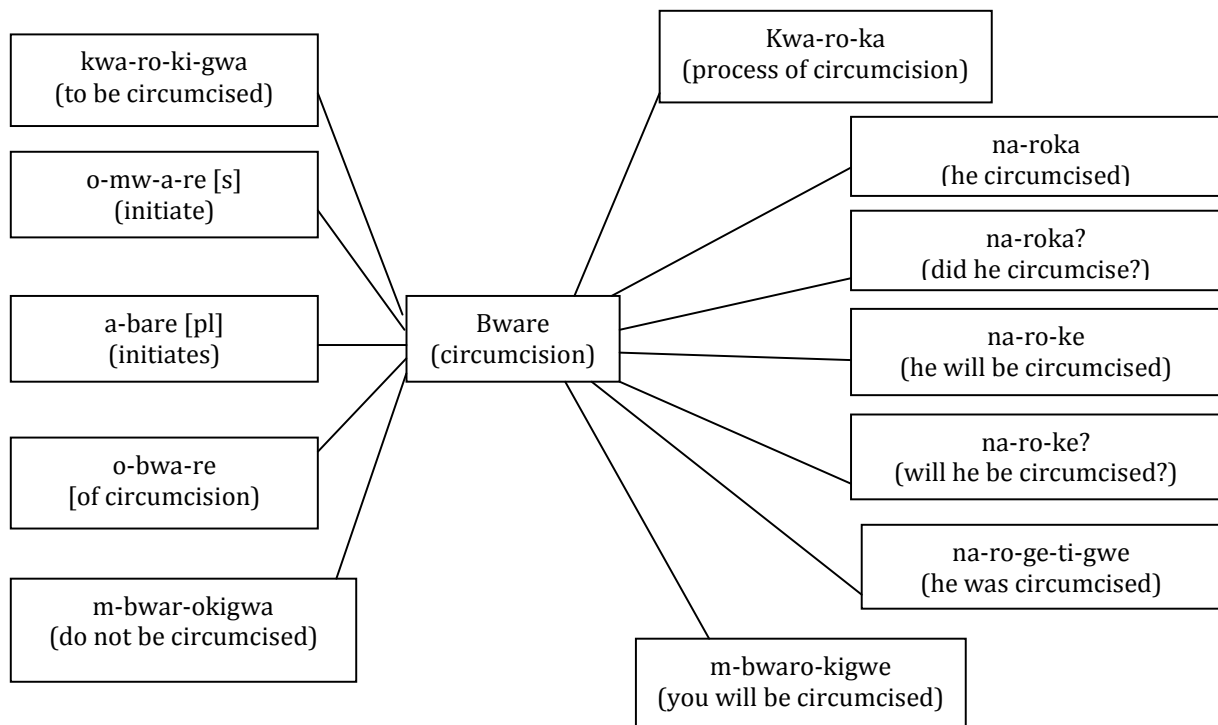
Mbwarogete (you are circumcised)

Mbwetiga (don't ignore yourself)

Mbwetiganete (you have ignored/sacrificed yourself)

The formation of *EkeGusii* words can further be illustrated as shown in figure 5.

Fig. 5: The formation of EkeGusii words using the lexical item 'bware' (circumcision)



EkeGusii is a Bantu language and Bantu languages are well-known for their agglutinative morphology (Reidel, 2009:3). This is illustrated in Figure 5. Another major characteristic of Bantu languages is the occurrence of noun classes whereby the head noun ‘triggers’ verbal agreement on verbs and ‘concordial agreement’ on its modifiers such as adjectives, to reflect the singular and plural forms (Simpson, 2008:237). This affects meaning especially of *EkeGusii* lexemes depending on context of use.

3.4 The Role of Lexical Phonology in Constructing Word Meaning

Lexical phonology gives an account of the interaction of morphology and phonology in the word building process. Word formation processes take place within the lexicon. The outcome of word formation processes may be a creation or change of meaning. Lexical phonology therefore plays a role in contrasting word meaning through sequences of sounds permissible in a language (Massamba, 1996: 127). Native speakers know meanings elicited from the same word when used in different contexts based on sound or pitch. Pitch is part of phonology which can be used to contrast lexical meanings (Katamba, 1989:10) In ESCV, pitch causes meaning differentiation as illustrated in table 12.

However, it should be noted that the interest of the current research is not with regard to phonological properties of lexical formatives or lexical matrices; rather, it is concerned with the lexicon in relation to meaning in the context of ECSV. ECSV is also a style or register. Registers are marked not only by word choice but also by grammatical features, morphology and other levels of grammar. The current study focuses on style and registers marked by lexical choices and their resultant meaning.

3.5 *EkeGusii* Lexico-Semantic relations

The lexicon of ECSV can be understood based on various types of semantic relations. These relations include polysemy, homonymy, synonymy, hyponymy and antonymy. ECSV is a case of multiple meaning (polysemy) on one hand and homonymy on the other. Leech (1974: 229) defines polysemy as ‘the existence of more than one semantic specification for the same lexical item. With regard to homonymy, Finnegan (2004: 187) says that “Homonyms have the same spelling but different meaning (and pronunciations)”.

These can be illustrated using the lexical items *omong’wansi* and *bware* respectively as shown in Table 6.

Table 6: *EkeGusii* homonyms

<i>Lexical item in EkeGusii</i>	<i>English equivalent/ translation</i>	<i>Context of use</i>
omong’wansi	One who sacrifices	Circumcision
bware ¹	Circumcision	Marriage & conceptual
bware ²	Of distance	conceptual

The two lexical items are polysemous as well as being homonyms because *omong’wansi* has more than two related meanings since it can occur in circumcision, marriage and death. *Bware* is a case of homonymy because it can occur in contexts of ECSV while at the same time it has two related meanings as shown in figure 6.

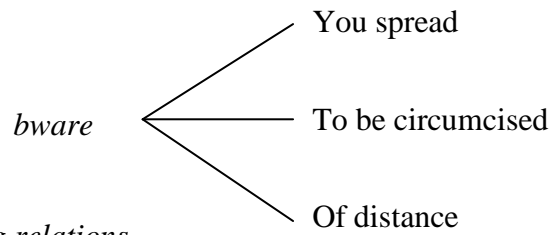


Fig. 6: Meaning relations

In the case of *omong'wansi*, the pronunciation for all the cases is the same but *bware* has different pronunciations marked by pitch. The two or more meanings specified by polysemic words and homonyms are psychologically related and apply metaphoric transfer because lexical rules have psychological reality to the extent that they are part of the native speaker's linguistic competence (Leech, 1974:228). A lexical item may be assigned different interpretations based on the operation of rules of transfer of meaning, and by extension, depending on gender. The aspect of meaning generated by gender differentiation is however not captured by polysemy or homonymy or better still by lexical rules. Thus, it can be captured by purely lexico-semantic relations. With regard to polysemy and homonymy, Finnegan (2004:188) contends that:

Polysemy and homonymy arise partly from the fact that language users often use words metaphorically. A traditional notion of metaphor sees it as an extension in the use of a word beyond its primary sense to describe referents that bear similarities to the word's primary referent.

The relationship which holds between words and things (their referent) is the relationship of reference. Reference in this case is the process by which a signifier relates to a signified (Frawley, 1992:19). With regard to ECSV, reference is the actual meaning of a lexical item in conceptual understanding. The second meaning can be referred to as "sense"; that is meaning realized by virtue of the context in which a lexical item is used. One of these contexts is that of circumcision. In the circumcision school, a lexical item realizes a different or additional meaning besides its meaning in conceptual contexts. For example, the lexical item in conceptual context '*mwaye*' (one's house) becomes one's wife in reference to marriage context and one's grave in the context of death. This lexical item in this case has acquired the second and third 'sense' by virtue of its use depending on context. It can be used in

conceptual, marriage sub-variety and death sub-variety contexts respectively as shown in Fig. 7.

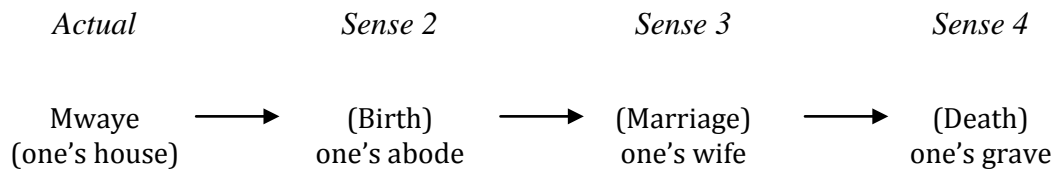


Fig. 7: EkeGusii sense relations

The different meanings are realized in the sentences below:

1. *Eye nero mwaye*
This is his house (sense 1)
2. *Togende korora mosamba mwaye*
[Go see the burn his/her house]
Let's go to see the new born baby (sense 2)
3. *Oyo nere mwaye*
[This is house his]
This is his wife (sense 3)
4. *'Mwaye tokoagacha*
[His house we are building]
We are preparing his grave (sense 4)

The meaning of the word '*mwaye (house to live in)* will only be understood based on context rather than on its conceptual meaning. Therefore, the meaning of a word is best understood by looking for its use in the various contexts it is used.

3.6 Language/ Lexical Decline

The lexicon of ECSV owed its existence to oral transmissions from one generation to another. The only source of information lay in human memories (Akama and Maxon, 2006:9). According to (Akama and Maxon, 2006:10):

The participants understood the message because of the commonality of the language that embodied a shared heritage and, also, promoted a sense of communal wellbeing.

As much as there are those essential elements of culture that will be static, culture keeps on changing to fit human requirement. This case applies to *Gusii* culture. Akama and Maxon (2006:11) have this to say:

For the *Gusii* some aspects of their culture are dynamic and yet there is something in culture that remains permanent.

This section considers the dynamisms of the lexicon of ECSV. ECSV has undergone many changes which may cause its decline. Notable among the causes is the GoK ban on FGM, modernization of male circumcision, migration of the *Gusii* people to Nakuru, Trans-Nzoia and interaction of *AbaGusii* with other language communities through trade and intermarriage as well as the natural attrition affecting the older members of the *Gusii* community. The older generation is diminishing gradually and ushering in a generation that embraces code-switching, bilingualism, multilingualism as well as multiculturalism.

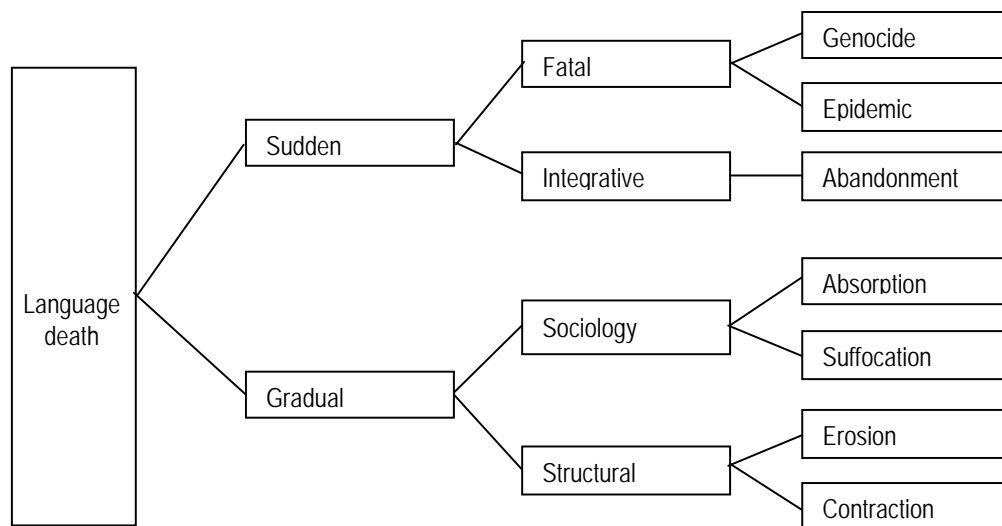
The effect of these emergent forms is a reduction of the lexicon of ECSV in the mental archives of its native speakers. Some native speakers of *EkeGusii* are gradually abandoning FGM together with *chinyangi* (rituals) accompanying circumcision due to religious reasons. Circumcision comprised of various rituals called *chinyangi* (rituals). These rituals are seldom performed especially since most *EkeGusii* speaking people have converted to Christianity. For instance, a child is born and taken to church where it is prayed for, given a name and/or baptized. When a *Gusii* person dies, rituals such as *kobuna egechuri* (breaking of rooftops), *gokobania* (putting on clothes inside out) by widows or even wife inheritance have been abandoned and replaced with church rituals. Whether speakers are abandoning the lexicon of ECSV willingly or unwillingly, the end result may be the lexical death of ECSV. Batibo (2005:87) defines language death as:

The state of extinction, that is, the language is no longer used as a means of communication or socialization. Language death may occur through the abandonment

of a language by its speakers or the non-functioning of its structure

The process of gradual and sudden language death is shown schematically in figure 8:

Fig 8: Schematic representation of various circumstances of language death



(Batibo, 2006)

The information in the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 2010 shows that the Gusii population of age bracket 80 and above is declining. The oldest Gusii female Jerry Kwamboka died in 2010 soon after the release by KNBS. Mzee Mwebi and his wife, James Mbori, Christopher Obiri, James Bosire and many other people aged 80+ have since died reducing the population further. The information may be useful in illustrating the declining number of people who can speak *EkeGusii* fluently. Table 7 shows the number of ENLS of age bracket 80+ at the time of the release by the GoK.

Table 7: Population in Gusii region by district, sex and age bracket of 80+

District	Male	Female	Total
Kisii Central	1,303	2,119	3,422
Kisii South	328	625	953
Masaba	861	1,334	2,195
Gucha	1,486	2,313	3,799

Gucha South	584	834	1,418
Nyamira	1,253	1,893	3,146
Manga	310	549	859
Borabu	279	248	527
Total	6404	9915	16319

(Kenya National Bureau of Statistics; 2010)

The lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties may be reducing in size, strength and safety as a result of the decline in numbers of its older speakers. The language is expected to be spoken by about 2.6 million people. Of this population, only about 16,319 can speak the lexicon of ECSV fluently. The tabulation on table 8 provides the number of people aged 70 – 79 of the *Gusii* people. As the population of people in these two age brackets decline, so does the lexicon of ECSV. For instance, death of *Gusii* people in these age brackets have been recorded since the year 2010 when the study commenced.

Table 8: Population of *Gusii* of age bracket 70 - 79

District	Male	Female	Total
Kisii Central	2326	2,898	5,224
Kisii South	772	1,128	1,900
Masaba	1,737	2,048	3,785
Gucha	2,651	3,339	5,990
Gucha South	992	1240	2,232
Nyamira	2,295	2,558	4,853
Manga	691	827	1,518
Borabu	499	466	965
Total	11,963	14,504	26,467

(Kenya National Bureau of Statistics; 2010)

The population of *Gusii* of age bracket 70-79 is involved in industrialization in *Gusii* region. This group is either bilingual or multilingual. Older speakers of *EkeGusii* are fluent in *EkeGusii* and can communicate in Kiswahili as well as English, besides having some knowledge of the languages of their neighbours. The first anti-FGM crusaders belong to this

age bracket. This age bracket belongs to *EkeGusii* native speakers who embraced Christianity and started the process of shifting from *EkeGusii*/African culture per se to foreign cultures.

The population of age bracket 70-79 however, did not embrace the foreign culture fully but the process of decline of *EkeGusii* culture can be traced to this generation. *EkeGusii* started taking a new form. It is argued in Baker (1996:47) that social changes such as industrialization and urbanization change social networks, relationships between people and patterns in language use in communities. As new environments arise with new speakers, languages take on new forms of social interaction. Some of the social changes that took place include the introduction of literacy. The male Gusii members of this age bracket went to school and were taught in English. Some were employed in white collar jobs while others became coffee, tea and pyrethrum farmers as well as keepers of grade cattle. The agricultural extension officers and veterinary doctors spoke to them in English necessitating them to embrace English in order to industrialize. As a result, they embraced the western culture and took their children to school with most of their sons being flown out of the country to get higher education in India, Canada and the USA. The practice of multiculturalism and multilingualism therefore took root in Gusiiland. Across Gusiiland, the lexicon of ECSV has declined following multiculturalism and multilingualism.

While the practice of FGM is still on in Gusiiland, the lexicon is seldom used. The remaining population of the *Gusii* of age 80+ talk/ed, and were/are talk/ed to only in *EkeGusii* while the other population practice code-switching. *EkeGusii* speakers have shifted over the years from being monolinguals to bilingualism. There is code-switching in every other conversation between *EkeGusii* native speakers.

Currently, the trend in Gusii is code-switching while communicating but the lexicon of ECSV does not feature in code-switching. The lexical items that feature include *EkeGusii* standard of minimal level, Kiswahili and English as well as traces of major languages in Kenya such as Gikuyu, Luo and Luhya. The kind of language/lexical decline that has been discussed may thus take place gradually but surely. There is another form of lexical decline that has been influenced by the GoK and some non-governmental organizations that are against the practice of FGM. This form of lexical death is not arising because the structures of the lexicon of ECSV are non-functioning in *Gusii* society. It is a kind of death that Edwards (1985) in Baker (1996) calls murder. The government and Non Governmental Organisations' stand is firm: that the practice of FGM must stop. For the language environmentalist however, the wish is to preserve the lexicon of ECSV even though the harsh reality regarding FGM is that it is harmful.

To conclude this section of language/lexical decline of ECSV therefore, there is a suggestion to maintain the diversity of *EkeGusii* by conserving and preserving the lexicon of ECSV. This is because any threat to the lexicon of ECSV is a threat to *EkeGusii* standard variety which according to Ogechi et al (2012) is not extensively documented.

3.7 Conclusion of the Chapter

This chapter has reviewed related literature on lexico-semantics and language variation that is geographically determined. Language variation between different languages as well as contrasting styles within a language have been discussed. Context of situation and meaning realization have been presented considering that meaning in ECSV is context specific. *EkeGusii* as an agglutinating language has been explained besides *EkeGusii* enclitics. An illustration of *EkeGusii* sense relations and the role of lexical phonology in contrasting word meaning has also been done. Factors that may lead to the decline and death of the lexicon of ECSV have been highlighted. Finally, a tabulation of the population of *EkeGusii* language native speakers aged above 70 years has been done. Chapter four will discuss data presentation and analysis.

Chapter Four

Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter, data is presented and analyzed. The analysis is done in order to meet the objectives in Section 1.5 which set out to identify lexical choices in circumcision that are different from everyday use of *EkeGusii*, determine lexical choices and patterns as influenced by circumcision domain in *EkeGusii* language and account for the different patterns of gender differentiation in *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties and its sub-varieties occur naturally and take a social dimension. As a result, data analysis centred on aspects of language use. Aspects of language use that formed the basis of lexico-semantic analysis included grammar, vocabulary, discourse analysis as well as phonology. Variations resulting from culture, gender, ideology and social ranks also formed part of the analysis. It should be noted that ECSV is not the standard variety because it is not used for all social functions and contexts. The lexico-semantic analysis of ECSV is therefore limited to the context of circumcision.

Data is analysed qualitatively using narrational analysis. Finally, this chapter presents how *EkeGusii* circumcision social variety promotes gender inequality.

4.2. Lexico-Semantic Analysis of ECSV

The study has established that the lexicon of ECSV is composed of the phonetic structure and form, the syntactic structure and the semantic content. The phoneme is the single speech sound that can make one word to be perceived differently from another. Besides forming differences orthographically, the phoneme contributes towards realizing meaning. The lexicon of ECSV seems to be operating in a linguistic environment without rules but using the rules of language and English as a metalanguage. It has been established that the semantic structure present in the lexicon of ECSV is responsible not only for the meaning realization in context, but also for changes in meaning and the principles that govern the relationship between sentences, words and their meanings.

4.2.1. Analysis of the Phonetic Form in the Lexicon of ECSV

Sound plays a vital role in establishing meaning of some lexical items used in ECSV. Meaning in this case is realized through vowel lengthening, pitch/tone/intonation as well as through stress. Data collected showed that the lexical items shown in table 9 are such cases.

Table 9. Phonetic Form in the Lexicon of ECSV

Lexical item		Context of use
EkeGusii	English	
Omware	Soot	Conceptual
Omware	Initiate	circumcision
Sara	Painful feeling	Conceptual
Sara	Process of circumcision	Circumcision
Kura	Dig with own hands	Conceptual
Kura	Scream	Circumcision
Mana	Be ready to start	Conceptual
Mana	Negotiate for bride price	Marriage
Basa	Operate	Conceptual
Basa	Elope	Marriage
Korera	To cry	Conceptual
Korera	In-law / bride's parents and groom's parents	Marriage
Omosari	Spoiler/sinner	Conceptual
Omosari	Male circumciser	circumcision
Soka	Get dressed, get out	Conceptual
Soka	Get married	Marriage

In the lexical items above, meaning is realized at the sound level. Orthographically, the lexical

items are similar since the long and short sound differentiating meaning are identical except for length (Ladefoged, 2001). Komenda (2011) notes that phonetically, long vowels distinguish word meaning. Although Komenda’s study is not based on meaning, he has highlighted instances of lexical items in which meaning is realized through phonetic contrasts.

Phonetically long vowels are not reflected in the spelling of words (Ladefoged, 2001).

Further, native speakers of *EkeGusii* know meaning(s) elicited from the same word when used for conceptual purpose, in the context of ECSV and its sub-varieties as well as any other context. In the context of ECSV, the lexical items in table 10 are used to illustrate the argument further.

Table 10. Phonetic reflections in the meaning of lexical items in the lexicon of ECSV

Lexical item		Context of use
EkeGusii	English	
Mana¹	Negotiate for dowry	Marriage sub-variety
Mana²	To open	Conceptual
Mana³	To be ready/to start	Conceptual
Sara¹	Process of circumcising a male	ECSV
Sara²	To feel pain	Conceptual
Sara³	To prick	Conceptual

Komenda’s study shows that each of the seven *EkeGusii* vowel sounds undergoes lengthening.

Meaning is also realized at the pitch level, i.e. within the domain of the word. In many Bantu languages such as Shona (spoken in Zimbabwe), Zulu or Luganda, every vowel may be classified as being on a high pitch or on a low pitch (Ladefoged, 2001: 227). Data collected in the research showed that in ECSV, meaning of some lexical items is realized at the level of pitch. Examples of lexical items used in ECSV whose contrast in meaning is realized within the domain of the word include the following lexical items in table 11.

Table 11. Meaning contrast within the domain of the word in the lexicon of ECSV

Lexical item in <i>EkeGusii</i>	English equivalent
Omware¹	Initiate
Omware²	Soot
Omware³	You scratch

Omware¹ (initiate) is a lexical item that is used in reference to the initiate from the times/he is circumcised (cut) to the time seclusion period comes to an end. Omware² (soot) is a term used in conceptual contexts to refer to the black substance referred to above.

Omware¹ is marked with a low pitch and it is the one used in the context of *EkeGusii* circumcision. Omware² on the other hand is marked with a high pitch and is used in conceptual contexts. Examples of lexical items whose meaning differentiation is realized through pitch include the ones illustrated in Table 12. Some of the information indicated by pitch in relation to meaning includes the personal characteristics of the speaker. According to Ladefoged (2001:226), pitch of the voice usually indicates whether the speaker is male or female and, to some extent, his/her age. In addition, it conveys a great deal of non-linguistic information about the speaker's emotional state that contributes to meaning. Pitch provides the emotional state of calmness, anger, happiness or sadness.

In ECSV and especially the sub-varieties of marriage, naming and death, pitch plays a very vital role. With the help of verbal utterances that are classified below a word but within the level of sound, pitch is used to communicate meaning depending on contexts in which they are used. In ECSV, what contrasts meaning in these particular contexts is the length of pitch. The sounds in table 12 can be used to illustrate this argument further.

Table 12: Meaning Contrast through length of pitch in the lexicon of ECSV

Sound(s)	Context used	Emotion evoked
iiiiiiii iiiiiii iiiiiii	Birth/naming	happiness/joy
arrrrr rrrrr rrrrr iiiiiiiii	Marriage/circumcision	happiness/joy
uuuuui uuuui uuuui	Death	sadness

The above are sounds made by women to pronounce various happenings in Gusii. **iiiiiiii iiiiiii iiiiiii** is pronounced a new birth and evoked happiness and joy. **arrrrr rrrrr rrrrr iiiiiiiii** announced marriage or the fact that one has successfully endured the cut during circumcision. **uuuuui uuuui uuuui** on the other hand announced death and evoked emotions of sadness.

Unlike speakers of English who do not relate tone with meaning, speakers of *EkeGusii* consider tone as an important meaningful part of a word. For *EkeGusii* and other tone languages, a difference in tone is just as significant as a difference in consonant or vowel

quality. This is especially with regard to meaning in context. Tone languages make two slightly different uses of pitch within a word ... differences in pitch have affected the lexical (dictionary) meaning of a word... tone languages also use pitch differences to make changes in grammatical (morphological) meaning. This is made possible through contours within a lexical item whose orthographic representation is similar in varying meaning. Meaning differentiation is realized in words such *korera* (N) and *korera* (V) through intonation and other prosodic features found within the lexical item.

Lastly, data collected show that meaning in some lexical items used in ECSV is differentiated/realized through stress. This can be demonstrated further using the lexical items presented in table 13.

Table 13. Meaning realization through stress in the lexicon of ECSV

<i>Lexical item</i>	English	Context of use
`abare	Initiates	Circumcision
a`bare	He/she count	Conceptual
`omosari	Male circumciser	Circumcision
omo`sari	Spoiler/sinner	Religious
`omware	Initiate	Circumcision
o`mware	Soot	Conceptual

4.3. Analysis of the Syntactic Structure of the Lexicon of ECSV

The current study seeks to find out how words in *EkeGusii* language are put together to be regarded as well-formed and the role of *EkeGusii* grammar in realizing meaning in the context of circumcision. As pointed out in the earlier chapters of this research, there are no records of written rules governing *EkeGusii* language in the linguistic archives.

Data collected in this study revealed that the lexical items used in the context of ECSV belong to two distinct parts of speech, namely; the noun and verb. A major characteristic of Bantu languages is the occurrence of noun classes whereby the head noun or phrase in a sentence ‘triggers’ on its modifiers such as adjectives, to reflect the singular and plural forms (Simpson, 2008:237). Lexical items that belong to the class of nouns collected from the research include the ones in table 14.

Table 14: The noun in the lexicon of ECSV

Lexical item in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
Baba	Mother	Ababa	Mothers	Marriage
Bwamwabo	Cousin	Bamwabo	Cousins	Naming
Egesagane	Lass	Ebisagane	Lasses	Naming
Egesimba (metaphoric)	Initiate when in seclusion	Ebisimba	Initiates when in seclusion	Circumcision
Enkuri	Crier	Chinkuri	Criers	Circumcision
Enyaroka	Circumcised young lady/woman	Chinyaroka	Circumcised young ladies/women	Circumcision
Esigani /omosigani	Go-between / matchmaker	Chisigani	Go-between/ matchmakers	Marriage
Esokoro	Ancestor	Chisokoro	Ancestors	Naming
Goko	Old woman who plays the role of omosiri	Goko	Old women who form part of abasiri	Circumcision
Magokoro	Grandmother	Abamagokoro	Grandmothers	Naming
Makobiara	Mother-in-law	Abamamabiara	Mothers-in-law	Marriage
Makomoke	Aunt	Abamakomoke	Aunt	Marriage /naming
Mosambamwaye	Newborn (<i>one who has burnt his/her house</i>)	Mosamba mwabo	Newborns (<i>those who have burnt their houses</i>)	Birth / naming
Nyokeu	One who has just graduated from circumcision	Nyokeu	Those who have just graduated from circumcision	Circumcision
Nyokorome	Uncle (maternal)	Bang'inarome	Uncles (maternal)	Naming
Omoburaka	Widow	Ababuraka	Widows	Death
Omochokoro	Grandchild	Abachokoro	Grandchildren	Naming
Omogaka	Old man	Abagaka	Old men	Naming
Omogere	Luo – an ethnic community in Kenya which does	Abagere	Luos-The people who belong to the Luo tribe- an ethnic tribe in Kenya which	All contexts -

Lexical item in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
	not practise circumcision		does not practise circumcision	
Omogesi	Bachelor	Abagesi	Bachelors	Marriage
omogisangio	Colleague/pal	Abagisangio	Colleagues/pals	circumcision
Omoigwa	Niece/nephew	Abaigwa	Nieces/nephews	Naming
Omoikora	Widower	Abaikora	Widowers	Death
Omoimari	Best lady/maid	Abaimari	Best maids	Marriage
Omoiseke	Unmarried young lady / woman	Abaiseke	Unmarried young women	Circumcision
Omoisia	Lad	Abaisia	Lads	Circumcision
Omokebi	Female circumciser	Abakebi	Female circumcisers	Female circumcision
Omokegori	Age-mate/set-birth	Abakegori	Age-mates/set-birth	Circumcision school (general)
Omokiare	Age set/group-circumcision	Abakiare	Age-mate/group/circumcision	When making reference to circumcision
Omoko	In-law (general)	Abako	In-laws (general)	Marriage
Omokundekane	One who ties	Abakundekane	Tiers	Marriage
Omokungu	Woman	Abakungu	Women	Marriage
Omomura	Young man	Abamura	Young men	Male circumcision
Omong'ina	Old woman	Abang'ina	Old women	Naming
Omong'wansi	Sacrifice	Abang'gwansi	Sacrificers	Death, circumcision, marriage
Omonyamaiga	One who holds the three cooking stones	Abanyamaiga	Those who hold the three cooking stones	Marriage/governance in all contexts
Omonyamwaka	In reference to a male Gusii who	Abanyamiaka	Plural marker for omonyamwaka	Marriage

Lexical item in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
	becomes old without getting married having ran away from home			
Omorikari	Newly married woman	Abarikari	Newly married women	Marriage
Omosacha	Married man	Abasacha	Married men	Marriage / naming
Omosae	Youth	Abasae	Youth	Naming
Omosari	Male circumciser	Abasari	Male circumcisers	Male circumcision
OBOSEGI	Fighter	Abasegi	Fighters	Circumcision
OBOSEMIA	Advisor	Abasemia	Advisors	Circumcision
Omosichi	Supporter of the girl during clitoridectomy	Abasichi	Supporters of the girl during clitoridectomy	Female circumcision during the flowering ceremony
Omosinto	Son of	Abasinto	Sons of	Naming
Omosiri	One who supports	Abasiri	Supporters	Circumcision
Omosubati	Daughter	Abasubati	Daughters	Naming
Omoteneneri	One who stands for	Abateneneri	Those who stand for	Marriage
Omourume	Aman who has never married and/or have no children to take care of him	Amaurume	Plural of omourume	Marriage
Omwana	Child	Abana	Children	Naming
Omware	Initiate	Abare	Initiates	Circumcision school
Omwekungi	Virgin	Abekungi	Virgins	Marriage
Riburu	A special place within the room	No plural marker		Circumcision

Lexical item in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
	where the initiates bedding was made			school
Riraya	Prostitute	Amaraya	Prostitutes	Marriage
Ritinge	Prostitute equivalent A woman who was once married but chased from her matrimonial home for defying chinsoni (norms) that governed marriage in Gusii society	Amatinge	Prostitutes	Marriage
Semo	One who has married your wife's sister	Chisemo	Those who are married to your wives' sisters	Marriage
Sokoro	Grandfather	Chisokoro	Grandfathers	Naming
Tata	Father	Abatata	Fathers	Naming
Tatabiara	Father-in-law	Abatatabiara	Fathers-in-law	Marriage

Data collected in table 14 shows that the lexicon of ECSV consists of nouns. Nouns found in the context of ECSV belong to common, proper and abstract noun classes. The use of nouns point towards the importance *AbaGusii* attach to the practise of circumcision. Stylistically, nouns make discourse to appear static while verbs provide dynamism/variety.

Most of the nouns used in ECSV have both singular and plural forms. The inflections which mark plural in *EkeGusii* precede the root word. This is unlike English where the plural marker supersedes the root word. This can be illustrated using the lexical items in table 15.

Table 15: Inflections which mark singular and plural in the lexicon of ECSV

Lexical item in singular	Lexical item in plural	Context of use
--------------------------	------------------------	----------------

<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
Ebarongo	Twin	<u>ch</u> ibarongo	Twins	Naming
Egesagane	Lass	<u>E</u> bisagane	Lasses	Naming
Egetondo	Corpse	<u>E</u> bitondo	Corpses	Death
Nyokeu	An initiated person who has just come out of seclusion	nyokeu/nyobi <u>u</u>	Initiates who have just come out of seclusion	Circumcision school
Omoimari	Best maid	<u>A</u> baimari	best maids	Marriage
Omoisia	Lad	<u>A</u> baisia	Lads	Naming
Omoriakari	newly married woman	<u>a</u> bariakari	newly married women	Marriage
Omozegi	Fighter	<u>A</u> basegi	Fighters	Circumcision
Omukundekane	one who ties	<u>a</u> bakundekane	those who tie	Marriage
Omware	Initiate	<u>A</u> bare	Initiates	Circumcision

The lexical items above refer to humans. Most of them form their plural forms by changing their prefix as shown in table 16.

Table 16: Prefix change in plural marking in the lexicon of ECSV

<i>Singular – ‘omo’</i>	<i>plural – ‘aba’</i>	<i>Context of use</i>
omoimari	abaimari	Marriage
omwana	abana	Naming in all contexts
omware	Abare	Circumcision

Some nouns used in the context of ECSV do not follow the above order of forming the plural by changing the prefix ‘omo’ – ‘aba’. They include the lexical items in table 17.

Table 17: Plural marking in irregular nouns in the lexicon of ECSV

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Context when used</i>
a) Egesagane (<i>lass</i>)	ebisagane (<i>lasses</i>)	naming in all contexts
Enyaroka (<i>circumcised girl</i>)	chinyaroka (<i>circumcised girls</i>)	female circumcision
b) Nyokeu (<i>one who has just graduated from the circumcision school</i>)	nyokeu (<i>no plural marker</i>)	circumcision
c) Riraya (<i>prostitute</i>)	amaraya (<i>prostitutes</i>)	marriage
d) Ritinge (<i>prostitute</i>)	amatinge (<i>prostitutes</i>)	marriage

The classification given above is important in realizing and differentiating meaning depending on context and gender. The noun classifications will be used to analyze gender differentiation in the lexicon of ECSV later in this chapter.

It should be noted that there are some lexical items belonging to the noun word class that do not have plural marker. Examples include: The lexical items in table 18.

Table 18: Nouns without Plural Marking in the Lexicon of ECSV

<i>Singular</i>	<i>Plural</i>	<i>Context when used</i>
Bamwabo/bwamwabo (cousin)	bamwabo (cousin)	naming in all contexts
Nyokeu (<i>one who has just graduated from the circumcision school</i>)	Nyokeu (no plural marker)	naming in <i>EkeGusii</i> circumcision school

Unclassified nouns collected in the data that form part of the lexicon of ECSV are presented in table 19. These nouns are considered to be unclassified in this particular study because they lack characteristics common to the classified nouns.

Table 19: Unclassified nouns in the lexicon of ECSV

Lexical items in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	

Lexical items in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
Amabe	Death	Amabe	No plural marker	During funeral
Amarwa	Beer	Amarwa	No plural marker	In all contexts
Amasangi	Unfaithfulness by the husband of a pregnant woman. This can cause death of the mother	Amasangi	No plural marker	During birth affecting marriage of two people
Chinchigiri / chindege	Part of the special attire worn by the groom when visiting the bride to be	Chinchigiri	No plural marker	marriage ceremonies prior to tying the knot
Chiombe	Symbolically used in reference to dowry	Chiombe	Cows (dowry)	Before a couple was allowed to tie the knot
Ebundo	Some clay used by male initiates	Ebundo	No plural marker	Male circumcision
Egekuro	Scream	Ebikuro	Screams	To announce death
Egesanda	Calabash	Ebisanda	Calabashes	All contexts
Egesarate	Kraal built in forests for the males who have graduated from the circumcision school	Ebisarate	Kraals built in forests by male graduates from circumcision school	Male circumcision school after graduating from seclusion
Egesembe	Special attire for the bride worn on the marriage day	Ebisembe	Special attire for the brides worn on their wedding days	Marriage
Egesieri kia	Cattleshed door	Ebisieri bia bweri	Cattle shed doors	Circumcision

Lexical items in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
bweri				/ marriage, death
Egesiringi	A small pebble	Ebisiringi	Small pebbles	Marriage
Egesono	Clitoris	Ebisono	Clitori	Clitoridectomy
Egetinge	A round ring worn round the ankle of a married woman that is reserved for the first wife only	Ebitinge	Round rings worn round the left ankles by married women. A reserve for the first wives	Marriage of a first wife
Egetondo	Corpse	Ebitondo	Corpses	Death
Eira	Promise/covenant chiira	Chiira	Promises/covenants	Circumcision & marriage
Ekee	A traditional bowl	Ebiee	Traditional bowls	Marriage
Ekeigoroigoro	Uphill	Ekeigoroigoro	No plural marker	Female circumcision
Ekemincha	Penis	Ebimincha	Penis	Conceptual / male circumcision
Ekeng'wanso	Sacrifice	Ebing'wanso	Ebing'wanso	Marriage & death
Ekerecha	Devil	Ebirecha	Devils	Death
Ekerende egekungu	Female softwood used to make fire	Ebirende ebikung'u	Female softwoods used to make ritualistic fire for the initiates	Female circumcision school
Ekerende egwetwani	Male hardwood used to make ritualistic fire for the initiate	Ebirende ebitwani	Male hardwoods used to make the ritualistic fire for the initiates	Male circumcision school
Ekerero	A cry	Ebirero	Cry	Death

Lexical items in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
Ekerorano	Seeing each other ceremony conducted before marriage day	Ebirorano	Seeing each other ceremony conducted before marriage takes place.	Marriage
Ekerundu	A wild plant held by the initiate after the cut on his/her way to seclusion. It aids stop bleeding	Ebirundu	Wild plants held by the initiates after the cut on their way to seclusion. The plants aid stop bleeding	Just after male and female circumcision
Ekiore	Part of the special attire worn by the groom when visiting the bride to be	Ebiore	Part of the special attire worn by the grooms when visiting the brides' homes	marriage
Embera	Grave (synonym)	Chimbera	graves	Death, burial
Emboro	Penis	Chimboro	Penis	Conceptual, male circumcision
Emuma	Oath	Chimuma	Oaths	In reference to EkeGusii statutes
Engiti	A dummy beast that visits the initiate during esubo ritual	Eng'iti	No plural marker	Conceptual, circumcision during the esubo (tying) ritual
Engobo	Part of the special dressing for the bride on her wedding day	Chingobo	Part of the special dressing for the bride on the wedding day	During the marriage ceremony

Lexical items in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
Engoma	A kind of drum beat for marriage	Chingoma	Drum beats for marriage	Marriage ceremony
Engoro	God	Engoro	God	All contexts
Enkondo	A small gourd decorated with cowrie shells that the bride carried on the marriage day – it was presented to the mother in-law	Chinkondo	Small gourds decorated with cowrie shells that the bride carried on their marriage day and presented to their mothers in-law	Marriage
Enkorogoinwa	(<i>Garissa edulis</i>) figuratively used in reference to a strong circumcised young man	chinkorogoinwa	No plural marker	Male circumcision school
Ensara	Arrow	Chinsara	Arrows	Male circumcision school
Entakana	Orphan	Chintakana	Orphans	Death
Entono/ egetono	Small pot	Ebitono	Small pots	Conceptual, circumcision, marriage, death
Enyabububu	A dummy dragon that visits the initiate during esubo ritual	Enyabububu	No plural marker	Circumcision school during <i>esubo</i> (tying) ritual
Enyamweri	Beast that visited the initiate to scare and subject the initiate into fear in order to test his/her	Chinyamweri	Chinyamweri	Circumcision school during <i>esubo</i> (tying) ritual

Lexical items in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
	perserverance			
Enyangi	Rituals	Chinyangi	Rituals	Circumcision / marriage
Erioba	Sky	Erioba	No plural marker	Conceptual, birth, naming
Esabarangi	Part of ECSV song	Esabarangi	No plural marker	Circumcision rituals
Esimbore	Sacred song for circumcision	Chisimbore	Sacred songs for circumcision	On the day one is circumcised/ cut
Esubo	One of the circumcision rituals	Esubo	No plural marker	Esubo (tying) ritual of circumcision
Esumati	Special attire worn by the groom when visiting the bride-to-be	Chisumati	Special attires worn by the grooms when visiting the bride	In ceremonies before marriage takes place
Etago	Some clay used by girls for beauty	Etago	No plural marker	During <i>ogosichwa</i> (flowering) ceremony, marriage
Eyarogoro	Part of the ECSV song	Eyarogoro	No plural marker	Female circumcision song
Irungu	Section in the house	Irungu	No plural marker	Circumcision
Nyaro	Synonym for bware/circumcision	Nyaro	No plural marker	During circumcision in reference to

Lexical items in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
				circumcision
Nyomba	House	Chinyomba	Houses	Conceptual/ circumcision during seclusion period
Oboina	Grave	Oboina	No plural marker (synonym)	Death
Obota	Shield	Obota	No plural marker	Male circumcision school
Omogomba	A woman who never married and did not bear children of her own	Abagomba	Spinsters	Marriage, birth
Omogoye	Rope	Emegoye	Ropes	Female circumcision
Omoino	A kind of special song	Emeino	Special songs	Special occasions including circumcision & marriage
Omotembe	A kind of softwood tree that is Used as a ritualistic tree	Emetembe	Softwood trees	During rituals, oathing, circumcision
Omourume	A man who had no family/wife/childre n; a loner	Amaurume	Men who did not have families of their own neither wife nor children	Marriage
Omoyaba	Special dressing for the bride on her marriage day	Emeyaba	Special attire for the bride on their wedding days	Marriage
Omwanania	A wrestling match	Omwanania	No plural marker	marriage

Lexical items in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
	between young men from the bride's clan and those from the groom's clan			
Omwobo	Markhamia lutea: a ritualistic tree that brough peace to a homestead	Emiobo	Markhamia lutea	Death, conceptual
Oroiboro	In relation to birth	Amabiara	Irregular. In relation to birth	Marriage & birth
Orotuba	A traditional blade made of flattened stone where girls sit when the clitoris is being cut	Orotuba	No plural marker	Female circumcision at the site of clitoridectomy
Ribuko	Some wild leaves used as the initiates' bedding	Ribuko/amabuko	Some wild branches used as the initiates' bedding	circumcision
Richambe	Mat	Amachambi	Mats	Female circumcision
Riiga	Cooking stone	Amaiga	Cooking stones	Marriage / circumcision
Riririanda	High level of sympathy	Amaririanda / amayianda	High level of sympathy	Death
Risaga	Cooperation	Amasaga	Cooperation	community cooperation to assist the widow
Risate	Communal	Risate	No plural marker	Same as risaga
Riteba	May/may not have married but infertile / barren woman	Amateba	Infertile / barren women	marriage

Lexical items in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
Yaa	Name that refers to age-mate used by young men	Yaa	No plural marker	By age sets in male circumcision

Data collected also revealed that some lexical items used to name people have the prefix /ege - / which is ideally a singular marker for inanimate things or smaller parts of the body such as the ones shown in table 20.

Table 20: Lexical items with the prefix / ege- / [s]

<i>Inanimate</i>		<i>parts of the human body</i>		<i>Context</i>
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
Egechiko	<i>spoon</i>	<i>ebichiko</i>	<i>spoons</i>	conceptual
Egekombe	<i>cup</i>	<i>egechara</i>	<i>finger nail</i>	conceptual
Egesiri	<i>small jembe/ho</i>	<i>ebisiri</i>	<i>small jembes/hoes</i>	death
Egete	<i>stick</i>	<i>egesono</i>	<i>clitoris</i>	conceptual
Egetiro	<i>uphill</i>	<i>ebitiro</i>	<i>uphills</i>	conceptual
Egetono	<i>small pot</i>	<i>ebitono</i>	<i>small pots</i>	conceptual

The lexical item *egesagane* (lass or uncircumcised girl/woman) is used in ECSV derogatively to mean uncircumcised woman of whatever age. The plural marker for /ege-/ is /ebi-/ as shown in table 21.

Table 21: Lexical items with plural marker for / ege- // ebi- /

Lexical item in singular		Lexical item in plural		Context of use
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	
<u>E</u>gechiko	Spoon	<u>E</u>bichiko	Spoons	Conceptual
<u>E</u>gento	Something	<u>E</u>binto	Things	Conceptual
<u>E</u>gesagane	Lass	<u>E</u>bisagane	Lasses	Before clitoridectomy
<u>E</u>gesanda	Calabash	<u>E</u>bisanda	Calabashes	Circumcision, marriage
<u>E</u>gesiri	Small hoe/jembe	<u>E</u>bisiri	Small hoes/	Death

			jembes	
<u>E</u>gesono	Clitoris	<u>E</u>bisono	Clitoris	Female circumcision during clitoridectomy
<u>E</u>gete	Stick	<u>E</u>bite	Sticks	Male and female circumcision
<u>E</u>getiro	Uphill	<u>E</u>bitiro	Uphill	Female circumcision, marriage
<u>E</u>getono	Small pot	<u>E</u>bitono	Small pots	Marriage, death
<u>E</u>getondo	Dead body (corpse)	<u>E</u>bitondo	Dead bodies (corpses)	Death

Further, data collected showed that nouns used in the lexicon of ECSV form word-stems on which other parts of speech rest and that various words are formed through the processes of prefixation, suffixation and infixation. Prefixes are put at the beginning of a root word, while suffixes are put at the end of the root word. Infixation is a process by which an expletive is inserted into a word. Infixations occur within the word. According to Mwangi (2007:50), the lexicon in the mental dictionary has the words to which the affixes are added. The affixes have information such as on meaning, bases, the grammatical category and the different layers in which the lexicon is organized. The result of these processes on root words is the formation of other/new words or change in meanings. The following nouns undergo processes to create new words or change meaning of lexical items to result in contrast between conceptual usages of words from contextual usage. Examples include the following lexical items in figure 9.

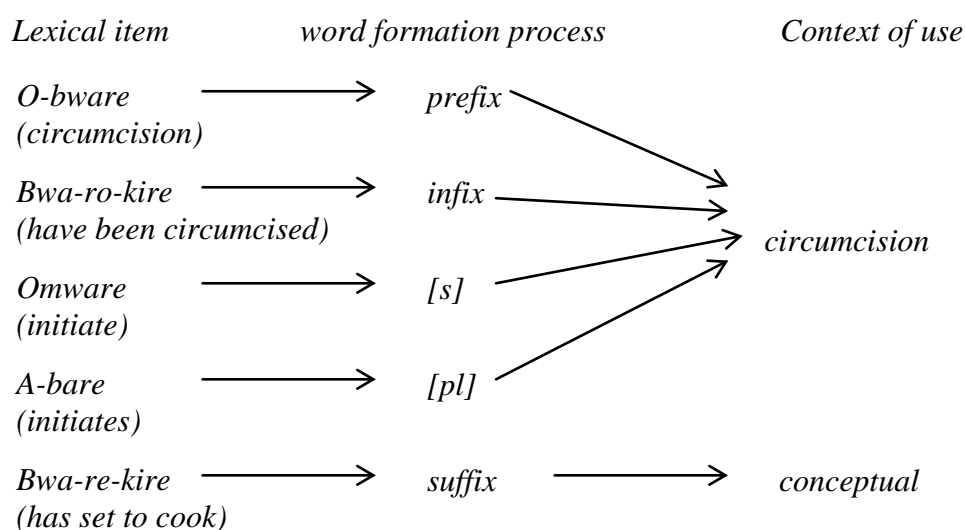


Fig 9: Word formation processes in the context of ECSV

Some of the word classes formed include the following:

1. Nouns, e.g. *omware*(initiate), *abare*(initiates)
2. Verbs, e.g. *bwarekire*(has set to cook)

Understanding the meaning of the lexical items above is only a preserve of native speakers and by extension those who have undergone the initiation process of circumcision and clitoridectomy. Regardless of the change that takes place as a result of prefixation, suffixation and infixation, meaning is understood based on the context in which a word is used.

The lexical item ‘omong’wansi’ in table 22 illustrates this further:

Table 22: The illustration of the lexical item among’wansi

EkeGusii	English	Word class	Context of use
<i>Kongwansa</i>	To sacrifice	Verb	Death, marriage, circumcision
<i>Ng’wansa</i>	Sacrifice		Death, marriage, male circumcision
<i>Omongwansi</i>	A person who sacrifices	Noun	Death, marriage, male circumcision
<i>Omong’wansire</i>	He has sacrificed him	A noun phrase	Death, marriage, male circumcision

The noun phrase *Omong’wansire* above is an illustration of a characteristic of Bantu languages whereby an NP is encompassed within one word to make the lexical item have an added meaning. In the context of ECSV ‘omongwansi’ is a male helper for the male initiate and a best-man in the sub-variety of marriage. The lexical item ‘omong’wansi’ is a case of polysemy which will be discussed in the section of semantic content of the lexicon of ECSV. The other sub varieties of ECSV have been studied under circumcision for the simple reason that it is learned during circumcision. The use of the lexical item ‘omongwansi’ is gender specific and its meaning is understood based on the sex of the user.

4.3.1 Analysis of the verb in the lexicon of ECSV

The current study uses English as a meta-language to analyse the lexicon of ECSV. In the

English language, the verb is understood as a word that expresses an action. In the lexicon of ECSV, the verb is used to express both the action and state of being. Some of the verbs used in the context of ECSV are cases of derivations from other parts of speech. Verbs used in the context of ECSV that were collected in the data include the ones presented in table 23.

Table 23: Verbs and verb stems found in the lexicon of ECSV

Verb (EkeGusii)	English	Context of use	Exression
<i>Gochinyomba</i>	To inherit another man's wife unlawfully	Death	State of being
<i>Gokeba</i>	To circumcise – female	Female circumcision during clitoridectomy	Action
<i>Gokobania</i>	Special mourning attire worn by a woman whose husband has died	Death, during mourning	State of being
<i>Gokura</i>	To scream	Death to announce the demise of a Gusii man	Action
<i>Gokwa</i>	To die (impolite)	In reference to death	State of being
<i>Gosara</i>	To circumcise – male	Male circumcision during the act of cutting the foreskin	Action
<i>Gosega</i>	To fight for/help the initiate by 'omosegi' (fighter)	Throughout the circumcision period	Action
<i>Gosicha</i>	To support a girl during the cutting of the clitoris	Female circumcision	Action
<i>Gosichwa</i>	To be flowered during clitoridectomy	During the female gosichwa (flowering) ceremony that took place shortly before graduating from seclusion	State of being
<i>Gosigana</i>	To play the go-between	Commencement of engagement for marriage	Action
<i>Gosira</i>	To get lost (die)	Death	State of being

Verb (EkeGusii)	English	Context of use	Exression
<i>Gosoka</i>	To get out / to be married	Marriage	State of being
<i>Gosonia</i>	Arouse sexual desire – with girls challenging the male initiates to have intercourse by removing all their clothes. Having sex during ‘ogosonia’ is taboo for the male	circumcision	Action
<i>Gotenenera</i>	To stand for	Marriage	Action / state of being
<i>Gotindeka</i>	To bury (impolite)	During burial	Action
<i>Gotugutwa</i>	To be thrown away / buried (polite)	Burial	Action / state of being
<i>Gotureka</i>	To put important belongings of the deceased upside down e.g. the three-legged stool, ekenindo (locking chair), pots etc, as a form of mourning for the deceased	After burial in the death sub-variety	Action / state of being (temporal)
<i>Gotweka mo</i>	To die (polite)	Death	State of being
<i>Koba nda</i>	To become pregnant (impolite)	Marriage	State of being (temporal)
<i>Kobasa</i>	To elope	Marriage	State of being
<i>Kobiara</i>	To give birth (impolite)	Marriage	action
<i>Kobina</i>	To go into labour	Marriage	Action
<i>Kobuna egechuri</i>	Breaking the rooftop of a conical traditional house as a form of ‘ogotureka’ that has	Death	Action

Verb (<i>EkeGusii</i>)	English	Context of use	Exression
	been explained above		
<i>Koega</i>	To seduce	Marriage	Action
<i>Koibora</i>	To give birth (polite)	Marriage	Action
<i>Koimara</i>	To play the role of best maid	Marriage	Action
<i>Komana</i>	To negotiate for dowry/bride-price	Marriage	Action
<i>Kong'wansa</i>	To sacrifice	Circumcision, marriage	Action
<i>Korera</i>	To nurture	Marriage	Action
<i>Korutwa omwaro</i>	To have a dry tree thrown on a man's grave who had no wife or children	Death	Action / state of being
<i>Kwarama</i>	To be in seclusion	Circumcision	State of being (temporal)
<i>Kwaroka/kwarokia</i>	To be circumcised / to take one to be initiated	Circumcision	Action
<i>Kwebwaterania</i>	To become pregnant or conceive	Marriage	State of being (Temporal)
<i>Kweumia</i>	To mourn	Death	Action
<i>Morito</i>	To become pregnant (polite)	Marriage	State of being (temporal)

4.4 Analysis of Lexical Items that Distinguish ECSV from *EkeGusii* Standard Variety

Lexical items used in the context of ECSV and not in the standard variety include the ones shown in Table 24.

Table 24: Lexical items that distinguish ECSV from the standard variety

<i>EkeGusii</i>	English	Context of use
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<i>EkeGusii</i>	English	Context of use
<i>Amabuko</i>	Thick leafed plant that was used as bedding for the initiates during seclusion period	Seclusion period in the circumcision social variety
<i>Chigwagwa</i>	A plant of the climber species that is worn by old men on the day of <i>eburu</i> . They are also spread on the backs of the bulls that participate in the <i>eburu</i> ceremony of EkeGusii death sub-variety	Death
<i>Chinchigiri / chindege</i>	Part of the special dressing/attire worn by the groom when visiting the home of the bride-to-be.	During courtship in the marriage sub-variety
<i>Chinyangi</i>	All rituals/ceremonies associated with circumcision, clitoridectomy and marriage	In the context of EkeGusii circumcision social varieties and sub-varieties
<i>Chisare</i>	Twins	Marriage and birth/naming
<i>Chisokoro</i>	Ancestors to whom special supplication was made to bless the initiate during and after seclusion	Death
<i>Ebundo</i>	Mould black clay	Circumcision social variety
<i>Eburu</i>	The ceremony conducted the day after burial. In case it is the man whose ceremony is being conducted, bulls would be led to the grave to mourn.	After burial in the death sub-variety
<i>Egekamago</i>	The first step in preparing the grave. The first born son/grandson of the bereaved person makes the first step in digging the grave	Death sub-variety

<i>EkeGusii</i>	English	Context of use
<i>Egesanda</i>	(Calabash) used to carry milk or traditional brew for the oiling ceremony of 'goaka maguta motwe'/oiling the head ceremony	In the oiling ceremony of circumcision
<i>Egesembe</i>	Part of the special attire worn by the bride	Marriage
<i>Egesimba / ebisimba</i>	Wild cat(s) in reference to the initiates in seclusion	Throughout the seclusion period
<i>Egesono</i>	The clitoris	Female circumcision
<i>Egetinge</i>	A round ring worn round the left ankle of a married woman. Only the first wife wears 'egetinge'	Marriage
<i>Ekee</i>	Special traditional bowl for carrying millet flour that would be sprinkled onto the initiate's clitoris after circumcision.	Circumcision, marriage
<i>Ekeigoroigoro</i>	A ceremony in which girls/initiates were prepared in readiness for consummation of marriage. The girls were smeared with clay/etago	During ekeigoroigoro ceremony of <i>EkeGusii</i> circumcision
<i>Ekerende egekungu</i>	Dry female soft stick used to make a fire for the female initiate	Setting fire for the female initiate in ECSV
<i>Ekerende egetwani</i>	Dry male hard stick – a special stick that was used to make the ritualistic fire for the male initiate	In setting of fire for the male circumcision social variety
<i>Ekerorano</i>	Seeing each other	During courtship in the marriage sub-variety of <i>EkeGusii</i> circumcision
<i>Ekerundu</i>	An indigenous ritualistic plant that has a scent. It was given to the initiates to help track them. It symbolically meant that the initiate had been made attractive for the opposite sex to follow and marry.	During Esuguta ritual in the circumcision social variety

<i>EkeGusii</i>	English	Context of use
<i>Ekiore</i>	Part of the special attire worn by the groom when visiting the bride-to-be	During courtship in the marriage sub-variety
<i>Engobo</i>	Special attire for the bride	Marriage
<i>Engoma</i>	Wild banana leaves that were placed on the floor to form a carpet during the ekeigoroigoro ceremony	Circumcision
<i>Enkondo</i>	A small gourd decorated with beads and cowrie shells that the bride carried on the marriage day. She placed it in a strategic position in her mother-in-law's house for the entire period she was under orientation as 'omoriakari.'	Marriage
<i>Enkorogoinwa / chinkorogoinwa</i>	An edible wild fruit (scientific name <i>Garissa edulis</i>) symbolically used in reference to a young man in Gesarate ready for marriage	Circumcision school, marriage
<i>Ensobosobo</i>	Cape Gooseberry (Scientific name <i>Physalis vulgaris</i>) that was used figuratively in reference to a fully grown woman ready for marriage	Circumcision, marriage
<i>Entakana</i>	Orphan	Death
<i>Enyabububu (eng'iti)</i>	A beast that was meant to scare the initiate, to subject the initiate to fear in order to test his/her perseverance. <i>Enyabububu (dragon)</i> formed part of the <i>esubo</i> ritual. <i>Esubo</i> songs such as 'nyasuguta' (of <i>Sporobolus africanus</i>) for girls and ' <i>esabarangi ya bagaka</i> ' (<i>male circumcision song</i>) for boys were sung.	Circumcision school
<i>Esabarangi</i>	Boys' symbolic circumcision song	Male circumcision

<i>EkeGusii</i>	English	Context of use
		school
<i>Esuguta</i>	Ritual grass (Scientific name: <i>Sporobolus africanus</i>) that was planted near the entrance of the main door, i.e., egesieri kia bware)	Circumcision
<i>Esumati</i>	Special dressing worn by the bride	Marriage
<i>Etago</i>	Clay that was used to decorate the girl during ekeigoroigoro (up-hill). Etago is red ochre	Female circumcision school
<i>Eyarogoro</i>	A girl circumcision song that was sung at dawn when the sun from mocha (east) was reddish, i.e., <i>Orogoro orabariri</i> (the red north). See the compass on Fig. 4.6.1. It was sung to the girls on the morning of clitoridectomy	Female circumcision school
<i>Gochi nyomba</i>	(enter house) Compound word that stood for inheriting a dead man's house (wife)	Marriage
<i>Gosichwa</i>	To be decorated by etago for the purpose of being prepared for marriage	Female circumcision school
<i>Gotureka</i>	To break the rooftop of the main house after the burial of a married man	Death
<i>Kogenda / gochi nyaro</i>	In reference to circumcision	Circumcision
<i>Kororombia</i>	The wife (widow)'s recurrent wails as a way of mourning her dead husband	Death
<i>Koumamia</i>	Also <i>gotureka</i> (putting things upside down) used in <i>maate</i> dialect)	Death
<i>Kwarama</i>	The state of being in seclusion	Circumcision school
<i>Nyaro</i>	Equivalent to circumcision	Circumcision school
<i>Nyokeu</i>	Initiated person who has graduated from	Tag name used after

<i>EkeGusii</i>	English	Context of use
	seclusion	seclusion
<i>Nyomba</i>	The state of being in seclusion	Circumcision
<i>Ogosuba/esubo</i>	Part of chinyangi rituals that was performed towards the end of circumcision period (during ‘esubo’ ritual, EkeGusii chinsoni (norms) were inculcated in omogusii male/female as well as the lexicon of circumcision was acquired.	Circumcision school
<i>Okogororokia</i>	(to straighten up) a follow up ceremony conducted to return the bereaved family back to normalcy. <i>Omoburaka</i> (widow) or <i>omoikora</i> (widower) are allowed to leave the compound after ‘ <i>kogororokia</i> ’	Death
<i>Omorero</i>	Fire Symbolically used to mean life/culture that should keep burning in the Gusii person after circumcision/clitoridectomy	Circumcision school
<i>Omosari</i>	The male circumciser	Male circumcision
<i>Omosichi</i>	Tamer – helps the ‘mosegi (fighter) by lighting the ritualistic fire	Female circumcision school
<i>Omosiri</i>	One who holds the (female) initiate when the clitoris is being cut	Female circumcision school
<i>Omosuto</i>	Used in marriage ceremony to refer to the <i>ritororo</i> (calf) given by maternal uncle	Marriage
<i>Omotache</i>	A child who has an immediate sibling/follower	Marriage
<i>Omotembe</i>	A ritualistic tree that the lad held during the cutting of the foreskin of the penis. Male circumcision and important rituals were conducted under the <i>omotembe</i> . In the event	Male circumcision school and other important oathing

<i>EkeGusii</i>	English	Context of use
	of <i>emuma/chimuma</i> (oaths), <i>omotembe</i> was to be held. <i>Chimuma</i> was an event for men only.	ceremonies
<i>Omoyaba</i>	Part of the special attire worn by the bride	Marriage
<i>Omukundekane</i>	Tier i.e. one who ties together. The <i>omukundekane</i> was a respectable old man who blessed the wedding and marriage	Marriage
<i>Omwanania</i>	A wrestling match between young men from the bride's clan and young men from the groom's clan	Marriage
<i>Omwobo</i>	<i>Markhamia Lutea</i> . A ritualistic tree that brought peace to the mind of the initiate.	<i>Marriage and death</i>
<i>Orotuba</i>	A kind of special smooth stone on which an initiated girl sat during the process of clitoridectomy, i.e., when the clitoris was being cut.	Female circumcision
<i>Riburu</i>	A special bed and bedding for the initiates during seclusion period	Circumcision
<i>Risaga</i>	A kind of self-help group at the clan level who helped in organizing for events and work such as circumcision, marriage, planting, weeding, harvesting, etc.	Circumcision, marriage and some conceptual contexts
<i>Teta</i>	Have sex with a woman	Marriage

The lexical items presented in table 25 were used to name artefacts that were used in ECSV.

Table 25: Lexical items of artefacts used in the Lexicon of ECSV

<i>Ekegusii</i>	English equivalent	<i>Context of use</i>
<i>Chinchigiri</i>	Part of the special attire	

<i>Ekegusii</i>	English equivalent	<i>Context of use</i>
	worn by the groom when visiting the bride -to -be	
<i>Ebundo</i>	Some clay used by male initiates	<i>Male circumcision school</i>
<i>Egesanda</i>	Calabash	<i>All contexts</i>
<i>Egesembe</i>	Special attire for the bride worn on the marriage day	<i>marriage</i>
<i>Egetinge</i>	round ring worn round the left ankle of a married woman	<i>Marriage</i>
<i>Egetono</i>	a small pot	<i>All contexts</i>
<i>Ekee</i>	a traditional bowl	<i>All contexts</i>
<i>Ekerundu</i>	A wild plant used during ECSV	<i>Circumcision school</i>
<i>Ekiore</i>	Attire worn by the groom during the marriage ceremony.	<i>Marriage</i>
<i>Engobo</i>	Part of the special dressing for the bride on her wedding day	<i>Marriage</i>
<i>Engobo-</i>	An attire worn by women in any other occasion	<i>Conceptual</i>
<i>Enkondo</i>	a kind of small guard carried by the bride on the marriage day and presented to the mother-in-law upon reaching her matrimonial home	<i>Marriage</i>
<i>Ensio</i>	a small stone used to grind grain on a grinding stone.	<i>Conceptual, marriage and death</i>

<i>Ekegusii</i>	English equivalent	Context of use
<i>Erioba</i>	Sky-symbolically used in reference to god	<i>All contexts</i>
<i>Esuguta</i>	A wild plant carried by the initiates on their way to seclusion after circumcision	<i>Circumcision</i>
<i>Esumati</i>	Special attire worn by the groom when visiting the bride-to-be	<i>Marriage</i>
<i>Etago</i>	Clay that was used to decorate the girl during ekeigoroigoro	<i>Female circumcision school</i>
<i>Omoyaba</i>	Special dressing for the bride on her marriage day	<i>Marriage</i>
<i>Orogena</i>	Grinding stone	<i>Conceptual, marriage and death</i>
<i>Orotuba</i>	A kind of blade where girls sat in the process of cutting the clitoris during clitoridectomy	<i>Female circumcision</i>

4.5 Analysis of Discourse Patterns within the Lexicon of ECSV

Discourse analysis studies give analysis of languages. The current study analyses the lexicon of ECSV which falls under sociolinguistics. However, its semantics will be best understood if its analysis includes discourse analysis in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of how a variety of language and in this particular study, the social variety of circumcision (as well as the sub-varieties included in circumcision) operates in *EkeGusii* speaking society. This argument follows what Gee (1996) in Schiffrin et al, (2001:538) considers as ways of being in the world, or forms of life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social

identities, as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes. In the case of *EkeGusii* speaking society, reference is made to *chinsoni* (statues). *Chinsoni* is polysemic. There is *chinsoni* for language, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes and social identities. In each of the *chinsoni* listed, language is the medium that is used to pass them from one generation to another. There are also linguistic *chinsoni* allowed to operate at every context of *EkeGusii* language speaking world. In the context of circumcision, a lexical item *enkuri* (one which cries) is understood differently from *enkuri* (bedbug). In conceptual contexts ‘enkuri’ is not associated with + human. The semantic fields applied here is context specific, i.e., where *enkuri* in reference to one who cries takes;

+ human

+ animal

In other words, *enkuri* is less human which is ideally the case with *enkuri* (bedbug) which is;

- human

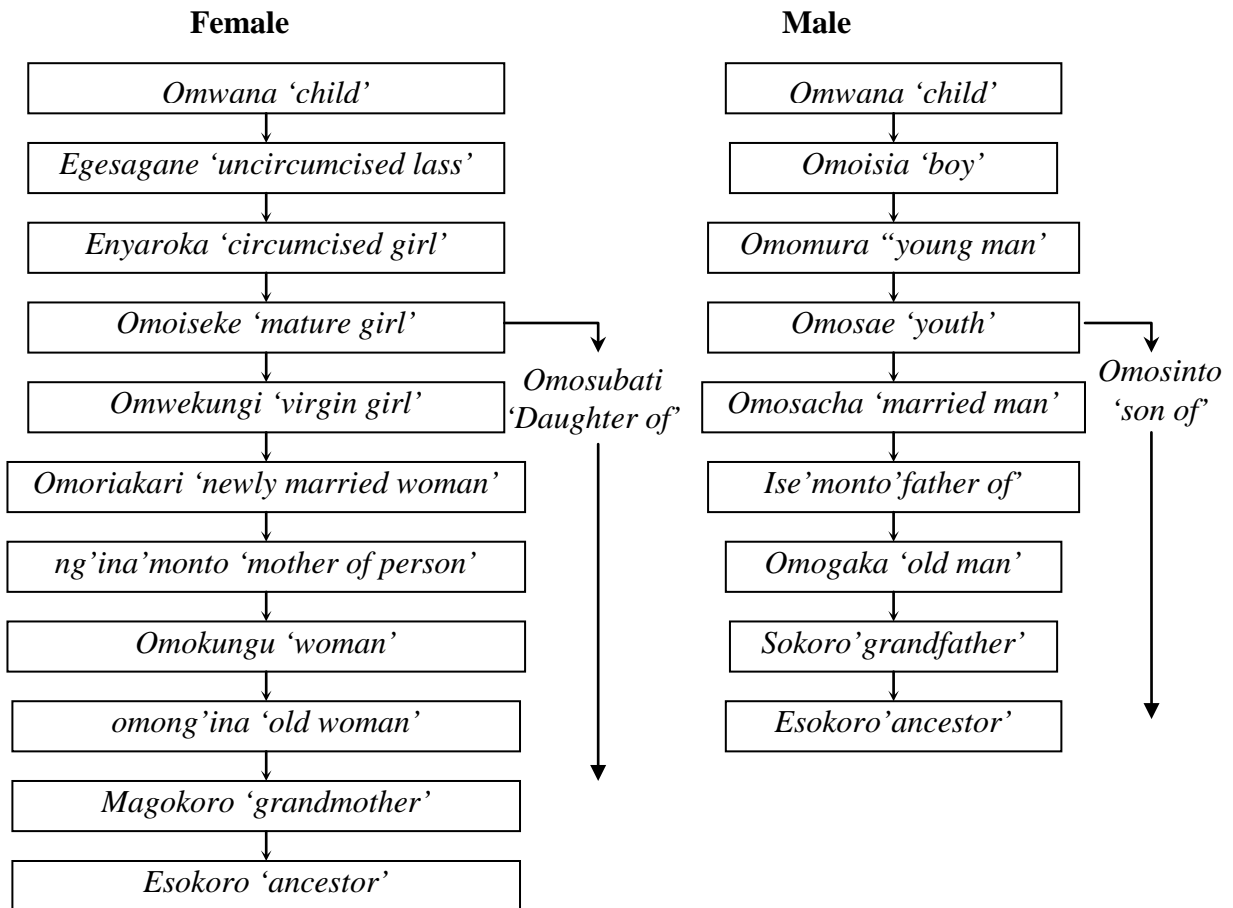
+ animal

+ parasite

Discourse in this particular case has been analysed semantically within the sociocultural context. Schifffrin et al (2001) argues that social practices are understood as being constituted in and through discursive social interactions while at the same time those social interactions are taken as instantiations of pre-existing social practices.

Data collected from the research through the interviews exhibited sex variation in the use of language. *EkeGusii* naming system exhibits gender differentiation as shown in figure 10.

Fig. 10: EkeGusii Naming system



(EkeGusiiLanguage Expert aged above70)

In the event that at circumcision, a girl does not go through clitoridectomy, she remains *egesagane* (lass) for the rest of her life even if she marries, bears children and becomes a grandparent. She will however, be required to be circumcised when she is giving birth or before she is buried. *Enyaroka* (circumcised girl) proceeds to the next stage of becoming *omoiseke* (circumcised mature girl) or *omoiseke omwekungi* (circumcised virgin) respectively. Culturally, becoming *enyaroka* (circumcised girl) is regarded highly in EkeGusii-speaking society. Therefore, becoming *omoiseke* (mature girl) and *omoiseke omwekungi* (circumcised, mature virgin girl) is the highest level a Gusii female can attain. The cultural implication involves fetching a higher bride price for her parents and clan as well as commanding respect at marriage and old age. At marriage, a woman becomes *omoriakari* and *ng'ina monto* (mother of person). After the first born, a mother becomes *omokungu* and if she is divorced the reference of her changes to (ritinge). The male on the other hand, is born *omoisia* (lad) and transforms through rebirth to become *omomura* at circumcision. In the event that *omosae* (youth) of marriageable age remains unmarried, he becomes *omogesi* (harvester) and if he

dies unmarried at old age, he becomes *omonyamwaka*. He also acquires *omonyamwaka* (of ages) if he runs away from his family for many years without coming back home. If a man's wife dies, he becomes *omoikora* while a widow is *omobora'ka* (one without a home). This explains that *EkeGusii* naming system clearly differentiates a female from a male in all contexts.

Gochi nyaro (go under) means that one has to bend or be submissive to his/her own culture in order to receive it. A child is born without culture or language. At the circumcision school, one seeks to be given culture and that is why *omomame's* (maternal uncles') permission is required for one to be given circumcision. The goat/sheep/chicken given is symbolically used to show that permission has been granted. The whole process of circumcision uses metaphoric language but men use metaphor more than women. This means that *EkeGusii* language is given to the man because he is the steward of culture. Women do not have a culture and hence are not given *EkeGusii* culture because a woman can be married to a man from another tribe such as *omosigisi* from (Kipsigis tribe) or *omomanyi* from (Maasai tribe) and as a result of the intermarriage, the language/culture gets lost. *EkeGusii* speaking society is patriarchal and conservative in nature and they use language to conserve their culture. Circumcision is significant to a *Gusii* man because it empowers the man/installs the man with the responsibility of heading a family, a clan, and community. Circumcision also made one a defender of the community and detached him from being under a woman (his mother) to a patriarch.

Lexical items associated with male circumcision include:

<i>Enkororo</i>	defender/one who does not meet with women
<i>Omobui</i>	winner
<i>Omogaka</i>	old man
<i>Omomura</i>	young man
<i>Omorwani</i>	fighter
<i>Omosacha</i>	man

The term *enkororo* (*military/army*) has however, acquired a negative connotation to imply the outlawed sect of the *Gusii* youth who maim, terrorize and torture. '*Chinkororo* (*army/military*)', (plural of *enkororo*), is an army of young men who lived in 'gesarate' (far from the homestead) and learnt skills of war. They were called upon to defend their community against any attack or invasion from their enemies. Of late, however, '*chinkororo* (*military/army*)' has been misused by the rich businessmen to eliminate their

competitors. *Chinkororo* (military/army) are now on hire by politicians to scare away likely opponents. *Chinkororo* (military/army) therefore have deviated from their noble role of being defenders of the community to being a terror group to the very community that constituted them.

Esimbore y'abagaka (male circumcision song) was used to empower the army to carry out their mandate. As soon as all the boys who had been presented for the cut were done with circumcision, the *omosari* (male circumciser) started off the song thus:

<i>Omosari</i>	all the men present respond
Oyoo oyoo oyo-oo x 3	of yours -oo x 3
<i>Omoisia nyok'obororo bwamorire eeee x 3</i>	Lad mother yours feels angry
<i>Arwane sigisi x 2</i>	of yours-oo
<i>Arwane bomanyi x 2</i>	of your-oo
<i>Na'botende x 2</i>	of yours-oo

(male informant no. 2)

Apart from empowering the young men to join *chinkororo* (army), the song gave guidance on marriage. A Gusii man was advised against taking *omogere omochene* (Luo) for marriage. The Kisii *chinsoni* (statutes) allowed intermarriage with their neighbours who practiced circumcision. *Esimbore y'abagaka* (male circumcision song) also advised the young man to delink himself from associating with women even their own mother. It was/is a serious offense for a circumcised man to be sent by his mother to carry out chores reserved for women and children such as fetching water, collecting firewood, sweeping or even cooking and looking after the baby. *Chinsoni* (statutes) required a complete de-linkage with women by a man.

At the male circumcision school, a stone was used to sharpen the knife that was used to cut the foreskin of the initiate's penis. This was symbolic because it showed that the man has been prepared well and is sharp/ready for marriage. As a result, circumcision had the anointing authority. The lexical item *maguta motwe* (oiling the head) is a compound word that was used in reference to having been empowered through circumcision. No oil was however used; rather, milk was sprayed on the girl's face and beer for the boy. The oiling ceremony was conducted by the father(s) of the initiate just before they departed from seclusion.

4.6 Analysis of Lexico-morphology in ECSV

Lexical morphology is the branch of morphology that deals with the lexicon. Morphologically conceived, and is the collection of lexemes in a language, it concerns itself primarily with word formation, derivation and compounding. These affixes and roots are stored in the lexicon. Data collected in the study showed cases of derivations, affixations and compounding. These word formation processes found in the context of ECSV are not ECSV context specific but similar to that of *EkeGusii* standard variety. However,] meaning differentiation occur when the lexical items are used in the context of ECSV.

The lexical item below is one such example.

<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>
<i>Obware</i>	initiation/circumcision

The prefixation of o- to *bware* (*circumcision*) forms *obware* (*circumcision-noun*), which is a lexical process. Lexical processes are class changing as well as class retaining. The meaning of *bware* (*circumcision*) is circumcision or a place where circumcision takes place. *Obware* (*circumcision-noun*) on the other hand is the abstract idea of circumcision. In no other context within *EkeGusii* is ‘obware’ used apart from that of circumcision. Other lexical processes are exhibited in:

<i>Lexical items</i>		
<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English</i>	<i>Context of use</i>
<i>abare</i> ¹	initiates	ECSV
<i>abare</i> ²	those who are	conceptual

The lexical item *bware* (*circumcision*) is a stem to different words whose meaning is related. Words/lexemes originating from *bware* (*circumcision*) through prefixation, infixation and suffixation are used in both conceptual and contextual communication as illustrated in table 26.

Table 26: Lexemes originating from *bware* through prefixation, infixation and suffixation

<i>Lexical item in EkeGusii</i>	<i>English equivalent</i>	<i>Context of use</i>
<i>Bwarekire</i>	has started preparing food	Conceptual
<i>Bwaroke</i>	ensure you get circumcised	ECSV

<i>Bwarokire</i>	has been circumcised	ECSV
<i>Mbwaregete</i>	food preparation is in process	Conceptual

Data collected showed cases of compounding. The compound lexical items visible in ECSV are either verbs or nouns as shown in Table 27.

Table 27: Compound lexical items in the lexicon of ECSV

<i>Lexical item (EkeGusii)</i>	<i>English equivalent</i>	<i>Context of use</i>
<i>Ekeigoroigoro</i>	upland /up (sung during the circumcision ceremony)	During the flowering ceremony in female circumcision
<i>ekerende egekungu</i>	‘ekerende’ female (softwood used together with the hardwood to make fire)	Female circumcision school
<i>ekerende egetwani</i>	‘ekerende’ male (hard wood used to make fire used together with softwood)	Male circumcision school
<i>gochi nyomba</i>	going into house (inherit one’s wife)	Wife inheritance after the death of husband
<i>kogenda nyaro</i>	going under (circumcision)	Circumcision
<i>mosamba mwaye</i>	one who has burned his/her house (newborn)	Birth / naming
<i>omokundekane tier</i>	(one who joins the bride and the bridegroom together during marriage)	Marriage

The compound lexical items below belong to the verb-noun class. They are formed by a verb and a noun. They include the lexical items presented in table 28.

Table 28: Compound lexical items belonging to the verb-noun class in the lexicon of ECSV

<i>Lexical item (EkeGusii)</i>	<i>English equivalent</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
<i>Gochi nyomba</i>	going into house	inherit another man's wife
<i>Kogenda nyaro</i>	going under	polite form of circumcision
<i>Mosamba mwaye</i>	one who burns his/her house	newborn baby

Meaning of compound lexical items is understood not by the meaning of individual words forming the compound words, but rather through the pseudo-compounds. In English, a compound word such as 'headteacher' has an obligatory element 'head' and an optional element 'teacher' as a dependent element. Unlike English, in ECSV, the elements of compounding are all obligatory in realizing meaning. The lexical items below can be used to illustrate ECSV compounding further:

Head element	dependent element	=	
<i>kogenda</i>	<i>nyaro</i>		<i>kogenda nyaro</i>
(go)	(under)		(Go under)

However, '*kogenda*'(going) alone which is presumed to be the head element cannot realize the meaning realized in *kogenda nyaro* (ECSV) in the same way 'head' in head teacher is understood to mean the person in charge. The same applies to '*mosamba mwaye*'(one who has burned his/her house) and '*gochi nyomba*'(going into house) respectively. Additionally, semantic headedness of root compounds follow from structural headedness in some other languages and even in *EkeGusii* standard variety. However, the same does not apply in the lexicon of ECSV. The second constituent is considered syntactically dominant. Data collected on root compounds does not exhibit syntactic dominance of the second constituent (Kane) in the compound lexical item '*omokundekane*' (tier). In English, however, any analysis of the semantics of compounds must account for the fact that the first step in root compounds is non-referential (Lieber, 2004:49) as is the case with the word head teacher above. The stem 'head' in 'head teacher' cannot refer to any special head. It will account for the fact that head teacher is a teacher first and foremost before acquiring the additional meaning.

The lexical items *maguta motwe* (oiling the head), *ekeigoroigoro* (raised up ground), *omokundekane* (tier), *ekerende egetwani* (male hardwood), as well as *ekerende egekungu* (female hardwood) belong to the noun word class. These compound lexical items are formed from two nouns as shown in table 29.

Table 29: Compound lexical items belonging to the noun-verb class in the lexicon of ECSV

<i>EkeGusii</i>		<i>English</i>	<i>Context of use</i>
<i>Ekeigoro</i> (raised ground)	+ <i>igoro</i> (up)	= <i>ekeigoroigoro</i> (ceremony in which the circumcised girl is prepared in readiness for marriage)	Female circumcision school
<i>ekerende</i> (hardwood)	+ <i>egetwani</i> (male)	= <i>ekerende egetwani</i> (ekerende for male used to make male fire. It is made of hardwood)	Male circumcision school
<i>ekerende</i> (softwood)	+ <i>egekungu</i> (female)	= <i>ekerende egekungu</i> (ekerende (soft wood) for female used to make fire for female initiates.)	Female circumcision school
<i>Omokundeki</i> (tier)	+ <i>kane</i> (four)	= <i>omokundekane</i> (tier four)	Marriage

The four compound lexical items belong to the noun class. They are formed through a combination of nouns.

Compounding involves attaching two or more words together to form one word. A new/different or added meaning emerges from the meaning realized from the combined words. Compounding is a case of style and register in the context of ECSV. Compounding is used as structural variation while in the context of ECSV it is a variety of EkeGusii. More about style and register is illustrated in sub-section 4.8.3

4.7 Analysis of Culture-specific Meaning(s) in ECSV

EkeGusii culture is carried in *chinsoni* (norms/statutes), *chinyangi* (ceremonies) and *chimuma* (oaths) respectively. All these aspects of culture are carried out through language which is the medium of communication. There is an overlap of the lexicon of ECSV with *EkeGusii*

standard variety since the culture of *EkeGusii* manifested in the standard language also applies in ECSV. Data collected in the study present a scenario which makes it difficult to separate language and culture. Culture, just like language, is learned by *OmoGusii* from those who already possess that knowledge. According to data collected in the study, *EkeGusii* culture is learned at the male circumcision *per se* and partly in the female clitoridectomy schools. *OmoGusii* learns the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision as part of the culture and ECSV is part of *EkeGusii*. There are other varieties of *EkeGusii* such as the standard variety that have not been included in this study. This is because the presence of variations in *EkeGusii* does not translate to different cultures for different contexts. The different varieties of *EkeGusii* make up *EkeGusii*. Data collected through the informants and the interview schedule show that there is no *EkeGusii* culture for men and women amid the presence of gender differentiation in the choice of the lexicon. Data collected however show a chronological differentiation in gender socialization at birth, initiation, marriage and death.

At birth, a child is born as *mosamba mwaye* (one who has burnt his/her house) and identified either as *omoisia* (boy), *egesagane* (girl) or *chibarongo* (twins). Either gender is named appropriately according to dead relatives of the father or mother. Names from the dead relatives of the father's clan are given preference to those from the mother's clan.

A boy is named one of the following *EkeGusii* names:

Mokaya

Marandi

Mogaka Momanyi

Nyakundi

Onsongo

(Male informant no. 2)

Girls, on the other hand, are given names such as:

Kemunto

Kerubo

Kwamboka

Moraa

Nyaboke

(Female informant no. 2)

Twins are named according to the sex of the child (since they were not referred to as two

children) but the younger twin carried the name *Barongo* irrespective of the sex of the twin. Parents whose children died soon after birth would name the subsequent children with names of:

- 1 Wild animals such as *Nyang'au* (hyena,) *Ondieki* (Dholuo for hyena), *Kemoni* (of cat), *Sese* (dog), *Mbori* (goat), *Ong'ondi* (of sheep), *Ongombe* (of cow), *Gesimba* (wild dog), *Ngoge* (ape), etc.
- 2 Pathways, bushes and hills, such as *Nyanchera* (wayside), *Makori* (path), *Rosana* (bush), *Getunwa* (hill), etc.

The first socialization of children is carried out by parents, especially the mother. Roles and chores are assigned based on gender. Boys at an early age herd goats and sheep and graduate to herding cows. They are sent to graze the animals in grazing grounds situated near the homesteads. They are taught to cut grass around their homesteads, clear hedges and make rooftops for houses in the homestead. They are also sent to carry out simple errands outside the home. Girls assist with domestic chores such as cleaning utensils, baby-sitting and eventually graduate to performing chores such as sweeping, fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking and tending the garden.

Boys dress in *ekenyansa/ebinyansa* (short/shorts) while girls dress in *eganchwa/chiganchwa* (dresses) and *egesena/ebisena* (skirts). *Eganchwa* is a full dress but *egesena* cover the front and back of the abdomen and is tied at the waist to hold the piece of clothing in place.

On the day of the circumcision, the boy is woken up before dawn and taken to the river to bathe. This makes the body numb to withstand the pain of the knife since the water is very cold at that time. Circumcised older boys and young men accompany the boy to visit *omosari* (male circumciser). Since there is only one season for circumcision, there are many boys (ranging from ten to twenty) visiting *omosari* for the cut in a day. *Omosari* sings *esimbore ya 'bagaka* (male circumcision song) upon cutting the last boy in the queue for a day and the rest of the men joins in the chorus (see appendix D (i) for the male circumcision song). Data collected through the male informant showed that *esimbore y'abagaka* carries an aspect of *EkeGusii* culture through language, as seen in the lines:

<i>Obeire omomura</i>	he has now become a man
<i>Otureirwe itimo</i>	A spear has been sharpened for him
<i>Na nguba 'mbibo</i>	and a shield of <i>Mbibo</i>

<i>Aruane sigisi</i>	To fight against the <i>Kipsigis</i>
<i>Aruane bomanyi</i>	to fight against the <i>Maasai</i>
<i>Na Botende</i>	and also fight in <i>Kuria</i>
Chorus:	<i>Oyooyo oyoooo!</i>

(Male informant no 2)

Data collected showed that according to Gusii culture, it indicates that it is taboo for anyone to sing *esimbore y'abagaka* outside the context of *EkeGusii* circumcision. Women are not allowed to sing *esimbore y'abagaka*. The song is the first sign that the male initiate has been admitted into the Gusii male circumcision school. The song gives authority (he has become a man) and norms as well as limitations of a Gusii man. The use of a spear and a shield as well as fighting the Kipsigis, Maasai and Kuria is symbolic use of language. The meaning of a sharpened spear (*otureirwe itimo*) means that the man has been prepared in readiness for the many roles that lie ahead of him as the head of the family and a defender of the community. *Esimbore* encourages the circumcised man to marry and bear children of his own. *Aruane sigisi*, *Bomanyi*, *Botende* (to fight in Kipsigis, Maasai and Kuria) limits the Gusii man with regards to which community to marry from. A Gusii man is not allowed to marry from communities that do not circumcise. At the moment though, Gusii intermarry with other communities whether they circumcise or not due to modernity.

Data collected by the researcher and through the female informant showed that girls are treated differently. They are not required to ask for permission in order for them to be circumcised. Preparation for girls' clitoridectomy is done by the grandmother, aunts and the mother in consultation with the father. Girls are not required to bathe in a river before visiting *omokebi* (girl circumciser). *Gochi maguta motwe* (to be anointed with oil) as girls' circumcision is referred to is also conducted at dawn. *Omoségi* (fighter) and *Omosichi* (flowerer) supports the girl during clitoridectomy. The party of young circumcised girls and women who escort the girl for clitoridectomy stand afar while the *Omokebi* performs the operation of cutting the clitoris. One of the participants in the clitoridectomy ululated after their girl has been cut. *Esimbore y'abang'ina* (female circumcision song) is sung by a woman talented with a loud voice. The *esimbore y'abang'ina* (female circumcision song) carries the message that the girl has been transformed through clitoridectomy to a young woman ready for marriage. She is advised against sleeping with/having sex with uncircumcised boys as shown in the lines below of *esimbore y'abang'ina*:

<i>Goko okorire buya</i>	old lady has done well
<i>Oreng'e mok'abaisia</i>	she was wife of lads
<i>Obeire mok'bamura</i>	she has become wife of young men

(See appendix D (ii) for the full girls' circumcision song.)

The female circumciser is thanked for making the girl a wife of men. *Esimbore y'aban'gina* ushered the initiate into the female circumcision school. The *chinsoni* (norms/statutes) of Abagusii is introduced to the girl. A code of conduct befitting a circumcised young woman is defined and new roles spelt out. Learning is organized through the various *chinyangi* (ceremonies) such as *koiya esuguta* (uprooting the *Sporobolus africanus* grass) in which the following lexical items underlined were learned.

<u><i>Nyasuguta</i></u>	the initiate was referred to as Nyasuguta (of grass, or of <i>Sporobolus africanus</i> grass)
<u><i>Sabarie</i></u>	<i>Sabarie</i>
Akwanigwe n'onde <u><i>otaitongo</i></u>	(bravery) to be greeted by none of <u><i>otaitongo</i></u>

The next ceremony is that of *ogosuba* or *esubo*. The initiate is subjected to pain and fear. The initiate is tested on the knowledge of *EkeGusii* folklore. *Esubo* ceremony is accompanied by *enyabububu* (sound of a dragon/serpent). At the end of seclusion, '*ekeigoroigoro*' ceremony is conducted. *Ekeigoroigoro* consisted of music and smearing of *etago* and *ebundo* which is referred to as *gosichwa* (being flowered/ decorated). The ceremony is conducted at the oldest woman's house who is like a grandmother to the initiate. The ceremony prepares one for adulthood as well as the responsibilities of motherhood. The father of the initiate who is participating in *ekeigoroigoro* sit near *bweri* (cowshed) and held *ribuogore* (Gusii traditional beer) in *entono* (small pot) or *egesanda* (calabash) and *amabere* (milk) in *ekerandi* (gourd) and sipped the *ribuogore* as he readies himself. Once the daughter who is presented to *gosoka* (to mark end of seclusion) appear through *egesieri kia bweri* (cow shed door), the father sprays her with *ribuogore* and then sips *amabere* (milk) and sprays her again with the contents. Symbolically used, this represents the idea of a girl leaving her parents' home and clan and getting married to join another clan. The use of *gesieri kia bweri* symbolises the bride price which is given in form of *etugo* (cows, goats). The father blesses the daughter with milk. People came to witness *ekeigoroigoro* (raised ground up) ceremony and when they had formed a crowd, *ekeigoroigoro* song would be sung thus:

Eeee! Ekeigoroigoro x 3
Abarisia 'mbaroche
Imbare be 'chiombe na mbori
Ee! Nyamondocho
Tiga eondoche, yerayore, yeondore
Nechio chia nsoni
Chinde chia mbago
Eee! Nyamondocho
Tiga eondoche, yerayore, yeondore
Nin'go'rantore ka?

Eee! They have seen x 3
Those who herd animals have seen
There are those of cows, those of goats
Eee! Nyamondocho
Let him come (his coming is described differently thus)
Others are of the fence
Let him come (his coming is described differently thus)
Who will remove it from my head?

The rest of the ekeigoroigoro song is found at the appendix.

Not all ceremonies that follow clitoridectomy are followed because female genital mutilation is outlawed in Kenya. Some of the ceremonies that followed male circumcision are also not being followed because of modernisation of male circumcision. The ban on Female genital mutilation and modernisation of male circumcision are some of the causes of decline of the lexicon of ECSV.

Circumcision was and still is considered important for the Gusii individual because it actualized socialization of the Gusii person into the Gusii language and culture. Data collected at *Ekeigoroigoro* (raised ground up) ceremony showed that the lexicon used at every ceremony that make up *EkeGusii* circumcision carry meaning that is context-specific even when words found in the standard variety are used. With reference to the *ekeigoroigoro* (raised ground up) song above, meaning is understood based on context. The song actually advertises the making of another Gusii *erabera* (young woman ready for marriage). The crowd that came to spectate (no longer is the case) composed of potential suitors. In the song, they would range from the wealthy, i.e., those with cows and goats, to those of *nsoni* (the

respectable), and even those who wanted to elope with the young woman. Depending on their integrity, they were either confidently described as '*kweondora*' (majestically), '*kwerayora*' (with pride) or '*kweondocho*' (confidently). The question *erabera* (the young woman who is now ready for marriage) asks herself is: *ning'orantore ka?* (who will offload me when I reach home?); this means - who will provide a home?

Eyarogoro ceremony commences the process of clitoridectomy. "*ya rogoro* (of the north song) is sung at dawn when the sun from *sugusu* (North) is reddish in colour, i.e. *orogoro orabariri* (North red). *Ya'rogoro* (of north) forms part of *esimbore* (female circumcision) for girls and is meant to prepare the girl for circumcision. The sacred fire is made and tamed by *omosegi* (sponsor/fighter) and *omosichi* (helper). The fire is kept burning from the time the initiate enters seclusion till the end.

Special sticks called *ekerende egetwani* (male hardwood stick) and *ekerende egekungu* (female hardwood stick) are used. *Ekerende egetwani* (male hardwood stick), a hardwood is rubbed against *ekerende egekungu* (female hardwood stick) which is harvested from a softwood. The making of the sacred fire using a hardwood and softwood symbolize the intercourse between a man and a woman in order to procreate. Marriage in Gusii is meant to procreate and keep the culture going. Taming the sacred fire symbolize the care given to children and the significance of life. If the sacred fire goes out, the *omosegi* (fighter), *omosichi* (helper) and *omware* (initiate) would make a sacrifice. If they do not, then they would not give birth. The sacred fire also symbolize a rebirth of the initiate who takes care of his /her life as a circumcised Gusii person.

4.7.1 Esuguta ritual

Esuguta (a special grass) is a drought-resistant grass that spreads after being transplanted. The grass symbolize the renewed self of the initiate. The initiate is meant to grow and spread like *esuguta*. The grass is transplanted from a path near *etoigo* (wetland) by *omosegi* (fighter) and *omosichi* (helper). Some of the *esuguta* grass is used to make *riburu* (initiate's bed) while some is planted near the *riburu* and watered daily. *Amabuko* plant is also used to make *riburu* for the initiate. *Amabuko* plant has carpet/blanket-like leaves that make the initiate's bedding. The rest of *esuguta* grass is planted at the entrance of *gesieri kia bweri/bware* (door of the cow shed /circumcision). *Esimbore y'esuguta* called *esabarangi* is sung for the initiate. There is *esabarangi* for males and *esabarangi* for females.

Esabarangi y'esuguta y'abare

Aye, makomoke oremire inchera igoro

Esabarangi of initiate's esuguta

Oh, stepmother has cultivated on the main path

Ee, tiga areme mboremo bwamoborire

Aye, Okwanigwe namoeti na mogendi

-yes, let her cultivate, she has no other garden

Oh, she gets greetings by passers-by

Aye, Okwanigwe nonde otaiitongo

Aye, okwanigwe na moeti na 'mogendi

Oh, she gets greetings by even the unfriendly

Oh, she gets greetings by passersby

A Gusii man/woman becomes what she or he becomes through socialization. The person is socialized using language. Language is intimately linked to the culture of the imagination that governs people's decisions and actions (Kramsch, 1998). This is because language is the medium through which individuals carry out their social lives. One's social life is contained in his/her culture and it is carried by language. Language is manifested in one's life in all aspects since it carries one's beliefs, hence expressing cultural reality. People who belong to a social language group and use a common social language variety express themselves using that common social variety to show belonging and identity.

Speakers of a cultural group identify themselves and the other insiders through language since language is a system of signs that contain shared beliefs. According to Kramsch (1998), the way in which members of a cultural group use language itself creates meaning that are understandable to the group they belong to. This is because language symbolizes cultural reality. The Gusii man is socialized differently from the woman. With regard to men and women socialization, Trudgill (1973: 88) has this to say:

Men and women are socially different in that society lays down different social roles for them and expects different behaviour patterns from them.

These behaviour patterns go as far as the choice of the lexicon in social contexts. The social context of *EkeGusii* circumcision forms the basis for gender differences exhibited in *EkeGusii*

sociolinguistic profile. Webb and Kembo-Sure (2000: 224) have a view that:

Rites of passage are important parts of the social structure... lexical items connected with these rituals have specialized meanings and their usage is restricted to circumstances connected to these rituals.

4.8 Analysis of Gender Differentiation in the Choice of the Lexicon in the Context of *Ekegusii* Circumcision

Data collected for this research through participatory observation and from own's intuition shows that gender differentiation in the choice of the lexicon of ECSV is a case of socialization. *EkeGusii* language speaking society constructs women differently from men through *chinsoni* (statutes), *chimuma* (oaths) and *chinyangi* (rituals) as well as *chiira* (covenants) and *ebitinge* (round rings worn around the ankles of married women). Language plays a pivotal role in constructing each gender by stipulating in the unwritten *chinsoni* (statutes) what is the ideal lexical item for use by each gender in different contexts. Data collected did not show manifestations of the objectives of *chinsoni* with regard to the construction of each gender. The analysis of data collected however, revealed a tendency of women allowed to choose a different style from that of men. While women's choices are limited, men's choices are not. The women in general are not allowed to use obscene lexical items while society does not seem to question men whenever they do so. This can be demonstrated in the examples below:

Example 1

1. *Embere* eye *ndetere* *amache* 'nywe
Vagina you me bring for water I drink / unquestioned
 2. *Ekimincha eke* *ndetere* *amache* 'nywe
Penis you me bring for water I drink / not allowed/considered taboo
- Ekemincha (penis) is the opposite of embere (vagina)

(Female informant no 1)

While a man can make reference to his wife or any other woman apart from his mother or sister as 'clitoris', a woman is not allowed to use *emboro/ekemincha*(penis) in the same sense. It is highly taboo for a woman to use lexical items associated with taboo/impolite/obscenities

publicly.

Societal *chinsoni* (statutes) of *EkeGusii* speaking society requires that the wife obeys her husband without question. *Chinsoni*(*statutes*) places the husband above the woman at all times in all circumstances. Additionally, a Gusii woman is required by the norms to use a low intonation when addressing the husband, brothers or even men in general. The man on the other hand is not restricted to show respect for his wife or women and does not change intonation to suit a woman. In the example 2 provided above, the wife uses the lexical item ‘*gaki*’ (please) while in example 1 above, the woman is not required to reply since it is an order. ‘Please’ is a polite way of making or emphasizing a request. *Gaki* connotes the idea of submissiveness and helplessness. The wife uses ‘*gaki*’ because of the belief that she is in the lower status position than that of her husband or any other man.

Omoriakari (a newly married woman) has another authority whom she respects as well as obey besides her husband. The person appointed to *komobwatia amaiga* (touch her cooking stones – orient her) *omoriakari* and *omonya maiga* (the one who orientates) has a master-servant relationship. The eldest *ekemati* (sister-in-law) takes the role or any other *chikamati* (sisters-in-law). The *ng’ina biara* (mother-in-law) also can assume the role of *omonyamaiga* (of the three stones) in homes where there are no *chikamati* (sister-in-law). *Omonyamaiga* (of the three stones) gives instructions to *omoriakari* (newly married woman) on how to conduct herself in all situations and ensure that *omoriakari* uses a suitable lexicon as learnt in the female clitoridectomy/circumcision school. *Omonyamaiga* reprimands *omoriakari* (newly married woman) if the former feels that the latter has fallen short of *chinson* (*statutes*). The main role of *omonyamaiga* (of the three stones) takes place when *omoriakari* (newly married woman) is ripe to live independently in her own house.

Orientation usually takes place in the mother-in-law’s house. *Omoriakari* (newly married woman) cooks, cleans (sweep), digs and carries out any errand as may be required of her. During the orientation period which may last from the time of marriage until the *omoriakari* is delivered of her first-born child, *omoriakari* goes through language socialization. In the orientation school, *omoriakari* learns, among others, the following: dress code, how to grind flour, cooking, fetching water, tilling the farm, permissive food for women, sweeping the houses in the homestead, carrying loads among other chores in the home.

On the day of ‘*kobwatigwa amaiga*’ (being led to touch the cooking stones), the *omonyamaiga* (of the three cooking stones) and *omokundekane* (tie), *omosegi* (fighter), *omongwansi* (sacrificer), *omosacha* (husband) and *eamate* (neighbors/clan members) are

invited for a ceremony of *koruga mwaye* (cooking in her house) which in most cases is a different (new) house from *esaiga* (boys' hut in which her husband lived until marrying). Brown meal made from *obori* (finger-millet) that is specially ground on a grinding stone is served in *ekee* (traditional bowl) with roast/boiled goat meat and *chinsaga/rinagu* (traditional bitter vegetables). In this ritual-like ceremony, *omonyamaiga* (of the three cooking stones) holds the hands of *omoriakari* (newly married woman) and helps her touch the three traditional cooking stones. Finally, *omonyamaiga* (of the three cooking stones) helps her place a pot with water on the three cooking stones which is fetched at dawn from a special *getacho* (well) of the man's clan.

The cooking area is usually prepared by the husband and his brothers or male members of his clan such as cousins and distant cousins who relate to *omoriakari* (newly married woman) as brothers-in-law. The women married to the clan assist in cooking and serving but the first *ugali* (brown meal) is cooked by *omoriakari* (newly married woman) who is assisted by *omonyamaiga* (of the three cooking stones) while *eamate* (neighbours/clan members) sing *emeino* (sacred songs) for that particular occasion. *Omoriakari* (newly married woman) is cheered on as she goes about preparing the food and praised if she performs well. She is called praise names depending on how successful she performs the first duty in her new house. The husband and all men who are approximately her husband's age or those who belong to her husband's *ekiare* (age set) or '*kegori* (age mate) are served first. A special *ekee* (traditional bowl) full of brown mound of *ugali* is then served to '*enyomba enene*' (main house) where adult men/women who are approximately the couple's parents age are also served. Food is served (placed on banana leaves) between men and women. Men eat separately from women.

After the food, all *eamate* (clan members) present (usually from the man's clan) gather under a tree and clan elders address the gathering. A summary of *chinsoni chia abagusii* (Gusii norms) regarding marriage are repeated to *omoriakari* (newly married woman). She is introduced to who she is related to as:

<i>Abaibori baminto</i>	married in the same clan / sisters-in-law
<i>Abamura baminto/bamwabo</i>	brothers-in-law
<i>Abana</i>	approximately her children
<i>Abang'ina biara</i>	mothers-in-law

<i>Abatatabiara</i>	fathers-in-law
<i>Abaiserome</i>	maternal uncles
<i>Chikamati</i>	sisters-in-law

Upon the introductions, she is given a dress code for young married women and officially ceases to be *omoriakari* (newly married woman), while at the same time she moves from *saiga* (boys' hut) to *nyomba mwaye* (her own house). Henceforth, she addresses the above clan members as appropriate; not by their names but titles. Such rigorous behaviour patterns are not expected of the man. At this point, a woman is completely socialized as a full member of her husband's clan by marriage. She cooks for any of the clan members any time she is required to and do as instructed without question. Those who defy the orders are referred to as *ritinge/amatinge* (prostitute) and chased away from that home. *Ritinge* is a woman equivalent to a prostitute not because of having love affairs with other men, but for the reason of being chased away from her matrimonial home for disobeying clan members. The husband was asked to marry another wife from a different clan. In other words, the woman has no role to play in retaining her marriage. Decisions are made without consulting her. Derogatory terms are used against any female members from such a woman's clan. The fear of being rendered homeless makes *Gusii* women to be submissive in order to retain their marriage status/titles. Women who once married and then chased away are highly looked down upon in their maiden and matrimonial homes as well as by the whole society. Their children too are looked down upon.

In a case where the man's behaviour prompts the wife to go back to her clan, the *chinsoni* (statutes) requires that she persevere. Perseverance is one of the virtues of female circumcision school. *Gusii* norms do not have provisions for divorce originating from a woman. Even in cases of male impotence, a woman is assigned a man who is closely related to her husband by blood to sire children for the impotent man. The woman therefore does not have powers over her sexuality. This depicts gender imbalances with power and authority resting entirely on the men rather than having it equally distributed.

It is not possible to collect all specific lexical items associated with gender differentiation in the choice of the lexicon in the context of ECSV due to the limited presence of men during clitoridectomy and women during male circumcision. However, reference can be made to the various lexical items associated with clitoridectomy and male circumcision in table 30.

4.8.1 Analysis of Language and Power distribution in ECSV

Language is a powerful tool not only in day-to-day communication but its usefulness goes as far as making important decisions for the individual using it, as well as for the society. As a result of the existence of language inequalities between a Gusii man and woman, women are left out in making important policies affecting the society. At the time of the research, the new Constitution of Kenya (2010) had already been promulgated. However, the imbalances still exist. According to the Kenya Constitution (2010: 25), women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres. The state shall not discriminate directly or indirectly against any person on any ground including race, sex, marital status...culture...language... etc. Even though change may not be spontaneous, the signs of *Gusii* realizing gender equality are so minimal.

Amid the assurance by the state to treat men and women equally, the *Gusii* society is still rigid to women ascending to political positions. *Chinsoni* (norms and statutes) are used to discriminate against women. The lexicon of authority and power is a preserve of the man in society. For instance, *Gusii* has not elected a woman to parliament since Kenya attained independence in 1963. This is so despite the introduction of affirmative action. This is attributed to, among other factors, cultural impediments that hinder women to aspire to or even seek electoral positions where they are required to compete with men. Those who got elected in the just concluded elections in March 2013 managed through the women representative seat set aside specifically for women. Communities neighbouring the *Gusii* have had women representatives in parliament and their numbers have increased with the introduction of democracy and the realization that women leaders are performing well in leadership positions. *AbaGusii* are placed number six by the population census of 2009. Communities ahead of the *Gusii* include the Gikuyu, Kalenjin, Luo, Luhya and Akamba.

All the communities mentioned above have had a woman in elective positions to parliament. The Gikuyu for instance have had Hon. Prof. Wangari Maathai, Martha Karua, Esther Murugi and Bishop Margaret Wanjiru. All these have held powerful ministerial positions. The Kalenjin lead with the number of women elected to parliament. They include Hon. Philemona Chelagat Mutai who was elected in the 1970s, Hon. Prof. Margaret Kamar, Dr. Sally Kosgey, Linah Chebii, Prof. Helen Sambili, Lorna Laboso, Dr Joyce Laboso, Beatrice Kones among others. The Akamba have had Nyiva Mwendwa, Charity Kaluki Ngilu and Wavinya Ndeti.

According to Fishman (2006:3) verbal interaction...choice of any part of speech (nouns,

verbs, adjectives) was determined by both correctly estimating the “other’s” social class position relative to one’s own, on the one hand, and the formality of the context...on the other. Clearly, certain social classes had more power than others, something that is implicit in the very notion of social class, and certain situational (cultural) settings elicited more social class differentiation than did others. So it is no surprise that manifestations of linguistic access and recognition have historically favoured some groups than others.

Data collected in the study clearly show that gender determines language variation. These gender based language variations are both biological as well as socially determined while others result from nurture rather than nature. It is natural that one is born either male or female and that gender based differences are expected to follow suit. However, for a *Gusii* person, society has clearly spelt out different linguistic behaviour patterns for each gender. Through gender-based socialization, variations in language that are socially conditioned do occur. Take, for example, the simple fact that at birth the female neonate cries the same way as the male one but by about fifteen years of age, the *Gusii* boy responds differently from a girl when his name is called. Consider the gender based responses taught to each gender by their parents.

Mother:	<i>Kemoni</i>
Kemoni:	ooo
Mother:	<i>Gesare</i>
Gesare:	eee

These gender-specific speech forms are mastered at a tender age so that by the time one attains the age of circumcision, both the girl and boy are ready to face the knife amid the danger it poses to the female. It is only through gender-based language differences that are usually acquired fully at the circumcision school, that one is recognized to be a member of the *Gusii* society. Further, modulation of gender-based lexical choices goes on until the member(s) masters the ethnolinguistic tradition.

Economically, *Gusii* women do not own property. The old constitution of Kenya did not favour land ownership for women. However a few *Gusii* women have risen above cultural discrimination and own property. For a long time, society viewed those who owned property negatively. The new constitution of Kenya 2010 however allows women to inherit property from their parents. It is hoped that this will be implemented in *Gusii*. For a long time, economic support extended to women in *Gusii* was in the form of *sindigisa* (support) and through *ebiombe bia abakungu* (women groups) which were/are resisted by men. *Sindigisa* is

a way of collecting money/raising funds to empower a woman who is less privileged. *Sindigisa* is meant to replace inheritance. Initially, traditions required that a widow was assigned a close relative of the husband to provide for her and the children. With the coming of Christianity, this culture was discouraged. The song below was invented to encourage *sindigisa*.

EkeGusii

Ee, sindigisa omwana bwomwoyo

Osiririe omogaka moe etaya ee bananga

Ee sindigia

English translation

Yes, support child of Omwoyo

Has lost husband give light, yes bananga

Yes support

Ebiombe bia bakungu (women groups) are self help groups organized and managed by women. Members of these groups are women. Married women who are members of the group have to seek permission from their spouses to attend the weekly or monthly meetings where they contribute small amounts to support the education of their children or even start small scale businesses.

4.8.2 Analysis of Forms of Language Variations in ECSV

Language variation focuses on how languages vary in different contexts. However, Chomsky and other scholars consider many kinds of variation to be instances of linguistic performance and therefore, of only peripheral concern (Wardhaugh, 1997: 218). The forms of language variation however, may not be taken to be of less concern since data collected in this study shows that they are significant for a sociolinguist's understanding of how language works in society. This shows that the lexicon of ECSV develops in a Gusii person through semanticity. The lexicon in conceptual communication acquires new meaning(s) after one undergoes the education in the circumcision school. The lexical item *nyomba* (*house*), for example, acquires another meaning to a Gusii person at circumcision and other meanings at marriage and death respectively. An examination of the lexical item *nyomba* illustrates this further.

Lexical item *nyomba* (house) realizes different meanings depending on context as shown in table 30.

Table 30: Realization of different meanings depending on context

<i>Lexical item</i>	<i>conceptual</i>	<i>Circumcision</i>	<i>marriage</i>	<i>Death</i>
<i>Nyomba</i>	House to live in	Secluded place in the house where an initiate spends his/her seclusion in reference to the whole process of seclusion	One's wife	One's grave

In the case of *nyomba*, the process of semantic change that takes place is that of widening of meaning.

Data collected in the study also showed cases of euphemism. Euphemism results when ...modified expressions are deliberately used to avoid harsh or explicit meanings (Wardhaugh, 1997: 212). Lexical items listed in table 31 are cases of semantic change in ECSV.

Table 31: Cases of euphemism in the lexicon of ECSV

Lexical item in EkeGusii	modified expression(s)	English equivalent	Context of use
<i>Gokwa</i>	<i>gosira, gotwekamo, gotimoka</i>	<i>die, get lost, give up the spirit, rest</i>	Death
<i>Goteta</i>	<i>korara na, koba na</i> <i>komanyana/komanya</i>	<i>sexual intercourse, sleep with</i> <i>be with, know one another</i>	Marriage
<i>Gotindeka</i>	<i>koenia, gotuguta, kogacha</i>	<i>bury, arrange, throw away, keep</i>	Burial ceremony in the death sub-variety
<i>Gotindekwa</i>	<i>koenigwa, gotugutwa</i>	<i>to be buried, to be arranged, to be thrown away, to be kept</i>	Death

<i>Koba inda</i>	<i>kobogoria oborito, korina omote igoro</i>	<i>to be pregnant, to carry heavy, to climb a tree top</i>	Child-bearing / Marriage
<i>Kobiara</i>	<i>koibora, gwekonya, korwa omote igoro</i>	<i>to give birth, produce, to help oneself, to climb down a tree</i>	Child-bearing / Marriage

In English, people pass on, or pass away rather than die (Wardhaugh, 1997:212) while death in the death sub-variety of ECSV, people get lost (*gosira*), rest (*gotimoka*) or ‘*tweka mo* (give up the spirit) instead of *gokwa* (die).

Data collected in the study showed variation resulting from the sex of the user. In ECSV, men choose and use the lexicon differently from the women. Table 32 presents variation of language based on the sex of the user.

Table 32: Lexical variation resulting from gender differentiation in the lexicon of ECSV

ECSV lexical item	English equivalent	Male user	Female user	Context of use
Bware	Circumcision	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	In reference to circumcision
Ebitinge	A round ring worn at the ankles by a married woman to tie her to her husband. They are removed when the husband dies		<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage
Ekerende egekungu	Female ekerende		<input type="checkbox"/>	Female circumcision school
Ekerende egesacha	Male ekerende	<input type="checkbox"/>		Male circumcision school
Enkondo	A small gourd decorated with cowrie shells that is carried by the bride and presented to the mother-in-law		<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage

ECSV lexical item	English equivalent	Male user	Female user	Context of use
Enkorogoinwa	(Figurative)	<input type="checkbox"/>		Male circumcision
Ensobosobo	(Figurative)		<input type="checkbox"/>	Female circumcision
Erabera	A young woman of marriageable age		<input type="checkbox"/>	Naming
Esumati	A special attire worn by the groom	<input type="checkbox"/>		Marriage
Omogesi	Unmarried man of marriageable age	<input type="checkbox"/>		Marriage
Omokebi	Female circumciser		<input type="checkbox"/>	Female circumcision
Omoriakari	Newly married woman		<input type="checkbox"/>	Marriage
Omosari	Circumciser	<input type="checkbox"/>		Male circumcision
Omoyabo	A special attire worn by the bride		<input type="checkbox"/>	marriage

The small box indicates which gender uses the lexical item. The ‘blank’ indicates that the particular gender does not use the lexicon of EkeGusii circumcision.

4.8.3 Analysis of ECSV as Style and Register

Stylistics has been defined in this study as the study of lexical and structural variations in language according to use, user and purpose (Thorne, 1988:477). Register on the other hand is a variety of language according to use.

Data collected in the research showed that ECSV stylistics is prominent in songs and *ching'encho/chingencho chia'AbaGusii* (styles of *AbaGusii*). The song below shows stylistic use of ECSV in the lexical items *enkundi* (fist), *kegara* (finger millet), *enkorogoinwa* (*Garissa edulis*) and *oroanganga* (skin disease).

EkeGusii

English

Eropia y'omomura yasira

The young man's rupee got lost

Yasirera gesarate kia Nyakemwa	It got lost in Nyakemwa's kraal
Akang' aka enkundi	He punched me
Inkamomocha kegara etc	I flung a (finger millet) head at him etc
Kegara 'nkia 'ngo	Whose (finger millet) head was it
Kegara 'nkia Nyabaro	It was Nyabaro's head
Nyabaro Enkorogoinwa	Nyabaro (<i>Garisa edulis</i>) – in reference to a strong circumcised young man
Oarang'ang'a sirinyonte	Oarang'ang'a sirinyonte – skin disease that is difficult to treat called Sirinyonte because that is the person that was first seen with it
Na Bonyonte	With (and) Bonyonte

(Akama and Maxon, 2006: 152)

Lexical items used in the song are both symbolic and metaphoric. Ideally, 'gesarate' (kraal built in the forest for the male who have graduated from the circumcision school) was out of bounds for unmarried girls/women. In the song, a rupee of one of the unmarried man got lost inside the gesarate. Then a fight ensued whereby the young man referred to as *enkorogoinwa* (*Garissa edulis*) punches the girl while the girl threw *ekegara* (finger millet) at him. The seed of *Garissa edulis* is very strong. The strength of *Nyabaro* is equated with that of *Garissa edulis* seed. The song symbolically depicts the developing relationship between a young man and young woman. The words *enkorogoinwa* (*Garissa edulis*) and *Ekegara* (finger millet) point towards a mature love relationship that might culminate into marriage.

More style is found in the initiation songs. In the "ya'rogoro" initiation song for the girls. The lines;

EkeGusii

English

'ndonga rogondereria

Dawn induces

'yachenga bokingite

celebrates in the chill

..mang'esa kegotongia,

... Venus the planet is getting lit

...'ndonga bogondereria

... (dawn induces)

(Akama and Maxon, 2006: 152)

The interpretation of the song could vary. While the song on one hand is symbolic, its literal meaning included the idea of introducing anaesthesia to make the body lose feeling in readiness for clitoridectomy. The song is also a tale of epiphany; one's discovery or revelation. It is an initiation into adulthood and maturity experienced at clitoridectomy.

Data collected showed that some songs are didactic in that they carry moral statement. This is illustrated in the *Egetinkinye ekeng'aini* (a clever bird) song that taught married women to be responsible. Part of the song goes:

<i>EkeGusii</i>	English
<i>Getinkinye 'kengaini</i> <i>Kerigi oboundi keagache</i> <i>Embure'gotwa gesoe mwaye</i> <i>Gesoe mwaye baba x 2</i>	A clever bird called <i>getinkinye</i> nets out for materials called oboundi to build a house so that when it rains it shelters get in its house x 2
<i>Mokung'u siomia siomia</i> <i>Kayi'okomanya bwarugeirwe</i> <i>Gose'mboke gose mbwamwana</i> <i>Gose mbwamwana baba x 2</i>	A woman who peep Peeps from one house to another gets to eat even the baby's food in the host's house What if it is the baby's food

<i>EkeGusii</i>	English
<p><i>Chingende chinkarange chiarugeirwe</i></p> <p><i>Gochiamaate mwana bwomonda</i></p> <p><i>Tagochiria</i></p> <p><i>Tagochiria baba</i></p> <p><i>Mwana bwomonda tagochiria baba x 2</i></p>	<p>Fried beans have been cooked</p> <p>And a young man has come home with his girl from a rich family. She will not eat such a meal</p> <p>A rich man's daughter will not eat them x 2</p>

(Female informant No. 1)

The song teaches responsiveness on the part of the woman. It also teaches against idleness. Idle women visit every house tasting every meal. Sometimes they are served with baby's food because the meal is not enough. It also teaches such people to have good manners. Finally, the song teaches a girl from a rich family to be humble and realize that the property in her home belongs to her parents. She should work hard and make her home rich.

Data collected exhibits figures of speech in the lexicon of ECSV as shown in table 33. The lexicon of ECSV uses figures of speech in order to create a mental effect as a way of emphasizing what is being said in a given context. Some of the figures of speech in the lexicon of ECSV include similes, metaphors, symbolism, and repetition among others.

Table 33: Figures of speech in the lexicon of ECSV

Lexical item		Meaning	Context of use
EkeGusii	English		
Enkuri	Crier	Denotatively used in reference to a coward who cries during the cut	Circumcision
Mosamba mwaye	One who has burnt his/her house	Figuratively used to refer to a new born baby	Birth / naming

Lexical item		Meaning	Context of use
EkeGusii	English		
Omogere	Tribe that does not circumcise	(metaphor) Omogere is a tribe that does not circumcise men as well as women. If you refuse to be circumcised you become one	Circumcision
Ensobosobo	Cape gooseberry	(simile) Figuratively used to compare a fully grown woman who is ready for marriage	Female circumcision school
Enkorogoinwa	An edible wild fruit	Symbolically used in reference to a young man in Geserate (hut in the forest) ready for marriage	Male circumcision school
Egesimba	Wild cat	To symbolize initiation because actual names of the initiates were not mentioned while in seclusion	Circumcision
Egetinge	Round ring worn round the left ankle of a first wife	Symbolized union/unity. It is still used to show belonging by all the Gusii	Marriage
Omotembe	Ritualistic tree that the lad held during the cutting of the foreskin of the penis	It signified the importance of male circumcision. It was <i>emuma</i> (oath)	Contexts that require oathing
Gotureka	To break up the roof top of the main house after burial of a married man	Symbolically used to show that the man (owner of the homestead) is deceased. Therefore other procedures such as inheritance or <i>sindigisa</i> can be performed	Death in the <i>Rogoro</i> dialect
Koumamia	It is the same as gotureka above	Symbolically used to show that the man (owner of the	Death in the <i>Maate</i> dialect

Lexical item		Meaning	Context of use
EkeGusii	English		
	but more prevalent in the Maate dialect of EkeGusii	homestead) is deceased. Therefore other procedures such as inheritance or <i>sindigisa</i> can be performed	
Omorero	Fire	Symbolized the existence and continuity of life	Circumcision
Engiti	Dragon/beast	Symbolized problems/challenges/painful experiences of adulthood	Circumcision
Esuguta	Ritual grass	Symbolized that the girl should spread like grass i.e. after circumcision the girl was married and bore children hence spreading like grass. It was accompanied with a blessing:	During the <i>esuguta</i> (grass) ritual in the female circumcision
<i>Orande orande buna emanga n'esasati</i>	<i>(Spread spread like the great Emanga escarpment and wetland grass)</i>	Esasati grows along the river banks. Since it is well watered and gets nutrients contained in the eroded material from the highlands, it grows and spreads faster than grass found in dry areas.	Contexts where blessings were showered such as circumcision or marriage

4.8.3.1 Symbols Found in the Lexicon of ECSV

A symbol is something that suggests more than its literal meaning. Symbols convey a special meaning and give more depth. A symbol may allude meaning beyond the perceptible object being described. Data collected in the research showed numerous symbols which are cultural to EkeGusii-speaking society. They include the following:

4.8.3.2 Animals

Egesimba (in reference to the initiate while in seclusion)

Embora emwamu (black goat)

Eng'iti (beast)

Eng'ombe/chiombe (cow/cows)

Enyamweri (dragon)

4.8.3.3 Plants

Ekebunga baiseke – the plant that ties girls

Ekerende egetwani- male hard wood

Ekerende egekung'u – female soft wood

Enkorogoinwa- an edible wild fruit – bitter - male

Ensobosobo – Cape Gooseberry – sweet - female

Esuguta – ritual grass

Omotembe – ritualistic tree that the lad held during the cutting of the foreskin of his penis

Omwobo – *Markhamia lutea* – a ritualistic tree for peace

Ribuko/amabuko – a tree with blanket-like leaves that made the initiates bedding during seclusion

4.8.3.4 Inanimate symbols

Omorero (fire) – symbolized life and continuity

Orogena (grinding stone) – source of livelihood and food

Ebundo (Some kind of clay) – that male initiates smeared themselves with

Etago (clay) – that female initiates decorated themselves with

Symbols allude to meaning beyond the signifier

(*Female informant No. 1*)

4.8.3.5 Other Symbols

Erioba (sky) alludes to the presence of a more powerful force beyond the sky. The lexicon 'rioba nderere' translated as sky nurse for me to implore engoro (God) – to protect and nurture a newborn baby. A woman whose newborn child was to be shaved for the first time

and given a name woke up very early in the morning. She went out of her house and faced the direction where the sun rises (*mocha* – East) and faced the rising sun. She pointed her breasts towards the sky and milked herself letting the milk flow towards the direction of the rising sun. She made her supplication to God for protection, good health and life for her baby.

The *esimbore y'abagaka* is symbolic. The following lines in the song are symbolic.

... otuireirwe itimo...

...nanguba mbibo...

...arwane sigisi...bomanyi, sugusu, irianyi, bobisa

The song is translated as follows:

... a spear has been sharpened for him... and a shield of mbibo... to fight Kipsigis, maasai, north, south and the enemy.

(*Male informant no 1*)

The song implies that manhood has been readied and a shield been made to protect him so that he can take the responsibilities of being a husband, father, worrier and elder. The man is given power to marry from the named communities and not from communities that do not practice FGM.

Lastly, *EkeGusii* language varies based on situation/context of use. During male circumcision and girl clitoridectomy, circumcision variety of *EkeGusii* is used. Some of the lexical items used are context-specific, i.e. these lexical items are not used in any other context. They include *chinyangi* (ceremonies) such as that of *esuguta* (ritualistic grass), *bware*, (*circumcision*), *enyabububu* (dragon/beast), *ekeigoroigoro* (up up ceremony), etc. Songs accompanying these ceremonies were also context specific. *Esimbore y'abagaka* (male circumcision song) and *esimbore y'abang'ina* (female circumcision song) respectively were taboo outside the context of circumcision and by extension the uncircumcised. (*See the appendix D i-iv*) for the main verses of the *EkeGusii* circumcision songs).

4.9 Analysis of Sense Relations in the Lexicon of ECSV

In this study, lexico-semantics has been defined as the meaning of words including the way in which some word meanings are related to others. Semantic analysis is expected to give an illuminating account of meaning relations, i.e., the systematic relations between word meanings (Goddard, 1998:16). In the lexico-semantic analysis of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties, various sense relations are established. This is because meaning involves on

the one hand, the relation of reference to extralinguistic reality, and on the other, relations of ‘sense’ to other vocabulary items (Howard, 1980:117-118). One of the meaning relations is that of hyponymy in which the meaning of a lexical item is included in another. This paradigmatic relation between words involves a superordinate and a subordinate. Data collected in the study showed cases of hyponymy in the following lexical items.

1. *Bware* (circumcision) whose meaning is included in *enyaroka* (circumcised girl)
2. *Ruga* (cook) whose meaning is included in *omorugi* (one who cooks). *Omorugi* is a term used in reference to one’s wife as such in “*omorugi one* (my wife)

Bware and *ruga* are superordinate terms of *enyaroka* and *omorugi* respectively.

Another meaning relation is that of synonymy or sameness of meaning (Goddard, 1998:17). Data collected in the research through the use of informants showed the following examples of synonyms.

1. *Bware* and *iburu* (in reference to circumcision)
2. *Embera* (grave) and *oboina* (grave)
3. *Enyaroka* (a circumcised girl) and *omoiseke* (young woman)
4. *Omorugi one* (one who cooks for me) and *mokane* (my wife) – in reference to my wife
5. *Riraya* (prostitute) and *ritinge* (prostitute)

It should be noted that unlike in English, lexical items such as *embera* (grave) and *oboina* (grave) are cases of true synonyms since in no other context are the two lexical items used except in the death sub-variety to mean grave.

Further, meaning relations include cases of homonymy and polysemy. Homonyms are the same orthographically but differ at the level of pronunciation and meaning (reference). Data collected showed that the following lexemes shown in table 35 are cases of homonymy in the lexicon of ECSV.

Table 34: Cases of homonymy in the lexicon of ECSV

<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English equivalent</i>	Context of use
Bware ¹	circumcision	Circumcision school
bware ²	of far	Conceptual

<i>EkeGusii</i>	<i>English equivalent</i>	Context of use
bware ³	you spread	Conceptual
soka ¹	get married	Marriage
soka ²	dress up	Conceptual
soka ³	be ashamed	conceptual
mana ¹	negotiate for dowry	Marriage
mana ²	to open/operate	Conceptual
mana ³	to be ready/short	conceptual
sara ¹	process of male circumcision	Circumcision
sara ²	to feel pain	Conceptual
sara ³	to prick	conceptual
Omware ¹	Initiate	From onset to end of seclusion in circumcision school
omware ²	Soot	Conceptual
omware ³	you scratch him/her	conceptual
Omosari ¹	male circumciser	Male circumcision
omosari ²	sinner, spoiler, you spoil him/her	Conceptual / religious
omogesi ¹	bachelor	Marriage / conceptual
omogesi ²	harvester/reaper	Conceptual
omoko ¹ omoko ¹	in-law (general)	Marriage
	a type of tree/plant	Conceptual

Homonyms are identical orthographically, the identical forms are equivalent grammatically but they are unrelated in meaning.

Polysemy designates a situation in which a single word has a set of related meanings (Goddard, 1998). Cases of polysemy exhibited in the data collected include the following lexemes:

Table 35: Cases of polysemy in the lexicon of ECSV

<u>EkeGusii</u>	<u>English</u>
Bware	circumcision
Omong'wansi	sacrifice

Syntactically, the lexical item “*omong'wansi*” used in the marriage context belongs to the same part of speech (noun) category and has a set of related meanings when used in the context of ECSV. *Omong'wansi* (sacrifice) is the best man in marriage, male tamer in circumcision, sacrifices in death. The meanings in all these contexts are closely related but differentiated by the different roles ‘*omong'wansi*’ plays in each context. In the female circumcision school, the roles would be assigned as indicated below.

1. *Omoimari* (best man or best maid) played the role of best maid at marriage. *Omosemia* (advisor) and *omonyamaiga* (of the three cooking stones) advised and oriented the *omoriakari* (newly married).
2. *Omong'wansi* (sacrificer) sacrificed and as has been pointed above, this was a preserve of the male relative in *EkeGusii* speaking society.
3. *Omosemi* (tamer) would play the role of tamer in circumcision. The female initiate had *omosegi* (tamer) and *omosichi* (helper/decorator). *Omosemi* (tamer) was a circumcised young woman who played as a role model to the female initiate while *omosichi* (flowerer) would be an older woman who has stopped bearing children. *Kong'wansa* (sacrificing) was a preserve for the males. A male relative sacrificed on behalf of a woman in the event that death of a child or husband occurred.

Speakers of *EkeGusii* have intuitive knowledge of how lexical items combine and how they relate in context. The sentences below are used to illustrate this:

1. *Omonyamaiga ochire*¹ of the three stones has come
*Omonyamaiga ochire*² of the three stones has come
2. *Ningo orache'che kobuna enyomba?*¹ who will come to break the house?
*Ningo oracha'che kobuna enyomba?*² who will come to break the house?
3. *Omwana n'oyong'o ogaoka egekamago?*¹ child whose is digging *egkamago?*
4. *Omwana n'oyong'o ogaoka egekamago?*² child whose is digging *egkamago?*

The native speakers will rely on context to understand meaning of the sentences above.

*Omonyamaiga*¹ – of the three stones in the first sentence is used in reference to the person (female) who orientates *omoriakari* (a newly married woman).

*Omonyamaiga*² – of the three stones in the second sentence refers to an elder who settles disputes at family level or clan level. *Omogayani* (one who separates) is a synonym of *omonyamaiga* (of the three stones) in the second reference. While *omonyamaiga*¹ is used in the marriage sub-variety of *EkeGusii*, *omonyamaiga*² is used in conceptual usage.

*Kobuna*¹ is related to the death sub-variety of *EkeGusii*. The house-top is bent/broken to symbolize the absence of a man in that house. A widow is regarded homeless hence the term *omuburaka* (one without a home). The second meaning of *kobuna* is used for conceptual usage, i.e., to break or to apply a final finish on the roof when constructing a house.

*Goaka egekamago*¹ on the other hand is used to ask for the firstborn grandchild/son of a deceased person who is designated to lead in preparing a grave for him/her. *Goaka egekamago*² in contrast is used for conceptual purposes to imply making holes for planting of crops.

The last aspect of sense relation in the lexicon of ECSV is that of antonymy. Antonymy is concerned with ‘oppositeness’ of meaning (Howard, 1980:118). Cases of converse antonyms were collected in the data. They include the following lexical items in table 36.

Table 36: Cases of converse antonymy in the lexicon of ECSV

Lexical item	Lexical item	Context of use
<i>Ekerende egetwani</i> 'Male ekerende'	<i>Ekerende egekungu</i> 'Female ekerende'	<i>Circumcision school</i>
<i>Omogaka</i> 'Old man'	<i>Omogina</i> 'Old woman'	<i>All contexts</i>
<i>Omoisia</i> 'Lad'	<i>Egesagane</i> 'Lass'	<i>All contexts</i>
<i>Omomura</i> 'Young man'	<i>Omoiseke</i> 'Young woman'	<i>All contexts</i>
<i>Omosacha</i> 'Husband/man'	<i>Omokungu</i> 'Wife/woman'	<i>All contexts</i>
<i>Omosari</i> 'Male circumciser'	<i>Omokebi</i> 'Female circumciser'	<i>Circumcision school</i>

4.10 Conclusion of the Chapter

The chapter has analysed the lexicon of ECSV which constitute the phonetic structure and form, the syntactic structure as well as context-specific semantic content. It has also established that the meaning of lexical items used in ECSV is based on *EkeGusii* culture encompassed in *chinsoni* (statutes). Further, gender differences exhibited in the choice of the lexicon of ECSV is a case of socialization. Socialization of *AbaGusii* is done through *chinsoni* (statutes), *chimuma* (oaths), *chinyangi* (rituals) and *chiira* (covenants) during circumcision. It is posited in the study that the semantic structure present in the lexicon of ECSV is responsible not only for the meaning realization in context, but also for the changes in meaning.

Chapter Five

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

The study sought to describe the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties, identify lexical choices in circumcision that are different from everyday use of *EkeGusii*, determine lexical choices/patterns as influenced by circumcision, describe the patterns within the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties and account for the different patterns of gender differentiation in *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. The study is based on language variation that is determined by context and gender. The analysis was based on aspects of language use and meaning(s) resulting from the choice of the lexicon by the males/females in the context of ECSV as well as the social forces of language. The theories of social varieties and contrastive lexico-semantics were used since the study is an interface of sociolinguistics and lexical semantics. The present chapter therefore aims at providing a review of the preceding chapters, summary of findings, conclusion as well as recommendations.

5.2 Review of Preceding Chapters

Lexico-Semantic Analysis of *EkeGusii* Circumcision Social Varieties studied meaning of the various lexical items used in the social context of circumcision. Chapter one provides the statement of the problem with regard to the state of the lexicon of ECSV which is endangered as a result of the ban of FGM and modernization of male circumcision. . Background information of *EkeGusii* that necessitated this study to be carried out is outlined. Key among them is the existence of *ekerogoro*(Northern) and *ekemaate*(Southern)dialects of *EkeGusii* which do not seem to affect the lexicon of ECSV. Reasons for studying the lexicon of ECSV as a variety of *EkeGusii* are qualified and the term ‘varieties’ in the sense of being a dialect or register is defined in relation to what is regarded as the standard variety of *EkeGusii*.

Interaction between language, the structure and functions of *EkeGusii* as well as the way people use language at a given time within a particular domain provide the justification for the study.

A review of related literature has been carried out in relation to ECSV as a social variety of *Ekegusii* language, culture and lexical-semantics as well as gender differentiation in the choice of the lexicon with regard to the context of ECSV.

Finally, methodology and scope of the study have been discussed. Sampling areas have been described bearing in mind that the study is an ethnography which requires that methodological techniques are blended.

Chapter two opens with the history, socio-cultural perspective as well as geographical distribution of Abagusii. *EkeGusii* language in terms of classification as E42 based on Guthrie's (1967) classification system has been made. Estimates of ENLS have been described based on the statistics provided by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2010). In addition, classification of *EkeGusii* morphological behaviour has been analysed in comparison with the English language even though the study is not comparative in nature.

A highlight of the movement and settlement of *AbaGusii* has been done as well as their interaction with communities from whom circumcision practice was acquired. The socio-cultural characteristics of *AbaGusii* are discussed such as the layout of a Gusii homestead, *AbaGusii* clans, the female and male institutions of the Gusii as well as the existence of other social activities among the Gusii besides circumcision which are governed by *chinsoni* (statutes).

Chapter three discusses the conceptual framework with reference to the male and female social varieties. *EkeGusii* dialectology and contrastive lexico-semantic analysis of *EkeGusii* sense relations culture/gender and lexical choices in ECSV are made. In the chapter, context of situation and meaning in social contexts is discussed. Language death and the current state of ENLS are outlined.

Chapter four provides data presentation with regards to the objectives of the study. The first objectives of the study set out to: Identify lexical choices in circumcision that are different from everyday use of *EkeGusii*. The second objective determines lexical choices and patterns as influenced by the circumcision domain in *EkeGusii*. The third objective describes the patterns within the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. The fourth objective accounts for the different patterns of gender differentiation in *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. The lexicon of ECSV is described and analysed phonologically, syntactically, morphologically and semantically, and various meaning contrasts visible in the lexicon of ECSV are discussed. Discourse analysis of the lexicon of ECSV has also been done with regard to gender differentiation in the choice of the lexicon in the context of ECSV in relation

to the circumcision rite, marriage, death and naming. An analysis of language and power in Gusii society is carried out as well as ECSV as a case of style and register. Data has been analysed with a focus on the lexicon of ECSV.

Chapter five discusses summary, findings, conclusion of the dissertation, recommendations as well as suggestions for further research. In the summary, all issues in the dissertation are tied together and harmonized. Recommendations with regard to the preservation and use of the lexicon of ECSV have been suggested. Further research on lexico-semantics focusing on the undescribed African languages is also made.

5.3 Summary of Findings

The study sought to identify lexical choices in circumcision that are different from everyday use of EkeGusii. The findings show that vowel sounds determine meaning of the lexical items used in ECSV and its sub-varieties. The noun and verb are found to be predominant in the lexicon of ECSV and parts of speech contribute towards realization of meaning. Findings pointed towards a communicative approach that is focused on the co-constructive aspect rather than a comparison between male and female or men and women.

Gender related *EkeGusii* language variation is context sensitive. There are instances where authority in *EkeGusii* language speaking society shifts. These cases include the process of negotiating for marriage but do not go as far as negotiating for bride price and during childbirth in which men are not allowed to participate because of the fear of *amasangi* (unfaithfulness) that may cause the death of the mother-to-be. Sex variety of *EkeGusii* therefore, does exist. Men use *EkeGusii* differently from women, while at the same time registers within *EkeGusii* language do exist because *EkeGusii* for ECSV is different from that used for conceptual/general communication.

Lexical disparity reflected in the study is also a case of social inequality (besides being cultural) in the position of women in the Gusii society. While Choti (1998) attributes lexical gaps in *EkeGusii* as a sexist manifestation that derogates women, findings in this study show that there exist derogatory lexical items used for males as well as women. However there are more derogatory lexical items for the female gender.

The lexicon of ECSV experiences change in meaning realized through change in pitch and stress. Stress plays a role in determining the meaning of a lexical item in context through lexical and contrastive stress. Differences in tone result in differences in meaning of the

lexicon of ECSV. Tone in ECSV is just as significant as differences in consonant or vowel quality in differentiating meaning. The contours within a lexical item enable the native speaker to comprehend meaning differentiation. Along the same argument, there exist enclitics in *EkeGusii* language that cause a formation of new words, which lead to change, shift or additional meaning. Fig. 5 illustrates enclitics found in ECSV. Findings show that while some lexical items carry general meanings, others are specific and further, other lexical items refer to one gender with no equivalent for the other.

Lastly, the lexicon of ECSV is a style as well as register. This is illustrated through the existence of euphemism, symbolism, hyponymy, synonymy, homonymy, polysemy and antonymy. These *EkeGusii* sense relations bring about changes in meaning.

5.4 Conclusion

The study being sociolinguistic in perspective has studied the way language operates within *EkeGusii* society and specifically, in the context of ECSV. Sociolinguistic analysis touches on the other levels of linguistics. In the current research, levels of linguistics such as lexicology, semantics, syntax, morphology, phonetics and phonology as well as discourse analysis formed part of the analysis of ‘A Lexico-Semantic Analysis of *EkeGusii* Circumcision Social Varieties’.

EkeGusii is content and context specific. Findings of the study provide proof that there is no *EkeGusii* for men or women but that each gender is socialized differently because of the roles played by each in *EkeGusii* speaking society.

Culture, through socialization, reinforces social inequalities between men and women using language. By limiting women’s use of some lexical items, they are denied access to power and authority and as a result considered a weaker sex. The way women are socialized goes as far as losing their identity. A Gusii woman is addressed as *mo’kanyerebe* (so and so’s wife), *ng’ina yarebe* (so and so’s mother), *mosubati o’nyarebe* (daughter of so and so), or simply as ‘*aye*’ – you. A Gusii child, who is born in town or away from Gusiiland, comes home to be circumcised at the age of nine or ten having no idea of what *EkeGusii* language is all about, and leaves for the city as soon as seclusion is over. No progress of the lexicon takes place after acquisition. The young man interacts with people from other cultures in school, in the estate where he lives and shares the same house with his parents. No one is held with the responsibility of nurturing him in the cultural/linguistic sphere of *EkeGusii*. This may cause a decline in the lexicon of ECSV.

Based on the research findings, it is established that the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision is a variety of *EkeGusii* because it meets a certain criteria that enabled it to be classified as a variety. Firstly, the linguistic items used in ECSV have similar distribution. Sometimes the lexical items used in ECSV overlap with the lexical items in *EkeGusii* standard variety but differ in meaning and context of use. Lastly, ECSV is considered a variety of *EkeGusii* language because it corresponds to traditional notions. This ethnicity based language differences are due to cultural rather than biological factors. *EkeGusii* language words are formed on the noun which in turn forms stems upon which other parts of speech rest. The word stem carries important information such as meaning and grammatical category and other layers in which the lexicon is organized. Partly, that would provide an explanation as to why one word can have varied meanings based on context of use in the lexicon of ECSV.

5.5 Recommendations

Teachers should be trained on sociolinguistics so as to have insights at their disposal on matters regarding multi-lingualism, multi-culturalism as well as multi-dialectism. They will in turn foster confidence in the learners with regard to their own languages. This will encourage learners to recognize and appreciate diversity as richness so that prejudice that stems from the perspective of language is prevented.

Schools should not take for granted the socio-cultural practices of pupils or learners. Instead, classroom research should be encouraged to identify the learners' culture and find ways of integrating an individual learner with other learners in the same class. In other words, the issue of catering for individual learners should be taken seriously. This is because the school has taken the role of socialization of an individual; a shift from the home and community environment.

At the time of going out for research, girls in the larger Gusii were undergoing clitoridectomy in total disregard of the government's directive, only that it was kept top secret. It is recommended that the government looks for a suitable replacement for FGM which will be focused on only eliminating the physical aspect of cutting the clitoris but retain the language aspect while at the same time encouraging the society to empower women by advocating for gender equity.

With regard to social inequality between men and women in *Gusii* society, there is need to encourage women to stand up and empower themselves linguistically because language in itself is a powerful tool for individual advancement. Holmes (1992) has written extensively on

linguistic sexism in both spoken discourse and linguistic forms. Drawing on examples from different communities of the world; England, New Zealand, America, Malagasy and Malaysia, Holmes summed up her views as follows:

...the relative status of the sexes in a society may be reflected not only in the ways in which women and men use language, but also in the language used about women and men... (Holmes, 1992: 343)

Even with this view, women can narrow the social inequality resulting from language.

Additionally, the East Africa Community (EAC) should consider setting up language academies and linguistic archives where languages and different dialects spoken within East Africa can be preserved, conserved and harmonized. This will go a long way in countering language/lexical decline and death. Strengthening of East Africa's local languages will contribute towards nurturing Kiswahili, encourage multiculturalism, multilingualism and promote cohesion within the region.

Inequality should be discouraged since it is a destructive pillar in the Gusii society and it undermines collective life in society. It makes women to be victims of conservatism ... women are victims of rigid patriarchal hegemony which is also enforced through conservative religion, political systems, and cultural traditions highly controlled by man (Rutere, 2009:183).

The Constitution of Kenya 2010 recognizes culture as the foundation of the nation and as the cumulative civilization of the Kenyan people and nation. In this regard, the Kenya Constitution states that the State shall:

- a) Promote all forms of national and cultural expression through literature, the arts, traditional celebration, science, communication, information, mass media, publications, libraries and other cultural heritage (the Kenya Constitution, 2010)

It is good to appreciate culture because one can only understand and share the hopes of one's people by understanding the language (Prah, 1998).

Even with the assurance from the Kenya Constitution, there exist no copies of the constitution in local ethnic languages. The Kenyan Constitution was rejected in 2005 probably because people did not comprehend it since it was written in English. Therefore, the government should consider having the constitution translated into *EkeGusii* and other African languages found in Kenya. In so doing, the Gusii woman will read and comprehend the constitution and appreciate her rightful position in society. The comprehension of the Kenyan constitution will enable the men appreciate the other gender and help narrow the gap that exist between women and men.

5.6 Further Research

Some writers from Africa have exposed African languages to the rest of the world through literary works. Notable among these are Chinua Achebe who has been able to write about the African experience in English and still has managed to preserve the authenticity of that African experience. Other African writers who have used the African symbolism in their works include Elechi Amadi in ‘The Concubine’ and Chimamanda Adichie in ‘Purple Hybiscus.’

Studies carried out in *EkeGusii* language have focused either on grammar or phonetics or are comparative in nature. Mbori (1994) studied NP construction errors while Cammenga (2002) studied aspects of the sound and morphology of *EkeGusii*. Ogechi (2002) studied code switching involving *EkeGusii*, Kiswahili and English. More Research is required on the lexico-semantics and the sociolinguistic profile of *EkeGusii* since the literature available is quite minimal.

It is suggested that research is carried out in order to understand the process of socialization of the Gusii man and woman and find ways of preserving the lexicon of *EkeGusii* circumcision social varieties. It is the concern of the current researcher to ensure that the aspects of culture that are good are preserved and the bad stemmed out since not all culture is bad.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Male Questionnaire

A LEXICO-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF EKEGUSII CIRCUMCISION SOCIAL VARIETIES

Dear Sir,

We are conducting research on the above topic in Gusii region. Please, answer the questions below as honestly as possible. I wish to ensure that your response will be treated confidential. Thank you in advance.

PART ONE (Confidential)

1. Name (Optional) _____
2. Gender _____

PART TWO (Respond as appropriate)

1. Are you circumcised? If yes how old were you when you were circumcised
Yes No Age _____
2. When is it the right time for a Gusii boy to be circumcised _____
3. What happens to a boy who refuses to be circumcised? _____

4. A boy who has just been circumcised is called _____
5. Apart from the initiate who are the other participants in boys' circumcision? _____

 - i). Who is Omong'wansi _____
 - ii). What is the role of Omong'wansi in the context of;
 - (a). Circumcision?
 - (b). Any other context ? _____
6. What is the meaning of
 - (i). Ekegori _____
 - (ii) Omokegori _____

- (iii). Ekiare _____
- (iv). Omokiare _____
- (v). Bware _____
- (vi). Nyomba _____
- (vii). Yaa _____

7. The male circumciser is referred to as _____

Below is a Kisii male circumcision song. Use it to answer questions 8, 9 and 10.

Oyoox3 Oyo-o
Omoisia Nyok'obororo bwamorire x2
Bwamorire
Arwane sigisi x2 oyoo
Arwane Bomanyix2 oyoo
Nabotende x 2 oyoo

8. What is the meaning of the first line (Omoisia Nyak'obororo bwamorire)? _____

9. What other meaning is derived from the first line? _____

10.i). What meaning is elicited from Korwana sigisi, Bomanyi and Botende? _____

ii). What is the other meaning of Korwana sigisi, Bomanyi and Botende? _____

11. Why do (male) Ekegusii speakers use a different lexicon from the female Ekegusii speakers in the context of circumcision?

12. What is the symbolic meaning of the song? _____

13. Does the Gusii society have a different culture for men and women?

ii). If 'No' explain. _____

iii). If yes explain _____

14.a). State any other word(s) used during circumcision period that we have not mentioned above _____

b). what is the meaning of the word(s) (Write as many meanings as you know).

Thank you for finding time to fill this questionnaire.

Appendix B: Female Questionnaire

A LEXICO-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF EKEGUSII CIRCUMCISION SOCIAL VARIETIES

Dear Madam,

We are conducting research on the above topic in Gusii region. Please, answer the questions below as honestly as possible. I wish to ensure that your response will be treated with utmost confidence. Thank you in advance.

PART ONE (Optional)

1. Name _____
2. Gender _____

PART TWO (Respond as appropriate)

1. Are you circumcised? If yes how old were you when you were circumcised
Yes _____ No _____
2. When is it the right time for a Gusii girl to be circumcised _____
3. What happens to a girl who refuses to be circumcised? _____

4. a) A girl who has just been circumcised is called _____
b). Are there any other word(s) used to refer to a girl who has been circumcised? If yes, name them. _____
5. Apart from the initiate who are the other participants in girls' circumcision? _____

 - i). who is Omoségi? _____
 - ii). what is the role of omosegi in (a). in the context of circumcision (b). Any other context _____
 - (i). Ekegori _____
 - (ii) Omokegori _____
 - (iii). Ekiare _____
 - (iv). Omokiare _____
 - (v). Bware _____

(vi). Nyomba _____

(vii). Omogisangio _____

6. The female circumciser is referred to as _____

Below are female circumcision songs. Use them to answer questions 8, 9, 10, 11

SONG A

Ng'omogoye nsibere

Richambe

SONG B

Echae ya morero toe

7. What is the meaning of the lexical items

i). Omogoye _____

ii). Gosiba _____

iii). Richambe _____

8. What is the symbolic meaning of the song? _____

9. What is the meaning of the lexical items

i). Echae _____

ii). Morero _____

iii). Toe _____

10. Why do the female Ekegusii speakers use a different lexicon from the male Ekegusii speakers? _____

11. Does the Gusii society have a different culture for men and women?

Yes

No

i). If Yes Explain

ii). If no Explain

12. a). State any other lexical item(s) used in the context of circumcision. _____

b). what is the meaning of the word(s) (Write as many meanings as you know).

Thank you for finding time to fill this questionnaire

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

The interview schedule will be used to collect data on “The Lexicon used by the males as well as females in Ekegusii circumcision social varieties”. The responses will be tape recorded and analyzed. The questions will often be clarified to suit the respondent.

1. Ekegusii family tree shows gender differentiation in their naming system. Which lexical items refer to each gender? Why does Ekegusii language speaking society have these differences?

2. What is the difference between *bware* and *Iburu* and why is ‘Iburu’ not used to refer to *bware* as well? _____

3. What are the semantic values of *bware* and *iburu* i.e what are the semantic differences of the two lexical items?
4. Why do men use metaphoric lexical items than women?
5. What is the significance of circumcision to a Gusii man? Are there any linguistic values attached to the lexicon of circumcision for *Ekegusii* speaking male? _____

6. What is the significance of clitoridectomy for the *Ekegusii* speaking female? Are there any linguistic values attached to the lexicon of circumcision for *Ekegusii* speaking females?
7. Are there instances where *Ekegusii* is used differently i.e. is *Ekugisii* the same in all contexts of use? If there are differences where/ when/ how is it used?
8. Why does *Ekegusii* have gender differences in the choice of the lexicon?
9. Are there any *Ekegusii* words that are used in *Ekegusii* Circumcision but are not used in the standard *Ekegusii*? If yes which are some of these lexical items?
10. Are there expressions that are used in *Ekegusii* circumcision that are also used in *Ekegusii* standard variety but whose meaning differ when used in *Ekegusii* circumcision? Which are some of these expressions? Are there words/expressions that men use in *Ekegusii* circumcision but women do not use? If yes which are these words?

11. Are there instances where women use lexical items/expressions to mean something different from what the same words would mean when used by men?
12. Do you know if *Ekegusii* has any different varieties?
13. Does *Ekegusii* have what can be classified as dialects or do Abagusii speak *Ekegusii* differently in different parts of Gusii?
14. How do these different *Ekegusii* for different parts of Gusii affect the lexicon of *Ekegusii* circumcision?
15. Are there any differences in *Ekegusii* pronunciation within different areas of Gusii?
16. When is it the right age for a Gusii boy to be circumcised?
17. What happens to a boy who refuses to be circumcised among *Ekegusii* speaking people?
18. Apart from the initiate who are the other participants in the boys circumcision?
19. What role do these participants play in the boys' circumcision?
20. Are there any other contexts within *Ekegusii* where there have participants of this kind other than *Ekegusii* circumcision? What role do these participants play in these other contexts?
21. What is the difference between *Bware*, *Iburu*, *gosara*, *Gokebwa*, *Omasari* and *Omokebi*?
22. In which context do we use *ekegori*, *ekiare* and *omogisangio*?
23. *Ekegusii* male circumcision song is symbolic and context specific. Why is it so? Why is the song not sung in contexts outside *Ekegusii* male circumcision?
24. What is the meaning of the male circumcision song (*esimbore*)? When is it sung apart from during the male circumcision?
25. Circumcision comprises of various rituals (*chinyangi*)? What is the role of *Chinyangi* for a Gusii male/female person?
26. Please provide a brief explanation of the process followed by *Ekegusii* male/female circumcision.
27. How long does the whole process of circumcision take?
28. How long do the initiates stay in seclusion?
29. In your view does *Ekegusii* speaking society have a different culture for men and women? How can we explain the existence of gender differentiation in the choice of the lexicon according to context in *EkeGusii* speaking society?

30. How is gender harmonized in *Ekegusii* speaking society amid the observable gender differences?

Thank you for finding time to participate in this interview.

APPENDIX D: SONGS

i) Esimbore y'abagaka

<i>EkeGusii</i>	English translation
<i>Oyo-oyo-o-o! x 2</i>	Here he is! Here he is!
<i>Omosia omoke mbororo bwamorire</i>	(the circumcised) little boy is experiencing
<i>Bwamorire</i>	pain
<i>Omoisia omoke ateta, ngina!</i>	The little boy, copulate with his mother!
<i>Oyo-oyo-o-o! x 2</i>	Here he is! Here he is!
<i>Omosia omoke mbororo bwamorire</i>	(the circumcised) little boy has had pain
<i>Omoisia omoke ateta, ngina. x 2</i>	The little boy, copulate with his mother.
<i>Nyamokami oirire 'mboro chiaito x 2</i>	Circumciser has taken our penis
<i>Tiga aire mbororo bwamorire x 2</i>	Let him take he is angry with us
<i>Oyotarochi tigache kwrorera x 2</i>	He who does not believe, let him come and witness
<i>Kwrorera enyamweri ekorwa engoro</i>	To witness the bright one, emerging from its hiding place.
<i>Ime. x 2</i>	
<i>Mboro chiaito indokore rwekonoire x 2</i>	Our penises are like a green tree with its bark peeled off
<i>Oyo-oyo-o-o! Oyoo! x 2</i>	Here he is! Here he is! X 2
<i>Otureirwe itimo x 2</i>	He has been given a spear x 2
<i>Na nguba mbibo x 2</i>	And a big shield x 2
<i>Arwane Sigisi x 2</i>	Fight the Kipsigis country x 2
<i>Arwane Maasai x 2</i>	Fight the Massai country x 2
<i>Arwane Sugusu x 2</i>	Fight to the north x 2
<i>Arwane Irianyi x 2</i>	Fight to the south x 2
<i>Arwane bobisa x 2</i>	Fight the enemy x 2

Source: Akama and Maxon (2006:182-3)

ii) Esimbore y'abangina

EkeGusii

Eyaeeyoye, eyaeeyoye

Goko okorire buya

Totongorere egeisero

Totongorere amoba

Eyaeeyoye, eyaeeyoye

Omokebi oirire ebisono biaito

Goko okorire buya

Oreng moka 'baisia

Obeire mokabamura

Abaraeta egeita

Simbore yaito yarure rogoro

English translation

Eyaeeyoye, eyaeeyoye

Granny has done well

So that we may taste our first harvest

So that we may start to cultivate our second
crop

Eyaeeyoye, eyaeeyoye

The circumciser has taken our clitoris

Granny has done well

She was the wife of the uncircumcised boys

She is now the wife of the young men.

She can now pass through the cattle pen gate

Our esimbore song comes from yonder

Source: Female Informant no. I

iii) Ya 'rogoro

EkeGusii

Ya rogoro x 2

Rogoro 'ndonga rogondereria

Ya rogoro x 2

Yachenga boking'ite

Koroche mang'esa kegotongia,

Ya 'rogoro

Rogoro 'ndonga bogondoreria

ya rogoro

Yachenga boking'ite

Ko 'ndoche bwanakire, yarogoro x 2

Rogoro 'ndonga bogondereria

ya rogoro x 2

yachenga boking'ite

English translation

Of the east x 2

The dawn could induce sleep/ease

Of the east x 2

It cheers (celebrates) in the chill

When Venus (*the planet*) emerges

In the east

The dawn could induce sleep/ease

Of the east

It cheers (celebrates) in the chill

I see it is dawn of the east x 2

The dawn could induce sleep/ease

It cheers (celebrates) in The chill

Source: Female Informant no.. I

iv) Esuguta

EkeGusii

Ya nyansuguta abare sabarie

Mako'moke oremire 'ncheraigoro

Akwanigwe moeti na mogendi

Akwanigwe n'onde otaitongo

Imboremo bwaborire

Tiga areme

Source: Male Research Assistant

English translation

Of drop grass initiates

Aunt has dug (cultivated) on the wayside

(so that) she may be hailed (greeted) by

passers-by and travellers

(so that) she may be hailed (greeted) by even

the seated one

There is scarcity of land

Let her dig/cultivate

v) Ekeigoroigoro

EkeGusii

Ee ekeigoroigoro

Abarisia bonsi 'mbarochereirie

Imbare ba'ngombe 'mbare ba mbori

Ee Nyamondocha x 2

Nyomba chia chiansoni, chinde chia mbago

Solo: riandomeire riandomeire

Chorus: Ae rimote, ae rimote e

Riandomeire ningo orantore ko

Riaroma baba antore ko riaroma

English translation

Ee of upland hill x 2

All herdsmen are witnesses

Both cattle or goat herders

Ee Nyamondocha (name of a person)

Let it wonder into the house/rooms

It has bitten me it has bitten me

Oh! the big stick, oh! the big stick.

Has bitten me, who will rid me of it

When it bites mother will rid me when it bites

Source: Akama and Maxon (2006:157)

vi) Ribina

EkeGusii

Bogirango, amabera ya mabera

Bogirango chora chinche tweake

Bogirango'na 'momura eake

English translation

The land of Abagirango, oh, deah oh dear

In the land of Abagirango, collect pebbles so
that we may smear/anoint ourselves

In the land of abagirango, the one with a son
may smear/anoint oneself

Source: EkeGusii Language Expert

vii) *Esubo*

Ekegusii

Nyamaruma, oyaye nyamaruma nyamaruma

Oyaye nyamaruma eng'ombe ekoemwana

Okame enchage, oyaye okame enchage

Oyaye okame enchage nero nyamabere mange

English

Nyamaruma, nyamaruma the bellowing cow

Milk the zebra

Oh dear milk the zebra because it has much milk

Source: Ekegusii Language Expert

APPENDIX E: Profile of the Participants in the Study

Respondent description	Age	Number	%-age
RFLPT	60+	3	5.051
RFT	60+	2	3.70
RMLPT	70+	1	1.85
RMT	60+	7	12.96
RPST	80+	2	3.70
RPST	70+	1	1.85
ELE	80+	2	3.70
ELE	70+	2	3.70
MY	-40	4	7.41
FY	-40	4	7.41
UFY	-30	4	7.41
MY	-30	4	7.41
MY	-20	4	7.41
CFY	-20	4	7.41
UFY	-20	4	7.41
Total		48	98.19

KEY

RFLPST	-	Retired Female Lower Primary School Teacher
RFT	-	Retired Female Teacher
RMLPST	-	Retired Male Lower Primary School Teacher
RMT	-	Retired Male Teacher
RPST	-	Retired Pastor
ELE	-	EkeGusii language Expert
MY	-	Male Youth
FY	-	Female Youth
CFY	-	Circumcised Female Youth
UFY	-	Uncircumcised Female Youth

APPENDIX E: CODES FOR INFORMANTS

F.INFI	Female Informant Number One
F.INFII	Female Informant Number Two
M.INFI	Male Informant Number One
M.INFII	Male Informant Number Two
M.R.ASS	Male Research Assistant