

## **ABSTRACT**

This study analyzed the different metaphors used in various Gĩchuka speech events with particular focus on coherence in metaphors and the influence of social context on metaphor use. The aim of this study was to investigate how Gĩchuka social discourse is systematically structured by metaphor. Metaphor determines how people think, speak and how they create and understand their world. Metaphor overlap creates both metaphorical and discourse coherence which makes comprehension better. The objectives of this study were: to discuss the metaphors used to conceptualize various aspects of life in Gĩchuka social discourse; to analyze coherence in Gĩchuka social discourse and to establish how social context influences metaphor use in Gĩchuka social discourse. This study was guided by the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by Lakoff and Johnson. It employed purposive sampling of eleven Gĩchuka speech events which included: a dowry negotiation ceremony, funeral arrangement and burial ceremony, a religious meeting, a table banking activity (chama), a funds drive, a work activity, a birthday occasion, a house warming occasion, a home coming occasion for an initiate, a community charity meeting and a thanks-giving occasion to parents. Different and unrelated speech events which cut across the main Gĩchuka social domains were selected with the aim of eliciting varied metaphors by which phenomena is conceptualized in Gĩchuka social discourse. Pile Sort Tasks were used to group the data for analysis, and the various metaphors were identified using the Metaphor Identification Procedure *Vrije Universiteit* (MIPVU). This study found Gĩchuka social discourse to be highly motivated by metaphor. Ontological metaphors were the most predominantly used metaphors in Gĩchuka social discourse. The JOURNEY metaphor was found to be used simultaneously with most metaphors to create coherence within the discourse and among metaphors. The study establishes that the social context plays a significant role in metaphor use in Gĩchuka social discourse. This study deepens the understanding of the nature of metaphors that motivate Gĩchuka social discourse. The metaphors highlighted in this study will be useful for cross-culture studies. This study contributes to knowledge in cognitive linguistics by conventionalizing and invigorating the use of metaphors in Gĩchuka social discourse, which increases vitality in African languages.