THE DISCOURSE TRENDS OF METAPHORS OF CUSTOMARY MARRIAGE CEREMONIES IN BURUNDI

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Abstract: Metaphors used in customary marriage ceremonies have continued to attract attention among scholars. However, little attention has been accorded to discourse trends of those metaphors. The main purpose of this paper was to investigate the discourse trends of metaphors used during customary marriage ceremonies in Giteranyi Commune, Burundi. A phenomenological design, observation and interview were used to gather the data. The target population was drawn from the people of Giteranyi commune involved in two customary marriage ceremonies that had been purposively sampled. The sampling techniques used were the purposive sampling and snowball to recruit sixteen participants to this study. Instruments used for data collection were a pen and a notebook as well as an audio-video recorder. Guided by Fairclough (1995)'s CDA Theory, the data was analyzed and discussed. Results indicate that metaphors used during customary marriage ceremonies have particular discourse trends. Those trends are for instance the strengthening of the linguistic and literary identity metaphors, negotiation trend, and persuasive trend, role of metaphors in conflict resolution and maintaining of linguistic etiquette. This paper will be useful to language teachers, scholars and the general public who will get an understanding of metaphors used in their lives specifically in customary marriage ceremonies.

Key Words: Giteranyi Commune, Customary marriage, Discourse trends, Metaphorical language, Metaphors.

1.1 Study background

Marriage is seen as a special ritual, that is, a rite of passage which culturally marks a person's transition from one life stage to another and redefines social and personal identity (Nelson and Otnes, 2005). People in Giteranyi Commune, like in the entire Burundi and indeed in Africa, consider customary marriage as one of the main events of their culture (Charity Adeyemi, 2016). Due to this perception of marriage as an important aspect of the cultural life in Giteranyi Commune, a particular form of language is used to make the event customarily significant, hence the use of metaphors during customary marriage ceremonies. This stylistic language is however perceived by most people, especially youth, as genderized, difficult to understand and interpret meaning. This gap involves the communicative aspects of metaphors, that is, there is a need to find out the purpose of metaphors used during customary marriage celebrations and how they can be well interpreted so as to be understood properly. In addition, little attention has been put on discourse trends of metaphors used during customary marriage ceremonies in Giteranyi Commune. This study therefore sought to investigate the discourse trends of metaphors used within a framework of customary marriage ceremonies in Giteranyi Commune, Burundi.

The literature reviewed for this paper indicates that metaphors have different trends serving various purposes. According to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), one of the discourse trends of metaphors is persuasion. These authors argue that metaphor is persuasive in everyday life, not just in language but in thought and action, and our conceptual system, in terms of which we think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature. Conflict resolution is another discourse trend of metaphors. Abigail and Cahn (2011) argue that conflict is "a kind of communication process within which a problematic situation with certain characteristics arises". These authors further noted that the concept of conflict is a very broad one which denotes several meanings. Thus, metaphors are a kind of language used to solve the problem.

Negotiation discourse trend has been discussed by Kinuthia et al. (2016) when they argued that metaphorical language is a significant phenomenon in the production and maintenance of social relations of power. In addition, language constructions such as figures of speech make significant constrains on interpretation processes. Mwangi (2007) also argues that in marriage negotiation the most important part is the discourse event when selected elders get into the house to negotiate the bride price.

Furthermore, according to Nibafasha (2013), there is another trend of metaphors which is to show the linguistic and literary identity of metaphorical language. Better than a direct blame and with a detour that hits the imagination, the Kirundi metaphorical discourse imposes itself better than a dry and brutal truth or remark. As argued by Genevieve (2015), metaphors help to develop mental clarity and perception by allowing a concrete representation of abstract ideas. Finally, language etiquette is another discourse trend of metaphors as discussed by Kasper (2004) that linguistic etiquettes refer to "the practice in any speech community of organizing linguistic action so that it is seen as appropriate to daily communicative event." In addition, Genevieve (2015), quoting Kasper (2004) claims that one is expected to observe linguistic etiquettes in the use of language in such areas as making greetings, requests, use of honorifics, and thanking among others. Conclusively, various scholars have noted that metaphors present different discourse trends in communication. However, a little emphasis has been put on discourse trends of metaphors used

during customary marriage ceremonies. This paper therefore investigated the discourse trends of metaphors used during customary marriage ceremonies in Giteranyi Commune, Burundi.

1.2 Methodology

The research focused on metaphors found in speeches delivered during customary marriage ceremonies in Giteranyi Commune, northeastern Burundi. The study adopted the phenomenological design under qualitative research approach. This method was useful in exploring how the different discourse trends of metaphors reflect the world's view of the people and capturing how metaphors are constructed and explained. It then helped in getting information, not as something to be calculated but the accurate information to be put in a narrative form. The target population was drawn from the people of Giteranyi Commune who were involved in the two customary marriage ceremonies that were purposively sampled during the data collection period (February-March, 2019). The sampling designs used were purposive and snowball sampling techniques to recruit sixteen participants to the study. Moreover, two main methods were used during data collection, that is, observation and interview. Observation helped the researcher hear from the speakers the exact constructions of metaphors in speeches. Interviews made it possible to get a deeper understanding and interpretation of the language constructions through dialogue with people who have knowledge in the use of different metaphors during customary marriage ceremonies. Instruments used were a pen, a notebook and an audio-video recorder to take notes of extracts of speeches and ascertain the exact responses of the interviewees for convenience of analyzing them easily. For the present study, the transliteration of the collected data from Kirundi to English was done by the researcher during the analysis. The data was assessed, categorized and examined from a linguistic and customary marriage perspective. Furthermore, metaphors were analyzed as both literary and social phenomena.

1.3 Results and discussion

In this paper, a qualitative analysis was done against the framework of CDA theory. Examples in which discourse trends of metaphors are indicated have been numbered. The names of the participants in the study were coded using the letters of the alphabet (A, B, C...) and their gender is represented by the letters 'M' for male and 'F' for female as put in the table indicating the demographic information of respondents.

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

Participants	Age	Gender	Marital Status	Roles
Participant A	50	M	Married	**Groom's Spokesperson** (deliberately chosen in marriage ceremonies of February 8th, 9th and 10th, 2019)
Participant B	68	M	Married	**Bride's Spokesperson** (deliberately chosen in marriage ceremonies of February 8th, 9th and10[th], 2019)
Participant C	60	M	Married	**Groom's Spokesperson** (deliberately chosen in marriage ceremonies of March 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 2019)
Participant D	55	M	Married	**Bride's Spokesperson** (deliberately chosen in marriage ceremonies of March 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 2019)
Participant E	22	M	Married	**Newly married couple's representative** (Married on March 3rd, 2019)
Participant F	20	F	Married	**Newly married couple's representative** (participant E's wife)
Participant G	61	F	Married	**An old couple representative** (Proposed among the attendance of the wedding ceremonies of February 9th, 2019)
Participant H	62	M	Married	**An old couple representative** (proposed among the attendance of the wedding ceremonies of February 9th, 2019)
Participant I	20	F	Single	**Youth representative** (one of the dancers: proposed among the attendance of the wedding ceremonies of March 3rd, 2019)
Participant J	22	M	Single	**Youth representative** (Proposed among the attendance of the wedding ceremonies of February 9th, 2019)
Participant K	28	F	Married	**Middle couple representative** (proposed among the attendance of the wedding ceremonies of March 3rd, 2019)
Participant L	32	M	Married	**Middle couple representative** (proposed among the attendance of the wedding ceremonies of March 3rd, 2019)
Participant M	48	M	Married	**Another old couple representative** (proposed among the attendance of the wedding ceremonies of March 3rd, 2019)
Participant N	45	F	Married	**Another old couple representative** (proposed among the attendance of the wedding ceremonies of March 3rd, 2019)
Participant O	23	M	Single	**Youth representative** (Proposed among the attendance of the wedding ceremonies of February 9th, 2019)
Participant P	19	F	Single	**Youth representative** (Proposed among the attendance of the wedding ceremonies of February 9th, 2019)

Source: Field data, 2019

Table 1 shows that the participants' contributions to this study were considered with such preference as their age and gender. This is to show that metaphors used in the context of customary marriage ceremonies are tied to age and gender of the users. Results of the study revealed that one of the discourse trends of metaphors is to show the linguistic and literary identity of the metaphors. In Burundi, metaphors like many other figures of speech are 'linguistic conceits' as posited by Nibafasha (2013). They constitute a 'powerful rhetorical device for the shaping of moral consciousness, opinions, and beliefs' in a discreetly allusive manner (Nibafasha: 2013). Better than a direct blame and with a detour that hits the imagination, the Kirundi metaphorical discourse imposes itself better than a dry and brutal truth or remark. For example, instead of telling the groom's family that they didn't bring enough money for dowry, the speaker used the following metaphorical expression:

Example 1:

…*banza usubire inyuma, niwakwiza ihumbi uzogaruka.*

…go back first, when the dry trees for construction are enough, then you will come back (*participant C, interview of March 2ⁿᵈ, 2019).*

According to *participant C*, speakers in customary marriage ceremonies use such a language to embellish their speech as he affirmed himself: …..'*tuba dushaka kuryosha ikirundi'* (we do so to make the Kirundi language elegant).

Negotiation is another discourse trend of metaphors which has been revealed in this study. For instance, in the following metaphorical statement, the groom's spokesperson sought to show the bride's family that they are aware of all the requirements for marriage negotiation:

Example 2:

> *…Twaje tutari ndagura, ariko turi ndasaba. Kandi rero, turazi ingene inyana yabagoye igihe yari ikiri nto, none twaje twiteguye gutanga **ibisabisho** vyose bikenewe*.
>
> We have come, not to buy, but to ask. And we are aware of how the calf was demanding at the early age; we are ready to give you all the **prayers** needed. *(Participant C, dowry negotiation of March 2nd, 2019)*.

In example (2), there is first this stylistic arrangement of words which shows how the speaker is not only able to use metaphors but can also put them so poetically that the interlocutors change their behaviour immediately. When they put '*twaje tutari ndagura, twaje turi ndasaba*' (We have come, not to buy, but to ask), there are the sound patterns, that is, the presence of the consonant /t/ five times and the vowel /a/ eight times, called in Kirundi '*igarukagaruka ry'amajwi'*(sound repetition) to first make the audience pay attention to what he wanted to mean.

As Fairclough (1995) posits, CDA helps us understand that it is always expedient for the analyst to go beyond the phonological and grammatical meanings of the discourse in order to unravel the inherent meanings of texts produced. The expression itself is metaphorical since it compares and contrasts rich people (who may say that they have come to buy) to poor and humble people (who recognize that they are missing something and that they have come to ask for it).

Next, there is the mentioning of the compassion on how the calf troubled them when it was still young. Now it is not even the idea of a big cow, the speaker used the concept of **a calf** because he wanted to show them that he knows how hard it is to take care of young calves (*participant C, interview of March 4th, 2019*), in the present case, calves referring to young girls. According to this participant, there is an implicit idea of telling the other family that they have come to ask for a girl who is virgin (culturally, calves refer to everything pure; hence a girl's virginity having a connotation of purity).

Another participant, to complete this idea emphasized that the Kirundi word '*inyana*'(calf), when used to refer to a girl, it denotes the notions of beauty, virginity and youth. This would then make the bride's family happy because their daughter is given such values. Thus, during negotiation, it is necessary that the speaker uses words that are likely to attract the audience's sensation (*participant E, interview of March 4th, 2019*).

Finally, the use of '*ibisabisho*' (prayers) to refer to '*inkwano*' (dowry) is also a negotiation metaphor bearing an idea of showing the bride's family that the negotiators are also believers (*participant D, interview of March 4th, 2019*). They cannot hesitate to give them their daughter because they will treat her well as believers are supposed to. The findings here concur with Kinuthia et al. (2016)'s results that instead of simply having the intuition that a metaphor is a comparison of two different items, it is worth noting that a word's contextual meaning somehow differs from its literal (basic) meaning, which is not also sufficient yet. This is in line with CDA theory guiding this study. In fact, Fairclough (1995) states that CDA goes beyond traditional discourse analysis by not only seeking to describe language in use, but also to analyse, interpret and explain the significance of the relationship of representations embedded in discourse. Also, metaphors carry the idea of thought (Fairclough, 2001).

Metaphors are also used to persuade as indicated by the findings. The following example can help understand how the groom's spokesperson tried to convince the bride's family members by showing them that he knew what he had come to do:

Example 3:

> *Mushingantahe nyen'urugo, ntutinye kuduha iyo nyana n'aho ikiri nto. Ishikira mu zindi; kandi kira noneho na twebwe turi aborozi, inka twarazitunze kandi n'ubu turacagahembera.*
>
> Honorable father of the family, do not fear to give us the *calf* even if it is still young. It will live with others; more so, we are *cattle breeders* too, we have been owning cows and so we do even now. *(Participant A, dowry negotiation of February 8th, 2019).*

According to *participant A*, the use of the words calf and cattle breeder in example (3) is a strategy to convince the bride's family to give them their daughter who in this case is being compared to a calf. The same participant continued to explain that the groom's spokesperson tried to persuade the bride's family that they are also good parents by comparing themselves to good cattle breeders. So, the bride's parents had no reason to fear because she would join other young people like her, especially her husband to be *(participant A, interview of February 10th, 2019)*.

Asked about this insistence on owning cows, *Participant A* responded as follows:

Example 4:

> *Uku ni ukugira twereke abavyeyi b'umwigeme ko n'ab'i buhungu nabo nyene ari abavyeyi beza. Erega, uriko urasabira uwo musore, utegerezwa kumenya imvugo ukoresha kugira wizerwe na ben'umukobwa batinde bamukwemerere.*
>
> This is to persuade the bride's parents that the groom's family members are also good parents. In fact, you as a speaker for the groom, you must know the language to use in order to convince the bride's family to give you their daughter. *(Participant A, Interview of February 10th, 2019)*

Through this explanation, one is able to note that the groom's family; especially the spokesperson is aware of the importance of his choice of words to convince the bride's group *(Participant A, Interview of February 10th, 2019)*. In one marriage negotiation ceremony, the groom's spokesperson seemed even to exaggerate by comparing **dowry** to **prayers**:

Example 5:

> *Nyakubahwa muvyeyi nasavye, ntunyime amasabo. Erega nagutumbereye ndakuzi. Kandi na jewe ikibera umusavyi ndakizi. **Ibisabisho** nabizanye. Niwantuma gusenya ndabanguka, naho ukantuma kuvoma, nta mubindi mena. Gira amahoro.*
>
> Reverend parent whom I asked a favour from, don't refuse it to me. Actually, I have come to you because I know you. For my case, I know what the subordinate has to do. I came with all '**prayers***'. Will you send me to *look for firewood*, I will go running, and if you send me to *fetch water*, I will not *break the pot.* Let's have peace. *(Participant C, dowry negotiation of March 2nd, 2019).*

The use of the word "*prayers*" in example (5) is a persuasive way to show the bride's family that they have come having made a decision. In fact, the Kirundi word '*ibisabisho*' (prayers) comes from the verb '*gusaba*' (to ask). According to the researcher's own knowledge, used in the context of religion, '*gusaba*' means 'to pray'; hence the noun '*ibisabisho*' (prayers). Following

the explanations provided by *participant D*, Burundians have adopted the word '*ibisabisho*' to mean things which someone gives to somebody else in order to gain something else from them, hence the use of the word standing for dowry. This is done to persuade the audience that the negotiators are believers as well *(participant D, interview of March 4th, 2019)*.

Metaphorical language is also used to solve some communicative conflicts among participants. *Participant C* for instance affirmed that if there were no metaphorical constructions in marriage ceremonies, people would sometimes encounter challenges on how to express themselves adequately. He put it in the following words:

Example 6:

> *Twebwe duhora tuja gusaba abageni, hariho imvugo zimwe zimwe zidufasha gusimba imitego.*
> We, who are used to go for asking girls' hands for marriage, there is certain language that we use to escape to linguistic traps *(Participant C, interview of March 3rd, 2019).*

The statement in example (6) shows that spokespersons know how to manipulate language in order to achieve their goal while minimizing conflict. Grooms' spokespersons for example know the language to use so that the bride's family reduces the amount of money to pay as a dowry. According to *participant C*, the interlocutor may utter words that could create conflict to see whether the other group is decided in what they are doing; so, the other part must be able to resolve the problem through language. Otherwise, the negotiations may fail. For example, the bride's spokesperson of March 8th's marriage negotiation said the following statement:

Example 7:

> *Umunyagiteranyi agushimye, akubwira ati ni akagaruka. Iyo yakuhaye naho ati ni agasaga.*
> A person from Giteranyi who appreciates you, he/she tells you 'see you soon', but if he/she undervalues you, he/she tells you 'goodbye'. *(participant D, dowry negotiation of March 8th 2019's marriage negotiation)*

This may not sound like a metaphorical language for one who is not well equipped with Kirundi linguistic turn, but according to the spokesperson of the groom who answered and explained the meaning during interview, the utterance means that 'when you have paid enough dowry, you will be given the wife, but in contrary, you better disappear *(participant C, interview of March 4th, 2019).*

This is quite understandable in the context of the meaning of the Kirundi words '*ni akagaruka*' (see you again) and '*ni agasaga*' (goodbye), which semantically are the same but pragmatically different. As explained by *participant D*, the Kirundi phrase '*ni akagaruka*' made of two words '*ni*' (it is) and '*akagaruka*' -a noun which is from the verb '*kugaruka*' (to come back)- is used to tell people who are leaving that you wish them to be back as soon as possible, hence '*ni akagaruka*' (literally translated as 'it is a coming back'). As for the other form, the same *participant* explained that the word '*agasaga*' is from the Kirundi verb '*gusaga*' which means 'to be extra'. Used with '*ni*', they form '*ni agasaga*' (literally, it is an extra). When it is told to somebody who is leaving, it means 'you can go, we have everything and extra; you can come back or not, we don't care'.

Linguistic etiquette is another discourse trend of metaphors revealed in this study. They have been classified following that they are greeting-based, thanking or requesting. During data collection,

especially at the day of dowry negotiation, all the ceremonies that were video-recorded opened up with the family of the groom exchanging greetings with the family of the bride on their arrival. That is, members of the bride's family form a long file led by their spokesperson to exchange handshake of greetings to members of the groom's family coming from outside.

According to *participant K*, this non-verbal sign is very significant for people in Giteranyi and in the entire Burundi since it is a sign which show the visitors that they are accepted in the bride's family. Otherwise, if they refuse to greet them, it is a sign that they are not going to exchange anything *(participant K, interview of March 4th, 2019)*. Furthermore, when the groom is introduced to the bride's family and that the bride is presented to her in-laws, the groom greets the parents with handshaking and looking at them intently whereas the bride gives them her hand without looking at them, a metaphorical sign of humility before her in-laws, which is part of Burundian culture. More precisely, culturally, girls and women are not allowed to fix the eyes of adults, especially men.

Verbal forms of greetings are also significant in customary marriage ceremonies among people in Giteranyi Commune. As observed in the ceremonies, the groom's spokesperson and the father as well, when greeting the bride's father, they told him '*Gira inka*'(may you have cows) and he responded '*twese*' (likewise). As explained by *participant N*, the answer from the bride's father 'twese' (likewise) means 'I will give you today but have in mind that tomorrow I may also come to you in order to request your daughter to get married to my son' *(participant N, interview of March 4th, 2019)*. Additionally, greetings are part of the Burundian culture which deserves a certain way of doing it either verbally or non-verbally. As a cultural element, greetings are meant to build good neighbour-to-neighbour relationships, among other things.

Concerning thanking**,** data gathered from this research proves that each family expresses gratitude through various forms of metaphors to the other for their time and cooperation towards a successful marriage ceremony. The following example illustrates it clearly:

Example 8:

> ....akarwa kavuye I bunyongera, inka nayo yavuye I bungabira, naho tweho, n'ejo tugashaka kwota, umukomezwa turawubonye.
>
> …banana wine has come from 'give me more', cow came from 'grant me'; and for us, if tomorrow we wish to be warmed, we have seen the fire. *(Participant C, after marriage negotiation of March 4th 2019)*

For someone who is not well equipped in the Kirundi expression '*uwukengurutse aba yongeje'* (when someone says thank you, he/she means I need more), example (8) may mean something else besides thanking. However, when the speaker says the wine or beer came from '*i bunyongera'* (give me more), this is a Kirundi metaphorical expression whose meaning is simply 'thank you for the good wine you have given us and we wish to stay and take more' *(participant L, interview of March 4th, 2019)*. The speaker, here, was thanking the bride's family for the wine they had offered them. As for to thank them for the warm reception and cooperation which had ensured a smooth and peaceful ceremony, the speaker used the terms '*nitwashaka kwota, umukomezwa twawubonye'* (when we wish to warm ourselves, we have seen the fire). So far in the previous sections, we have discussed that fire is compared to love. Thus, here the metaphor means: 'thank you for your warm reception; we have appreciated your love'.

As far as requesting is concerned, collected data during the ceremonies revealed that speakers have

a specific way of requesting, especially the grooms' spokespersons. The following example was uttered by a groom's spokesperson when the bride's family seemed to ignore their request:

Example 9:

> *Mushingantahe nyakubahwa, twagutumbereye kuko tukuzi. Twarumvise ko uru rugo rugaba. None tugire nk'abandi.*
>
> Honourable notable, we have come towards you because we know you. We have heard that this family grants favour to people. So, what you did for others, do it for us, too *(participant C, dowry negotiation of March 2nd, 2019).*

Here, the speaker did not say explicitly what they need (the bride), but asked to be granted the favour that others have benefitted from the family. This does not mean that the bride's family must have necessarily known such ceremonies before; but as emphasized by *participant L* when asked to explain that kind of language, the metaphorical expression here '*mutugire nk'abandi'* (do for us what you did for others) shows a humble request and an acknowledgement of the fact that the bride's family are so superior to the groom's that they have come to ask a favour from them (*participant L, interview of March 4th, 2019*).

1.4 Conclusion

This study has shown that metaphors used during customary marriage ceremonies among Burundians, particularly in Giteranyi, have specific discourse trends. Those trends are for instance the strengthening of the linguistic and literary identity metaphors to embellish the language. Negotiation trend functions when one seeks to achieve their goal, for example reducing the cost of dowry. As for persuasive trend, it has been revealed as the fact of convincing the interlocutors to willingly change their behaviour regarding the issue under discussion. Concerning conflict resolution, metaphors are used to minimize some conflicts among participants such as for example those related to dowry negotiation. Finally, metaphors help to put emphasis on linguistic etiquette to culturally express speech acts such as greetings, thanking and requesting among others.

From the findings of this study, it is evident that metaphors used in customary marriage ceremonies in Giteranyi commune are reflected in the consideration of their discourse trends so as to make the celebrations colourful and significant in the society. Spokespersons, that is, elders chosen to deliver speeches on the behalf of the groom and bride's families must be people who are able to properly use metaphors for different purposes. It is then recommended to elders teach people, especially the youth, about metaphors and their discourse trends so that they know them in order not to wrongly interpret them. Also, a future study could do a comparative analysis of discourse trends of metaphors and their linguistic interpretation during other customary practices.

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