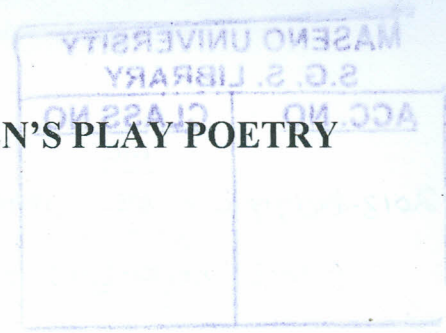


GENDER SPACES IN MARAGOLI CHILDREN'S PLAY POETRY



BY

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ABSTRACT

Children's play poetry exhibits gender spaces owing to the children's reactions to social, political and economic issues about their community. The gender spaces assigned to each gender also depict gender roles as well as the children's reactions to their gendered bodies on which poetry is inscribed to articulate societal norms and mores. Studies conducted in children's poetry have not addressed gender spaces in children's poetry more pointedly and any mention of it in those studies is incidental. The aim of this study was to establish gender spaces in Maragoli children's play poetry. The objectives of the study were to: analyze the depiction of feminine and masculine gender spaces in Maragoli children's play poetry; examine how gendered bodies and subversive signification are highlighted in Maragoli children's play poetry, and investigate how gender, style and language are highlighted in Maragoli children's play poetry. The study population comprised the play poems that added up to two hundred and twenty nine and performance events – all of which were sampled using the proportional allocation so as to use manageable data in the study. The sampled informants were drawn from five locations in Sabatia District, namely Busali East, Busali West, Idzava North, North Maragoli, and Wodanga. Three locations were used in Vihiga District namely Central Maragoli, Mungoma and South Maragoli. Structured interview schedules were used to collect primary data from one hundred and eight interviewees in the face to face interviews using interview schedules. Focus group discussions were also conducted to eight groups that had a total of eighty interviewees. Three primary schools in each district were used to provide primary data. In Sabatia district, Keveye, Kigama and Tsimbalo primary schools were used while Madira, Vigeze and Womulalu primary schools in Vihiga were used. The data collected was analyzed using the hermeneutical analysis.

The study is justified because of its relevance to literary scholars who could use the play poems to teach children's literature and orature. Teachers of children's literature will benefit from this study because children's play poetry is one of the sub-genres of children's orature. Pre-school and primary school curriculum developers will also benefit from the study in their planning for children's song games along gender issues. Since studies in gender are multidisciplinary, the results will benefit sociologists and anthropologists. Anthropologists will use the Maragoli ethnography to discuss gender spaces and compare them with those from western cultures. Since sociology is the study of the development, structure, and functioning of human society, sociologists will benefit from the spaces assigned to each gender in Maragoli children's play poetry. The study showed that there were feminine, masculine and both the feminine and masculine gender spaces in Maragoli children's play poetry. It was observed that the number of masculine gender poems was thirty eight (38) compared to the sixty seven (67) feminine poems because the masculine gender censored the information to divulge which the feminine gender was receptive and generous. The school system also enabled Maragoli boys and girls to play together thereby reinventing and redefining the gender spaces. This was evident in the one hundred and twenty four poems performed by both genders together. The review of related literature showed that there was a Luo poem that was performed in a similar manner with a Maragoli one in which children stretched their feet with one of them facing them as she lightly hit the outstretched feet with an object. Since comparative studies were outside the scope of this study, it is recommended that such a study be conducted using the historical-geographical theory.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

This study sought to analyze gender spaces in Maragoli children's play poetry. Play poetry falls within the sub-genre of oral poetry that includes birth and naming poetry, work poetry, initiation or circumcision poetry, marriage poetry and funeral poetry or dirges. Play poetry, like all other genres of literature not only entertains, but is loaded with societal norms and mores. While appreciating that all genres of orature embody both adults and children, this study takes children's play poetry as the springboard for analysis. Children's poetry mainly comprises lullabies and children's play poetry. However, this broad classification is fluid because children also play while singing lullabies to their toys. When this happens, lullabies then become part of children's play poetry. Besides, children's play poetry incorporates other genres of poetry such as work poetry, death poetry, marriage poetry and other social commentaries thereby enriching it because the totality of this array of sub-genres of poetry equips children with life skills such as coping mechanisms and the developmental phases of an individual. The children's incorporation of other genres of orature into their poetry emanates from the fact that they spend a lot of their time imitating adults. This poetry depicts a world in which societal issues earlier mentioned, including gender form an integral part of the interactions within the community.

Children's play poetry is unique because most of it is characterized by subtexts that have to be unraveled. These subtexts are deduced by analyzing the poems with the performances. Hence, the study is about how selected Maragoli children's play poetry addresses the children's ways of thinking about the spaces assigned to the feminine and masculine genders.

The Maragoli form one of the ethnic communities of the Abaluhya who inhabit the Western Kenya. This is supported by the internet article entitled "Luyia" (n.d, para 1) that discusses the practice of dowry by asserting that, "Dowry was paid in form of cattle, sheep, or goats during marriage. In place of giving cattle, sheep, or goats as bride price, one may pay dowry in cash. Nevertheless, marrying from one's clan is a taboo up to today." This marriage prohibition among clans' people is exhibited in some Maragoli children's play poetry that depicts gender spaces. Bwonya (2010: 50) states that the Maragoli, "are a Bantu-speaking community of the larger Abaluhya community of Western ... Kenya. The Maragoli speak Lulogoli" The proper linguistic name for a Maragoli person is Umulogoli for the singular form and Abalogoli or Avalogoli for the plural form. Most of the speakers of Lulogoli are found in Sabatia and Vihiga districts of Vihiga County. However, some of the Valogoli are also found in Migori, Trans Nzoia and Nakuru counties in Kenya. The word Maragoli for speakers of Lulogoli is generally used in place of Valogoli and has gained acceptance. This is the word that is used in this study.

Maragoli children's play poetry is a sub-genre of Maragoli orature. Maragoli orature comprises riddles, called *ividanda wili*; proverbs referred to as *zingano* and oral narratives that are called *zingano zia manani*, roughly translated as ogre narratives. However, the term "ogre narratives" is used to distinguish oral narratives from the other genres of Maragoli orature because proverbs, parables and puzzles are also called *zingano*. To say *Umundu yakunguba ulugano* is translated as "Someone has played a riddle on me." As such, the word *lugano* is understood according to the context in which it has been used. Children's play poetry is a sub-genre of poetry that the Maragoli call *zinyimbo*. The word *zinyimbo* means songs. It also refers to poems that are chanted and recited. It is therefore important to listen to children's play poems in order to determine whether they are sung, chanted or recited. Any individual who grows up in Maragoli encounters all or most of the sub-genres of Maragoli orature.

Children's play poetry is unique because teaching and learning take place best using oral poetry. Maragoli children's play poetry is poetry that is sung, chanted and recited while the children play or enact certain actions, some of which depict the spaces assigned to the genders while others articulate the interplay between the gendered spaces and sexed bodies. These enactments or actions when linked to the words in the poems are solutions to some of the puzzles created in the poems. As such, anyone watching children's play poetry has to merge the visual and audio senses in order to unravel the subtexts highlighted in the poems. Gender spaces in this study refers to public, private, domestic, semi domestic as well as professional spaces culturally assigned to the genders. However, the two major gender spaces from which other spaces emerge are public and domestic.

These gender spaces reveal, to a large extent, gender issues such as gender roles, behaviour and emotions. The main actors in these spaces are the gendered bodies that are sexual entities depicting nature and culture.

The projection of gender spaces in children's play poetry and their relationship between the play poetry as well as the shifting roles of boys and girls in the process of performing the poetry is pertinent to this study. In referring to public and domestic spaces, we argue that the two are co-existing spaces within which gender issues are enacted in the play poetry. The dichotomy is one that time and again vanishes, thus obliterating the two spaces and more so, the gender issues within. The orality embedded by children's play poetry is one that is dynamic and therefore continually re-inventing gender issues and inscribing into the public and domestic spaces.

Notably, each play poem is a complete text that tells a story about the community's social, cultural and even economic issues that have taken place or are still taking place in the community. Some of the poems composed at the onset of colonialism are still being performed thereby showing the staying power of poetry.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Many studies have been conducted in children's poetry. However, these studies have not addressed gender spaces in children's poetry more pointedly and any mention of it in those studies is incidental. For instance, Diehl (2011) discusses *wazauta*, a type of children's song that uses children's language to satirize political figures depicts a common political space for both feminine and masculine gender but which the researcher

does not address in the study or it is outside the scope of the researcher. Similarly, Okot p'Bitek (1974) describes an Acoli hide-and-seek game by both boys and girls but does not discuss the common space the performance avails for both the feminine and masculine genders. Odaga (1985) discusses children's play poetry among the Luo but does not discuss the work from a gender perspective. Alembi (1991) analyzes children's poetry among the Banyole but this author neither discusses gender spaces nor articulates gendered bodies in the work. As such, no one has conducted a research in Maragoli children's play poetry in which gender spaces are examined.

1.3 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How are feminine and masculine spaces depicted in Maragoli children's play poetry?
2. How are gendered bodies and subversive signification highlighted in Maragoli children's play poetry?
3. How are gender, style and language issues portrayed in Maragoli children's play poetry?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to establish gender spaces in Maragoli children's play poetry.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Analyze the depiction of feminine and masculine gender spaces in Maragoli children's play poetry.

2. Examine how gendered bodies and subversive signification are highlighted in Maragoli children's play poetry.
3. Investigate how gender, style and language are portrayed in Maragoli children's play poetry.

1.5 Rationale and Significance of the Study

This study was necessitated by the fact that studies conducted in children's poetry have not examined gender spaces depicted in the poems yet this enables the researcher to use the visual senses with a view to showing how the performance patterns or formations articulate a community's social, cultural and economic issues in the poems. This in turn demonstrates the subtexts, highlighted in the apparently simplistic poems, yet underneath them are crucial issues pertaining to societal gender ascriptions and the children's reactions to such issues that are unraveled through analysis. The poems also portray children's perceptions about the environment in which they live and how they accommodate change in their public or domestic spaces.

This study is justified because of its relevance to literary scholars who will use the play poems to teach children's literature and orature. Teachers of children's literature will benefit from this study because children's play poetry is one of the sub-genres of children's orature. Besides, many course books in oral literature exclude children's play poetry and so this study will assist teachers of orature. Pre-school and primary school curriculum developers will also benefit from the study in their planning for children's song games along gender issues. Since studies in gender are multidisciplinary, the results

will benefit sociologists and anthropologists. Anthropologists will use the Maragoli ethnography to discuss gender issues and compare them with those from western cultures. Since sociology is the study of the development, structure, and functioning of human society, sociologists will benefit from spaces assigned to each gender in Maragoli children's play poetry.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

Broadly, Maragoli oral poetry comprises lullabies, children's poetry, circumcision poetry, marriage poetry, work poetry, and funeral poetry. Maragoli children's poetry includes play poetry and other poetry for children. Play poetry is a performance that incorporates some of the other sub-genres of Maragoli poetry such as work poetry and funeral poetry thereby enriching the study. This is because children are imitative in nature and spend most of their childhood imitating adults. To this effect, they imitate adults performing their duties such as sowing. The performances include body movements, formations such as circles or semi circles and the use of real or imaginary props – some of which assist in unraveling the subtexts in the poems through analysis.

One major limitation of the study was setting out to collect data with no idea about the number of play poems that would be collected. The problem was solved by using the method proportional allocation to arrive at a manageable number of poems depicting gender spaces used in the study.

Another limitation was getting the informants to attend the meeting at the agreed upon time. Some informants would fail to come but this was overcome by rescheduling the meetings and also getting other willing informants to participate in the study. For instance, the male informants for the scheduled focus group discussion at Wamuluma failed to turn up. Willing informants were obtained from South Maragoli in the same district to participate in the study. The timetables in many schools at the time of the collection of data were strictly adhered to so that the time given to collect the data was during the forty minutes break time or the lunch break in some schools. This was sometimes difficult and in some instances, the performances had to be rescheduled. For instance, there were student teachers on teaching practice at the time of collection of data and this made it difficult to collect data from Chavakali Primary School owing to the rigorous supervision of such teachers. This was overcome by selecting Kigama Primary School in the same locality although they had to do so immediately the school broke for lunch so as not to miss their afternoon classes.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in the study was drawn from the Social Learning Theory, Semiotics and the Schema theory. Selected tenets from these theories enabled the researcher to situate the poems within the community's mores. The social learning theory propounded by Hogben and Dyrne as well as Mearns, Semiotics propounded by Nóth as well as the Schema Theory propounded by Vinogradovas and Gregoriou formed the framework used in the thesis.

Hogben and Dyrne's (1998:5) position on the social learning theory is that:

The major concepts of social learning theory rest on a series of assumptions about humans and human behavior...First and foremost theorists and researchers assume that people are social beings in that they pay attention to the environment around them. An important addition to this assumption is that people react to the environment or respond to stimuli in the environment.

The position above was relevant to this study because children observe their environment and then compose play poems that conform or react to the physical, social and cultural environments.

Another position on the social learning theory relevant to the study is an article by Mearns on Julian B. Rotter (2009:1), which states that, "Personality represents an interaction of the individual with his or her environment ... to understand behavior, one must take both individual ... and the environment into account ... Change the way a person thinks, or change the environment the person is responding to, and behavior will change." In short, changes in an individual's environment or way of thinking affect that individual's behavior. These changes were found in the children's play poems.

The importance of semiotics according to Chandler (n.d.) is that it:

...teaches us that reality is a system of signs. Studying semiotics can assist us to become more aware of reality as a construction and of the roles played by ourselves and others in constructing it. It can help us to realize that information or meaning is not 'contained' in the world or in books, computers or audio-visual media. Meaning is not 'transmitted' to us - we actively create it according to a complex interplay of codes or conventions of which we are normally unaware. Becoming aware of such codes is both inherently fascinating and intellectually empowering. We learn from semiotics that we live in a world of signs and we have no way of understanding anything except through signs and the codes into which they are organized.

In a nutshell, apart from reality being a system of signs, it entails the roles people play in creating those signs and meaning is crafted according to the complicated relationship of codes that people are normally unaware of and that it is intellectually empowering to unravel the codes. Chandler's position is pertinent to this study because children's play poetry is also a system of organized signs that are referred to as subtexts or puzzles in this study.

Signification in the theory of semiotics is, according to Noth (1990:95), "articulated meaning. It comprises both a dynamic and a static aspect." This author adds that whereas the dynamic aspect is the process of producing meaning, the static one refers to meaning already produced. Signification is therefore pertinent in the analysis of children's play poetry because the meanings of the poems are embedded in the interplay between the words, actions, performance or movements on the one hand and the cultural dictates on the other hand.

Tenets drawn from the schema theory were also useful in understanding and analyzing gender spaces in the children's play poems as shown by Vinogradovas (2002:1) who states that the:

'schema theory' approach ... shows that the construction of new worlds in literary texts is based not on various kinds of similarities among different schemata but on the substitution of a schema for a completely new one. In sum, the contemporary notion of schema, which is not only the product of cross – fertilization of different academic disciplines but also of intercultural character, can be usefully applied to literary studies, especially in the analysis of the epistemological and ontological entities of fictional worlds created by literary texts.

Briefly, the new worlds created in literary texts are as a result of substitution of schemata for new ones. The theory was also useful in analyzing the fictional worlds in literary texts. The substitution of schemata is the one that enabled children to highlight issues affecting them and the community at any given time as reflected in their poetry.

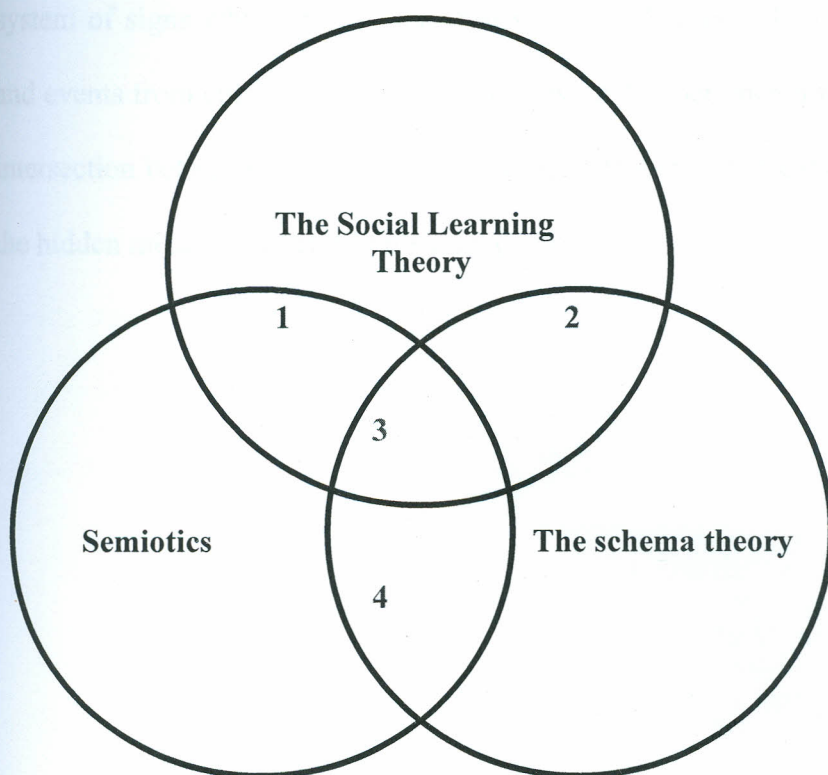
Gregoriou is another schema theorist :(2009:87) whose position on schema is that:

Since schemata are abstract cognitive structures which incorporate generalised knowledge about objects and events, containing slots which are filled with specific information bits as a text or message is processed, these are bound to vary depending on the culture and overall personal background and experience that each one of us has had.

In a nutshell, schemata pertain to the mental procedure where information is processed in accordance with cultural dictates and personal experiences. The appropriateness of this position is that children's play poetry is partly a product of the community's culture as well as their experiences as members of the community. Since the children's experiences at any given time in a community are generally similar, the children depict these experiences in their play poems. This was observed when the informants depicted their understanding of their culture by performing children's play poems highlighting gender spaces based on their culture or personal experiences. This met the first objective of the study that sought to analyze the depiction of feminine and masculine gender spaces in Maragoli children's play poetry. It also met the second objective that sought to examine how gendered bodies and subversive signification are highlighted in Maragoli children's play poetry.

The conceptual framework is best illustrated in Plate 1 below.

Plate 1: Self created model by researcher



Key

Intersection point	Variable
1	Learning
2	Performance
3	Gender spaces
4	Subtexts

In short, the dependent variable in the model above is a gender space that embodies the social learning theory, semiotics and the schema theory. The intersecting variable otherwise referred to as independent variable between the social learning theory and semiotics is learning. People learn from the environment and understand the codes and signs produced in their culture and or environment and react to it. After human beings have drawn pictures in their minds based on culture, experience and environment, they react to it, mostly through performance or action as exemplified in the intersection

between the social learning and schema theories. Semiotics teaches that reality is a system of signs while the schema theory asserts that an individual learns about objects and events from culture, personal background and experience through mind pictures. The intersection between semiotics and the schema theory is subtexts. These subtexts explain the hidden meanings in children's play poetry.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This study falls within the genre of children's literature, which refers to stories, skits, plays and poems written by: children for children or adults for children. Apart from stories both oral and written, children's literature also includes puzzles and tongue twisters as well as oral poems such as songs, chants and recitations that children perform.

Chesaina (2006: 31): captures the spirit of children's literature by stating that:

Children's literature and sources of children's literature have been the focus of creative men and women from time immemorial. This is because of the importance of children, not only as growing members of a given society, but also as the future torchbearers of any society's culture....before a child can be considered a *bona fide* of his/her society, she/he must be fully initiated into the society's culture. This entails inculcation of cultural values, with an emphasis on moral judgment or the code of what is considered right or wrong. Hence in our African traditional cultures... respect was upheld and disrespect condemned. This included respect for other people as well as respect for the environment.

In short, children's literature not only emanates from the importance of children in society but also the societal values the literature inculcates in the children. Children's play poetry falls within children's literature. An addition here is that since children's play poetry is significant to the community that creates it; its importance lies in the children's expression of societal issues.

Supporting Chesaina's position above, Wasamba (2006: 63) observes that oral literature is a vital tool in children's pedagogy and adds that "Learning among children ... is critical in passing on the foundations of culture in the form of knowledge, values, customs and traditions. It enables children to survive, grow and thrive." As such, the

children's play poems in this study are analyzed from the perspective of the social learning theory because children learn their communities' norms since they are social beings who pay attention to their environment and respond to stimuli in the environment.

Finnegan (2007: 156) discusses the many functions of performance in orature in the position that:

...our multi-layered nature of human action and expression, is something that we need to take account of at every level. The varying forms of oral literature we study may well not have any given and single function or meaning. Each is likely to be multivocal, to involve more than just a single 'front' performer, to evoke multiple meanings in different situations and for different parties even in the same audience, and to have a multiplicity of functions.

In other words, human action can be interpreted in many ways and that studying any genre of oral literature has more meanings with many functions. This position was used in this study where some of the poems would fall in the classification of work poetry but were also performed during play time, hence their analysis as children's play poetry.

A multidisciplinary approach to the understanding of oral literature as demonstrated by Poyatos (1988: 46) is that:

... the literary value of the works under study constitute a valid touchstone for the analysis of the esthetic and socioliterary values of a period In other words, the social or cultural anthropologist would do well to use the narrative literature of a period to ascertain the cultural aspects he is studying, which are but complementary to the purely literary ones, giving him a broader and richer understanding of its subject.

Although Poyatos uses narrative literature as an example, this assertion is true to children's play poetry because each poem is also regarded as a story. This means that anthropology is

only a tool that aids in the understanding of a literary genre. Poyotos' position on analysis of the aesthetic and socioliterary values was used under the analytical research design that enabled the researcher to examine how gender spaces are depicted in Maragoli children's play poetry.

Okombo (1992: 29) discusses the methodological implications of conducting a research in oral literature in any community by asserting that:

The essence of ethnomethodology is that the researcher tries to discover the explanatory principles in the community itself. Close involvement in the target community's life is merely a practical necessity for gaining insight into the nature of the institutions which constitute the community's artistic sense.

Okombo's position above indicates that ethnomethodology is pertinent in data collection for any researcher of orature. This was useful to this study because the researcher, being a speaker of Lulogoli used the poems that were performed to find out about the Maragoli community's understanding of the world and how the poems produce a social order in which the Maragoli live.

This study belongs to the genre of children's oral poetry such as lullabies and play poetry. Children play a lot as part of growing up in their given communities. This is supported by Kao (2011:17) who asserts that, "One of the most defining features that distinguish poetry from prose is that poetry is meant to be heard aloud." This is also true of children's play poetry. The fact that the poetry is performed means that it is heard aloud. This in turn means that the performances of such poetry require an audience.

Finnegan (2007: 119) states that, "Even performances which seem spur-of-the-moment depend on co-coordinated activities and prior organization." This in effect shows that even for poetry that is not planned for, such poems have to be rehearsed. It is this element of rehearsal that was used with all the focus group discussions, primary school children and face to face interviews before they performed the poems used in this study.

Supporting performance, Okpewho (1985:7) states that:

as far as oral tradition is concerned, we cannot properly understand the songs...unless we can direct our minds towards the actual performance of them. These songs are not written to be read but are chanted openly for an audience... to appreciate with their eyes and their ears.

In short, the performance of songs appeals to visual and audio sensibilities of an audience, which enhance the audience's understanding of the songs. Okpewho's position was appropriate to the study because watching and listening to the performances enabled the researcher to analyse the poems – an analysis that unraveled the subtexts in the poems.

Madison (2005: 149-50) is another scholar who also discusses performance by stating that:

Performance opens the secrets of a literary text. As the reader opens a book, the performer opens its secrets. The details – sometimes small and obscure, ambiguous or polemical are brought into *form*. They are opened up for broader questions and deeper reckonings through the guiding frame of performance. The performer, beyond bringing movement and sound to words and flesh to feeling, opens literature to the possibility of the hidden.... Performance opens the secrets of literature because it invites embodied comparisons between undercurrents that constitute operations of power in our lived experience.... Performance

promises engagement with what is otherwise hidden, oblique or secret.... It involves unearthing the subtext in literature....

The relevance of Madison's position to the study is that performance unravels subtexts in literary texts as discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Another examination of performance is by McGowan (2009: 44) who asserts that, "Although actor and witness can be the same person, the performance needs to be visibleThe performance occupies a place that is public ... and interactional, intersubjective."

The importance of this position to the study is that most of the performances of children's play poems have the same children as the performers as well as the audience because the children perform for fellow children. This study however shows that the performance of the poems not only depict gender spaces but also analyzes the relationship between the gender spaces and the meanings of the poems.

Barber (2007: 145) analyses the role of a local knowledgeable audience in deciphering meaning in the assertion that:

Many oral genres ... depend upon a local, knowledgeable audience to decipher them. Meanings are often attached to or secreted in texts in ways that could not be guessed by someone who did not have privileged information. Interpretation involves not only recognising the allusion but also bringing to it a fund of specific, detailed knowledge – often encoded in other textual genres - without which its meaning could not be deduced.

In brief, the meanings of oral genres are deciphered by the local knowledgeable audience who interpret the poems through allusions and intertextuality. A slight variation here is that being a Mulogoli grounded in the Maragoli culture; the researcher did not require interpretation of the poems by the performers.

Supporting Barber's assertion above, Diehl (2011: 7) observes that:

The term *wazauta* referred to songs that contained political content and, as a genre had their origins in China. They were composed anonymously because the words often contained satirical references to political figures. The references were metaphorical, cloaked in children's language, and the songs were mainly sung by children. This was comparable to the English nursery rhyme "Three Blind Mice", ... which was thought to have referred to the blinding and execution of three priests by Queen Mary 1 of England, although this interpretation is speculative.

Diehl's position that children's poetry is shrouded in language that needs to be interpreted is true of Maragoli children's play poetry. The author's interpretation of the English nursery rhyme entitled "Three Blind Mice" is relevant to this study because some children's play poems that were performed at an earlier time were interpreted by the researcher using the language in the poems.

The relevance of poetry, according to Vansina (1965: 149) is that it "serves as a source of information about the social ideals prevalent at the time when they were composed." This position is true of Maragoli children's play poetry, but which, goes further to show the genders involved in such poems and the spaces therein.

Finnegan (1977: 90) analyzes style in poetry by stating that:

The most marked feature of poetry is ... repetition... The collocations of line or stanza or refrain are based on their repeated recurrence; metre, rhythm or stylistic features like alliteration or parallelism are also based on repeated patterns of sound, syntax or meaning. In its widest sense, repetition is part of all poetry. This is the general background against which the prosodic and other features of oral poetry must be seen.

Finnegan's statement that repetition is a common feature in poetry was relevant to Maragoli children's play poetry in which repetition is discussed under anaphora, epizeuzis, epistrophe anadiplosis and symploce in Chapter 6.

Examining children's play poems among the Acoli, Okot p'Bitek (1974: 1) asserts that:

Acoli children have a large repertoire of games and most of them are accompanied by singing. For example *Dini-dini ye* ... is a "hide and seek" game. A little boy or girl kneels before the "referee" who drums his or her back quite hard with his fists, while singing the solo. The rest of the children take up the chorus and dance to the rhythm of the "drum". The singing and dancing stops when the referee sings *Lamanya-manyanya puk*, and closes the eyes of the "drum"; and the rest of the children run and hide themselves. When the drum's eyes are opened, he endeavours to chase and touch any of the other children before they return to the spot where the referee is standing. The child who is touched becomes the next drum.

The description above shows that both Acoli boys and girls play this hide and seek game.

The author's statement that both the boys and girls are involved in the performance of the hide and seek poem was true of some Maragoli children's play poems that were performed by both boys and girls. However, this study goes further to analyse salient gender spaces such as common spaces for both feminine and masculine gender in such a hide and seek poem.

Odaga (1985: 96-97), describes the performance of *Mindhère mindhère min Akelo min dhère gindha* by asserting that:

Sing it repeated counting touching on the participants out stretched legs, and whoever the song ends with singer's hand on his leg folds leg on which the singer hand resting (*sic*). Anybody who folds both legs goes out of the game. The last person to survive either with one leg or both wins the game and becomes the soloist.

Although the description of the performance of Odaga's play poem is relevant to this study, it does not show the genders that performed it with a view to discussing the gender spaces. This study has gone a step further to show that a similar poem among the Maragoli was a performance depicting common spaces for both the feminine and masculine genders in which subtexts are unravelled and discussed in the study.

When the

Analyzing children's play poetry among the Banyole, Alembi (1991: 32) posits that:

Singing games which are structured with characteristic formations and performances including a focus on their aesthetic features, which serve a variety of cognitive purposes (*sic*). The cognitive purposes include the development of positive values; the reinforcement of a sense of identity and preservation through puzzles and challenges; and education through exaggerated juxtaposition of virtue and vice with a positive emphasis on virtue.

When the

Briefly, Alembi states that children's play poems are not only of aesthetic merit but they also stimulate learning through inculcation of values and disapproval of vice using puzzles and challenges in the poems. Although Alembi's position was significant, the study went further to analyze gender spaces in the poems.

When the

Another children's play poem Alembi discusses is "The fence is strong and secure", which, the author says is a patterned oral poem sung by both boys and girls among the Banyole. Though the poem is similar to a Maragoli children's play poem, this study adds by stating that the poem has subtexts that are evident in the merging of the words to the performance as a way of unraveling these subtexts.

Okhoba (1995: 47) has also conducted research in Marachi children's oral poetry that is pertinent to this study. The author states that Marachi children perform poems of educational merit and gives an example of an apparently nonsensical poem of Teso origin, which is a mixture of Kiswahili and Teso words. According to the author, the leader sings the song while touching the other children's outstretched feet with his or her palm. When the leader touches a leg at the end of the poem and says *Jamasuki*, the leg is folded. This author adds that the poem is sung over and over again until all the legs are folded. The children then stretch their legs again and stiffen them. The leader tries to pull each child up. No child is expected to bend its knees in the process as this is construed to mean that either the child's mother cooks raw ugali or the child wets its bed. This study benefits from Okhoba's position because the children's bent knees are the subtext of either bedwetting or cooking of raw ugali. This in turn shows domesticity as a feminine gender space as exemplified in cooking and child care.

Mpesha's (1995: 422 -3) observation that children value things that adults consider ordinary and dull because it is these things that enchant and enliven the children is demonstrated in the following poem from the author.

*Ukuti ukuti
Wa mnazi wa mnazi
Ukiingi pepo? Wa mtetema*

The frond, the frond
Of coconut palm of coconut palm
When it catches a breeze? It trembles.

The researcher then gives an analysis of the above poem by stating that:

... the oral poet's observant eye sees what happens when wind blows against coconut trees. The adult may dismiss this as ordinary but a child can stand for sometime (sic) just observing the palm fronds being ruffled by the wind. What

is more, he will join his playmates and dance to “Ukuti ukuti” and pretend he is indeed a palm frond.

In short, children mime the movements of palm trees – an indication that their poems are performed. Performance is relevant to this study insofar as it is merged to the words in the poems to unravel the subtexts.

Mbugua (2007: 17) supports Mpesha by asserting that “Children are great observers of nature. A close look at their poetry is that they make serious and precise comments on their environment. Children appreciate both the physical and social environment.” However, this study adds that these environments depict spaces that the genders react to or approve of.

Gender spaces were also found to be pertinent to the study especially when children of both genders played either separately or together. These separate and combined gender plays accompanied by poetry highlight the community’s ascription of gender spaces. This is supported by Telford and Long (2012:1) who, quoting from Spain D. *Gendered Spaces* Chapel Hill N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 1992 state that:

Historically, across time and even today across cultures, spaces have been gender inflected, typically by means of some measure of gender segregation, with women's spaces often configured as private or domestic and men's spaces as public and professional. Spatial segregation of genders produces gender stratification; not only are women often deprived of the spaces of action allowed to men, but they are also deprived of the knowledge and status associated with occupying those spaces (pp. 1–29).

In a nutshell, many cultures have over the years bent gender spaces by assigning women domestic or private spaces while men’s spaces are public and professional, thereby

denying women knowledge and status associated with men's spaces. This position was found to be true of the spaces assigned to men and women in this study. This study not only analyzes the domestic and public spaces assigned to the masculine and feminine genders respectively but it also evaluates the disparities in the spaces assigned to men and women as exemplified in the children's play poetry.

Soost's (2001: 1) position on gender space in literary works is that:

spaces in a literary text as historically specific elements of discourse that are constructed and referentialized by linguistic signs as well as semiotically and semantically marked in terms of gender, ethnicity, and class. These spaces can be distinguished in private and public ones and are reconstituted by transgression of either one of the characters or the narrator.

In other words, spaces in literary works are created and situated within linguistic signs and are semiotically and semantically separated in terms of gender, ethnicity and class – spaces that are distinguished as private and public but which are reinvented by subversion by either the narrator or other characters in the story. This study adds that the actors in the poems are either the personae or subjects and either of them subverts private spaces.

Another position on gender is the internet article entitled *Gendering* (2008: 2), which states that:

"Gendering," the title of this entry, asks us to notice that newborns identified as female or male do not on their own develop into feminine and masculine adults: gendering is a major task of socialization which begins at the moment of birth. Parents, extended family, and caregivers all contribute to providing the cues that encourage the baby to adopt feminine or masculine patterns, and so also does the wider culture, which includes television, motion pictures, children's stories, toys, and clothing, and institutions like government, religion, and schooling.... Through explicit as

well as unspoken messages, girls are encouraged to model themselves on their mothers and other women they know or encounter in stories, schoolbooks, and television programs. Boys are encouraged to model themselves on their fathers and other male figures. In cultures where dominant beliefs unequivocally define women as wives and mothers and restrict them to nurturing roles and narrowly defined definitions of appropriate work, the lessons a child learns will be explicit. Middle- and upperclass Victorian girls, for example, were given dolls and encouraged to mother them, and moreover they were taught to sew dolls' clothing, thus learning to "use their needle," a skill then thought to be essential to womanliness.

This therefore means that parents, the extended family and caregivers socialize children into their cultural gender roles from birth – a process that is perpetuated by the print and electronic media. Whereas girls model after their mothers and other women, boys are encouraged to model after their fathers and other male figures. This position is vital to this study because children internalize these gender ascriptions through poetry in which they enact some of the roles assigned to their genders by imitating children, teenagers, young unmarried adult men and women, married adult men and women as well as the old.

Hetrik's (2006: 1) observation that prostitution results from a woman's movement from private to public consumer practices is that:

The woman's body, in moving from the private sphere into the realm of public consumer practices, bears the marks of this transformation in curious and telling ways. Historically, the notion of feminine "publicness" has metonymized the condition of the prostitute (*fille publique/femme publique*), in dramatic contrast to the bourgeois wife and mother, ruler of domestic and private space and nucleus of the family structure. This movement from private to public, then, implies a kind of prostitutionalization, the selling of the commodified body in the service of a new consumer culture, as well as its opposite: a sort of reverse-prostitution....

In brief, the movement of a woman's body from her traditionally assigned private space with its accompanying gender ascriptions to a public one equated to prostitution. There is a slight variation here because this study does not equate the movement of the woman's body from her domestic space to a public one but shows that once in a public space, the woman subverts her cultural expectations of chastity and actually engages in prostitution.

Cultural issues pertaining to gender are examined by Johnson and Longhurst (2010: 24-5) in their assertion that:

Gendered and sexed bodies are acculturated and inscribed by discourse or being nothing more than cultural, social or linguistic constructions. Bodies have a weighty materiality and biology that is undeniable but fleshy bodies always exist within the realms of political, economic and cultural realms Bodies require examination and explanation Sexed bodies are an interface between culture and nature. They are both real and socially constructed.

In other words, it is culture that defines human bodies as gendered and sexed biological entities with flesh and that sexed bodies border between culture and nature. This study adds that it is these gendered sexed bodies that fit within the community's cultural, domestic, public and semi public spaces assigned to the genders.

So far, this chapter has demonstrated that children's play poetry as a sub-genre of orature is of academic merit. Chesaina (2006) states that children's literature emanates from the important role children play in any community. Wasamba (2006) adds that oral literature is an important tool in teaching children their customs and traditions and this enables them to grow and thrive. Finnegan (2007) observes that any genre of orature has more than one meaning and serves many functions. Poyatos (1988) emphasizes the usefulness

of anthropology in understanding literary genres. Okombo (1992) asserts that ethnomethodology is applicable in data collection for researchers of orature. Kao (2011) states that poetry is distinguished from prose because it is meant to be heard aloud. Finnegan (2007) observes that the spur of the moment performance of poetry has coordinated activities and prior organization. Okpewho (1985) underscores the importance of any audience in the performance of poetry. Madison (2005) observes that performance unravels the subtexts in literary works. McGowan's (2009) position is that in some performances the performers are also the audience. Barber (2007) states that meanings in oral texts are deciphered by the local audiences who have the skill of interpreting such texts. Diehl (2011) observes that children's poetry is shrouded in language that needs to be interpreted. Finnegan's (1977) observation is that repetition is a common feature in poetry. Okot p'Bitek (1974) describes a hide-and-seek game performed by Acholi boys and girls as a song. Odaga (1985) also describes a Luo children's play poem that is performed by singing. Alembi (1991) examines children's play poetry among the Banyole by stating that such poetry castigates vices and emphasizes virtues. Okhoba's (1995) contribution to children's play poetry is that Marachi children perform a poem of Teso origin with some Kiswahili words and describes how the poem is performed. Mpesha (1995) states that the physical environment thrills children who imitate the flora in a Kiswahili performed poem. According to Mbugua (2007), children make serious and precise comments on their environment.

Telford and Long's (2012) position on culture is that they assigned domestic or private spaces to women while men were assigned public and professional spaces. Soost (2001) situates gender spaces in literary works within the linguistic signs depicted semiotically and semantically. The internet article entitled *Gendering* (2008) makes the observation that parents and other caregivers socialize children to their cultural gender roles at birth so that girls grow up modeling after their mothers while boys model after their fathers. Lastly, Johnson and Longhurst (2010) state that culture defines human bodies as gendered and sexed biological entities bordering between culture and nature.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the research design, describes the study area, study population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, data analysis and ethical issues.

3.2 Research Design

The research design, the master plan of the study, gives direction on how the research was conducted and the end product of the research.

3.2.1 Analytical Research Design

The analytical design was used in the analysis of gender spaces in the poems. It was also used in interpreting the poems by merging the visual and audio senses in unraveling the subtexts by establishing their meanings through the use of semiotic signs.

3.3 Study Area

The study was confined to five locations of Sabatia District and three in Vihiga District of Vihiga County, giving a total of eight locations. The choice of these two districts was based on the fact that most of the speakers of Lulogoli are found here. At the time of the research, Sabatia District had eight locations, namely: Busali East, Busali West, Chavakali, North Maragoli, Idzava North, Idzava South, West Maragoli and Wodanga. Vihiga District had the following locations: Central Maragoli, Lugaga, Mungoma, South

Maragoli and Wamuluma. The percentage of the locations used from Sabatia District was arrived at by dividing the selected five locations by eight (the total number of locations in the district) and multiplying by one hundred; this gave a percentage of sixty two point five (62.5%). The percentage of the three locations in Vihiga District was obtained by dividing three by five and multiplying by one hundred to get the percentage, which yielded sixty per cent (60%). of the locations used The percentage of the total number of locations used in the study was arrived at by adding eight (the total number of locations in Sabatia District) to five (the total number of locations in Vihiga District) and this yielded thirteen. The percentage of the eight locations selected from the two districts was arrived at by dividing eight by thirteen and multiplying by one hundred. The result was sixty one point five (61.5%). This percentage gave more than half the total number of locations in the two districts, thereby making it representative enough.

3.4 Study Population

The study population comprised children's play poetry and performed events whose numbers were determined after collection of the primary data.

3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure

Two types of sampling namely sampling play poems and sampling performed events were used in the study.

3.5.1 Sampling Play Poems

During the collection of the primary data, the researcher was not able to determine the number of poems that would be used in the study. As such, the method of proportional allocation was used. According to Kothari (2003: 78), “the sizes of the samples from the different strata are kept proportional to the sizes of the strata.” In other words, all the play poems collected were added up and then divided by three because it was established that each performance event rendered feminine, masculine and play poems by both gender. A total of two hundred and twenty nine poems were collected. The proportional allocation of these poems was arrived at by dividing two hundred and twenty nine (229) by three because the performed units rendered their poems in these three gender categories. The result was seventy six (76). Out of the two hundred and twenty nine (229), sixty seven (67) were performed by females, thirty eight (38) by males and one hundred and twenty four (124) by both feminine and masculine genders. The poems rendered by each gender were multiplied by seventy six (the proportional allocation of the poems used in the study) and divided by two hundred and twenty nine (the total number of poems collected in the study). As such, the proportional allocation of the sixty seven (67) feminine gender poems was twenty two (22) while that of the thirty eight (38) masculine gender poems was thirteen (13). The proportional allocation of the one hundred and twenty four (124) poems by both feminine and masculine genders was forty one (41). In short, twenty two (22) feminine, thirteen (13) masculine and forty one (41) for both the feminine and masculine gender poems were selected and used in the study. Hence twenty two (22) feminine, thirteen (13) masculine and forty one (41) shared gender poems all added up to seventy six (76), the proportional allocation. As such, the proportions per gender

category added up to seventy six. However, only the poems that depicted gender spaces were selected and used.

3.5.2 Sampling Performed Events

Three categories of performed events were obtained namely, face to face interviews, focus group discussions and school children's performances. The performed events from the face to face interviews were one hundred and eight (108). There were eight focus group discussions, each of which rendered three performed events. These added up to twenty four (24) performed events. Each of the six primary schools gave three performed events. This gave a total of eighteen (18). The total number of the performed events was arrived at by adding one hundred and eight (108) to twenty four (24) and eighteen (18), yielding one hundred and fifty (150). As such, there were one hundred and fifty (150) performed events used in the study

3.6 Research Instruments

The study employed the following research instruments to collect primary data: observation, interview schedules, and focus group discussions.

3.6.1 Observation

The non-participant observation design was used to capture the actual performances from focus group discussions as well as those from children in the mixed gender primary schools. This enabled the researcher to use visual and audio senses to observe and link the performances in the play poems to the words and this assisted in unraveling the

subtexts in the poems. The subtexts formed the thrust of the analysis of the data in chapters 4, 5 and 6 of the thesis.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions

Eight focus group discussions were used to give children's play poems. The purpose of these focus group discussions that were conducted was to find out how the poems were performed with a view to establishing gender spaces from the performed poems.

The research used one moderator who took notes during the focus group discussions while the principal researcher conducted the actual discussions in the focus groups. The discussions were aimed at finding out if Maragoli children's play poetry was gender based or if the children always played together all the time. The informants were then asked to perform the children's play poems which were video taped as the principal researcher observed the performances. These focus group discussions not only performed play poems but were also used as samples of performed events.

3.6.3 Interview Schedules

Interview schedules comprising both open-ended and closed questions were personally administered to informants whose performed events were one hundred and eight (108). The poems rendered from these performed events were audio taped and each performed event described in continuous prose. The interview schedules were used to augment the play poems from primary schools and focus group discussions. A sample list of

informants drawn from both focus group discussions and the informants to whom interview schedules were administered is displayed in a table in Appendix 2.

3.7 Data Sources

Both primary and secondary data were used in the study.

3.7.1 Primary Data

Primary data, which was obtained from the field was collected through personal interviews, focus group discussions, observation, as well as performed events of both focus group discussions and primary schools. This formed the data that was analyzed in chapters 4, 5 and 6.

3.7.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data was attained from books, journals, magazines and newspapers in libraries and archives. The Internet was also useful for secondary data. This data was used in the review of related literature as well as the conceptual framework. Content analysis was used to analyze this data by synthesizing it.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using the hermeneutical method.

3.8.1 The Hermeneutical Method

According to Peter (1994: 63), "The hermeneutical method deals with the analysis of language, the problem of meaning and the interpretation of symbols and images in order to grasp the meaning of a passage or concept." This type of method was useful to the study in the analysis of meaning deciphered from the poems. This meaning was obtained from the: performance context that involved how the poems were performed; social context that placed the poems within the Maragoli community's roles ascribed to the genders; cultural context that examined the poems vis-a-vis the community's cultural practices; values, attitudes and symbols that were interpreted by the researcher.

3.9 Ethical Issues

The researcher obtained an introduction letter from the chair of the department. A copy of the letter is displayed in appendix 9. The researcher also got verbal consent from informants before interviewing them. Primary schools' head teachers, their deputies or senior teachers were also asked for verbal consent before allowing their pupils to perform children's play poems. The researcher also obtained a permit from the National Council of Science and Technology of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology through Maseno University School of Graduate Studies to conduct the research. A copy of the research permit is displayed in Appendix 10.

3.10 Summary

This section has shown the step by step manner in which the study was conducted. It shows how the analytical research design was used and also states that the study area was

Sabatia and Vihiga districts of Vihiga County where a majority of the inhabitants are Valogoli. The chapter has also shown that the study population comprised children's play poetry and performed events. The sampling of play poems and the sampling of performed events enabled the researcher to use manageable data. The play poems were sampled using the method of proportional allocation. All the performed events were added up and those depicting gender spaces were used in the study. The research instruments used in the collection of primary data were non participant observation, focus group discussions and interview schedules. Primary data was obtained from play poems got from personal interviews, focus group discussions as well as primary school children. Performed events were also a source of primary data. Books, journals, magazines, archives and the internet were used in secondary data collection. The data was analyzed using the hermeneutical method to analyze the data, interpret language, symbols and images in the play poems. The researcher obtained permission from the informants who were used in the study. The head teachers, deputy head teachers and senior teachers in the selected primary schools consented before the pupils were asked to perform the play poems. The researcher also obtained an introduction letter from the chair of the department and also a permit from the National Council of Science and Technology to conduct the research.

CHAPTER 4

THE FEMININE AND MASCULINE SPACES IN MARAGOLI CHILDREN'S PLAY POETRY

4.1 Introduction

The spaces assigned to each gender in any community spell out the community's perceptions of the status accorded to that gender. The study revealed that space in Maragoli children's play poetry fell in three sections and are discussed in this chapter in three subheadings namely: 4.2 The Feminine Spaces in Maragoli children's Play Poetry; 4.3 The Masculine Spaces in Maragoli children's Play Poetry, and 4.4 Common Spaces for both Feminine and Masculine Genders in Maragoli Children's Play Poetry. The chapter examines the spaces assigned to each gender and to both genders together. The poems in this section are analyzed by placing them within given contexts and also unraveling the subtexts inherent in them. The analysis of the chapter met the first objective of the study that sought to analyze the depiction of feminine and masculine gender spaces in Maragoli children's play poetry.

4.2 The Feminine Spaces in Maragoli children's Play Poetry

The study showed that the feminine spaces were mainly pegged to the feminine gender roles that the Maragoli have assigned women. As such, the feminine spaces were found to be mainly domestic while their public spaces were scripted to conform to their feminine gender roles.

The feminine gender roles of pottery and drawing water from the springs are articulated in the poem below that reveals domesticity as the woman's space.

*Mama yalonga zinyingu munane
Na avana mnane
Na avola
Mundu watanya kalala
Ndi mushira wa kanani
Azi kumulia
Kandie kurole*

Mother made eight pots
With eight children
And she said
Whoever will break one
I will take her to the ogre
To go and eat her
Then eat me so that we may see

The feminine gender role of drawing water from protected springs is arrived at here by deciphering its covert meaning whereby the pots are associated with water drawn from springs. Though the Maragoli use plastic jerry cans and plastic buckets to draw water from protected springs nowadays, in the olden days water was drawn using clay pots. This demonstrates the staying power of poetry evident in the use of pots to draw water in the poem performed by school girls. The mother's threat to her children is that she will take anyone who breaks her water pot to the ogre to eat her. The ogre, a character in Maragoli oral narratives is greedy, cannibalistic and evil, is used as a threat in the poem to instill fear in the young girls so that they each take care of her water pot. The mother's warning is aimed at ensuring that each of her daughters takes good care of her pot. The poem reveals that some of the teaching among the Maragoli was done through intimidation. However, the girl child dares the ogre to eat her - an indication that she will not break her water pot.

The feminine gender's scripted public space whereby the female persona leaves home in the following poem is exhibited in her act of drawing water from the protected spring to show that drawing water from protected springs is one of the feminine gender roles among the Maragoli.

*Ndazia mu kidaho
Ndanyola ingugi
Iduvula amazi
Ndagevolera
Ndahilaku nywi
Yandahila uvusinu
Ndasundula
Ndadaha otonono
Ndanywa gaba! Kandi gaba!
Tutigaye ndidwika
Ndagenda genda
Ndanyola kavuli ka mwayi
Kalanira kunzira
Ndakabama u pa! Kandi u pa!
Umwayi mwene
Yambola ubamilaki kavuli kange
Yakunduya nu lwiga lwe mbongo*

I went to the protected spring
I found a baboon
Mixing the water (with mud)
I told it
Draw me some to drink
It drew me sediments
I poured it
I drew clear (water)
I drank gaba! Again gaba!
The remaining I put on my head
I walked walked
I found a shepherd's goat
Bleating on the path
I slapped it pa! Again pa!
The shepherd himself
Told me why are you slapping my goat
It has gored me the horn of an antelope

The poem indicates that when her feminine gender leaves the domestic space, she moves to a scripted public space to carry out her gender roles. This is supported by an

encyclopedia article entitled *Public and Private Spaces* (2003: 536) that, “Public space has been gendered to exclude women or to include them in limited or highly scripted roles.” This means that the feminine gender is only allowed to a public space to carry out the roles assigned to her gender. The poem highlights the fact that girls learn early in life the importance of drinking clean water. The baboon, a character in oral narratives is used in the poem as a *dramatis persona* to show that girls should learn to be independent and not ask for favours from strangers. This is evident when the baboon mixes water with mud and draws sediments for the *persona* who pours it out and draws clear water to drink and take home. The poem instills in young girls the fact that they should be courageous even when they encounter livestock while carrying water home so as to reach home safely with the water. Another issue that the poem highlights is the fact that girls are observant as demonstrated in the female *persona*’s separate encounters with the wild and the tamed fauna in her physical environment as demonstrated in the lines below.

I went to the protected spring
I found a baboon
Mixing the water (with mud)
I told it
Draw me some to drink
It drew me sediments
I poured it

I found a shepherd’s goat
Bleating on the path
I slapped it pa! Again pa!
The shepherd himself
Told me why are you slapping my goat
It has gored me the horn of an antelope

The baboon that is found in the wild draws dirty water for the *persona* to show that whereas wild animals drink dirty water, human beings drink clean water. Hence the sudden meeting between the female *persona* and the baboon is one of contrasts. The

poem is also a lesson to girls to embrace the basic hygiene requirement of using clean water. The persona's encounter with the goat that is tamed is a subtext. This is because it is expected that the goat will be friendly to the persona but it gores her to show that the feminine gender should not trust even those individuals in society who look harmless and that females should be ready to defend themselves at all times.

The feminine gender's space as one of domesticity is exhibited in one of the persona's roles of kitchen gardening and grinding grain into flour as highlighted in the poem below.

*Mama mbe zimbindi nzie kumiza
Mama mbe zimbindi nzie kumiza
Nzie nzie nzie nzie kumiza
Nzie nzie nzie nzie kumiza
Kilavula ikitiezo ng'ani inzara yakwita
Nololi akanyama usiezanga nogonga
Kilavula ikitiezo ng'ani inzara yakwita
Nololi akanyama usiezanga nogonga
Nzie nzie nzie nize kumiza*

Mother give me cowpeas to go and sow
Mother give me cowpeas to go and sow
I may go go go go to sow
I may go go go go to sow
If it was not for *ikitiezo* hunger would have killed us
When you see meat you grind when acting modest

The line *mama mbe zimbindi nzie kumiza*, translated as, "Mother give me cowpeas to go and sow" proves one of the feminine gender roles among the Maragoli is vegetable gardening. This is supported by Mwanzi (a) (2006:4) in the statement that cow peas:

give rise to luxuriant, green leaves that are used as vegetables. There are several varieties of the plant, but the one that is most valued is the type that is drought resistant, for it provides the seeds for consumption as a protein-based legume and it also provides green vegetables during the three dry months of December, January and February.

In other words, the feminine gender is expected to be observant so as to know the season when to plant drought resistant vegetables like cowpeas since it is during drought that

famine strikes. Because it is the role of the feminine gender to cook food for the family, a woman has to ensure that when the family has grains she should provide the vegetables to be eaten with ugali, the Maragoli community's staple food. This poem therefore socializes girls into their gender roles of planting drought resistant vegetables, which, implicitly, are to be eaten with ugali as shown in grinding cereals into flour.

Grinding grain into flour is another domestic feminine gender space that is revealed in the line, *Nololi akanyama usiezanga nogonga*, whose translation is, "When you see meat you grind when acting modest". The line shows that every married woman among the Maragoli had her own grinding stone on which to grind grains such as millet. The lines therefore indicate that the woman's space is a domestic one because she interacts with her children in the homestead where she carries out the roles assigned to her. The enactment of shyness is ironical because the actual action of grinding is strenuous – it requires a lot of energy and this does not allow for theatrics. This irony is a puzzle whose meaning is that meat was and still is a delicacy among the Maragoli. Any time meat is cooked in an average home indicates that one will eat a lot of ugali unlike on other days when ugali is eaten with vegetables. As such, the persona's mother is acting modest at the prospect of eating a delicacy on this particular day.

A woman's domestic space is also depicted in the poem below in which the girl persona, having observed that the crop of maize is ready at Rachel's tells her mother about it.

Chorus: *Ososi mama*
Chorus: *Ososi mama*
Soloist: *Amaduma gakomeye mukivanda wanga Rachel*
Chorus: *Ososi mama*
Chorus: *Ososi mama*

Soloist: Are you relieved mother
 Chorus: You are relieved mother
 Soloist: Maize is ready in the river valley at Rachel's
 Soloist: Are you relieved mother
 Chorus: You are relieved mother

The poem covertly highlights the Maragoli culinary art of cooking maize that is ready as a feminine gender role. This means that the female persona is explicitly telling her mother the moment of famine is over because her mother will now put food on the table. This is an affirmation of the feminine gender's domesticity involving farm work and cooking.

Another feminine gender's scripted public space is exhibited in the action of the persona's mother going to solicit for food as demonstrated in the skit the performers enacted, interspersed with song. In the skit, one female enacted the role of Ndiegu eating a chunk of food while the other enacted the role of Ndiegu's starving child. The starving child asked her mother Ndiegu to share the food with her but she refused by moving away from her. The child told Ndiegu that she will get her food but Ndiegu continued to move away from her child while she ate her food. The starving child then got her own food and refused to share with Ndiegu.as the skit below shows.

Mwana: *Ndiegu haki numbaku.*
 Ndiegu: *Awa. Nguhaku mba.*
 Mwana: *Ndiegu mbeku*
 Ndiegu: *Kaagehi*
 Mwana: *Ndanyola ichange, ndanyola ichange*
 Ndiegu: *Kaagehi*
 Mwana: *Ayiki, ayiki. Ndakonyola*
 Ndiegu: *(Atanga kulira)*

Child: Ndiegu please give me some
 Child: Ndiegu give me some.
 Ndiegu: It is little.
 Child: I'll get mine, I'll get mine
 Ndiegu: It is little

Child: Here it is, here it is. I've found.
Ndiegu: (Starts crying)

The child's refusal to share food with her mother makes Ndiegu to start crying. Her crying prompts the chorus to sing the song below in which they recount what happened.

*Vosi: Ndiegu akazia kusuma
Akima umwana
Numwana akazia kusuma
Akima Ndiegu
Ndiegu vava
Ukaliranga gu?
Zunu zunu zunu
(Vatanga kudiginyana ma uvukinu vufwa)*

All: Ndiegu goes to solicit for food
She does not offer his/her child any
And the child goes to solicit for food
She does not offer Ndiegu any
No Ndiegu
Are you really crying?
Zunu zunu zunu
(They start tickling each other and the performance ends)

The poem demonstrates that since it is the duty of women to provide food for their families, the feminine gender – both mother and daughter each go to scripted public spaces separately to solicit for food. It is an early training on motherhood – that as future mothers, irrespective of their children's individual differences, they should share food with all their children. The performance of the poem reveals that famine is a threat to the Maragoli – that when faced with famine, both female adults and their daughters go to solicit for food. Selfishness, which is a vice among the Maragoli, is shown in the performance. Unfortunately, children emulate this vice from adults as in the case of Ndiegu who refuses to share food with her child. This is further demonstrated by Ross (2007: 50) in the assertion that:

Bandura showed kindergarten children a film in which one of his female students physically attacked a Bobo doll, an inflatable baboon that was weighted at the bottom to make it bob back and forth when struck. After viewing the film

the children were made to feel frustrated by being placed in a room full of toys that they were not permitted to touch. Finally, the children were led to a room with a Bobo doll and other toys identical to those in the film they had viewed. The majority of the kindergarteners imitated the aggressive behavior they viewed in the film; almost half continued to produce this behavior months later.

The child's refusal to share her solicited food with her mother emanates from the child's observation of the parent's behaviour of refusing to share food with her. Indangasi's (2010: 47) observation about the mother's behaviour is that:

Ndiegu was selfish. The food he begged for, he refused to share with the child. The child then did his own begging and decided he was not going to give any to Ndiegu. Unable to appreciate that he was being given a taste of his own medicine, Ndiegu started to cry....in the world of Maragoli children, and perhaps children in general, the good are rewarded and the bad punished. It is simple, unambiguous poetic justice.

The meaning of the poem was underscored in the performance. During the performance, females used their fists to form a vertical line in which each female used her thumb and index finger to grip lightly the back of the palm of each child. They then swayed their gripped fists up and down according to the rhythm of the song. When they sang the last line of the poem, *Zunu zunu zunu zunu*, they disengaged their palms; tickled and pinched each other lightly and this ended the performance. The meaning of this part of the performance according to Irvine's (2012) internet article is that "the signs of a culture can be analyzed for how societies construct, produce, and circulate meanings and values." As such, the forming a line with the gripped back of palms reveals the fact that the Maragoli community is cohesive and they are united. This unity is usually demonstrated during famine when they share whatever little food they have. The light gripping of the back of each other's fist is an enactment of the unity demonstrated in the spirit of sharing of the mere bites of solicited food each one takes. The disengagement of the gripped fists shows

that this unity has been broken by Ndiegu's refusal to share food with the child. The pinching of each other lightly after the disengagement of the palms is a performance of pricking each other's conscience about breaking the Maragoli cultural norm of sharing food in times of famine.

This section has revealed that the spaces the Maragoli assign the feminine gender are domestic because they are linked to the feminine gender roles. One poem has depicted a mother's role of pottery with its implied feminine gender role of drawing water using clay pots. Another domestic space has been evident in a poem in which a child persona requests her mother to give her cowpeas to go and sow. Explicit in the poem is grinding grain into flour which is used in the cooking ugali. A poem depicting a woman's domestic space has covertly shown the feminine gender role of cooking maize that is ready. Two poems have highlighted the feminine gender scripted public spaces. In one poem a girl persona goes to draw water from the protected spring where she meets a baboon as a dramatis persona; the intention of the poem is to teach girls not to seek favours from strangers. In another poem a mother goes to a scripted public space to solicit for food and refuses to share it with her daughter who also goes to ascripted public space and solicits for her own food which she also refuses to share with her mother. The poem reveals that selfishness is a vice mong the Maragoli, but children learn the vice from adults.

4.3 The Masculine Spaces in Maragoli Children's Play Poetry

This section analyzes the spaces assigned to the masculine gender in Maragoli children's play poetry that not only enable the males to be courageous but also empower them economically.

M'mbo is regarded a very far off physical place among the Maragoli and therefore a public space for the masculine gender. The male persona in the poem below states that he will go to see Kalasimba in M'mbo to complain to him about the poisonous pumpkins he planted that have killed the persona's eleven children.

Soloist: *Nzinzi nzia M'mbo nzinzi*
Nzinzi nzia M'mbo

Chorus: *Nzinzi*

Soloist: *Zi m'mbolele Kalasimba*

Chorus: *Nzinzi*

Soloist: *Mahondo ga yataga*

Chorus: *Nzinzi*

Soloist: *Gamalira avana*

Chorus: *Nzinzi*

Soloist: *Likomi na mulala*

Chorus: *Nzinzi*

Soloist: *Katiguli isugudi*

Chorus: *Nzinzi*

Soloist: *Amanani giduvule*

Chorus: *Nzinzi*

Soloist: *Nzinzi nzia M'mbo*

Soloist: *Nzinzi nzia M'mbo*

Chorus: *Nzinzi*

Soloist: *Even I am going to M'mbo*
Even I am going to M'mbo

Chorus: *I am going*

Soloist: *Go and tell Kalasimba*

Chorus: *I am going*

Soloist: *The pumpkins that he planted*

Chorus: *I am going*

Soloist: *Finished my children*

Chorus: *I am going*

Soloist: Then start (playing) the *sugudi*
 Chorus: I am going
 Soloist: Ogres may dance
 Chorus: I am going
 Soloist: Even I am going to M'mbo
 Even I am going to M'mbo
 Chorus: I am going

According to the poem, the masculine gender visits public spaces that are far away from home thereby enabling them to explore new physical places. The male persona is lamenting about the death of his eleven children who died after eating poisonous pumpkins that Kalasimba planted. Kalasimba is a man who has left the familiar physical place in Maragoli to the far away M'mbo. This means that he has gone to a public space where the persona is soon joining him. The poem indicates that since the masculine gender ventures into public spaces, he develops resilience as seen in the lines below.

Soloist: *Katiguli isugudi*
 Chorus: *Nzinzi*
 Soloist: *Amanani giduvule*
 Chorus: *Nzinzi*

Soloist: Then start (playing) the *sugudi*
 Chorus: I am going
 Soloist: Ogres may dance
 Chorus: I am going

The playing of the *sugudi*, which is a type of drum, for ogres to rejoice stems from the fact that among the Maragoli, there are ill-intentioned people who rejoice at another person's misfortunes. The lines therefore are a subtle way of scorning people who rejoice at the misfortunes of others. As such, the masculine gender is depicted as philosophical about the principle of dualism where sorrow and joy coexist. This character trait is inculcated in the masculine gender due to his exposure to public spaces.

Another masculine gender's public space is revealed in the poem below in which the persona states that a man called Barang'a has gone to Nandi to harvest three granaries of maize.

Barang'a aziye Inandi
Barang'a aziye Inandi
Kogesa amaduma
Ivyage vivaga
Barang'a aziye Inandi
Barang'a aziye Inandi
Kogesa amaduma
Ivyage vivaga

Barang'a has gone to Nandi
Barang'a has gone to Nandi
To harvest maize
Three granaries
Barang'a has gone to Nandi
Barang'a has gone to Nandi
To harvest maize
Three granaries

The poem indicates that men among the Maragoli undertake economic crop farming far from Maragoli land that hardly practices large scale farming as seen in the three granaries of maize that Barang'a harvests from Nandi. This depicts the masculine gender's economic authority and power.

In the masculine gender poem below, the male persona defines his public space by stating that he is a leader.

Soloist: *Nise ul'ledi wa nise ul'ledi*
Chorus: *Aa anise ul'ledi*
Soloist: *Ooh*
Chorus: *Nise ul'ledi*
Soloist: *Oooh*
Chorus: *Nise ul'ledi wa valedanga havugwi*
Soloist: I, yes, I am the leader
Chorus: Aa I am the leader
Soloist: Ooh

Chorus: I am the leader

Soloist: Oooh

Chorus: I am the leader whom they dignify in the east

It is from the performance of the poem that the masculine gender's public space is demonstrated in his attainment of the position of a leader – an indication that he is now going to interact with many people as their leader. This is illustrated in the rod that each boy carried and rhythmically moved it up and down during the performance. The rod is a symbol of authority among the Maragoli. This rod enabled the researcher to merge visual and audio senses by linking it to the persona's words "I am the leader whom they dignify in the east" to understand that "east" is a symbol of new beginning for the persona because he has acquired a new social status as a leader.

Hunting as a masculine gender role underscores the masculine gender's public space as the following poem in which a man called Kirumbesi praises himself for killing a wild boar.

Vuhingu vwange vwita imbizi Kirumbesi x2
Vuhingu vwange vwita imbizi Kirumbesi go
Vuhingi vwange vwita imbizi Kirumbesi
Wowo singila Mungavo vayaye
Mwandenyyaa kwanigila uo uo uo
Vuhingu vwange vwita imbizi Kirumbesi

My bow killed the wild boar Kirumbesi x2
My bow killed the wild boar Kirumbesi
My bow killed the wild boar Kirumbesi
Wowo stand at Mungavo vayaye
Where I wanted to go uphill vayaye
Mwandenyyaa kwanigila uo uo uo
My bow killed the wild boar Kirumbesi

Self praise as a masculine gender issue that depicts the courageous nature of the masculine gender emanates from the persona's venturing into a public space to hunt and kill a wild boar. According to Lamb (2010:4) "Bandura noted that external,

environmental reinforcement was not the only factor to influence learning and behavior. He described intrinsic reinforcement as a form of internal reward, such as pride, satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment.” This position is relevant to the masculine gender’s performance of the poem which inculcates self-praise in the boys as an intrinsic reinforcement. Hence the idea being shaped in the young boys at a tender age is that they should boldly praise themselves for their achievements and successes; these are made possible due to their venturing into public spaces.

This section has indicated that the masculine gender spaces are mainly public thereby giving the masculine gender a lot of exposure. One poem showed that the male persona is going to M’mbo, a public space to complain to Kalasimba about the poisonous pumpkins Kalasimba planted that have killed his eleven children. The persona’s exposure enables him to philosophically observe that sorrow and joy co-exist in society. Another public space is exhibited in a poem in which a man called Barang’a goes to Nandi, a public space where he harvests three granaries of maize. This in turn shows his economic power. Another poem depicting the masculine gender’s public space is exhibited in a poem in which a man acquires the status of a leader due to venturing into public spaces. The masculine gender’s public space is depicted in a poem in which a man called Kirumbesi praises himself for his feat of killing a wild boar during hunting. This makes Kirumbesi to praise himself due to his interaction with public spaces.

4.4 Common Spaces for both Feminine and Masculine Genders in Maragoli

Children's Play Poetry

This section analyzes the poems that highlight spaces that both the feminine and masculine genders share. This demonstrates that formal education has enabled children of both genders to reinvent the traditional separate gender spaces by also inscribing new gender issues to the public masculine gender space through the inclusivity of the feminine gender.

Children of both genders show their keenness in their observation of the tortoise in their physical environment. The keen observation reveals that schooling has enabled girls to enter the public spaces reserved for the masculine gender. The children's space is demonstrated in the poem below in which they keenly observe the existence of the tortoise in the environment and notice that it feeds on mushrooms and that it moves by waddling.

Soloist: *Likudu l'lambaya*
Chorus: *Ee l'lambaya*
Soloist: *Lyambayanga nilienya sina*
Chorus: *Lyambayanga nilienya uvwova*

Soloist: *Likudu sesa*
Chorus: *Likudu sesa umusembe*
Soloist: *Likudu sesa*
Chorus: *Likudu sesa umusembe*

Soloist: A tortoise is waddling
Chorus: Ee it is waddling
Soloist: What is it looking for as it waddles
Chorus: It waddles as it looks for mushrooms

Soloist: Tortoise shake
Chorus: Tortoise shake the tail
Soloist: Tortoise shake
Chorus: Tortoise shake the tail

The children performed the poem by squatting and enacting the movement of a tortoise. Each child folded his or her hands and passed them behind the thighs and started moving like a tortoise to the rhythm of the song. When they sang the line, *Likudu sesa umusembe*, translated as, "Tortoise shake the tail", and they all rhythmically enacted the shaking of the tail by making up and down movements with their waists in their squatting positions. The poem reveals the fact that both boys and girls are observant. This is illustrated in the following lines:

Soloist: *Likudu l'lambaya*
Chorus: *Ee l'lambaya*
Soloist: *Lyambayanga nilienya sina*
Chorus: *Lyambayanga nilienya uvwova*

Soloist: A tortoise is waddling
Chorus: Ee it is waddling
Soloist: What is it looking for as it waddles
Chorus: It waddles as it looks for mushrooms

The lines above not only show that the tortoise moves by waddling but they also show that the tortoise eats mushrooms. The performance reveals that both genders are expected to know the fauna in their physical environment and what that fauna feeds on. Therefore, the children's performance of a tortoise straddling is a demonstration of the knowledge on the environment that they have acquired from their shared public space.

The children's uncertainty about the conflicting information they get about the society expects of them is resolved through an intra gender tug of war in a public space in the following poem.

Girls: *Ngolilo*
Boys: *Ndondo*
Girls: *Nugunani yigu*
Boys: *Ndondo*
Girls: *Gwamala avana*
Boys: *Ndondo*

Girls: *Gwenya kungumila*
Girls: *Ndondo*
Girls: *Ni kihambe*
Boys: *Ndondo*

Girls: *Baba alisema tuvute sigara*
Na mama akasema tusivute sigara
Hebu tujaribu
Moja mbili tatu

Girls: Ngolilo
Boys: Ndondo
Girls: And this ogre
Boys: Ndondo
Girls: Has finished the children
Boys: Ndondo
Girls: It wants to capture me
Boys: Ndondo
Girls: It is a tug of war
Boys: Ndondo
Girls:

Girls: Father said we should smoke cigarettes
And mother said we should not smoke cigarettes
Let us try
One two three
(Boys and girls pull each other in two queues in
a tug of war.)

School children performed the intra gender tug of war by forming separate gender queues. The lead girl in the girls' queue was the soloist. The poem was repeated three times. The first time both groups did not pull each other. The second time the boys fell back and so there was no pulling. The third time the song was sung, there was a tug-of-war and three boys were pulled to the girls' side, which ended the performance. The salient issues the performance addresses are the enormity of drug abuse and the conflicting information parents give their children. These issues are exemplified in the lines below.

Girls: *Nugunani yigu*
Boys: *Ndondo*
Girls: *Gwamala avana*

Girls: And this ogre
Boys: Ndondo
Girls: Has finished the children

Girls: Father said we should smoke cigarettes
And mother said we should not smoke cigarettes
Let us try
One two three
(Boys and girls pull each other in two queues in
a tug of war.)

The schema theory supports the enormity of drug abuse as shown in the Internet article entitled *Schema* (n.d: para 1, 3 &5),

schema is a mental structure we use to organize and simplify the world around us...

Schemas affect what we notice, how we interpret things and how we make decisions and act. They act like filters, accentuating and downplaying various elements... We even remember and recall things via schemas, using them to encode memories...

The fact that children use the augmentative form of the Lulogoli word for ogre as *ugunani*, when they address the ogre shows that the word has a subtext which is later unraveled in the lines where the children state that whereas their father told them to smoke cigarettes, their mother told them not to. The augmentative form of the ogre is therefore unfolded later in the performance to mean cigarette smoking – an unfolding that is linked to the performance of the second stanza of the poem. The lines also show that some parents socialize their young children to drug abuse. Since the children are left in a state of dilemma from the conflicting information their parents give them on whether or not to smoke cigarettes, they hold a tug of war to resolve the matter. The fact that three boys joined the girls' queue implies that the information from their mother that they should not smoke cigarettes is the correct one. As such, the girls' victory in the tug of war has determined the children's correct shared public space as one that is free from cigarette smoking.

In the following poem, both boys and girls suffer from mumps.

Soloist: <i>Ndendei</i>	Mumps
Chorus: <i>Hela ku mutembe</i>	Perish on the <i>mutembe</i>
Soloist: <i>Ndendei</i>	Mumps
Chorus: <i>Hela ku mutembe</i>	Perish on the <i>mutembe</i> X10
Soloist: <i>Ooooooh!</i>	Ooooooh!
Chorus: <i>Aaaaaah!</i>	Aaaaaah!

Mumps is a disease that is characterized by swelling of the glands under and in front of the ear and then progresses to the next ear causing the cheeks to swell. The poem shows how children suffering from mumps cope with it through a shared public space that trains children about the Maragoli community's beliefs that were demonstrated in the performance of the poem in which each child put a miniature bundle of wood on his or her head as they all sang and moved in a straight line towards the *mutembe*, the red poker. A female soloist then started singing the song while the rest of the performers responded as they moved according to the rhythm of the song towards the tree. When they reached the *mutembe*, they surrounded it in a circle and continued singing. The soloist exclaimed "Oooh!" which served as a cue because the rest of the performers exclaimed "Aaah!" and threw simultaneously threw their bundles of firewood on the tree then took off very fast without looking back. Considering that any child suffering from mumps has swollen painful cheeks owing to the swollen glands, the experience of running away from the *mutembe* very fast is a very painful one. Children would brave the action if only to be able to eat and play with fellow children after being healed. The fact that children escort a fellow child to the *mutembe* shows not only a sense of unity but also concern for one of them.

Mwanzi (a) (2006:7), states that “this song is used in the performance of ritual healing”. This introduces children to the Maragoli community’s belief systems because the tree is believed to cure mumps. It also introduces children to Maragoli superstitions since it is believed that any child who turns back after throwing the bundle of sticks on the *mutembe* will suffer from mumps if not already suffering or will not heal if already suffering. The *mutembe* among the Maragoli is associated with a lot of taboos and superstitions. For instance, the firewood from the tree is not supposed to be used in cooking because a calamity will befall the users. The tree is also not supposed to be cut down for the same reason. One of the subtexts of this performance is the fact that preservation of rare species of trees is done through superstitions.

The poem below was performed to highlight the public space among the Maragoli community’s cultural practice in the formation of heterosexual relationships.

Soloist: *Aadilewa*
 Chorus: *Aadilewa*
 Soloist: *Aadilewa*
 Chorus: *Aadilewa*
 Soloist: *Esinasi hamba mulina*
 Chorus: *Aadilewa*
 Soloist: *Nuhamba uhambe umulahi*
 Chorus: *Aadilewa*

Soloist: *Aadilewa*
 Chorus: *Aadilewa*
 Soloist: *Mugadili hamba mulina*
 Chorus: *Aadilewa*
 Soloist: *Na inze mbambe undi*
 Chorus: *Aadilewa*

Soloist: *Aadilewa*
 Chorus: *Aadilewa*
 Soloist: *Aadilewa*
 Chorus: *Aadilewa*
 Soloist: *Esinasi choose a friend*
 Chorus: *Aadilewa*

Soloist: If you choose, chose a good one
 Chorus: Aadilewa

Chorus: *Aadilewa*
 Soloist: *Aadilewa*
 Soloist: Mugadili choose a friend
 Chorus: *Aadilewa*
 Soloist: And I choose another
 Chorus: Aadilewa

The performance of the poem augmented its meaning. During the performance, boys and girls formed a circle and held each others' hands as they sang the antiphonal poem. They rhythmically moved their joined hands back and forth. In the first stanza, the female soloist called a girl by the name Esinasi and asked her to choose a good friend. Esinasi moved from her position in the circle to another section where she separated a boy and a girl holding hands and stood between them as she nodded at the boy. In the second stanza the soloist called a boy called Mugadili telling him to choose a friend while she, the soloist, chose another friend. Mugadili then went to separate two girls who were holding hands and stood between them as he nodded at the one to his left. The soloist also left the circle and separated a girl holding a boy's hand and stood between them, holding their hands as she nodded at the boy. The circle in the poem is a covert statement of the Maragoli community's ideology of heterosexual relationships. The poem is therefore an early preparation for boys and girls to form good heterosexual relationships which shows that when they are of age these heterosexual relationships will lead to marriage. As such, the shared public space in the poem underscores heterosexuality.

Another poem that also demonstrates the Maragoli community's formation of heterosexual relationships is exhibited in the poem below during the *isugudi* dance in which the camp is a common semi public space for both genders.

Soloist: *Nzia kolola isugudi ikambi*
Sieve ku
 Chorus: *Mmh mmh*
 Soloist: *Nzia kolola isugudi ikambi*
Sieve ku
 Chorus: *Mmh mmh*
 Soloist: *Nzia kolola isugudi ikambi*
Sieveku
 Chorus: *Mmh mmh*
hima nuvwuni
Vwanula
 Chorus: *Mmh mmh*
 Soloist: *Vuchima nuvwuni*
Vwanula
 Chorus: *Mmh mmh*

Soloist: I am going to watch the *sugudi* at the camp
 I may also dance
 Chorus: Mmh mmh
 Soloist: I am going to watch the *sugudi* at the camp
 I may also dance
 Chorus: Mmh mmh

Soloist: Ugali with minnows
 Is delicious
 Chorus: Mmh mmh
 Soloist: Ugali with minnows
 Is delicious
 Chorus: Mmh mmh

During the performance of the poem, boys and girls formed two lines – one for boys and one for girls and they moved together in a circular manner. Boys rhythmically lifted their left legs in the air and made circular movements with those legs. The performers danced in this pattern and then some dancers broke from their lines and danced freely to the rhythm of the poem. The girls rhythmically shook their shoulders and also broke from their line and started dancing free style. The poem shows that both boys and girls danced together at the camp, a semi public space to the traditional music of *isugudi* as part of their recreation. This is supported by Soost (2001: 2-3) who describes a place such as the camp where both genders go to dance in the statement that it:

is also a space in which men and women can meet casually.... The dancing scenes show also that in the semi-public space ...gender relations have to be negotiated as they are as undefined as the space that could provide the

rules.... The culturally defined rules of conduct between men and women are suspended in the semi-public space of the dancing....

In other words, men and women danced as couples, temporarily ignoring the community's cultural norms related to gender interactions such that certain levels of freedom were realized to the extent that some intimacy or closeness took place between the genders.

Implicit in the performance is the fact that that boys and girls participated in such dances because it was in semi public spaces that a young man would spot a young woman and send his relatives to the girl's village to secretly spy on her. He would then declare his wish to marry her if he was satisfied with the report about her. The performance is a demonstration of the Maragoli community's heterosexual relationships depicting how young men met young women as potential wives.

Common spaces between the feminine and masculine genders in Maragoli children's play poetry have been discussed in this section. The spaces were mainly private with an exception of one public and one semi public space, albeit with one serving as both private and semi public. The shared public space in one poem revealed boys and girls keenly observing a tortoise's waddling and its feeding on mushrooms. In another poem, parents interfered with children's public space by giving them conflicting information about cigarette smoking that led children into an intra gender tug of war to resolve the issue. The children asserted their public space as one that was cigarette free. One poem depicting the children's shared public space that was evident in the *mutembe*, believed to heal mumps depicted the Maragoli community's superstitions that children were introduced to. The shared public space as well as semi public space was evident in the Maragoli community's formation of heterosexual relationships underscored in two

poems. In the first poem, boys and girls formed a circle and each chose a friend of the opposite sex as the poem directed. Each gender formed a line and started singing and dancing towards the line of the opposite sex in the other poem. The poem demonstrated that the school as a public space enabled both genders to form heterosexual relationships. Lastly, in one poem both genders went to a camp – a semi public space and danced with the opposite sex as part of their recreation. This way, men spotted their future wives.

CHAPTER 5

GENDERED BODIES AND THEIR SUBVERSIVE SIGNIFICATION IN MARAGOLI CHILDREN'S PLAY POETRY

The Maragoli community views the human body as a biological entity that enters the world to procreate within the stipulated marriage norms with their accompanying gender issues so as to increase the progeny as well as have children born in chaste marriage relationships. However, the Maragoli experiences insidious resistance against social and cultural ideologies aimed at preserving the community with its offsprings. This resistance is depicted in the form of subversive signification of the spaces of the feminine and masculine genders as the poems discussed in this chapter reveal. The chapter shows that signification occurs in the process of encoding and decoding. In other words, the poems overtly or covertly depict the Maragoli community's teaching on social and cultural issues. However, these issues are subverted in the poems either implicitly or explicitly. Each subversive poem is therefore decoded or unraveled through the interplay of the social learning theory, semiotics and the schema theory. Most of the poems discussed in this chapter deal with subversions pertaining to sexual issues. The discussion of the chapter met the second objective of the study that sought to examine how gendered bodies and subversive signification are highlighted in Maragoli children's play poetry.

The poem below portrays the bodies of both girls and boys from an unstated place as being weak, yet the poem's subtext depicts the boys' and girls' subversion of the Maragoli community's private space of feminine virginity.

Soloist: *Vakana vu weneyo*

All: *Vakana vu weneyo*

Soloist: *Migongo migongo jituli*

Chorus: *Migongo migongo jituli*

Soloist: *Visindi visindi vituli*

Chorus: *Visindi visindi vituli*

Soloist: *Ndemela mushoro ndidile*

Chorus: *Ndemela mushoro ndidile*

Soloist: *Koko koko koko koko*

Chorus: *Koko koko koko koko*

Soloist: *Vayayi vu weneyo*

Chorus: *Vayayi vu weneyo*

Soloist: *Migongo migongo jituli*

Chorus: *Migongo migongo jituli*

Soloist: *Ndemela mushoro ndidile*

Chorus: *Ndemela mushoro ndidile*

Soloist: *Koko koko koko koko*

Chorus: *Koko koko koko koko*

The girls of that place

Soloist: The girls of that place

Chorus: The backs the backs are disjointed

Soloist: The backs the backs are disjointed

Chorus: The waists the waists are disjointed

Soloist: The waists the waists are disjointed

Chorus: Cut me a big walking stick to support myself

Soloist: Cut me a big walking stick to support myself

Soloist: *Koko koko koko koko*

Chorus: *Koko koko koko koko*

Soloist: The boys of that place

Chorus: The boys of that place

Soloist: The backs the backs are disjointed

Chorus: The backs the backs are disjointed

Soloist: Cut me a big walking stick to support myself

Chorus: Cut me a big walking stick to support myself

Soloist: *Koko koko koko koko*

Chorus: *Koko koko koko koko*

The poem shows that both boys and girls from an unstated place are lazy because they are asking for rough poles to support themselves. This shows that laziness is a vice among the Maragoli. Implicit in the line *Migongo migongo jituli*, translated as, “The backs the backs are disjointed” that refers to both boys and girls, is the fact that they get tired very easily after performing some chores or even after playing; yet at their age as teenagers they have a lot of energy to expend. However, one needs to decipher the subtext of the performance. The Lulogoli euphemistic word for haemorrhoids is *mugongo*. This therefore means that both boys and girls from an unstated place are suffering from haemorrhoids. The connotation here is that the boys’ and girls’ indulgence in sexual activities at an early age has caused them haemorrhoids. The whole stanza is satirizing boys and girls from an unstated place for their loose morals. This is an indication that by engaging in teenage sex, boys are intruding into the girls’ private space by defiling the girls’ bodies thereby subverting the Maragoli community’s cultural norm of feminine virginity and chastity which is a sexual offence among the Maragoli.

Women’s bodies are regarded as sacred among the Maragoli and so should not be defiled with sexual offences such as fornication and adultery. However, due to a young woman’s gullibility, she regrets the consequences of her subversion of her private space of virginity preservation through fornication in the poem below.

*Kibusi changada kilamboliza
Lwali ulugano lwa changuba
Chajila ninguliza mulingeti gwange
Lelo ngonanga ni nzeteji*

A cat cheated me it would woo me
It was a riddle it played on me
The reason I sold my blanket
Now I sleep while squatting

The cat, a character in oral narratives has been used as the *dramatis persona* in the poem to show that some human beings are insincere in matters pertaining to love relationships. The female persona in the poem has subverted the Maragoli community's ideology of feminine virginity by committing fornication, which is a sexual offence among the Maragoli. The meaning of the poem is that the persona is admitting that she fell into a trap a man set for her and now she has to face the consequences of her action of selling her "blanket". The persona's selling of her blanket connotes the loss of her virginity, yet virginity is one of the ideological pillars of good upbringing for pure families among the Maragoli. This is because a thin membrane like the smallest width of a blanket is the one that proves a woman's virginity. If the membrane, perceived as a blanket is missing, then the woman has been deflowered. Hence the poem is about a woman's loss of virginity as a result of premarital sex and the consequences such as an unwanted pregnancy. The female persona is therefore aware that her new status after premarital sex will be a child out of wedlock and the acquisition of a new sarcastic title, *kidwadi*, a Lulogoli word which refers to a woman who has a child outside wedlock. According to Bwonya, (1998: 49-50):

Such a girl or woman would either be married off to a widower or to an old manSuch a woman would not get a young man for a husband ...a woman who has given birth to a child or children outside marriage is regarded as an objectThis shows that such a woman is not respected. She is actually stigmatized.

It is probably due to the persona's awareness that she is now an object of ridicule since the Lulogoli affix *ki* in the word *kidwadi* denotes an object that she says:

Lelo ngonanga ni nzeteji
Now I sleep while squatting

This also shows that the persona is uncomfortable in her new status – a discomfort that probably causes her lack of sleep. Traditionally, any girl who bore a child out of wedlock among the Maragoli was forced to name the baby's father and would then be asked to marry the man. This is supported by Kabaji (2005: 47) that:

A girl who gets pregnant out of wedlock is a disgrace to her family. This type of pregnancy is called "*indasimba*", the pregnancy obtained in a boy's hut. A boy's hut is called *Isimba*. The pregnancy is an offence; The boy responsible for the pregnancy is compelled to marry the girl.

If the man refused to marry the girl, it was possible for her parents or brothers to send her away from home. The situation would be worsened if she bore a son because such a child had no inheritance in his maternal grandparents' home. The issues of defloration, pregnancy and a child out of wedlock explain why the persona is sleeping in a squatting position. It also demonstrates her readiness to flee or leave home at any time. As such, the poem has depicted that premarital sex could lead to unwanted pregnancies which might make girls to be sent away from their parents' home. The poem shows the female persona's realization that she has committed two sexual offences, namely loss of virginity and fornication and this explains why she is lamenting. In fact, a woman's loss of virginity among the Maragoli is something to be lamented and mourned and this is what the persona is doing.

Men are expected to get married and beget children with their wives as their biological role. One of the shared private spaces of both the feminine and masculine genders is love-making in marriage in which the Maragoli culture stipulates fidelity so that the women can beget legitimate children. However, some men subvert the Maragoli community's

cultural norm of fidelity in marriage by committing adultery with other married men's wives; yet it is a sexual offence for women to commit adultery among the Maragoli. The following poem shows a man's subversion of fidelity in marriage by committing adultery with the male persona's wife.

<i>Siolindanga vwila</i>	Can't you wait till nightfall
<i>Ukasomola amaduma</i>	Then you pull maize
<i>Siolindanga vwila</i>	Can't you wait till nightfall
<i>Ukasomolanga amaduma</i>	Then you pull maize

<i>Nakamuna iwe iwe</i>	You you Hare
<i>Nzogu yu guzumbuzu</i>	Elephant of the bushy tail
<i>Nakamuna iwe iwe</i>	You you Hare
<i>Nzogu yu guzumbuzu</i>	Elephant of the bushy tail

Although the poem refers to the squirrel as a thief who steals the persona's cobs of maize even in broad daylight, the squirrel is used as a *dramatis persona* to depict a man's complaint about another man who has an affair with his wife. The scornful attitude of male persona towards the affair is revealed in the following lines that show personification:

<i>Nakamuna iwe iwe</i>	You you squirrel
<i>Nzogu yu guzumbuzu</i>	Elephant of the bushy tail

Personification is used above to insult the squirrel for stealing the persona's maize. Although the personification in the lines above falls within a metaphor where the squirrel is said to be an elephant with a bushy tail, the personification is more pronounced than the metaphor. This is supported by Leech and Short (1981: 199) in their statement, "The personifying metaphor is so consistently employed that the 'metaphor' almost ceases to be the appropriate term". The personification shows that though the squirrel is a small animal, it causes destruction of immense proportions. Notably, Squirrel, is a cunning character in Maragoli oral narratives and has been used in this poem to refer to a man

who is cunning in the manner in which he seduces another man's wife. As such, to refer to a man who has an affair with another man's wife as a squirrel is to show that that man is cunning in the way he seduces the other man's wife. This seduction of a married woman might lead to pregnancy that shows she will bear an illegitimate child. Among the Maragoli, a boy child born out of an adulterous relationship has no inheritance in the home because the Maragoli community is a patrilineal one. The boy can neither be circumcised in that home nor be given a cow to pay as bride price for his wife when he becomes of age because he is not the man's biological son. In case of death, such a child cannot be buried in the homestead where he was born and raised because the woman's husband is not his biological father. If he is the woman's first born, he cannot build his *simba* (a young man's hut) before the bona fide son of the couple does so because he is not recognized as the couple's first born.

The subversion of the cultural norm of marital fidelity was highlighted in the insult the masculine persona hurls at the male adulterer in the line "Elephant of the bushy tail" that is unraveled to mean the adulterer's huge phallus. The insult reveals the man's lustful nature which is against the Maragoli community's cultural norms pertaining to fidelity. Therefore, apart from depicting theft as a vice, the poem shows that the Maragoli community does not condone infidelity in marriage. Among the Maragoli, the offspring in a marriage should be sired by the woman's husband. Hence the body of the adulterous woman in the illicit relationship is regarded as defiled. It is this defilement that the male persona, the husband of the adulterous woman is complaining about in the poem because

he knows that a child might be born out of such union and he might, unknowingly, raise the child.

In the following poem, the building of a fence around a homestead among the Maragoli community is discussed.

Soloist: *Vana vetu kwumbakila musala ki*

Chorus: *kwumbakila musangula*

Soloist: *Kwumbakila musala ki*

Chorus: *Kwumbakila musangula*

Soloist: *Lugaga lwa liga*

Chorus: *Lwa liga*

Soloist: *Lwa liga*

Chorus: *Lwa liga*

(Atula hagati vandi vamulonda ma vumwilanyia hagati kuli umuhambe.)

Soloist: Our siblings what tree did we use to build (the fence)

Chorus: We built using the *musangula*

Soloist: What tree did we use to build (the fence)

Chorus: We built using the *musangula*

Soloist: Is the fence fortified

Chorus: It is fortified

Soloist: Is the fence fortified

Chorus: It is fortified

(He escapes from the circle. Others run after him and bring him to the centre of the circle as a prisoner.)

The prohibition of incest is an intrusion into the feminine gender's private space as shown in the subtext of the poem. The subversion of the Maragoli community's incest prohibition is exhibited in the performance of the poem that was an antiphonal song in which a boy was the soloist. Both girls and boys formed a circle and held their hands together tightly. The male soloist was at the centre of the circle and he sang his lines as he used both his palms hitting at two tightly held hands with the intention of breaking through. He sang as he hit the first two tightly held palms of one boy and one girl and separated them. He then escaped from the circle and ran away very fast as other children pursued him, caught him and brought him back. He sat

at the centre of the circle while the girl whose palm was separated from a boy's became the next soloist but the performance came to an end at that time. Mwanzi (b) (2006: 58), commenting on this performance states that:

Having noticed the father's determination to make a strong, unbreakable fence round the home, each child participating in this play song has little difficulty in playing the role of a strong fence, nor does any of them have a problem playing the role of a fence breaker/destroyer. That it takes some time before the fence breaker can gain access through the fence and escape is testimony to the fact that both the stems (the children themselves) and the twined twigs and leaves (the chain of hands tightly held) have been strongly "constructed" and the children have noticed this. The community's awareness of, and response to issues of security have not escaped the notice of children....The enthusiasm with which the lead singer dramatizes the action of hurling him/herself onto the fence – his/her friends – in the effort to break through suggests how seriously the performers are taking the action of the play.

In other words, the poem is about children's keen observation of the gender roles of adults and their (the children's) enactment of those roles. The circle that the children formed is therefore imitative of the fence surrounding the homestead. The covert meaning of the poem lies in the escape of the destroyer from the homestead. The question here might be, "If the performers have built a strong and secure fence, how come the fence breaker has escaped from the homestead?"The response lies in the fact that this is a play poem performed by children who are not necessarily blood siblings. Hence the performance of the lines below depicts the Maragoli community's incest prohibition.

Soloist: *Vana vetu kwumbakilaa musala ki*
Chorus: *kwumbakilaa musangula*

Soloist: Our siblings what tree did we use to build (the fence)
Chorus: We built using the *musangula*

This is supported by Mwanzi b (2006: 59) who states that the lines above indicate that every child among the Maragoli is:

Socialized into regarding the girl or boy next door as a blood sibling, anyone who, on turning into an adult expected or had sex with a clansman/ clanswoman got banished. The experience of being forced out of one's home was as bitter as it was humiliating and devastating.

In short, the play poem socializes both genders to the fact that if they commit incest they will be banished from the community in their adulthood. Incest here extended to one's neighbours and clans' people. The formation of a circle in the children's performance demonstrates the Maragoli community's cultural norms prohibiting incest. The poem is therefore a performance of an ordinary child play showing the shared gender role of building of a fence using the *musangula*, yet underneath is an important Maragoli societal norm of prohibition of incest and the resultant punishment of banishment meted out on incest culprits. This incest prohibition is highlighted in the holding of each others' hands tightly to symbolize the kinship that binds the children. The child who broke loose from the circle had actually broken this Maragoli community's norm. This is highlighted in the soloist who was caught after escaping from the circle and brought back to the centre of the circle and made to sit down to await a verdict of banishment from the clan elders. The circle also signifies the arena known as *uluhya* in Lulogoli where meetings took place and cases were resolved. The tightly held hands did not only signify incest but also the Maragoli culture, traditions and customs that bound the community together as passed on by the sages. The breaking of the circle signified a wayward child who failed to adhere to the culture, traditions and customs of the community. Such people were normally brought back and faced the wrath of the community through the elders' council otherwise referred to as *uluhya*.

The poem below reveals the feminine gender's subversion of both virginity and marriage by wedding as the feminine gender's private space among the Maragoli.

*Igiliki ikumulanga yeyo
Igiliki ikumulanga yeyo
Ikumulanga sia iyali iyetu zerererere
Zie m'bolle baba na mama
Vakana vazia uvulina
Inyanza yavigalira zerererere*

That bull that is bellowing
That bull that is bellowing
It is bellowing exactly like the one that was ours
Go and tell father and mother
The girls who went to look for friendship
The lake has prevented them completely

The poem emanates from the fact that girls among the Maragoli were expected to be sociable by befriending girls far from their village. A girl would send word to her girlfriend informing her of the date of her visit and she would be escorted by some girls from her village on that day. The girls would be treated as guests and given gifts such as cereals in traditional baskets to take back home. The girl visiting would also reciprocate by inviting that girlfriend to her home and the girl would also be escorted to her girlfriend's home with food stuff in the baskets in which her girlfriend's parents had packed foodstuff for her. It was against such a backdrop that girls were trapped by men and so did not return home. The lake in the poem signifies loss of virginity and elopement because the young girls have subverted the Maragoli community's virginity requirement and have eloped since they have been deflowered. It is this poem that alerts a young man who has gone to a public space with the cattle to graze that the girls have disgraced their families by eloping. Marriage by elopement among the Maragoli is a sign of poor upbringing – an indication that the young women who have eloped were raised badly by their parents. The young women have therefore disgraced their parents by

subverting the feminine gender's private spaces of virginity preservation and marriage by wedding.

In yet another poem, the masculine gender subverts the Maragoli community's feminine virginity ideology which is the feminine gender's private space as signified in the performance of the poem below.

Ndi ndi
Siena mu ng'ono
Ndi ndi
Siena mu ng'ono
Kolole wa Aidi aziye
Aidi nu mulogi
Aidi nu mulogi
Yita Kikulenda

Ndi ndi
Step in the antelope's den
Ndi ndi
Step in the antelope's den
We may see where Aidi has gone
Aidi is a wizard
Aidi is a wizard
He killed Kikulenda

The subversion of the feminine gender's virginity requirement in the poem is demonstrated in the performance in which boys formed a semi circle with the right leg in front while the left one was somewhat stationary as they sang the choral poem above. The right leg of each boy tapped rhythmically to the ground as both hands moved musically together with the leg. The poem indicates that witchcraft is a vice since it reveals that Aidi used witchcraft to kill Kikulenda. This highlights the Maragoli community's belief in witchcraft. The meaning of the poem reveals that young men visited the hut where girls slept so as to woo them. This is unraveled from the fact that the Lulogoli word *mung'ono* means the antelope's den; it is also used as a subtext by the young people to mean a place where

people slept, in this case, the old woman's hut where girls slept. This subtext was only known to boys and girls but unknown to the adults. The poem that has a sad tone was aimed at distracting the attention of the old woman in whose hut young women slept so that they could sneak in and walk away with their girlfriends unnoticed. It was only the young women in the hut who understood the poem and covered up for the girls who had gone out with their boyfriends. The poem therefore not only shows the Maragoli community's belief in witchcraft, but it also has sexual innuendoes known only to the young people.

The meaning of the poem comes from the Maragoli community's cultural practice of young women sleeping in an old woman's hut, in most cases, a grandmother to some of the girls. The girls, through oral narratives and teachings, learnt the importance of virginity, marriage and motherhood. It is therefore ironical for young men to use a poem about death to sneak away with their girlfriends. The paradox is that it was during such night prowls on young women by men that some of the girls lost their virginity yet this was a woman's pride and symbol of her chastity. A woman's moment of glory was seen on her wedding night when she was declared a virgin as stated by Kabaji (2005:43) who asserts that:

One of the most treasured aspects is virginity. A girl is expected to remain a virgin until she gets married. This demand was not put on the male children. Great honour was bestowed on the girl and her family if she is found to be a virgin at marriage. Her parents would receive gifts of good will from their son-in-law. Virginity was, at the covert level, the symbol that life had been preserved, that relatives had preserved the sanctity of human reproduction. A virgin bride is the greatest glory and crown to her parents, husband and relatives.

However, a woman who did not resist the men's night prowls and yielded to her boyfriend's whims was deflowered and therefore dead to the important feminine gender's

private space of virginity. As such, whereas men, who were not expected to prove their virginity, strove to subvert the Maragoli community's ideology of virginity, a woman was expected to resist the subversion or else face the shame of on her wedding day when it was discovered not to be a virgin.

In another poem below, the masculine gender's subversion of the feminine private space of virginity is underscored.

Soloist: <i>Ni kihambe</i>	It is a tug of war
Chorus: <i>Eee</i>	Ee
Soloist: <i>Ni kihambe</i>	It is a tug of war
Chorus: <i>Eee</i>	Eee
Soloist: <i>Nyola mundu ng'usa</i>	Get a person and pull
Chorus: <i>Eee</i>	Eee
Soloist: <i>Ni kihambe</i>	It is a tug of war
Chorus: <i>Eee</i>	Eee
Soloist: <i>Ni kihambe</i>	It is a tug of war
Chorus: <i>Eee</i>	Eee
Soloist: <i>Nyola mundu ng'usa</i>	Get a person and pull
Chorus: <i>Eee</i>	Eee
(<i>Vang'usana</i>)	(They pull each other)

The subversion of the poem above was shown during the performance of the intra gender tug of war comprising two queues – one for boys and the other one for girls. The leading person in each queue determined the direction that the queue took. The lead boy in the boy's queue was the soloist. The children rhythmically went zigzag in their queues until they faced each other and members of each queue pulled members of the other queue. The game ended soon after they started pulling one another. Culturally, rape is a sexual offence among the Maragoli. The masculine gender's intention to rape the feminine gender is depicted to show that the female has turned down his sexual advances and so he tries to rape her because his ego is hurt. The rape is demonstrated in the lines below.

Soloist: <i>Ni kihambe</i>	It is a tug of war
Chorus: <i>Eee</i>	Eee

Soloist: *Nyola mundu ng'usa*
Chorus: *Eee*

Get a person and pull
Eee

In other words, rape is depicted in the masculine persona's assertive statement "Get a person and pull", which means he should take the woman by force which leads to rape.

The feminine subject is supposed to resist as exhibited in the performance of a tug of war.

The following poem also depicts the masculine gender's attempts to subvert incest prohibition by intruding into the feminine gender's private space in a nuclear family.

Soloist: *Nziye kolola*
All: *Mmmh*
Soloist: *Mwana wa mama*
All: *Mmmh*
Soloist: *Cheza Kibaringo*
Cheza Kibaringo
All: *Mmmh*

Soloist: *Nziye kolola*
All: *Mmmh*
Soloist: *Mwana wa mama*
All: *Mmmh*
Soloist: *Cheza Kibaringo*
Cheza Kibaringo
All: *Mmmh*
Soloist: *Cheza Kibaringo*
Ni kihambi
Ni kihambi
(Vang'usa)

Soloist: I have gone to see
All: *Mmmh*
Soloist: Mother's child
All: *Mmmh*
Soloist: Play the Baringo way
Play the Baringo way
All: *Mmmh*

Soloist: I have gone to see
All: *Mmmh*
Soloist: Mother's child
All: *Mmmh*
Soloist: Play the Baringo way
Play the Baringo way

All: Mmmh
Soloist: It is a tug of war
It is a tug of war
(They pull)

The masculine gender's subversion of incest prohibition among biological siblings was signified in the performance of the intra gender tug of war. The boys and girls formed two separate queues and sang the antiphonal song in which one girl was the soloist. The two genders pulled each other and both boys and girls fell back wards and ended the game. The words "Mother's child" mean a biological sibling, in this case a brother whose sister has gone to visit but the brother tries to rape her; this indicates that the female persona's brother subverts the Maragoli community's sexual offence of rape by trying to rape his sister who resists it. The poem indicates that the feminine gender is in danger even from male relatives who attempt to intrude into her private space of chastity by attempting to defile her; yet defilement is one of the sexual offences among the Maragoli.

This chapter has shown that the human body is a gendered one that subverts the Maragoli community's norms pertaining to sex and marriage. One poem has signified the bodies of both boys and girls as being involved in teenage sex thereby subverting the Maragoli community's virginity and chastity norms for girls. Another poem has indicated a young woman's subversion of the Maragoli community's ideology of virginity by committing fornication, which is a sexual offence that has led to her defloration. The woman is aware that the consequences of her fornication are a child out of wedlock and the possibility of her being chased from her parents' home for shaming them. In another poem, an adult male subverts the Maragoli community's cultural norm of fidelity in marriage by committing adultery with another man's wife. Infuriated by this action, the male persona

laments and insults the man who has committed adultery with his wife. Incest, one of the Maragoli community's sexual offences is subverted by both genders in their childhood and this offence haunts them in adulthood when the incest offenders are banished from the community in one poem. In another poem, the feminine gender subverts two feminine private spaces – virginity and marriage by wedding. This is revealed when all the girls who escorted one of them to visit her girlfriend far from their village do not return home because they have all been deflowered and so have eloped.

The masculine gender's subversion of the feminine gender's private space of virginity is also depicted in a poem in which men stealthily visit an old woman's hut where girls sleep at night and walk away with their girlfriends. The girls who do not resist the men end up being deflowered and therefore dead to their private space of preservation of virginity. This death is what is being mourned in the poem. Another poem also depicts the masculine gender's subversion of the Maragoli community's cultural norms about sexual offences in which the masculine gender wants to rape the feminine gender and deflower her because she has turned down his sexual advances. This is an intrusion into the woman's private space. In a similar poem, a brother subverts the norm of incest prohibition among siblings and tries to rape his sister who resists the rape. This too, is an *intrusion into the feminine gender's private space.*

CHAPTER 6

GENDER, STYLE AND LANGUAGE IN MARAGOLI CHILDREN'S PLAY

POETRY

6.1 Introduction

Children's play poetry is performed from a gender perspective because children, being the future adults of a community learn their community's gender ascriptions mainly through poetry in which they enact certain actions with a view to showing how the children perceive gender spaces and how these spaces impact on the community's social, cultural, economic and political issues. These issues are not only crafted in the poems thereby highlighting style but are also crafted using language in a special way. The chapter is divided into two broad sections – each of which underscores how gender spaces are expressed stylistically and linguistically in the children's play poetry. These two broad sections are: 6.2 Style in Maragoli Children's Play Poetry and 6.3 Language in Maragoli children's Play Poetry. The discussion of this chapter met the third objective of the study that sought to investigate how gender, style and language are portrayed in Maragoli children's play poetry.

6.2 Style in Maragoli Children's Play Poetry

The style discussed in this section shows how gender spaces are articulated in allusion, ideophones and repetition.

6.2.1 Allusion

Allusion, the indirect reference to something or an object is used in three poems. Each of the three poems discussed in this section alludes to a different Maragoli oral narrative.

The feminine gender's role of fetching firewood as a scripted public space is juxtaposed with the masculine gender's public space depicting his role of taking livestock to graze among the Maragoli as exhibited in the poem below that alludes to a Maragoli oral narrative.

*Umwayi wetu wakwaleta
Asundanga mbuli na ng'ombe sssssss
Umwayi wetu wa kwaleta
Umwayi wetu wa kwaleta
Alamala ng'ombe na mbuli sssssss*

The herdsman that we hired
Moves goats and cattle sssssss
The herdsman that we hired
The herdsman that we hired
Will finish cattle and goats sssssss

The narrative that the poem above alludes to is about a woman who went to fetch firewood and found a boy in the forest. Since she had no son to herd her livestock, she tied the boy together with her firewood and came home with him. He herded her livestock so well that villagers also entrusted him with their livestock. He faithfully herded all the livestock till one day he drove large herds of cattle, sheep and goats away. Some young men saw him from afar driving the livestock and sung the poem to alert the livestock owners. The allusion serves to warn people; especially the women whose scripted public space makes the woman in the narrative to take a boy whose origin she does not know, to be wary of strangers that they meet. The poem not only underscores patriarchy that demonstrates the importance of a son in a family but it also shows that the

masculine gender's public space depicted in the role of taking livestock to graze indicates his economic power.

The scripted feminine gender's public space is also demonstrated in the poem below in which the feminine gender's character traits of being foolish and gullible are depicted in the allusive poem below.

*Vakana vatano
Vazia kotenya
Vanyola lilina lye liaga
Vavola mulala yingila mu woi
Naye yingila mu vwangu
Wooi wooi wooi wooi kulelo nangole ndi go
Wooi wooi wooi wooi kulelo nangole ndi go*

Five girls
Went to fetch firewood
They found an anthill
They told one of them get in quickly
And she got in quickly
Wooi wooi wooi wooi so what shall I do now
Wooi wooi wooi wooi so what shall I do now

The poem alludes to an oral narrative where five girls went to fetch firewood in the forest and they found an anthill. They asked one girl to get in. When she got in, the others closed the anthill, left her there and went home with their firewood. The girl then started crying and as she sang the poem. The feminine gender's gullibility is evident in her yielding to the request of fellow girls without thinking about the consequences of quickly getting inside an anthill. The scripted public space into which the five girls venture is the thicket, bush or forest where they leave one of them in the anthill in which they have asked her to enter shows that owing to the feminine gender's confinement to private or domestic spaces, their ventures into scripted public spaces are often disastrous. This is caused by the cultural inhibition of the feminine gender's exposure to public spaces.

The Maragoli community's cultural practice of arranging marriages for the feminine gender is depicted in the following allusive poem that exhibits a shared public space of fetching firewood.

Man: *Mulina wange ika*
Mulina wange ika
Kuzie kotema u ba!
Kotema u ba! Kuli kwatema dalinda

Woman: *Yee mulina ndika*
Yee mulina ndika
Kuzie kotema u ba!
Kotema u ba! kuli kwatema dalinda

Man: My friend climb down
My friend climb down
We may go to cut ba!
To cut ba! The way we cut dalinda

Woman: Yes friend I'll climb down
Yes friend I'll climb down
We may go to cut ba!
To cut ba! The way we cut dalinda

The poem alludes to a Maragoli oral narrative about a young woman of marriageable age whose parents organized for her to get married to a man she did not love. On realizing her parents' determination to marry her off to that man, she cut a big barbed stick and climbed the tip of a huge tree where she stayed hungry for many days. She licked dewdrops in the mornings to sustain her. She became so emaciated that it was feared she would die. Her relatives came to the tree but could not get to her because she produced the barbed stick to attack them. Each relative sang the song substituting the word "friend" with the word that stated his or her relationship with the young woman. The aunts, uncles, cousins, siblings, parents and friends sang for her to climb down but for each she retorted by mimicking their song scornfully using ideophones thus:

Nyo nyo nyo nyonyo
Nyo nyo nyo nyonyo

Nyonyo nyo nyonyo nyo nyo
Nyonyo nyo nyonyo nyonyonyonyo nyonyonyo

However, when the young woman's lover came and sang the song, she responded by singing that she would climb down and she did. This oral narrative according to Bwonya (1998: 101) emanates from the Maragoli cultural requirement that a young woman of marriageable age was expected to consent to a marriage proposal from a man she had never met. The allusion shows the persistence of the young woman enables her to circumvent the Maragoli cultural stipulation of an arranged marriage by being allowed to marry her lover. The ironic twist of events is shown in the woman's subversion of the Maragoli community's expectation of a woman to get married to a man she does not love by climbing a tall tree and going on hunger strike until her lover comes for her. This allusion highlights the feminine gender's contestation of her subordination underscored in the Maragoli community's domestic gender space assigned to her that does not allow her to have a say in the choice of a husband. The allusion therefore demonstrates how the feminine gender has subtly subverted this Maragoli feminine cultural norm thereby showing the power of women because they can subvert cultural norms that they feel are insensitive to the feminine gender without changing those norms. The poem is however, understood to be a call and response. This is supported by Njogu (2004: 123) that, "Conventionally, when a poem has been addressed to someone, the recipient is supposed to respond with a poem." This is why the female subject poetically responds to the male persona's address by stating that she will climb down because he has come for her and she actually climbs down. The response is an affirmation of her subversion of an arranged marriage. The allusive poem therefore highlights that the feminine cultural

practice of compliance with an offensive practice can be insidiously circumvented without causing a stir.

This section has shown that some children's play poems allude to Maragoli oral narratives in which spaces for the genders are exhibited. Two allusive poems have shown that the feminine gender's public spaces are scripted to conform to their societal gender ascriptions. In the first poem, an old woman who has gone to fetch firewood brings a strange boy home to take her livestock to graze. In the other poem, five girls go to fetch firewood and ask one of them to enter an anthill which they close and leave her for dead. These two allusive poems indicate that the feminine gender's interactional space is mainly domestic. Besides, the public spaces assigned to her are scripted thereby denying her opportunity to study human behaviour and detect people's whims so as to know how to deal with the people they interact with in public spaces. The last allusive poem depicts the masculine gender's marriage proposal as a cultural requirement and the feminine gender's acceptance of the proposal in conformity to the cultural norm. However, the ironic twist of events depicts the female gender's contestation of the subordinating cultural norm assigned to her in her subversion of this norm by going on a hunger strike till she is allowed to marry her lover. The poem reveals that the feminine gender has the ability to change cultural norms that disparage women without raising eyebrows.

6.2.2 Ideophones

An ideophone, according to Sunkuli and Miruka (1990: 40) is, "A sound expression that conveys, for the purpose of intensifying ideas of colour, manner, smell, silence, action,

posture, state....” Four poems with ideophones exhibiting gender spaces are used in this section to depict a hen’s brooding on eggs till they hatch, cutting firewood, a cat licking cancerous feet, and the foul smell of an elephant’s fart.

The feminine gender’s scripted public space is exhibited using ideophones in the poem below showing a young woman’s vulnerability to the wiles of men when she is carrying out her feminine gender role of fetching firewood from the forest.

Ndazia kotenya m’mlitu
Kanyonyi ka manani kananga nziriri nziriri
Muhonja Muhonja nziriri nziriri
Genda vwangu
Muhonja

I went to fetch firewood in the forest
A bird of ogres called me *nziriri nziriri*
Muhonja Muhonja *nziriri nziriri*
Walk quickly
Muhonja

The ideophones *nziriri nziriri* describe the actual sound made by a male human “predator” that preys on the female persona fetching firewood. The fact that the “bird of ogres” calls her by name shows it has a melodious voice that distracts her from her role of fetching firewood. The ideophones show that it is when a young unmarried woman leaves her domestic space to her gender scripted public space that men try to take advantage of her. Through juxtaposition and intertextuality whereby a bird and ogres that are characters in oral narratives are used show that the philosophical acts of benevolence and malevolence co-exist. This is because the bird in oral narratives is a benevolent character that signifies the rescue of besieged characters or characters in distress. The ogre in oral narratives is malevolent since it symbolizes evil, cruelty, destruction, sadism and greed. The ideophones therefore caution young girls to desist from yielding to calls

from strangers whose voices are melodious and therefore appealing yet these strangers are ill intentioned.

Auditory ideophones in the poem below explicitly depict the shared domestic space for feminine and masculine genders as exhibited in the performance of the poem by both genders in which ownership of property such as chicken is depicted.

*Ngoko yange yatela mavuyu
Kiduku ngongo ngongo
Kindu chatula Ivulaya
Kizulanga zwi kandi zwi
Ngongo ngongo
Yaaluli!*

My hen laid eggs
The clutch *ngongo ngongo*
Something emerged from Europe
Screaming *zwi* again *zwi*
Ngongo ngongo
It has hatched!

The ideophones in the poem highlight the relationship between children's observation of a hen's actions of laying eggs and nesting till they hatch with the unstoppable incoming technological innovations from Europe that produce different deafening sounds. This is exemplified by the schema theory in which Vinogradovas (2002:1) states that the "schema theory" approach ... shows that the construction of new worlds in literary texts is based not on various kinds of similarities among different schemata but on the substitution of a schema for a completely new one." As such, the ideophones *ngongo ngongo* that are both auditory and tactile emphasize a hen's repeated action of using its beak to peck the eggs so that the chicks come out during hatching. These ideophones are juxtaposed with the inevitability of the incoming western culture such as technological innovations that produce different sounds *Zwi* and *Ngongo ngongo* – all of which are

auditory images. The interplay between technological innovations from Europe and the hatching of a hen's eggs into chicks is demonstrated in the poem. These auditory ideophones enabled the children, both boys and girls to cope with new unfamiliar sounds from European machines by associating the new sounds with those they were already familiar with, in this case, the sounds by a hen pecking at the eggs in the nest. The poem was composed when colonialists settled in Maragoli as seen in the line "Something emerged from Europe" to show that something came from Europe in the past. The fact that the poem was performed long after Europeans settled in Maragoli and other parts of Kenya reveals the staying power of poetry.

Fetching firewood, a public space for both genders leads to the suffering of boys and girls from tropical cancers. This is revealed through auditory ideophones that describe the sound made by flies buzzing and the kinetic imagery describing the sound made by the flies landing on the children's cancerous feet in the poem below.

*Kibusi chamena malenge matiginyu
Nenyama mukitambaya
Nezinji nizivuya ku
Kuru kuru kutu*

A cat licked legs with ankles
With meat in a piece of cloth
With flies abuzz on it
Kuru kuru kutu

The poem shows that when children suffered from tropical cancers, they bandaged the wounds by tying pieces of cloth on them to keep the flies off. It was common for cats to lick such wounds thereby aggravating the already excruciating pain. It is therefore because of this that children developed coping mechanisms by turning a painful experience into a play poem. It is these wounds about which the children compose the poem. The ideophone

kuru kuru imitates the sound of the movement of flies as they buzz around the cancerous wounds on children's feet while the kinetic image *kutu* imitates the sound made by the flies as they land on the children's cancerous and painful feet.

A sister-in-law, who, according to her husband's siblings, takes too long in the scripted public space for women – the road –, is not spared scorn from her sisters and brothers-in-law in the ideophones *susu su* and *Ao* as the following mixed gender poem shows.

Soloist: *Susu su*
Chorus: *Ao*
Soloist: *Susu su*
Chorus: *Ao*
Soloist: *Uwinya vwenzogu*
Chorus: *Ao*
Soloist: *Vwagodoma*
Chorus: *Ao*
Soloist: *Mulamwa ahonganga kunzira*
Chorus: *Mulamwa ango ango*
Mulamwa ango ango
Mulamwa ango ango

Soloist: *Susu su*
Chorus: *Ao*
Soloist: *Susu su*
Chorus: *Ao*
Soloist: *The fart of an elephant*
Chorus: *Ao*
Soloist: *Is bent*
Chorus: *Ao*
Soloist: *Sister-in-law takes long on the road*
Chorus: *Sister-in-law ango ango*
Sister-in-law ango ango
Sister-in-law ango ango

The poem abounds in olfactory imagery in the ideophones *susu su* that concretizes the foul smell of the elephant's fart while *Ao* is an auditory ideophone that depicts the resentful attitude of young boys and girls towards their sister-in-law. This resentful attitude emanates from the fact that a sister-in-law among the Maragoli is never fully

accepted in the home she is married because she is regarded as a stranger. In other words, it takes quite a while for a sister-in-law to be fully accepted in her marital home.

The meaning of the ideophones in the poem above reveals that both boys and girls scorn their sister-in-law because of her behaviour of being a gossip as seen in the hyperbole "The fart of an elephant" that signifies gossip. Both boys and girls compare their sister-in-law's gossip to an elephant's fart because she says many nasty things about the family she is married to.

The four poems highlighting ideophones depicted in this section have revealed gender spaces. To begin with, the feminine gender's scripted public spaces are discussed in two poems. The female persona goes to fetch firewood in the forest in one poem where she is confronted by a male subject whose tantalizing voice is intended to distract her so that he can take advantage of her. Another poem in which the feminine gender's scripted public space is exhibited using ideophones is one in which the plural feminine and masculine personae show their scornful attitude towards their sister-in-law who is a gossip. A shared domestic space in which children's ownership of property, their acceptance of change demonstrated in the different sounds from machinery from Europe is underscored using ideophones. The suffering of boys and girls from tropical cancers on their feet is revealed using ideophones in which the actual sounds made by flies as they hover around the cancerous feet and the sound the flies make as they land on the feet indicate the intensity of the pain the children feel.

6.2.3 Repetition

Repetition as a feature of style achieves effects such as urgency, excitement and anxiety as exhibited in the selected poems. This is supported by Okpewho's (1992: 49) position, "When we see repetition in the text of an oral performance, we may wish to ask questions about the manner in which the text was performed" This means that repetition augments issues of performance. Gill (1995: 92) also states, "When a poet uses a word more than once, you should concentrate on it because it could reveal something of importance about the poem as a whole." This position is true of Maragoli children's play poems as demonstrated in the discussion on the types of repetition because the repetition in the poems exhibit gender spaces, underscore new knowledge, attitude and children's coping mechanisms. The specific types of repetition that this section discusses are: anaphora, epistrophe, epizeuzis anadiplosis and symploce – each of which is a strategy used for enhancing meaning and singability of the poem.

6.2.3.1 Anaphora

Anaphora, the repetition of a line or phrase at the beginning of successive lines in a poem is shown in the poems analyzed in this section to emphasize the need for privacy for boys and girls, the cultural practice of fencing and moving a landmark and death due to famine.

Private spaces during separate gender play are highlighted using anaphora evident in the separate trees for boys and girls to use while playing among the Maragoli as the lines below demonstrate.

Nina gwavakana nazini

Nina gwa vayayi masala

Climb the one for girls nazini
Climb the one of boys masala

The anaphora therefore underscores the need for both boys and girls to play separately.

Whereas boys were culturally allowed to climb trees as seen in the word *masala*, meaning

“yes”, girls were prohibited from climbing trees as revealed in the word *nazini*, meaning

“no”. Girls were not allowed to climb trees so as not to expose their private parts to the

boys in conformity with the Maragoli culture that prevented children from exposing their

private parts to the opposite sex while playing. The anaphora highlights the need for

separate private spaces for females and males. This separate gender play is supported by

Coltrane (1998: 121) who states that:

According to the gender schema theory, when the culture is ... stereotyped according to gender, children become gender schematic without even realizing it. They develop networks of associations that guide their perceptions, so that they come to see the world in gender-polarized ways Gender polarization organizes the daily lives of children the moment they are born....The overriding importance of the male-female distinction is communicated to children in the different ways adults talk to boys and girls, the different social experiences adults provide children, and the different expectations adults have for them. Children learn that virtually everything in their world can and should be classified according to gender.

The anaphora therefore makes a distinction between the separate private gender spaces depicted in the poem.

The masculine gender's domestic space is exhibited in his demarcation of the boundary of a piece of land as one of his cultural roles in the poem below in which the female persona uses anaphora in her statement that her husband Keverenge died due to moving a land mark.

Keверenge keверenge
Keверenge yali musakulu wange
Niyagenda ku za ndi kandi ndi
Ndahula vulahi
Keверenge keверenge
Keверenge yali ni kituva chiche
Yikala kuza ndi kandi ndi
Keверenge keверenge
Keверenge musakulu wange
Lugaga yilu lugaga yilu
Lugaga yilu lwita keверenge
Keверenge yali ni kinagozi yatula nacho
Nazia natema yaho kandi yaho
Keверenge keверenge
Keверenge musakulu waa

Keверenge Keверenge
Keверenge was my husband
When he walked like this and like this
I used to feel good
Keверenge Keверenge
Keверenge had his three legged stool
He used to sit on it like this and like this
Keверenge Keверenge
Keверenge my husband
This fence this fence
This fence killed Keверenge
Keверenge had euphorbia and left with it
He went and cut here and here again
Keверenge Keверenge
Keверenge my husband

The feminine persona's immense love for Keверenge her husband is shown in the lines below using anaphora.

Keверenge keверenge
Keверenge musakulu wange
Lugaga yilu lugaga yilu
Lugaga yilu lwita keверenge

Keверenge Keверenge
Keверenge my husband
This fence this fence
This fence killed Keверenge

Anaphora, evident in the repetition of Keверenge, a man's name among the Maragoli, the persona's husband, underscores the inevitability of the death of a beloved husband and the onset of widowhood. By giving prominence to the fence through anaphora, the lines

above show that Keverenge dies due to moving the land mark of the fence which is a taboo among the Maragoli.

A grief-stricken woman mourns the death of her child who succumbed to hunger – indicating domesticity of the feminine gender space as highlighted through anaphora in the following poem.

Inzara
Inzara kandu kavi
Inzara
Inzara Kanduu kavi

Kanduu kavi kita mwanage
Mwanange munwa gwizu uluvi
Gwizu uluvi kale kale
Kalindi mbole kalanda
Kalindi mbole kalanda
Mwana wa mama kalanda

Hunger
Hunger the bad thing
Hunger
Hunger is a bad thing

The bad thing killed my child
My child the mouth is full of bitterness
It is full of bitterness for very long
Then allow me to say Kalanda
Then allow me say Kalanda
Mother's child Kalanda

The woman in the poem is extremely bitter at the death of her child and she tells someone called Kalanda to let her lament and pour out her bitterness due to her grief. The use of anaphora is evident in the following lines.

Inzara
Inzara kandu kavi

Hunger
Hunger is a bad thing

Famine is foregrounded in the use of anaphora as a threat to the survival of the Maragoli community in the lines above because it causes death as depicted in the demise of the female persona's child. The woman's anaphoric statement stems from the fact that she was pregnant, suffered all the pregnancy related complications and the birth of the child was her source of joy and maternal accomplishment. Her child's death due to hunger reveals her inability to provide food for the family as her feminine gender role. Anaphora therefore underscores her feelings of bitterness.

The discussion of anaphora above has demonstrated that there were separate private gender spaces during play. While boys were culturally permitted to climb trees during play, girls were not. Anaphora in another poem has highlighted a man's breaking of a taboo that led to his death causing his wife grief. Another poem that emphasizes a woman's suffering and grief through the use of anaphora shows her feelings of bitterness due to her child's death caused by hunger.

6.2.3.2 Epistrophe

Epistrophe, a feature that uses repetition at the end of successive lines especially in a poem, is evident in the poems analyzed in this section showing how gender spaces are foregrounded.

The transformation of the woman's body from a private to a public space that is not scripted has led to prostitution as highlighted using epistrophe in the following poem.

Soloist: Mwana wange Kageha
Chorus: Ee ee Kageha
Soloist: Gunani gwamila Kageha
Chorus: Ee ee Kageha

Soloist: My child Kageha
Chorus: Ee ee Kageha
Soloist: An ogre has swallowed Kageha
Chorus: Ee ee Kageha

The epistrophe, evident in the word Kageha, a woman's name among the Maragoli, underscores prostitution, which is a sexual offence in the community. This is revealed in *gunani*, the augmentative form of *linani*, the Lulogoli word for "ogre". The epistrophe means that the female persona, Kageha's mother is stating that her daughter has been consumed by evil. This is because the ogre is a symbol of evil and greed in Maragoli oral narratives. The fact that Kageha's mother says that Kageha has been swallowed by the ogre shows that Kageha, driven by greed, has embraced wayward behavior – the worst being prostitution in return for material goods. The expression "be swallowed by an ogre" in Lulogoli when used in reference to the feminine gender shows a deviation from the Maragoli cultural norm of chastity. This position is supported by Coy (n.d: 5) that "A gendered division of labour is perhaps the most straightforward, since prostitution disproportionately involves men buying access to women's bodies."

Epistrophe in the poem below foregrounds the masculine gender's public space evident in his action of returning home from grazing sheep, goats and cows.

*Muhonja Muhonja
Ndula kwaya Muhonja
Na magondi Muhonja
Ne zimbuli Muhonja
Ne zing'ombe Muhonja,
Muhonja witu muhonja*

Muhonja Muhonja
I have been grazing Muhonja
And the sheep Muhonja
And the goats Muhonja
And the cows Muhonja
Our Muhonja Muhonja

The epistrophe evident in Muhonja, a woman's name among the Maragoli, enhances the meaning of the poem. This is illustrated in the juxtaposition of the masculine gender's public space where he takes livestock to graze with that of the feminine gender's domestic space of staying within the confines of the homestead where the male persona finds her when he announces his return.

The analysis of epistrophe in this section has foregrounded gender spaces. In one poem, epistrophe has underscored prostitution as revealed by the female persona's observation that her daughter, who has ventured into a public space, has become a prostitute; yet prostitution is a sexual offense among the Maragoli. In another poem, epistrophe highlights the juxtaposition of the masculine gender's public space with the feminine gender's domestic space as depicted in the masculine gender's return with livestock to the homestead where the feminine gender is.

6.2.3.3 Epizeuzis

Epizeuzis, a feature that repeats a word or phrase without any break is analyzed in three poems emphasizing gender spaces in this section.

The masculine gender's domestic space is highlighted in the poem below using epizeuzis.

Eng'ombe nilimanga
Ekwesa akwesa
Eng'ombe nilimanga

When a cow is ploughing
It drags it drags
When a cow is ploughing

The epizeuzic line “It drags it drags” is foregrounded to show that an ox drags the plough for long before one notices the area it has ploughed. It also emphasizes the societal ascription of the responsibility bestowed upon the masculine gender in fending for their families.

The Maragoli community’s heterosexual relationships that children learn early in life are stressed using epizeuzis depicting a public space for both genders is underscored in the poem below.

Soloist: *Esinasi hamba mulina*
Chorus: *Aadilewa*
Soloist: *Nuhamba uhambe umulahi*
Chorus: *Aadilewa*

Soloist: Esinasi choose a friend
Chorus: Aadilewa
Soloist: If you choose choose a good one
Chorus: Aadilewa

The epizeuzic word “choose” in the lines above depicts heterosexuality as one of the Maragoli community’s ideological pillars that ensures the community’s survival. The foregrounding teaches the children to make personal choices early.

Epizeuzis in the poem below highlights the feminine gender’s error of refusal to give her child food in her domestic space as demonstrated in her role of cooking.

Umukere yadeka maganda inyingu du
Yima umwana weve mukogoti
Ikinanda kiza kimbolera
Okoli magosa magosa madamanu

An old woman cooked a pot full of beans
Refused to give her last born child any
A record player came and told her
You have erred erred badly

Selfishness as a vice among the Maragoli is also highlighted using epizeuzis to scorn the old woman and also to prick her conscience.

Epizeuzis analyzed in this section has revealed gender spaces. In one poem, epizeuzis has underpinned the masculine gender's domestic space that involves dragging the ox-plough many times before the results of his labor are evident to show his family responsibilities. Heterosexuality as one of the Maragoli community's ideological pillars that ensures the community's survival is emphasized in another poem. Epizeuzis has depicted selfishness as a vice through the word "erred" aimed at pricking the old woman's conscience for her refusal to give her child food.

6.2.3.4 Anadiplosis

Anadiplosis, the repetition of the end of a line being the same at the beginning of the next line, is discussed in four poems highlighting gender spaces in this section. These poems foreground the cruelty and inhumanity of the Valongosyo hunters, the vagaries of weather, and the losses incurred due to lack of knowledge about the use of money as well as overcoming the morning cold in school so as to go to Europe.

The following poem uses anadiplosis to emphasize the juxtaposition of the feminine gender's domestic space with the masculine gender's public space.

*Sambili uludada
Uludada lwa vahizi
Vahizi Valongosyo
Avita Sang'ang'a
Valeka ni yama
Lyama lye kihindi*

Roast for the pouch
The pouch of hunters
The Valongosyo hunters
Who killed Sang'ang'a
They left him germinating
The germination of the trunk

The lines above are emphatic of the fact that Valongosyo hunters who carry pouches are cruel because they killed Sang'ang'a and left his trunk on the bare ground which, among the Maragoli, it is a taboo to leave a corpse exposed on bare ground because they bury the dead. The cruelty of the Valongosyo hunters is also implicit in the fact that they dismembered Sang'ang'a's corpse by removing the limbs and leaving his trunk on the bare field. However, the anadiplosis is a paradox because hunters among the Maragoli had strict hunting rules that they adhered to. One of their rules was that if a hunter stole other hunters' game meat, he would be killed; his limbs, head and neck would also be removed and strewn in the field for all to see. It is this rule that the women cite in the poem. This is what happened to Sang'ang'a, a game meat thief. The paradox is that whereas the females are expected to carry out and even show off their feminine gender role of roasting meat for hunters including Sang'ang'a, the truth is that he is a game meat thief who receives the Maragoli community's stipulated punishment for such thieves. Hence the girls, who are enacting adult women, having been taught to exhibit the correct feminine gender emotions of grief find themselves in a dilemma as to how they are expected to roast meat for murderers who have killed Sang'ang'a. The fact that hunting is mentioned puts the composition of the poem at a time when there were bushes and some forests in Maragoli where hunting took place. Anadiplosis in the poem apart from stressing the masculine gender's strict adherence to their hunting rules underscores the punishment meted out on game meat thieves and the women's portrayal of correct feminine gender emotions after witnessing the murder of such a thief.

The feminine gender's role of crop farming emphasizing her domestic space in the following poem is articulated using anadiplosis.

*Mukere muka Londo
Wataga mbande mulondolo
Mulondolo gwahya gwahal'luka
Gwahal'luka tevi akandu akumukigulu
Akumukigulu akita Nasimba
Nasimba mukana wa Kilavile
Kilavile muliga gulidola*

Old woman wife of Londo
Planted mbande on a narrow strip of land
The narrow strip has been scorched and withered
It has withered ask the thing on the hill
The person on the hill who killed Nasimba
Nasimba the daughter of Kilavile
Kilavile tears are streaming copiously

Anadiplosis is underscored in crop farming; illustrated by Londo's wife who plants *mbande*, Bambara groundnuts on a narrow strip of scorched land, demonstrates scarcity of farmland among the Maragoli. Anadiplosis also highlights the cruelty and inhumanity of the person who lives in the hills referred to as *akandu*, the diminutive form of *umundu*, translated as person in reference to Nasimba's husband who has beaten her to death. Anadiplosis also stresses the feminine gender's emotions of grief as shown in the line "Kilavile tears are streaming copiously".because of the death of her daughter Nasimba.

This line is an early preparation for the girls that when they become mothers, they should exhibit the correct feminine gender emotions such as sadness. This is supported by

Fischer (1998: 87) who asserts that:

Parents did not talk about anger and disgust to their daughters than with their sons. Further, parents seemed to talk more about the causes and consequences of emotional events with their sons, but discussed emotional feelings with their daughters. Thus, there is evidence from an early age; girls are more exposed to talk about content emotions than are boys.

The feminine gender's lack of knowledge about the use of money in a public space makes her go at a loss is revealed in the poem below.

*Ndaziye wa Ndonga mani
Ndanyoye kiliango mani
Kiliango kifungi mani
Kuvugani na Ndonga mani
A Ndonga avoye mani
Valuka ngohe esendi
Esendi isambi mani*

I went to Ndonga's mani
I found the door mani
The door locked mani
We met with Ndonga mani
And Ndonga said mani
Return so that I give you money
(The) Money has burnt me

The poem, through a story states that the female persona goes to Ndonga's, who probably owes her money. When she meets him on the road he asks her to go back for the money which she says has burnt her in the lines below.

Return so that I give you money
(The) Money has burnt me

The anadiplosis shows that the poem was composed at the onset of colonialism in Kenya when money economy was introduced to replace trade by barter which the persona is familiar with. The anadiplosis underscores the female persona's loss in trade in a public space that has been opened up to women. The anadiplosis underscores the reinvention of public spaces that were the preserve of men to women who do not understand the dynamics of money economy thereby operating at a loss.

The feminine gender's domestic space is emphasized through anadiplosis in her role of not only washing elderly ailing women but also washing her children who have sores on their bodies in the poem below.

*Mukali mulavu yananga
Hamba usingi amadigu
Amadigu yaga malulu
Genya umwene na nyina*

A light complexioned woman called me
Come and wash my sore scars
(These) sore scars are painful
They need the one with a mother

The poem emanates from severe malnutrition and other ailments that some children suffered from in the past due to famine and poverty. Children who suffer from such malnutrition develop scars on their bodies and some of them are usually raw and painful. It is this kind of backdrop that the female persona has observed and is referring to. The role of a mother in the upbringing of her children is foregrounded through anadiplosis because she is the only one who will withstand her children's scars, which she will wash tenderly so as not to inflict any further pain on them. The feminine gender is therefore being reminded by an old woman who suffered malnutrition related scars in her childhood that part of her role as a mother will be to not only wash the elderly ailing females in the community but also washing her own children who are suffering from malnutrition or other skin conditions that make their bodies sore. The subtext of the poem is that the old woman's sore scars never healed properly in her childhood because her biological mother did not raise her. This is demonstrated in the lines:

The(se) sore scars are painful
They need the one with a mother

The poem underpins the important role of a biological mother in nurturing her own children.

The school as a public space for both genders is highlighted using anadiplosis in the following poem.

<i>Magu vukindu</i>	Alas the cold x 3
<i>Vukindu vwa mugamba</i>	The morning cold
<i>Nyenywa kosoma</i>	I want to learn x 3
<i>Ndaduki Ivulaya</i>	And reach Europe

The anadiplosis emphasizes the eagerness of both boys and girls to brave the morning cold as they go to school so as to pursue further education in Europe. This means that both boys and girls are aware that formal education will open up other public spaces for them to study in Europe.

This section has analyzed anadiplosis. One poem has indicated that anadiplosis as a style strategy has underscored the cruelty of the Valongosyo hunters who have executed the punishment meted out on game thieves by killing Sang'ang'a, removing all his limbs and head and throwing the trunk on an open field for all to see. This anadiplosis is paradoxical because the women are expected to roast meat for the Valongosyo hunters who have killed Sang'ang'a for stealing game meat; the truth being that they have to roast the meat because the Valongosyo hunters have acted within the Maragoli community's stipulated hunting rules. Anadiplosis also foregrounds scarcity of farmland in Maragoli and domestic violence because Nasimba's husband has beaten her to death causing her mother severe grief, which is the correct feminine gender emotion. Anadiplosis in another poem has underpinned the reinvention of public spaces that were

the preserve of men to women who do not understand the dynamics of money economy thereby operating at a loss. The feminine gender's domestic space that emphasizes the importance of a mother in tenderly cleaning her child's soiled body is revealed using anadiplosis. Lastly, the public space that both the feminine and masculine genders share due to formal education is underscored using anadiplosis.

6.2.3.5 Symploce

Symploce, the repetition of words both at the beginning and end of lines is discussed in two poems in this section. In the first instance, symploce is depicted in the feminine persona's grief about the death of her parents in her domestic space. In the second poem, symploce juxtaposes the feminine gender's domestic space with the masculine gender's public space.

The use of symploce in the poem below foregrounds the feminine gender's feelings of sorrow.

Mbeleraa mama ondeki
Mbeleraa baba ondeki
Baba wange
Mama wange
Ndondondo mulina
Ndondondo mulina
Ndondondo mulina ndo

I am sad mother has left me
I am sad father has left me
My father
My mother
Ndondondo friend
Ndondondo friend
Ndondondo friend ndo

The feminine persona's expression of grief due to the deaths of both her parents is emphasized using symploce in the lines below.

I am sad mother has left me
I am sad father has left me

Symploce reveals that the death of the girl's parents is a painful experience for her. It also shows that the person who will sincerely stand by her during her moment of grief is her friend. Symploce highlights the sad tone of the poem, Notably the Lulogoli word *ondeki*, means "has left me". It is the euphemistic term for "is dead". Although the poem is an early preparation for the girl to exhibit correct emotions in adulthood, the euphemism ameliorates the sad atmosphere that the poem creates.

The juxtaposition of the feminine gender's domestic space with the masculine gender's public space underscores the masculine gender's role of taking livestock to graze in the following poem.

*Muhonja muhonja
Ndula kwaya muhonja
Na magondi muhonja
Ne zimbuli muhonja
Ne zing'ombe muhonja,
Muhonja witu muhonja*

Muhonja Muhonja
I have been herding Muhonja
And the sheep Muhonja
And the goats Muhonja
And the cows Muhonja
Our Muhonja Muhonja

The repetition of the word "And" at the start of the third, fourth and fifth lines and the word "Muhonja" at the end of each of those lines in as shown below indicates symploce and the comparison of the masculine and feminine gender spaces.

*Na magondi muhonja
Ne zimbuli muhonja
Ne zing'ombe muhonja*

And the sheep Muhonja
And the goats Muhonja
And the cows Muhonja

The symploce shows the masculine gender space as a public one where he takes livestock to graze while that of the feminine gender is a domestic one because the male persona finds her home. The male persona's repeated calling of the female subject Muhonja stresses his assurance to her that he is back from carrying out the masculine gender role of herding sheep, goats and cows. It also reveals that he is caring. The symploce depicts livestock rearing as an economic activity among the Maragoli. Implicit in the symploce is the fact that girls among the Maragoli are expected to stay within the homestead which is a domestic space. This is contrasted with the masculine gender's public space outside the home; in this case the grazing areas.

The analysis of symploce in this section has underscored the feminine gender's expression of grief which has indicated the sad tone of the poem. The juxtaposition of the masculine gender's public space with the feminine gender's domestic space has been done using symploce whereby the male persona has announced to the female subject, Muhonja who is in her domestic space, his return with the sheep, goats and cows from his public space, the grazing field.

6.3 Language in Maragoli Children's Play Poetry

6.3.1 Introduction

This section analyzes the language used in Maragoli children's play poetry showing how the language demonstrates gender spaces. The aspect of language that is analyzed is diction.

6.3.2 Diction

Diction refers to the choice of words. According to Roberts and Jacobs (1992: 42), a poet's diction ranges from formal to middle to informal. Although this is true of poetry, Maragoli children's play poetry consists mainly of informal diction because the performances of these poems are usually informal and ad hoc. The diction in Maragoli children's play poems has some foreign words that are localized and some that are only used in the poems for their singability but not in ordinary speech as demonstrated in the poems discussed in this section. Some of the poems highlight the use of foreign words that are now part of Lulogoli, for instance *suti* for suit. Some words in the poems are transient because apart from the poems in which they appear, they are not part of Lulogoli vocabulary. For instance, *sister*, an English word, is temporary. Each poem is discussed for its diction and gender spaces.

The feminine gender issue of adolescent uncertainty and confusion due to the changes taking place in her sexed body is revealed through diction in the following poem that illustrates the school as a shared public gender space.

Soloist: *Jambo sister mbuganga*
Chorus *Ni siverera*

Nuva ni waduka
Wenyanga kugwa ichombo
Sun'gusa amarinda
Ni siverera

Soloist: *Inyima skongoti*
Chorus: *Skongoti skongoti*
Soloist: *Imberi skongoti*
Chorus: *Skongoti skongoti*
Wanjiko komaa

Soloist: Greetings sister I am surprised
Chorus: It is sadness
Soloist: If you have matured
You want to become a decent lady
Shake your full dress
Chorus: It is sadness
Soloist: Behind skongoti
Chorus: Skongoti skongoti
Soloist: In front skongoti
Chorus: Skongoti skongoti
Wanjiko komaa

Since the poem was performed by both boys and girls, it shows that they have observed the changes taking place in one of the girls and her confused state as exhibited in the lines below.

Soloist: *Inyima skongoti*
Chorus: *Skongoti skongoti*
Soloist: *Imberi skongoti*
Chorus: *Skongoti skongoti*

Soloist: Behind *skongoti*
Skongoti skongoti
In front *skongoti*
Skongoti skongoti

The meaning of the diction in the poem is unraveled by merging the auditory and visual senses during the performance of the poem. For instance, when the soloist sang the words *Inyima skongoti* translated as, “Behind *skongoti*” and reversed her rhythmic movements, some of the performers missed the movements and continued with their forward movement thereby hitting against those who reversed their movements. Similarly, when she sang the words, *Imberi skongoti*, whose translation is “In front *skongoti*”, some of the

performers who were still reversing hit against those who were making the forward movement. This part of the performance depicted a puzzle which could only be unraveled by making use of both the visual and auditory sensibilities. Therefore, having observed that some of the performers hit against each other, the subtext deduced from this performance is that adolescence for girls is a confusing phase in their development. When an adolescent girl shows signs of confusion, her fellow peers – boys and girls sympathize with her. Since the poem was performed by school girls and boys, it shows that the school is a shared public space where both gender notice the confused state of the subject they call “sister” Her confused state is highlighted in the word *skongoti* that has no meaning in Lulogoli but which means peer pressure on the girl from many directions.

The diction comprising Kiswahili, English, Lunyore and Lulogoli words in the poem articulate gender spaces. The Kiswahili word *jambo* that is translated as “greetings” is used instead of the Lulogoli word *mirembe* because the former has two syllables while the latter has three syllables. The word *jambo* has been chosen only for purposes of its singability since it has not been localized. The poem starts with the persona greeting a female subject by using the English word “sister”, which has two syllables instead of the Lulogoli phrase *mukana wetu* that has six syllables. The word *sister* is therefore used for its singability. Notably, if *mukana wetu* were to be used, it would create ambiguity since it means “our sister”, “my sister” and “our daughter”. The persona is specifically greeting his or her sister but what follows is the Lunyore word *siverera* whose translation is “sadness”. The Lulogoli word for sadness is *vovereri*. Although *siverera* and *vovereri* have four syllables each, the preference of the former is its musicality in the sibilance

created by *si* in the word. However, the use of Kiswahili, English and Lunyore words in a Maragoli poem is an example of code switching which is a common practice among Maragoli children. The word *siverera* is therefore transient since it is only used in the poem. The word *ichombo* is borrowed from the Kiswahili word *chombo*, meaning vessel. Nevertheless, the word in Lulogoli means “a decent lady”. Hence the adolescent girl’s behaviour indicates that she now behaves like a decent lady or an adult woman but her peers of both genders tell her that adult women are decent and that they prove their decency in their domestic space by multi tasking or dovetailing as demonstrated in the word *amarinda*, a borrowed word from the Kiswahili word *marinda* meaning “women’s full dresses”. *Amarinda* is the Lulogoli plural for Kiswahili *marinda*. The Lulogoli singular form for the word is *lirinda*, translated as “a woman’s full dress”. It is therefore ironical for the persona to ask the female subject to shake many full dresses at once and yet she can only put on one full dress at any given time. The meaning of *amarinda* is unraveled to mean the female subject perceives herself as an adult woman. This position is shared by Thorne (1993: 155) who observes that, “During adolescence, both boys and girls come to be seen, and to see themselves as sexual actors, but girls are more pervasively sexualized than boys ... for many girls, appearance and relationships with boys begin to take primacy over other activities.” As such, the persona’s request that the female subject shakes many full dresses to mean that she should dovetail or multi-task many chores performed by female adults to prove that she too is now an adult woman and can now indulge in sexual matters that are the preserve of adult women. In other words, the diction is used to mean the adolescent female subject’s subversion of the Maragoli

community's cultural norm of chastity. Her peers remind her that love-making is the preserve of adults.

The word *komaa* in the same poem is a Kiswahili word meaning "mature". It is not used in Lulogoli because the Lulogoli word for "mature" is *hindila*. *Komaa* has been used in this poem because it has two syllables while *hindila* has three. The former has been used for its singability. The chorus gives the name of the female subject as Wanjiko whom they ask to mature up. The use of the Kiswahili word probably means that the female subject does not understand Lulogoli because Wanjiko is a Gikuyu name. It could also mean that the word *komaa* is more forceful because of the cacophony created by the /k/ sound thereby making it more distinct than if the Lulogoli word *hindila* were to be used.

Good grooming as a masculine gender requirement is depicted in the poem below through diction.

*Amwavo: Kalimilwa mwanitu Kalimilwa
Mugeni yazi yengo Kalimilwa
Nohenza ku suti Kalimilwa
Waseka widila Kalimilwa*

Kalimilwa: Ziumbolere Kalimilwa usuye.

*Amwavo: Kalimilwa mwanitu Kalimilwa
Mugeni yazi yengo kalimilwa
Nohenza ku suti Kalimilwa
Wayanza widila Kalimilwa Kalimilwa
Numbinila amavega Kalimilwa*

Kalimilwa: Zium'bolere Kalimilwa uyanzi.

*Sister: Kalimilwa my sibling Kalimilwa
A visitor has come home Kalimilwa
If you look at his suit Kalimilwa
You will laugh and hold your sides Kalimilwa*

Kalimilwa: Go and tell him Kalimilwa has refused.

Sister: Kalimilwa my sibling Kalimilwa
A visitor has come home Kalimilwa
If you look at his suit Kalimilwa
You will rejoice and hold your sides
You will shake shoulders for him Kalimilwa

Kalimilwa: Go and tell him Kalimilwa is pleased.

The poem uses the word *suti* borrowed from the English word “suit” to mean masculine gender grooming among the Maragoli. The word *suti* according to Bwonya (1998: 86) “has been localised because there were no suits in the traditional Maragoli community.” Suits among the Maragoli as in other cultures are mainly worn by men on formal occasions. The two contrasted stanza’s above show that a man has to wear a neat suit on formal occasions such as a marriage proposal, which is a public space. The fact that the nativized *suti* is now part of Lulogoli vocabulary not only shows the influence of English on Lulogoli but it also shows the Maragoli acceptance of the suit as part of the community’s masculine dress code on which certain values are attached. This is because a creased, poor quality suit presents the wearer as despicable, worthless and poor as seen in the first stanza of the poem while a neat, well-fitting expensive suit depicts the wearer as well-groomed, dignified and wealthy as the second stanza reveals. Besides, the Maragoli culture depicts a Maragoli woman’s expectation of her future husband to be smartly dressed in a suit on one of the most important days in her life when he formally goes to propose marriage to her in her parent’s home, which is her domestic space. Hence the disheveled, tight fitting suit in the first stanza makes the prospective bridegroom despicable. His poor dressing makes both Kalimilwa’s sister and Kalimilwa herself to scorn him. In contrast, the second suitor who is in a well fitting smart suit makes Kalimilwa and her sister to show feelings of admiration for him.

Tropical cancers affect children of both gender who are not only keen observers of what happens around them but they are also able to withstand the pain of their sore feet due to tropical cancers as exhibited in the diction in the poem below showing the children's domestic space.

Soloist: *Kurusume*
All: *Meeh*
Soloist: *Kurusume*
All: *Meeh*

Soloist: Kibusi chamena malenge matiginyu
Ni nyama mu kitambaya
Ni zinji zivuyaku
Gulale gulale kitambaya cha vageni
Kulingisha kubanya

Soloist: *Kurusume*
All: *Meeh*
Soloist: *Kurusume*
All: *Meeh*

Soloist: A cat licked legs with ankles
With meat in a piece of cloth
With flies abuzz on it
Gulale gulale the visitors' piece of cloth
Kulingisha fold

The words *kurusume* and *meeh* uttered by the soloist and chorus in the poem are the Lulogoli children's corruption of "cross me" and "me" respectively. The use of the words *kurusume* and *meeh* in the poem is supported by Vinogradovas (2002:1) who states that the "schema theory" approach ... shows that the construction of new worlds in literary texts is based not on various kinds of similarities among different schemata but on the substitution of a schema for a completely new one." This meaning was obtained from the performance of the poem where a female soloist stood in front of the rest of the performers who were seated down with outstretched feet. The soloist then used an object to rhythmically brush on all the outstretched feet clockwise and then anticlockwise uttering the word *kurusume* while the chorus responded *meeh*. Merging the performance

and the words together reveals that the persona, who is the soloist, assumes the role of a singular subject by stating “Cross me” as the chorus, also assuming the role of a singular object responds “me”. The assumption of a singular persona and a singular subject is due to the fact that each one of the children of both genders is suffering from tropical cancers on the feet.

The meaning of the poem is deduced from the children’s fresh wounds on their feet caused by tropical cancers. Being keen observers of the environment, the children contrast the fresh wounds on their sore feet in the poem with fresh meat. In order to keep off flies and cats from those wounds, the children tie pieces of cloth on their feet. However, flies and cats still inflict pain on the feet thereby causing them severe pain. The diction in the poem is therefore drawn from the children’s painful experience and the play poem offers them coping mechanisms from their physical pain.

The Lulogoli word for cat is *kibaga*, seemingly, a borrowed word from the Kiswahili word *paka*, translated as “cat”, while *kibusi* is borrowed from the English phrase “pussy-cat”. Notably, the words *kibusi* and *kibaga* are localized as part of Lulogoli vocabulary. The word *kibusi* shows that the cat is a domesticated animal that the Maragoli treat with a lot of tenderness. In short, *kibusi* is an endearing word. The word shows that the cat, which is a pet that the Maragoli tame to kill rats and snakes in a home licks the children’s raw wounds thereby aggravating the pain; yet the children, cannot hit the cat. In the same poem, the word *malenge* for legs has been used. The Lulogoli word for legs is *vilenge*; this is what is used in ordinary speech. Nevertheless, when contextually placed, the word

malenge depicts legs that are an eyesore – one looking at such legs will quickly look aside and cover their noses due to the foul smell the legs emit. This is supported by Bwonya (1998: 83) who asserts that such legs emit a mixture of water, pus and blood. The word *malenge* is both a visual and olfactory image because we are able to perceive almost decomposing legs of human beings who are alive. As such, the word *malenge* has been used in the poem to underscore the enormity of the wounds on the children's feet caused by tropical cancers.

The word *gulale* in the poem is the augmentative form of the Lulogoli word *alale*, translated as “he or she will spread”. The word is a visual image of a big-bodied boy or girl in their domestic space spreading a piece of cloth that is used only when visitors arrive at the persona's home. This means that the subject has used the visitors' piece of cloth during child play and this is what the persona is referring to. The use of the augmentative form of the word depicts the persona's scornful attitude towards the child subject who has used the piece of cloth that is spread on the table or chair when visitors arrive and has soiled it; yet children use props and costumes during play. The introduction of the visitors' piece of cloth in the poem is a temporary relief for the children whose painful legs are bandaged in pieces of cloth. On the other hand, the word *kulingisha* is a coinage from the Lulogoli word *kulinga* meaning to fold. The suffix *sha* creates a transitory word with the meaning cause to fold because the Lulogoli *kubanya* means fold. *Kulingisha* is therefore used to maintain the rhythm of the poem.

This section has shown that diction, comprising Lulogoli, Lunyore Kiswahili and English words not only depicts gender spaces but also shows meaning by unraveling subtexts through the interplay between the words and the performance. The pressures an adolescent girl experiences in the school which is a public space are depicted using diction. The masculine gender requirement of good grooming when he ventures into public spaces for marriage proposal is revealed in a poem in which two suits are juxtaposed to show that a neat, expensive well-fitting suit wins the prospective bride's admiration as opposed to a creased, tight-fitting suit that invites scorn. The ability of boys and girls to withstand the pain of tropical cancers on their feet in their domestic space is depicted using diction in which the word *kibusi* from pussy is an endearing term to show that the cat is a pet that inflicts pain on children's sore feet through licking.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This section summarizes what the study entailed, gives conclusions on the study and also makes recommendations.

7.2 Summary

The study set out to investigate gender spaces in Maragoli children's play poetry. This study was necessitated by the fact that children's play poetry cuts across other poetry and genres of orature because children are imitative. Their imitations of adults were highlighted in the children's play poetry. The poems portrayed children's perceptions about the environment in which they live and how they accommodated changes in their public and domestic spaces. There were crucial issues pertaining to societal gender ascriptions and the children's reactions to such issues that were unraveled through analysis.

The study will benefit literary scholars in teaching orature and children's literature. Pre-school and primary school curriculum developers will also benefit from the study in their planning for children's song games along gender issues. Since studies in gender are multidisciplinary, the results will benefit sociologists and anthropologists. Anthropologists will use the Maragoli ethnography to discuss gender issues and compare them with those from other cultures. Since sociology is the study of the development,

structure, and functioning of human society, sociologists will benefit from gender spaces and subversion as depicted in Maragoli children's play poetry. The choice of play poetry in this study is due to the fact that it is a performance that incorporates some of the other sub-genres of Maragoli poetry such as work poetry and funeral poetry thereby enriching the study. This is because children's play poetry deals with the life of individuals from birth, early childhood, adulthood and old age thereby depicting the developmental phases of persons and the gender spaces assigned to them. The performances that included body movements, formations such as circles or semi circles and the use of real or imaginary props were used in unraveling the subtexts in the children's play poetry.

One major limitation of the study was setting out to collect data with no idea about the number of play poems that would be collected. The problem was solved by using the proportional allocation method to arrive at a manageable number of poems depicting gender spaces used in the study.

The conceptual framework was drawn from the Social Learning Theory, Semiotics and the Schema Theory. According to the Social Learning Theory, people are social beings and they pay attention to the environment. They also react to the environment. Semiotics is a system of signs and meanings in understanding codes. The Schema Theory enables literary scholars to apply it to knowledge and limits of human understanding as well as the essence of being. Schemata pertain to the mental procedure where information is processed according to cultural dictates and personal experiences.

The review of related literature in Chapter 2 demonstrated that children's play poetry as a sub-genre of orature is of academic merit. Finnegan (2007) observes that any genre of orature has more than one meaning and serves many functions. Poyatos (1988) emphasizes the usefulness of anthropology in understanding literary genres. Okombo (1992) asserts that ethnomethodology is applicable in data collection for researchers of orature. Kao (2011) states that poetry is distinguished from prose because it is meant to be heard aloud. Finnegan (2007) observes that the spur of the moment performance of poetry has coordinated activities and prior organization. Okpewho (1985) underscores the importance of any audience in the performance of poetry. Madison (2005) asserts that performance unravels the subtexts in literary works. McGowan's (2009) position is that in some performances the performers are also the audience. Barber (2007) states that meanings in oral texts are deciphered by the local audiences who have the skill of interpreting such texts. Diehl (2011) posits that children's poetry is shrouded in language that needs to be interpreted. Finnegan's (1977) observation on poetry is that repetition is a common feature in poetry. Okot p'Bitek (1974) describes the performance of a hide-and-seek game performed by Acholi boys and girls as a song. Odaga (1985) describes the performance of a Luo children's play poem that is performed by singing. Alembi (1991) also examines children's play poetry among the Abanyole by stating that such poetry castigates vices and emphasizes virtues. Okhoba's (1995) contribution to children's play poetry is that Marachi children perform a poem of Teso origin with some Kiswahili words and describes how the poem is performed. Mpesha (1995) states that the physical environment thrills children who imitate the flora in a Kiswahili performed poem.

According to Mbugua (2007), children make serious and precise comments on their environment in their poetry.

Telford and Long's (2012) position on culture is that they assigned domestic or private spaces to women while men were assigned public and professional spaces. Soost (2001) situates gender spaces in literary works within the linguistic signs depicted semiotically and semantically. The internet article entitled *Gendering* (2008) makes the observation that parents and other caregivers socialize children to their cultural gender roles at birth so that girls grow up modeling after their mothers while boys model after their fathers. Lastly, Johnson and Longhurst (2010) state that culture defines human bodies as gendered and sexed biological entities bordering between culture and nature.

Chapter 3 showed the step by step manner in which the study was conducted. It indicated how the analytical research design was used and also states that the study area was Sabatia and Vihiga districts of Vihiga County where a majority of the inhabitants were Valogoli. The chapter also indicated that the study population comprised children's play poetry and performed events. The sampling of play poems and the sampling of performed events enabled the researcher to use manageable data. The play poems were sampled using the method of proportional allocation. All the performed events were added up and some were used in the study. The research instruments used in the collection of primary data were non participant observation, focus group discussions and interview schedules. Primary data was obtained from play poems got from personal interviews, focus group discussions as well as primary school children. Performed events were also a source of

primary data. Books, journals, magazines archives and the internet were used in secondary data collection. The hermeneutical method was used to analyze the data, interpret language, symbols and images in the play poems. The researcher obtained permission from the informants who were used in the study. The head teachers, deputy head teachers and senior teachers in the selected primary schools consented before the pupils were asked to perform the play poems. The researcher also obtained an introduction letter from the chair of the department and also a permit from the National Council of Science and Technology to conduct the research.

The analysis of Chapter 4 showed that spaces in children's play poems fell in three categories, namely: The feminine spaces, the masculine spaces and common spaces for both feminine and masculine genders. This analysis met the first objective of the study that sought to analyze the depiction of feminine and masculine spaces in Maragoli children's play poetry. The analysis revealed that the feminine gender's space is mainly a private or domestic one. The chapter highlighted that the space the Maragoli assigned the feminine gender was domestic because it was linked to the feminine gender roles. One poem depicted a mother's role of pottery with its implicit feminine gender role of drawing water using clay pots. Another domestic space was evident in a poem in which a child persona requested her mother to give her cowpeas to go and sow. A poem depicting a woman's domestic space covertly depicted the feminine gender role of cooking maize that was ready. Two poems showed the feminine gender scripted public spaces. In one poem a girl went to draw water from the protected spring where she met a baboon as a *dramatis persona*. In another poem a mother went to a scripted public space to solicit for

food and refused to share it with her daughter who in turn solicited for her own food also from a scripted public space and refused to share it with her mother.

The chapter also discussed masculine gender spaces that were public thereby giving the masculine gender a lot of exposure. One poem showed that the male persona was going to M'mbo, a public space to complain to Kalasimba about the poisonous pumpkins Kalasimba planted that had killed his children. The persona's exposure enabled him to philosophically observe that sorrow and joy co-exist in society. Another public space was exhibited in a poem in which a man called Barang'a went to Nandi where he harvested three granaries of maize. This in turn showed his economic power. A poem depicting the masculine gender's public space was also exhibited in a poem in which a man acquired the status of leader due to venturing into public spaces. The masculine gender's public space was depicted in a poem in which a man called Kirumbesi praised himself for his feat of killing a wild boar during hunting. This made Kirumbesi to praise himself due to his interaction with public spaces.

Common spaces between the feminine and masculine genders in Maragoli children's play poetry were also discussed in Chapter 4. The spaces mainly depicted cultural issues. The shared public space in one poem revealed boys and girls keenly observing a tortoise's waddling and its feeding on mushrooms. In another poem, parents interfered with their children's public space by giving them conflicting information about cigarette smoking that led children into an intra gender tug of war to resolve the issue. The children asserted their space as one that was cigarette free. One poem depicting the children's shared

public space that was evident in the *mutembe*, the red poker, believed to heal mumps highlighted the Maragoli community's superstitions that children were introduced to. The shared public space as well as a semi public space was evident in the formation of heterosexual relationships as a Maragoli community's ideology was underscored in two poems. In the first poem, boys and girls formed a circle and each chose a friend of the opposite sex as the poem directed. The poem demonstrated that the school as a public space enabled both genders to form heterosexual relationships as marriage training. In the other poem, each gender formed a line and started singing and dancing towards the line of the opposite sex at the camp – a semi public space where they danced together as part of their recreation. It was in this manner that men spotted their future wives.

The analysis of Chapter 5 met the second objective of the study that sought to examine how gendered bodies and subversive signification were highlighted in Maragoli children's play poetry. One poem indicated that the human body was a gendered one that subverted the Maragoli community's norms pertaining to sex and marriage. Another poem signified the bodies of both boys and girls as being involved in teenage sex thereby subverting the Maragoli community's virginity and chastity norms for girls. Another poem depicted a young woman's subversion of the Maragoli community's ideology of virginity by committing fornication, which was a sexual offence that led to her defloration. The woman was aware that the consequences of her fornication were a child out of wedlock and the possibility of her being chased from her parents' home for shaming them. In another poem, an adult male subverted the Maragoli community's cultural norm of fidelity in marriage by committing adultery with the male persona's

wife. Infuriated by this action, the male persona lamented and insulted the man who had committed adultery with his (the persona's) wife. Incest, one of the Maragoli community's sexual offences was subverted by both genders in their childhood and this offence haunted them in adulthood when the incest offenders were banished from the community in one poem. In another poem, the feminine gender subverted two feminine gender's private spaces of virginity and marriage by wedding. This was revealed when all the girls who escorted one of them to visit her girlfriend far from their village did not return home because they had all been deflowered and so had eloped. Marriage by elopement among the Maragoli meant poor upbringing - an indication that the young women's parents were to blame for their daughters' defloration and elopement.

The masculine gender's subversion of the feminine private space of virginity was also depicted in a poem in which men stealthily visited an old woman's hut where girls slept at night and walked away with their girlfriends. The girls who did not resist the men ended up being deflowered and therefore dead to their community's cultural norm of preservation of virginity. This death was mourned in the poem. Another poem also depicted the masculine gender's subversion of the Maragoli community's norms about sexual offences in which the masculine gender wanted to rape the feminine gender and deflower her because she had turned down his sexual advances. This was an intrusion into the woman's private space. In a similar poem, a brother subverted the norm of incest prohibition among siblings and tried to rape his sister who resisted the rape. This too, was an intrusion into the feminine gender's private space.

The analysis of chapter 6 met the third objective of the study that sought to investigate how gender, style and language were portrayed in Maragoli children's play poetry. The discussion of allusion in the chapter showed that some children's play poems alluded to Maragoli oral narratives in which spaces for the feminine and masculine genders were exhibited. Two allusive poems revealed that the feminine gender's public spaces were scripted to conform to their societal gender ascriptions. In the first poem, an old woman who had gone to fetch firewood brought a strange boy home to take care of her livestock. In the other poem, five girls went to fetch firewood and asked one of them to enter an anthill which they closed and left her there. These two allusive poems indicated that the feminine gender's interactional space was mainly domestic and the public spaces assigned to her were scripted. The last allusive poem depicted the masculine gender's marriage proposal as a cultural requirement and the feminine gender's acceptance of the proposal in conformity to the cultural norm. However, the ironic twist of events depicted the feminine gender's contestation of the subordinating cultural ascription in her subversion of this cultural norm by going on a hunger strike till she was allowed to marry her lover. The poem revealed that the feminine gender had the ability to change cultural norms that disparaged women without raising eyebrows.

Gender spaces highlighting ideophones were discussed in the chapter. To begin with, the feminine gender's scripted public spaces were discussed in two poems. The female persona went to fetch firewood in the forest in one poem where she was confronted by a male subject whose tantalizing voice was intended to distract her so that he would take advantage of her. The feminine gender's scripted public space was exhibited in another

poem using ideophones in which the plural feminine and masculine personae showed their scornful attitude towards their sister-in-law who was a gossip. A shared domestic space in which children's ownership of property, their acceptance of change demonstrated in the different sounds made by machinery from Europe was underscored using ideophones. The suffering of boys and girls from tropical cancers on their feet was revealed using ideophones in which the actual sounds made by flies as they hovered around the cancerous feet and the sound the flies made as they landed on the feet indicated the intensity of the pain the children felt. The analysis of anaphora, a feature of repetition, in Chapter 6 demonstrated that there were separate private gender spaces during play. While boys were culturally permitted to climb trees during play, girls were not. Anaphora in another poem highlighted a man's breaking of a taboo by moving a landmark led to his death that caused his wife grief. Another anaphoric poem that emphasized a woman's suffering and grief due to her child's death caused by hunger showed her feelings of bitterness.

The analysis of epistrophe as a feature of repetition in the chapter foregrounded gender spaces. In one poem, epistrophe underscored prostitution as revealed by the female persona's observation that her daughter, who ventured into a public space, had become a prostitute; yet prostitution was a sexual offense among the Maragoli. In another poem, epistrophe highlighted the comparison of the masculine gender's public space with the feminine gender's domestic space depicted in the masculine gender's return with livestock to the homestead where the feminine gender was. Epizeuzis, another feature of repetition, as analyzed in the chapter underscored gender spaces. In one poem, epizeuzis underpinned the masculine gender's domestic space that involved dragging the ox-plough

many times before the results of his labor were evident to show his family responsibilities. Heterosexuality as one of the Maragoli community's ideological pillars that ensured the community's survival was emphasized in another poem. Epizeuzis also depicted selfishness as a vice through the word "erred" aimed at pricking the old woman's conscience for her refusal to give her child food.

Anadiplosis, an aspect of repetition, as a style strategy in one poem underscored the cruelty of the Valongosyo hunters who had executed the punishment meted out on game meat thieves by killing Sang'ang'a, removing all his limbs and head and throwing the trunk on an open field for all to see. This was paradoxical because the women were expected to roast meat for the Valongosyo hunters who had killed Sang'ang'a for stealing game meat; the truth being that they had to roast the meat because the Valongosyo hunters had acted within the Maragoli community's stipulated hunting rules. Anadiplosis in another poem also foregrounded scarcity of farmland in Maragoli and domestic violence because Nasimba's husband had beaten her to death causing her mother severe grief. In another poem anadiplosis had underpinned the reinvention of public spaces that were the preserve of men to women who did not understand the dynamics of money economy thereby trading at a loss. The feminine gender's domestic space that emphasized the importance of a mother in tenderly cleaning her child's sored body was revealed using anadiplosis. Lastly, the public space that both the feminine and masculine genders shared due to formal education was highlighted using anadiplosis.

Symploce as a feature of repetition highlighted the feminine gender's expression of grief which indicated the sad tone of the poem. The contrast of the masculine gender's public space with the feminine gender's domestic space was done using symploce whereby the male persona had announced to the female subject, Muhonja who was in her domestic space, his return with the sheep, goats and cows from his public space, the grazing field.

The aspect of language analyzed in Chapter 6 was diction, comprising Lulogoli, Lunyore Kiswahili and English words that not only depicted gender spaces but also showed meaning by unraveling subtexts through the interplay between the words and the performance. The pressure an adolescent girl experienced in the school which was a public space was depicted using diction. The masculine gender requirement of good grooming when he ventured into public spaces for marriage proposal was revealed in a poem in which two suits are juxtaposed to show that a neat, expensive well-fitting suit won the prospective bride's admiration as opposed to a creased, tight-fitting suit that invited scorn. The ability of boys and girls to withstand the pain of tropical cancers on their feet in their domestic space was depicted using diction in which the word *kibusi* from pussy was an endearing term to show that the cat was a pet that inflicted pain on children's sore feet through licking.

7.3 Conclusions

The study showed that there were indeed gender spaces in Maragoli children's play poetry. The poems were performed in three categories namely feminine, masculine and poems for both genders.

The study revealed that due to the introduction of formal education among the Maragoli in the late nineteenth century, some of the children's play poems that were ascribed to a specific gender became poems for both genders. The reason for this was that the school became a public space for both boys and girls and so the children found themselves playing together more often than when they were at home where their gender roles were defined. The study also demonstrated disparities in gender spaces. Whereas the masculine gender spaces were public, the feminine gender spaces were mainly private or domestic. These disparities enabled the masculine gender to venture into far off physical spaces that were public and so allowed them to be more exposed than the feminine gender. The feminine gender's private spaces on the other hand, confined them to the homestead and its environs thereby constraining their exposure. It is not therefore surprising that when the feminine gender ventured into scripted public spaces, they lacked the opportunity to understand human behaviour and detect people's whims so as to know how to deal with the people they interacted with in public spaces as shown in the woman who entrusted her livestock to a stranger.

It was also observed that the common gender poems were very many, one hundred and twenty four out of two hundred and twenty nine. This means that the school system enabled both boys and girls to perform play poetry together. Besides, school boys and girls were bold enough to perform feminine gender issues such as carrying a water pot on the head and being wooed by boys in the process. This showed that children understood at an early age the significance of a persona in poetry.

During the administration of the interview schedules, it was established that most males preferred to perform feminine gender poems rather than the masculine gender ones. They called the poems childish poetry. The researcher was of the impression that when males were on their own, they tended to censor the kind of information to divulge. This explains why the number of poems from the masculine gender was thirty eight. The feminine gender was, however, willing to perform their poems

7.4 Recommendations

The review of related literature in Chapter 2 showed that there was a Luo poem similar in performance to a Maragoli one. Since comparison was outside the scope of this study, it is recommended that a comparative study be conducted between Maragoli and Luo children's play poetry. A similar poem was also evident in Marachi children's play poetry. As such, a comparative study using the Historical-Geographical theory would be used in such a comparison.

Owing to the thirty eight (38) out of a total of two hundred and twenty nine (229) collected poems from the masculine gender, it is recommended that the county government should encourage talent and preservation of culture by building a theatre where drama, music and dance are taught so as to encourage men to nurture their talents.

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