

Changing Trends in the Form of the Metaphor in Kiswahili Literature

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Abstract

The metaphor as defined in Kiswahili literature is a saying with a hidden meaning. It takes the form of a questioning statement that requires the listener to give a one word answer. However the Kiswahili word for metaphor 'fumbo' refers to any text with a hidden meaning. This paper discusses the new forms of the Swahili metaphor based on its usage. The study uses the conceptual theory of metaphor to analyze the use of metaphors in Kyallo Waddi Wamitilas plays so as to reveal the new forms of metaphors. Data was collected through document review of Wamitilas plays. Data was then subjected to textual analysis. The analysis showed that there is a transformation in the form and use of the metaphor due to its cognitive aspect and character of intergenerativity. This hence affects the concept and the place of the metaphor as a genre in Kiswahili literature.

Keywords: Metaphor, form, Conceptual theory of metaphor

Introduction

The metaphor is one of the genres of Swahili sayings broadly used in both written and oral texts. It however portrays ambiguity and complexity with regard to its various definitions and manner of classification (Simala, 2012; Ndumbaro, 2013). This complexity is further portrayed in its usage and form. Many literary works are either metaphoric or contain a lot of metaphors by communicating messages with a hidden meaning while taking up forms of other genres. Despite this situation, various scholars of Kiswahili literature among them Kyallo Waddi Wamitila have classified metaphors as a genre of sayings in oral literature. This therefore means that the metaphor takes the short form of sayings generally referred to as *semi* in Kiswahili literature. Although Wamitila stands out for his overwhelming contribution in the field of Kiswahili literature, he holds the same view with other scholars regarding the form of the metaphor, yet he applies other forms broader than the *semi* in his use of the metaphor in the selected literary works. It is against this background that this paper analyses the changing trends in the form of the metaphor in Kiswahili literature with special regard to Wamitilas' plays.

2. Objectives

The objective of this study was to analyze the changing trends in the form of the metaphor as used in Kyallo Waddi Wamitila plays and how this affects the definition and place of the metaphor in Kiswahili literature.

3. Literature Review

3.1 The concept of a metaphor

The concept of the metaphor is complex. This has hence attracted many studies in various fields including philosophy, linguistics and psychology (Lumwamu, 2004). Simala (2012) further indicates that the complexity in the concept of the metaphor is also seen in Kiswahili literature. Despite the widespread use of the metaphor literary works, few studies have been carried out on the use of the metaphor in Kiswahili literature. This according to Simala is due to the ambiguity in the concept of the metaphor. M'Ngaruthi (2008) further defines a metaphor as a word with a hidden meaning. Such words are arranged in prose to enable the audience to find and understand their meaning. The meaning of such metaphors can be unfolded in either one word, a clause or a sentence. The reason for applying metaphors according to M'Ngaruthi is to awake the mind hence they are also referred to as 'chemshabongo'. This definition indicates that 'chemshabongo' and 'mafumbo' are similar. It also points at the former concept of the metaphor which has since changed (Lakoff & Johnson, 1992).

3.2 Changing trends in the use and form of the metaphor

Change in the use of the metaphor is one of the factors causing a transformation in the form of the metaphor in Kiswahili literature. Several studies have shown the change based on the theories of the metaphor. Lakoff (1992) asserts that in the past the metaphor was considered as an aspect of language rather than a concept of thought. An analysis to this perspective however showed that it lacked substance since the basis of the metaphor is not in the understanding of language but in the way one thing is perceived in terms of the other. Lakoff states that the metaphor in the previous theory referred to a word, a phrase or a sentence; today a metaphor refers to various forms in the conceptual system. To Lakoff & Johnson (1987), many forms of the metaphor exist today, while others are conventional, some are conceptual. This view gives a basis for this study where the various forms analyzed go beyond the word, the phrase or the sentence.

Since a metaphor is coined by the speaker for a specific purpose and audience, it is different from a proverb or a riddle which are inherited through the generations (Ndumbo, 2013). This shows that new forms of the metaphor may arise depending on the artists intention of use and the target audience. The implication is that there is no particular form or manner of using the metaphor. Zinken (2013), asserts that an analysis of the conventional metaphors has shown that there are new metaphors which help in interpreting and understanding concepts and occurrences in ordinary conversations. Odaga (2005) indicates that change in the use of the metaphor is not only portrayed in new fields but also in traditional texts. He cites examples of metaphors from the Luo community in Kenya including proverbs and sayings commonly referred to as *ngeche luo*. He further explains that metaphors are commonly used by children as they play. According to Odaga, most of the metaphors are new and are still being collected as the Luo language continues to grow. This is proof of the creativity in the use of the metaphor and hence the need to investigate the aspect of change in the meaning, form and use of the metaphor.

Development in the genres of oral literature has also led to change in the genres of literature (Wamitila, 2008). According to Wamitila, oral myths grew to the short stories which have finally grown to the novel. This view was important in this study as it laid a basis for the investigation of how metaphors have either themselves become complete written genres or contributed to the development of written literary works especially the novel. Intergenericity is another element that has contributed to change in the genres of literature. Senkoro (2011) contends that it's not a strange thing to find a song or a part of a song in a story. The song can be used to emphasize a point which according to the author is important. On this basis it follows that the use of oral literature elements like proverbs, riddles and sayings in written genres creates change in the form and use of other genres. Senkoro however does not show how the metaphor is changed through intergenericity, a gap this study intended to fill. Kyallo Waddi Wamitila is one of the authors who have tried new forms in writing (Mwamzandi, 2013). Mwamzandi states that intertextuality and intergenericity are some of the elements of experimentation causing change in the genres of oral literature. This study focuses on how metaphors have been intertwined in Wamitila plays through intertextuality and intergenericity to show their new forms as depicted in the analyzed texts.

4. Theoretical Framework

This study employs the conceptual metaphor theory also referred to as the contemporary theory of metaphor as it draws the distinction between the previous and the contemporary concept of the metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson, 1987). Lakoff (1992) asserts that the conceptual theory of metaphor is opposed to a number of traditional misconceptions about the metaphor especially the distinction between ordinary language and figurative language. Lakoff & Johnson (1987) also state that the word metaphor was previously used to refer to a word, phrase or sentence. This concept has since changed to refer to various genre forms and elements of language. They hence state the following about the metaphor:

- i. Metaphors are the only way to understand concepts and abstract ideas.
- ii. Conceptual metaphors occur in metaphoric language.
- iii. Metaphors help in understanding complex and abstract issues in terms of real objects.
- iv. Although a wide part of human language is metaphoric, part of it is non metaphoric hence metaphoric ideas are founded on non metaphoric ideas.

Lakoff (1992) states the following characteristics about the metaphor:

- i. The conceptual system of the metaphor is ordinary and functions with ease as is the ordinary system of human language.
- ii. Our system of metaphor is live as is our grammar and phonology.
- iii. Our system of the metaphor is based on our understanding of experiences and how we interact with them.
- iv. Metaphors are based on the things which are closely related but not those that are similar.

According to Tay (2014), characteristics of the metaphor in the conceptual theory are similar to the knowledge in philosophy, literary studies and perhaps general knowledge. Generally, a metaphor is the aspect of expressing one thing in terms of another. The tenet of the theory that was employed was the change element in the concept and use of the metaphor (Lakoff, 1992; Lakoff & Johnson 1987)

5. Methodology

5.1 Sampling Procedure

The study employed both saturated and purposive sampling procedures. Saturated sampling technique was used to select all the four plays written by K.W. Wamitila because the targeted texts were four in total and it would be meaningless to take a sample. The targeted texts were *Wingu la Kupita* (1999); *Pango* (2003); *Seserumbe* (2006) and *Sumu ya Bafe* (2006). Purposive sampling was used to select metaphors for analysis. According to Mugenda (1999), purposive sampling is a technique that enables the researcher to use cases that have the required information in reference to the objectives of the study.

5.2 Data collection and analysis

Secondary data was collected in the library through document review and content analysis of Wamitila's plays using a table of occurrence. The metaphors were recorded and classified based on the existing criteria in addition to the criteria developed by the researcher as per collected data. A qualitative data analysis was done with the unit of analysis being metaphoric texts. Three components of analysis employed were descriptive, interpretation and explanation.

6. Findings and Discussion

There is a transformation in the form and use of the metaphor due to its cognitive aspect and character of intergenerativity. Metaphors have hence acquired other genre forms away from the short form of sayings as depicted in Kiswahili oral literature. This has hence affected its definition and place in Kiswahili literature as a whole. The following are the forms of the metaphor as depicted in Wamitilas' plays:

6.1 Narrative form of the metaphor

A narrative is a story reporting real or imaginary connected events presented in a sequence of words. Narratives are characterized by opening and closing formulas, characters, use of past tense, literary devices such as songs, proverbs, repetition, figurative language and a simple plot with a beginning, middle and end (Foster, 1927; Dujama, 2014). The following are examples of narrative forms of metaphors in Wamitilas' plays: In the play *Pango*, we find the following story narrated by the main character Katango to the people at the campaign field:

Excerpt 1, pg. 42-45

Katango: Story! Story!

Sota & Susa: (*Loudly*): Story come!

Katango: Story! Story!

Group : Story come!

Katango: Once upon a time animals lived together in unity, peace and brotherhood. The conditions were very calm. Then one day there was an outbreak of drought, a very severe drought...

(*pause*) The animals held a session to deliberate on the actions to take. They thought, thought and finally decided to dig a well...

Sota : For drawing water by every member of the community!

Susa : A community well.

Katango: (*Agrees and looks at Ngwese*) A community well, yes! Every ones well! Then it happened, early in the morning, as the sun rises they meet at the valley. Their work was to stamp their feet at places they thought there could be aquifers of water.

Ngwese: She is wasting our time with her stories!

Babu : (*Calming him*) Don't glow, next is your turn!

Kibwana: Wa! Wa! Wa!

Youth : Aiwa! Aiwa! Aiwa!

Katango : Fine, the big animals were the first,...(*pause. As she begins to narrate again, she tries to act to show*) Came the elephant with his roughness and sang:

"I am the elephant a courageous destroyer

When I walk the ground shakes

No animal can touch me

I can trample on anyone"

After boasting the elephant threw a kick

(*she acts*)

Susa & Sota: Tuuu! Tuuu! Tuuu!

Katango : What came out is a cloud of dust!

(*laughs here and there*)

Then came the lion with his praises

"I am the lion the murderer without comparison

I am the lion the king of the jungle....

This story is narrated by Katango at the campaign field. It contains opening and closing formulae, narrated in the past tense, repetition and a simple plot. The metaphor describes the difficult times affecting the people. The animal characters such as the elephant, lion, the giraffe and the hare represent people of different character and positions in the society. The community is faced by a major problem of drought which signifies lack of basic and essential commodities to the common man. The author metaphorically shows that although political leaders brag of their ability to offer solutions to the common man, humble leaders are the ones who are capable of offering appropriate leadership to solve problems in the society. In this example the author draws a comparison between the life in the society and the animal world. This affirms that the basis of a metaphor is drawing a comparison between two concepts (Gerard, 2008). In the play *Seserumbe* (2006), the main character Seserumbe, a minister in the government and the main character metaphorically communicates to his daughter Maribel through a story of a bat which is neither an animal nor a bird. By so doing he warns the daughter against betraying him to the workers by joining the workers union to fight his fathers' corrupt deals. He narrates the story as follows:

Excerpt 2, pg. 39-40

Seserumbe : Have you heard of the story of the bat, the animals and the birds!

Maribel : I have heard!

Seserumbe : That whenever the bat went to the animals he behaved like an animal because he has milk. The animals were happy and took him as their own.

Maribel : I have heard!

Seserumbe: When the birds met, the bat flew to them and claimed he was one of them because he had

feathers?
 Maribel : I have heard!
 Sesorumbe: Are you aware in the end the animals and the birds rejected him?
 They rejected him because he had no stand and that is why he flies in the night when the birds are asleep and sleeps in the caves where the animals don't go?
 (silence)
 Maribel : That's how the story goes!
 Sesorumbe: Don't you know its lesson?
 (silence)
 Maribel : Lesson?
 (Pause)
 Sesorumbe: This is betrayal!

In this story, Maribel's character is compared to the character of a bat which behaves like an animal while at the same time flies like a bird. Metaphors generally help to describe one thing in terms of another (Gerard 2008; Tay 2014; Wei-Lun-Lu & Ahrens; 2008)

In the play *Sumu ya Bafe* (2006), 'The puff udders poison' Mapindu narrates the following story:

Excerpt 3, pg.20

Mapindu: (*Speaking with excitement, as if telling a story. Behaving as if there is an audience before him*)

Should I stand and go my way, please remain (and tell the story)...
 There is a story of a snake that glides along the earth
 A big snake of metal...of gold, especially of silver!
 A snake that shines to attract yet it kills!
 The snake is called the puff adder, you may despise it when you see it
 And say it is a mere log with nothing
 But
 Whoever it bites
 Despises his people
 Hates another tribe
 Fattens his neck
 The stomach swells with individualism
 The eyes are blinded not to see ahead
 He may not know where he goes
 Then denies the presence of the snake
 Looking back its confusion
 In front hangs a cloud...

In excerpt 3 above, Mapindu narrates the story of a snake, the puff adder. In the text, the snake is used in different senses to refer to an oppressive leader or a colonialist. In the above extract 'the snake bite' refers to the leadership tactics used by the leader who subjects his people to oppression. The story presents the effects of this leadership tactics as rebellion against ones people, promotion of tribalism, greed and selfishness. The people also lack understanding of their world and become puppets to the leader on the throne. The final result is that they deny the presence of oppression. Generally the society is thrown in a state of confusion. In the play *Wingu la Kupita* (1999), "The passing cloud" the character 'Mama' Swahili word for 'Mother' narrates the story of the elephant and the frogs to her children: 'Mvulana' Boy and 'Msichana' Girl.

Excerpt 4, pg. 6-9

Mother : (*Inhales then looks side and side...*) Ok...Shall I stand and go my way?
 Boy & girl : Please remain (and tell the story)
 Mother : Once upon a time.
 Boy & girl: (*Acting as they were taught in school*) Ehee!
 Mother : In a wild jungle near a pond of water

Boy & girl: Ehee!

Mother : There lived a huge elephant like this (*stretching her hand to show the size of the elephant*) then this elephant was used to eating food from the jungle and later going to the pond to drink water..

Boy & girl :(*staring at their mother. having bent their legs and crossed their hands on the front sides of their legs near the top of their legs, with eyes fixed at their mother*) Ehee...(*they playfully move their bodies by going back and forth in agreement*)

Mother : Then every time this huge elephant went to the water he ran hastily and got into the water in a mess. Later he started fetching water using his trunk and pouring it into his big mouth like this ... (*she tries to show using the palm of his right hand*)

Boy & girl: (*Laughing after seeing their mother showing how the elephant drinks water*) Ehee. Eehee..eeee...

Mother: Inside the water the frog watched from a corner (*Blinks her eye as if she's watching something that is partially invisible*)

Mother: After a while the frogs held a meeting to find a way of dealing with the elephant who killed their children every time he came to the pond. After a long discussion they decided to do one thing. (*pause*)

In this metaphor, the writer draws a distinction between two classes of people, the oppressors represented by the elephant and the oppressed represented by the frogs. The issues highlighted include oppression, social stratification, leadership and unity. The frogs in the story held a meeting and united against the oppression of the elephant. They agreed that one of the frogs was to jump and stick into the elephants' trunk to suffocate him. This was done and it gave them freedom from the oppression. Excerpts 1 to 4 are narrative forms of the metaphor used to address issues like leadership and oppression. These are abstract concepts and as Lakoff (1992) states, metaphors offer a unique way of comprehending abstract issues. The author uses these metaphors to explain complex ideas in terms of real objects. The use of narratives as metaphor gives it a new form of the narrative.

6.2 Poetic form of the metaphor

Metaphors have also exhibited poetic forms which are characterized by existence of stanzas, rhyme and rhythm. Despite this situation however there is a lot of transformation in the form of the Swahili poem (Maitaria, 2012). In the play *Pango* we find the following poem narrated by 'Babu' a Swahili word for 'grandfather':

Excerpt 5. Pg. 40

Babu : My fellow citizens
 We know what has brought us here
 The old say that that a hen that has been scratched by
 An eagle
 Becomes wise
 The flowers have flourished and soon the bees will be back
 To the cave
 And start making honey
 But
 We must guard our honey this time
 We must defend our honey this time
 We must guard our cave this time
 Long ago honey was harvested
 Harvested by foreigners
 Harvested while we slept
 Harvested by foreigners and their agents, others...

The message in this poem is metaphorically presented. The poem addresses matters of election of leaders. It draws a distinction between good and bad leaders. Quibbles like '*kujua mbichi na mbovu*' (to know the raw and ripe) and phrases like '*kutenganisha masega na nzana*' (to separate the honey from the comb), '*kujua choroko na ndeme*' (to know the cow pea and the husk) and '*kuchambua mande na wishwa*' (to pluck out the chaff from the husks) are used metaphorically to mean the electorate shall only elect the good leaders and leave the bad ones.

The Swahili proverb '*kuku aliyepapurwa na kipungu huerevuka*' (a hen that has been scratched by an eagle becomes wise) is used to show the experience of the people with bad leadership which has made them wise. Such metaphoric expressions in totality help to build the poetic metaphor (Gerard, 2008; Wei-Lun-lu & Ahrens, 2008; Tay, 2014). The poem encourages the people to choose a good leader. This results are similar to what Vierke (2010) calls poetic metaphors. The other example appears on page 49, where Katango speaks metaphorically after the declaration of Ngwese as the winner in the just concluded elections. In the play *Seserumbe* (2006), Seserumbe the main character says the following metaphorically:

Excerpt 6, Pg. 4-5

Seserumbe: (*to himself*) I knew this
 It wouldn't be otherwise
 Yesterday
 Has no authority over today completely!
 Yesterday is independent
 It can fly like a bird
 and patch anywhere
 yesterday
 cannot be held
 it is a concept that you cannot touch
 it is something like in the community of the Hopi

This comes after Mamkuu, Seserumbes' wife convinced him that 'yesterday' has no judgment over 'today'. Seserumbe seems to be disturbed by his ill actions during his tenure as a minister. He hears voices of cries from women and children which no one else can hear. 'Yesterday' and 'today' are metaphorically used to mean 'past life / actions' and 'present life' respectively. The basis of the metaphor in this poem being 'yesterday has no authority over today'. In this poem Seserumbe consoles himself that his past actions cannot affect his present life. Therefore the suffering he is undergoing cannot be attributed to his past actions. The play *Sumu ya Bafe* (2006) begins with a poetic metaphor recited by the character 'Msimulizi' i.e. 'the Narrator'

Excerpt 7, pg. 1

Msimulizi: (*In front of the stage curtain*)
 All this was not expected this way (*pause*)
 it went at this pace
 and took this course when the puff adder spat and caused rage grandpas eyes Sewall the child's
 sight caught fog not to see the pain mother, caught rage father, into confusion
 They felt, darkness
 Though, would not see it...
 Yet it was claimed the cross eyed existed
 Who could see some light
 So, there's still hope
 Yes, the day grandpa would speak...
 Tell me,
 until when will the puff adder live?
 until when will it spit?
 What shall remove its poison?
 (*Pause, the questions are heard from the back stage*)
 until when will the puff adder live?
 until when will it spit?
 What shall remove its poison?

This poem has been used as an introduction to the play. It gives a summary of the events in the play hence should be the end of the play. The poem is about a puff udder which sprays its toxic saliva. The snake is a representation of an oppressive leader and his regime while his toxic saliva are the leadership strategies which he uses to sustain his oppressive regime. The effects of his leadership are the many problems affecting the people in the community. Most people are however blindfolded such that they are unable to see the ills of the system.

The poem however gives hope that there are still a few people who are able to see the hypocrisy of the leaders. An oppressive leader is thus likened to the puff adder as is a comparison in a metaphor (Lakoff, 1992).

6.3 Song metaphors

Metaphoric songs have been identified either through the writers explanation in the stage directions or through the characters used in Wamitilas' plays. In the play *Pango*, songs have been used during campaigns by both divide of politicians.

Excerpt 8, pg. 38

Ngoi: (*Singing*) The one who belongs to Ngwese is here, One who belongs to Ngwese
 One who belongs to Ngwese, the hurricane, of Ngwese
 One who belongs to Ngwese, the axe that cuts young trees, Of Ngwese
 One who belongs to Ngwese, the tree is ready, Of Ngwese
 One who belongs to Ngwese, the tip is bending,
 The youngster should not threaten you
 Leaves should not make you tremble
 One who belongs to Ngwese...champion of the cave!

Group: Ngwese Ngwese Ngweseeee!

Soloist: Leadership is your ancestry

And you have an ancestry as big as the elephants trunk

In the above extract the song led by 'Ngoi' a Swahili word for 'Soloist' is used to praise and encourage Ngwese the male aspirant against Katango the female aspirant. While Ngwese is compared to a hurricane and an axe that brings down the youth, Katango is likened to a small tree. The song implies that Ngwese is strong and should bring down his weak opponent. He is also likened to animals like the lion, the giraffe and the rhino to show his superiority. In this kind of comparison we find a metaphor. Metaphors generally involve all forms of comparisons (Gerard, 2008; Wei-Lun-Lu & Ahrens, 2008; Tay, 2014). In the play *Seserumbe*, Seserumbe the main character laments of hearing voices of women and children. He refers to the voices as dirges that make him panic. These voices are accompanied by rhythmic drumming.

Excerpt 9, pg. 1,6,53

(*Darkness. drums*)

Dudu! Dudu! Dudu! Dudu!

(*Cries, Voices of women and children heard for a while*)

Voice: Mother motherrrr! They are killing me ee-ee!

Mother motherrrr! They are strungling me-ee!

My Go- o -o-d ! They are castrating me-ee!

Wooii! Wooi! Wooi! (*pause*)

Humanity has taken the road?

Which street has love taken?

Where has love escaped to?

This auction of humanity!

Seserumbe claims that these are voices of children who died in the demolitions which he directed as the then minister. The song presents the oppression the minister carried out during his tenure in office. The personification of humanity, love and unity which have since fled in the community adds onto the metaphor as it draws the comparison between human beings and the items so personified. This according to Giovanni (2008) are ontological metaphors. In the play *Sumu ya Bafe* there is the heroes' song led by Bamkongwe; a name derived from two Swahili words 'Baba' or 'father' shortened as *Ba* and *mkongwe* 'old' thus 'old father'. It narrates how Bamkongwe led his group in to the hunt for the puff adder, meaning he led the heroes to the fight against the colonialists and delivered independence to the people.

Excerpt 10, pg. 21

Bamkongwe: (*leading the song. His counterparts dance with him*) We are the heroes, we passed and slept in the jungle

We were chewed by the mosquitoes of trouble and confused by the leaves of suffering, We were lashed by the rains of shame

We were pursued by the buffalo of persecution
 We drowned in the lake with a depth of storm
 Then we emerged And Stood
 Group: Straight !
 Bamkongwe: We turned into...
 Group: Victims
 Bamkongwe: And volunteered
 Group: unimpeded
 Bamkongwe: We were washed by...
 Group: blood!
 Bamkongwe: Great ehh! (*Pause*) as we ambushed
 Group: The puff adder!
 Bamkongwe: Then!
 Group: It was over!
 Bamkongwe: While we?
 Group: Were neglected!

Bamkongwe uses metaphoric phrases such as ‘confused by the leaves of suffering’ to show the numerous problems they experienced Also, ‘buffalo of persecution’ and ‘drowned in the lake with a depth of storm’ to show the complexity and magnitude of the problems they experienced. The other song in excerpt 11 below, also referred to as the ‘new song’ declares the death of the puff adder. Mapindu is expected to sing the new song as a condition for his release from jail.

Excerpt 11. Pg. 25,30,32,40

A voice behind the stage: Puff adder, the neck of the puff adder was cut!
 Puff adder, he who was the puff adder was buried!
 Puff adder, the fear of the puff adder has been rubbed!
 Puff adder today is no more puff adder it has been announced!
 Puff adder, shall not come back, it has been commanded!

The song talks about the death and burial of the puff adder and the wiping out of its effects among people. The snake may refer to a colonialist or an oppressive leader. The death of the snake refers to the freedom of the people from oppressive leadership. Mapepe uses this song to lie to people that his leadership has brought freedom yet in reality it is the opposite since the people are still faced with a lot of problems in the society.

In the play *Wingu la Kupita*, the author uses a song to drive home the main theme of the play. The song sung by school going children and taught by their teachers is about the passing cloud.

Excerpt 12, pg 47.

Cloud...cloud...cloud is dark cloud!
 Cloud...cloud...a big dark cloud!
 Cloud...cloud...a cloud of rain cloud!
 Cloud...cloud...cloud is dark cloud!
 It is passing cloud...Cloud!
 For the sun to shine...cloud!
 For us to bask in the sun...cloud!

The above song is a metaphor that conveys a message that the problems faced by the people are temporary. The ‘cloud’ refers to a leader of high position in the society; it also generally refers to the problems facing people in the society; the ‘passing of cloud’ is the temporary state of the poor leadership and the problems faced by the people. Once the cloud passes, the people are able to access the basic needs, ‘the sun’ which they are not able to access due to the poor leadership. The songs in excerpts 8, 9,10,11 and 12 are metaphoric. According to Sheikh (1993), almost all Swahili songs are metaphors.

6.4 Conversational form

A conversation is an oral dialogue about a subject in ordinary language. Mayengo (2016) states that a conversation must be artistic and take the form of a dialogue. The following is an example from the play *Pango*:

Excerpt 12, Pg. 53

Ngwese: (to Kauleni) How are people over there?
 Kauleni: Pure jubilation! (laughter) Nowadays tea is not taken on ordinary bites; the talks about your triumph have become the bites, They have great hopes...
 Ngoi: (Interrupting) Yeah, they confess this is a new era!
 Ngwese: True eh? I knew that would happen! (Pointing at the newspaper) I see its even been written!
 Kauleni: Exactly! (laughter) we worked
 Ngoi: Very hard
 Ngwese: That is it, working in the scorching sun!
 Kauleni: Let's eat under the shade...others under the sun!
 Ngoi: Ehh and you know human beings don't like the success of others, what determines is your fate like it has done for our elder here.
 Ngwese: Haven't you heard issues arising ...?
 Kauleni: Elder, you know men are scaly; how can they miss words? But their noises are hens curses
 Ngoi: they will curse while the eagle flies high ...

This conversation has a number of phrases with hidden meanings. Kauleni says 'Nowadays tea is not taken on ordinary bites; the talks about your triumph have become the bites' meaning the talk of the village is about the success of Ngwese in election. In the debate people are likened to 'ngamba' for his talkative character. The Swahili proverb 'mchumia juani hulia kivulini' is also used by Ngwese to agree with Kauleni that they deserve to celebrate for their hard work. Ngoi on the other hand encourages Ngwese not to mind about peoples talks likening them to the cry of a hen as evident in the Swahili proverb, 'Laana za kuku hazimpatu mwewe' 'A hens curses do not affect the eagle'. This implies that Ngwese is like an eagle while the people are like the hen. In this conversation, the writer uses literary styles like proverbs, simile and metaphors which are all metaphoric (Gerard, 2008). In the play *Seserumbe*, Kembo and Sererumbe converse metaphorically as follows:

Excerpt 13, pg. 32-33

Kembo: But ants can kill an elephant.
 Seserumbe: (With laughter) Aahh...ahh... an ant to kill an elephant? Where on earth would that occur? May be in the world of oral narration! (More laughter) Aah ... ahh ... aah master! Those are the real Alnacha dreams! He who punches the wall hurts his fist and if you cannot cut it off, kiss it..
 Kembo: But... master, a sharp knife broke in a pumpkin!

This is part of a long conversation between Ngwese and Kembo. In this extract, Seserumbe is likened to an elephant while the people are likened to an ant. Kembo asks the minister if the insects can kill an elephant. Seserumbe denies this and says it can only happen in the world of storytelling. Kembo in his statement meant that the workers could unite and bring the leadership of Ngwese down, a fact that Ngwese denies. Kembo concludes by telling him that 'a sharp knife broke in a pumpkin'. The message here is metaphorically conveyed. The play *Sumu ya bafe*, begins with a metaphoric conversation between Bamkongwe and Mwapinduzi as follows:

Excerpt 14, pg.1-2

Bamkongwe: (Coughing) Mwapinduzi my grandchild you are back?
 Mwapinduzi: Yes, grandfather!
 Bamkongwe: Is it buried?
 Mwapinduzi: The puff adder?
 Bamkongwe: Yes, that snake, is it buried?
 Mwapinduzi: Yes, they say they buried it!
 Bamkongwe: Mwapinduzi, You don't believe yourself?
 Mwapinduzi: Surely grandfather, I'm terrified.

This conversation is about the burial of the snake. As earlier explained it refers to the freedom of the people from oppressive leadership and its effects. Mwapinduzi however shows discontent with the claim that the snake has been buried. Although the whole issue is discussed metaphorically, both characters understand the conversation. Benta, Makapile and 'Baba' Swahili word for 'father' also speak about the issue metaphorically. Makapile for instance on pg. 9 says: ' Mm..it was killed...(with consideration) But they have always said the snake was buried? Dint we even hold an occasion led by Mapepe? And Mapepe played the drum. He first held the fly switch then danced to the tune of the national songs...' This shows that Makapile too doesn't believe in the end of the oppressive era. Finally, Baba encourages his daughter to consider what Mwapinduzi tells her because he too is not sure if the snake was buried. In the play *Wingu la kupita* 'Mama' Swahili word for 'Mother' and 'Mwanamke'; 'Woman' also converse metaphorically:

Excerpt 15, pg 21

Mama: (*Shaking her head side by side*) That's human nature. You always think the state of another person is better than your own. That is what we mean when we say, when you see your home burning...

Mwanamke: Your neighbors home is being consumed. But this may just be temporary; Recently I heard children singing their amazing song.

Mama: (*Interrupting*) This song of the cloud doing what?

Mwanamke: Yes, passing, they say!

Mama: The song has sent them mad! So they even sing it at your place, I thought only our children sing it here?

This conversation is a lamentation of the women concerning the character of their husbands. Each of the women sees a fair situation in the home of the other hence the writer uses the Swahili proverb translated to English as 'when you see your home burning, know your neighbors home is being consumed' which is uttered by Mama and completed by Mwanamke. The two characters generally talk about the children's song about '*wingu la kupita*' ie 'The passing cloud'. Mama asks 'This song of the cloud doing what? Mwanamke responds 'Yes, passing, they say!' hence forming the conversation. This is also the title of the play which generally refers to a temporary state of events. It however has others connotations as well. Since the women are faced with the problem of their stubborn husbands, Mwanamke says such problems are mere passing clouds; meaning the problem is a temporary one. Mfungwa and Jaribosi while in custody also talk about 'The passing cloud' on pg.65-67 in reference to the problems of life being temporary. According to Vierke (2007) metaphoric language is greatly valued in conversations in different contexts. The use of other genre forms metaphorically shows the change in the form of the metaphor due to its character of intergenericity (Murimi, Obuchi & Kandagor, 2016). The metaphor thus changes its form due to its ability to assume other genre forms. Based on the element of change in Lakoffs' conceptual theory of the metaphor (Lakoff,1992), metaphors were previously regarded as an aspect of language and only referred to a word, a phrase or a sentence, today however it is used to refer to various forms in the conceptual system.

7. Conclusion

This paper has analyzed the changing trends in the form of the metaphor in Kiswahili literature with specific reference to K. W. Wamitilas' plays. The study showed that there is a change in the form of the metaphor from the traditional short form of saying as in Kiswahili oral literature to longer forms including genres in written literature. The metaphor has hence taken longer forms of other genres like the narrative, poem, song and conversation some of which found in written literature. This hence affects the definition and classification of the metaphor. The study hence suggests that a metaphor be defined as a text with a hidden meaning and that its classification should not only be confined to the genre of saying as in Kiswahili oral literature but also include other genres both in oral and written literature.

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