

**ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE ELEMENTS IN THE BUKUSU INITIATION RITUAL  
(*SIKHEBO*)**

**BY**

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**SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**MASENO UNIVERSITY**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own unaided work and it has not been submitted before for examination in any other University.

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## **DEDICATION**

In the loving memory of my late father Jason Mang'oli Khaemba. To my family: May this work be a living proof to them that hard work, patience and prayer always pay abundantly.

## ABSTRACT

Rituals mark rites of passages from one point to the next and involve performances worldwide. In Africa, rituals are performed during birth, initiation, marriage and death ceremonies. The Bukusu community practices rituals and one of them is *sikhebo* where boys are initiated after every two years. Consequently, researches that have been conducted on *sikhebo* ritual deal with it as drama, as acculturation and its educative values. It was therefore, necessary to examine *sikhebo* ritual in order to unveil the narrative elements therein because the nature of the ritual as drama; acculturation and education are first and foremost narratives. The specific objectives were to: analyze plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element; to assess actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative; and to study themes and meaning in the narrative. The study adopted the theory of narratology that was propounded by Todorov (1969) and transformed by Groden, Kreiswirth and Sweman (2012) to deal with text and form in narratives. The study used three tenets of the narratology theory, firstly, the tenet which states that a narrative is composed of unique sequence of events met the first study objective that investigated plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element; secondly the tenet which states that events in a narrative include characters met the second objective that assessed the actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative and lastly the tenet which states that themes are evident in narrative met the third objective that studied themes and meaning in the narrative. The study adopted the ethnographic research design that assisted to formulate the research questions on *sikhebo* ritual. The study area was Bungoma North Sub-County. The suitability of the area is that it is inhabited by the Bukusu who practice *sikhebo* ritual. The study was restricted to one live performance of *sikhebo* ritual comprising one male initiate who defined the scope of this undertaking. Purposive sampling was used to get one initiate, his parents and other people who made up *sikhebo* ritual narrative. Primary data was got using non-participant observation, videotaping the entire *sikhebo* ritual with the assistance of two research assistants and interview whereby two key informants shed light on observation check-list. Secondary data was assembled by extraction from selected commentary and documenting the required information. Data collected was analyzed using textual analysis, codified based on the study objectives and presented in continuous prose. The study found out that *sikhebo* ritual is replete with plot as narrative element, characterization and role of various characters in the narrative and themes and meaning in narrative. The study concluded that *sikhebo* ritual takes a narrative structure governed by Freytag's dramatic model in MacEwan that include exposition, the inciting incident, the rising action, climax, falling action and denouement; actual characterization and characters roles in the narrative, themes and meaning in narrative. The findings on an analysis of narrative elements in the Bukusu initiation ritual *sikhebo* is useful in expanding existing knowledge in literary and orature studies as well as teaching performance stylistic devices in literature and performing arts. The study suggests a similar study to be carried out to deal with the initiate who fears the knife. Secondly, a study should be done to assess characterization and role of the girl child in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative. Lastly, further studies should be conducted to study masculinity as a theme in *sikhebo* ritual and its meaning as narrative.

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## GLOSSARY

- Bakoki:** Initiates circumcised the same year.
- Basakhulu:** The Bukusu men aged above seventy years who are well versed with the performance of the Bukusu male circumcision ritual *sikhebo*.
- Birere:** Metal rings worn on both wrists of the initiate on which jingles are struck.
- Busaa:** Traditional brew made by mixing fried maize dough known as *kamalwa kamakhalange* and yeast.
- Buse:** Contents from animal's stomach.
- Chinyimba:** Bells that the initiate strikes on metal rings worn on his wrists.
- Chirungu//Bicholong'o:** Clubs/sticks carried shoulder high by the male escorts while singing and dancing.
- Ebukhocha:** Maternal uncle's place.
- Esitosi:** A place at the nearby swamp/river where the initiate is smeared with cold mud early in the morning on the circumcision day.
- Etiang'i:** Sacred spot where the initiate stands during the ritual cut.
- Kamakomeri:** Beads used to decorate the initiate's chest and back.
- Khubeka:** The act of shaving the initiate's hair to shed off boyhood by the paternal aunt.
- Khubita chigembe:** Involves the ordaining of the circumcision knives. The ritual involves offering sacrifices to the ancestors and gods to protect and bless the circumcisers during the circumcision period.
- Khubita:** A ritual whereby, the circumciser advises the initiate to behave as a mature member one month after the ritual cut.
- Khuchukhila:** A ritual that involves mixing fermented fried sorghum or maize flour with yeast known as *limela* in a special pot known as *esachi* to prepare local brew known as *busaa* for visitors.
- Khukambila:** Final pieces of advice given to the initiate by the male elder during the pass-out rite.
- Khukhwosia lusanja:** Involves the lighting of twigs or setting the twigs on fire on the eve of the pass-out day.
- Khulanga:** The act of the initiate inviting relatives, friends and neighbours to attend the circumcision ceremony.

- Khulonga:*** The art of smearing the initiate with mud from the swamp.
- Khulumia:*** The ritual that involves the circumciser feeding the initiate with half-roasted meat and *ugali* to usher him to take part in other rituals that enable him to intermingle with members of the community on the circumcision day.
- Khuminya:*** Involves singing and dancing to circumcision songs.
- Khurona:*** The art of decorating the initiate with body art and ornaments for identification.
- Likhoni:*** The rite where the maternal uncle slaughters a bull and dresses a brisket around the initiate's neck as a sign of honour.
- Limela:*** Fermented millet that is mixed with fried fermented maize flour that is used to prepare local brew known as *busaa*.
- Lugembe:*** A knife used to circumcise the initiate.
- Musialukho:*** The third day after the ritual cut when the initiate is allowed to intermingle with others in the neighbourhood.
- Sikhebo:*** Entails the entire ritual performance process whereby the Bukusu boys graduate to adulthood through a series of rituals. Each ritual has defined and selected events.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Characterization:** description and information provided about the characters in a story.

**Narrative:** the account of events, experiences, and details, it also refers to the story telling process.

**Plot:** The sequence of events in which each event affects the next one through the principle of cause and effect.

**Ritual Performance:** A set of actions of words performed in a regular way, often as part of a religious ceremony.

**Themes:** what the story is truly about as its core

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

#### 1.1.1 Overview of Rites of Passage

De Gruyter (2013) argues that it is fruitful to bring together ritual and narrative because they provide structure and meaning in people's lives for they appeal to the emotions and both create worlds which have enchanted participants and readers for thousands of years. Fuller (1994) postulates that in England, many of the rites of passage that young people undergo are connected with their progress through the educational system that take narrative form. According to the author, other rites of passage include getting a first job, being promoted, getting married, having children and retiring in one's sixties. Byron (2012) stipulates that the rites of passage which people in the United States typically experience follow a chronological, youth oriented line. Byron (ibid) states that typical rites of passage are baptisms, bar mitavahs and confirmations, school graduation ceremonies, weddings, retirement parties and funerals.

According to Nwadiokwu, Favour and Okwuazun (2016), African rituals that follow a stipulated order are performed by communities to mark the passage during birth, naming, initiation, marriage and death ceremonies. Mbithi (1969) stipulates that Kenyan communities perform sequential rites of passage during birth, naming, initiation, marriage and death ceremonies. Makila (1978) postulates that among the Bukusu community, rites of passage conducted deal with naming whereby children are named after their immediate deceased relatives, initiation involves transformation from boyhood to manhood, marriage involves a man and a woman coming together to propagate the community's lineage and funeral involves activities that are done after a member of the community dies. According to Makila (ibid), each rite of passage among the Bukusu

community follows a chronological order and is replete with performances like song and dance. Wasike (2013) argues that all the Bukusu rites of passage are performed to both male and female characters except *sikhebo* that is strictly performed to depict the masculine nature of men. Makila (1986) asserts that the Bukusu community practices male circumcision ritual known as *sikhebo* during even years in the months of August to December to male children aged between twelve and sixteen years.

Were (1967), Makila (1986), and Bulimo (2013) contend that the Bukusu community is one of the seventeen sub-tribes that comprise the Luhya cluster of interlacustrine Bantu tribes of the Bantu group. The authors posit that the Bukusu is the most populous of the Abaluhya sub groups forming about 17-20 percent of the estimated six million Abaluhya. They are composed of more than two hundred clans. Were (ibid), Makila (ibid) and Bulimo (ibid) postulate that the Bukusu community live mainly in Bungoma County but a large number spill to Trans Nzoia and Kakamega counties. According to Wanyama (2005), *sikhebo* ritual is mythical. The ritual was initiated after Mango planned the attack and single handedly fought and killed the serpent that used to terrify beasts and human beings at Mwiala in Kakapel Teso land in Busia County. The Barwa, a sub-clan among the Sabot tribe who practices male circumcision were astonished by Mango's bravery as a result, decided to circumcise him in order to earn status as a warrior. Thereafter, they gave him a girl to marry as present. From that time, the Bukusu adopted *sikhebo* ritual as an act of bravery and a rite of passage. Were (2014) argues that among the Bukusu community, boys who are circumcised in hospital are not respected because they are seen to have missed complete system of knowledge in their lives. *Sikhebo* ritual involves analysis of plot as a narrative element, actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative and themes and meaning in narrative that should be subjected to literary analysis and documented for wider readership.

### **1.1.2 Background to the Study**

Winter (2021) postulates that in Britain, Bonfire Night or Guy Fawkes Night is celebrated every year on 5<sup>th</sup> November. According to the author, the tradition of lighting bonfires celebrates the failure of a conspiracy to blow up King James 1 and parliament on 5<sup>th</sup> November 1605. Winter (ibid) adds that it also keeps alive the ancient Celtic Samhain fire festival of late October and early November. Following the failure of the gun powder plot, 5<sup>th</sup> November was declared a national day of thanksgiving, it has been traditionally marked with bonfires, fire works and parades whereby effigies of one of the conspirators, Guy Fawkes, are burned on the bonfires. Winter's (2021) view that in Britain, Bonfire Night or Guy Fawkes Night is celebrated every year on 5<sup>th</sup> November was instructive to the study that analyzed plot in ritual as a narrative element.

According to Marchi (2006), in many Latin American countries, the "Days of the Dead" are observed on November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> by the Roman Catholics. Marchi (ibid) asserts that "Day of all souls" is a syncretic mix of Catholic beliefs and indigenous practices of honoring the ancestors. The two days are considered as one holiday throughout Latin America. The author adds that rituals are celebrated in diverse ways from country to country and from religion to religion within countries; but key practices of this holiday include any of the following: sprucing up family gravesites by weeding, cleaning and repainting them and refurbishing crosses; bringing flowers or other mementos to gravesites: constructing home alters to honour the departed; preparing special foods and beverages for the ancestral spirits traditionally believed to visit the living on these dates or simply eating specific foods prepared only at this time of year and attending catholic mass to pray for the departed. Marchi's (ibid) assertion that two days are put aside in Latin American countries to honor the departed souls informed the study that assessed the narrative elements in ritual performance.

The eminence of narration in rituals has steadily increased in the recent past just as witnessed in the normal literary prose works like stories. Freytag (1896) in MacEwan (2010) argues that a narrative embraces six stages namely: exposition, inciting incidents, rising actions, climax, falling action and denouement that create an emotional curve that directs the audience to a complete appreciation of the story telling exercise.

The concept of plot in rituals has been highlighted in researches among the Zambia people. Mutunda (2016) affirms that there are three essential distinct stages in the male circumcision ritual among the Zambia people. The first being preparation which usually begins when a village headman (*chilolo*) or an important elder, having reached consensus with families of the young uncircumcised boys, publicly announces that time for the *mukanda* (circumcision) has come. The candidates are then gathered at the sacred place where they are circumcised using a special knife designed for the ceremony. The author adds that boys and young men are taught that circumcision increases virility and sexual performance, their attractiveness to girls and women and their dominance over youth who are not circumcised and therefore, seen as 'weaklings'. The second stage is the seclusion, during which the initiates are taught skills such as *makishi* (masks making, wood-carving, basketry, smithing and other practical skills). The candidates are allowed to play games and engage in sports. The curriculum includes cultural training and instruction in the ancient form of design and calculus known as (*tusona*), which is a tradition of ideographic tracing that are made in sand. The third and final stage is graduation or (*kulovola*) which is marked by various activities as boys are welcomed back into their community, where they are received joyously as newly born and real men. Mutunda's (2016) take that a ritual follows a sequence of events informed the study. The study analyzed plot in ritual performance as a narrative element.



Examining plot witnessed among the Tiriki people, Senoga-Zake (2000) stipulates that during the Tiriki male circumcision ceremony, preparation begins once the father has decided on the son to get circumcised. The first encounter is when the initiates are lined by recent circumcised boys in the forest in the ceremony known as *chisulu*. The following day, the initiates are circumcised. As soon as this is done, they wear masks known as *ingolole* to hide their identity during the village dance. Senoga-Zake (ibid) view that ritual performance follows a stipulated order informed the study that analyzed plot in ritual performance as a narrative element.

Characters in rituals are assigned specific roles. Ikenga-Metuh (1987) examines performers' roles in initiation ceremony among the Egungun of Yoruba. The author's view is that there are specified individual roles during the graduation rites. Ikenga-Metuh (ibid) states that the initiates are welcomed by loud songs and dancing when they come back from the seclusion camp by the young men who were circumcised recently. They are then led into the open place through the bush, with heads totally covered using pieces of cloth. Old men encircle the initiates, forming a fence with pieces of cloth around them. The author's take that performers are assigned specific roles in ritual performance informed the study that assessed actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative.

Nwandu (2012) argues that special roles assigned to specific people in the Umulumgbe funeral ritual are examples of reincorporation strategies. The roles are meant to assign new responsibilities to individuals in dealing with death. The first daughter of the departed is assigned the task of providing *iheikporihu* (this is a special female animal which the first daughter of the departed presents to the male elders known as *umuada*). This same case applies to the son who presents a male animal known as *ewueda* to the relatives of the departed. These children are made to realize

that they depend upon for many things in the family just like the *umuanda*. The whole action is therefore, a way of dealing with loss. It is also a way of 'ending' the mourning and setting life back to normalcy. In the ritual, the first grandson, the first daughter and the great granddaughter, are taken through similar initiation. As a matter of consciousness of life after death, the Umulumgbe know the specific places the various clans occupy in the next world. Nwandu's (ibid) view that different roles are assigned to participants in Umulumgbe funeral ritual based on gender was vital the study. The study analyzed actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative.

Commenting on informal education as a dominant theme in ritual performance, Simiyu (1990) confirms that the education given to initiates places emphasis on the learning of practical skills and the acquisition of knowledge, which is useful to the individual and the society as a whole. The education puts emphasis on social responsibility, job orientation, political participation and spiritual moral values. According to Simiyu (ibid) it is after a person is circumcised that he is allowed to join a new class of adults to take up new responsibilities. Simiyu's (ibid) take that informal education as a theme is evident during ritual performance informed the study that studied themes and meaning in the narrative.

Ronoh (2008) argues that informal education as a theme is evident in the Maasai initiation ceremony. The author states that for Maasai youth, elaborate training and learning through the medium of indigenous learning took place just after circumcision. Ronoh (2008) adds that upon being circumcised, Maasai girls received intensive education on their culture and expectations before getting married. The author stipulates that the main aim of this type of education was to make them responsible adults and to prepare them for their future roles in society. Ronoh (ibid)

stipulates that the Maasai boys receive less intense education immediately after circumcision. Instead, after recuperation newly circumcised Maasai boys proceed to the Moran system of barracks life during which they obtain comprehensive indigenous teaching, learning and training on indigenous subjects by use of proverbs whose attributes are of particular interest to the Maasai as a pastoral society living in a harsh environment. Ronoh's (ibid) view that informal education is evident during seclusion stage among the Maasai was instructive to the study that studied themes and meaning in narrative.

Authors who have carried out empirical research on circumcision rituals among the Bukusu community include Wanyama (2005), Were (2014) and Wanjala (2015). Wanyama (ibid) dealt with a shift in form and content in the performance of circumcision music among the Bukusu. The author stipulates that the Bukusu circumcision music is deeply rooted in myths, taboos and beliefs that form the basic philosophical foundations of the community's cultural foundations. The study assessed myths, taboos and beliefs in ritual performance as narrative elements. Were (ibid) examined how the Bukusu traditional initiation is considered as a form of education and drama. The author asserts that the Bukusu are more concerned with the preparation of their sons into adults in order to perpetuate the community's lineage and culture. The study investigated the actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative. Wanjala (ibid) dealt with the integration of orature in form of songs; recitation, chants, proverbs, ululations and war cries in *sikhebo* among the Bukusu community. The study examined themes and meaning in orature that is integrated in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The previous studies that have been conducted on rituals dealt with drama, acculturation and its educative values. For instance, Senoga-Zake and Mutunda dealt with the dramatic elements in rituals in the Tiriki and Zambia initiation ceremony respectively, Ikenga-Metuh and Nwandu dealt with characters roles in initiation ceremony among the Egungun of Yoruba and Nwandu dealt with special roles assigned to specific people in the Umulumgbe funeral ritual. Ronoh and Omwansa dealt with rituals as means of transmitting values and ideals to the initiates during the Maasai and Abagusi initiation ceremonies. Authors who have carried out empirical research on the Bukusu circumcision ritual known as *sikhebo* include Wanyama, Were and Wanjala. Wanyama (ibid) dealt with songs as an integral component of transmitting Bukusu's community's values and ideals, Were (ibid) examined *sikhebo* ritual as drama and education and Wanjala (ibid) dealt with the integration of orature in form of songs; recitation, chants, proverbs, ululations and war cries in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community. From the previous studies discussed, it is necessary to analyze narrative elements in rituals because the nature of ritual as drama; acculturation and education are first and foremost narratives. The study analyzed *sikhebo* ritual in order to unveil it as narrative. The study analyzed plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element, assessed actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative and studied themes and meaning in narrative.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. How is plot analyzed in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element?
2. What are actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative?
3. How are themes and meaning brought out in narrative?

#### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of the study was to analyze narrative elements in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Analyze plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element.
2. Assess actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative.
3. Study themes and meaning in narrative.

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

There are certain salient factors that justified the undertaking of this study. The research findings on an analysis of narrative elements in the Bukusu initiation ritual *sikhebo* would be useful in the expansion of knowledge in literary and orature studies, teaching performance stylistic devices in literature and performing arts in learning institutions and teaching and learning literature (oral and written) at different levels of learning.

#### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study dealt with an analysis of narrative elements in the Bukusu initiation ritual *sikhebo*. Specifically, the study analyzed plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element, assessed actual characterization and role of various characters in the ritual and studied themes and meaning in narrative. The study dealt with *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu as a complete cycle. The study adopted three tenets of the theory of narratology. The first tenet that states that narrative is composed of a unique sequence of events met objective one that analyzed plot in *sikhebo* as a narrative element. The second tenet that states that a narrative includes characters met the second objective that assessed actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative. The

third objective that states that themes are evident in narrative met the third objective that studied themes and meaning in narrative. However, the study did not investigate: what happens incase the initiate fears the knife during performance, the place of girls in *sikhebo* ritual and masculinity as a theme in *sikhebo* ritual.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

The study adopted the theory of narratology propounded by Todorov (1969) who used it in his book '*The Grammar of Decameron*'. The proponent defines the term narratology as 'the science of narrative'. Writing at the heyday of structuralism, of which narratology can be viewed as a sub-category, Todorov (ibid) and Barthes (1966) were thinking of producing a set of rules by which types of narrative could be classified. The writers were here following the Saussurean binary opposition of langue and parole, the former referring to the abstract system called language and the latter to the real utterances produced by human beings. However, as time passed, the validity of such a system was put into serious doubt, leading to a second generation of classical narratology. These narratologists including Genette (1980) and Stanzel (1984) are discourse oriented theorists who do not offer general rules for all narratives introduced their own typologies. Genette (ibid) focuses on how time and narrative are treated and Stanzel (ibid) deals with instances in narrative presentation in which the narrator narrates but his narration is coloured by the perspective of one of the characters in the story (focalization). The theory was modified by Groden, Kreishwirth and Sweman (2012) who stipulate that narratology aims at defining the narrative specific conventions governing narrative production and presentation.

The theory of naratology is derived from structuralism and semiotics. According to Genette (1988), the ambition of the structuralist proponents was to dig out the codes, systems and structures which governed any cultural activity and its products. The author stipulates that language and all other discourse and symbolic systems is constituted from the immanent relations among their component elements and grammar of these relations is liable to being discovered and formulated. Genette (ibid) asserts that if meaning exists, it is made possible by the underlying system of distinctions and conventions. Pains and Trimboli (2023) postulate that the semiotic approach to text and images has its roots in ancient Greek philosophy and children's literature, but it has found application in modern philosophy and the social sciences. According to the authors, this approach analyzes narrative function and text structure, drawing on studies and theoretical references.

Todorov (1969) and Genette's (1980) postulation that narratology involves a sequence of events met the first study objective that analyzed plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element. Stanzel's (1984) take that there are instances in narrative presentation in which the narrator narrates but his narration is coloured by the perspective of one of the characters in the story (focalization) met the second study objective that assessed actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative and Genette (1988), Pains and Trimboli (2023) argument that meaning exists in texts using language met the third study objective that studied themes and meaning in narrative.

Authors who have applied the narratology theoretical framework in their works include Chatman (1978), Genette (1980) and Fisher (1984). Chatman (ibid) argues that there should be a flexible basic model of narrative theory to deal with different types of narrative. To achieve this, Chatman (ibid) begins by following the typical division of the structuralist model breaking narrative into story (what is told) and discourse (how it is told). He breaks up a story into events which contain

actions and happenings and existents which includes characters. In *sikhebo* ritual, characters are real human beings in which the audience get the story. The characters are assigned roles based on gender and experience. Since, it is the male initiate who undergoes the ritual cut; major roles are taken by the male characters while the female characters take minor roles. The initiate acts as a main character whose roles run through the entire narrative. Chatman's (ibid) view that narratives involve characters met the second study objective that assessed actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative. This was realized by assessing individual roles of specification and participation based on the four stages of *sikhebo* ritual namely: preparation, ritual cut, seclusion and pass-out.

Genette's (1980) model for his study is linguistics. Genette (ibid) organizes the book *Proust's Remembrance of Things Past* under three main headings: tense, mood and voice. Tense itself is separately divided into order duration and frequency. The whole topic of frequency provides an answer to the question when? By order, Genette (ibid) means the temporal order of events in the story in relation to the order in which they are presented in the text. According to the author, meaning is achieved based on the overall configuration of the sequence as a whole. *Sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu follows a prescribed order religiously from the preparation stage to the ritual cut through seclusion and pass-out rite to ensure correctness. Genette's (ibid) stipulation that narrative is composed of a unique sequence of events met the first study objective that analyzed plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element. The study applied Freytag's (1896) dramatic model in MacEwan (2010) to embrace six basic stages of narrative namely: exposition, inciting incidents, rising actions, climax, falling action and denouement to analyze *sikhebo* ritual as a complete appreciation of the story telling exercise.



Fisher's (1984) narrative paradigm deals with themes. According to the author, themes are evident in narratives. Among the Bukusu community, it is during *sikhebo* ritual that themes of bravery, generosity, moral decadence, kinship, sexual issues, unity, role of ancestors and informal education are transmitted to the initiate and the community at large using songs, proverbs, dialogue and authoritative language. Fisher's (ibid) view that narrative deals with themes met the third study objective that studied themes and meaning in narrative. This was achieved by examining the themes that emanated from the entire ritual narrative.

## **1.8 Conclusion**

This chapter has been an expository one, presenting an exposition of the material to be used in the subsequent chapters. The chapter has presented the overview of rites of passage, the background to the study by elucidating the statement of the problem, research questions, study objectives, significance of the study, scope of the study and the theoretical framework of the study. The next chapter presents review of literature on plot in orature as a narrative element, characterization and role of various characters in ritual narratives and themes and meaning in performances.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a critical review of literature on plot, characterization and themes. The review was based on the following areas: plot in orature as a narrative element; characterization and role of various characters in ritual narratives and themes and meaning in performances.

#### **2.2 Plot in Orature as a Narrative Element**

Gale (2006) defines plot as the sequence of events in which each event affects the next one through the principle of cause and effect. The author adds that five components of plot include exposition, rising action, climax, falling action and resolution. According to Gale (ibid), exposition introduces all the main characters in the story, rising action is where a problem occurs and becomes more problematic and challenging while the climax is the point whereby nothing seems to get any worse. Resolution involves everything that was set into action falls into place to complete the narrative.

Booker (2006) asserts that there are four common plots in literature. The first one is flashback that presents actions or occurrences inconsequentially so that the author is able to deliver information about events that occurred earlier. The second type of plot is parallel where there is a structure that enables an author to combine or weave two or more dramatic plots in a story. In the parallel plot, the beginning is marked with multiple dramatic plots that run on their own up to their rising events but then crash together at the climax. The third type of plot is episodic that also employs a chronological structure. However, unlike dramatic plot which concentrates on a single event, an episodic consists of a series of loosely related incidents which are tied together by a common theme

or characters. The fourth type of plot is linear also called dramatic or progressive that presents actions or occurrences chronologically. This type of plot starts with an exposition and the conflict. After that, the rising action follows which leads to a climax. Soon after the climax, falling action emerges which brings the reader to the resolution. Most rituals performed in Africa follow the linear plot because characters who execute them are experienced, knowledgeable and authoritative thus, follow the stipulated procedures religiously to ensure correctness.

According to Robert and Jacobs (1987), plot is important in making the arrangement of the story and it is the idea that determines how the story will flow and relate one action to another in order to make a good organization. The authors argue that in a well plotted story, nothing is irrelevant, because everything is related. They observe that in the story, time is important not simply because one thing happens after another but because one thing happens because of the other. Robert and Jacobs (ibid) assert that aspects that form the backbone, skeleton or pattern of development include exposition which is the laying out, putting forth of the material in the story. The main characters, their backgrounds, their characteristics, goals, limitations and potentials are outlined. Complication marks the onset of the major conflict in the story. Crisis is the turning point, the separation between what has gone before and what will come after. Climax is the high point in the action in which the conflict and the consequent tension are brought out to the fullest extent and resolution or denouement is the set of actions that bring the story to its conclusion. Robert and Jacobs's (ibid) view that a story follows a pattern of development based on time informed the study. In the communities that perform rituals, time is set aside to perform specific rites that contribute to the successful narration.

In discussing the aspect of plot, Okpewho (1992) divides the work into three parts. The first part is the background and resources, where the author discusses what is oral literature and its importance. Okpewho (ibid) also examines aspects of the artist and the performance itself. This section is useful as it talks about the paralinguistic resources. The author's fourth chapter is also very useful as it deals with the stylistic qualities in an oral performance. The second part of the book deals with the classification of oral literature and the themes while chapter six deals with songs and chants. Okpewho (ibid) analyzes the problems of classification and the nature of songs. According to the author, this section helped to sort data and classify it. The last part deals with the survival of oral literature. He elucidates methods of presenting oral literature and conducting field work. Although Okpewho's (1992) work falls purely in oral literature, it contributes to the study because the work is divided into sections and rituals are divided into stages.

Staton (2007) argues that plot is a series of events in a story and how a certain event affects another. The author adds that the plot is the sequence of events in a story from the beginning, middle until the end. The author stipulates that with plot, the audiences know how groups/ideas come into conflict and proceed to the climax. It can be called the complication. According to the author, climax is the turning point in the action, the crisis at which the rising action reverses and becomes the falling action sometimes called the reversal. According to Staton (ibid), falling action is the second half of the dramatic plot. It follows the climax and often exhibits the winding down of the climax. The author asserts that resolution is the end of the falling action and the solution to the conflict which is not always a happy ending. The study concurs with Staton's (ibid) notion that plot follows a stipulated order. In rituals, the conflict is introduced at the beginning thereafter, grows where every member of the community takes part in the transformation. The conflict

intensifies up to the climax. After climax, there is the falling action that is followed with resolution. Nevertheless, the study departs from the author's notion that solution to the conflict is always a bad ending because in rituals, the solution to the conflict is a happy ending because a character attains what she/he wants.

According to Elsner (2015), plots share a common sequential structure – an emotional/rhetorical structure for systems using sentiment features or a chronological sequence for LDA. The study concurs with Elser (ibid) that plots share a common sequential structure because rituals follow a chronological order religiously from the beginning to the end as a result, creating a narrative. Nevertheless, the study disagrees with Elsner (ibid) that deviations from structural principles are a common way to create suspense or draw attention to the narrative as an artifact. The author states that in a 19<sup>th</sup> century example, the long flashback in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* breaks the chronological sequence to reveal the details of a character's mysterious past. In ritual performances, excutors are experienced and knowledgeable hence, follow strictly stipulated order such that correct outcome is re-assured. However, skipping one stage gives wrong results and forces a repeat of the entire ritual.

Highlighting the concept of plot amongst the Zambia people, Mutunda (2016) argues that there are three essential distinct stages in the male circumcision ritual among the Zambia people. The first being preparation which usually begins when a village headman (*chilolo*) or an important elder, having reached consensus with the families of the young uncircumcised boys, publicly announces that time for the *mukanda* (circumcision) has come. The candidates are then gathered at the sacred place where they are circumcised using a special knife designed for the ceremony. The author adds that boys and young men are taught that circumcision increases virility and sexual

performance, their attractiveness to girls and women and their dominance over youth who are not circumcised and therefore, seen as 'weaklings'. The second is the seclusion, during which the initiates are taught skills such as *makishi* (masks making, wood-carving, basketry, smithing and other practical skills). The candidates are allowed to play games and engage in sports. According to the author, the curriculum includes cultural training and instruction in the ancient form of design and calculus known as (*tusona*), which is a tradition of ideographic tracing that are made in sand. The third and final stage is graduation or (*kulovola*) which is marked by various activities as boys are welcomed back into their community, where they are received joyously as newly born and real men. Mutunda's (ibid) point that ritual performance among the Zambia people follows a stipulated pattern informed the study. Nonetheless, the author's notion that a very important elderly person reaches consensus with the families of the young uncircumcised boys to go for the cut differs with some communities where the initiate who attains the circumcision age voluntarily approaches his father to inform him of his intent to get circumcised. During this time, the initiate puts on a brave face and maintains eye contact. Immediately he is given the consent by the father to get circumcised, the story unfolds.

Commenting on plot among the Tiriki people, Senoga-Zake (2000) stipulates that during the Tiriki's male circumcision ceremony, preparation begins once the father has decided on the son to get circumcised. The first encounter is when the initiates are joined by recent circumcised boys in the forest in the ceremony known as *chisulu*. The following day, the initiates are circumcised. As soon as this is done, they wear masks known as *ingolole* to hide their Identity during the village dance. Senoga-Zake's (ibid) take that ritual performance follows a chronological order informed the study. However, the study disagrees with the author's notion that preparation of the Tiriki's male circumcision begins once the father decided on the son get circumcised. In many African

communities, the initiate who attains the circumcision age approaches his father voluntarily to inform him of his intent to get circumcised using direct address.

The literature reviews on analysis of plot in orature as narrative element revealed that rituals follow chronological sequences of events to ensure correctness. This section also revealed that narrative structure resolves around conflict. The next section assesses actual characterization and role of various characters in ritual narratives.

### **2.3 Characterization and Role of Various Characters in Ritual Narratives**

Abbott (2008) defines characterization as the arrangement of characters in the story. The author adds that a character is any entity in the story that has agency that is who is able to act in the environments of the storyworld. In rituals, characterization is the arrangement of female and male characters who take part in the performance either actively or passively.

Williams (1961) contends that through sacrifice, divination or the intensity of the dance, the consciousness of a devotee can be so transformed that the boundary between the ordinary and the extraordinary worlds becomes blurred. Williams (ibid) asserts that with the rhythm of drums, persons can literary dance in order to tap divine power. The author adds that performers can dance out their desires until they are mounted by a god and come into possession of a special identity. In ritual performances, dancing is closely related to drama for it is a way of making the performance attractive spectacle. According to Williams (1961), in dance, certain movements are specifically aimed at giving vivid emphasis on actions expressed in the songs. Turner (1977) concurs with Williams (ibid) that in ritual performances, characters are at liberty to break the laid down rules without reprimands through dance. In ritual performances worldwide, characters get inspired to

the extent that they become unconscious. The study examined characterization and character roles in ritual performance as narrative using song and dance.

Soyinka (1975) argues that each hour in an African's life affords him opportunity to express emotions of joy, sadness, victory or thanksgiving. The author says that these expressions are exhibited often with songs, dance or music and often all put together. Soyinka (ibid) contends that the language of music and the music of language are one. He adds that in one sense, the music of the play gives it its force, the reciprocal displacement of the language of music with the music of language. The author emphasizes the crucial weight to music as an indispensable vehicle of the ritual transition. Soyinka's (ibid) argument that play can be fully realized only through an evocation of music from the abyss of transition aided the study that assessed characterization and character roles in ritual performance as narrative using songs.

According to Kwakwa (1982), in ritual setting, symbolism provides visible, audible and tangible evidence of the beliefs and values that cannot be readily perceived. The author observes that symbolism is the totality of perspective based on the social and cultural values of the group is the essence of the African aesthetics. Trumbull (1991) agrees with Kwakwa (ibid) that symbolic or ritual actions, more than say, a textual expression or a verbal orientation define the vital dimension of reality. The author stipulates that ritual actions embody an account for the problematic, which is lived, practiced and experienced. Kwakwa (ibid) and Trumbull's (ibid) argument that performers in ritual take part in symbolic actions was vital to the study that assessed characterization and character roles in rituals as narrative.



Bauman (1986) asserts that the ritual is culture-specific meaning that it has to be understood through the interpretation of cultural symbols and elements manifest in the spoken language. According to the author, understanding of the process of ritual depends very much on the understanding of the language of performance. Bauman (ibid) says that this is because a subtle juxtaposition and fusion of the secular and sacred on a personal as well as the communal levels, which may be harder to detect unless one understands the language and pays particular attention to the entire process. In many traditional performances, characters use the languages that the audiences understand. Apart from language, characters use paralinguistic features that play an important role in ritual performance. Bauman (ibid) states that by their nature emerge within specific contexts as performative features that serve to intensify the creative-effect of an oral performance. Bauman's (ibid) view that characters use language and paralinguistic features to communicate during performance was instructive to the study that assessed characterization and character roles in the ritual as narrative.

Ikenga-Metuh (1987) examines characters' roles in initiation ceremony among the Egungun of Yoruba. His view is that there are specified individual roles during the graduation rites. The author states that the initiates are welcomed by loud songs and dancing when they come back from the seclusion camp by the young men who were circumcised recently. They are then led into the open place through the bush, with heads totally covered using pieces of cloth. Old men encircle the initiates, forming a fence with pieces of cloth around them. Ikenga-Metuh's (ibid) view that performers are assigned roles during the Egungun graduation rite informed the study. In many rituals performed worldwide, characters are assigned specific roles based on gender, experience

and record of accomplishment. The study assessed characterization and character roles in ritual as narrative.

Non-verbal and verbal cues used in performances are functional and symbolic. Wanyama (2005) argues that during *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community, characters use costume, make-up and ornaments that are functional and symbolic. The author adds that they identify the initiate and make him realize that he is the centre of focus as a result, gains courage to face the knife. According to Utoh-Ezeajugh (2006), ornaments do more than just decorate the body of an actor or a performer and are essential social-cultural significance and central in performance. La Fontaine (1994) stipulates that non-verbal aspects including the objects carried by and constructed around the initiates serve a communicative purpose. Muriuki (2021) contends that props are used in performances to communicate the culture of the performers. During ritual performances, costume, ornaments and body art are symbolic and functional. The study assessed characterization and character roles in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative using costume, ornaments, props and body art.

Commenting on characterization in rituals, Kasili (2006) argues that the female folk, in regard to the performance of *sikhebo* include the biological mother to the initiate, the initiate's paternal aunt and maternal uncle's wife. The author adds that moments before the initiate arrives on the spot for the cut known as *etiang'i*, the female folk are tasked to sit in one of the houses nearest to the spot. The initiate's mother sits at the centre of her house in the pattern of the sitting with their legs stretched. The women are required to remain in the sitting position with their legs stretched out straight until the operation is over. Once the male elders check and confirm that the operation is well done, the women are allowed to come out of the house and ululate. The ululations announce

success of circumcision. They also crown the initiate with presents for their demonstration of bravery. Kasili's (ibid) postulation that female characters take roles in *sikhebo* ritual during the ritual cut was helpful to the study. In many traditional rituals, characters are assigned roles based on gender, experience and record of accomplishment. The study examined characterization and character roles in rituals as narrative.

Kripke (2009) argues that the segregation arises from Greek ideas about the human body and the biological differences between males and females. Although women's bodies and voices were strictly controlled or semi secluded in most areas of ancient Greek public life, women did have important public roles in one area: religious ritual. Thus, as women worshipped, both male and female divinities acted as priests, performing many of the same activities, Greek ideas about the body affected ritual aspects for non-verbal behaviour, especially regarding clothing, voice and gesture. Rietz (1986) postulates that use of non-verbal cues play a significant role in the final analysis of meaning in that they advance a multi-channeled form of communication. According to Rietz (ibid), non-verbal cues ensure what the narrator fails to capture verbally is eventually realized. The author adds that through facial expressions, mimicry, tonal variations, gestures, body movements, dramatizations among others, the narrator is capable of revealing the mood of the narrative. In ritual performances, paralinguistic features like facial expressions, intonation, eye-balling and gesticulation emerge within specific contexts. The study examined characterization and character roles in ritual performance as manifested in the use of paralinguistic features as narrative.

Stanislavsky (2009) asserts that having decided on what the actions of the character; the actor produces a 'score of actions.' 'The path we take, artistically, is like a railway line that is divided into large medium – size and small stages and half stages. The author adds that it is this mental score of actions, containing objectives, obstacles and strategies, that the actor plays, not the play text or the emotions of the character or a conventionalized representation of the story/play. Crawford (2005) observes that because of the importance of characters in a story, a quality that is often cited is being crucial for the success of interactive storytelling is character believability. The author observes that it is often somewhat circularly – defined as a character's ability to suspend disbelief and if it provides a convincing portrayal of the personality they expect or come to expect. The authors' input that characters play vital roles in the performance aided the study. In rituals, characters play vital role as far development of plot is concerned. The study assessed characterization and character roles in rituals as narrative based on role of specification.

Omwansa (2011) contends that cries and ululations are part of the performance of *esimbore*. He describes these as the inflexible features of style because in all instances of their usage, they mark excitement. Omwansa (ibid) adds that ululation is a preserve of women while the escort men make war cries. The author adds that the time the initiate is escorted home by the male escorts is a moment of great joy. It portrays the attitude of the performers towards the occasion. The author says that ululations and cries enhance the mood of the performance. The happy mood of celebration is punctuated with the ululations by women and interjections of the cries by the escort men. Omwansa (ibid) argues that the happy mood is derived from the fact that the performance of *chinyangi chia bare* is an occasion that marks maturation and social development within society. Omwansa's (ibid) view that ritual performance involves specified individual roles based on gender

was helpful to the study. In many rituals, roles are assigned based on gender. The study examined characterization and character roles as narrative in rituals as manifested in war cries and ululations.

Nwandu (2012) asserts that the special roles assigned to specific people in the Umulumgbe funeral ritual are examples of reincorporation strategies. The roles are meant to assign new responsibilities to individuals in dealing with death. The first daughter of the departed is assigned the task of providing *iheikporihu* (this is a special female animal which the first daughter of the departed presents to the male elders known as *umuada*). The same case applies to the son who presents a male animal known as *ewueda* to the relatives of the departed. These children are made to realize that they depend upon for many things in the family just like the *umuanda*. The whole action is therefore, a way of dealing with loss. It is also a way of 'ending' the mourning and setting life back to normalcy. In the ritual, the first grandson, the first daughter and the great granddaughter, are taken through similar initiation. As a matter of consciousness of life after death, the Umulumgbe know the specific places the various clans occupy in the next world. According to the Umulumgbe myth of Ojebe Ojene, the geography of Umulumgbe has a precise replication in the spiritual world. Nwandu's (ibid) view that different roles are assigned to participants in Umulumgbe funeral ritual based on gender was instructive to the study. In ritual performances worldwide, characters are assigned roles based on gender. The study analyzed characterization and character roles in rituals as narrative based on individual roles.

Wanjala (2015) argues that during *khuchukhila*, that involves the preparation of local brew known as *busaa*, the initiate carries a small pot known as *esachi* given by his father on the left shoulder. Immediately he arrives home, he pours water into a small pot that is placed outside by the father.

Wanjala (ibid) adds that before the initiate arrives in the father's compound from the swamp on the circumcision day, the paternal aunt comes towards him running with a cooking stick known as *kumukango* that has been dipped in local brew known as *busaa*. She then makes a sign as if to hit the initiate with it. However, the initiate exerts all his efforts to block, an act that signifies his protective role in the family. After successful ritual cut, the initiate is appreciated with presents among them a girl who holds his waist because of fatigue to signify the gift in form of a girl that Mango was given by Barwa when he was circumcised. Additionally, on the eve of the pass-out day, the initiate's father burns the bedding the initiate was sleeping on during seclusion period to signify a new beginning. Equally, a male elder who is knowledgeable about the Bukusu culture do the administration of the final pieces of advice. Wanjala's (2015) input that ritual performance involves participation of both sexes was insightful to the study that analyzed characterization and character roles in rituals as narrative based on individual performances.

The literature reviews on characterization and role of various characters in ritual narratives have revealed that characterization and characters roles as narrative are evident in rituals. This section also revealed that characters are given specific scripted roles based on individual roles of specification and gender. The next section examines themes and meaning in performances.

#### **2.4 Themes and Meaning in Performances**

According to Sudjiman (1991), the theme is the main idea, ideas, or thought that underlies a literary work. The author adds that the main meaning or thought of a new story can be obtained after a deep search of the other elements that build the story.

Mbithi (1969) contends that initiation is one of the most important rituals meant to produce able-bodied youth force, labour, military and leadership. According to the author, some of the initiates can become entertainers, dancers or storytellers. Mbithi (ibid) says that initiation also cultivates solidarity among the youth that could be essential in the protection of the society. Makila (1978) argues that circumcision marks the end of childhood and is an introduction to manhood in moral behaviour and responsibility as well as exposing the child to traditional education. The author says that the transition is followed by a lot of education which includes marriage, sex education and self-identity. Were (2014) stipulates that circumcision among the Bukusu has come to be considered by the community as an identity-conveying process that opens the way to adulthood through informal education. Mbithi (ibid), Makila (ibid) and Were's (ibid) postulation that initiation teaches the initiate communities values and ideals informed the study. Rituals worldwide teach the entire communities customs and culture. The study examined themes and meaning as narrative in ritual performance based on individual roles.

Contributing to informal education during ritual performance, Rodney (1989) argues that there is effective African traditional education through proverbs, songs and sayings, which is tangible, definite and intelligible. It is essentially an education for living with the main aim of preparing the youth for adult life. It is education intertwined with social life and meant to socialize the young into norms and beliefs of the wider society. Simiyu (1990) asserts that the education given to initiates places emphasis on the learning of practical skills and the acquisition of knowledge, which is useful to the individual and the society as a whole. The education puts emphasis on social responsibility, job orientation, political participation and spiritual moral values. It is after a person is circumcised that he is allowed to join a new class of adults to take up new responsibilities.

Rodney (1989) and Simiyu's (1990) view that informal education is evident in ritual performances informed the study. In many communities, it is during the initiation period that the initiates are taught customs, traditions, beliefs, norms, morality and good social values and ideals. The study examined themes and meaning in the teachings that the initiate receives during ritual performance as narrative.

Commenting on thematic issues in ritual performances, Wanyama (2005) contends that there is aesthetics in the Bukusu circumcision songs marked by the use of satire that has educative and social control functions for the initiates and the community at large. Wanyama's (ibid) observation that satire has educative and social functions for the initiates and the community at large was instrumental to the study. In rituals, some songs criticize human weakness and faults with ultimate aim of bringing about reform and keeping other people from falling into similar vices. The study analyzed themes and meaning in ritual performance as narrative using different literary techniques.

Childs and Fowler (2006) stipulate that themes are identified through dialogue, actions and manifestations in the actions of the major characters as they interact with other characters in the play. The authors add that the interpersonal relationships of the characters help to highlight and advance particular idea. According to Childs and Fowler (ibid), the important factor is that there is an important message that he sends to the audience. The authors' take that themes are identified through dialogue, actions and manifestations in the actions of the major characters as they interact with others in the play informed the study. In many rituals, themes are realized through dialogue. The study analyzed themes and meaning as narrative in ritual performance using dialogue as a literary technique.



Soyinka (2007) terms a ritual as a theatrical medium in which societal or the collective consciousness is impacted to its people. Soyinka (ibid) shares a Jungian concept of myth and ritual as the natural effluence of man's yearning for spiritual meaning in life. According to the author, it is in ritual that aspects of cultural sets of behaviour or customs are transmitted to its people. The author avers that the dramatic performance of recognizable rite is drawn from the mythical heritage of the community in the ritual. Through submergence in the ritual, members of the community emerge with a new consciousness of themselves as individuals and a community. Therefore, Soyinka (2007) uses the ritual formant to express his consciousness of socio-political imperatives precisely because of its communal or audience affective qualities. As such, the playwright envisages the consequent awakening of communal consciousness to be the preliminary step towards change or action. Soyinka's (2007) view that through submergence in the ritual, members of the community emerge with a new consciousness informed the study. In ritual performances, characters are transformed from one state to another. The study evaluated themes and meaning in rituals as narrative.

Ronoh (2008) argues that for Maasai youths, elaborate training and learning through the medium of indigenous learning took place just after circumcision. Upon being circumcised, Maasai girls received intensive education on their culture and expectations before getting married. Ronoh (ibid) adds that the main aim of this type of education was to make them responsible adults and to prepare them for their future roles in society. According to the author, the Maasai boys receive less intense education immediately after circumcision. Instead, after recuperation newly circumcised Maasai boys proceed to the Moran system of barracks life during which they obtain comprehensive indigenous teaching, learning and training on indigenous subjects by use of proverbs whose

attributes are of particular interest to the Maasai as a pastoral society living in a harsh environment. The study concurs with Ronoh (ibid) that informal education is evident during seclusion stage among the Maasai community. In many initiation ritual performances, it is during the seclusion stage that the initiates are taught values, beliefs and ideals. The study assessed the teachings that the initiates receive during seclusion stage in initiation rituals as narrative.

The study however, departs from Ronoh's (2008) notion that among the Maasai youths, elaborate training and learning through the medium of indigenous learning took place just after circumcision where the initiates received intensive education on their culture and expectations. In African communities, informal education begins immediately the initiates declared the intent to get circumcised up to the time they graduate. During this time, they are taught community's customs, traditions, beliefs, norms, morality, values and ideals through songs, proverbs, self-praises and dialogue. Equally, characters who execute rituals are experienced and of good morals act as role model to the initiates and the members of communities at large. The study examined themes and meaning in ritual as narrative using songs, proverbs, self-praises and dialogue.

Musungu (2016) contends that dominant themes in Bukusu oral narrative performance include heroism, social justice, friendship and honesty, generosity and hospitality, love and affection as well as hatred and jealousy. According to the author, these themes are critical in the construction of Bukusu perceptions on personal and communal relationships. Musungu (ibid) says that a close look at the narrative in which these themes are suggested reveal the presence of Bukusu perceptions on a number of issues at the core of Bukusu way of life. For instance, it has emerged that the Bukusu community demands for self-sufficiency and condemns over dependency at all

levels. At the same time, the community advocates for gratitude whenever we receive any form of assistance from those we interact with. Similarly, vices like ingratitude and laziness are condemned and those who exhibit such characterizations are considered as outsiders since they fail to live according to the African worldview. Musungu's (ibid) view that the Bukusu oral narrative performance includes dominant themes was instrumental to the study. Many communities have narratives that teach members of the community cherished virtues. The study analyzed themes and meaning in ritual performance as narrative using orature.

Commenting on the major thematic concerns that feature prominently in 2014 FIFA world-cup, Kioko (2019) stipulates that themes are conveyed using a variety of literary techniques mirror postmodern standpoints. The author adds that the commentators' utterances abound with references to spirituality and the supernatural. According to Kioko (ibid), a good number of these spiritual expressions exhibit key postmodern ideals such as parody playfulness and irony. However, the commentaries portray these spiritual endeavours as having no discernible impact on match results. The author argues that the commentaries also expose various acts of narcissism, vanity and hero worship. Kioko (ibid) contends that the tournament endeavoured to celebrate equality, universality and the enjoyment of basic human rights. The author's argument that thematic concerns conveyed using a variety of literary techniques are evident in 2014 FIFA world cup was vital to the study. In ritual performances, themes are depicted using different literary techniques. The study investigated themes and meaning in ritual as narrative using different literary techniques.

Literature review on the study of themes and meaning in performances showed that characters and writers seek to communicate to the audience and readers important issues like morality, bravery, heroism, social justice, friendship, honest, generosity, hospitality, love, affection, hatred, jealous, vanity, narcissism, equality and universality that affect them using different literary techniques that include satire, symbolism, allusion and proverbs. The next section analyzes review of literature related to the narratology theoretical framework.

## **2.5 Review of Literature Related to the Narratology Theoretical Framework**

The narratology theoretical framework has been applied in some contemporary studies of varied context. Jones (1999) who has studied the female characters of Joseph Conrad focuses on Winnie Verloc in *The Secret Agent* and maintains that Conrad presents the deeds of his female murderers like Winnie Verloc in *The Secret Agent* from an ambivalent perspective using an omniscient rather than a dramatized narrator. However, there are other Couradians who stand far from this neglect of or marginalisation of the narrator in *The Secret Agent*. Greaney (2002), for instance, believes that there is no central character in the novel and the narrator occupies the role of the protagonist of the novel. Though the author rightly underscores the centrality of the narrator in the novel, Greaney's (ibid) lack of anthropomorphic characteristics and his distance from the diegesis, standing outside the narrative as a keen observer, hardly encourages us to consider him as a character. Jones (1999) and Greaney's (2002) view that characters play vital roles in performances aided the study to assess actual characterization and role of various characters in the ritual as narrative.

In the contribution to the field of narratology, Ryan (1999) in what she designates as narrator hood in a short essay entitled *The Narratonal Functions: Breaking Down a Theoretical Primitive*

maintains that Barthes and Foucault opened up the notion of author to examine its inner organs, the operation was considered generally successful but the patient died. On the other hand, as the author notes, the narrator has been protected from this fatal deconstruction so far. This is for the simple fact that if we believe in the existence of a narrative act, we can never deny the existence of a narrator to communicate the act. The author has briefly noted that the concept of author as referred to in narratology before Barthes and Foucault is a simplification that cannot hold any longer. More specifically, it is first and foremost an extra-textual entity which was not in the domain of narratology proper until the introduction of new trends in narratology in recent years and second, the concept of author is really beyond narratological scrutiny. It is more related to the context rather than the text itself. Likewise, the concept of implied author as the version of the author established in each specific text, which has been introduced by some narratologists to replace the concept of author is just a theoretical entity which does not have a material presence in the text. Therefore, sticking to the narrator is a more profitable task. The application of Ryan's (ibid) different functions of the narrator can be a useful theoretical narratological framework to evaluate and analyze a fictional work as narrative as well as food for ritual narrative.

In *Fictional Minds*, Palmer (2004) as the author's title suggests focuses on the presentation of fictional minds. Palmer (ibid) begins the argument with the interest of narratologists in the presentation of consciousness in fiction. The work that classical narratologists have done concerning consciousness presentation in fiction is related to what the author designates as the internalist perspective. This follows their assumption concerning the centrality of the text and the exclusion of the reader. The author however, maintains that the internalist perspective is only half of the issue in question, problematizing one of the central concepts of classical narratology. The author believes that the assumption that a narrative is a sequence of events governed by temporality

and causality should not be the central issue in narratology because fictional narrative is, in essence, the presentation of mental functioning. Palmer (ibid) argues that events in the story world are of little importance unless they become the experiences of characters. The author stipulates that events can occur independently of characters but they will on the whole, only have significance for narrative because of their effect on those characters' minds. However, in ritual performances, performers act until they are possessed to the extent that they break the laid down rules without reprimand.

Zunshine (2006) maintains that the attribution of mental states to literary characters is crucially mediated by the workings of our metapresentational ability. The author defines metarepresentationality as the quality which fictional narratives rely on in order to manipulate, and titillate our tendency to keep track of *who* thought, wanted, and felt *what* and *when*. By metarepresentation, then, Zunshine (ibid) means the reader's ability to follow the informatics presented in the novel and the reader's revision of his/her changes of outlook during the course of his/her reading. For instance, in the *Secret Agent*, the title of the novel activates the schemata in the mind of the reader to prepare him for a detective story, but this preliminary assumption is to be revisited when we observe Mr Verloc as a shopkeeper who is leaving his shop. However, the reader is later tempted to go back to his detective schema as the shopkeeper is named as the protector of the society. The author finally maintains that metarepresentation is actually based on theory of mind. Sunshine's (ibid) attribution of mental states in literary characters is crucially mediated by the workings of metapresentational ability was applied to orature, in ritual narratives and ritual performances.

McGowan and Bell (2013) examine the use of temporal and spatial manipulation techniques to subvert the concepts of time and space in the contemporary fiction and film. On the other hand,

there is Kioko (2019) who examined the literary and performance features of 2014 FIFA world cup television football commentary. The authors employed the narratological concepts to accommodate the narratological analysis of other domains such as drama, film, music and the visual and performing arts. The study used the narratological theoretical framework to examine orature, ritual narratives and performances in rituals.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

The critically reviewed literature in this chapter reveals that *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community has attracted a lot of attention. However, it may be difficult to delineate the fine details on the analysis of narrative elements in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community. Therefore, there is need for critics to conduct studies that constitute a more crystallizing platform in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu which are disguised in the narrative sensibility. Hence, it is not possible to say adequate research has been conducted in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community as a narrative piece. In fact, the works cited in this review do not sufficiently deal with the matter in question. Even if they do, insufficient evidence from *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu has not been addressed. Such lack of adequate evidential materials reduces most of the commentaries highlighted to over-generalization. Hence, there are very significant critical gaps that arise from the reviews. It was the intent of this study to attempt to fill these gaps by subjecting *sikhebo* ritual to further investigation to analyze it as a narrative element. The next chapter

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research design and the study area. It also discusses the sample size, sampling techniques and procedures that were applied in the study. Moreover, the chapter discusses the tools and procedures that were used to obtain the required data and the validity and reliability of the instruments. The chapter discusses the data analysis steps, interpretation of data collected and the ethical considerations that were made during the study.

#### 3.2 Research Design

The study adopted the ethnographic research design to meet the objectives of the study. According to Wanyama and Egesa (2015), ethnographic research design employed in the study collects data of events as they happen in a cultural context. The authors add that the research design combines the emic view of an insider (first author) with the ethic view of an outsider (second author) to describe the ritual setting, meaning and rationale as the researcher realizes; resulting in deep description which is fuller than that of ordinary outsider and broader and less culture bound than that of ordinary insider. The study was conducted from 5<sup>th</sup> April 2018, immediately the initiate declared the intent to get circumcised upto 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018, when he obtained a circumcision age-set and was taught community's values and ideals. The first study objective that sought to investigate plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element was achieved by observing a phased ethnographic detail of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu as a complete planned cycle from the preparation to ritual cut through seclusion and pass-out stage. The second objective assessed actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative. This was realized by observing



individual roles of specifications and participation based on the four stages of *sikhebo* ritual. The third objective studied themes and meaning in narrative. This was achieved by examining the themes and meaning that emanated from the entire ritual as narrative.

### **3.3 Study Area**

The study was conducted in the geographical area of Bungoma North Sub County of Bungoma County. The Sub County is divided into twelve administrative locations namely: Mukuyuni, Mbakalo, Milima, Kabuyefwe, Naitiri, Kakamwe, Soysambu, Mitua, Tongaren, Ndalua, Kiminini and Kibisi. According to GOK (2013), Bungoma County is located on the Southern slopes of Mt. Elgon which forms the apex of the County. It borders the republic of Uganda to the North West, Trans-Nzoia County to the North East, Kakamega County to the East and South East, and Busia County to the West and South West. Bungoma North sub County borders Bungoma East sub County to the South West and Kimilili-Bungoma sub County to the West. The study got the narrative ritual from Tabani area of Kiminini location of Bungoma North Sub County by observing one live performance of *sikhebo* ritual that involved one initiate, his parents and other characters who took part in the ritual. A map showing the study area is displayed in appendix 3.

### **3.4 Study Population**

The study population comprise people who were to take part in *sikhebo* ritual and ritual narratives to be collected. The study targeted 3 live performances of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community in Tabani village, Kiminini location of Bungoma North Sub County that involved 3 male initiates and their parents. The other characters who played important roles were obtained/observed during performance. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) argue that a third of the

target population normally gives the required information with respect to the objectives of the study and this influenced the choice of the sample size in the following sub section.

### **3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

The study employed purposive sampling to obtain the characters and the audience. In this regard, the researcher with the help of the key informants purposively sampled 1 live performance among the Bukusu community from Tabani area of Kiminini location of Bungoma North Sub County involving a sample size of 1 male initiate, his parents and other people who made up *sikhebo* ritual narrative were obtained/observed during performance. Apart from the initiate, all characters in the ritual acted as the audience. The rationale of sampling Wanyama amongst the three targeted initiates was that he came from a family that cherished Bukusu traditional male circumcision known as *sikhebo* ritual and his four older brothers had successfully undergone the entire ritual process. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), purposive sampling involves a situation where the researcher purposely targets a group of people believed to be reliable for the study. Therefore, in the study, subjects were selected using purposive sampling because they are informative thus, possess the required characteristics.

### **3.6 Data Collection Techniques**

Primary data was collected using non-participant, video taping and interview while secondary data was obtained from extraction.

#### **3.6.1 Non-participant observation**

The researcher used non-participant observation to observe the procedure of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community with regard to the stages. Binnet (2003) stipulates that non-participant observation is used as a research technique when data on actual practice is required.

### **3.6.2 Video taping**

Two research assistants were used to video tape the entire procedure of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community in order to capture the entire ritual within the context for the purposes of refreshing memory during data analysis stage.

### **3.6.3 Interview**

The study used two key male informants aged seventy five (75); and seventy eight (78) years that were sampled purposively from Bungoma North Sub County based on age because they were knowledgeable and experienced and well versed with *sikhebo* ritual and the Bukusu culture. The duty of the key informants was to shed light on every stage of *sikhebo* ritual as narrative. The researcher replayed the video tapes for them and asked them to explain questions on observation check-list. The researcher's main roles were to listen keenly, take notes and moderate the session by probing and prompting views from the key informants while, the two research assistants were refreshing the video cameras to the key informants which they used to tape *sikhebo* ritual as narrative from the start to the end. Lokot (2021) contends that key informants interview involves getting information on a topic from people who have specialized knowledge. The list of questions on observation check-list to the key informants during the actual field study is displayed in appendix 7.

### **3.6.4 Data Collection Tools**

The study used observation check-list, interview schedule and video camera as tools to collect data.

#### **3.6.4.1 Observation Check-list**

The following features in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community were observed during fieldwork as provided in the attached observation check-list based on plot, characterization and themes. A sample of a non-participant observation schedule is provided in appendix 6.

#### **3.6.4.2 Video Camera**

The research assistants used the video camera to record the entire procedure of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community in order to capture the entire ritual within the context for the purposes of refreshing memory during data analysis stage.

#### **3.6.4.3 Interview Schedule**

During key informant interview, the researcher used an interview schedule to give participants questions on the observation check-list to respond. The list of questions on the check-list during the pilot study is displayed in appendix 5. Whereas, the list of questions on the check-list to the key informants during the actual field study is displayed in appendix 7.

### **3.7 Secondary Data**

Secondary Data was obtained from extraction that included journal articles, internet sources, seminar papers, books, newspapers, master's thesis and doctoral dissertations from Universities across the world. Secondary Data was used to review related studies in order to find a point of departure for discussion.

### **3.8 Reliability and Validity of Data Collection Tools**

A pilot study was conducted in Mukuyuni location on 31st July and 1st August 2018 involving one live performance of *sikhebo* ritual that involved a male twin and a female twin to investigate

narrative elements in *sikhebo* ritual. The researcher tested all primary data collection tools that included the video camera, interview schedule and the observation check-list. The pilot study gave the researcher the opportunity to validate the instruments and adjust where necessary to ensure correct data was collected. According to Perakyla (1997), it is possible to ensure reliability and validity of qualitative data if the researcher follows procedures that minimize biases. A sample of a documented pilot study is provided in appendix 4.

### **3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation**

The study was analyzed using textual data analysis. The study used three tenets of the textual data analysis as proposed by Caulfield (2022). The first tenet that states that texts are written in a chronological order met the first study objective that analyzed plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element. The second tenet states that texts which tell a story in the traditional sense of recounting a plot with events that happened over a period of time in space involve characters met the second study objective that assessed actual characterization and role of various characters in *sikhebo* ritual. The third tenet that states that literary texts are usually written for an artistic purpose met the third study objective that studied themes and meaning in *sikhebo* ritual. Recorded materials in Lubukusu were transcribed and then translated into English by the researcher and the two research assistants. The researcher repeatedly and critically read data in the original form and the English translation to identify *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element. The translated data was subjected to verification by requesting the informants who were proficient in both Lubukusu and English to confirm the accuracy of the translated data with native speakers. The researcher further analyzed the notes that were taken during the study to identify major issues like plot, characterization and themes/meaning in *sikhebo* ritual. Data from primary and secondary sources was synthesized and categorized in accordance with the study objectives. The data was then presented as textual description. Ideas

gathered from the field were classified systematically and thereafter, integrated to draw a holistic conclusion and make recommendations for further research. Data or evidence from *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community was summarized, paraphrased and quoted with the purpose to analyze the ritual among the Bukusu community as narrative presented in a continuous prose.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations were important in this study because the researcher dealt with human beings and a culturally important and sensitive rite. First, the researcher obtained permission to conduct research from Maseno University Ethics Review Committee (MUERC). Secondly, the researcher obtained permission from participants above 18 years of age to take part in research, record songs and videotape live performances of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community. However, in case the participant was below 18 years and orphaned, permission was obtained from parents and caretakers respectively. Thirdly, the researcher explained to participants that the information obtained from the field study would be used for research purposes after translating into Lubukusu and English for easy understanding and not for financial gain. In addition, the researcher assured participants that their participation in the study would be voluntary and they would be free to withdraw at any stage of the research without negative consequences and data collected would be destroyed. Also, the researcher gave characters taking part in *sikhebo* ritual different names to conceal their identities and were protected by not displaying their pictures in the thesis. Polite and Beck (2004) stipulate that ethics is a branch of philosophy that deals with morality. The respondents who accepted to take part in research signed an informed consent form displayed in Appendix 1. A copy of permission to conduct research from Maseno University Ethics Review Committee is displayed in appendix 2.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS OF PLOT IN *SIKHEBO* RITUAL AS A NARRATIVE ELEMENT

#### 4.1 Introduction

This section analyzes plot in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community as a narrative element. It also investigates the manner in which *sikhebo* ritual applies Freytag's (1896) dramatic model in MacEwan (2010) to embrace six basic stages of narrative namely: exposition, inciting incidents, rising actions, climax, falling action and denouement. In order to achieve this objective on analysis of plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element, some general discussions are made by various authors as indicated in section 2.2. Hence, how *sikhebo* ritual is analyzed is contextualized and extracted from the ritual. Groden, Kreiswirth and Sweman (2012) stipulation that narrative is composed of a unique sequence of events met the first study objective that sought to analyze plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element. This was achieved by observing a phased ethnographic detail of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community from the beginning to the end.

#### 4.2.1 Exposition

According to Freytag's (1896), dramatic model in MacEwan (2010), the exposition is the first stage that presents the principal characters and establishes the scene. Exposition is observed as soon as the initiate who is Wanyama is introduced in early April 2018. The initiate approaches his father. The following confirms:

In the month of April, the year 2018, the initiate namely Wanyama aged thirteen years approaches his father Wekesa, to inform him of his intention to get circumcised.

*'Papa esaba nandi nenyā khukhwingila kumwaka kuno'*

‘Excuse me father; I would like to get circumcised this year.’

‘*Kaba mbo wamwene wenye khukhuwingila, endakhanga ekhukhebe.*

*Ekhusaba nandi okheambia chisoni, babandu boo nende ekholo yoo tawe. Obe*  
*omunyindafu. Babuka sebakosa anga baloma bali nio embogo esecha yambukhila*  
*luluchi engana yosi yabukhilao! Ese Omuchuma mala nema chinyuni*  
*chafua. Kenyekhana olonde lukele.’*

‘If you want to get circumcised voluntarily, I will do everything possible to ensure you undergo the rite! However, do not embarrass yourself, the family and the community! You must be brave! Elders were not wrong when they said that where the father buffalo crossed the river is the same spot the calf crosses! I belong to Bachuma age-set and I stood until all the birds died! You ought to follow my footsteps!’

As observed from the field study, the initiate approaches his father early in the month of April 2018. Using direct address, he tells him that he has attained the age to get circumcised. In return, the father reminds the son to uphold the family's dignity by being brave during the ritual cut. As soon as the initiate is given permission to get circumcised the story unfolds whereby, the initiate's father takes the first step to send Nasambu the initiate's mother to her relations to inform them of the son's intention to get circumcised. This is the time the audience is introduced to the initiate's mother. According to Werunga the key informant, the initiate's maternal uncle who benefited from the initiate's mother's dowry slaughters a bull for the nephew to appreciate the dowry that was given that was used to pay the initiate's maternal uncle's wife's dowry. The audience is also introduced to Wakhisi the initiate's maternal uncle who plays a vital role in *sikhebo* ritual. The initiate's mother then gives a hen to Wanyama to take to the blacksmith known as Wakhungu in



exchange of two jingles known as *chinyimba*. Jingles are bells, which the initiate strikes on metal rings worn on both of his wrists on which jingles are struck act as basic musical instruments.

Wekesa the initiate's father then informs relatives and neighbours of the initiate's intention to get circumcised. Equally, he provides two bulls to be slaughtered on the eve of the circumcision day to appease the ancestors and the gods and ensures the cottage where the initiate stays during seclusion is in good condition. On her part, the initiate's mother ensures there is enough food and local brew known as *busaa* to feed and make visitors happy respectively. According to Werunga the key informant, circumcision among the Bukusu takes place in the month of August. This is the time of harvesting maize that is used to prepare posho and local brew known as *busaa*. In the month of May and June 2018, the initiate under the guidance of the male escorts who are Kundu, Bunyasi and Wafukho put handles in jingles using sisal, sticks obtained from plants known as *chifufu* and used bicycle tubes.

The study agrees with Robert and Jacobs (1987) that the aspects that form the backbone, skeleton or pattern of development include exposition which is the lying out; putting forth of the material in the story, the main characters, their backgrounds, their characteristics, goals, limitations and potentials are outlined. Among the Bukusu community, the initiate who wants to get circumcised informs the father explaining why he has to get circumcised. In return, the father reminds him of his obligation to be brave. This is the time the initiate who is Wanyama is introduced and his intention to get circumcised is known. From the initiate, the audience is introduced to the initiate's parents who participate actively by ensuring everything needed for smooth running of the ceremony is availed, inform relatives, neighbours and friends of their son's intention to get circumcised hence, establishing the scene.

#### 4.2.2 The Inciting Moment

Freytag's (1896) dramatic model in MacEwan (2010) the second stage is the inciting incident that introduces a conflict which powers to the rest of the story. In the months of May and June 2018, the initiate under the guidance of the male escorts namely: Kundu, Bunyasi and Wafukho gather at a central point each night and trek for several kilometres in the company of other initiates rehearsing to play jingles and dance to circumcision songs. The song that is commonly sung is 'Mulongo'. 'Mulongo' song is displayed in appendix 8. The song goes as follows:

#### Mulongo Song

##### Lubukusu Version

Soloist: Mulongo *mwana wa ma!*

All: *Hahooo!* (x4)

Soloist: *Mwana wa mama otinya!*

All: *Hahooo!*

##### English Version

Soloist: Mulongo child of my mother!

All: *Hahooo!* (x4)

Soloist: Child of my mother be strong!

All: *Hahooo!*

During this time, the male escorts produce war cries and carry clubs and sticks shoulder high. According to Wafula the key informant, the song 'Mulongo' is sung during the preparation period to teach the initiate to be brave evident in the line that says: '*child of my mother be strong*'. Secondly, the act of the male escorts producing war cries during the preparation stage is to express the liking attitude they have towards *sikhebo* ritual because it is the only avenue that creates men out of boys as well as announces to the stakeholders that *sikhebo* ritual is approaching as a result, prepare adequately. Thirdly, the male escorts carry clubs and sticks shoulder high to create fear in the initiate thus, realizes the need to be serious. The following confirms:

Wafukho and Bunyasi produce war cries: '*Woooooi! Woooooi! Woooooi!*' as they carry clubs known as '*bicholong'o*' shoulder high.

Another inciting moment in *sikhebo* ritual is evident in the month of July 2018, the first week; the circumcisers perform a ritual known as *khubita chigembe* (sanctification of the circumcision knives). The ritual is performed as transcribed below:

Khisa calls Wanyonyi, Simiyu, Wafula and Maloba to an open place at the back of his house and says:

*'Ano nio mulombakha namwima.'*

*'Here is where the shrine will be constructed!'*

Khisa points at the back of the house. Wanyonyi, Simiyu, Wafula and Maloba take the circumcising knives known as *'chigembe'* and put on the prop. Thereafter, they remove shoes, nod and move to the spot where Khisa points.

Khisa takes one circumcising knife and slaughters the five cockerels while facing east. He roasts the white one with feathers on and once they are burnt, he dissects and studies the intestines and other organs to determine the initiates' fate. He then declares the period successful based on the reading of the cockerel's organs. He then takes a calabash of local brew known as *'busaa'* sips and applies on the circumcisers' arms and foreheads in a straight line. In addition, he gives the circumcisers traditional herb known as *kamanyasi'*, which they sip in turns. He then takes one circumcising knife, holds it blade-up on the foreheads of each circumciser. Using authoritative language, he invokes the ancestors and the gods to bless them during the circumcision period by saying:

*'Ese Khisa olomaloma okhuwama mukholo eye Bakhone okhuwama Chwele khwa Nasambu okhuwama Kilachi. Nengila kumwiko elfu ndala chimia tisa na arubaini na sita (1946). Omukinyikeu. Nicha ebweni wenywe! Okuno kumusambwa nikwo*

*mwakhuwa. Bita bakhebi bano nende chigembe chino. Mala mubaweleshe bunyindafu bwe khungangana nende basinde banyala khuria bise bie embalu. Bita basinde bise bie sikhebo.'*

'I am Khisa, speaking from Bakhone clan of Chwele, the son of Nasambu from Kilachi! Circumcised the year nineteen forty-six (1946) of Kinyikeu age-set. I come before you! This is the spirit we inherited from you, bless the circumcisers, the circumcising knives, and give them courage to discern the initiates who may exhibit fear during the ritual cut! Bless the initiates during the circumcision period!'

From the information collected from Werunga the key informant, the ancestors and the gods are appeased during the performance of a ritual known as *khubita chigembe* (sanctification of the circumcision knives) to bless and protect the initiates, the circumcision knives and the circumcisers during the circumcision period. However, if they are not appeased, they cause surgical mishaps on the side of the circumcisers and initiates fearing the knife.

In addition, while offering sacrifices to the ancestors and the gods, the chief circumciser who is Khisa instructs the circumcisers to abstain from sex and not to attend funerals. The excerpt below confirms these warnings:

Khisa maintains eye contact with Wanyonyi, Simiyu, Wafula and Maloba and speaks authoritatively:

*'Sekenyekhana mukone nende bakhasi, muche emasika namwe mwifuwale biraro bise bie sikhebo tawe.'*

'You must not sleep with women, attend funerals and wear shoes during the circumcision period.'

According to the information collected from the field, the circumcisers are warned by the chief circumciser to abstain from sex and not to attend funerals because the acts lead to surgical mishaps, excessive bleeding or fear the knife on the part of the initiates. Equally, circumcisers are told not to put on shoes because they can easily slide as a result, leads to automatic disqualification from circumcising.

The inciting moment is evident during the first week of August when neighbours, friends and relatives gathered at Wekesa's home to ensure everything required for smooth running of the ceremony is availed. The following confirms:

Wekesa speaks to relatives, neighbours and friends:

*'Buli sindu sili abwene. Endi nende chiunwa chipili chekamapala chikhachichwe silo sie sikhebo. Ndala ekhachichwe esilindwa sia baba Wanyama. Ne ekindi simbi nende namwima. Likombe nilio Wanyama akhamenye na khebilwe lili lilai.'*

'Everything is in place. I have two coloured bulls to slaughter on the eve of the circumcision day. One will be slaughtered by my father's graveside whose name is Wanyama and another one near the shrine. The cottage where Wanyama will stay after the ritual cut is in good condition'

The relatives, the initiate's parents and neighbours settled on date 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2018 to circumcise Wanyama. This is the day Namaemba, the initiate's paternal aunt shaves and decorates the initiate

with beads known as *kamakomeri* that criss cross on his chest and back to form letter X as she praises herself. The narration by Namaemba is indicated as below:

Namaemba speaks authoritatively as she maintains eye contact with Wanyama:

*‘Nise Namaemba olomaloma, sengeo, Omubuya Omusimaolia, khwa Wamalwa. Omu Kinyikeu arubaini na sita (1946). Khehubeka luluwana. Okhoya waba omunyindafu bise bie sikhebo, onyole omukhasi, wibule babana sikila buno nibwo busani. Buri bwosi bwosi bise bie embalu aba bwamile ebumao. Efwe banyindafu.’*

‘I am Namaemba speaking, your paternal aunt, Omubuya Omusimaolia; the daughter of Wamalwa. My father was circumcised the year nineteen forty-six (1946) of Kinyikeu age-set. I hereby, shave your boyhood. You must be courageous and brave during the ritual cut, get married and sire children since real manhood is assessed in terms of the above features. Any sign of fear witnessed during the ritual cut is attributed to the initiate’s maternal side. We are brave people.’

According to the information collected, among the Bukusu community, the initiate's paternal aunt who is Namaemba known for her kindness and generosity shaves the nephew to shed off his boyhood, teach him morals and encourage him to be courageous in order to face the knife. The initiate is decorated with beads known as *kamakomeri* for identification and to make him look unique during visitations as a result, gains courage to face the knife.

The study concurs with Genette (1980) that narrative is composed of unique sequence of events. In *sikhebo* ritual, immediately the initiate is introduced, characters actively participate in the ritual to ensure everything needed for the ceremony is available. For instance, the initiate's father informs friends, neighbours and relatives of his son's intention to get circumcised and avails two bulls to offer sacrifices to the gods and the ancestors. The initiate's mother ensures there is enough food and local brew to make visitors happy in order to bless the initiate. The male escorts assist the initiate to put handles in jingles and teach him to play jingles and dance to circumcision songs. The circumcisers perform a ritual known as sanctification of the circumcision knives. The relatives, neighbours and friends meet at the initiate's father's home to ensure everything needed for smooth running of the ceremony is available, fix the day to circumcise the initiate and the initiate's paternal aunt decorates the initiate with beads.

#### **4.2.3 The Rising Action**

According to Freytag's (1896) dramatic model in MacEwan (2010), the rising action stage is whereby, the intensity of events increases. Among the Bukusu community, early in the month of August, 2018, Wekesa the initiate's father performs an initial ritual known as *khuchukhila* that involves the preparation of local brew known as *busaa* for visitors who come to witness the ritual cut. He instructs Lukibisi the initiate's older brother to escort Wanyama the initiate to go to river Kiminini and draw water. Wekesa's instructions follow:

Wekesa looks at Lukibisi and speaks authoritatively:

*'Nenya oelekeshe Wanyama muluchi lwa Kiminini khutaa kamechi! Nemucha namwe nemukobola, sekenyekhana mwikhebukhe tawe namwe mulole bukhikha tawe. Lundi nemwicha okhuwama eluchi, kenyekhana Wanyama arumikhile engila ekindi nasuta esachi khuwibeka. Khehubulila?'*

‘I want you to escort Wanyama to river Kiminini to draw water! While going and coming back, ensure you do not look back, sideways or talk to anyone! Likewise, while coming back, you are supposed to use a different route as Wanyama carries the small pot on his shoulder. Are you getting me?’

According to Werunga the key informant, the act of the initiate's father decorating the pot with star grass signifies prosperity in the initiate's life meaning he has to marry in future and sire children. Secondly, while going to fetch water in river Kiminini, the initiate under the guidance of the older brother known as Lukibisi carries the pot on his shoulder to indicate that he is doing female chores of fetching water for the last time. Equally, while going and coming back from the river, he is not allowed to look backwards, sideways or talk to anyone because the acts are viewed as cowardice. Moreover, the initiate fetches water from the river that flows to symbolize the progressive nature of his life evident in him marrying and siring children in future.

Immediately Wanyama arrives home; he pours water in the small pot known as *esachi* placed in front of his father's house. Thereafter, he stands straight while maintaining eye contact with Wekesa his father who advises him to be focused and determined as he praises himself: The following confirms:

Wekesa speaks authoritatively as he maintains eye contact with Wanyama:

*‘Kenyekhana olole ebweni lundi obe ne sinani sie khukhebwa! Wamwene werakho!  
Okheambia chisoni namwe babandu boo tawe!’*

‘You ought to be focused and determined to face the knife! It was your personal decision to get circumcised! Do not embarrass yourself, your family and your community!’



Wanyama nods to show approval and puts on a brave face as Wekesa advises him. Thereafter, he chooses Kundu a brave male escort to lead the crowd to sing 'Sioyayo' authoritatively 'Sioyayo song' is displayed in appendix 18. Below is a verse in the song:

**Sioyayo Song**

**Lubukusu version**

Soloist: *Oh! Oh! Oh! Omusinde we!*

All: *Ahoo! Ahoo!*

Soloist: *Oh! Oh! Oh! Omusinde we!*

All: *Ahoo! Ahoo!*

**English version**

Soloist: *Oh! Oh! Oh! The uncircumcised one!*

All: *Ahoo! Ahoo!*

Soloist: *Oh! Oh! Oh! The uncircumcised one!*

All: *Ahoo! Ahoo!*

According to Wafula the key informant, the initiate's father maintains eye contact with the initiate to gauge the level of seriousness. Secondly, he praises himself as a result, makes the initiate to learn that he is a product of brave people thus, gains courage to face the knife. The act of Wekesa the initiate's father choosing an authoritative male escort to lead the crowd to sing 'Sioyayo' creates a circumcision mood in the initiate's mind that gives him courage to face the knife.

The rising action is evident in *sikhebo* ritual during the performance of *khuchukhila* that involves the preparation of brew known as *busaa* after the crowd sings the song 'Sioyayo', the initiate's mother ululates. Thereafter, the male escort who is Kundu leads the crowd to sing the song 'Khwera Omurwa' as the initiate dances and trots around the pot. According to Werunga the key informant, the act of the crowd singing 'Sioyayo' on the third day to the ritual cut, creates a circumcision mood in the initiate's mind as a result, gains courage to face the knife because he must be circumcised at whatever cost. Secondly the initiate's mother ululates to express joy after the son dares the father to get circumcised. Lastly, the crowd dances and sings the song 'Khwera Omurwa' as the initiate dances and trots around the pots to show that the initiate has won the battle

after daring his father to get circumcised. The song '*Khwera Omurwa*' alludes to Barwa, a clan among the Sabot tribe that used to fight with the Bukusu over land. In the context of *sikhebo* ritual, the song shows that the initiate has won after he dares the father to get circumcised.

The rising action is seen after *khuchukhila* when the initiate's father who is Wekesa gives Lukibisi the initiate's older brother a list of people to be invited to attend the ceremony and gift the initiate.

The list goes as follows:

Wekesa maintains eye contact with Lukibisi and says:

*'Nenya oelekeshe Wanyama khucha khulanga bakeni bakheche musikhebo siewe!  
Omundu we khuranga ali sengeo Namaemba nalondebwa nende bakoki wange  
Masibo ne babandi! Lubabulo olusina!*

'I want you to accompany Wanyama to go and invite visitors who will attend his circumcision ceremony! The first person to invite is Namaemba, your paternal aunt, followed by Masibo my circumcision age-set, followed by others! Here is the list!'

Wekesa hands the list to Lukibisi and says:

*'Mukharuka omundu yesiyesi tawe!'*

'Ensure you do not skip anyone!'

As observed from the field, this is the time, Wanyama plays jingles and dances stylishly to circumcision songs as Wafukho, Bunyasi, Kundu, Lukibisi, Nakhumicha, Nasipwondi and

Nanyama who are the escorts sing and dance behind him until they reach Namaemba's home where the initiate has gone to invite, when they dance and sing in a circle until they are joined by Namaemba in ululations. During this time, Nakhumicha and Nasipwondi ululate as Kundu, Wafukho and Bunyasi produce war cries and carry sticks and clubs shoulder high. According to Werunga the key informant, the act of the initiate's paternal aunt ululating after the initiate arrives in her home shows the joy she has after she is visited by the initiate. On their part, the female escorts ululate as their male counterparts produce war cries to express the liking attitude they have towards *sikhebo* ritual because it is the only avenue that creates men out of boys. Equally, the act of the male escorts carrying clubs and sticks scares the initiate as a result, makes him to realize that *sikhebo* ritual is a serious affair. Lastly, the act of the escort dancing in a circle signifies unity in the family evident in every member of the community taking part in transforming the initiate from boyhood to manhood.

The rising action in *sikhebo* ritual is evident when the initiate visits the maternal uncle for gifts and blessings. Immediately he arrives while playing jingles and dancing stylishly as the escorts sing and dance, they are joined by Nafula the initiate's maternal uncle's wife in song, dance and ululations. The following day, the maternal uncle advises the nephew to be focused and brave during the ritual cut. Thereafter, he orders Murefu and Matere to slaughter a coloured bull and a piece of meat from the breast known as *luliki* is dressed around Wanyama's neck as he praises himself. The maternal uncle further chooses Wafukho an authoritative male escort to sing '*Sioyayo*' after which, Nafula ululates. Additionally, Wakhisi smears Wanyama with bull's stomach waste known as *buse* and yeast on the head, face, chest and legs. Notably, Nakhumicha and Nasipwondi the female escorts are given the bull's head to carry to the initiate's father's home.

According to Werunga the key informant, Nafula the initiate's maternal uncle's wife ululates immediately the initiate reaches the maternal side to express joy having been invited to attend the ceremony. Wakhisi the initiate's maternal uncle praises himself to invoke the maternal ancestral spirits to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period. Among the Bukusu, any sign of fear witnessed during the ritual cut is attributed to the maternal side. Wakhisi then chooses an authoritative male escort who is Kundu to sing the song '*Sioyayo*' to create a circumcision atmosphere in the initiate's mind as a result, gains courage to face the knife. The act of the initiate's maternal wife ululating after '*Sioyayo*' is sung expresses joy after the maternal uncle honours the nephew. More so, before the initiate leaves the maternal side, he is smeared with yeast and bull's stomach waste known as *buse* on his body by the maternal uncle to bless and protect him during the circumcision period because any sign of fear witnessed during the ritual cut is attributed to the maternal side. Nasipwondi and Nakhumicha the female escorts who are morally upright carry the bull's head from the initiate's maternal side to the initiate's father's home to teach the initiate morals.

Staton's (2007) postulation that plot is a series of the events in a story and how a certain event affects another event cannot be ignored informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community, time is set aside to perform specific rituals. For instance, there is time set aside to decorate the initiate, to prepare the brew, invite visitors and offer sacrifices to the gods and the ancestors. It is worthy noting that the mentioned rituals affect the entire performance. As observed from the field study, the initiate is decorated with beads known as *kamakomeri* in order to make him unique as a result, realizes that *sikhebo* is a serious ritual. Secondly, the initiate prepares the brew for the visitors to show his commitment towards the ritual. Notably, the initiate invites

visitors to attend his circumcision ceremony for gifts and blessings. Lastly, sacrifices are offered to the gods and the ancestors to invoke them to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period.

Immediately, the initiate arrives home from the maternal side, he is welcomed by Nasambu the initiate's mother in the company of Namaemba in song and dance. After ten minutes, Wekesa the initiate's father orders the son to stop playing jingles after which he removes a piece of meat around Wanyama's neck and hands to Namaemba the initiate's paternal aunt. According to Werunga the key informant, the initiate's father hands the brisket to Namaemba the initiate's aunt because she can not harm her own blood. Among the Bukusu, the brisket that is removed around the initiate's neck is cooked without addition of salt that makes the initiate to become impotent or fear women.

The rising action is evident in *sikhebo* ritual on the eve of the circumcision day at Wekesa's compound. As observed from the field study, another bull is slaughtered. This is the time Wafukho, Kundu and Bunyasi the male escorts direct the initiate to Wanyama's (Wekesa's deceased father's grave) where he meets Nyukuri the male elder. The performance by Nyukuri is indicated below:

Wanyama stands besides Wanyama's grave as he puts on a brave face.

Nyukuri speaks authoritatively as he uses gesticulation:

*'Saba kamakhono koo ano!'*

*'Wash your hands here!'*

Nyukuri points the bull's stomach waste known as *buse*. Takes and smears Wanyama's face as he praises himself.

*'Ese Nyukuri omukuka olomaloma, Omubuya Omusimaolia okhwa Nanjala omusoleli arubaini na nane (1948) omusani omukinyikeu omunyindafu. Nicha ebweni wenywe nende kumurungo kuno. Bitu lundi mulinde omusinde khu butinyu bwosi.'*

'I am Nyukuri a male elder speaking from Babuya Basimaolia clan, the son of Nanjala circumcised the year nineteen forty-eight (1948) of Kinyikeu age-set, a brave man. I come before you with this sacrifice. Bless and protect the initiate against all forms of malice.'

The rest of *buse* is left by the graveside for the ancestors to feed on while the meat is used to feed the many visitors who attend the ceremony.

At Wekesa's compound near the shrine known as '*namwima*'. Enters Nyukuri, Kiberenge, Wanyama and Kitui. Nyukuri looks at the coloured bull slaughtered by Kitui and Kiberenge and orders its stomach to be torn apart.

Nyukuri studies the inner part of the bull keenly. Realizes that it was clear an indication that the initiate had courage to face the knife! He observes Wanyama's eyes and nods to show approval.

Wanyama stands upright as he puts on a brave face and maintains eye contact with Nyukuri.

Nyukuri takes a piece of the bull's meat, clotted blood known as '*kamalasile*' that was tapped while slaughtering the bull and brew known as '*busaa*' and places at the centre of the shrine as he speaks authoritatively saying:

*'Nise Nyukuri olomaloma, Omubuya Omusimaolia okhwa Nanjala omusoleli arubaini na nane (1948) omusani omukinyikeu. Nicha ebweni wenywe nende kumurungo kuno. Fukilila sianuwa sino, mubite omusinde ino mala abe omunyindafu bise bie embalu.'*

'I am Nyukuri speaking from Babuya Basimaolia clan. The son of Nanjala circumcised the year nineteen forty-eight (1948) of Kinyikeu age-set. I come before you with this sacrifice. Accept it, bless the initiate and give him courage to face the knife.'

According to Wafula the key informant, among the Bukusu, naming is done after an immediate relative who had good record of accomplishment. For instance Wanyama who is the initiate is named after Wekesa's deceased father. Therefore, the act of Nyukuri the male elder ordering the bull to be slaughtered by Wanyama's graveside shows that blood that drips on the ground appeases the grandfather who is part and parcel to the initiate. The male elder goes further and praises himself to lure the paternal ancestral spirits to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period. Nyukuri's self-praise makes the initiate to learn that he is a product of brave people thus, gains courage to face the knife.

As observed from the field study, another bull is slaughtered by Kiberenge and Kitui who are Wekesa's male neighbours and after bisecting; Nyukuri observes the inner part to determine the initiate's fate. Notably, he discovers it is clear. According to Werunga the key informant, the bull's inner part is clear to indicate that the initiate has courage to face the knife. Nevertheless, if it is stained then the initiate can fear the knife therefore; he is smeared with bull's stomach waste known as *buse* to protect him. The male elder then takes a piece of bull's meat, clotted blood known as *kamalasile* and local brew known as *busaa* and places at the centre of the shrine. Using self-praise, he invokes the gods and the ancestors to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period. Among the Bukusu, the initiate is protected from malicious people with the intention of planting charms that make him fear the knife. Notably, the initiate is blessed in life if he marries in future and propagates the community's lineage.

The rising action is evident in *sikhebo* ritual on the eve of the circumcision day when Wekhomba who is the initiate's paternal uncle dresses a piece of the bull's entrail known as *lisombo* around the initiate's neck as he praises himself. Thereafter, he orders *Kundu* an authoritative male escort to lead the crowd to sing '*Sioyayo*'. Afterwhich, he smears the initiate with the bull's stomach's waste on the head, hands, chest, back and legs. The following affirms:

*'Ese Wekhomba rarao, Omubuya Umusimaolia khwa Wafula, Omuchuma owakhataru, kumwaka samanini na mbili, khekhobolela, emoni abwenao. Ese nga rarao necha nema chinyuni chafwa sio'*

I am Wekhomba speaking your father, Omubuya Omusimaolia the son of Wafula of Chuma age-set number three circumcised the year nineteen eighty two. I hereby, tell you, your eyes should remain there. As your father, I stood until all birds died'.



According to Werunga the key informant, the initiate's paternal uncle uses self-praise while advising the initiate to encourage him to be focused and invokes the paternal ancestral spirits to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period. The piece of the bull's entrail that is dressed around his neck gives him extra powers to face the knife with courage. The act of the initiate's paternal uncle ordering an authoritative male escort to sing '*Sioyayo*' creates a circumcision mood in the initiate's mind as a result, gains courage to face the knife. Moreover, the act of the paternal uncle smearing the initiate with the bull's stomach waste protects and blesses him during the circumcision period not to fear the knife.

Robert and Jacobs (1987) stipulation that crisis is the turning point, the separation between what has gone before and what will come after was instructive to the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the act of the male elder offering sacrifices to the gods and the ancestors on the eve of the circumcision day and smearing the initiate with bull's stomach waste known as *buse* protects him from malicious people who can bewitch him to fear the knife. As observed from the field study, the rituals performed three days to the ritual cut that include the preparation of local brew, inviting visitors and offering sacrifices to the ancestors and the gods show that the initiate must be circumcised.

The rising action is seen in *sikhebo* ritual throughout the night on the eve of the circumcision day when Wanyama the initiate is chided through songs and verbal reprimands. As observed from the field study, this is the time, Bunyasi, Wafukho and Kundu the male escorts lead the crowd to sing songs creatively to criticize members of the community of both sexes and make fun of themselves and family members, reprimand the initiate and provide moral guidance. Notably, characters display emotions through the provocative dance that allow them to dance without shame or fear of

reprimand as the male escorts carry clubs, sticks and produce war cries and Nakhumicha and Nasipwondi ululate. The initiate plays jingles and dances to circumcision songs up to three o'clock in the morning when he is led to a room reserved for members from the maternal side and served with half-roasted meat and posho by Lukibisi the older brother and sleeps on the bull's skin. According to Wafula the key informant, the initiate is chided through songs, reprimands, props and actions on the eve of the circumcision day to harden him face the knife and life challenges with courage. Notably, Wakhisi the initiate's maternal uncle protects the initiate and his mother against harassment from the male escorts and characters who are rowdy.

The rising action is evident in *sikhebo* ritual early in the morning on the circumcision day at five o'clock. The initiate is woken up by the escorts to play jingles and dance to circumcision songs as the crowd dances and sings. During this time, Nyukuri and Mang'oli the male elders lead the crowd to sing the song '*Amba Mutalya*' in a sad mood thereafter, Nyukuri and Mang'oli visit the swamp before the initiate. As soon as the initiate is escorted to the swamp, the initiate's father who is Wekesa prepares the circumcision spot by putting sand on a sack and places in front of his house. The song '*Amba Mutalya*' is displayed in appendix 15. The song goes:

### *Amba Mutalya Song*

#### Lubukusu Version

Soloist: Mango *niye papa awarera sikhebo*  
*chindalo echo!*

All: *Tila Mutalya!*

#### English Version

Soloist: It is Mango our father who  
brought circumcision those days!

All: Hold Mutalya!

According to Werunga the key informant, the act of the male elders leading the crowd to sing the song '*Amba Mutalya*' in a sad mood indicates that time is running out for Wanyama to face the

knife hence, need to be courageous. The song also informs the entire Bukusu community to embrace the old tradition of male circumcision that was initiated by Mango. Secondly, the act of the male elders visiting the swamp before the initiate on the circumcision day is to pre-empty any charm that can be planted to harm the initiate to fear the knife. Thirdly, the circumcision spot prevents blood to spill on the ground where malicious people can pick with the intention of harming the initiate to become impotent and fear women.

The rising action is evident in *sikhebo* ritual immediately the initiate arrives at the swamp, whereby he is ordered by Wanjala the paternal male cousin to remove his short and relieve himself in the open thereafter, immerses in cold flowing water. Similarly, after smearing is perfected, the initiate's paternal male cousin plucks *lusiye* grass and sticks on his head. According to Wafula the key informant, the initiate is ordered to remove his short and relieve himself in the open because he is still a child who should expose his nakedness in public. The act of the initiate immersing in cold water makes his blood numb as a result, reduces pain during the ritual cut and heavy bleeding. Among the Bukusu, the swamp where the initiate is smeared with mud should not dry for if it does, all the initiates who are served in it automatically die. Consequently, smearing the initiate with mud from the swamp puts him to be in fellowship with the spirit of circumcision for the community believes the swamp is trampled upon during the period of *sikhebo* ritual with the spirits of the rite. The grass that the initiate's paternal male cousin sticks on the initiate's head communicates with the gods and the ancestors who give him extra powers to face the knife with courage. In *sikhebo* ritual, Wanjala's actions indicate that the initiate must be courageous because he must be circumcised at whatever cost. As observed from the field study, while at the swamp, the

uncircumcised boys, men circumcised in hospital and women are not allowed to move near because the spirit of fear in them can be transferred easily in the initiate.

The study agrees with Mutunda's (2016) notion that ritual performance among the Zambia people follows a stipulated pattern. Among the Bukusu, in the morning of the circumcision day there is a stipulated order that is followed. For instance, immediately the initiate is woken up by the male escorts, he is allowed to play jingles for two hours. Thereafter, he is lead to the swamp and instructed by the paternal male cousin to remove his short, relieve himself in the open and immerses in cold flowing water. Thereafter, he is smeared with mud starting from the head, face, infront, back, legs and hands. Similarly, after smearing is perfected, the initiate's paternal male cousin plucks *lusiyyede* grass and sticks on his head.

The rising action is evident in the morning of the circumcision day when the initiate is escorted to his father's home from the swamp. The initiate uses a different route from the one he used. Notably, before he approaches his father's compound, Khisa who is the circumciser in the company of Wafula the helper dressed in costume meet him. Equally, the initiate's paternal aunt runs with a cooking stick known as *kumukango* that has been dipped in brew. Immediately the initiate arrives home, he is welcomed by his father wrapped in a traditional regaria known as *likutu*. According to Werunga the key informant, the initiate uses a different route from the one he used as he is escorted to the father's home to face the knife to confuse malicious people from planting charms that can make him fear the knife. Secondly, the act of Khisa the circumciser in the company of Wafula the helper dressed in costume while meeting the initiate as he is escorted home on the circumcision day is for identification observe the initiate's penis to acquit themselves with the best holding and cutting styles. Thirdly, the act of Namaemba the initiate's paternal aunt running with the cooking

stick known as *kumukango* with the intension to hit Wanyama who tries all the best to block shows that he is brave ready to face the knife and protect the community against aggression. Additionally, the act of Namaemba trying to hit the initiate signifies that he is taking instructions from the female characters for the last time.

Okpewho's (1992) view of dividing oral literature material into three parts namely background and resources, classification and survival of oral literature informed the study. Among the Bukusu, the preparation stage is divided into four parts. The first part is when the initiate declares the intent to get circumcised thereafter, every member of the community takes part in ensuring everything needed for smooth running of the ceremony is availed. The second part involves the rituals that are performed three days to the ritual cut that include the preparation of local brew and inviting visitors. The third part is when the male elder offers sacrifices to the gods and the ancestors and *khuminya* whereby the initiate plays jingles and dances as the crowd sings and dance. The fourth part is when the initiate is smeared with mud on the circumcision day in the swamp and escorted to his father's compound to face the knife.

#### **4.2.4 The Climax**

Freytag's (1896) dramatic model in MacEwan (2010) fourth stage which is climax, is the turning point when events and situations change for better or worse. In *sikhebo* ritual, the ritual cut marks the climax because the initiate is transformed from boyhood to manhood. The actual operation takes place in the initiate's father's courtyard known as *khuluya* at a spot in front of the house where grains are traditionally spread to dry. The following affirms the climax:

50 metres to Wekesa's home enters Wanyama escorted by Kundu, Wafukho and Bunyasi. The singing of 'Sioyayo' song stops. Wanjala hands Wanyama to Wekesa dressed in traditional regalia known as *likutu*.

Wekesa speaks authoritatively as he maintains eye contact with Wanyama and says:

*'Okheambia chisoni alala nende babandu boo tawe! Obe omunyindafu bise bie embalu! Ewe wama mubandu banyindafu. Ima ano!'*

'Do not embarrass yourself, the family and the entire community! Be brave during the ritual cut! You are a product of brave people. Stand here!'

Wekesa then directs Wanyama to stand on the circumcising spot known as *etiang'i* meanwhile, Wanyama holds a special stick obtained from a tree known as *kumulaha* on his shoulders while facing east as Nasambu, Namaemba, Nafula and Nakhumicha sit down on the floor of Nasambu's house with their legs stretched horizontal on the floor in great pain. There is total communicative silence to make

the initiate focused as Kundu, Wafukho, Lukibisi and Bunyasi carry big clubs known as *bicholong'o* and sticks known as '*chisimbo*' high as Nyukuri and Mang'oli observe keenly. Khisa emerges from a hidden place and starts operating Wanyama. Wafula holds the initiate's foreskin backward as he applies dust powder known as *lipukhulu*. Finally, Khisa holds the foreskin between the thumb and the

forefinger pulls it forward and cuts in a sawing motion for three seconds as Wekesa bravely stands in front of Wanyama maintaining eye contact with him.

The climax in *sikhebo* ritual is the ritual cut involves the surgical removal of the foreskin by Khisa a specially trained traditional surgeon known as *omukhebi*. During the cut, the initiate faces east and holds a stick obtained from a tree known as *kumulaha* on his shoulders. According to the key informants, the initiate faces east to imply a new member is joining the family. Likewise, the initiate holds a stick obtained from a tree known as *kumulaha* on his shoulders for protection against any harm by malicious people. Notably, during the ritual cut, Nasambu the initiate's mother in the company of Namaemba and Nafula sit on the floor of her house with legs stretched horizontally. According to information gathered from the field, the initiate's mother's sitting position signifies the pain she experienced during delivery. Among the Bukusu, the initiate's mother is in pain because any sign of fear witnessed during the ritual cut is attributed to the maternal side. As observed from the field study, there is total communicative silence to ensure the initiate's mind is focused.

Among the Bukusu, the initiate is supposed to display unwavering fortitude during the ritual cut. After successful ritual cut, the men roar as their women counterparts join in the song '*Khwera Omurwa*' as they dance and ululate around the newly initiated. The song '*Khwera Omurwa*' is displayed in appendix 19. The song goes:

**Khwera Omurwa Song**

**Lubukusu version**  
**Soloist & response**

Soloist: *Wandaye wase khwerire Omurwa!*

All: *Aah! Khwerire Omurwa!*

**English version**

Soloist: My brother we have killed  
Omurwa!

All: *Aah! We have killed Omurwa!*

According to Wafula the key informant, after a successful ritual cut, the men roar to welcome the initiate into the male club because he has proved to be brave. The song '*Khwera Omurwa*' that is sung after successful ritual cut alludes to the Barwa tribe among the Sabot clan that used to fight with the Bukusu community over land. Therefore, the phrase: '*Khwera Omurwa*' means that one has killed an enemy. In the context of *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate is seen as a hero after displaying unwavering fortitude during the ritual cut. Equally, after successful ritual cut, the initiate's mother ululates to mark the climax after her son is transformed from boyhood to manhood. The study concurs with Robert and Jacobs (1987) that climax is the high point in the action in which the conflict and the consequent tension are brought out to the fullest extent. As observed from the field study, during the ritual cut, the initiate's mother is in great pain because any sign of fear witnessed during the ritual cut is attributed to the maternal side. However, after successful ritual cut, she joins the crowd in song, dance and ululations to appreciate the initiate's bravery.

According to Wafula and Werunga the key informants, in case the initiate fears the knife by screaming or holding the circumciser's hand which is a fall on his part, he is circumcised by force. The male escorts get hold of him as the circumciser operates. The circumciser who cuts the initiate who fears is paid as prescribed by the male elders.

#### **4.2.5 The Falling Action**

The study was governed by Freytag's (1896) dramatic model in MacEwan (2010) fifth stage the falling action, whereby suspense is prolonged as complications are met head-on and questions are acknowledged and occasionally answered. In *sikhebo* ritual, after successful ritual cut, the initiate is isolated to stay in a special cottage known as *mwikombe*. It was observed from the field study



that while taking the initiate to the cottage, Wekesa directs him in a reverse manner until he sets in. According to the key informants, the act of the initiate's father directing the initiate in a reverse manner until he sets in the house signifies he should behave maturely evident in him protecting the community against aggression.

According to Werunga the key informant, the initiate interacts with spirits some of which are harmful. Therefore, two rituals namely *khulumia* and *khubita* that involve the circumciser feeding and advising the initiate to behave as a young Bukusu man are performed to allow him to interact freely with members of the community. For instance, on the circumcision day, the initiate is not allowed to eat until the circumciser feeds him in a ritual known as *khulumia*. This goes like this:

It is midday on the circumcision day; Khisa enters the initiate's cottage where Wanyama is with a plate of *ugali* and roasted meat accompanied by Wekesa and Lukibisi.

Khisa orders Wanyama:

*'Ikhala bukolofu! Leisha kimikhono kioo.'*

'Sit upright! Stretch your hands!'

Khisa takes *ugali* and roasted meat and directs towards Wanyama. However, before he bites, he is teased twice. Wanyama puts on a brave face and maintains eye contact with Khisa. He spits the first bite on the right side, the second bite on the left-hand side before he bites the third time, chews and swallows.

According to the information collected from the field, the circumciser teases the initiate by use of gestitution twice to teach him to behave maturely and the virtue of tolerance.

During seclusion, the initiate's father appoints Lukibisi the oldest brother to Wanyama to guide him. The following affirms:

Wekesa tells Lukibisi:

*'Nakhurobore wekeshe Wanyama anga amenya mwikombe. Kumulimo kwoo kuli khumwegesha anga aakha enguu, khumubolela anga amenya nende babandu, khumubolela chingano che basecha bakhola kimilimo kimilai mara omukanie khukwikhala nende basale be sikhasi ne khukenda musilo.'*

'I have appointed you to guide Wanyama during seclusion period. Your duty will be to instruct him to apply traditional herb called *enguu*, to associate with people in society, tell him stories of great men in the past and caution him against coming into contact with female friends and walking at night.'

In *sikhebo* ritual, seclusion is part of the falling action. This is the time Lukibisi the initiate's older brother guides and teaches the initiate community's values and ideals. As observed from the field study, he cautions him to avoid the company of female friends and walking at night. According to Wafula, the key informant, the initiate's father picks on Lukibisi to guide the initiate during seclusion because he is authoritative and understands the ritual. The appointment of Lukibisi is important because he cautions the initiate to avoid female friends lest his penis erects as a result, cracks the wound that potentially results to bleeding or generally slowing down the healing process. Equally, the initiate is cautioned against walking at night because he can be exposed to malicious men who may scratch his wound that causes bleeding. During this time, Lukibisi teaches

the initiate community's attributes of bravery and tolerance that the Bukusu society expects of him using stories of heroes in the past.

The study agrees with Mutunda (2016) that during seclusion among the Zambia people, the initiates are taught relevant skills. Among the Bukusu, community, the initiate is taught cherished virtues of bravery and tolerance during seclusion using legends. Also the initiate is taught to behave like a young Bukusu man and cautioned to avoid female friends lest his penis erects as a result, cracks the wound that potentially results to bleeding or generally slowing down the healing process. Equally, the initiate is cautioned against walking at night because he can be exposed to malicious men who may scratch his wound that causes bleeding.

The falling action is evident in *sikhebo* ritual on the third day after the ritual cut known as *musialukho*. On this day, early in the morning, Wekesa who is the initiate's father takes the contents wrapped in the circumcision spot to bury in a hidden place. As observed from the field study, before the initiate leaves the compound, he is cautioned by the initiate's father not to eat outside his cottage, shelter in other initiate(s) cottage(s) and greet people with his hands. During this time, he carries a stick known as *kumuasi* that is obtained from a tree known as *kumusitati* that he hands to circumcised men to tap his ankle. Equally, the initiate ties a sheet around his body from the shoulders to the knees and he is treated using a herb known as *enguu* that is bitter. This goes like this:

Wekesa talks to Wanyama authoritatively:

*'Oluno khocha khukhuwanganana ne babasio. Sokhoya wisinge khumwesi mulala tawe nebusa olebakha lulongo khumubili kwoo khurusiakho buchafu. Sie khabili, sokhoya walia siakhulia enje we likombe lio tawe sikila siakhulia sinyala*

*siyatekhuwa nende bakhasi bakhakholelwa sitekho tawe sikila banyala bonaka bulamu bwoo. Nemalilisha, okheikama mwikombe lie bafulu babandi tawe sikila chikhabi chinyala chabachila.'*

'Today you are going out to intermingle with others in the neighbourhood. You must not bathe for the next one month but you will apply white ochre known as *lulongo* on your body to shed off dirt. Secondly, you should not eat outside your cottage because women, who are not purified in a ritual known as *sitekho* can prepare food as a result, ruin your life. Lastly, you should not shelter in other initiates' cottages because luck can be transferred to them.'

According to the key informants, the initiate's father buries the contents wrapped in the circumcision spot so that malicious people can not pick with the intention of harming the initiate to fear women or become impotent. The initiate is told not to shelter in other initiates' cottages because luck can be transferred to the host initiates. Notably, the initiate is not allowed to greet people with his hands because the act delays the healing process and for hygienic purposes. Moreover, the initiate is treated using traditional herb known as *enguu* that is bitter to teach him virtues of tolerance and endurance. During seclusion period, the initiate is not allowed to bathe for a period of one month. This is the time he smears himself with white ochre known as *lulongo* after two days to shed off dirt from his body. He also carries a catapult that he uses to hunt domestic birds for meat. *Sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community continues up to convalescence; hence, strict rules must be observed. For instance, during seclusion, the initiate is not allowed to bathe because water washes off medicine from the wound. Therefore, he applies ochre on his body that

is bright in colour to symbolize prosperity in his life evident in him marrying in future and siring children to propagate the community's lineage.

Senoga-Zake's (2000) stipulation that when boys are circumcised, they wear masks known as *ingolole* to hide their identity during the village dance informed the study. Among the Bukusu, *sikhebo* ritual continues up to convalescence; hence, strict rules must be observed. For instance, during seclusion, the initiate is not allowed to bathe but applies ochre known as *lulongo* on his body that sheds off dirt. He also ties a sheet on his body to avoid the wound being hurt.

The falling action is evident in *khubita* that involves the circumciser who is Khisa advising the initiate on community's ideals and values. The ritual takes place one month after the ritual cut when the initiate is healing. Khisa tells Wanyama:

*'Ikhala asi! Nise Khisa olomaloma Omusaba omulia mafunga Omuchuma osimikha kumwaka kwa arubaini na nane (1948) khwa Netondo. Kenyekhana wamba nende siren'gamo, okhoya waba nende enju. Busani khubeya omukhasi mala wibule babana. Kenyekhana wabaya bibiayo nende chinyuni mara wekeshe liria khubandu bwosi.'*

'Sit down! I am Khisa speaking from Babasaba clan a circumciser of Bachuma first age-set circumcised the year nineteen seventy eight. You must work hard, you must own a house. Manhood entails marrying a woman and siring children. You must rear animals and birds, show respect to all people both young and old.'

According to Wafula the key informant, during *sikhebo* ritual, the words of the circumciser are very important and must be taken seriously. For instance, the initiate is told to work

hard to provide for his family by use of the machete, axe and hoe, protect the family and the community from enemies, rear livestock and poultry, respect all people and avoid drunkenness. However, if the initiate misbehaves, he is mocked by other initiates to book another session with the circumciser.

Mutunda's (2016) take that it is during the seclusion stage among the Zambian male initiation ceremony that the initiates are taught cultural training informed the study. Among the Bukusu community, it is during the seclusion period in *sikhebo* ritual that the initiate is taught to behave as a young Bukusu man. This is evident in him working hard to provide for his family, rear livestock and poultry and respect people. The initiate is told to be responsible and avoid drunkenness.

The initiate who is Wanyama is given an age-set name on December, 10th 2018 at Wekesa's home. Prior to the ceremony, Wanyama's male escorts namely: Wafukho, Bunyasi and Kundu assist him to assemble stumps for the ritual fire and green bananas to roast on the eve of the pass-out day. Also, he constructs a temporal structure known as *silali* in Nasambu's (the initiate's mother's) banana plantation. On the eve of the pass-out day at 7pm, Wekesa the initiate's father burns the bedding Wanyama was sleeping on during seclusion and instructs him to get hold of a twig of *nanjaka* sticks tied with dry banana leaves known as *kamasanja* to light as he runs to the banana plantation he abuses the circumciser who is not present until he reaches the temporal structure. According to Werunga and Wafula the key informants, the act of the initiate's father chosing Nasambu's plantation who is kind and generous where his son constructs a temporal structure teaches him cherished virtues. Secondly, the fire that the initiate lights on his parents' compound signifies blessings he receives from them evident in him marrying and siring children in future.

The fire that the initiate lights does not go off until he reaches the temporary structure, however, if it does, it is believed that he becomes a wizard. Also, while running, the initiate abuses the circumciser who cut him to show that he is mature and deserves respect.

As observed from the field study, as the initiate spends out on the eve of the pass-out day, he is instructed by the male escorts not to leave the temporal structure called *sisali* at whatever cost, ensures the ritual fire that he lights does not go off at whatever cost as the male escorts namely: Wafukho, Bunyasi and Kundu narrate stories of the community's heroes in the past. According to Wafula the key informant, the act of the male escorts instructing the initiate not to leave the temporal structure at whatever cost teaches him cherished virtues of obedience and tolerance. Secondly, the ritual fire that the initiate lights must not go off to signify continuity in the family evident in him marrying in future and siring children. Additionally, the initiate remains awake as he listens to legend stories from the male escorts to teach him virtues of courage and tolerance because after the ritual cut, he must protect the community against aggression.

The study concurs with Staton (2007) that falling action follows the climax and often exhibits the winding down of the climax. In *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu, seclusion takes place in the months of August to December. During this time, the initiate is isolated and stays in a cottage known as *mwikombe* that symbolizes where people go when they die. According to Werunga the key informant, during *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate interacts with spirits some of which are harmful. Therefore, cleansing rituals are performed to enable him to intermingle freely with members of the community. For instance, on the circumcision day, the initiate is not allowed to eat until the circumciser performs a ritual known as *khulumia* that involves feeding and teaching him how to

handle himself during seclusion. One month after the ritual cut, the circumciser is called by the initiate's father to perform a ritual known as *khubita* that teaches the initiate to behave like a young Bukusu man.

#### 4.2.6 Denouement

Freytag's (1896) dramatic model in MacEwan (2010) which is denouement is the sixth stage where the pending concerns are settled and status quo is restored. Among the Bukusu community, in the morning of the pass-out day, the initiate is escorted by Wafukho, Bunyasi, Lukibisi and Kundu along the river where he is shaved by Namaemba the paternal aunt thereafter, instructed to bathe in water that flows and put on new clothes. Namaemba tells Wanyama authoritatively:

*'Khola kumuruwe kwoo kube kumwangu!'*

'Make your head flexible!

When Wanyama has bathed Namaemba gives him new clothes to put on and orders him to stay along the river upto eleven o'clock in the morning when he goes home in the company of other initiates singing the song '*Lelo Mungumbo Empia*' as he dances in a jovial matching pace. When he arrives at his father's compound, he is prevented from getting into the house. Nasambu the initiate's mother serves him hot bananas. After eating for a while, he starts hitting other initiates with the bananas.

According to Werunga the key informant, the act of the initiate singing the song "*Lelo Mungumbo Empia*" while coming home from the river in the morning of the pass-out day



signifies that he is a new creature who deserves respect and is ready to take up adult roles. Secondly, the act of the initiate hitting other initiates with bananas signifies plenty of food in the community. Therefore; he must work hard in future to provide for his family.

Denouement is evident in *sikhebo* ritual in the morning of the pass-out when Mang'oli the male elder is selected to advise the initiate on community's customs, traditions, beliefs norms and ideals.

The issues dealing with sexual matters are outlined below:

Mang'oli clears the throat and talks to Wanyama:

*'Busecha bwoo sebuli bwe burembo tawe nebusa kenyekhana osale babana sikila sikhebo sili khubeishana. Khekhosomela khuloba khuria bakhasi be babandu! Kumuliango kumwikule kukwoo ne kumwikale kwabene!'*

'Your sexual organ is not meant for beauty but for specific purpose of siring children because circumcision is pegged on marriage! I warn you against disrespecting other people's wives! An open door is yours and closed one is somebody else's!'

This is the time Wanyama is told to work hard and provide for his family, respect other people, when he should indulge in sex and by who and how to relate with others. However, he is warned against involving in kitchen affairs because these are affairs of his wife, not to venture into his mother's bedroom but respect the privacy of his mother and father, not to bewitch or cause any form of evil to fellow human beings, not to use force to get what is not rightfully his and engage in activities that are not prescribed by the society.

The study concurs with Mutunda (2016) that the third and final stage during the Zambia male circumcision is graduation which is marked by various activities as boys are welcomed back into their community, where they are received joyously as newly born and real men. In *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu, it is after the initiate receives the final pieces of advice on community's values and ideals that he is allowed to eat with the male elders to welcome him into the club of men and he is respected in the community.

In *sikhebo* ritual, it is during the pass-out stage that the initiate graduates to manhood and is taught community's values and ideals. Some of the teachings are enshrined in the statements made by Wekesa and Mang'oli as stated below:

Wekesa hands a spear and a shield to Wanyama and says:

*'Khekuwekesia kimilimo kie chitalo chicha kie khulinda babandu!'*

'I am preparing you for future responsibility of protecting the society!'

Mang'oli stresses the point:

*'Babuka sebakosa aga baloma bali bulala kamani.'*

'Our ancestors were not wrong when they said that unity is strength.'

Mang'oli speaks authoritatively:

*'Omusoleli, yakhaba mbo sikhale siloma sili onyuwe kamalwa, okhoya wanyuwa ne wichunga. Kenyekhana obe nende siren'gamo mara oweleshe babandu boo nisio benya.'*

‘Young man, although tradition allows you to take brew, you must drink responsibly. Ensure you work hard to provide for your family!’

As observed from the field study, after the initiate attains a circumcision age-set, he is appreciated by relatives; friends and neighbours with gifts to enable him start new life. Also, Wekesa the initiate’s father appreciates his son by giving him a spear to throw accurately enough to pierce and sticks on the ground. As soon as the spear lands on the ground, Wanyama says:

*‘Nerire omusiku!’*

‘I have killed an enemy!’

According to the information collected from the field, after Wanyama who is the initiate receives pieces of advice from Mang’oli the male elder, he is given a spear by the father as present to throw accurately enough to pierce and sticks on the ground to show his protective role in the community. Equally, he is served food to eat with the male elders who are Nyukuri and Mang’oli to usher him into the club of men. Likewise, the initiate is served local brew known as *busaa* in a calabash however, he is advised to drink responsibly. A day after the pass-out rite, the initiate visits friends, relatives, and neighbours for a period of one month to be rewarded with livestock, chicken and eggs to enable him accumulate wealth that should be used to pay dowry. According to the key informants, during *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate is given gifts after receiving final pieces of advice to show that he is a man who is ready to receive property and take care of his family. The study agrees with Robert and Jacobs (1987) that denouement is the set of actions that bring the story to its conclusion. In *sikhebo* ritual, it is during the pass-out stage that the initiate obtains a circumcision

age-set and is taught community's customs, traditions beliefs, norms, morality and good social values and ideals that are recognized by the community.

*Sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community creates a curve that directs the audience to a complete appreciation of the storytelling exercise. The ritual uses the conflict inherent to enhance the audience's experiences by presenting them with moments of exposition, inciting incidents, rising actions, climax, falling action and denouement. *Sikhebo* ritual follows a chronological order religiously from the preparation stage, ritual cut through seclusion and pass-out rite in order to get correct outcome.

#### **4.3 Conclusion**

The study established that *sikhebo* ritual takes a narrative structure governed by Freytag's (1896) dramatic model in MacEwan (2010). The narration analyzed embraced six basic stages namely exposition, the inciting incident, the rising action, climax, the falling action and denouement. Exposition was the first stage that presented the principal character and established the scene. In *sikhebo* ritual, it was at this stage that the initiate was introduced and the intention to get circumcised was known. The second stage was the inciting incident that introduced a conflict which powered to the rest of the story. In *sikhebo* ritual, the conflict was the initiate's intention to get circumcised. The third stage was the rising action at which the intensity of events increased and the conflict grew. In *sikhebo* ritual, every member of the community took part in the performance that lead to the initiate being circumcised. This was the time that rituals like *khuchukhila* that involved the preparation of brew known as *busaa*, the initiate declared his candidature to relatives, friends and neighbours, and sacrifices were offered to the gods and the

ancestors. On the eve of the circumcision day, the initiate was chided through songs, reprimands and props. Early in the morning on the circumcision day, the initiate was escorted to the swamp where he was smeared with mud and escorted back home to face the knife. The fourth stage was the climax the turning point when events and situations change for better or worse. In *sikhebo* ritual, climax was realized when the initiate was circumcised. The fifth stage was the falling action where suspense was prolonged as complications were met head on and questions were acknowledged and occasionally answered. In *sikhebo* ritual, it was during seclusion period that the initiate was isolated in order to perform cleansing rituals and was taught community's values and ideals. The sixth stage was denouement where the pending concerns were settled and status quo was restored. In *sikhebo* ritual, this was the time the initiate obtained a circumcision age-set and was taught community's customs, traditions, beliefs, norms, morality and good social values and ideals. The study used the tenet of the theory of narratology that states that narrative is composed of a unique sequence of events to analyze narrative elements in *sikhebo* ritual. Chapter 5 that follows provides findings and conclusion on assesment of actual characterization and role of various characters in *sikhebo* ritual.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ASSESSMENT OF ACTUAL CHARACTERIZATION AND ROLE OF VARIOUS CHARACTERS IN THE NARRATIVE

#### 5.1 Introduction

The chapter examines objective two dealing with assessment of actual characterization and role of various characters in *sikhebo* ritual. In order to achieve this objective on the assessment of actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative, some general discussions are made by various authors as indicated in section 2.3. Thereafter, actual characterization and role of various characters are contextualized in the study of *sikhebo* ritual. The data on this was extracted from the *sikhebo* ritual. Groden, Kreiswirth and Sweman's (2012) postulation that a narrative includes characters met the second study objective that assessed the actual characterization and role of various characters in *sikhebo* ritual. This was achieved by observing individual roles of specifications and participation based on the stages of the ritual.

#### 5.2 Characters in *Sikhebo* Ritual

According to Abbott (2008), characters in ritual are human beings who take up specified roles. The author affirms that in rituals, characterization is scripted according to the specific ritual. This explains the pomp, generosity and commonality which might not be the case in the community's day to day lives. In *sikhebo* ritual, characters are divided into two namely: main and minor characters whose roles were scripted.

The main characters who took up major roles in *sikhebo* ritual include: the initiate who is Wanyama, the initiate's father who is Wekesa, Nasambu is the initiate's mother, Namaemba the initiate's paternal aunt, Kundu, Bunyasi and Wafukho are the male escorts, Wakhisi the initiate's

maternal uncle, Mang'oli and Nyukuri are the male elders and Khisa is the circumciser. The minor characters in *sikhebo* ritual took up supporting roles. They include: Nanyama is Wanyama's sister, Lukibisi and Masinde are Wanyama's brothers, Wafula, Maloba, Wanyonyi are circumcisers, Nafula is Wakhisi's wife, Walubengo and Masibo are Wekesa's circumcision age-sets, Kiberenge and Kitui are Wekesa's male neighbors, Wanjala is Wekhomba's son, Wekhomba is Wekesa's brother, Nasipwondi and Nakhumicha are Wekesa's female escorts and Nafula is Wakhisi's wife. The next sub-sections analyze characterization and role of each of the characters in *sikhebo* ritual in relation to narrative based on gender and role of specification.

### **5.2.1 Actual Characterization and Role of the Initiate in the Narrative**

In *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu, the initiate is characterized as brave during early days when he approaches his father to inform him of his intent to get circumcised. In the direct address, he tells his father boldly that he wants to get circumcised because he is of age and he can not embarrass himself and his family. He says boldly:

*'Papa nenyā khukhuwingila kumwigo kuno sikila nolanile. Sendabaabia chisoni tawe!'*

'Father I want to get circumcised this year because I am of age. I will not embarrass you!'

According to Werunga, the key informant, the initiate who has attained the circumcision age approaches his father with news while putting on a brave face. However, if he puts on a smiling face, he is seen as source of embarrassment to himself and the family thus, he is denied the opportunity. Bauman's (1986) postulation that paralinguistic aspects are culture specific constellations of communicative means that serve to key performance in a particular

communication was instructive to the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate who intends to get circumcised portrays high level of seriousness by putting a brave face. On the other hand, putting on a smiling face is seen as a cowardice act. The study added by examining the paralinguistic features evident in the initiate's direct address with the father during early stages in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

In *sikhebo* ritual, before the initiate starts to invite visitors to attend the circumcision ceremony, he is decorated with beads known as *kamakomere* that criss cross on his chest and back to form letter X, he is also smeared with yeast on the head, face, chest, back, hands and legs by Namaemba the paternal aunt and the father dresses his head with a headgear. According to Wafula the key informant, the use of ornaments, costume and body art in *sikhebo* ritual makes the initiate to look unique as a result, learns that he is the centre of attraction thus, gains courage to face the knife. Additionally, the paraphernalia used during *sikhebo* ritual identifies the initiate so that whenever he passes he is reminded now and again to be serious because the costume is not put on for fun but serious business. The study agrees with Utoh-Ezeajugh (2006) that ornaments do more than just decorate the body of an actor or a performer are essential social-cultural significance and central in performance. In *sikhebo* ritual, the paraphernalia used by the initiate during performance makes him gain courage to face the knife. The study investigated the paraphernalia that the initiate use during *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

Among the Bukusu community, on the third day to the ritual cut, the initiate is symbolically brave when he goes to the river to draw water. This is evident when he puts on a brave face and focuses his eyes forward. Also, when he visits the maternal uncle for gifts and blessings he portrays high level of seriousness. According to Wafula the key informant, the time the initiate visits the maternal relations for blessings and gifts, he has to project high level of seriousness. The Bukusu



community equates the maturation of *busaa* which is measured by the way beer bubbles while turning into the strong alcohol, to the initiate who turns into tough individual by the third day. Therefore, the level of seriousness must grow exponentially as he advances towards the day of the cut. Throughout the night to the circumcision day, the quality of projecting the initiate's strength is gauged by the male elders who observe his face which is expected to be frowned. According to Werunga the key informant, frowning is indicative of how manhood is achieved through a painful process of removal of the foreskin. Equally, when the initiate is escorted to the swamp to be smeared with mud on the circumcision day, he expresses that he is serious by putting on a brave face. During the ritual cut, he shows solemnity by displaying unwavering fortitude, portraying no single sign of fear. Rietz's (1986) postulation that use of non-verbal cues play a significant role in the final analysis of meaning in that they advance a multi-channeled form of communication informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's seriousness is gauged by looking at the face and the eyes. The study assessed the initiate's use of paralinguistic features in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

In the entire *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate is tolerant. For instance, during rehearsal, the male escorts who are Wafukho, Bunyasi and Kundu slap and reprimand him as they teach him to play jingles and dance to circumcision songs. Equally, during visitations, the initiate dressed in costume is easily spotted by passers-by who reprimand and ask him to play jingles and dance to the tune of the circumcision songs. Also, at the maternal side, the initiate is slapped and reprimanded by Wakhisi the initiate's maternal uncle. Notably, before he leaves the maternal side, he is smeared with bull's stomach waste and yeast. As observed from the field, on the eve of the circumcision day, the initiate is chided through songs and oral verbalisms, served with half-roasted meat, sleeps on a bull's skin and his chest is hit with mud as he is reprimanded by the paternal male cousin.

Trumbull's (1991) argument that symbolic or ritual actions, more than say, a textual expression or a verbal orientation define the vital dimension of reality was instructive to the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate is chided through songs, oral verbalisms and actions to harden him for the task ahead.

In the morning of the circumcision day, the initiate's paternal aunt who is Namaemba comes towards the initiate running with the cooking stick known as *kumukango* that has been dipped in local brew known as *busaa* with the intention of hitting the initiate. However, he tries all means to block. The following confirms:

'In the morning on the circumcision day, Namaemba runs with a cooking stick that has been dipped in local brew with the intention to hit Wanyama who blocks'

According to Werunga the key informant, the act of the initiate's paternal aunt running with a cooking stick with the intention to hit the initiate is to test his bravery. However, after learning that the initiate is brave evident in him blocking any attempt to be hit, she runs home to inform the crowd that the initiate is brave. The study agrees with La Fontaine (1994) that props used in ritual performance are functional. In *sikhebo* ritual the cooking stick is used to test the initiate's bravery. The study examined the use of the props in narration during *sikhebo* ritual.

As observed from the field study, on the eve of the pass-out day, the initiate spends out in the company of the male escorts. This is the time he is taught cherished virtues of tolerance and bravery using legends. The excerpt below confirms this:

Kundu sits down and narrates stories of community's heroes in the past to keep Wanyama awake and encourages him to be brave. He says:

'Wanyama! Wanyama! *Okhakona tawe!*'

‘Wanyama! Wanyama! Do not sleep!’

On the eve of the pass-out day, the initiate is tolerant. This is evident when Wanyama stays in the temporal structure known as *sisali* and does not leave the place at whatever cost as instructed by Kundu. The initiate remains awake and endures as he ensures that the fire he lights does not go off as he listens to legend stories. According to Wafula the key informant, the initiate is instructed by the male escort who is Bunyasi not to leave the temporal structure at whatever cost to learn cherished virtues of obedience and tolerance. Secondly, the fire that he lights must not go off at whatever cost for it signifies continuity in the community evident in the ability to marry in future and sire children. Thirdly, the act of the initiate remaining awake as he listens to legends narrated by the male escorts shows his role to protect the community against aggression and learns virtues of courage and tolerance. Soyinka’s (2007) view that a ritual is a theatrical medium in which societal or the collective consciousness is impacted to its people informed the study. Among the Bukusu, it is during *sikhebo* ritual that the initiate is taught community’s values and ideals. The study examined the initiate’s actions in *sikhebo* ritual on the eve of the pass-out day as narrative.

Equally, on the eve to the circumcision day, Wanyama who is the initiate is abusive. This is evident when he holds twigs of *nanjaka* plant; dried banana leaves called *kamasanja*, in his hands, lights and runs towards the banana plantation as he shouts while abusing the circumciser who is not present. The following affirms:

Wekesa shouts:

‘Khisa! Khisa! Khisa! *Ewe omusilu! Ewe omujinga!*’

‘Khisa! Khisa! Khisa! You are stupid! You are an idiot!’

According to Werunga the key informant, the act of the initiate running while shouting as he abuses the circumciser shows that among the Bukusu community, a person is circumcised once and thereafter, deserves respect. The study concurs with Stanislavsky (2009) that the character score of actions include the mental score of actions. In *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu, the act of the initiate running with fire from the father's compound to the temporal structure as he abuses the circumciser who is not present shows that he is a man who should be respected. The study investigated the initiate's actions in *sikhebo* ritual on the eve of the pass-out as narrative.

Early in the morning on the pass-out day, Wanyama the initiate is bold. This is evident when he marches majestically from the river at ten o'clock in the morning in the company of other initiates singing the song '*Lelo Mungumbo Empia*'. The song is displayed in appendix 20. The song goes:

**Lelo Mungumbo Empia Song**

**Lubukusu version**

**English version**

**Soloist & response**

Soloist: *Mayi wundomanga!*

Soloist: Mother who talks of me!

All: *Lelo mungumbo empia!*

All: Today I am in new clothes!

According to Wafula the key informant, the act of Wanyama marching home in the morning on the pass-out day boldly as he sings the song '*Lelo Mungunbo Empia*' signifies that he is a man who should be respected. Additionally, the act shows that he is ready to take up adult responsibilities of protecting the community against enemies and getting children in future to propagate the community's lineage. The study agrees with Ikenga-Metuh (1987) that initiates take part in actions during the graduation initiation ceremony among the Egungun of Yoruba. In *sikhebo* ritual, in the morning of the pass-out day, the initiate comes from the river to his father's home walking boldly while singing the song '*Lelo Mungunbo Empia*' to signify that he is a new creature. The study assessed the initiate's actions in the morning of the pass-out day in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

On the pass-out day, Wanyama is skillful. This is seen when he throws the spear that he is given by Wekesa his father that pierces and sticks on the ground. The following affirms:

Wanyama takes a spear from Wekesa as present and throws accurately enough to pierce and sticks the ground as he shouts:

*'Nerire omusiku'*

'I have killed an enemy!'

According to Wafula the key informant, the initiate is given a spear by his father to throw accurately enough to pierce and sticks the ground as he shouts: *'I have killed an enemy!'* to show his protective role in the community. The study agrees with Muriuki (2021) that props are used in performances to communicate the culture of the performers. In *sikhebo* ritual the initiate is given a spear by the father to throw accurately to pierce and sticks the ground to signify his protective role in the community. The study examined the use of props in *sikhebo* ritual in telling the story.

### **5.2.2 Actual Characterization and Role of the Initiate's Father in the Narrative**

In *sikhebo* ritual, during the preparation period, the initiate's father is authoritative. This is evident when he tells his son that it is his personal decision to get circumcised thus, he should uphold the community's dignity by being brave using a proverb that states: *'nio embogo esecha yambukhila luluchi engana yosi yabukhilao'* translated as: *'where the father buffalo crossed the river is the same spot the calf crosses'*. The following confirms:

Wekesa answers Wanyama:

*'Kaba mbo wamwene wenye khukhuwingila, endakhanga khukhukheba. Ekhusaba nandi okheambia chisoni, babandu bwoo nende ekholo yoo tawe. Obe omunyindafu. Babuka sebakosa anga baloma bali nio embogo esecha*

*yambukhila luluchi engana yosi yabukhilao! Ese Omuchuma mala nema chinyuni chafwa. Kenyekhana olonde nio naswala.'*

'If you want to get circumcised voluntarily, I will do everything possible to ensure you are circumcised! However, do not embarrass yourself, the family and the community! You must be brave! Elders were not wrong when they said that where the father buffalo crossed the river is the same spot the calf crosses! I belong to Bachuma age-set and I stood until all the birds died! You ought to follow my footsteps!

According to Wafula the key informant, the initiate's father uses the proverb that states that: '*where the father buffalo crossed the river is the spot the calf crosses*' to show that the initiate should embrace the act of male circumcision that was initiated by Mango the founder of the rite among the Bukusu community. However, the initiate who fears the knife or delays getting circumcised is seen to have betrayed the ancestors who are part and parcel of him because he is named after the departed grandfather and uncle.

Equally, on the third day to the circumcision day in *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's father uses authoritative language to advise the son to stay firm and focused. Wekesa's self-praise is displayed in appendix 23. The following affirms:

Wekesa speaks authoritatively to Wanyama:

*'Nise Wekesa olomaloma, rarao, Omubuya Omusimaolia khwa Wamalwa Omuchuma, kumwiko likhumi saba namunane (1978). Okhoya waba omunyindafu bise bie embalu. Okhakuambia chisoni tawe! Babandu be kholo yefwe banyindafu. noloma oli sowerekekhe tawe mbeleshe chinyimba ekhubikhile! Ekholo yefwe seli eye babandu bari tawe!'*

‘I am Wekesa speaking, your father, Omubuya Omusimaolia the son of Wamalwa age-set of Bachuma circumcised the year nineteen seventy-eight (1978). You must be courageous during the cut! Do not embarrass us! People in our clan are brave! Tell me if you are not ready so that you can give me jingles to keep for you! Our clan is not for cowards!’

According to Werunga the key informant, the initiate’s father uses authoritative language to advise the initiate on the third day to the ritual cut to remain firm and focused. The initiate’s father’s tone of voice helps to instil fear in the initiate as a result, marshals the required courage to face the knife. Equally, during self-praise, Wekesa praises himself and his lineage as brave people hence, makes the initiate to learn that he is a product of brave people. The study concurs with Bauman (1986) that one must understand the language of performance and pay particular attention to the entire process. In *sikhebo* ritual, characters who execute rituals show authority over the initiate in order to earn respect. The study examined the initiate’s father’s roles in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative. The initiate's father is protective. Immediately the initiate arrives home from the maternal side, Wekesa orders him to stop playing jingles. He then removes the brisket around his neck and hands to Namaemba the initiate's paternal aunt. The following confirms: Wekesa says:

*‘lekha khupa chinyimpa’*

'Stop playing jingles'

Wekesa removes a brisket from Wanyama's neck and hands to Namaemba.

According to Wafula the key informant, the act of the initiate father removing the brisket around the initiate's neck and handing to the paternal aunt shows that she can not spoil her own blood by making the initiate to fear the knife or women. The study agrees with Trumbull (1991) that symbolic or ritual actions, more than say, a textual expression. In *sikhebo* ritual, the act of the

initiate's father handing the brisket to the initiate's paternal aunt symbolizes that she can not spoil her blood. The study assessed the initiate's father actions in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

The initiate's father is appreciative. This is evident after successful ritual cut when he joins the crowd in song and dance to celebrate the initiate's success. Equally, on the circumcision day, he appreciates his circumcision age-sets with meat and brew known as *busaa*. Wekesa says:

*'Nasima khumilimo kimilayi bakoki'.*

*'Thank you for the good work my circumcision age-set'.*

Wekesa gives Masibo and Walubengo brew and meat to share.

According to the information collected from the field, Wekesa the initiate's father joins the crowd in the song '*Khwera Omurwa*' as he dances after successful ritual cut to appreciate the initiate's bravery. Secondly, the initiate's father appreciates his circumcision age-sets with meat and brew because tradition dictates that whenever an age-set circumcises his son, he rewards them so that they can bless the initiate. However, if they are not rewarded, they can curse the initiate to become impotent or fear women. The study concurs with Kwakwa (1982) that in ritual setting, symbolism provides visible, audible and tangible evidence of the beliefs and values that cannot be readily perceived. Among the Bukusu community, tradition dictates that the initiate's father appreciates his circumcision age-sets whenever he circumcises his son. The study analyzed the initiate's father's actions after the ritual cut in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

The initiate's father is protective on the third day after the ritual cut, known as *musialukho*. This is seen when he takes the contents wrapped in the circumcision spot that include: mud that was removed from the initiate's body, blood that dripped on the ground during the ritual cut and the initiate's foreskin and buries in a hidden place early in the morning. According to Werunga the key informant, Wekesa buries the contents wrapped in the circumcision spot to prevent malicious



people from picking with the intention of harming the initiate to fear women or become impotent. Ikenga-Metuh's (1987) view that performers are assigned roles during the Egungun graduation rite informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's father has the responsibility to bury the contents wrapped in the circumcision spot on the third day after the ritual cut to prevent malicious people from picking with the intention of harming the initiate to become impotent and fear women. The study assessed the initiate's father's actions on the third day after the ritual cut in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

Equally, on the third day after the ritual cut, the initiate's father is cautious. This is evident when he advises his son before he leaves the compound to intermingle with other initiates in the neighborhood. He cautions Wanyama not to eat outside his cottage, shelter in other initiates' cottages and greet people with his hands. The following confirms:

Wekesa talks to Wanyama authoritatively:

*'Oluno khocha khukhuwanganana ne babasio. Sokhoya wisinge khu mwesi mulala tawe lakini olebakha lulongo khumubili kwoo khurusiakho buchafu. Sie khabili, sokhoya walia siakhulia enje we likombe lio tawe sikila siakhulia sinyala siyatekhuwa nende bakhasi bakhakholelwa sitekho tawe. Nemalilisha, okheikama mumakombe ke bafulu babandi namwe okheshe babandu ne kimikhono tawe.'*

'Today you are going out to intermingle with others in the neighbourhood. You must not bathe for the next one month but you will apply white ochre known as *lulongo*. Secondly, you should not eat outside your cottage because women, who

are not purified in a ritual known as *sitekho*, can prepare food. Also, you should not shelter in other initiates' cottages and greet people with your hands.'

According to Wafula the key informant, the initiate's father tells Wanyama not to bathe for one month to prevent the herb to be washed off. During this time, he smears himself with ochre known as *lulongo* that is bright in colour that symbolizes prosperity in the initiate's life evident in him marrying and siring children in future. The initiate is also told not to shelter in other initiates' cottages because luck may be transferred to the host initiates. Lastly, the initiate is not allowed to greet people with his hands because the act delays the healing process. Stanislavsky's (2009) postulation that mental score of actions contain objectives informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's father instructs the initiate before he leaves the compound on the third day after the ritual cut to ensure that he lives a prosperous life. The study analyzed the initiate's father's instructions during seclusion in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

### **5.2.3 Actual Characterization and Role of the Initiate's Mother in the Narrative**

Nasambu who is the initiate's mother is generous. This is evident when she provides two sacks of maize to prepare brew and posho. Nasambu says:

*'Anga mayi we mungo, khebabolela nandi buli sindu sili abwene. Ligunia lilala lilangona kamalwa ne lindi liye liboso. Bakuka sebakosa anga baloma bali omulange alimo luliye.'*

'As the mother of the home, I assure you that everything is in place. One sack is for preparing the brew and another one for posho. Our ancestors were not wrong when they said that an invitee is full of greed.'

According to Werunga the key informant, *sikhebo* ritual involves many participants who attend the ceremony because the ritual takes place in the month of August during holiday when schools have closed. Therefore, the initiate's mother has the responsibility to ensure there is enough food and local brew known as *busaa* for visitors who attend the ceremony. Therefore, the initiate's mother uses a proverb that states that: '*omulange alimo luliye*' translated as '*an invitee is full of greed*' to show that during *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's parents should prepare adequately to make visitors happy. The study agrees with Nwandu (2012) that different roles are assigned to participants in Umulumbe funeral ritual based on gender. In *sikhebo* ritual the initiate's mother has the responsibility to ensure there is enough food and brew for visitors. On the other hand, the initiate's father ensures two bulls are available for meat and to offer sacrifices to the gods and the ancestors. The study examined the initiate's mother's actions during the preparation period in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

The initiate's mother who is Nasambu is appreciative. This is seen when she ululates after Wanyama the initiate dares his father to undergo the rite during the performance of a ritual known as *khuchukhilila* that involves the preparation of brew. Also, she ululates after the initiate's mother arrives home from the maternal side and after successful ritual cut. According to Werunga the key informant, the initiate's mother ululates three days to the ritual cut during the performance of a ritual known as *khuchukhilila*, to express joy of expecting a circumcised man in the home soon after the initiate dares his father to get circumcised. Also, immediately the initiate arrives home from the maternal side, the initiate's mother ululates to appreciate the maternal uncle for honouring the son. Lastly, Nasambu ululates after the ritual cut to appreciate the initiate's bravery. The study agrees with Omwansa (2011) that ululations in the performance of *esimbore* mark excitement. The study investigated the initiate's mother's ululations in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

#### 5.2.4 Actual Characterization and Role of Initiate's Maternal Uncle in the Narrative

In *sikhebo* ritual, Wakhisi the initiate's maternal uncle is authoritative. This is seen when he uses authoritative language during self-praise to tell the initiate to be focused. Wakhisi's self-praise is displayed in appendix 26. This is illustrated using data below:

Early in the morning a day to the ritual cut, Wakhisi calls Wanyama and tells him to stand before him; he starts speaking authoritatively pointing the coloured bull:  
*'Ese Wakhisi olomaloma, khochao, Omuchuma owakhabili kumwiko kwa samanini (1980) khwa Nambuye! Ekholo yefwe eli eye babandu banyindafu. Okhoya waba omunyindafu bise bie embalu. Buri bwosi bwosi aba bwama eburarao. Lola eunuwa eye kamapala!'*

'I am Wakhisi speaking, your maternal uncle of Bachuma age-set, number two circumcised the year nineteen eighty (1980) the son of Nambuye! Our clan is of brave people! You must be brave during the cut! Any fear witnessed will be attributed to the paternal side. Look at that coloured bull known as *'eunuwa!'*

According to information collected from the field, the initiate's maternal uncle who benefited from the initiate's mother's dowry has to appreciate by slaughtering a bull for the nephew. It was observed that before Wakhisi dresses a piece of meat from the bull's breast known as *luliki* around the initiate's neck, he praises himself. According to Werunga, Wakhisi praises himself to invoke the maternal ancestral spirits to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period. Among the Bukusu, the ancestors give the initiate courage to face the knife because any sign of fear witnessed during the ritual cut is attributed to the maternal side. Stanislavsky's (2009) view that actions contain objectives, obstacles and strategies was instructive to the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate visits the maternal uncle for gifts and blessings. Notably, before he leaves the

maternal side, he is smeared with yeast and bull's stomach waste to bless and protect him against malicious people. However, the obstacle arises when the maternal side is blamed whenever the initiate fears the knife. The study examined the initiate's maternal uncle's roles in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

Among the Bukusu community, the initiate's maternal uncle is protective. This is evident in *sikhebo* ritual before the initiate leaves the maternal side; he is smeared with yeast and the bull's stomach waste on his body. According to information gathered from the field, the initiate's maternal uncle smears the initiate with yeast and bull's stomach's waste to protect and bless him during the circumcision period. Among the Bukusu, any sign of fear witnessed during *sikhebo* ritual is attributed to the maternal side. Wakhisi is also protective on the eve of the circumcision day when he protects the initiate and his mother from the male escorts who are rowdy. Ikenga-Metuh's (1987) view that performers are assigned roles during the Egungun graduation rite informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's maternal uncle has the responsibility to smear the initiate with bull's stomach waste known as *buse* for protection and protect the initiate's mother from rowdy crowd. The study analyzed the initiate's maternal uncle's actions in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

The initiate's maternal uncle is appreciative. This is evident when he appreciates the nephew by slaughtering a bull and dresses a piece of meat from the breast around the neck. Secondly, on the circumcision day, he joins the crowd in dance as he sings the song '*Khwera Omurwa*'. According to Wafula the key informant, Wakhisi appreciates the nephew because he benefited from the initiate's mother's dowry. Secondly, he joins the crowd in song and dance after successful ritual cut to celebrate the nephew's victory because any sign of fear witnessed during ritual cut is attributed to the maternal side. The study agrees with Kwakwa (1982) that in ritual setting,

symbolism provides visible, audible and tangible evidence of the beliefs and values that cannot be readily perceived. In *sikhebo* ritual, tradition dictates that the initiate's maternal uncle appreciates the nephew by slaughtering a bull and smears the initiate with the bull's stomach waste known as *buse* because any form of fear witnessed during the ritual cut is attributed to the maternal side. The study assessed the initiate's maternal uncle's roles in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

### 5.2.5 Actual Characterization and Role of the Male Escorts in the Narrative

In *sikhebo* ritual, Kundu, Bunyasi and Wafukho the male escorts are creative and imaginative. This is seen when they compose songs that criticize people who deviate from the normal norms. The male escorts sing the song 'Babuya'. The song is displayed in appendix 13. The song goes:

#### **Babuya Song**

##### **Lubukusu Version**

Soloist: *Ee! Rirr! Bungali eteremesha  
sibala!*

All: *Ee! Babuya ekholo embi eh!*

##### **English Version**

Soloist: *Ee! Rirr! Truly make tremors  
that will shake the earth!*

All: *Ee! Babuya is a bad clan eh!*

According to information collected from the field, the Bukusu community expects its members to be morally upright. The song 'Babuya' that is sung during *sikhebo* ritual criticizes a sub clan of Babuya among the Bukusu tribe who killed the teacher by the name Protus using chameleon poison. The song makes members of 'Babuya' clan stigmatized as a result, discourages other Bukusu clans to indulge in immoral acts. The study agrees with Ikenga-Metuh (1987) that characters are assigned specific roles among the Egungun of Yoruba. In *sikhebo* ritual, the male escorts have the role of composing songs. The study examined songs in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative. During *sikhebo* ritual, the male escorts who are Wafukho, Kundu and Bunyasi are fearful. This is evident when they carry clubs and sticks high, use oral verbalisms and reprimands. The following confirms:

On the eve of the circumcision day, Kundu dashes in front of Bunyasi, Wafukho, Lukibisi, Kundu and Nakhumicha for a short distance and turns to the audience as he produces war cries! *Woooi! Woooi! Woooi!*

Bunyasi, Wafukho and Kundu carry sticks and clubs; reprimand the initiate using slaps gesticulation.

According to the information collected from the field, the act of the male escorts reprimanding the initiate verbally, carrying sticks and clubs shoulder high as if they want to hit him instills fear in him as a result, makes him to realize that *sikhebo* ritual is a serious affair. Equally, the male escorts engage in war cries to express the liking attitude they have towards *sikhebo* ritual because it is the only avenue that creates men out of boys. The study concurs with La Fontaine (1994) and Bauman's (1986) that non-verbal aspects including the objects carried by and constructed around the initiates and paralinguistic aspects serve a communicative purpose. In *sikhebo* ritual, the sticks and clubs scare the initiate thus, gains courage to face the knife. Equally the male escorts use slap gesticulation to instil fear in the initiate in order to gain courage to face the knife. The study analyzed the male escorts' actions in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

The male escorts are also authoritative. This is evident when Bunyasi a male escort uses authoritative language to teach Wanyama to play jingles and dance to 'Mulongo' circumcision song. This is supported by the following data:

Bunyasi uses slap gesticulation and authoritative language to teach Wanyama to play jingles and dance to circumcision song 'Mulongo'. He says:

*'Okhoya waba nende sinani! Kenyekhana wamanya oli sikhebo sikhoya sinani!'*

'You need to be serious! You must know that *sikhebo* is a serious affair!'

According to Werunga the key informant, authoritative male escorts are picked to train the initiate to play jingles and dance to circumcision songs to instill fear as a result, makes him to gain courage to face the knife. Also, authoritative male escorts are picked to lead the crowd to sing songs in *sikhebo* ritual to imbue in the initiate a sense of courage. Bauman's (1986) argument that the process of ritual depends very much on the understanding of the language of performance informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu, the male escorts who are authoritative lead the crowd to sing songs to imbue a sense of courage in the initiate. The study examined the male escorts' tone of voice during *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

Notably, in *sikhebo* ritual, the male escorts are vulgar, this is evident during *sikhebo* ritual when they break the laid down rules without reprimand. As observed from the field, they hold their penis and direct to where their female counterparts are who lift their dresses as they point where their male counterparts are. This is supported by the data below:

On the eve of the circumcision day, the song that is sung is '*Luwaya*'. As Kundu sings the line: '*the wire that gave birth to the initiate*' and the crowd responds by saying, '*Ah! The wire!*' Wafukho, Bunyasi and Lukibisi use gesticulation as they hold their penis and direct where their female counterparts are as Nakhumicha and Nasipwondi respond by lifting their dresses.

According to Werunga the key informant, *sikhebo* ritual gives characters liberty to break the laid down rules without reprimand. Therefore, during performance, the male escorts utter taboo words, use obscenities as they dance provocatively until they get inspired to the extent that they display emotions. It was observed that while dancing, the male escorts hold their penis and direct where their female counterparts are as they tell them that they want to beat them water implying they are ready for sexual intercourse. Turner's (1977) view that the actors in rituals sometimes break the



moral conventions of the mundane society and behave in a manner precisely contrary to ordinary social expectations informed the study. Among the Bukusu, it is during *sikhebo* ritual that the initiate is taught sexual issues. The study investigated the provocative dance styles and uttering of taboo words by the male escorts in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

In *sikhebo* ritual, the male escorts are appreciative. For instance, while escorting the initiate from the maternal side, they sing the song '*Mayi wo Mwana*'. The song is displayed in appendix 11. The song goes:

### *Mayi wo Mwana* Song

#### Lubukusu Version

Soloist: *Omwana afwana sisuche!*

All: *Ooo! Mayi wo mwana yicha obone!*

Soloist: *Omwana afwana sisuche!*

All: *Ooo! Mayi wo mwana yicha obone!*

#### English Version

Soloist: The child resembles a fox!

All: *Ooo!* Mother to the child come and see!

Soloist: The child resembles a fox!

All: *Ooo!* Mother to the child come and see!

According to Wafula the key informant, in the song '*Mayi wo Mwana*', the male escorts inform people to see how the initiate's maternal uncle has appreciated the nephew by slaughtering a bull and dresses a piece of meat from the breast known as *luliki* around the neck. Notably, before Wanyama leaves the maternal side, he is smeared with yeast and bull's waste known as *buse* that is mixed with sweat that make spots on the initiate's face that resembles a fox. A fox is a wild animal that stays in the forest. In the context of *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate is accepted in the society when he is brave during the ritual cut. However, initiates who fear the knife are seen as outcasts. Equally, during *sikhebo* ritual, Wafukho, Bunyasi and Kundu who are the male escorts engage in war cries to display the liking attitude they have towards *sikhebo* ritual because it is the only avenue that creates men in the society. Equally, after successful ritual cut, the male elders roar as they sing the song '*Khwera Omurwa*' to celebrate the initiate's success. Soyinka's (1975) view that each hour

in an African's life affords him opportunity to express emotions of joy, sadness, victory or thanksgiving through songs, dance or music informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the song '*Mayi wo Mwana*' is sung while escorting the initiate to the father's home as the escorts dance to appreciate the maternal uncle for honouring the initiate. The study analyzed the male escorts' actions in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

During seclusion in *sikhebo* ritual, the male escorts are skillful. This is seen when they assist the initiate to construct a temporal structure known as *sisali*. Equally, on the eve of the pass-out, they narrate stories of heroes in the past. According to Werunga the key informant, the male escorts assist the initiate to construct a temporal structure where he spends on the eve of the pass-out day. Wafukho, Bunyasi and Kundu who are the male escorts narrate stories of heroes in the past to ensure the initiate remains awake in order to learn cherished community's virtues of bravery and endurance. Kripke's (2009) view that ritual involves individual roles based on gender informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the male escorts assist the initiate to construct the temporal structure and spend out with him on the eve of the circumcision day. The study examined the male escorts' roles in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

#### **5.2.6 Actual Characterization and Role of the Initiate's Paternal Aunt in the Narrative**

During the first week of August 2018, after relatives, friends and neighbours gathered to ensure everything required for the ceremony is availed and fix the day to circumcise Wanyama the initiate, Namaemba the initiate's paternal aunt is skillful. This is evident when she decorates the nephew with beads known as *kamakomeri* that criss-cross on the initiate's back and chest to form letter X as she praises herself. The self-praise is displayed in appendix 25. This is supported by the data below:

Namaemba speaks authoritatively as she maintains eye contact with Wanyama:

*'Nise Namaemba olomaloma, sengeo, Omubuya Omusimaolia, khwa Wamalwa. Omu Kinyikeu arubaini na sita (1946). Khehubeka luluwana. Okhoya waba omunyindafu bise bie sikhebo, onyole omukhasi, wibule babana sikila buno nibwo busani. Buri bwosi bwosi bise bie embalu aba bwamile ebumao. Efwe banyindafu.'*

'I am Namaemba, your paternal aunt, Omubuya Omusimaolia; the daughter of Wamalwa. My father was circumcised the year nineteen forty-six (1946) of Kinyikeu age-set. I hereby, shave your boyhood. You must be courageous and brave during the ritual cut, get married and sire children since real manhood is assessed in terms of the above features. Any sign of fear witnessed during the ritual cut is attributed to the initiate's maternal side. We are brave people.'

According to the information collected from the field, the initiate's paternal aunt decorates the initiate with beads known as *kamakomeri* for identification so that whenever he passes, he is reminded now and again that the beads are not put on for fun but for serious business. Hence, gains courage to face the knife. Among the Bukusu community, beads are known for their high multiplication rate, therefore, decorating the initiate with them blesses him to be productive in future evident in him marrying and siring children. The initiate's paternal aunt praises herself as she decorates the initiate to invoke the paternal ancestral spirits to bless and protect him during the circumcision period. Nwandu's (2012) stipulation that special roles are assigned to characters based on gender was instructive to the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's paternal aunt known for her kindness, productivity and generosity is picked to shave and decorate the initiate to teach him morals. The study assessed the initiate's paternal aunt's actions in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

The initiate's paternal aunt is appreciative. This is seen when the initiate arrives home from the maternal side, Namaemba ululates before receiving the brisket that is removed around the initiate's neck by the initiate's father. Equally, after successful ritual cut she ululates and joins the crowd in dance and sings the song '*Khwera Omurwa*'. According to the information collected from the field, Namaemba ululates immediately the initiate arrives home from the maternal side to appreciate the maternal uncle for honouring the initiate by slaughtering a bull. Equally, the initiate's paternal aunt ululates after successful ritual cut as she joins the crowd to sing the song '*Khwera Omurwa*' to appreciate the initiate for being brave. The study agrees with Omwansa (2011) that in the performance of *esimbore*, cries and ululations marked excitement. The study investigated the initiate's paternal aunt's ululations in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's paternal aunt is authoritative. This is illustrated when she uses authoritative language while decorating the initiate during self-praise. Namaemba's self praise is illustrated below:

Namaemba speaks authoritatively as she maintains eye contact with Wanyama:

*'Nise Namaemba olomaloma, sengeo, Omubuya Omusimaolia, khwa Wamalwa. Omu Kinyikeu arubaini na sita (1946). Khehubeka lulwana. Okhoya waba omunyindafu bise bie sikhebo, onyole omukhasi, wibule babana sikila buno nibwo busani. Buri bwosi bwosi bise bie embalu aba bwamile ebumao. Efwe banyindafu.'*

'I am Namaemba, your paternal aunt, Omubuya Omusimaolia; the daughter of Wamalwa. My father was circumcised the year nineteen forty-six (1946) of

Kinyikeu age-set. I hereby, shave your boyhood. You must be courageous and brave during the ritual cut, get married and sire children since real manhood is assessed in terms of the above features. Any sign of fear witnessed during the ritual cut is attributed to the initiate's maternal side. We are brave people.'

According to Werunga the key informant, the initiate's paternal aunt uses authoritative language while shaving and decorating the nephew to invoke the initiate's paternal ancestors to protect and bless the initiate during the circumcision period. The tone of voice helps to instil fear in the initiate hence, marshals the required courage to face the knife. Kripke's (2009) observation that Greek ritual performance involves individual roles based on gender informed the study. Characters in *sikhebo* ritual are assigned roles based on gender. For instance, the initiate's paternal aunt who is given the responsibility to shave and decorate the initiate should be authoritative in order to instil fear in him who in turn realizes that *sikhebo* ritual is a serious affair. The study examined the initiate's paternal aunt's actions in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community as narrative. The initiate's paternal aunt is provocative. This is seen when she runs with a cooking stick with the intention of hitting the initiate who tries all means not to be hit. The following confirms:

'As Wanyama is escorted to his father's compound, Namaemba the initiate's paternal aunt runs towards him carrying a cooking stick that has been dipped in water with the intention of hitting the initiate'

According to the information collected from the field, the act of the initiate's paternal aunt running with a cooking stick with the intention of hitting the initiate tests his bravery. On his side, he tries all means not to be hit thereafter, she runs home to inform the crowd that the initiate is courageous ready to face the knife. The act also signifies that the initiate is taking instructions from the female

characters for the last time. The study concurs with Kwakwa (1982) that in ritual setting, symbolism provides visible, audible and tangible evidence of the beliefs and values that cannot be readily perceived. In *sikhebo* ritual, the act of the initiate's paternal aunt running with a cooking with the intention to hit the initiate is symbolic. The study examined the initiate's paternal aunt's actions in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

The initiate's paternal aunt is supportive. This is seen when she sits down on the floor of Nasambu's house with legs stretched horizontal in the company of Nasambu the initiate's mother. The following confirms:

During the ritual cut, Nasambu, Namaemba, Nafula and Nakhumicha sit down on the floor of Nasambu's house with their legs stretched horizontal on the floor in great pain.

According to Werunga the key informant, the act of Namaemba sitting with her legs stretched on the floor during the ritual cut in the company of other women characters signifies the pain the initiate's mother went through while giving birth to the initiate. In the context of *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's mother is in great pain because any form of fear witnessed during the ritual cut is attributed to the initiate's maternal side. The study concurs with Kasili (2006) that female characters take roles in *sikhebo* ritual during the ritual cut was vital to the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the female characters sit on the floor with their legs stretched. The study analyzed the female characters' actions in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

### **5.2.7 Actual Characterization and Role of the Circumciser in the Narrative**

Khisa the circumciser is skillful. This is evident when he offers sacrifices to the ancestors and the gods during the performance of a ritual known as sanctification of the circumcision knives. He dissects the cockerel and studies the intestines and other inner organs. The following confirms:

Khisa roasts the white cockerel with feathers on and once it is burnt, he dissects and studies the intestines and other inner organs to determine the initiates' fate. He then declares the period successful based on the reading of the cockerel's inner organs.

According to the information collected from the field, the circumciser observes the cockerel's inner organ and finds that it is clear an indication that the initiate has courage to face the knife. On the contrary, if the cockerel's inner organ is stained meaning that there are doubtful signs of fear, the initiate is smeared with bull's stomach waste known as *buse* to protect and bless him during the circumcision period. The study concurs with Kripke (2009) that ritual involves individual roles based on gender. In *sikhebo* ritual, the chief circumciser has the responsibility to determine the initiate's fate by observing the inner organs of a cockerel. The study investigated the chief circumciser's skillful actions in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

In *sikhebo* ritual, the circumciser is knowledgeable. This is evident during seclusion when he performs a ritual known as *khulumia* that involves feeding the initiate. It was observed that before the initiate is allowed to bite food, he is teased twice by the circumciser. According to Werunga the key informant, the act of teasing the initiate teaches him to behave maturely and the virtue of patience. One month after the ritual cut, the circumciser who is Khisa is called upon to advise the initiate on community's values and ideals by use of symbols. This is the time the initiate is told to work hard to provide for his family, protect the family from enemies, rear livestock and poultry, respect all people and avoid drunkenness. Ikenga-Metuh's (1987) view that performers are assigned roles during the Egungun graduation rite informed the study. Among the Bukusu, a circumciser must be a respected man who is skillful, knowledgeable and has a good record of accomplishment. The study examined the circumciser's actions in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative

In *sikhebo* ritual, the circumciser is authoritative. This is evident during the performance of a ritual known as *khubita chigembe* (sanctification of the circumcision knives) that is performed the first week of the month of July, 2018, Khisa uses authoritative language to appease the gods and the ancestors. Khisa's self-praise is displayed in appendix 23. The performance by Khisa is indicated below:

Khisa uses authoritative language to invoke the ancestors and the gods to bless the initiates and the circumcisers during the circumcision period. He says:

*'Ese Khisa olomaloma okhwama mukholo eye Bakhone okhwama Chwele khwa Nasambu okhwama Kilachi. Nengila kumwiko elfu ndala chimia tisa na arubaini na sita (1946). Omukinyikeu. Nicha ebweni wenywe! Okuno kumusambwa nikwo mwakhuwa. Bita bakhebi bano nende chingembe.'*

'I am Khisa, speaking from Bakhone clan of Chwele, the son of Nasambu from Kilachi! Circumcised the year nineteen forty-six (1946) of Kinyikeu age-set. I come before you! This is the spirit we inherited from you; bless the circumcisers and the circumcising knives.

According to Wafula the key informant, the chief circumciser uses authoritative language to appease the gods and the ancestors to bless the initiates, the circumcisers and warns the circumcisers not to indulge in sex, attend funerals because these result to circumcision mishaps. The circumcisers are also told not to put on shoes during the circumcision period because this can make them to slide as a result, being disqualified automatically as circumcisers. Moreover, during the performance of *khulumia* ritual that involves the circumciser feeding the initiate and *khubita* that involves the circumciser advising the initiate on community's values and ideals, the circumciser uses authoritative language. The circumciser's tone of voice makes the initiate to get



what the circumciser tells him because his words are very important. Bauman's (1986) argument that the process of ritual depends very much on the understanding of the language of performance informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the chief circumciser uses authoritative language to offer sacrifices to the ancestors and the gods as well as instructing the circumcisers and the initiate. The study examined the circumciser's role(s) in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

### 5.2.8 Actual Characterization and Role of the Male Elders in the Narrative

In *sikhebo* ritual, Mang'oli and Nyukuri the male elders are knowledgeable. This is evident when they use proverbs and songs to teach the initiate community's values and ideals. For instance, on the circumcision day when the initiate's wakes up, the male elders lead the crowd to sing the song '*Amba Mutalya*'. The song is displayed in appendix 15. The song goes:

#### *Amba Mutalya* Song

##### Lubukusu Version

Soloist: Mango *niye papa awarera sikhebo*  
*chindalo echo!*

All: *Tila Mutalya!*

##### English Version

Soloist: It was Mango our father who  
brought circumcision those days!

All: Hold Mutalya!

According to Werunga the key informant, the song '*Amba Mutalya*' is sung by the male elders in the morning of the circumcision day before the initiate is escorted to the swamp to be smeared with mud to allude to the battle of Adwa in 1896 where the Ethiopian forces under the leadership of Emperor Menelik 11 defeated an Italian army. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate should be brave during the ritual in order to be respected. The song also informs the initiate and the community at large to embrace *sikhebo* ritual that was initiated by Mango as a way of transmitting the community's customs and traditions from one generation to another. This is evident in the line that says: '*it was Mango our father who brought circumcision those days!*' The study concurs with Soyinka (1975) that each hour in an African's life affords him opportunity to express emotions of

joy, sadness, victory or thanksgiving through songs, dance or music. In *sikhebo* ritual, the male elders sing the song '*Amba Mutalya*' in a sad mood because after a short while, the initiate must face the knife. The study examined the male elders' roles in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

Notably, while advising the initiate, Mang'oli the male elder uses the song '*Amani Kali Elwanyi*' to teach the initiate community values and ideals. The song is displayed in appendix 21. The song goes:

<u>Lubukusu version</u>	<u><i>Amanani Kali Elwanyi</i> Song</u>	<u>English translation</u>
<i>Basoleli mukhabanga!</i>		You young men who brag!
<i>Amanani kali elwanyi!</i>		The war ogres are out there!
<i>Basoleli mukhabanga!</i>		You young men who brag!
<i>Amanani kali elwanyi!</i>		The war ogres are out there!
<i>Bamaina mukhabanga!</i>		Young men of Maina age-set who brag!
<i>Amanani kali elwanyi!</i>		The ogres of war are out there!

According to the information collected from the field, the song '*Amani Kali Elwanyi*' alludes to the British who attacked Chetambe area with the intention of taking land. However, the Bukusu circumcision age-sets teamed up fought and defeated them. The male elder uses the song to teach the initiate to unite with other initiates from other circumcision age-sets in order to protect the community's territory.

Also, while advising the initiate on community's values and ideals Mang'oli uses proverbs. For instance, he uses a proverb that states that: '*kumuliango kumwikule kukwoo ne kumwikale kwabene*' translated as '*an open door is yours and the closed one is for someone else*'. The proverb teaches the initiate to indulge in sex in future because his sexual organ is not meant for beauty but for specific purpose of siring children. The initiate is also told to make friendship with girls evident in the phrase: '*an open door*'. However, he is warned to respect married women seen in the phrase '*closed door*'. Additionally, the male elder uses a proverb that states that: '*kamalwa kakila sisiayo*'

*siboe siyakhina*’ to warn the initiate of the effects of drunkenness that make people to be irresponsible. The study agrees with Wanjala (2015) that among the Bukusu community, a male elder who is knowledgeable about the Bukusu culture do the administration of the final pieces of advice. The study analyzed songs and proverbs used by the male elder while advising the initiate during pass-out day in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

In *sikhebo* ritual the male elders are authoritative. On the eve of the circumcision day, Nyukuri the male elder offers sacrifices to the ancestors by Wanyama’s graveside and near the shrine. He uses authoritative language to lure them. Nyukuri’s self-praise is displayed in appendix 27. It follows:

Nyukuri advises Wanyama authoritatively. He says:

*‘Ese Nyukuri omukuka olomaloma, Omubuya Omusimaolia okhwa Nanjala omusoleli arubaini na nane omusani (1948) omukinyikeu omunyindafu. Nicha ebweni wenywe nende kumurungo kuno. Bita lundi mulinde omusinde khu butinyu bwosi.’*

‘I am Nyukuri a male elder speaking from Babuya Basimaolia clan, the son of Nanjala circumcised the year nineteen forty-eight (1948) of Kinyikeu age-set, a brave man. I come before you with this sacrifice. Bless and protect the initiate against all forms of malice.’

According to Werunga the key informant, Nyukuri who is the male elder uses authoritative language to appease the ancestors and the gods to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period. However, if they are not appeased, they may cause the initiate to bleed profusely and fear the knife. Also, Nyukuri’s tone of voice helps to instil fear in the initiate as a result, marshals the required courage to face the knife. Equally, during his self-praise, Nyukuri mentions the year of circumcision to show that he is superior at the same time, challenges the

initiate to face the knife with courage in order to earn respect in the community. Crawford's (2005) view that because of the importance of characters in a story, a quality that is often cited is being crucial for the success of interactive storytelling is character believability. In *sikhebo* ritual, the male elder who appeases the gods and ancestors is experienced and morally upright to act as role model to the initiate. The study investigated the male elder's actions in *sikhebo* ritual while offering sacrifices to the ancestors and the gods as narrative.

Equally, while advising the initiate on community's values and ideals, Mang'oli the male elder uses authoritative language during self-praise: Mang'oli's self-praise is displayed in appendix 31.

This is supported by the data below:

Mang'oli speaks authoritatively while looking at Wanyama:

*'Nise Mang'oli oloma. Omuneala owe Bamilele owe Bamitungu! Okhwa Namubuya, Nengo owe Kilachi, Omusoleli arubaini na nane (1948) ne omusani Waamba Mutalia! Anga kukao, khekhurusiakho egumbo ya mao! Bise bino wabele omusani! Kumuliago kumwikele kwabene ne kumwikule kukwoo! Okhuwama luno okhanyolekhana muchiju che bawandayo besisoleli, musilo tawe. Khekhurusiakho egumbo ya mayi woo ne khufwala aya baba woo. Kenyekhana olonde kamalaka. Wakholana khucha liye ne khulinda babandi!'*

'I am Mang'oli speaking of Baneala clan from Bamilele of Bamitungu lineage! My mother is Namubuya from Babuya clan, of Nengo from Kilachi! I am a brave one circumcised in nineteen forty-eight (1948) under Kinyikeu age-set the last cohort of Wamba Mutalia! As your grandfather, I take away the cloth of your mother! This time you are a man! The door that is closed is not yours and the one that is open is yours! From today you should not be found in your brother's house at night! I am

now removing off the cloth of your mother! I officially give you the cloth of your father! You must adhere to the pieces of advise you are given! You have qualified to go to war and defend others!’

According to the information collected from the field, while advising the initiate on the pass-out day, the male elder who is Mang'oli uses authoritative language to teach him community's customs, traditions, beliefs, norms, morality and good social values and ideals that are recognized by the community using proverbs and songs. Notably, during self-praise, he mentions the year of circumcision to show that he is superior and demands respect in the society. Nwandu's (2012) postulation that special roles are assigned to specific people in the Umulumgbe funeral ritual informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the male elder who is selected to advise the initiate on community's norms and culture must be a man, who has undergone the ritual cut, is well versed with the Bukusu culture and has a good record of accomplishment. In *sikhebo* ritual, the male elder is authoritative on the pass-out day in order to teach the initiate community's customs, traditions, beliefs, norms and ideals. The male elder's tone of voice instills fear in the initiate as a result, gets what he is told. The study analyzed the male elder's roles in *sikhebo* ritual on the pass-out day as narrative.

In *sikhebo* ritual, the male elders are skillful. Nyukuri and Mang'oli have the responsibility to prescribe the livestock to be used during the ritual, choose places where rituals are performed, offer sacrifices to the ancestors and the gods. According to the information collected from the field, the male elders have the responsibility to choose places where rituals are performed. For example the swamp where the initiates are smeared with mud should not dry because if it does all the initiates who are served in it die instantly. The livestock used during *sikhebo* ritual bore bright colours to signify prosperity in the initiate's life evident in him marrying in future and siring

children to propagate the community's lineage. Among the Bukusu community, skillful male elders are appointed to offer sacrifices to the ancestors and the gods to ensure correctness. Nevertheless, if the ritual is performed by non-skilled characters the outcome may be incorrect forcing a repeat of the entire ritual. Chatman's (1978) postulation that narrative involve characters was instructive to the study while assessing the roles of male elders in *sikhebo*. Among the Bukusu, the male elders have the responsibility to choose places where rituals are performed and the livestock to use. The study analyzed the places where rituals are performed and the livestock used in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community as narrative.

### **5.2.9 Actual Characterization and Role of the Initiate's Brothers in the Narrative**

Lukibisi the initiate's older brother is obedient. This is evident three days to the ritual cut when he follows his father's instructions to the latter when he escorts Wanyama to the river to draw water that is used to prepare the brew. During this time, he ensures the initiate does not look backwards, sideways and talk to anyone as well as fetches water that flows. According to Werunga the key informant, Lukibisi ensures the initiate does not look backwards, sideways and talks to anyone because these are viewed as cowardice acts. Secondly, the act of the initiate drawing water that flows symbolizes the progressive nature of his life evident in him marrying and siring children. Kripke's (2009) view that characters are assigned roles in rituals based on gender informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's older brother has the responsibility to escort the initiate to draw water three days to the ritual cut. The study investigated the initiate's older brother's roles in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

Lukibisi is authoritative. During seclusion, he is appointed to guide the initiate by Wekesa the initiate's father. The following affirms:

Wekesa looks at Lukibisi and says:

*'Nakhurobore wekeshe Wanyama anga alamenya mwikombe. Kumulimo kwoo kukhabe khumwengesha anga abakha enguu, khumubolela anga amenya nende babandu, omukanile chingano che basecha bakhola kimilimo kimilai mala omuganie khukwikhala nende basale be sikhasi nende khukenda musilo.'*

'I have appointed you to guide Wanyama during seclusion period. Your duty will be to instruct him to apply traditional herb called *enguu*, associate with people in society, tell him stories of great men in the past and caution him against coming into contact with female friends and walking at night.'

According to Werunga the key informant, the initiate's father chooses Lukibisi the initiate's older brother to guide and instruct the initiate during seclusion. His role is to instruct him to apply the herb known as *enguu* that is bitter to teach him virtues of tolerance and bravery. Additionally, he narrates stories of community's legends to teach the initiate virtues of bravery and tolerance. Equally, he cautions the initiate to avoid female friends lest his penis erects, cracking the wound and potentially resulting in bleeding or generally slowing down the healing process. Also, he cautions the initiate against walking at night because the act exposes him to malicious men who may scratch the wound that causes bleeding. Omwansa's (2011) take that male and female characters take different roles based on gender in the performance of *chinyangi chia bare* among the Abagusi informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's older brother is given the task to instruct the initiate to apply medicine, clean the wound and teach him community's values and ideals. The initiate's older brother should be authoritative in order to earn respect from the initiate. The study assessed the initiate's older brother's actions in *sikhebo* ritual during seclusion period as narrative.

Lukibisi is appreciative. This is evident during *sikhebo* ritual when he engages in war cries as he carries a big club and sings to circumcision songs. Equally, after the ritual cut, he joins the crowd to sing the song '*Khwera Omurwa*'. According to Wafula the key informant, the initiate's older brother engages in war cries to display the liking attitude he has towards *sikhebo* ritual because this is the only avenue that creates men out of boys. Secondly, Lukibisi carries a big club to scare the initiate not to fear the knife. Lastly, the initiate's older brother joins the crowd in singing the song '*Khwera Omurwa*' as he puts down the big club to appreciate the initiate's bravery. The study agrees with Stanislavsky (2009) that characters' actions contain objectives. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's older brother's actions are functional. The study examined the initiate's older brother's actions in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

Masinde the initiate's young brother is supportive. This is evident when he runs after boys and girls and forwards them to Wanyama to be greeted by tapping their ankles. This goes like this:

Wanyama and Masinde go to the river to collect white ochre known as *lulongo*.

Meanwhile, Masinde spots two uncircumcised boys and two girls and shouts!

'*Incha ano!*'

'Come here!'

The girls and boys start running away. Masinde runs after them gets hold of them and forwards them to be greeted by the initiate.

According to Wafula the key informant, the initiate's young brother runs after boys and girls and forwards them to Wanyama to be greeted by tapping their ankles because the act of the initiate greeting people with hands delays the healing process. The study agrees with Nwandu (2012) that special roles are assigned to specific people in the Umulumbe funeral. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's young brother runs after boys and girls and forwards them to be greeted. The study assessed the young initiate's brother's roles in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.



### 5.2.10 Actual Characterization and Role of the Initiate's Paternal Uncle in the Narrative

Wekhomba the initiate's paternal uncle is authoritative. On the eve of the circumcision day, before he dresses a piece of the bull's entrail known as *lisombo* around Wanyama's neck, he uses authoritative language in the self-praise. Wekhomba's self-praise is displayed in appendix 28. The following affirms: He says:

*'Ese Wekhomba oloma rarao, Omubuya Omusimaolia khwa Wafula Omuchuma owakhataru kumwaka samanini na mbili (1982) khekhubolela emoni abwenao. Ese anga rarao necha nema chinyuni chafwa sio. Lundi chikhaba chisoni taa. Ekhaba bali bakhukheba ne winyaa tawe. Muchuli okhaumba chiunuwa ta. Bona khekhuwa engumbo yefwe. Engumbo efwanana ne Babukusu, seli engumbo niyo khuloma khuli yama ano ta. Yama khale nende Mango.'*

'I am Wekhomba speaking your father Omubuya Omusimaolia. The son of Wafula of Bachuma age-set number three circumcised the year nineteen eighty two (1982). I hereby tell you that your eyes should remain there. As your father, I came and stood until all birds died. Do not embarrass us. Do not play during the ritual cut. Tomorrow don't start modelling bulls. See! I am giving you your cloth. The cloth that resembles the Bukusu. It is not the type of cloth that we can say came from near here. It started long ago with Mango!'

According to Werunga the key informant, Wekhomba uses authoritative language before he dresses a piece of the bull's entrail around the initiate's neck to invoke the paternal ancestral spirits to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period. However, if the paternal ancestral spirits are not appeased, they can make the initiate to fear the knife and bleed profusely. Equally, the initiate's paternal uncle's tone of voice instills fear in the initiate as a result, gains courage to face the knife after learning that he is a product of brave people. The study agrees with Ikenga-Metuh (1987) that performers are assigned roles during the Egungun graduation rite based on

gender. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's paternal uncle has the responsibility of dressing a piece of the bull's entrail known as *lisombo* around the initiate's neck and uses self-praise to invoke the paternal ancestral spirits to protect and bless the initiate during the circumcision period. The study examined the initiate's paternal uncle's roles in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

Wekhomba is also protective. This is evident on the eve of the circumcision day after dressing a piece of the bull's entrail around Wanyama's neck, he goes a head and smears him with bull's stomach waste starting from the head, face, chest, back, hands and legs. According to the information collected from the field, the initiate is smeared with bull's stomach waste to protect and bless him during the circumcision period. Among the Bukusu community, one is blessed when he marries and produces children to propagate the community's lineage. The study concurs with Stanislavsky (2009) that characters' actions have objectives. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate is smeared with bull's stomach waste to protect and bless him during the circumcision period. The study investigated the initiate's paternal uncle's roles in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

On the eve of the circumcision day, the initiate's paternal uncle is fearful. This is evident when he slaps Wanyama and fingerpoints the initiate. According to the information collected from the field, the initiate is slapped to instil fear in him as a result, gains courage to face the knife. Equally, he is fingerpointed during *sikhebo* ritual because he is a child. However, after successful ritual cut; the act stops because he is a mature man who needs to be respected. The study agrees with Bauman (1986) that paralinguistic aspects are culture specific constellations of communicative. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate is fingerpointed to show that he is a child. The study analyzed the initiate's paternal uncle's actions in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

In the morning of the circumcision day, Wekhomba is appreciative. This is evident after successful ritual cut; he roars his approval to welcome the initiate into the club of men as he joins the crowd

to sing the song '*Khwera Omurwa*' that recapitulates Mango's original triumph when he killed the serpent to celebrate the initiate's success. Soyinka's (1975) view that each hour in an African's life affords him opportunity to express emotions of joy, sadness, victory or thanksgiving through songs, dance or music informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's maternal uncle has the responsibility of roaring to appreciate the initiate and welcome him into the club of men. The study examined the initiate's paternal uncle's actions in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

### **5.2.11 Actual Characterization and Role of Initiate's Paternal Male Cousin in the Narrative**

Early in the morning on the circumcision day at the swamp, Wanjala the initiate's paternal male cousin is authoritative. This is seen when he instructs Wanyama authoritatively to remove his shorts, relieve himself in the open and immerse in cold water. Equally, before he starts smearing the initiate with mud, he uses self-praise. Wanjala's self-praise is displayed in appendix 29 of this thesis. This is supported by the data below:

Wanjala speaks to Wanyama *authoritatively*:

*'Ese Wanjala olomaloma, Omubuya Omusimaolia, okhwa Nasipwondi Omusawa osimikha kumwiko kwa samanini na nane (1988)! Bona nakhumala nende litosi nio wesi oche okhebwe! Embalu endafu. Okhoya waba omunyindafu nekakila wama mubandu banyindafu! Wime siriri ne bakhukheba. Okhakuambia chisoni tawe.'*

'I am Wanjala speaking, Omubuya Omusimaolia, the son of Nasipwondi, of the first Basawa age-set, circumcised the year nineteen eighty-eight (1988)! I hereby, smear you with this grey ochre so that you can also go and get circumcised! Circumcision is painful! Be courageous because you are a product of brave people! Be firm during the ritual cut and do not embarrass us!'

According to Werunga the key informant, the initiate is instructed to remove his shorts and relieve himself in the open because he is a child who exposes his body anyhow in public. However, after successful ritual cut, he is only supposed to expose his nakedness to his wife. Secondly, the initiate immerses in cold water to make his blood numb as a result, reduces pain during the cut and prevents excessive bleeding. Wanjala uses authoritative language during self-praise to invoke the paternal ancestral spirits to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period. This is the time the initiate's paternal male cousin tells the initiate that the ritual cut is painful thus, makes him to gain courage to face the knife. Stanislavsky's (2009) view that characters take up different roles in ritual performance informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's paternal male cousin has the responsibility of smearing the initiate with mud and directing him back to his father's compound. The study investigated the initiate's paternal male cousin's actions in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

Wanjala is fearful. This is evident in the morning of the circumcision day when he slaps Wanyama, hits his chest with mud from the swamp and maintains eye contact with him. According to Wafula the key informant, the initiate's male paternal cousin slaps the initiate to instill fear in him as a result, gains courage to face the knife. Equally, he hits the initiate's chest with mud while maintaining eye contact to instill fear that makes him to realize that circumcision is a serious affair. The study agrees with Crawford (2005) that a quality that is often cited for the success of interactive storytelling is character believability. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's paternal male cousin who is given the responsibility to smear the initiate with mud is authoritative hence, instills in him fear as a result, gains courage to face the knife. The study analyzed the initiate's paternal male cousin's roles in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

Wanjala is appreciative. This is evident on the eve of the circumcision day when he engages in war cries as he sings circumcision songs and carries the big club. In the morning on the

circumcision day, the initiate's paternal male cousin dances and sings the song '*Liloba*' as he escorts the initiate to the swamp. Equally, after successful ritual cut, he joins the crowd in singing the song '*Khwera Omurwa*' as he dances. According to information collected from the field, Wanjala engages in war cries to display the liking attitude he has towards *sikhebo* ritual because it is the only avenue that creates men out of boys in the community to take up adult roles. Also, Wanjala carries big clubs to scare the initiate as a result, learns that *sikhebo* is a serious affair. The initiate's paternal male cousin and the crowd sing the song '*Liloba*' that alludes to Mango the founder of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu that gave him extra powers to kill the serpent singlehandedly. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate is smeared with mud from the swamp to give him extra powers to face the knife with courage. The study agrees with Nwandu (2012) that the special roles are assigned to specific people in the Umulumgbe funeral ritual. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's paternal male cousin who is authoritative, circumcised and of good record of accomplishment has the responsibility of smearing the initiate with mud. The study examined the initiate's paternal male cousin's actions in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

#### **5.2.12 Actual Characterization and Role of the Initiate's Sister in the Narrative**

Nanyama the initiate's sister is appreciative. This is evident during the invitation period when Wanyama is given gifts she ululates and carries them home in form of grains and poultry. Equally, on the eve of the circumcision day, she sings and ululates. After successful ritual cut, she ululates as she dances around the initiate. According to Wafula the key informant, the initiate's sister ululates during visitation to appreciate the gifts given to the initiate. During this time, she carries gifts home in form of grains and poultry to show that the gifts lie in the female domain. On the eve of the circumcision day, Nanyama ululates as she sings and dances to display the liking attitude she has towards *sikhebo* ritual because it is the only avenue that creates men in the society. After

successful ritual cut, the initiate's sister joins the crowd in ululations and dance as she sings the song '*Khwera Omurwa*' to appreciate the initiate's success. Omwansa's (2011) postulation that cries and ululations are part of the performance of *esimbore* to mark excitement informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, female characters ululate to show joy. The study analyzed the initiate's sister's ululations and actions in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's sister is supportive. This is evident on the circumcision day after the ritual cut when she stands behind the initiate and thereafter, holds Wanyama's waist. The following confirms:

After successful ritual cut, Nanyama stands behind Wanyama and holds his waist.

According to Werunga the key informant, Nanyama holds the initiate's waist after successful ritual cut to support him from falling down due to fatigue caused by harassments from the escorts who are rowdy. The act is also used symbolically to mean that when the initiate's sister gets married, Wanyama who is the initiate takes her dowry. This alludes to Barwa a Saboat sub clan who congratulated Mango for saving them from the serpent's scourge with a girl to marry as a present. Kripke's (2009) postulation that ritual performance involves individual roles based on gender informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's sister holds the initiate's waist is used symbolically. The study examined the initiate's sister's symbolic actions in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

The initiate's sister is dutiful. This is clearly seen when she removes mud from Wanyama's body and blood that drips on the ground plus the initiate's foreskin and wraps in the circumcision spot known as *etiangu'i* and hands to Namaemba the initiate's paternal aunt as instructed. According to the information collected from the field, the paternal aunt instructs Nanyama to remove mud from the initiate's body and ensures no particle drops down along side blood that drips on the ground

and the foreskin. This is because malicious people may pick with the intention of harming the initiate to become impotent or fear women. Therefore, the initiate's sister collects everything and hands to the initiate's paternal aunt who later hands to Wekesa the initiate's father to keep safely. The study agrees with Stanislavsky (2009) that characters' actions contain objectives. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's sister ensures that she removes mud from the initiate's body to avoid malicious people from picking with the intention of harming him. The study analyzed the initiate's sister's actions in *sikhebo* ritual after successful ritual cut as a story.

### **5.2.13 Actual Characterization and Role of Maternal Uncle's Wife in the Narrative**

Nafula who is Wakhisi's wife is appreciative. This is evident when she joins the crowd in song, dance and ululations when Wanyama visits the maternal side. Equally, after Wakhisi dresses the bull's piece of meat from the breast known as *luliki* around the neck she ululates. Lastly, after successful ritual cut, she joins the crowd in ululations and dance as she sings the song ' *Khwera Omurwa*'. This is supported by the following data:

Nafula joins the crowd in singing and dancing as she ululates:

*Alililili! Alililili! Alililili!*

According to information collected from the field, Nafula ululates immediately Wanyama visits the maternal side to express joy having been invited to attend the ceremony. Equally, after Wakhisi dresses the brisket around the nephew's neck she ululates to express joy of having honoured the the initiate. Lastly, the initiate's maternal uncle's wife ululates to celebrate the initiate's victory for being brave during the ritual cut. Omwansa's (2011) observation that the happy mood is derived from the fact that the performance of *chinyangi chia bare* is an occasion that marks excitement informed the study. Among the Bukusu, ululations are evident because *sikhebo* ritual is the only

avenue that creates men out of boys. The study assessed the female characters' ululations in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

Nafula is supportive. This is evident during the ritual cut when she sits on the floor of Nasambu's house with her legs stretched horizontally in the company of the initiate's mother, Namaemba, Nasipwondi and Nakhumicha. According to Wafula the key informant, Nafula sits on the floor of Nasambu's house to give her moral support. This is because the initiate's mother is in great pain because any sign of fear witnessed during the ritual cut is attributed to the maternal side. The study concurs with Nwandu (2012) that special roles are assigned to specific people in the Umulumbe funeral ritual. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's maternal uncle's wife has the responsibility to sit with the initiate's mother on the floor with her legs stretched to give her moral support. The study investigated the female roles in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

#### **5.2.14 Actual Characterization and Role of the Male Neighbours in the Narrative**

In *sikhebo* ritual, Wekesa's male neighbours who are Kitui and Kiberenge are appreciative. This is evident on the eve of the circumcision day when they engage in war cries as they sing and dance. This goes:

On the eve to the circumcision day, as Kundu leads the crowd to sing the song 'Kongona', the lines that say: ' Eh! Cut you circumciser! You cut'and 'finish it' Kitui and Kiberenge engage in war cries as they sing and carry clubs and sticks shoulder high.

Kitui and Kiberenge engage in war cries: 'Woooi! Woooi! Woooi!'

According to the information collected from the field study, the male neighbours engage in war cries to display the liking attitude they have towards *sikhebo* ritual because it is the only avenue



that creates men in the society. Equally, after successful ritual cut, they join the crowd in singing the song '*Khwera Omurwa*' to appreciate the initiate's bravery. Childs and Fowler's (2006) observation that characters are a vehicle through which the performance is understood was vital to the study. In *sikhebo* ritual the audience learns of the male neighbours' liking attitude towards *sikhebo* ritual from the war cries that they engage in. The study examined the male neighbours' actions in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

The male neighbours are fearful. This is evident on the eve of the circumcision day when they dance as they carry big clubs. Equally, they chide the initiate through songs and oral verbalisms. According to Werunga the key informant, the male neighbours carry big clubs as they sing, dance and surround the initiate to scare him as a result, realizes that *sikhebo* ritual is a serious affair. Also, the initiate is chided through songs and oral verbalisms to harden him to face the knife and world challenges with courage. The study agrees with Stanislavsky (2009) that actions contain objectives. In *sikhebo* ritual, the male neighbours carry clubs and reprimand the initiate to harden him for the task ahead. The study investigated the props and the male neighbours' actions in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

### **5.2 15 Actual Characterization and Role of the Female Escorts in the Narrative**

Nakhumicha and Nasipwondi who are the female escorts are appreciative. This is evident during visitation when they ululate and dance. It was observed that as soon as the initiate is appreciated by the maternal uncle, they ululate before they carry the bull's head home. On the eve of the circumcision day, they dance, sing and ululate. Equally, after successful ritual cut, they ululate and join the crowd to sing the song '*Khwera Omurwa*'. The following confirms:

After successful ritual cut, Nasipwondi and Nakhumicha ululate:

*'Alililili, Alililili, Alililili!*

According to Werunga the key informant, the female escorts ululate during visitation to appreciate the gifts that are given to the initiate. Secondly, the female escorts ululate on the eve of the circumcision day as they dance to express the liking attitude they have towards *sikhebo* ritual because it is the only avenue that creates men out of boys. Lastly, they ululate after successful ritual cut as they sing the song '*Khwera Omurwa*' to celebrate the initiate's bravery. During this time, they take a lead role dancing around the initiate to show that they are ready for sexual advancements now that the initiate is a man. Omwansa's (2011) take that cries and ululations are part of the performance of *esimbore* that mark excitement informed the study. The study assessed the female characters' ululations, songs and dances in *sikhebo* ritual as a story

On the eve of the circumcision day, the female escorts are vulgar. This is seen when they sing the song '*Luwaya*' they lift their dresses as they point where their male counterparts are as they utter taboo words. This is supported by the following data:

While singing the song '*Luwaya*', Namaemba and Nasipwondi dance provocatively as they lift their dress as they face Kundu, Wafukho and Bunyasi as they utter taboo words: *endene! Khukhundana! Penis! Sexual intercourse!*

According to Wafula the key informant, *sikhebo* ritual gives characters liberty to break the laid down rules without reprimand. The female escorts dance provocatively as they lift their dresses to the extent that they get inspired as they utter taboo words, use obscenities in order to teach the initiate that his sexual organ is not meant for beauty but for sexual intercourse. Therefore, he should marry in future in order to propagate the community's lineage. The study concurs with Turner (1977) that performers may sometimes act hostilities that are never expressed in normal circumstances while appearing to deny some moral codes of the society. In *sikhebo* ritual, the female escorts dance provocatively and utter taboo words because the context of *sikhebo* gives

them the liberty. The study assessed the female escorts' provocative dances and oral utterances in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

### **5.2.16 Actual Characterization and Role of Wekesa's Circumcision Age-sets in the Narrative**

Masibo and Walubengo are Wekesa's circumcision age-sets are appreciative. This is evident in the morning of the circumcision day when they join the crowd to sing the song '*Khwera Omurwa*'. Equally, they appreciate when they are rewarded by Wekesa with meat and brew. The following confirms:

Masibo says to Wekesa:

*'Bakoki Wekesa, khuwasima bakoki, khusabila Wanyama chikhabi'*

*'Wekesa our circumcision age-set, we wish Wanyama blessings'*

As observed from the field, Wekesa's circumcision age-sets join the crowd to sing the song '*Khwera Omurwa*' after successful ritual cut to appreciate the initiate's victory. Equally, Masibo appreciates the initiate's father for giving him meat and brew to share with Walubengo. According to Werunga the key informant, the initiate's father's circumcision age-sets join in song and dance after successful ritual cut to appreciate the initiate's bravery. Secondly, the initiate's father's circumcision age-sets are rewarded with brew and meat in return bless the initiate to be successful in life evident in him marrying in future and siring children to propagate the community's lineage. However, if they are not rewarded accordingly, they can curse the initiate to become impotent or fear women. The study agrees with Stanislavsky (2009) that characters' actions contain objectives. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's father rewards his circumcision age-sets in order for them to bless the initiate. The study analyzed the initiate's father's circumcision age-sets roles in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

### 5.3 Conclusion

the study revealed that characters in *sikhebo* ritual were channels through which the audience got the narrative. The study noted that characters were divided into two: main and minor whose roles were scripted. The study noted that the initiate was brave. This was evident when he approached his father while putting on a brave face and maintained eye contact with the excutors. Equally, the costume, body art, ornaments, props and songs used in *sikhebo* ritual teach the initiate to be brave. The study noted that the initiate was tolerant. This was shown when he was chided through songs, props, reprimands, actions and paralinguistic features to harden him in order to face the knife with courage. The study established that the initiate's mother was generous when she ensured that enough brew and food was availed to feed visitors. The study established that characters in *sikhebo* were appreciative. This was demonstrated when the male escorts produced war cries as their female counterparts ululated to display the liking attitude they had towards *sikhebo* ritual. Equally, after successful ritual cut, the female characters ululated as their male counterparts roared to appreciate the initiate's bravery. The study also realised that characters who executed rituals in *sikhebo* ritual were authoritative in order to instil fear in the initiate who learnt that the ritual was a serious affair. The study noted that characters who took part in *sikhebo* ritual were dutiful. This was seen when every member of the community took part in the ritual and ensured that the right procedure was followed. Lastly, the study affirmed that characters who executed rituals in *sikhebo* ritual were cautious and protective to ensure the right thing was done. Chapter 6 that follows provides findings and conclusion on the themes and meaning in the narrative.

## CHAPTER SIX

### STUDY OF THEMES AND MEANING IN THE NARRATIVE

#### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research findings for objective three on the study of themes and meaning in the narrative among the Bukusu community. The themes examined include bravery, generosity, moral decadence, kinship, sexual issues, unity, role of ancestors and informal education. In order to achieve this objective on the study of themes and meaning in *sikhebo* ritual, some general discussions are made by various authors as indicated in section 2.4. Thereafter, themes are contextualized in the study of *sikhebo* ritual. The data on this was extracted from *sikhebo* ritual. Groden, Kreiswirth and Sweman (2012) postulation that themes are evident in narrative met the third study objective that sought to study themes and meaning in *sikhebo* ritual. This was achieved by examining the themes that emanated from the entire ritual narrative.

#### 6.2 Bravery

This section examines bravery as a theme in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative among the Bukusu community. The study revealed that the theme of bravery is evident in *sikhebo* ritual using different literary techniques.

During early stages in *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate who is Wanyama approaches his father and narrates why he should get circumcised. In return, the father reminds him about the obligations regarding his request through a narrative. This is supported by the following data:

In the month of April, the year 2018, the initiate namely Wanyama aged thirteen years approaches his father Wekesa, to inform him of his intention to get circumcised.

*‘Papa esaba nandi nanya khukhwingila kumwaka kuno’*

‘Excuse me father; I would like to get circumcised this year.’

*‘Kaba mbo wamwene wenye khukhuwingila, endakhanga ekhukhebe. Ekhusaba nandi okheambia chisoni, babandu boo nende ekholo yoo tawe. Obe omunyindafu. Babuka sebakosa anga baloma bali nio embogo esecha yambukhila luluchi engana yosi yabukhilao! Ese Omuchuma mala nema chinyuni chafua. Kenyekhana olonde lukele.’*

‘If you want to get circumcised voluntarily, I will do everything possible to ensure you undergo the rite! However, do not embarrass yourself, the family and the community! You must be brave! Elders were not wrong when they said that where the father buffalo crossed the river is the same spot the calf crosses! I belong to Bachuma age-set and I stood until all the birds died! You ought to follow my footsteps!’

The narrative that unfolds through a dialogue between Wekesa the initiate’s father and Wanyama the initiate clearly explains that *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community is a voluntary affair. No one forces the initiate to undergo the rite. Moreover, the dialogue displays the qualities that the initiate should have in order to be allowed to get circumcised. The initiate who decides to get circumcised approaches his father with news while putting on a brave face. According to Werunga the key informant, a prospective initiate who smiles as he announces his decision to get circumcised is denied the opportunity because he is seen as a coward. On his part, Wekesa tells the son that it is his personal decision to get circumcised voluntarily and no one forced him to undergo the rite. He adds that he is ready to circumcise him provides he maintains the community’s dignity by being brave during the ritual cut. Therefore, if the initiate is not ready, he withdraws.

Childs and Fowler's (2006) view that themes are identified through dialogue, actions and manifestations in the actions of the major characters informed the study. The dialogue between Wekesa and Wanyama shows that *sikhebo* ritual is a serious affair hence; the initiate is expected to portray high level of seriousness by putting on a brave face to show that he is ready to face the knife. Equally, the initiate's seriousness is ascertained by looking at the eyes which are expected to stay focused on the father. The study further analyzed the dialogue between the initiate and his father in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

As observed from the field study, in the morning of the circumcision day, as soon as the initiate wakes up, Mang'oli the male elder leads the crowd to sing the song '*Amba Mutalya*' translated as '*Hold the Italian*'. '*Amba Mutalya*' song is displayed in Appendix 15.

### **Amba Mutalya Song**

#### **Lubukusu Version**

Soloist: Mango *niye papa awarera sikhebo chindalo echo!*

All: *Tila Mutalya!*

#### **English Version**

Soloist: It is Mango our father who brought circumcision those days!

All: Hold Mutalya!

According to Wafula the key informant, the song '*Amba Mutalya*' alludes to the battle of Adwa in 1896 where the Ethiopian forces under the leadership of Emperor Menelik 11 surprised the world by defeating an Italian army. In the context of *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate must display unwavering fortitude during the ritual cut in order to earn respect just like the Ethiopian forces who earned respect after defeating the Italian army. Among the Bukusu, it is after the initiate successfully undergoes the ritual cut that he is entitled to the community's privileges accorded to circumcised men that include marrying, owning land and taking part in *sikhebo* ritual. However, the initiate who fears the knife is scorned by girls who turn down his marriage proposals and he is not allowed to execute rites during *sikhebo* ritual. Musungu's (2016) view that heroism is among the dominant

themes in the Bukusu oral narrative performances informed the study. Among the Bukusu, the song ‘*Amba Mutalya*’ teaches the initiate to be brave in order to face the knife with courage and protect the community’s territory. The song also informs the initiate and the community at large to embrace *sikhebo* ritual that was initiated by Mango as a way of transmitting the community’s customs and traditions from one generation to another. The study examined allusion in the song ‘*Amba Mutalya*’ in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

Equally, while escorting the initiate to the swamp on the circumcision day, the song that is sung is ‘*Liloba*’. It was observed that as Kundu the male escort repeatedly sings the line that says: ‘*Oh! The soil! (x4) that finishes us, the soil!*’ The crowd responds by repeating the same line as they sing and dance. ‘*Liloba Song*’ is displayed in appendix 16.

### **Liloba Song**

#### **Lubukusu version**

Soloist: *Oh! Liloba (x4) Oh! Liloba  
liakhumala liloba!*

All: *Oh! Liloba (x4) Oh! Liloba  
liakhumala liloba!*

#### **English version**

Soloist: Oh! The soil (x4) that finishes  
us, the soil!

Soloist: Oh! The soil (x4) that finishes  
us, the soil!

According to Werunga the key informant, the song ‘*Liloba*’ alludes to mud that Mango the founder of *sikhebo* ritual smeared himself with that gave him the inspiration to kill the serpent that used to terrify beasts and human beings at Mwiala in Kakapel in Busia County. In the context of *sikhebo* ritual, the song ‘*Liloba*’ informs the initiate that he should be smeared with mud from the swamp in order to be inspired as a result, gains courage to face the knife. The Bukusu believe that smearing the initiate with mud from the swamp gives him extra courage to face the knife because the swamp is trampled with the spirits of *sikhebo* ritual during the circumcision period. ‘*Liloba*’ song teaches the initiate to emulate Mango’s character of bravery. Therefore, the initiate should be brave during the ritual cut in order to seal the covenant with the ancestors. However, the initiate who fears the



knife is seen to have betrayed the ancestors who are part and parcel of him because he is named after them. The study analyzed the song ‘*Liloba*’ that teaches the initiate and the community at large the theme of bravery in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

In *sikhebo* ritual, the song that is sung during rehearsal by the male escorts is ‘*Mulongo*’ as they teach the initiate to play jingles and dance to circumcision songs. It was observed that while singing, the soloist who is Bunyasi repeats the line that says: ‘*Child of my mother be strong*’ as the male escorts reply by repeating the word ‘*Hahoo!*’ as they stamp their feet on the ground and carry clubs. ‘*Mulongo* song’ is provided in appendix 8. The following affirms:

### **Mulongo Song**

#### **Lubukusu Version**

Soloist: *Mulongo!* (x4)

All: *Hahooo!* (x4)

Soloist: *Mwana wa mayi otinya*

All: *Hahooo!* (x4)

#### **English Version**

Soloist: *Mulongo!* (x4)

All: *Hahooo!* (x4)

Soloist: *Child of my mother be strong,*

All: *Hahooo!* (x4)

According to Wafula and Werunga the key informants, ‘*Mulongo*’ song is used to remind the initiate that the ritual cut is painful thus, need to be courageous evident in the line: ‘*Child of my mother be strong*’. Equally, singers respond by repeating the word ‘*Hahoo!*’ to mean that the initiate is on his own and it was his personal decision to get circumcised hence, need to be courageous. In the entire *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate is expected to be brave because his main role is to defend the community against aggression.

Likewise, in the song ‘*Sioyayo*’, the initiate is mentioned most of the time and categorically told by the soloist who is Kundu that: ‘*The initiate who fears should go to Luo-land!*’ repetitively as the crowd responds by saying: ‘*Aho! Aho! Aho!*’ ‘*Sioyayo*’ song is displayed in appendix 18. The song goes like this:

## Sioyayo Song

### Lubukusu version

Soloist: *Omusinde oteremaka acha*  
Ebunyolo!

All: *Aho! Aho! Aho!*

Soloist: *Acha Ebunyolo!*

All: *Aho! Aho! Aho!*

### English translation

Soloist: The initiate who tremors goes to  
Luo-land!

All: *Aho! Aho! Aho!*

Soloist: Goes to Luo-land!

All: *Aho! Aho! Aho!*

According to the information collected from the field, ‘*Sioyayo*’ song informs the initiate to be courageous during the ritual cut. For instance, the line that says: ‘*The initiate who fears should go to Luo-land*’ refers to the neighbouring Luo community that used not to circumcise their male children. Therefore, the initiate who fears the knife should be ex-communicated from the community because he would have betrayed the community and the ancestors who are part and parcel of him. The song gives the initiate courage to be initiated in order to be respected in the community. Moreover, in the song ‘*Sioyayo*’ the initiate is mentioned repeatedly to show that he is the centre of focus as a result, realizes that *sikhebo* ritual is a serious affair thus, gains courage to face the knife.

Equally, the line that says: *Aho! Aho! Aho!* Apes what Mango’s mother said as his son was being led to the circumcision ground while crying. ‘*Woceli! Wooceli! My only son! Ahaa! Hooh! Mango did I not tell you that circumcision is painful! You have chosen it by yourself! There you are!*’ Mango’s painful words were turned into a song known as ‘*Sioyayo*’, which is sung while escorting the initiate from the swamp to the father’s ground. In the context of *sikhebo* ritual, *Aho! Aho! Aho!* Means that it was the initiate’s decision to undergo the ritual cut and he is on his own, therefore, he should be courageous. The study concurs with Musungu (2016) that one of the dominant themes in the Bukusu oral narrative performance include heroism. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate is supposed to display unwavering fortitude during the ritual cut when he is termed as a hero. However, one

who fears the knife is termed a coward who is not respected in the community. The study analyzed the songs: '*Liloba*', '*Mulongo*' and '*Sioyayo*' that teach the initiate to be courageous in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

Notably, before the initiate starts to invite relatives, friends and neighbours, he looks for appropriate costume to put on for three days. As observed from the field study, he puts on a pair of shorts and leaves the upper part uncovered for decoration purposes. Besides, he ties his waist with rags and the father dresses his head with a headgear known as *ekutwa*. According to Werunga the key informant, the initiate puts on costume in order to look unique as a result, realizes that he is the centre of focus. Also, the initiate's father dresses the son with a headgear known as *ekutwa* to show his commitment towards *sikhebo* ritual. Therefore, whenever, he passes he is supposed to be serious because he is reminded now and again by passers-by that the costume is not put on for fun but for serious business. Musungu's (2016) postulation that dominant themes in Bukusu oral narrative performance include bravery informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate who puts on costume looks unique as a result; psychologically learns that *sikhebo* ritual is a serious affair. The study examined paraphernalia used by the initiate in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

### **6.3 Generosity**

Generosity as a theme is evident in *sikhebo* ritual. The dialogue between Nasambu the initiate's mother, Wekhomba who is Wekesa's brother and Wekesa the initiate's father during the final meeting with relatives, neighbours and friends at Wekesa's home shows that *sikhebo* ritual requires adequate preparation. From the dialogue, the initiate's mother assures the members present that there is plenty of food and brew known as *busaa*. Nasambu's assurance is as follows:

Nasambu smiles and says:

*'Anga mayi we mungo, khebabolela nandi buli sindu sili abwene. Ligunia lilala lilang'ona kamalwa ne lindi lie liboso. Bakuka sebakosa anga baloma bali omulange alimo luliye.'*

'As the mother of the home, I assure you that everything is in place. One sack is for preparing the brew and another one is for *ugali*. Our ancestors were not wrong when they said that an invitee is full of greed.'

Equally, Wekesa the initiate's father avails two coloured bulls. As observed from the field study, one bull is slaughtered by Wanyama's graveside and another one near the shrine to appease the ancestors and the gods. To underscore that *sikhebo* ritual requires adequate preparation, Nasambu the initiate's mother uses a proverb that states that: '*omulange alimo kumulungu*' translated as '*an invitee is full of greed*'. According to Wafula the key informant, *sikhebo* ritual takes place every even year in the months of August and December during holiday when schools have closed making many participants to attend the ceremony. Moreover, the Bukusu community practices mixed farming that provides food and brew for visitors who attend the ceremony. Also, the Bukusu rear livestock that they use to offer sacrifices to the ancestors and meat to feed visitors present. Additionally, *sikhebo* ritual is a communal affair therefore; relatives, neighbours and friends assist the initiate's family to ensure there is plenty of food; brew and meat to feed visitors present in order to make them happy as a result, bless the initiate. The study concurs with Musungu (2016) who says that a dominant theme in Bukusu oral narrative performance is generosity. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's parents ensure there is plenty of food and brew for visitors to make them happy so that they can bless the initiate. The study analyzed the initiate's parents' generous actions in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

Moreover, the dialogue between Wekesa, Masibo and Walubengo provides an opportunity for narration. From the narration, it is evident that the Bukusu community values circumcision age-sets. This is evident when Wekesa the initiate's father appreciates his circumcision age-sets by giving them a reciprocal reward when he circumcised his son. The following affirms:

At Wekesa's home in the morning on the circumcision day, enter Masibo and Walubengo who are Wekesa's circumcision age-sets and stand outside Wekesa's house demanding for special and reciprocal reward known as *'lubaka'*.

Wekesa comes from the house and tells Masibo and Walubengo to come right in the house and speaks to them:

*'Mwateka khubuyeti bwenywe'*.

'Thank you for your moral support.'

Wekesa points the hind leg of the slaughtered bull and speaks to Masibo and Walubengo.

*'Esino sienywe babili mukabane. Khutasakho, endabawelesha busaa'*

'This is for the two of you to share. In addition, I will give you local brew known as *'busaa'*.

Wekesa points the brew.

Masibo smiles as he faces Wekesa and says:

*'Nasima khumilimo kimilayi bakoki'*.

'Thank you for the good work our circumcision age-set'.

*'Khubirira khubabili befwe esabila Wanyama aone bwangu'*.

'On behalf of the two of us, I wish Wanyama quick recovery'.

Masibo gets a knife from Wekesa and starts cutting meat.

Walubengo nods and says:

*‘Ewe soli anga Wesonga owabukulanga lubaka okhuwama khuwifwe ne anga biola bise bie khukheba omwana wewe Wekunda, kamuyila khulubao mala kakuwima lubaka. Nisio khwakhola, khwamukwakho, khwamupa mala khuwalama omwana wewe kaba omuchili!’*

‘You are not like Wesonga who used to take rewards from us but when time came for him to circumcise his son Wekunda, he took him to hospital and refused to reward us accordingly. What we did, we pounced on him, beat him and cursed his son who became impotent!’

As observed from the field study, after successful ritual cut, Wekesa the initiate’s father rewards Masibo and Walubengo his circumcision age-sets with brew and meat. On their part, they appreciate and bless the initiate and wish him quick recovery. According to Wafula the key informant, if the circumcision age-sets are not rewarded accordingly, they can curse the initiate to become impotent or fear women. Additionally, circumcision age-sets ought to respect one another. This means that they should not fight or commit adultery with a circumcision age-set’s wife or daughter for this is abominable. Musungu (2016) argues that dominant themes in the Bukusu oral narrative performance include friendship and honesty. The author adds that the community advocates for gratitude whenever one receives any form of assistance from those s/he interacts with. In *sikhebo* ritual, when Wekesa appreciates his circumcision age-sets with meat and brew, they appreciate as a result, bless the initiate. The dialogue between Wekesa and his circumcision age-sets shows that among the Bukusu, circumcision age-sets respect one another by rewarding them whenever one circumcises his son. More so, circumcision age-sets respect one another by not sleeping with other age-sets’ wives and daughters. However, incase this happens both of them

die on spot. The study analyzed the dialogue between the initiate's father and the circumcision age-sets in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

Equally, while escorting the initiate from the maternal side, the escorts sing the song 'Mayi wo Mwana' translated as 'The mother to the child'. 'Mayi wo Mwana' song is displayed in Appendix 11.

### Mayi wo Mwana Song

#### Lubukusu Version

Soloist: *Omwana afwana sisuche!*

All: *Ooo! Mayi wo mwana yicha obone!*

Soloist: *Omwana afwana sisuche!*

All: *Ooo! Mayi wo mwana yicha obone!*

#### English Version

Soloist: The child resembles a fox!

All: *Ooo!* Mother to the child come and see!

Soloist: The child resembles a fox!

All: *Ooo!* Mother to the child come and see!

According to the key informants, the song 'Mayi wo Mwana' is used symbolically. This is evident in the line that says: 'Ooo! Mother to the child come and see! To appreciate the initiate's maternal uncle for honouring the nephew by slaughtering a bull and dressing a piece of meat from the bull's breast known as *luliki* around his neck. Thereafter, he smears the nephew with yeast and bull's stomach waste to protect and bless him during the circumcision period. As observed from the field, yeast and bull's stomach's waste mixes with sweat to form spots on the initiate's face that resembles a fox. Childs and Fowler's (2006) view that themes are identified through actions of characters in the play informed the study. Among the Bukusu, the initiate's maternal uncle who benefited from the initiate's mother's dowry appreciates the nephew by slaughtering a bull and dresses a piece of meat from the bull's breast known as *luliki* around the neck. The initiate's maternal uncle goes a head and smears the nephew with yeast and bull's stomach's waste to bless

and protect him during the circumcision period. The study investigated the initiate's maternal uncle's actions in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

#### **6.4 Moral decadence**

The theme of moral decadence in *sikhebo* ritual teaches the initiate and the community at large cherished virtues however, those who are deviants are ridiculed. This is evident in the song 'Babuya'. 'Babuya song' is displayed in Appendix 13. The song goes:

<b><u>Babuya Song</u></b>	
<b><u>Lubukusu Version</u></b>	<b><u>English Version</u></b>
Soloist: <i>Ee! Rirr! Bungali eteremesha sibala!</i>	Soloist: <i>Ee! Rirr!</i> Truly make tremors that will shake the earth!
All: <i>Ee! Babuya ekholo embi eh!</i>	All: <i>Ee!</i> Babuya is a bad clan <i>eh!</i>

According to Wafula the key informant, members of the community are expected to be kind and hospitable. However, indulging in a vice like witchcraft is not allowed for it makes one unsuccessful in life. Equally, members are supposed to be hospitable evident in them welcoming people and sharing food. The song 'Babuya' teaches the initiate and the entire community cherished virtues of kindness and hospitality. However, a vice like witchcraft is discouraged. The song 'Babuya' highlights and condemns the Babuya clan for practicing witchcraft. The song helps to educate the initiate and members of the community at large the danger of witchcraft as it causes death and stigmatization. The study agrees with Wanyama (2005) that there is aesthetics in the Bukusu circumcision songs marked by the use of satire that has educative and social control functions for the initiates and the community at large. In *sikhebo* ritual, the song 'Babuya' criticizes witchcraft as a vice and urges people to be kind and hospitable. The study assessed the moral teachings in the song 'Babuya' in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu as narrative.



Likewise, the Bukusu community expects people to be faithful. In the song ‘Wambumuli’ a man called Wambumuli is criticized for unfaithfulness. ‘Wambumuli song’ is displayed in Appendix 22.

The song goes:

### Wambumuli Song

#### Lubukusu version

Soloist: Wambumuli *banakhulilanga!*

All: Wambumuli!

Soloist: *Bandu banakhuchekhanga!*

All: Wambumuli!

Soloist: *Bakhasi ba bene kene bakhwire!*

All: Wambumuli!

#### English version

Soloist: Wambumuli people are crying because of you!

All: Wambumuli!

Soloist: People are laughing at you!

All: Wambumuli!

Soloist: People will kill you because of people’s wives!

All: Wambumuli!

According to Wafula the key informant, although the initiate is taught sexual issues during *sikhebo* ritual as a way of preparing him for marriage, he is told to respect other people’s wives and young girls. In the song ‘Wambumuli’, Wambumuli is satirized for being sexually immoral evident in him committing adultery with people’s wives and school children. The community expects people to be faithful and condemns unfaithfulness and disrespectfulness because the two vices make people to suffer by being killed. The study concurs with Musungu (2016), that vices like ingratitude and laziness are frowned at and those who exhibit such characterizations are considered outsiders since they fail to live according to the Bukusu way of life. The song ‘Wambumuli’ teaches the entire community cherished virtues of faithfulness and respectfulness. The study examined the moral teachings in the song ‘Wambumuli’ in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

Similarly, in the song ‘*Sioyayo*’, the initiate is categorically told that those who fear the knife are to be ex communicated. ‘*Sioyayo* song’ is displayed in appendix 18.

### Sioyayo Song

#### Lubukusu version

Soloist: *Omusinde oteremaka acha  
Ebunyolo!*

All: *Aho! Aho! Aho!*

Soloist: *Acha Ebunyolo!*

All: *Aho! Aho! Aho!*

#### English translation

Soloist: The initiate who tremorss should go  
to Luo-land!

All: *Aho! Aho! Aho!*

Soloist: Go to Luo-land!

All: *Aho! Aho! Aho!*

According to Werunga the key informant, *sikhebo* ritual is painful hence; the initiate should display unwavering fortitude during the cut to show that he is brave. Nevertheless, if he fears the knife by screaming or holding the circumciser's hand, he is circumcised by force by the male escorts holding him as the circumciser operates. It is worth noting that the circumciser who operates the initiate who fears is paid as prescribed by the male elders. The initiate who fears the knife causes embarrassment to himself, the family and the entire community. Additionally, it is a form of betrayal to the ancestors who are part and parcel of him because he is named after the deceased grandfather or uncle. Moreover, the initiate who fears the knife is scorned by girls who turn down his requests for marriage for he is seen as a coward. Furthermore, the initiate who fears the knife is not allowed to execute rites in *sikhebo* ritual because the spirit of fear in him can be transferred to the initiate. However, the initiate who undergoes the ritual cut with courage is respected and given leadership responsibilities. In *sikhebo* ritual, the ritual cut marks the climax because the initiate is transformed from boyhood to manhood. Musungu's (2016) postulation that one of the dominant themes in the Bukusu oral narrative performance includes heroism was vital to the study. The narrative behind the line: '*the initiate who fears the knife should go to Luo land*' satirizes those who feared the knife who should be ex-communicated as a result, makes the initiate to gain courage to undergo the ritual cut with courage in order to be respected in the society. The study analyzed the moral teachings in the song '*Sioyayo*' in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

Notably, on the pass-out day while advising the initiate on community's customs, traditions, beliefs, morality, good social ideals and values, Mang'oli the male elder cautions him against bewitching or causing any form of evil to fellow human beings, using force to get what is not rightfully his and engaging in activities that are not prescribed by the society. According to Werunga the key informant, the male elder warns the initiate not to take part in the above mentioned acts because they may make him to suffer and fail to prosper in life. In *sikhebo* ritual, after the initiate obtains a circumcision age-set, he eats with the male elders to usher him into the club of men. It was observed that although, the male elders allow the initiate to take *busaa* in calabashes, he is told to drink responsively and avoid drunkenness because it makes people to be irresponsible as a result, fail to provide for their families. Mang'oli the male elder uses a proverb that says: '*kamalwa kakila sisiayo siboe siyakhina*' translated as '*beer can make a teetered animal to dance*' to warn the initiate of the effects of drunkenness that make people to be irresponsible and teaches him cherished virtue of responsibility evident in him working hard and providing for the family. Rodney (1989) and Simiyu (1990) assert that proverbs are used as a form of education that places emphasis on the learning of practical skills and the acquisition of knowledge which is useful to the individual and the society as a whole. In *sikhebo* ritual, it is during the pass-out rite, that the initiate is taught cherished good social values and ideals that are recognized by the Bukusu community. The study examined the moral teachings that the initiate receives on the pass-out day in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

## **6.5 Kinship**

*Sikhebo* ritual involves the initiate declaring his candidature to relatives, neighbours and friends who come from near and far to attend the ceremony. However, if a relative is not invited, s/he

complains through the head of the clan. Therefore, to ensure everyone is invited, Wekesa prepares a list and hands to Lukibisi. Wekesa's instructions are as follows:

Wekesa maintains eye contact with Lukibisi and says:

*'Nenya oelekeshe Wanyama khucha khulanga bakeni bakheche musikhebo!  
Omundu we khuranga ali sengeo Namaemba nalondebwa nende bakoki wange  
Masibo ne babandi! Lubabulo olusina! Okharuka omundu yesi yesi tawe.'*

'I want you to accompany Wanyama to go and invite visitors who will attend the circumcision ceremony! The first person to invite is Namaemba your paternal aunt followed by Masibo my age-set followed by others! Here is the list. Ensure you do not skip anyone!'

According to information gathered from the field, the initiate invites relatives, neighbours and friends to attend the circumcision ceremony for gifts and blessings. However, if a relative, a neighbour or a friend is not invited s/he complains through the chairperson of the community to be told why s/he was skipped. This clearly explains why Wekesa prepares a list and hands to Lukibisi to ensure everyone is invited. The study agrees with Musungu (2016) that a dominant theme in the Bukusu oral narrative is kinship. Among the Bukusu, *sikhebo* ritual is a communal affair whereby every member of the community contributes in transforming the initiate from boyhood to manhood. The study analyzed Wekesa's instructions to Lukibisi in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

In *sikhebo* ritual, while decorating the initiate with beads known as *kamakomeri*, the initiate's paternal aunt tells him to know the paternal aunts. This goes:

After fixing the day to circumcise wanyama, Namaemba known for her kindness and generosity is picked to decorate the nephew. She speaks authoritatively:

*'Ese Namaemba olomaloma, Omubuya Omusimaolia. Luno khekhurona nende kamakomeri. Babuya banyinyindafu. Okhoya waba omunyindafu, onyole omukhasi, wibule babana, okhoya wamanya basengeo, obwo nibwo busani bwangali.'*

I am Namaemba speaking, Omubuya Omusimaolia. Today I decorate you with beads known as *kamakomeri*. You must be courageous during the ritual cut, get a woman, produce children, and know your paternal aunts. That is what real manhood entails.'

According to Wafula the key informant, the initiate's paternal aunt should be respected as a result, blesses the nephew because she is like the initiate's father. Nonetheless, if she is not respected, she can curse the initiate to become impotent or fear women. Notably, in *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's paternal aunt play vital roles in transforming the initiate from boyhood to manhood. For instance, she shaves and decorates the initiate, she ululates immediately after the initiate arrives home from the maternal side and takes the brisket that is removed around the initiate's neck, she runs with the cooking stick known as *kumukango* with the intention to hit the initiate, she sits on the floor in the company of the initiate's mother with her legs stretched horizontally during the ritual cut and ensures the initiate's sister removes mud from the initiate's body and blood that drips on the ground and hands to the initiate's father. The role(s) played by Namaemba in *sikhebo* ritual are symbolic and teach the initiate the need to respect the female characters in *sikhebo* ritual. The study investigated the theme of kinship as brought out by the initiate's paternal aunt in *sikhebo* ritual into telling a story.

Notably, the last person for the initiate to invite is the initiate's maternal uncle for gifts and blessings. Wakhisi's sentiments follow:

At ten o'clock in the morning, Wakhisi calls Wanyama and tells him to stand before him. He starts speaking authoritatively:

*'Ese Wakhisi oloma, khochao, Omuchuma owe khabili kumwiko kwa samanini (1980) khwa Nambuye! Ekholo yefwe eli eye babandu banyindafu. Okhoya waba omunyindafu bise bie embalu. Omanyebukhochao.'*

'I am Wakhisi speaking your maternal uncle of Bachuma age-set, number two circumcised the year nineteen eighty (1980) the son of Nambuye! Our clan is of brave people. You must be brave during the ritual cut. Know your maternal side'.

According to the information collected from the field, the initiate's maternal uncle who benefited from the initiate's mother's dowry slaughters a bull as appreciation. This is because the initiate's mother's dowry was used to pay the initiate's maternal uncle's wife's dowry. Equally, before the initiate leaves the maternal side, he is smeared with yeast and bull's waste on the head, chest, back, hands and legs to protect and bless him during the circumcision period. The initiate's maternal uncle's roles in *sikhebo* ritual teach the nephew that he does not only belong to the paternal side but also to the maternal uncle's side. Therefore, in case of any misfortune that befalls him from the paternal side, he seeks refuge from the maternal side. The study concurs with Fisher (1984) that narratives deal with themes. The study analyzed the theme of kinship in *sikhebo* ritual that involves every member of the community as narrative.

## **6.6 Sexual Issues**

The theme of sexual issues in *sikhebo* ritual prepares the initiate for marriage therefore; characters who teach him sexual issues during performance are appreciated. This is evident in the song 'Luwaya'. 'Luwaya' song is displayed in Appendix 9. The song goes:

### Luwaya Song

#### Lubukusu Version

Soloist: *Ooo! Luwaya!*

All: *Ooo!*

Soloist: *Luwaya lwasala omusinde!*

All: *Ooo!*

#### English Version

Soloist: *Ooo! The wire!*

All: *Ooo!*

Soloist: The wire that gave birth to  
the initiate!

All: *Ooo!*

According to Werunga the key informant, characters who teach the initiate sexual matters are appreciated because *sikhebo* ritual prepares him for marriage. The context of *sikhebo* ritual gives characters liberty to break the laid down rules without reprimand. For instance, while singing the song ‘*Luwaya*’ the escort utter taboo words, use obscenities and dance provocatively. During the dance, the male escorts dance as they hold their penis and direct to where their female counterparts are as they tell them that they want to beat them water implying they are ready for sexual intercourse. On their part, the female counterparts lift their dresses as they point where their male counterparts are to show that they are ready for sexual intercourse. The study concurs with Ronoh (2008) that among the Maasai youths, elaborate training and learning through the medium of indigenous learning took place where initiates received intensive education. The context of *sikhebo* ritual gives performers liberty to break the laid down rules without reprimand to communicate sexual issues to the initiate. Therefore, after the ritual cut, he should indulge in sex in future in order to propagate the community’s lineage. The study assessed the escorts’ provocative dances and utterances in *sikhebo* ritual that teach the initiate sexual issues as narrative.

According to information gathered, one month after the ritual cut, the circumciser tells the initiate to categorically indulge in sexual affairs because his sexual organ is modeled primarily for reproduction and not for mere feature of physiological aesthetics. He further, tells the initiate that he came into being because his father and mother had sex. Moreover, the male characters who execute rites at cultural sites must be circumcised, married and able to sire children to act as role

model to the initiate. Makila's (1978) argument that circumcision marks the end of childhood and is an introduction to manhood in moral behavior and responsibility as well as exposing the child to traditional education informed the study. Among the Bukusu community, it is during *sikhebo* ritual that the initiate is taught sexual issues, when to indulge in sex and by who. The study examined the circumciser's sexual teachings in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

It was observed that while escorting the initiate to the initiate's maternal side, the escorts sing the song '*Mbe omukhasi*' translated as 'give me a woman' '*Mbe Omukhasi* song' is displayed in Appendix 10. The song goes:

**Mbe Omukhasi Song**

**Lubukusu Version**

Soloist: *Khocha mbe omukhasi!*

All: *Mbe omukhasi!*

Soloist: *Khocha mbe omukhasi oyo!*

All: *Mbe omukhasi!*

**English Version**

Soloist: Maternal uncle give me a woman!

All: Give me a woman!

Soloist: Maternal uncle give me that woman!

All: Give me a woman!

According to Wafula the key informant, the song '*Mbe Omukhasi*' refers to one of the blessings that the initiate receives from the maternal side which is the ability to marry and sire children in future in order to propagate the family's lineage. On the contrary, barren women and impotent men are not allowed to execute rites in *sikhebo* ritual because of fear of the wrath of the ancestors. However, men who sire and women who produce children are given responsibility to execute rites to act as role model to the initiate and the community at large. The study agrees with Rodney (1989) that the education is essentially for living with the main aim of preparing the youth for adult life. The song '*Mbe omukhasi*' prepares the initiate to marry and sire children in order to propagate the community's lineage in future. The study investigated the metaphorical meaning in the song '*Mbe Omukhasi*' in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.



In *sikhebo* ritual, before Wanyama starts to invite relatives, friends and neighbours, he is decorated with ornaments made from *kamakomeri* seeds on his chest and back in a way that they crisscross on the body to form a shape of letter X by Namaemba the paternal aunt. The excerpt goes like this:

Namaemba speaks authoritatively as she maintains eye contact with Wanyama:

*‘Nise Namaemba olomaloma, sengeo, Omubuya Omusimaolia, khwa Wamalwa. Omukinyikeu arubaini na sita (1946). Khekhurona nende kamakomeri. Okhoya waba omunyindafu bise bie embalu, onyole omukhasi, wibule babana sikila buno nibwo busani. Buri bwosi bwosi bise bie embalu aba bwamile ebumao. Efwe banyindafu.’*

‘I am Namaemba, your paternal aunt speaking, Omubuya Omusimaolia; the daughter of Wamalwa, my father was circumcised the year nineteen forty-six (1946) of Kinyikeu age-set. I hereby, decorate you with beads known as *kamakomeri*. You must be courageous and brave during the cut, get married and sire children since real manhood is assessed in terms of the above features. Any sign of fear witnessed during the ritual cut is attributed to the initiate’s maternal side. We are brave people.’

According to Wafula the key informant, *kamakomeri* seeds are known for their high productive rate, thus, decorating the initiate with the seeds blesses him to be productive in future evident in him marrying and siring children. Equally, in the preparation of brew known as *busaa*, millet is used extensively because of its high multiplication rate. Therefore, the use of millet to prepare the brew blesses the initiate to be productive as a result, propagates the community’s lineage. It was observed that while decorating the initiate, Namaemba, in her self-praise tells the nephew to get a woman and sire children because that is what real manhood entails. The study concurs with Simiyu

(1990) that after successful ritual cut, the initiate is allowed to join a new class of adults to take up new responsibilities. In *sikhebo* ritual, it is after the initiate displays unwavering fortitude during the ritual cut that he is respected, allowed to marry and take up leadership responsibilities. The study analyzed the symbolic use of beads and millet in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

As observed from the field study, immediately Wanyama arrives home from the swamp on the circumcision day, he is received by Wekesa who has wrapped himself in the bull's skin known as *likutu*. The bull's skin that he wraps himself with identifies him and blesses the initiate to be productive evident in him marrying and siring children in future. According to Wafula the key informant, the skin that the initiate's father wraps himself with is the same one that he slept on while siring the initiate thus, blesses him to be productive in future. The study agrees with Makila (1978) that the transition is followed by a lot of education which includes marriage, sex education and self identity. In *sikhebo* ritual, the regalia that the initiate's father wraps himself with is functional and symbolic because it identifies him and blesses the initiate to be productive in future. The study examined the costume the characters used in the morning of the circumcision day in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

*Sikhebo* ritual teaches the initiate sexual issues since it prepares him for marriage. It was observed from the field study that during the administration of the final pieces of advice to Wanyama, Mang'oli the male elder uses a proverb that states that: '*kumuliango kumwikule kukwoo ne kumwikale kwabene*' translated as '*an open door is yours and the closed one is for someone else*'.

This is supported by the following data:

*'Nise Mang'oli olomaloma Omuneala owe Bamilele owe Bamitungu! Okhwa Namubuya, Nengo owe Kilachi. Omusoleli arubaini (1940) ne omusani waamba Mutalia! Anga kukao, khekhurusiakho egumbo aya mao! Bise bino wabele*

*omusani! Kumuliango kumwikale kwabene ne kumwikule kukwoo. Okhuwama luno, okhanyolekhana muju mwa wandayo we sisoleli musilo tawe. Khekhurusiakho egumbo aya mayi woo ne khufwala eya baba woo. Kenyekhana olonde kamalaka. Wakholana khucha liye nekhulinda babandi.'*

'I am Mang'oli speaking of Baneala clan from Bamilele of Bamitungu lineage! My mother Namubuya from Babuya Clan, of Nengo from Kilachi! I am a brave one circumcised the year nineteen forty (1940) under Kinyikeu age-set; the last cohort of Wamba Mutalia! As your grandfather, I take away the cloth of your mother! This time you are a man! The door that is closed is not yours and the one that is open is yours! From today, you should not be found in your brother's house at night! I am now removing off the cloth of your mother! I officially give you the cloth of your father! You must adhere to the pieces of advice you are given! You have qualified to go to war and defend others!'

According to information gathered from the field, after the initiate obtains a circumcision age-set, he is supposed to marry and sire children in future to propagate the community's lineage. Nevertheless, he is warned not to make friendship with married women, animals and birds. The male elder uses a proverb that states that: '*kumuliango kumwikule kukwoo ne kumwikale kwabene*' translated as: '*an open door is yours and the closed one is for someone else*'. The male elder further tells the initiate to make friendship with girls but warns him against committing adultery with other people's wives because he can be killed. Moreover, he is warned not to be found in his brother's house at night and venture into his mother's bedroom. According to Werunga the key informant, the act of the male elder telling the initiate to stay away from his older brother's house at night shows that he is a man who can be lured easily into sexual intercourse by his older brother's wife

which is against the tradition because the older brother is like his father who needs to be respected. Additionally, the initiate is warned against venturing into his mother's bedroom because he can see her naked. Were's (2014) postulation that initiation teaches the initiate community's values and ideals informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, it is during the administration of the final pieces of advice by the male elder that the initiate is taught community's customs, traditions, beliefs, norms, morality and values and ideals that are recognized by the community. However, if one initiate misbehaves in future, he is mocked by his circumcision age-sets to book another session. The study examined the male elder's pieces of advice in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

## **6.7 Unity**

Unity as a theme is evident in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community whereby, every member takes part in transforming the initiate from boyhood to manhood making it a communal affair. During the final meeting held at Wekesa's home early in the month of August 2018, Mang'oli, Namaemba, Wekhomba, Masibo, Walubengo, Kitui and Kiberenge attended to ensure everything needed for smooth running of the ceremony was availed and fixed the date to circumcise Wanyama. This is supported by the following data:

In front of Wekesa's house, the first week of the month of August, Wekesa welcomes Mang'oli, Namaemba, Wekhomba, Masibo, Walubengo, Kitui and Kiberenge into his house.

Wekesa addresses Mang'oli, Namaemba, Wekhomba, Masibo, Walubengo, Kitui and Kiberenge:

*'Nabalangile nio mbo khumbe nende sisikhasio simalilisi nende khurao endalo eye khukheba Wanyama.'*

‘I have called you in order to make final preparations and fix the date to circumcise Wanyama.’

Among the Bukusu community, *sikhebo* ritual is a communal affair where every member of the community takes part in transforming the initiate from boyhood to manhood. As observed from the field, the male escorts teach the initiate to play jingles and dance to circumcision songs; the initiate’s paternal aunt shaves and decorates the initiate. The male and female escorts accompany the initiate as they sing, dance and carry gifts home. More so, the male elders offer sacrifices to the gods and ancestors. On the eve of the circumcision day, the initiate’s paternal uncle advises the initiate and dresses a piece of the bull’s entrails known as *khasombo* around his neck. On the eve of the circumcision day, relatives, neighbours, initiate’s father’s circumcision age-sets and friends take part in singing, dancing, feasting as they plan for the finality of the ceremony. Early in the morning on the circumcision day, the initiate’s paternal male cousin smears the initiate with mud, the initiate’s paternal aunt runs with a cooking stick known as *kumukago* with the intention to hit the initiate. The ritual cut is done by a man who is trusted and experienced. During seclusion period, the initiate’s older brother is selected to guide the initiate. Equally, on the pass-out day, a male elder teaches the initiate community’s customs, traditions, beliefs, norms, morality, values and ideals. It was observed that during *sikhebo* ritual, the crowd sings and dances in a circle. According to Wafula the key informant, the act of the crowd dancing in a circle symbolizes unity in the community and no one can be on his own. Musungu’s (2016) notion that one of the dominant themes in Bukusu oral narrative performance includes unity informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, every member of the community takes part in transforming the initiate from boyhood to manhood hence, making the performance a communal affair. The study analyzed the final meeting that involves relatives, friends and neighbours in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

Notably, while administering the final pieces of advice to Wanyama on the pass-out day, Mang’oli the male elder uses the song ‘*Amanani Kali Elwanyi*’. ‘*Amanani Kali Elwanyi* song’ is displayed in Appendix 21. It goes:

**Amanani Kali Elwanyi Song**

**Lubukusu version**

*Basoleli mukhabanga!*

*Amanani kali elwany!*

*Basoleli mukhabanga!*

*Amanani kali elwany!*

*Bamaina mukhabanga!*

*Amanani kali elwany!*

**English translation**

You young men who brag!

The war ogres are out there!

You young men who brag!

The war ogres are out there!

Young men of Maina age-set who brag!

The ogres of war are out there!

According to Werunga the key informant, the song ‘*Amani Kali Elwanyi*’ alludes to Chetambe war whereby, the British soldiers attacked the area with the intention of owning it. However, the Bukusu circumcision age-sets teamed up fought and defeated the British soldiers. Among the Bukusu, *sikhebo* ritual prepares the initiate for future responsibility of protecting the community against aggression. As observed from the field study, on the pass-out day while administering final pieces of advice to the initiate, the male elder tells him the need to unite with other circumcision age-sets in order to protect the community’s territory. The study concurs with Ronoh (2008) that the main aim of education given to the initiates among the Maasai was to make them responsible adults and prepare them for their future roles in society. In *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community, it is during the pass-out stage that the initiate is taught to unite with other circumcision age-sets to protect the community’s territory. The study assessed the male elder’s pieces of advice in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

## 6.8 Role of Ancestors

In *sikhebo* ritual, the ancestors are grouped as supernatural characters who plead with god on behalf of the Bukusu community. Notably, during performance, characters mention the ancestors during self-praises. For instance, while advising his son on the third day to the ritual cut, Wekesa the initiate's father praises himself. Wekesa's self-praise is displayed in appendix 24. The self-praise goes:

*'Ese Wekesa olomaloma rarao Omubuya Omusimaolia khwa Wamalwa  
Omuchuma osimikha kumwaka sabini na nane. Efwe mukholo yefwe sekhurichanga  
ta. Khuwimanga mpaka chinyuni chifua!*

I am Wekesa speaking your father of Babuya Basimaolia clan the son of Wamalwa of Bachuma age-set number one circumcised the year nineteen seventy eight. People from our clan do not fear. We stand until birds die!

According to the information collected from the field, the initiate's father uses self-praise to invoke the ancestors and the gods to protect and bless the initiate during the circumcision period. However, if they are not appeased, they become angry as a result, make the initiate to bleed profusely, fear the knife and surgical mishaps on the side of the circumcisers. Also, the self-praise makes the initiate to learn that he is a product of brave people, hence, gains courage to face the knife. Sudjiman's (1991) postulation that deeper meaning or thought can be obtained after a deep search of the other elements informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate gains courage after the father's self-praise to face the knife after learning that he is a product of brave people. The study examined the characters' self-praises in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

To underscore the role of ancestors among the Bukusu, Wekesa uses the proverb that states that: *'nio embogo esecha yambukhila luluchi engana yosi yabukhilao'* translated as *'where the father buffalo crossed the river is the same spot the calf crosses'*. The excerpt below confirms this:

Wekesa answers Wanyama:

*'Kaba mbo wamwene wenye khukhuwingila, endakhanga khukhukheba Ekhusaba nandi okheambia chisoni, babandu bwoo nende ekholo yoo tawe. Obe omunyindafu. Babuka sebakosa anga baloma bali nio embogo esecha yambukhila luluchi engana yosi yabukhilao! Ese Omuchuma mala nema chinyuni chafua. Kenyekhana olonde nio naswala.'*

'If you want to get circumcised voluntarily, I will do everything possible to ensure you are circumcised! However, do not embarrass yourself, the family and the community! You must be brave! Elders were not wrong when they said that where the father buffalo crossed the river is the same spot the calf crosses! I belong to Bachuma age-set and I stood until all the birds died! You ought to follow my footsteps!

According to information gathered from the field, circumcision is mandatory for every male child who attains the circumcision age among the Bukusu. However, those who delayed getting circumcised are scorned and jeered by circumcised men and girls whom the boys ask for courtship. Equally, circumcision is a way of the initiate sealing the covenant with the ancestors. However, initiates who feared the knife are seen to have betrayed the ancestors who are part and parcel of them because they are named after the departed uncles and grandfathers. To underscore the importance of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu, the initiate who dies and has attained the circumcision age is circumcised before he is buried to prevent curses from befalling the



community. Among the Bukusu, it is after the initiate undergoes the ritual cut successfully that he is entitled to community's privileges that include marrying, owning land and taking part in *sikhebo* ritual. However, the initiate who fears is not respected because he would have betrayed the ancestors who are part and parcel of him.

Were's (2014) argument that initiation is a covenant that the Bukusu prophets entered into with god and cannot be broken informed the study. Among the Bukusu, it is after the initiate undergoes the ritual cut successfully that he seals the covenant with the ancestors which is evident in the blood that spills on the ground during the ritual cut. The study examined the dialogue between the initiate and his father in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

In *sikhebo* ritual, after Wanyama is smeared with mud, Wanjala the initiate's paternal cousin plucks a special grass known as *lusiye* and sticks on his head. The excerpt below confirms this:

Wanjala plucks a special grass called *lusiye* and sticks on Wanyama's head in a process called *lwanantu*. The initiate stands straight awaiting Nanyama to be smeared with mud on the legs, hands and forehead.

According to Werunga the key informant, after smearing the initiate with mud, the performer plucks a special grass known as *lusiye* and sticks on the initiate's head to show that he is communicating with the ancestors who give him extra powers to face the knife with courage. Rodney's (1989) take that informal education is intertwined with social life and meant to socialize the young into norms and beliefs of the wider society was instructive to the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the special grass that is stuck on the initiate's head after smearing is perfected gives him extra powers to face the knife with courage. The study analyzed the use of props in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

The Bukusu tradition dictates that the ancestors and the gods should be appeased. Therefore, in the month of July, 2018, the first week; the circumcisers perform a ritual known as *khubita chigembe* (sanctification of the circumcision knives). The ritual is performed as transcribed below:

Khisa calls Wanyonyi, Simiyu, Wafula and Maloba to an open place at the back of his house and says:

*'Ano nio mulombakha namwima.'*

*'Here is where you will construct the shrine!'*

Khisa points at the back of the house. Wanyonyi, Simiyu, Wafula and Maloba take the circumcising knives known as *'chigembe'* and put on the prop. Thereafter, they remove shoes, nod and move to the spot where Khisa points.

Khisa takes one circumcising knife and slaughters five cockerels while facing east. He roasts the white one with feathers on and once they are burnt, he dissects and studies the intestines and other organs to determine the initiates' fate. He declares the period successful based on the reading of the cockerel's organs. He takes a calabash of local brew known as *'busaa'* sips and applies on the circumcisers' arms and foreheads in a straight line. In addition, he gives the circumcisers traditional herb known as *'kamanyasi'*, which they sip in turns. He then takes one circumcising knife, holds it blade-up on the foreheads of each circumciser. Using authoritative language, he invokes the ancestors and the gods to bless them during the circumcision period.

*'Ese Khisa olomaloma okhuwama mukholo eye Bakhone okhuwama Chwele khwa Nasambu okhuwama Kilachi. Nengila kumwiko elfu ndala chimia tisa na arubaini*

*na sita (1946). Omukinyikeu. Nicha ebweni wenywe! Okuno kumusambwa nikwo mwakhuwa. Bita bakhebi bano nende chigembe chino. Mala mubaweleshe bunyindafu bwe khungangana nende basinde banyala khuria bise bie embalu. Bita basinde bise bie sikhebo.'*

'I am Khisa, speaking from Bakhone clan of Chwele, the son of Nasambu from Kilachi! Circumcised the year nineteen forty-six (1946) of Kinyikeu circumcision age-set. I come before you! This is the spirit we inherited from you, bless the circumcisers, the circumcising knives, and give them courage to discern the initiates who may exhibit fear during the ritual cut! Bless the initiates during the circumcision period!'

In *sikhebo* ritual, the chief circumciser offers sacrifice to the ancestors and the gods during the performance of sanctification of the circumcision knives ritual known as *khubita chigembe*. According to Wafula the key informant, the sacrifice appeases the ancestors and the gods to bless and protect the initiates, the circumcisers and the circumcision knives during the circumcision period. Nonetheless, if they are not appeased, they cause surgical mishaps on the side of the circumcisers and the initiates fearing the knife.

Equally, on the eve of the circumcision day, the male elder offers sacrifices to the ancestors and the gods to invoke them to protect the initiate during the circumcision period. This is supported by the following data:

On the eve of the circumcision day, Nyukuri directs Wanyama to stand besides Wanyama's (the initiate's grandfather's) grave while putting on a brave face. He speaks authoritatively as he uses gesticulation.

'*Saba kamakhono koo ano!*'

‘Wash your hands here!’

Nyukuri points the bull’s stomach waste known as *buse*. Takes it and smears Wanyama’s face while praising himself:

‘*Ese Nyukuri omukuka olomaloma, Omubuya Omusimaolia okhwa Nanjala omusoleli arubaini na nane (1948) omusani omukinyikeu omunyindafu. Nicha ebweni wenywe nende kumurungo kuno. Bitu lundi mulinde omusinde khu butinyu bwosi.*’

‘I am Nyukuri a male elder speaking from Babuya Basimaolia clan, the son of Nanjala circumcised the year nineteen forty-eight (1948) of Kinyikeu age-set, a brave man. I come before you with this sacrifice. Bless and protect the initiate against all forms of malice.’

The rest of *buse* is left by the graveside for the ancestors and the gods to feed on while the rest of meat is used to feed the many visitors who attend the ceremony.

At Wekesa’s compound near the shrine known as ‘*namwima*’. Enters Nyukuri, Kiberenge, Wanyama and Kitui. Nyukuri looks at the coloured bull slaughtered by Kitui and Kiberenge and orders its stomach to be torn apart.

Nyukuri studies the inner part of the bull keenly. Realizes that it is clear an indication that the initiate has courage to face the knife! Observes Wanyama’s eyes and nods to show approval.

Wanyama stands upright putting on a brave face and maintains eye contact with Nyukuri.

Nyukuri takes a piece of the bull's meat, clotted blood known as '*kamalasile*' that is tapped while slaughtering the bull and brew known as '*busaa*' and places at the centre of the shrine as he speaks authoritatively:

*'Nise Nyukuri olomaloma, Omubuya Omusimaolia okhwa Nanjala omusoleli arubaini na nane (1948) omusani omukinyikeu. Nicha ebweni wenywe nende kumurungo kuno. Fukilila sianuwa sino, mubite omusinde ino mala abe omunyindafu bise bie embalu.'*

'I am Nyukuri speaking from Babuya Basimaolia clan. The son of Nanjala circumcised the year nineteen forty-eight (1948) of Kinyikeu age-set. I come before you with this sacrifice. Accept it, bless the initiate and give him courage to face the knife.'

According to Werunga the key informant, on the eve of the circumcision day, the male elder takes the bull's stomach waste known as *buse* and smears on the initiate's body on the head, chest, back, hands and legs while praising himself to invoke the gods and the ancestors to protect him during the circumcision period from people with bad intentions that can make him fear the knife. Moreover, the male elder observes the inner part of the bull slaughtered near the shrine to determine the initiate's fate. Nyukuri discovers that the bull's inner part is clear an indication that the initiate has courage to face the knife. Nevertheless, if the bull's inner part is stained, an indication that the initiate can fear the knife; he is smeared with bull's stomach waste to protect him during the circumcision period. The male elder further takes a piece of the bull's meat, clotted blood known as *kamalasile* and local brew known as *busaa* and places at the centre of the shrine. Using self-praise, he invokes the gods and the ancestors to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period.

According to Werunga the key informant, *sikhebo* ritual cannot be successful without the moral support of the ancestors and the gods. This is because the initiate is part and parcel of them for he bears the name of the departed grandfather. Therefore, the departed spirits must be appeased through self-praises and sacrifices to invoke them to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period. It was observed from the field study that the initiate's father, the initiate's paternal aunt, the initiate's maternal uncle and the initiate's paternal male cousin use self-praises to invoke the paternal and the maternal ancestral spirits to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period. Nonetheless, if they are not appeased, they cause the initiate to fear the knife, bleed profusely and surgical mishaps on the side of the circumcisers during the ritual cut. Childs and Fowler's (2006) view that themes are identified by the major characters as they interact with other characters informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the ancestors are categorized as supernatural characters who plead with god on behalf of the Bukusu community. The study assessed the male elder's actions during self-praise in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

## **6.9 Informal Education**

The theme of informal education is evident in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community to transmit customs, traditions, beliefs, norms, morality and good social values and ideals to the initiate and the community at large. For instance, during *khuchukhila* ritual that involves the preparation of brew known as *busaa*, the dialogue between Wekesa and Lukibisi teaches the initiate and the community at large taboos and beliefs. This is supported by the data below:

Wekesa looks at Lukibisi and speaks authoritatively:

*'Nenya oelekeshe Wanyama muluchi lwa Kiminini khutaa kamechi! Nemucha namwe nemukobola, sekenyekhana mwikhebukhe namwe mulole bukhikha tawe.*

*Lundi nemwicha okhuwama eluchi, kenyekhana Wanyama arumikhile engila  
ekindi ne asuta esachi khuwibeka. Khehubulila?’*

‘I want you to escort Wanyama to river Kiminini to draw water! While going and coming back, ensure you do not look back, sideways or talk to anyone! Likewise, while coming back, you are supposed to use a different route as Wanyama carries the small pot on his shoulder. Are you getting me?’

Lukibisi answers:

*‘Nakhuulile papa.’*

‘I have heard you father.’

According to Wafula the key informant, *sikhebo* ritual is characterized by taboos and beliefs. For instance, while coming from the river to draw water three days to the ritual cut, the initiate uses a different route to confuse people with bad intentions from planting charms that can make him fear the knife. *Sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu takes place during even years in the months of August during holiday when most members of the community are at home that allows for more characters cum audience. The Bukusu believe that even years are connected to good luck while odd years are connected to bad luck. Additionally, the sacred song known as ‘*Sioyayo*’ is only sung in the context of *sikhebo* ritual. However, if the song is sung outside the context, a bad omen befalls the singer or his family members and if the singer is uncircumcised, the ancestral spirits would circumcise him at night halfway. In this case, the foreskin of the penis would swell and the circumciser would be summoned to circumcise the initiate even in the odd year. The belief among the Bukusu that *sikhebo* ritual should be performed during stipulated time made the community to respect the ritual as a form of identity. Were’s (2014) argument that circumcision among the Bukusu involves taboos and beliefs informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, taboos and beliefs ensure that the ritual is

followed strictly to ensure correctness. The study analyzed taboos and beliefs in *sikhebo* ritual into telling a story.

Among the Bukusu, places where rituals are performed are sacred. These include the shrine known as *namwima* where the ancestors and the gods are appeased to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period. According to Wafula the key informant, *namwima* is a small hut that is constructed outside the initiate's father's house. The hut is constructed with trees that include: *lusola*, *kumulaha* and *likomosi*. The hut is thatched with special rare species of grass known as *nabuyeywe*. Second, the swamp where the initiate is smeared with mud known as *litosi* gives him extra powers to face the knife with courage. It is worth noting that the swamp where the initiate is smeared with mud should not dry at whatever cost for if it does, all the initiates who are served in it automatically die. Moreover, the gravesides where the ancestors are appeased and the circumcision spot known as *etiang'i* that prevent blood to spill on the ground where malicious people can take with the intention of harming the initiate to fear women and become impotent. *Etiang'i* is prepared by putting sad on a sack that is placed in front of the initiate's father's house. The study concurs with Makila (1978) that circumcision is followed by a lot of education which includes marriage, sex education and self-identity. In *sikhebo* ritual, the places where rituals take place are sacred thus, women, men who feared the knife and boys are not allowed to move near to prevent the wrath of the ancestors to befall them. The study examined the places where rituals are performed in *sikhebo* ritual into settings to tell a story.

Among the Bukusu, the livestock used in *sikhebo* ritual are symbolic and functional. According to Werunga the key informant, only healthy livestock that bear bright colours are used. Healthy livestock with bright colours signifies prosperity in the initiate's life evident in him marrying in future and siring children to propagate the community's lineage. On the contrary, livestock with



dark colours signify bad life and when used, make the initiate to fear women, become impotent and fear the knife. However, castrated livestock, those with broken legs or horns and mono-eyed are not slaughtered for they symbolize the ceremony is associated with fecundity. Subsequently, the skin to be won while performing the rituals has to come from a bull or a he-goat for it instills extra powers in the initiate that enables him to gain courage to face the knife. The study agrees with Musungu (2016) that themes are critical in the construction of Bukusu perceptions on personal and communal relationships. In *sikhebo* ritual, the theme of informal education teaches the initiate and the community at large community values, ideals and beliefs. The study analyzed the beliefs in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

On the pass-out day while advising Wanyama on community's values and ideals, Mang'oli teaches him the origin of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community. He goes ahead and tells him the eight circumcision age-sets and how they are spaced. According to Mang'oli, the circumcision age-sets are spaced hundred years apart and when the last circumcision age-set ends the first one starts. To stress the point, he uses a proverb that states: '*bibingilo sebingilana tawe*' translated as '*circumcision age-sets cannot meet*'. The excerpt goes like this:

*'Sikhebo sie Babukusu sia chakisibwa nende Mango enyuma wekhukwira endemu yabebe yengene. Khuli nende bibingilo munane bie sikhebo: Bakolongolo, Bakikwameti, Bakananachi, Bakinyikeu, Banyange, Bamaina, Bachuma nende Basawa! Bibingilo bino biyapangwa buli silala sibukula kimiko likhumi. Sisigilo sie Bachuma siabukula kimiko likhumi na kine ne sivune mbo omusakhulu owe sisingilo sie Basawa siabira yaba asili omulamu mala kabona sisigilo sie Basawa esindi. Nebusa anga nekafua, Basawa babakulikha mu singilo sia londakho. Khukhuwama hao bandu baulilishana bali khuloba khulindilisha,*

*omusakhulu omenya khubona sisikilo sie khabili akhoya keruwa. Khulondekhana nende kano, bakuka becha nende lusimo luloma luli bibingilo sebingilana tawe. Anga sisingilo sifunga, sie khuranga sichaka! Anga, sisingilo sie Bachuma siabao okhwama 1872 okhwola 1886! Nono omusani omubukusu owengila bise bino ali murika ino. Kumwiko 1888, sisingilo sie Basawa siachaka siola 1988! Nono sisingilo sienywe sie kumwiko 2018 silangwa mbo Bakikwemeti bie khane akari we likhesiana lio muruki Uhuru Kenyatta nende Raila Odinga. ’*

‘Circumcision among the Bakusu was started by Mango who killed a notorious serpent singlehandedly! There are eight circumcision age-sets among the Bukusu community namely: Bakolongolo, Bakikwameti, Bakananachi, Bakinyikeu, Banyange, Bamaina, Bachuma and Basawa! The age-sets are spaced in a way that each lasts for ten years a part from Bachuma that lasted for fourteen years! The reason why the age-set took fourteen years was that there was an old man who belonged to Basawa age-set from the previous cycle who was still alive! He was not meant to live and see the next Basawa age-set! When he died, Basawa were named in the next initiation period! It was therefore, agreed that to avoid such delays any man who lives long enough to see the second cycle would be killed! As such, elders came

up with a proverb that states that circumcision groups cannot meet! Once the last age-set has been reached, the first is restarted! For instance, Bachuma age-set lasted from 1872 to 1886! Therefore, every Mubukusu man who was circumcised within this period belongs to that age-set. In 1888, the Basawa age group began and lasted until 1898! (*Looking at Wanyama.*) Therefore, your age-set of the year 2018 is

called Bakikwameti number four of the handshake between the former President Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga!’

Among the Bukusu community, it is during the final pieces of advice that community’s customs, traditions, beliefs, norms, morality and good ideals and values are transmitted to the initiate and the community at large. This is the time the initiate obtains a circumcision age-set and is keen to get what he is told. According to Wafula the key informant, if the initiate misbehaves, he is mocked by his circumcision age-sets to book another appointment with the male elder. The initiate is further told his circumcision age-set based on environmental and natural occurrences. For instance, Wanyama’s age-set is Omukikwameti number four of the hand shake between the former Kenyan president Uhuru Kenyatta and former prime minister Raila Odinga that happened on 9 March 2018 when Kenyans woke to the news that the key leaders, Raila Odinga and Uhuru Kenyatta who were at the helm of the divisive politics and hurling insults at each other, were putting their differences aside and uniting through a ‘*handshake*’. Ronoh’s (2008) postulation that the main aim of education given to Maasai initiates was to make them responsible adults and prepare them for their future roles in society was instructive to the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, it is during the pass-out stage that community’s customs, traditions, beliefs, norms, morality and good ideals and values are transmitted to the initiate and the community at large. The study examined the male elder’s teachings during the pass-out stage in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

During seclusion period in *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate is treated using traditional herb known as *enguu*. Nyukuri the male elder is given the responsibility to harvest the herb. He goes to the forest and after looking around he sees *enguu* plant with wide leaves and by passes it. However, when he sees the one with thin leaves, he whistles, beats it before harvesting. It was observed that while applying the herb on Wanyama’s wound, Lukibisi tells him to be disciplined with the herb due to

his rudeness by use of a proverb that states: '*sonyala warora kamanyasi kie sikhebo tawe*' translated as '*you couldn't dream of circumcision medicine*' to show that the herb was bitter than the ritual cut. The following data confirms:

Lukibisi nods while speaking to Wanyama:

*'Kenyekhana osome kimima kimilai khubirila mumasuswa kano sikila sileka sio.*

*Bakuka sebakosa anga baloma bali sonyala warora kamanyasi kie sikhebo tawe.'*

'You ought to be disciplined with the herb due to your rudeness. Elders were not wrong when they said that you can not dream of circumcision medicine.'

According to Wafula the key informant, the act of the male elder whistling and beating *enguu* plant before harvesting makes it bitter when the initiate applies on the wound than the ritual cut. In *sikhebo* ritual, the act of treating the initiate with bitter herb teaches him the virtue of bravery and tolerance because his role is to protect the community against aggression and to be in position to face future world challenges. The study concurs with Mbithi (1969) that initiation is one of the most important rituals meant to produce able-bodied youth force, labour, military and leadership. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate is expected to be brave and tolerant in order to protect the community against aggression and face life challenges in future with courage. The study analyzed the male elder's actions while harvesting the herb known as *enguu* in *sikhebo* ritual as a story.

In *sikhebo* ritual, three days to the ritual cut, Wekesa the initiate's father performs an initial ritual known as *khuchukhila* that involves the preparation of local brew known as *busaa* for the visitors who come to witness the ritual cut. This is supported by the following data:-

At Wekesa's compound, the second week of August enters Wekesa, Wanyama,

Lukibisi, Nasambu, Kundu, Wafukho, Nasipwondi and Nanyama. Wekesa takes a

small pot known as 'esachi' decorated with star grass known as 'lukhafwa' and places outside in front of his house in a depression. Wanyama comes from Wekesa's house accompanied by Lukibisi.

Wekesa speaks authoritatively as he maintains eye contact with Wanyama and Lukibisi:

*'Nemucha namwe nemukobola okhuwama muluchi, sekenyekhana mwikhebukhe namwe mulole bukhikha tawe. Lundi nemwicha okhuwama eluchi, kenyekhana Wanyama arumikhile engila ekindi ne asuta esachi khwibeka. Khekhubulila?'*

'While going and coming back to and from the river, ensure you do not look back, sideways or talk to anyone! Likewise, while coming back, you are supposed to use a different route as Wanyama carries the small pot on his shoulder. Are you getting me?'

According to the key informants, the act of the initiate's father decorating the small pot with star grass symbolizes prosperity in the initiate's life evident in him marrying and siring children in future. Also, while going to fetch water in the river, Wanyama carries the small pot on his shoulder to symbolize that he is doing female chores of fetching water for the last time. Equally, while going and coming back from the river, he is not allowed to look backwards, sideways and talk to anyone because these are cowardice acts. More so, the initiate uses a different route from the one he used while going to draw water to show that he must turn into a tough individual by the third day just as the maturation of local brew that is measured by the way it bubbles while turning into strong alcohol. Hence, the initiate's seriousness must grow exponentially as he advances the day of the ritual cut. Simiyu's (1990) postulation that initiation places emphasis on the learning of practical skills and the acquisition of knowledge, which is useful to the individual and the society as a whole

informed the study. In *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate's seriousness is gauged by looking at the eyes which are focused at one point. The study assessed the symbolic actions evident during the performance of a ritual known as *khuchukhila* that involves the preparation of brew known as *busaa* in *sikhebo* as narrative.

Among the Bukusu, livestock slaughtered during *sikhebo* ritual bear bright colours. This is evident when Wakhisi the initiate's maternal uncle provides a coloured bull to slaughter to appreciate his nephew. Equally, Wekesa the initiate's father provides two coloured bulls to be slaughtered on the eve of the circumcision day. This is supported by the following information:

Wekesa assures relatives, neighbours and friends by saying:

*'Buli sindu sili abwene. Endi nende chiunwa chibili chekamapala chikhachinchwe silo sie sikhebo. Ndala ekhachichwe esilindwa sia Wanyama ne kindi simbi nende namwima.'*

'Everything is in place. I have two coloured bulls to slaughter on the eve of the circumcision day. One bull will be slaughtered by Wanyama's graveside and another one near the shrine.'

According to Wafula the key informant, the livestock slaughtered and given to the initiate as presents during *sikhebo* ritual bear bright colours to symbolize the initiate leads a successful life, evident in him marrying and siring children. On the contrary, livestock with dark colours signify bad life and when used make the initiate to fear women, become impotent and fear the knife. In addition, the livestock slaughtered or given to the initiate as gifts are supposed to be healthy in order to bless him. However, livestock with dark colours and those that are not healthy are not used because they symbolize bad ending in the initiate's life evident in him not marrying and becoming impotent. The study examined the livestock used in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

During *sikhebo* ritual, the trees that are used to erect the shrine known as *namwima* are symbolic. As observed from the field study, the shrine is thatched with special rare species of grass known as *nabuyeywe*. Trees used to construct *namwima* included *lusola*, *kumulaha* and *likomosi*. This is supported by the following data:

Khisa calls Wanyonyi, Wafula and Maloba to an open place at the back of his house and says:

*‘Ano nio mulombakha namwima khurumikhila kumusola, kumulaha, nende kumukomosi. Lundi mulabiba namwima nende bunyasi bulangwa buli nabuyeywe.’*

*‘Here is where you will construct the shrine using trees like kumusola, kumulaha and kumukomosi. In addition, you will thatch the shrine with grass known as nabuyeywe.’*

In *sikhebo* ritual, the props used or constructed around the initiate are functional. According to Werunga the key informant, *nabuyeywe* signifies the importance of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community. Notably, the Bukusu believe that *lusola* is a tree that is planted around the homestead to signify good luck. *Lusola* is used in the construction of the shrine to bless the initiate. *Lusola* is known for its hardness as a result, termites do not eat its wood easily. Also, the Bukusu believe that a boy in the home is compared to *lusola* tree because he is permanent in the home and is in position to propagate the community’s lineage. On the contrary, a girl is equated to a eucalyptus tree because time will come for her to leave her parent’s home and get married elsewhere to start a new family. More so, the Bukusu community believe that a special tree known as *kumulaha* protects the initiate against malicious people with the intention of bewitching him to fear the knife. Additionally, it is believed that *likomosi* is known for its quick multiplication, which implies that after circumcision, the initiate must prove his manhood by marrying later and siring

enough children especially boys. The study agrees with Simiyu (1990) that education puts emphasis on social responsibility, job orientation, political participation and spiritual moral values. It is during *sikhebo* ritual that the initiate and the community at large are taught the Bukusu customs, traditions, beliefs, norms, morality and good social values and ideals. The study analyzed the props used in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

## **6.10 Conclusion**

the study revealed that *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community involved themes and meaning as narrative. The study noted that the theme of bravery was dominant in *sikhebo* ritual. This was evident in songs, paralinguistic features, props, costume, body art and ornaments. The study noted that generosity as a theme was manifested in *sikhebo* ritual where the initiate's mother ensured there was enough food and local brew for the visitors who attended the circumcision ceremony. Also, the initiate's father rewarded his circumcision age-set with brew and meat in order to bless the son. Moreover, the study established that moral decadence as a theme was manifested in *sikhebo* ritual whereby members of the community who were deviants were ridiculed by use of songs to ensure they behave well. It was discovered that kinship as a theme was evident in *sikhebo* ritual where every member of the community was invited to attend the circumcision ceremony with the view of the initiate to know his relatives. The study revealed that during *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate was taught sexual issues to prepare him for the future responsibility of indulging in sex in order to propagate the community's lineage using songs, dances, symbolism and proverbs. Unity as a theme was demonstrated in *sikhebo* ritual whereby every member of the community took part in transforming the initiate from boyhood to manhood thus, making performance a social affair. Also the male elder used the song "*Amanani Kali Elwanyi*" to teach the initiate to unite with other age-sets to protect the community's territory. The study established that ancestors played a vital



role in *sikhebo* ritual because they blessed the initiates and the circumcisers during the circumcision period. The ancestors were invoked in *sikhebo* ritual through songs, self-praises, authoritative language and props. The study revealed that *sikhebo* ritual involved informal education. This was evident in the use of taboos and beliefs that were enshrined in the Bukusu worldview as well as the props, costumes, paralinguistic features, body art and ornaments that were used in *sikhebo* ritual that were functional and symbolic. Chapter 7 that follows provides summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

#### 7.1 Introduction

This chapter summarizes the findings of the study and covers the conclusion. The study aimed at analyzing narrative elements in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community. The study analyzed *sikhebo*'s ritual application of literary and other performance features to prove if these attributes can transform the happenings in *sikhebo* ritual into narrative. The specific objectives were to: analyze plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element, assess actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative and to study themes and meaning in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

#### 7.2 Summary of Findings

Chapter four analyzed plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element. The study established that *sikhebo* ritual takes a narrative structure governed by Freytag's (1896) dramatic model in MacEwan (2010) that represents the storytelling process in six steps: the exposition, inciting moment, rising action, climax, falling action and denouement. The exposition marked the situation before the beginning of the action, the major character who was Wanyama the initiate was presented and the audience was also introduced to Wekesa who was the initiate's father. From the dialogue between the initiate and the father, the initiate's intention to get circumcised was known hence, setting the scene. The inciting incident was the second part point in a narrative. At this point the conflict was introduced which powered to the rest of the story. In *sikhebo* ritual, immediately the initiate got permission from the father to get circumcised, every member of the community was actively involved in transforming him from boyhood to manhood either actively or passively. For instance, the initiate's mother went to her relations to inform them of her son's intention to get circumcised,

the initiate's father informed friends, neighbours and relatives of his son's intention to get circumcised. The rising action was the stage at which the intensity of events increased and the conflict grew. In *sikhebo* ritual, the intensity of events increased and the conflict grew three days to the ritual cut when the initiate's father performed an initial ritual called *khuchukhila* that involved the preparation of local brew known as *busaa*, the initiate in the company of the older brother Lukibisi and the escorts invited visitors to attend the circumcision ceremony, the male elder who was Nyukuri offered sacrifices to the gods and the ancestors, throughout the night to the circumcision day, the initiate was chided through songs, reprimands and props to make him brave. Early in the morning on the circumcision day, the initiate was escorted to the swamp to be smeared with mud. The activities that were performed three days to the ritual cut made the conflict to intensify because the initiate must be circumcised. The climax was the turning point when events and situations changed for better or worse. In *sikhebo* ritual, it was during the ritual cut that the initiate was transformed from boyhood to manhood by Khisa the circumciser who cut the foreskin of his penis. This was the time the initiate displayed unwavering fortitude to show a better change. During the falling action, suspense was prolonged as complications were met head on and questions were acknowledged and occasionally answered. During *sikhebo* ritual, Wanyama who was the initiate was isolated to stay in a special cottage known as *mwikombe* where cleansing rituals were performed that enabled him to intermingle freely with members of the community and was taught community's customs, beliefs, morality and good social values and ideals. The denouement marked the end of *sikhebo* ritual. This time, the initiate was given final pieces of advice on community's customs, traditions, beliefs, norms, morality and good social values and ideals that were recognized by the community.

Chapter five assessed actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative. The study revealed that characters in *sikhebo* ritual were divided into two: major and minor characters. Among the Bukusu community, characters' roles were scripted. The study revealed that the initiate was brave. This was evident when he put on a brave face and maintained eye contact with the father as he approached him to announce the intention to get circumcised. Equally, he maintained eye contact with executors throughout the ritual to show that he was serious. The study established that the initiate was tolerant. This was evident when he was chided through props, songs, reprimands, actions and paralinguistic features to harden him to face the knife with courage. The study noted that the initiate's mother was generous. This was seen during the final meeting with relatives, neighbours and friends at Wekesa's home when she used a proverb that states that: '*an invitee is full of greed*' to show that she had enough food and brew for the visitors to make them happy. The study revealed that characters in *sikhebo* ritual were appreciative. This was evident when the male escorts produced war cries as their female counterparts ululated to display the liking attitude they had towards *sikhebo* ritual because this was the only avenue that men were created in the society. Also, the female characters ululated to express joy and appreciate the gifts given to the initiate and his bravery act of facing the knife with courage. The study found out that characters who excuted rituals in *sikhebo* ritual were authoritative as a result, instilled fear in the initiate who learnt that the ritual was a serious affair and lured the gods and the ancestors to bless and protect him and the circumcisers during the circumcision period. The study established that characters in *sikhebo* ritual were dutiful. This was unveiled when every member of the community took part either actively or passively to transform the initiate from boyhood to manhood that made performance a social affair. The study established that characters who excuted rituals in *sikhebo* ritual were knowledgeable. This was seen when the male elder who was Mang'oli used proverbs

and symbols to teach the initiate and the community at large values and ideals. The study noted that the male escorts were creative and imaginative. This was evident when they composed textual and melodic phrases and narrated stories of heroes to teach the initiate cherished virtues. The study revealed that characters in *sikhebo* ritual were cautious. This was established when the initiate's father gave the brisket that was removed around the initiate's neck when he arrived home from the maternal side to the initiate's paternal aunt because she could not spoil her own blood, the initiate's father also buried the contents wrapped in the circumcision spot that included mud that was removed from the initiate's body, foreskin and blood that dripped on the ground after the ritual cut to prevent malicious people from exsanguinating them with the intention of spoiling the initiate. Equally, before, the initiate left his father's compound to intermingle with others in the neighbourhood, he was warned not to shelter in other initiates' cottages because luck could be transferred to the host initiate.

Chapter six of the thesis studied themes and meaning in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative. The study revealed that the theme of bravery was evident in *sikhebo* ritual when the initiate approached the father while putting on a brave face to announce his intent to get circumcised. The dialogue between the father and the son showed that the initiate should uphold the community's dignity by being brave. Notably, the songs that were sung during *sikhebo* ritual like '*Amba Mutalya*', '*Liloba*', '*Mulongo*' and '*Sioyayo*' taught the initiate to be brave in order to face the knife with courage. Generosity as a theme was evident in *sikhebo* ritual. This was seen during the final meeting with relatives, friends and neighbours when Nasambu used a proverb that states that: '*an invitee is full of greed*' to assure members present that there was enough food and brew for the visitors. Notably, after a successful ritual cut, the initiate's father rewarded his circumcision age-sets with brew and meat and in return they blessed the initiate. The study noted that the theme of

moral decadence was manifested in *sikhebo* ritual in some songs. For instance, the song ‘Babuya’ highlighted and condemned the Babuya clan for practicing witchcraft. The song helped to educate the initiate and members of the community at large the danger of witchcraft as it caused death and stigmatization. Likewise, in the song ‘Wambumuli’, Wambumuli was satirized for being sexually immoral evident in him committing adultery with people’s wives and school children. The song ‘*Sioyayo*’, satirizes initiates who feared the knife to be ex-communicated as a result, made the initiate to gain courage to face the knife. Notably, while giving the initiate final pieces of advice, Mang’oli the male elder used a proverb that states: ‘*beer can make a teetered animal to dance*’ to warn the initiate of the effects of drunkenness. The study discovered that kinship was evident in *sikhebo* ritual. This was seen when Wanyama declared his candidature to relatives for blessings and gifts. Equally, the roles played by the initiate’s relatives in *sikhebo* ritual showed that the initiate should appreciate them in life. The study revealed that the theme of sexual issues was in co-operated in *sikhebo* ritual. For instance, during the performance of the song ‘*Luwaya*’ the escorts uttered taboo words, used obscenities and danced provocatively to teach the initiate sexual issues. The song ‘*Mbe Omukhasi*’ that was sung while escorting the initiate home from the maternal side, referred to the blessing that the initiate received from the maternal side which was the ability to marry and sire children. The male elder who was Mang’oli used a proverb that states: ‘*an open door is yours and the closed one is for someone else*’ to tell the initiate to make friendship with girls and warned him against committing adultery. The study revealed that the theme of unity was seen in *sikhebo* ritual which was evident in every member of the community taking part in the ritual either passively or actively that made performance a social affair. Also, while advising the initiate, Mang’oli the male elder uses the song ‘*Amanani Kali Elwanyi*’ to tell the initiate to unite with others to protect the territory. The study revealed that role of ancestors was a major theme in

*sikhebo* ritual. This was evident when executors used self-praises and authoritative language to invoke the ancestors and the gods to bless and protect the initiate during the circumcision period. The study established that the theme of informal education was evident in *sikhebo* ritual. This was established in the use of taboos and beliefs that were enshrined in the Bukusu worldview and the props, costume, paralinguistic features, body art, ornaments that were used in *sikhebo* ritual that were symbolic and functional.

### **7.3 Conclusion**

The conclusions of this study were discussed as per the three stated objectives: to analyze narrative elements in the narrative; to assess actual characterization and role of various characters in the narrative and to study themes and meaning in *sikhebo* ritual.

Firstly, the study established that *sikhebo* ritual takes a narrative structure governed by Freytag's (1896) dramatic model in MacEwan (2010). The narration analyzed embraced six basic stages namely exposition, the inciting incident, the rising action, climax, the falling action and denouement. Exposition was the first stage that presented the principal character and established the scene. In *sikhebo* ritual, it was at this stage that the initiate was introduced and his intention to get circumcised was known. The second stage was the inciting incident that introduced a conflict which powered to the rest of the story. In *sikhebo* ritual, the conflict was the initiate's intention to get circumcised. The third stage was the rising action at which the intensity of events increased and the conflict grew. In *sikhebo* ritual, every member of the community took part in the performance that lead to the initiate being circumcised. This was the time rituals like *khuchukhila* that involved the preparation of brew known as *busaa*, the initiate declared his candidature to relatives, friends and neighbours, and sacrifices were offered to the gods and the ancestors. On the eve of the circumcision day, the initiate was chided through songs, reprimands and props. Early in

the morning on the circumcision day, the initiate was escorted to the swamp where he was smeared with mud and escorted back home to face the knife. The fourth stage was the climax the turning point when events and situations change for better or worse. In *sikhebo* ritual, climax was realized when the initiate was circumcised. The fifth stage was the falling action where suspense was prolonged as complications were met head on and questions were acknowledged and occasionally answered. In *sikhebo* ritual, it was during seclusion period that the initiate was isolated in order to perform cleansing rituals and was taught community's values and ideals. The sixth stage was denouement where the pending concerns were settled and status quo was restored. In *sikhebo* ritual, this was the time the initiate obtained a circumcision age-set and was taught community's customs, traditions, beliefs, norms, morality and good social values and ideals. The study used the tenet of the theory of narratology that states that narrative is composed of a unique sequence of events to analyze plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element.

Secondly, the study established that characterization and role of various characters in the narrative are evident in *sikhebo* ritual. Characters in *sikhebo* ritual were channels through which the audience got the narrative. The study noted that characters were divided into two: main and minor whose roles were scripted. The study revealed that the initiate was brave. This was evident when he approached his father while putting on a brave face and maintained eye contact with the excutors. Equally, the costume, body art ornaments, props and songs used in *sikhebo* ritual teach the initiate to be brave. The study noted that the initiate was tolerant. This was shown when he was chided using songs, props, reprimands, actions and paralinguistic features to harden him in order to face the knife with courage. The study established that the initiate's mother was generous when she ensured that enough brew and food was availed to feed visitors. The study revealed that characters in *sikhebo* were appreciative. This was demonstrated when the male escorts produced war cries as



their female counterparts ululated to display the liking attitude they had towards *sikhebo* ritual. Equally, after successful ritual cut, the female characters ululated as their male counterparts roared to appreciate the initiate's bravery. The study also established that characters who executed rituals in *sikhebo* ritual were authoritative in order to instil fear in the initiate who learnt that the ritual was a serious affair. The study noted that characters who took part in *sikhebo* ritual were dutiful. This was seen when every member of the community took part in the ritual and ensured the right procedure was followed. Lastly, the study affirmed that characters who executed rituals in *sikhebo* ritual were cautious and protective to ensure the right thing was done to ensure correctness.

Thirdly, the study revealed that *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community involved themes and meaning as narrative. The study noted that the theme of bravery was dominant in *sikhebo* ritual. This was evident in songs, paralinguistic features, props, costume, body art and ornaments. The study revealed that generosity as a theme was manifested in *sikhebo* ritual where the initiate's mother ensured that there was enough food and local brew for visitors who attended the son's circumcision ceremony. Also, the initiate's father rewarded his circumcision age-set with brew and meat to bless the son. Moreover, the study established that moral decadence as a theme was manifested in *sikhebo* ritual whereby members of the community who were deviants were ridiculed by use of songs to ensure they behave well. It was noted that kinship as a theme was evident in *sikhebo* ritual where every member of the community was invited to attend the circumcision ceremony with the view of the initiate to know his relatives. The study revealed that during *sikhebo* ritual, the initiate was taught sexual issues to prepare him for the future responsibility of indulging in sex in order to propagate the community's lineage using songs, dances, symbolism and proverbs. Unity as a theme was demonstrated in *sikhebo* ritual whereby every member of the community took part in transforming the initiate from boyhood to manhood that made performance a social

affair. Also the male elder used the song “*Amanani Kali Elwanyi*’ to teach the initiate to unite with other circumcision age-sets to protect the community’s territory. The study established that ancestors played a vital role in *sikhebo* ritual because they blessed the initiates and the circumcisers during the circumcision period. Therefore, the ancestors were invoked in *sikhebo* ritual through songs, authoritative language and props. The study revealed that *sikhebo* ritual involved informal education. This was realized in the use of taboos and beliefs that were enshrined in the Bukusu worldview as well as the props, costumes, paralinguistic features, body art and ornaments that were used in *sikhebo* ritual that were functional and symbolic.

#### **7.4 Recommendations**

The findings have established that *sikhebo* ritual takes a narrative structure governed by Freytag’s (1896) dramatic model in MacEwan (2010) that included exposition, the inciting incident, the rising action, climax, falling action, and denonement. The study recommends the use of *sikhebo* ritual as narrative structure governed by Freytag’s (ibid) dramatic model in MacEwan (ibid) in learning institutions for teaching performance stylistic devices in literature and performing arts. The findings noted that *sikhebo* ritual involved actual characterization and role of various characters. The study recommends the use of actual characterization and role of various characters in *sikhebo* ritual in teaching novels, plays, short stories and oral narratives in schools, colleges and universities. The study revealed that themes and meaning as narrative were evident in *sikhebo* ritual. The study recommends the use of themes and meaning in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative in the field of literature (oral and written) at all levels of learning.

## 7.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The study suggests the following:

1. The study examined plot in *sikhebo* ritual as a narrative element. However, among the Bukusu community, there are cases where initiates fear the knife. It is thought-provoking to analyze the above-mentioned case as a narrative element.
2. The study assessed characterization and role of characters in the narrative. A study should be conducted to assess characterization and role of the girl child in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.
3. The study established that *sikhebo* ritual involves themes and meaning in narrative. The study did not deal with masculinity as a theme. A study should be conducted to deal with masculinity as a theme and meaning in *sikhebo* ritual as narrative.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1: Consent Form**

**PART A RESEARCHER' S DETAILS**

I am Paul Wanyonyi Khaemba from Maseno University in the Department of Linguistics and Literary Studies, School of Arts and Social Sciences conducting research on Analysis of Narrative Elements in the Bukusu ritual *Sikhebo*. I am requesting you to participate in the study.

**PART B: RESPONDENT'S DETAILS**

I ..... of Id number .....  
willingly accept to participate in the study. I accept that I will be given a pseudonmy to conceal my identity.

Name ..... Id no.....

**PART C: GUARDIANS/PARENTS OF MINORS BELOW AGE 18.**

I ..... of Id no .....  
willingly accept my son/sibling below eighteen years to participate in the study. I accept that s/he will be given anonymity.

Signature..... Date.....

## Appendix 2: Ethical Review Approval



### MASENO UNIVERSITY ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Tel: +254 057 351 622 Ext: 3050  
Fax: +254 057 351 221

Private Bag – 40105, Maseno, Kenya  
Email: muerc-secretariate@maseno.ac.ke

**FROM:** Secretary - MUERC

**DATE:** 2<sup>nd</sup> October, 2018

**TO:** Paul Wanyonyi Khaemba  
PG/PHD/00047/2013  
Department of Literary Studies  
School of Arts and Social Sciences, Maseno University  
P. O. Box, Private Bag, Maseno, Kenya

**REF:** MSU/DRPI/MUERC/00595/18

**RE:** Depiction of Shikhebo as Acculturative Dramatic Narrative. Proposal Reference Number MSU/DRPI/MUERC/00595/18

This is to inform you that the Maseno University Ethics Review Committee (MUERC) determined that the ethics issues raised at the initial review were adequately addressed in the revised proposal. Consequently, the study is granted approval for implementation effective this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 2018 for a period of one (1) year.

Please note that authorization to conduct this study will automatically expire on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 2019. If you plan to continue with the study beyond this date, please submit an application for continuation approval to the MUERC Secretariat by 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2019.

Approval for continuation of the study will be subject to successful submission of an annual progress report that is to reach the MUERC Secretariat by 15<sup>th</sup> September, 2019.

Please note that any unanticipated problems resulting from the conduct of this study must be reported to MUERC. You are required to submit any proposed changes to this study to MUERC for review and approval prior to initiation. Please advise MUERC when the study is completed or discontinued.

Thank you.

  
Dr. Bonuke Anyona,  
Secretary,  
Maseno University Ethics Review Committee.



Cc: Chairman,  
Maseno University Ethics Review Committee.

MASENO UNIVERSITY IS ISO 9001:2008 CERTIFIED



### Appendix 3: A Map Showing the Study Area

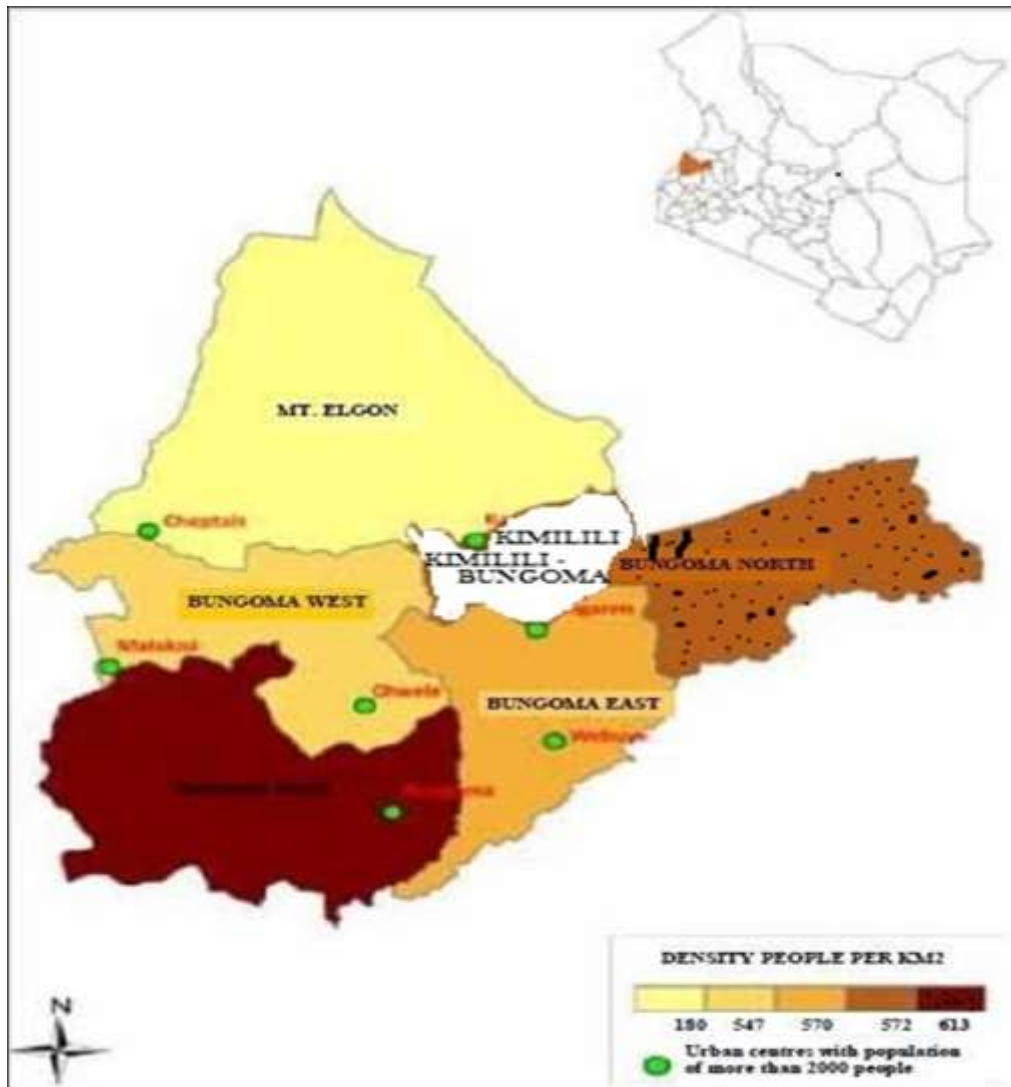


Figure 1: Detail of the study area (Bungoma North Sub-County) in relation to other sub Counties in Bungoma County. Source: Bureau of Statistics Bungoma North Sub County.

#### Appendix 4: Documentation of the Pilot Study

The pilot study was conducted in Mukuyuni location of Bungoma North Sub-County of Bungoma County on 31<sup>st</sup> July and 1<sup>st</sup> August 2018. The researcher used purposive sampling to select one live performance of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community that involved twin brother and twin sister with their parents. The other characters who played important roles were obtained/observed during performance. The researcher purposively selected one male key informant who was aged seventy two (72) years and is well versed with the procedure of *sikhebo* ritual and the Bukusu culture. The researcher gave the key informant a series of questions on observation check-list to respond to gather views and opinions. The male key informant was sampled purposively from Mukuyuni location, Bungoma North Sub County. Additionally, the researcher inducted two research assistants James and Peter on effective use of still photo cameras, videotaping and general issues concerning ethical considerations. The pilot test enabled the researcher to make revisions on instruments for the key informant interview and data collection procedures to ensure the right data was collected. To ensure reliability, participants in the pilot study were excluded in the actual study.

On 31<sup>st</sup> July 2018 before the initiates left to invite the maternal uncle in Kimilili Sub County, the paternal aunt smeared the twin brother with yeast on the face, head, hands, chest, back and legs and the twin sister on the head, face, hands and legs. Thereafter, the male twin played jingles and danced stylishly as the female counterpart danced besides him as the escorts sang and danced behind them in a matching pace as they headed to Kimilili. During this time, the male escorts carried sticks and clubs shoulder high as they danced while producing war cries as the female escorts ululated. Immediately they arrived at the maternal uncle's home, the escorts danced in a circular manner until they were joined by the maternal uncle's wife who joined them in dance and ululations. Thereafter, she instructed the twin brother to stop playing jingles after which they were directed to the house where they were served food. After eating, the maternal uncle advised the initiates to be focused in order to retain the family's dignity. The escorts and the initiates were then directed where to rest.

The following day at ten o'clock in the morning, the maternal uncle called the initiates and showed them the coloured bull that had white and black stripes. However, before he instructed the male neighbour to slaughter, he advised the initiates to be focused as he slapped the male twin. The bull is then slaughtered and skinned as the initiates, the escorts and the relatives watched. The stomach was torn and the bull's underside known as *luliki* was cut. The maternal uncle then ordered the initiates to stand in front of him as he took the bull's stomach waste and hit the twin brother's chest while praising himself. Thereafter, he took the bull's underside and dressed around the male twin's neck and smeared the male twin with bull's waste on the head, face, chest, back and legs and the female twin on the face, head and legs. This time the maternal uncle ordered a courageous male escort to lead the crowd to sing '*Sioyayo*' as the initiates maintained eye contact with the maternal uncle for three minutes after which the maternal uncle's wife ululated. Notably, before the initiates left the maternal side, the male twin was smeared with yeast on the head, face, hands, chest, back and legs while the twin sister on the legs, hands and face.

As observed from the field study, two female characters who accompanied the initiates were given the bull's head to carry home as the male escorts carried meat wrapped in the bull's skin. On the way, the escorts sang the song '*Mayi wo Mwana*' as they danced in a matching pace as the male escorts pointed sticks and clubs at the initiates. The twin brother carried the bull's underside around the neck as he played jingles until he reached home as the twin sister danced besides him. Immediately they arrived home, they were welcomed by their mother in the company of other women characters who joined the crowd in song, dance and ululations. After singing and dancing for five minutes, the twin brother was instructed to stop playing jingles by the father who advised them to remain focused. He then removed the bull's underside around the twin brother's neck and handed to the initiates' paternal aunt who in turn ululated. The initiates under the company of the escorts and visitors from the maternal side were served food. After eating, the male escorts guarded the initiates.

At six o'clock in the evening, the male elder escorted the initiates to the gravesides as the male escorts and the male relatives watched. He then tore the bull's stomach and ordered the initiates to wash hands in the bull's waste. This was the time he praised himself thereafter, sprinkled blood of the slaughtered bull by the gravesides. Likewise, the twin brother was smeared with the bull's waste on the head, face, chest, back, hands and legs and the twin sister on the face, head, hands and legs. The bull's waste was then left by the gravesides as the rest of meat was taken home to feed the visitors. Moreso, the initiates were directed near the shrine where another coloured bull was slaughtered, skinned and the stomach torn apart. The male elder then studied the intestines to determine the initiates' fate thereafter, announced the findings based on the outcome. The male elder took a piece of the bull's meat, clotted blood and local brew and placed at the center of the shrine as he praised himself to appease the gods and the ancestors. The male elder then took the bull's waste and smeared on the twin brother's head, face, chest, back, hands and legs and the twin sister's face, hands, head and legs. The initiates' paternal uncle was then called to dress pieces of inner stomach meat known as *lisombo* around the initiates' necks in turns. As observed from the field, he took the animal waste, hit the twin brother and slapped him while praising himself. He then instructed an authoritative male escort to sing '*Sioyayo*' as he maintained eye contact with the initiates for three minutes. The paternal uncle then took the bull's waste and smeared on the twin brother's head, face, chest, back, hands and legs while on the twin sister's face, head, hands and legs. It should be noted that while executing rituals on the eve of the circumcision day, boys, women and men circumcised in hospital were supposed to stand fifteen metres away.

The initiates' paternal uncle then instructed the twin brother to play jingles while the female twin danced as the male escorts directed them to an open place where *khuminya* that involved dancing and singing to circumcision songs took place. During this time, the female twin danced besides the male twin who danced stylishly and played jingles. On their part, the escorts uttered taboo words and danced provocatively as the male escort lead the crowd to sing songs that criticized members of the community of both sexes to promote positive change, made fun of themselves and family members. During performance, singers danced and surrounded the initiates as the male escorts carried big clubs and sticks high as they produced war cries while their female counterparts

ululated. The twin brother played jingles while the twin sister danced up to one o'clock in the morning when they were directed to a room set aside for the initiates' maternal relations by the elder brother where they were served half-roasted meat and *ugali* made from millet flour thereafter, they slept on animal skins.

It was observed from the field study that as the initiates went to rest, the male escorts entertained the visitors present with songs and dances. On the other hand, the invited guests who formed part of the audience spend time singing, dancing, feasting, drinking, chatting and planning the finalities to the event as they cohesively waited to witness the circumcision rite. The initiates were woken up at two thirty in the morning by the male escorts whereby the twin brother played jingles and danced as the twin sister danced besides him. This was the time the male elders lead the crowd to sing the song '*Amba Mutalya*' meaning to uphold the tradition in a sad mood as they jumped in front of the initiates as the male escorts responded while jumping. Thereafter, the male escort lead the crowd to sing songs that indicated in a short while; the initiates were going to face the knife. Notably, before the initiates were escorted to the swamp, the male elders visited the swamp to pre-empt any form of charm. Also, a ram was slaughtered and its contents of the intestines called *buse* was smeared on the male twin's head, face, chest, hands and legs and on the twin sister's head, face, hands and legs. The initiates were then escorted to the swamp under the company of the escorts, neighbours and relatives.

Immediately the initiates arrived at the swamp, the twin brother was instructed to remove the short, relieved himself in the open and immersed in cold flowing water as the twin sister and the crowd watched. Thereafter, the paternal male cousin took mud from the swamp hit the male twin's chest as he praised himself. He then took grey ochre and smeared the twin brother's chest, back, hands, face and legs before mounting mud on the nose and the head. Thereafter, he plucked special grass called *lusinyade* and stuck on the head. The paternal male cousin then smeared the twin sister with mud on the face, head, legs and hands after which, he tied a banana leaf around her waist. The initiates' young sister then carried the twin brother's short and jingles as the paternal male cousin escorted the initiates fifty meters from the swamp using a different route where he ordered an authoritative male escort to lead the crowd to sing '*Sioyayo*' as he instructed the twin brother to play jingles for three minutes before throwing them away. The initiates' younger sister then took jingles and carried home. It was observed that while escorting the initiates back home, the male escorts danced provocatively in a walking pace as they carried twigs and sticks shoulder high while producing war cries as their female counterparts ululated.

Hundred metres to the initiates' father's home, the circumciser in the company of his helper dressed in uniform came to meet the initiates to acquit themselves with the best holding and circumcising style. Likewise, the initiates' paternal aunt ran with a cooking stick known as *kumukango* dipped in local brew known as *busaa* with the intention to hit the twin brother. However, he tried all means to block any attempt to be hit. The paternal aunt then ran home to inform the crowd that the initiates were ready to face the knife. Fifty metres to the initiates' father's home, the singing of '*Sioyayo*' stopped and the paternal male cousin handed the initiates to the father dressed in a traditional regalia known as *likutu*. He then directed the initiates to the

circumcision spots known as *chitiang'i* starting with the twin sister followed by the twin brother. The initiates' father then stood in front of the initiates and handed a stick obtained from *kumulaha* tree to the twin brother to hold on his shoulders as he faced east. The circumciser and his helper emerged from a hidden place and started circumcising the twin sister by symbolic act of cutting part of the banana leaf tied around her waist. He then moved to the twin brother whereby the circumciser assistant held the initiate's foreskin backwards as he applied dust powder known as *lipukhulu* as the circumciser held the foreskin between the thumb and the forefinger then pulled it forward and cut in a sawing motion for five seconds. During this time, the initiates' mother in the company of other women characters sat on the floor of the initiates' mother's house with their feet horizontally stretched in great pain. There was total silence as the male elders were vigilant to detect signs of fear as the male escorts carried clubs and sticks shoulder high.

After successful ritual cut, the initiates' mother in the company of other women characters joined the crowd in singing, dancing and ululating. This was the time men roared as the male escorts put down sticks and clubs to appreciate the initiates' bravery. The initiates were then given presents as the initiates' young sister stood behind the twin brother. After some time, the initiates sat down where they were covered with blankets by the young sister. She went ahead and removed mud from the twin brother's body, the briskets, blood that dripped on the ground and foreskin and wrapped in the circumcision spots thereafter, handed to the initiates' paternal aunt for safe custody. Thereafter, the initiates were directed to a special cottage known as *mwikombe* in a backward manner starting with the twin sister.

## **Appendix 5: Key Informant's Questions on Observation check-list in *Sikhebo* Ritual during Pilot Study**

My name is Paul Wanyonyi Khaemba a PhD student from Maseno University in the Department of linguistics and literary studies, School of Arts and Social Sciences. I am carrying out research on the topic 'An Analysis of Narrative Elements in the Bukusu Initiation Ritual *Sikhebo*'. The pilot study is to ensure the right data is collected and methods used to collect data are workable. The study engaged one male key informant who was experienced in *sikhebo* ritual and aged seventy two (72) years to gather views and opinions by giving him a series of questions on observation check-list to respond. The male elder was sampled purposively from Bungoma North sub County of Bungoma County based on age and experience. The researcher's main role during interview was to listen and moderate the session by probing and prompting views from the participant.

### **Questions on observation check-list in *sikhebo* ritual during the pilot study**

- 1 Explain why twins are treated differently during *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
- 2 Tell me why the twin sister accompanies the brother whenever he goes during the circumcision period in *sikhebo* ritual?
- 3 I would like to know why the female twin is not allowed to play jingles during the circumcision period?
- 4 Explain why the male escorts carry clubs and sticks as they produce war cries while their female counterparts ululate during *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
- 5 Why is it important for the initiates to visit the maternal uncle during the circumcision period?
- 6 What is the essence of appeasing the gods and the ancestors during the circumcision period?
- 7 Explain to me the activities that take place in *sikhebo* ritual from the time the initiates set to invite the maternal uncle to the time they are directed to the cottage after the ritual cut among the Bukusu community?
- 8 Tell me why characters dance provocatively and utter taboo/abscene words in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
- 9 Tell me the individual character roles in *sikhebo* ritual on the eve and the circumcision day?
- 10 I would like to know when props and paralinguistic features are used in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
- 11 Explain why the initiates are chided with songs and served half-roasted meat on the eve of the circumcision day?
- 12 I would like to know why twins are smeared with contents of ram's intestines known as *buse* before they are escorted to the swamp in the morning of the circumcision day in *sikhebo* ritual?



- 13 Tell me why twins are taken to the swamp early and circumcised before four o'clock in the morning on the circumcision day?
- 14 Explain why the paternal aunt runs towards the initiates with a cooking stick that has been dipped in local brew known as *busaa* with the intention to slap the twin brother?
- 15 Why does the initiates' mother sit on the floor of her house with her legs stretched horizontal in the company of other female characters during the ritual cut?
- 16 What happens in case the initiate(s) fear(s) the knife?
- 17 How does the performance of *sikhebo* ritual shape the behaviour of members of the community as far as relating with other people is concerned?

### Appendix 6 Observation Check-list

The following features of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu were observed during fieldwork.

Objective	Aspect(s)	Features Observed
<b>Plot</b> 1. Conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The initiate vs society</li> <li>- The initiate vs the psyche</li> <li>- The initiate vs the ancestors</li> </ul>	Songs, proverbs & oral narratives
ii. Exposition	The initiate is introduced and the scene is set	Dialogue, proverbs
3. The inciting incident	The conflict is introduced	Dialogue, songs, Symbolism
4. Rising action	Individual role(s), paralinguistic features & props	Proverbs, songs & symbolism
5. Climax	Individual role(s), paralinguistic features & props	Symbolism & songs
6. Falling action	Individual role(s) & props	Symbolism & proverbs
7. Resolution	Individual role(s), props & paralinguistic features	Proverbs, symbolism & songs
<b>Characterization</b> 1. The initiate	Props, paralinguistic features, costume, body art and ornaments	Symbolism, songs, metaphor
2. The initiate's father	Individual role(s), paralinguistic features	Hyperbole, symbolism, dialogue
3. The initiate's mother	Individual role(s)	Dialogue, symbolism
4. The male escorts	Individual role(s), props, dances and paralinguistic features	Symbolism and songs
5. The initiate's paternal aunt	Individual role(s), paralinguistic features	Symbolism
6. The initiate's maternal uncle	Individual role(s), paralinguistic features	Symbolism, hyperbole
7. The circumciser	Individual role(s), paralinguistic features	Proverbs, symbolism

8. Male elders	Individual role(s), paralinguistic features	Proverbs, symbolism, songs
9. The initiate's male cousin	Individual role(s), paralinguistic features	Symbolism
<b>Themes</b>	Props, paralinguistic features & self-praises	Songs, proverbs & dialogue
1. Bravery		
2. Generosity	Props, body art & characters' involvement	Dialogue, proverbs
3. Kinship & unity	Dances & characters' involvement	Symbolism
4. Moral decadence	Characters' behaviour	Songs & proverbs
5. Roles of the ancestors	Characters' involvement & props	Symbolism
6. Informal education	Taboos & beliefs, props, body art & costume	Proverbs, symbolism & songs
7. Sexual issues	Dances & self-praises	Proverbs & symbolism

## **Appendix 7: Key Informants' Questions on Observation check-list in *Sikhebo* Ritual during Actual Study**

My name is Paul Wanyonyi Khaemba a PhD student from Maseno University in the Department of Linguistics and Literary Studies, School of Arts and Social Sciences. I am carrying out research on the topic 'An Analysis of Narrative Elements in the Bukusu Initiation Ritual *Sikhebo*'. The study engaged two male key informants who were experienced in *sikhebo* ritual and aged seventy five (75) years and above to gather views and opinions by giving them a series of questions on observation check-list to respond. The male elders were sampled purposively from Bungoma North Sub County of Bungoma County based on age and experience. The researcher's main role during interview was to listen and moderate the session by probing and prompting views from the participants.

### **Questions on observation check-list in *sikhebo* during the actual study**

1. What is the significance of sanctifying the circumcision knives in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
2. Tell me the importance of the circumcision songs in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
3. Why should the initiate carry a small pot on the left shoulder when going and coming from the river during the performance of *khuchukhila* in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
4. Explain the importance of self-praises in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
5. Explain the importance of body art and costume in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
6. What is the importance of appeasing the ancestors and the gods during *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
7. Tell me why the male escorts carry clubs and sticks shoulder high as if they want to hit the initiate during *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
8. Explain why the male escorts produce war cries and the female counterparts ululate during *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
9. Why is the initiate served half-roasted meat on the eve of the circumcision day in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
10. What is the importance of smearing the initiate with mud from the swamp in the morning of the circumcision day in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
11. Explain why the paternal aunt runs towards the initiate with a cooking stick that has been dipped in *busaa* with the intention to slap him in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
12. Tell me the main stages in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
13. Explain the character roles at every stage of *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
14. Why does the initiate's mother sit on the floor of her house with legs stretched horizontal during the ritual cut in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
15. Explain how characters are expected to behave during *sikhebo* ritual?

16. What is the significance of the initiate standing facing east during the ritual cut in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
17. What is the significance of the initiate's sister holding the initiate's waist after the ritual cut?
18. What is the significance of the initiate's father directing his son around the cottage and finally enters in a backward manner after successful ritual cut?
19. Explain why the initiate is not allowed to greet people with his hand during the healing process in *sikhebo* ritual?
20. What is the essence of the initiate's father burning the bedding that the son was sleeping on during seclusion period?
21. What is the significance of the initiate running with burning fire from the father's compound while abusing the circumciser on the eve of the pass-out day in *sikhebo* ritual?
22. Tell me why the fire that the initiate lights on the eve of the pass-out burns continuously the whole night?
23. Why is it that the animals that are given to the initiate and slaughtered during *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community bear bright colours?
24. What criteria is used to chose characters who excute rituals in *sikhebo* ritual among the Bukusu community?
25. How does the performance of *sikhebo* ritual shape the behaviour of members of the community as far as relating with other people is concerned?

## Appendix 8: Mulongo Song

### Lubukusu Version

#### **Soloist & response**

Soloist: Mulongo *mwana wa ma!*

All: *Hahooo!* (x4)

Soloist: Mulongo *mwana wa ma!*

All: *Hahoo!* (x3)

Soloist: Mulongo! (x4)

All: *Hahooo!*

Soloist: *Mwana wa mayi otinya!*

All: *Hahoo!*

Soloist: *Mwana wa mayi oluma!*

All: *Hahooo!*

Soloist: *Bali mbele khulaini!*

All: *Khane omwana akwa munda!*

Soloist: *Bali mbele khulaini!*

All: *Khane ekhafu esalile!*

### English Translation

Soloist: Mulongo child of my mother!

All: *Hahooo!* (x4)

Soloist: Mulongo, child of my mother!

All: *Hahoo!* (x3)

Soloist: Mulongo! (x4)

All: *Hahooo!*

Soloist: Child of my mother be strong!

All: *Hahooo!*

Soloist: Child of my mother be strong!

All: *Hahooo!*

Soloist: While on the line!

All: The child was conceived!

Soloist: While on the line!

All: As if the cow delivered!

## Appendix 9: Luwaya Song

### Lubukusu version

#### **Soloist & response**

Soloist: *Oooo! Luwaya!*

All: *Oooo!* (x3)

Soloist: *Wandaye wase omusime!*

All: *Ooo! Luwaya!*

Soloist: *Bakoki wange luwaya!*

All: *Ooo! Luwaya!*

Soloist: *Lekha endome, luwaya!*

All: *Ooo! Luwaya!*

Soloist: *Luwaya lwasala omusinde!*

All: *Ooo! Luwaya!*

Soloist: Ezekiel Biketi!

*Ooo! Luwaya!*

Soloist: *Omusani khukhwama Mubamoyaye  
ba Tulweti!*

All: *Ooo! Luwaya!*

Soloist: Tabalia!

All: *Ooo! Luwaya!*

Soloist: *Omulimi bali Wandabwa!*

All: *Ooo! Luwaya!*

Soloist: *Babana ba Kusimba!*

All: *Ooo! Luwaya!*

Soloist: *Wilson, nyola kimilembe!*

All: *Ooo! Luwaya!*

### English version

Soloist: *Oooo!* The wire!

All: *Oooo!* (x3)

Soloist: My beloved brother!

All: *Ooo!* The wire!

Soloist: My age-set, the wire!

All: *Ooo!* The wire!

Soloist: Let me say, the wire!

All: *Ooo!* The wire!

Soloist: The wire that gave birth to the initiate!

All: *Ooo!* The wire!

Soloist: Ezekiel Biketi!

All:

*Ooo!* The wire!

Soloist: A man from the Bamoyaye clan of  
Tulweti!

All: *Ooo!* The wire!

Soloist: Tabalia!

All: *Ooo!* The wire!

Soloist: A farmer called Wandabwa!

All: *Ooo!* The wire!

Soloist: Children of Kusimba!

All: *Ooo!* The wire!

Soloist: Wilson, receive greetings!

All: *Ooo!* The wire!

**Appendix 10: Mbe Omukhasi Song**

**Lubukusu version**

**Soloist & response**

Soloist: *Khocha mbe omukhasi!*

All: *Mbe omukhasi!*

Soloist: *Khocha mbe omukhasi oyo!*

All: *Mbe omukhasi!*

Soloist: *Khocha nenyanya omukhasi!*

All: *Mbe omukhasi!*

Soloist: *Khocha mbe omukhasi nibule bandu!*

All: *Mbe omukhasi!*

**English version**

Soloist: Maternal uncle give me a woman!

All: Give me a woman!

Soloist: Maternal uncle give me that woman!

All: Give me a woman!

Soloist: Maternal uncle I want a woman!

All: Give me a woman!

Soloist: Maternal uncle give me a wife  
so that I can produce people!

All: Give me a woman!



## Appendix 11: *Mayi wo Mwana* Song

### Lubukusu version

#### **Soloist & response**

Soloist: *Ooo! Mayi wo mwana yicha obone!*

All: *Aah! Mayi wo mwana yicha obone!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Mayi wo mwana yicha obone!*

All: *Ooo! Mayi wo mwana yicha obone!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Papa wo mwana yicha obone!*

All: *Ooo! Papa wo mwana yicha obone!*

Soloist: *Omwana kama ebukhocha!*

All: *Ooo! Mayi wo mwana yicha obone!*

Soloist: *Omwana afwana ututu!*

All: *Ooo! Mayi wo mwana yicha obone!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Omwana kama ebukhocha!*

All: *Senge wo mwana yicha obone!*

Soloist: *Omwana kama ebukhocha!*

All: *Ooo! Kukhu wo mwana yicha obone!*

Soloist: *Omwana afwana sisuche!*

All: *Ooo! Mayi wo mwana yicha obone!*

Soloist: *Omwana afwana sisuche!*

All: *Ooo! Papa wo mwana yicha obone!*

### English version

Soloist: *Ooo!* Mother to the child come  
and see!

All: *Aah!* Mother to the child come and see!

Soloist: *Ooo!* Mother to the child come and  
see!

All: *Ooo!* Mother to the child come and  
see!

Soloist: *Ooo!* Father to the child come and  
see!

All: *Ooo!* Father to the child come and see!

Soloist: The child is coming from the  
maternal side!

All: *Ooo!* Mother to the child come and see!

Soloist: The child resembles an owl!

All: *Ooo!* Mother to the child come and see!

Soloist: The child is coming from the  
maternal side!

All: Paternal aunt to the child come and see!

Soloist: The child is coming from the maternal  
side!

All: *Ooo!* Grandmother to the child come  
and see!

Soloist: The child resembles a fox!

All: *Ooo!* Mother to the child come and see!

Soloist: The child resembles a fox!

All: *Ooo!* Father to the child come and see!

## Appendix 12: *Omusinde Okhabanga* Song

### Lubukusu version

#### **Soloist & response**

Soloist: *Omusinde okhabanga eh!*

All: *Lelo bwasiela khulalola!*

Soloist: *Khwama ebukhocha eh!* (x3)

All: *Lelo bwasiela khulalola!*

Soloist: *Papa okhabanga eh! Omusinde  
okhabanga!*

All: *Lelo bwasiela khulalola!*

### English version

Soloist: The uncircumcised who brags *eh!*

All: Dawn is coming for us to see!

Soloist: We are coming from the maternal  
uncle's place *eh!* (x3)

All: Dawn is coming for us to see!

Soloist: Father who brags! The initiate who  
brags!

All: Dawn is coming for us to see!

### Appendix 13: Babuya Song

#### Lubukusu version

##### **Soloist & response**

Soloist: *Ooo! Babuya ekholo embi khakhubolele  
Babuya ekholo embi nalopile!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya ekholo embi ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Babuya ekholo embi khakhubolele  
Babuya ekholo embi nalopile!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya ekholo embi ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Babuya khukhwama Kibuchori  
bera omwana Protus!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya ekholo embi ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Babuya ekholo embi khekhubolele  
batekhela bandu chikhaniafu!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya ekholo embi ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Bilaka nibio baboa alala  
bakhabikangulule nende ewembe  
ebaka ekwena!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya ekholo embi ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Rirr! Bungali eteremesha  
sibala siarenga!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya ekholo embi ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Basecha balelo bechuba  
sebalibeya bakhana Babuya ta!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya ekholo embi ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Khwola engo khukhwama  
khubikulu khwanyola kumoyo kwo  
kwabolile*

All: *Ooo! Babuya ekholo embi ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Khwecha khukhwama  
atayi mala nga khwola ewoho  
sichula mala khuwaluyile!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya ekholo embi ooo!*

Soloist: *Sirr! Warengisha sibala mala  
orela birengo!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya ekholo embi ooo!*

#### English version

Soloist: *Ooo! Babuya is a bad clan let  
me reveal, Babuya is a bad  
clan I refuse!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya is a bad clan ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Babuya is a bad clan let  
me reveal, Babuya is a bad  
clan I refuse!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya is a bad clan ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Babuya who come from  
Kibuchori killed the child  
Protus!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya is a bad clan ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Babuya is a bad clan  
let me tell you; they cook  
chameleons for people!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya is a bad clan ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! The rags they tied together  
would only be split by nacet enjoki  
razorblade, sharp enough to  
dissect a crocodile!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya is a bad clan ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Rirr! Truly it makes the earth to  
tremor!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya is a bad clan ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! Men of nowadays have sworn ever  
never to marry girls from Babuya clan!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya is a bad clan ooo!*

Soloist: *Ee! We arrived home from the  
mountains only to find the mwana  
child's heart rotten!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya is a bad clan ooo!*

Soloist: *Ooo! We came from far and when we  
arrived at your home we were  
naked and tired!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya is a bad clan ooo!*

Soloist: *Sirr! You shake the earth and  
cause tremors!*

All: *Ooo! Babuya is a bad clan ooo!*

## Appendix 14: Kongona Song

### Lubukusu version

#### **Soloist & response**

Soloist: *Ee! Kongona buli sindu mungo kongona!*

All: *Kongona!*

Soloist: *Ewe Wakhaleli nebakhuwele kongona!*

All: *Kongona!*

Soloist: *Ewe Wangila nebakhuwele kongona!*

All: *Kongona!*

Soloist: *Ata ewe Franco nebakhuwele kongona!*

All: *Kongona!*

Soloist: *Dennis nebakhuwele kongona!*

All: *Kongona!*

Soloist: *Baba Wanyonyi nebakhwelesha kongona!*

All: *Kongona!*

Soloist: *Sikhebo sie babuka nebakhwelesha kongona!*

All: *Kongona!*

Soloist: *Bangona chintinka khusoko ya Tulweti kongona!*

All: *Kongona!*

Soloist: *Ee! Khala mukhebi ewe khala!*

All: *Kongona!*

Soloist: *Oyino Mwengele Henry Keya kongona!*

All: *Kongona!*

### English version

Soloist: *Ee! Finish everything in this home muno you finish it!*

All: *Finish it!*

Soloist: *You Wakhaleli, if you are given finish!*

All: *Finish it!*

Soloist: *You Wangila, if you are given finish it!*

All: *Finish it!*

Soloist: *Even you Franco, if you are given finish it!*

All: *Finish it!*

Soloist: *Dennis, if you are given finish it!*

All: *Finish it!*

Soloist: *Father Wanyonyi, if you are given finish!*

All: *Finish it!*

Soloist: *Circumcision of our tradition, if you are given finish it!*

All: *Finish it!*

Soloist: *Those who repair bicycles in Tulweti market, you finish!*

All: *Finish it!*

Soloist: *Ee! Cut you circumciser you cut!*

All: *Finish it!*

Soloist: *This is Mwengele Henry Keya you finish it!*

All: *Finish it!*

## Appendix 15: *Amba Mutalya* Song

### Lubukusu version

#### **Soloist & response**

Soloist: *Khuwimba bulayi ne khusuna!*

All: *Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Yaba kumusi niyo mulamwa  
kefula chingumbo omwene!*

All: *Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Eh! Mala lundi khusuna mungagi  
nende asi!*

All: *Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Eh! Nacha engagi Chelebei khusili  
khukhesia wele!*

All: *Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Eh! Khuwimba lundi khuwimba  
Kumutalya kwe Baluyia kwe  
babandu babengila!*

All: *Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Khuwimba lundi khuwimba Kumutalya!*

All: *Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Khwimba lulwimbo lundi!*

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Kumutalya kuno kwe Baluyia!*

All: *Ah! Khukhusima!*

Soloist: *Sikhebo sie Baluyia be Mukenya  
siachakisibwa nende kuka Mango!*

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Mango niye papa owarera  
sikhebo chindalo echo!*

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Nalanga lundi nalanga mala  
nakundua nandi nalanga hata babofu!*

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Nakhesia omukhana owakhoma ali ese,  
omuchinga, khane Mango owamusomia  
kamakhuwa ako!*

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Eh! Bukumbafu, buchinga, lakini  
ukimwi yapa munda mwewe!*

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Khwabukula sipimo sio mukhana sie  
kumubili mala saa kumi na moja kamili  
omulebe kachaka khubimba likosi!*

### English version

Soloist: We sing well this *Mutalya*  
as we jump up!

All: Hold *Mutalya!*

Soloist: It was in broad daylight when my  
sister in-law undressed herself!

All: Hold *Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Eh!* Then again, we jump  
up and down!

All: Hold *Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Eh!* I went up to Chelebei hill  
to greet god!

All: Hold *Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Eh!* We sing and sing again this  
*Mutalya* of luhya people  
who circumcise!

All: Hold *Mutalya!*

Soloist: We sing and sing again this  
*Mutalya!*

All: Hold *Mutalya!*

Soloist: We sing the song again!

All: *Oyee!* Hold *Mutalya!*

Soloist: This is *Mutalya* of the luhya people!

All: *Ah!* We thank you!

Soloist: Circumcision of the luhya from Kenya  
was founded by our father Mango!

All: Hold *Mutalya!*

Soloist: It was Mango our father who brought  
circumcision those days!

All: *Oyee!* Hold *Mutalya!*

Soloist: I called and called only to discover I  
had called even the blind!

All: *Oyee!* Hold *Mutalya!*

Soloist: I greeted a young girl, who  
insulted me, foolish, stupid,  
so it is Mango who taught her!

All: *Oyee!* Hold *Mutalya!*

Soloist: She insulted me, foolish,  
stupid but AIDS was in her  
stomach!

All: *Oyee!* Hold *Mutalya!*

Soloist: We took her temperature and at  
eleven o'clock, the relative's  
neck started swelling!

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Baloma bali ututu niyo eyarumikha khuloka!*

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Mala khwimba lundi!*

All: *Ah! Khukhusima oyee, tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Kenyekhana omanyeye oli oyuno niye Mutalya!*

All: *Ah! Khukhusima!*

Soloist: *Ee! Okuno Mutalya kwe Baluyia!*

All: *Ah! Khukhusima tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Chindalo echo kecha omusani olangwa ali Mango!*

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Noreba bulayi Mutalya sina nisio, sikhuwese, sikila ino niyo eye* is, and hold it, and pull it, for this *Mutalya belongs to our ancestors!*

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Nalanga omukhana owachaka! khane mayi wewe* realized she was sent by her mother!

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Kakhoma ali bupumbafu, omuchinga, khane ukimwi yaba munda mwewe!*

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Khwanyola mayi wo mukhana mala khwamulanga!*

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Khuwenya khumanya mayi wewe mala khuwamulanga owamuwibula mburafu!*

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

Soloist: *Lundi khwalanga rarawe owamusuta!*

All: *Oyee! Tila Mutalya!*

All: *Oyee! Hold Mutalya!*

Soloist: They say it was *ututu* that was used to bewitch the person!

All: *Oyee! Hold Mutalya!*

Soloist: And we sing again!

All: *Ah! We thank you, oyee! Hold Mutalya!*

Soloist: You should know this is *Mutalya!*

All: *Ah! We thank you!*

Soloist: *Ee! This is Mutalya of the luyia people!*

All: *Ah! We thank you, oyee, hold Mutalya!*

Soloist: In those days, came a man by the name *Mango!*

All: *Oyee! Hold Mutalya!*

Soloist: You ask well what this *Mutalya sitile, bakuka!*

All: *Oyee! Hold Mutalya!*

Soloist: I called a young girl who *khukhukhoma kamuruma!*

started to insult me and I realized she was sent by her mother!

All: *Oyee! Hold Mutalya!*

Soloist: She insulted me, foolish, stupid but AIDS was in her stomach!

All: *Oyee! Hold Mutalya!*

Soloist: We found out the mother to the girl and called her!

All: *Oyee! Hold Mutalya!*

Soloist: We wanted to know the girl's mother. And we called her who bore her in great pain!

All: *Oyee! Hold Mutalya!*

Soloist: Again, we called the father who carried her!

All: *Oyee! Hold Mutalya!*

## Appendix 16: *Liloba* Song

### Lubukusu version

#### **Soloist & response**

Soloist: *Oh! Liloba (x4) Oh! Liloba  
liakhumala liloba!*

All: *Oh! Liloba (x4) Oh! Liloba  
liakhumala liloba!*

Soloist: *Papa! Liloba (x4) Oh! Liloba  
liakhumala liloba!*

All: *Papa! Liloba (x4) Oh! Liloba  
liakhumala liloba!*

### English version

Soloist: *Oh! The soil (x4) Oh! The soil  
that finishes us, the soil!*

All: *Oh! The soil (x4) Oh! The soil  
that finishes us, the soil!*

Soloist: *Father! The soil (x4) Oh! The soil  
that finishes us, the soil!*

Soloist: *Oh! The soil (x4) Oh! The soil  
that finishes us, the soil!*

## Appendix 17: *Orao Bachonga* Song

### Lubukusu version

#### **Soloist & response**

Solo: *Omusinde!*  
All: *Hahooo!*  
Solo: *Oh!*  
All: *Orao bachonga!*  
Solo: *Bachesulola!*  
All: *Haho!*  
Solo: *Oh!*  
All: *Orao bachonga!*  
Solo: *Barema!*  
All: *Haho!*  
Solo: *Oh!*  
All: *Orao bachonga!*  
Solo: *Lie khungaki!*  
All: *Haho!*  
Solo: *Oh!*  
All: *Orao bachonga!*  
Solo: *Omusani!*  
All: *Haho!*  
Solo: *Aah!*  
All: *Orao bachonga!*  
Solo: *Wemile!*  
All: *Haho!*

### English version

Solo: The uncircumcised!  
All: *Hahooo!*  
Solo: *Oh!*  
All: Put it so that they can chop!  
Solo: Let them chop!  
All: *Haho!*  
Solo: *Oh!*  
All: Put it so that they can chop!  
Soloist: Let them cut!  
All: *Haho!*  
Solo: *Oh!*  
All: Put it so that they can chop!  
Solo: The top skin!  
All: *Haho!*  
Solo: *Oh!*  
All: Put it so that they can chop!  
Solo: The man!  
All: *Haho!*  
Solo: *Aah!*  
All: Put it so that they can chop!  
Solo: You ought to stand!  
All: *Haho!*



## Appendix 18: *Sioyayo* Song

### Lubukusu version

#### **Soloist & response**

Soloist: *Oh! Oh! Oh! Omusinde we!*

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: *Oh! Oh! Oh! Omusinde we!*

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: *Oh! Oh! Oh! Omusinde we!*

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: *Oh! Oh! Khukute! Eh! Khukute! (x2)*

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: *Kumwenya kuno!*

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: *Kumwenya kwe bakuka!*

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: *Omusinde oteremaka acha  
Ebunyolo!*

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: *Acha Ebunyolo!*

### English version

Soloist: *Oh! Oh! Oh!* The uncircumcised one!

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: *Oh! Oh! Oh!* The uncircumcised one!

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: *Oh! Oh! Oh!* The uncircumcised one!

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: *Oh! Oh!* Let's sing! *Ee!* Let's  
sing! (x2)

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: This song!

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: The song of our ancestors!

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: The initiate who tremors goes to  
Luo-land!

All: *Ahoo.o!*

Soloist: Goes to Luo-land!

## Appendix 19: *Khwera Omurwa* Song

### Lubukusu version

#### **Soloist & response**

Soloist: *Wandaye wase khuwerire Omurwa!*

All: *Aah! Khwerire Omurwa!*

Soloist: *Khwerire Omurwa wandase,  
khuwerire Omurwa!*

All: *Aah! Khwerire Omurwa!*

Soloist: *Khwerire Omurwa papa!*

All: *Aah! Khwerire Omurwa!*

Soloist: *Khwerire Omurwa bakoki,  
khuwerire Omurwa!*

All: *Aah! Khwerire Omurwa!*

### English version

Soloist: My brother we have killed Omurwa!

All: *Aah!* We have killed Omurwa!

Soloist: We have killed Omurwa, my brother  
we have killed Omurwa!

All: *Aah!* We have killed Omurwa!

Soloist: We have killed Omurwa, father!

All: *Aah!* We have killed Omurwa!

Soloist: We have killed Omurwa my age  
age-set we have killed Omurwa!

All: *Aah!* We have killed Omurwa!

**Appendix 20: *Lelo Mungumbo Empia* Song**

**Lubukusu version**

**Soloist & response**

Soloist: *Mayi wundomanga!*

All: *Lelo mungumbo empia!*

Soloist: *Yaya wundomanga!*

All: *Lelo mungumbo empia!*

Soloist: *Senge wundomanga!*

All: *Lelo mungumbo empia!*

Soloist: *Khochha wundomanga!*

All: *Lelo mungumbo empia!*

**English version**

Soloist: Mother who talks of me!

All: Today I am in new clothes!

Soloist: My sister who talks of me!

All: Today I am in new clothes!

Soloist: Paternal aunt who talks of me!

All: Today I am in new clothes!

Soloist: Maternal uncle who talks of me!

All: Today I am in new clothing!

**Appendix 21: Amanani Kali Elwanyi Song**

**Lubukusu version**

**Soloist**

*Basoleli mukhabanga!*  
*Amanani kali elwanyi!*  
*Basoleli mukhabanga!*  
*Amanani kali elwanyi!*  
*Bamaina mukhabanga!*  
*Amanani kali elwanyi!*  
*Wa Chetambe mukhabanga!*  
*Amanani kali elwanyi!*  
*Bachuma mukhabanga!*  
*Amanani kali elwanyi!*  
*Basawa mukhabanga!*  
*Amanani kali elwanyi!*  
*Heeh, mukhabanga!*  
*Amanani kali elwanyi!*  
*Basoleli mukhabanga!*  
*Amanani kali elwanyi kabalindile!*

**English version**

Young men who brag!  
The war ogres are out there waiting for you!  
Young men who brag!  
The war ogres are out there waiting for you!  
Bamaina age-set who brag!  
The war ogres are out there waiting for you!  
Sons of Chetambe who brag!  
The war ogres are out there waiting for you!  
Bachuma age-set who brag!  
The war ogres are out there waiting for you!  
Basawa age-set who brag!  
The war ogres are out there waiting for you!  
*Heeh, you who brag!*  
The war ogres are out there waiting for you!  
Young men who brag!  
The ogres of war are out there waiting for you!

## Appendix 22: Wambumuli Song

### Lubukusu version

#### **Soloist & response**

Soloist: Wambumuli *banakhulilanga!*  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: *Bandu banakhuchekhanga!*  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: *Bakhasi ba bene kene bakhwire!*  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: *Bandu bana khukutanga!*  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: *Bakhasi babene kene bakhwire!*  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: Wambumuli! *Kene bakhwire!*  
All: *Wambumuli!*  
Soloist: *Banakhulomanga!*  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: *Bakhasi ba bene kenebakhwire!*  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: *Omukhasi wange, omukhasi wange*  
*owe bweni Wambumuli kacha nenaye-eh!*  
All: *Wambumuli!*  
Soloist: *Omukhasi namba mbili, Wambumuli*  
*kacha naye!*

### English version

Soloist: Wambumuli people are crying because  
of you!  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: People are laughing at you!  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: You will be killed because of people's  
wives!  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: People are gossiping because of you!  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: People will kill you because of  
people's wives!  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: Wambumuli! You will be killed!  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: People are talking of you!  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: You will be killed because of  
people's wives!  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: My wife, my first wife was  
taken by Wambumuli!  
All: Wambumuli!  
Soloist: My second wife was taken  
by Wambumuli!

### Appendix 23: Chief Circumcicer's Self-praise

#### Lubukusu version

*Ese Khisa olomaloma*

*Omukhone owe Chewele*

*Okhwa Nasambu owe Kilachi*

*Omulia mafunga omukhulu*

*Omusoleli arubaini na sita*

*Omusani Kinyikeu*

*Nicha ebweni wenywe*

*Kuno kumusambwa nikwo mwakhuwa*

*Khusaba khuli mubite chigembe chino*

*Khusaba khuli mubite bakhebi bano*

*Bawelesie bunyidafu*

*Babe babangu*

*Bawelesie kamani kekhukhubana nende*

*basinde banyala khuria embalu*

*Linda basinde bano bise bie sikhebo*

*Nio babe babandu be nganga mukholo*

*Khusaba mukhuyete khung'ole anga sikhebo silaba*

#### English translation

I am Khisa speaking

From Bakhone clan of Chewele

The son of Nasambu from Kilachi

The chief circumciser

Circumcised the year nineteen forty-six

Of Kinyikeu age-set

I come before you

This is the spirit we inherited from you

We beg you to bless these circumcising knives

We beg you to bless these circumcisers

Give them courage

Let them be swift

Give them strength to discern initiates

who may exhibit fear during the cut

Bless these initiates during the circumcision  
period

So that they may be productive members in  
society

We beg you to assist us predict the  
outcome of the circumcision period

## Appendix 24: Initiate's Father's Self-praise

### Lubukusu version

*Ese Wekesa olomaloma rarao*  
*Omubuya Omusimaolia*  
*Khwa Peter Wamalwa*  
*Omuchuma osimikha*  
*Kumwaka sabini na nane*  
*Khekhubolela*  
*Okhoya wime embalu*  
*Okhakhwambia chisoni ta*  
*Noloma oli soli bunara ta*  
*Efwe mukholo yefwe sekhurichanga ta*  
*Khuwimanga mpaka chinyuni chifua*  
*Omusecha wima busa mpaka bamale*

### English translation

I am Wekesa speaking your father  
Of Babuya Basimaolia clan  
The son of Peter Wamalwa  
Of Bachuma age-set number one  
Circumcised the year nineteen seventy-eight  
I tell you  
You ought to be firm during the cut  
Do not embarrass us  
If you are not ready  
People from our clan do not fear  
We stand until birds die  
As a man, you stand until they finish

## Appendix 25: Initiate's Paternal Aunt's Self-praise

### Lubukusu version

*Nise Namaemba olomaloma*

*Sengeo*

*Omubuya Omusimaolia*

*Khwa Wamalwa*

*Omu Kinyikeu arubaini na sita*

*Oluno khekhurona nende kamakomeri*

*Babuya banyindafu*

*Okhoya watinya embalu*

*Onyole omukhasi*

*Wibule babana*

*Okhoya wamanya basengeo*

*Obwo nibwo busani bwangali*

### English translation

I am Namaemba speaking

Your paternal aunt

Omubuya Omusimaolia

The child of Wamalwa

Of Kinyikeu age-set circumcised  
nineteen forty-six

Today I decorate you with beads  
known as *kamakomeri*

Babuya are brave people

You must be firm during the cut

Get a woman

Produce children

Know your paternal aunts

That is what real manhood entails



## Appendix 26: Initiate's Maternal Uncle's Self-praise

### Lubukusu version

*Ese Wakhisi olomaloma*

*Khochao*

*Omuchuma owa khabili*

*Kumwaka kwa elfu moja mia tisa samanini*

*Khwa Nambuye*

*Khocha oli nende kumoyo kwe khuwingila*

*Nokhali nende kumwoyo ta mbolele*

*Ekhaba mbo mayi wowo niye owakhurakho ta*

*nimbo yesi abekho nende omusani mugo*

*Efwe sekhurichanga embalu ta*

*Ese khochao khekhufwala likhoni*

*Khekhusebula oche wikhasie bakeni*

*Bona ese anga khochao khekhubolela*

*Emoni abwenao*

### English version

I am Wakhisi speaking

Your maternal uncle

Of Bachuma age-set number two

Circumcised the year nineteen eighty

The son of Nambuye

Nephew? Do you have the heart to  
get circumcised?

If you don't have the heart tell me

Let it not be that your mother forced

you so that she can also have a  
circumcised man in the home

In our clan we do not fear the knife

As your maternal uncle, I dress you the  
brisket

I am releasing you to go and entertain visitors

See! As your maternal uncle, I hereby, tell you

Focus your eyes there

## Appendix 27: Male Elder's Self-praise

### Lubukusu version

*Ese Nyukuri omukuka olomaloma  
Omubuya Omusimaolia  
Okhwa Nanjala  
Omusoleli arubaini na nane  
Omusani Kinyikeu  
Omunyindafu  
Nicha ebweni wenywe  
Nende kumurungo kuno  
Fukilila sianuwa sino  
Esaba mwiche ano  
Mubite omusinde ino  
Esaba nandi mulinde omusinde ino  
Mumukhinge khubutinyu bwosi  
Ba naye bise bino bie sikhebo*

### English version

I am Nyukuri a male elder speaking  
Of Babuya Basimaolia clan  
The son of Nanjala  
Circumcised the year nineteen forty-eight  
Of Kinyikeu age-set  
A brave man  
I come before you  
with this sacrifice  
Accept this sacrifice  
I beg you to come here  
Bless this initiate  
I beg you to protect this initiate  
Protect him from all forms of malice  
Be with him this circumcision period

## Appendix 28: Initiate's Paternal Uncle's Self-praise

### Lubukusu version

*Ese Wekhomba oloma*

*Rarao*

*Omubuya Omusimaolia*

*Khwa Wafula*

*Omuchuma owakhataru*

*Kumwaka samanini na mbili*

*Khekhubolela*

*Emoni abwenao*

*Ese nga rarao*

*Necha nema chinyuni chafwa sio*

*Lundi chikhaba chisoni taa*

*Ekhaba bali bakhukheba nowinyaa ta*

*Muchuli okhaumba jiunuwa tawe*

*Ese nga omusakhulu omukinyikeu*

*Khekhubolela nandi warurire mubienebio*

*Bona khekhuwa engumbo yefwe*

*Engumbo efwanana ne Babukusu*

*Seli engubo niyo khuloma khuli yama ano ta*

*Yama khale nende Mango*

### English version

I am Wekhomba speaking

Your father

Omubuya Omusimaolia

The son of Wafula

Of Chuma age-set number three

Circumcised the year nineteen eighty-two

I hereby, tell you

Your eyes should remain there

As your father

I came and stood until all birds died

Do not embarrass us

Do not play during the ritual cut

Tomorrow don't start modeling bulls

As a male elder of Bakinyingeu age-set

I hereby tell you that you have come out

of such things

See! I am giving you our cloth

The cloth that resembles Babukusu

It is not the type of cloth that we can say

it came from near here

It started long time ago with Mango

## Appendix 29: Initiate's Paternal Male Cousin's Self-praise

### Lubukusu version

*Ese Wanjala oloma*

*Wandayo*

*Omubuya Omusimaolia*

*Khwa Nasipwondi*

*Omusawa osimikha*

*Kumwaka kwa samanini na nane*

*Wambone*

*Ese omusani nengila*

*Mala khekhulonga wesi oche wingile*

*Okhakuambia chisoni taa*

*Efwe banyindafu*

*Bona nakhupa litosi*

*Khekhufwala esuti yino*

*Esuti ya Mango*

### English version

I am Wanjala speaking

Your brother

Omubuya Omusimaolia

The son of Nasipwondi

Of the first Basawa age-set

Circumcised the year nineteen eighty-eight

Do you see me?

I am a man circumcised

I smear you so that you can also go and be  
circumcised

Do not embarrass us

We are brave people

See I hit you with mud

I dress you this suit

The suit of Mango

### Appendix 30: Chief Circumciser's Self-praise

#### Lubukusu version

*Ese Khisa olomaloma*  
*Omusaba omulia mafunga*  
*Omuchuma osimikha*  
*Kumwaka kwa sabini na nane*  
*Khwa Netondo*  
*Nakhurerire mungubo ye busani*  
*Luno lugembe lwe bakhale*  
*Lwalia bakuka babandi*  
*Lwalia rarao*  
*Bona lwakhulia*  
*Omusani olinda bandu*  
*Busani khulia nende babandu*  
*Omusani okhoya waba nende siren'gamo*  
*Okhoya waba nende enju*  
*Busani khubeya omukhasi*  
*Mala wibule babana*  
*Lugembe luno lukobole lubakhebe*

#### English version

I am Khisa speaking  
From Babasaba clan a circumciser  
Of Omuchuma first age-set  
Circumcised the year nineteen seventy-eight  
The son of Netondo  
I have put you in the rope of manhood  
This is the ancient circumcision knife  
It ate other great grand fathers  
It ate your father  
See it has also eaten you  
Manhood is defending others  
Manhood is eating with people  
Manhood entails working hard  
You must have a house  
Manhood is marrying a woman  
In addition, produce children  
So that this knife can come back and cut them

**Appendix 31: Male Elder's Self-praise**

**Lubukusu version**

*Nise Mang'oli olomaloma*

*Kukao*

*Omuneala owe Bamilele owe Bamitungu*

*Okhwa Namubuya, Nengo owe Kilachi*

*Omusoleli arubaini ne omusani*

*waamba Mutalia*

*Khekhurusiakho engumbo eya mayi woo*

*Sise sino wabele omusani \*

*Kumwikale kwabene*

*Kumwikule kukwoo*

*Okhwama luno okhanyolekhana muchinju che*

*bawandayo besisoleli musilo tawe*

*Ewe bise bino khekhurusiakho egumbo ya mao*

*Ne khuwelesia egumbo aya rarao*

*Nono okhoya watila kamalaka*

*Ewe wakholana khucha liye*

*Khekhuwakanisha lifumo*

*Nio olinde babandi*

**Lubukusu version**

I am Mang'oli speaking

Your grandfather

Of Baneala clan from Bamilele of

Bamitungu

The son of Namubuya of Nengo from

Kilachi

Under the Kinyikeu age-set, last cohort of Wamba

Mutalia

I take off your mothers' clothe

This time you are a man

Closed door is someone else

The door that is open is yours

From today you should not be found in

your brothers' houses at night

You! This time I am removing your

mother's clothe

And give you the clothe of your father

Now you ought to adhere to the pieces

of advice

You qualify to go to war

I hand you this spear

So that you can defend others