

Analysis of the Mesandstylistic Devices Ingikūyūogre Narratives

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Abstract: The Gikūyū oral narratives employ complex use of stylistic devices and symbols of ogre in developing the themes. The study therefore analyses the themes and stylistic devices including symbolism of ogres as portrayed in Gikūyū oral narratives. The objective of the study is to look at the themes and various stylistic devices especially symbolism of ogres in the Gikūyū community. The research is guided by structuralism and post structuralism theory where the Structuralists argued that one symbol can have more than one meaning depending on the social context while the Post Structuralists emphasized on the role of the language use in analyzing the social structure, meaning and their interpretations in terms of self-consciousness where language is taken as the main axis in giving both the real meaning and the derived one. The data was collected in Nyandarua County by Snowball sampling then transcribed for analysis. A purposeful sample of five narratives whose main characters are the ogre was then chosen from the collected narratives. The data collected finally was analyzed descriptively the various symbols of ogres as portrayed in the Gikūyū oral narratives and other stylistic devices. The study findings are useful to the oral literature scholars to have an in depth understanding of this genre and their significance as well as preserving oral narratives in literature.

Keywords: Ogre symbolism, stylistic devices, Gikūyū narratives.

INTRODUCTION

Ogre narratives are a popular genre in oral literature that is found in almost all communities in the world. They have been handed over through generations from the remote past, most probably in a world perfect form. Every community portrays ogres as having unique characteristics different from the others depending on the themes and their functions in the society. Though they have some similarities in some aspects, they differ from one community to the other. The main characters in these narratives being ogres who were feared by the human-beings because of the way they were portrayed as man-eating, frightening and cruel.

The study will analyze the themes, ogre symbols and other stylistic devices and in reference to five selected Gikūyū ogre narratives namely: 'The Ogre and a Girl', 'The Ogre and a Small Boy' 'The Ogre and a Girl', 'Njiru and a Boy', 'The Ogre and Three Young Men' and 'The Ogre and a Woman Who had Given Birth'. Basing on the way the ogres are portrayed, it raises a number of questions which form the basis of this study. The questions are: are ogres human beings? Why do they marry and have families and at times marry human beings? Why are they always seen to do evil things? What types of human beings are they or represent? If they are symbolic, what do they symbolize

and which other stylistic devices are used in the Gikūyū ogre narratives?

The study will look at the symbols by looking at non- convectional symbols whose meaning is derived from the context of the society as opposed to the universal one. [1] classifies them into two categories. The Post Structuralism theory argues that the meaning can be understood well by first looking at language use and the context. For example an owl symbolizes wisdom to some communities while in African context, it's a sign of bad omen.

The characteristics differences in the of ogre narratives is dependent on the environment in which the community lives which molds the culture of the people. When the oral artist wants to portray a terrifying environment, he/she will use forests, caves or such settings and characters like giants, ogres or monsters to bring out the themes and fulfill the intended purposes. [2], notes that all the characters are used to represent the real situation in the society concerning issues like good and evil which is seen in through the various themes.

In some narratives they are depicted as powerful monsters, giants, and spirits in West African stories many of them man-eating but apparently less often physically deformed and having strange appearance like one-legged, two-mouthed, cannibals of

Angolan stories as noted by [3]. She adds that they are stock characters in many stories in Bantu Africa. They were at times shown as fierce and very destructive in some narratives. These traits among others are also seen in most of these narratives.

The various themes in the narratives contribute greatly in the choice of stylistic devices to be used. It's therefore hard to separate the devices used to convey message and the themes. For us to understand the ogres, we have to study them in relation to the community and environment. The ogre in Gikũyũ oral narratives have been depicted as having strange appearance like: having two mouths, one at the front and the other at the back, good at disguising themselves especially to girls so that they can lure them into marriage or elope with them. They are also destructive, gluttonous, evil, hypocritical, and secretive among other negative traits.

Themes of Gikũyũ ogre narratives

The ogre narratives like any other literary work passes information to the community through various themes found in them. Some of the themes that are clearly seen in the selected narratives are:

Cruelty

This is the behavior that causes pain or suffering to others, especially intentionally. Ogres in all the stories have been portrayed as beings deriving joy in the suffering of human beings. They use their power and ability to instill pain instead of helping the weak and less privileged. [4] Says these narratives have characters that are portrayed to be evil, merciless and violent. A good example is in the story of a woman who needed help after giving birth but an ogre took the opportunity to oppress the woman and even planned to feast on her with others. She was given little food if any and even ate it at times leaving the woman very weak because the husband was far from home.

The Njiru story also is a repeat of the same where the only woman who had remained went to borrow some fire in the home that she saw some smoke but was first given a condition of being shaved. The ogre shaved the woman cruelly eating parts of the flesh from her head. When the woman returned home, her children could not even recognize her. Normally it is expected of us to give help when even not asked to give.

The ogre took advantage of a small boy who was sent by her mother to sell their only cow so that they could afford food in their home. It tricked the boy and carried the cow in exchange of a few beans which were not equal in terms of value. This is the same ogre that had taken their possession and also knew that they were languishing in poverty. The ogre's action shows that it rejoices when others are in problem. The narrative

condemns this behaviour but instead encourages the society to mind for the poor because a civilized society also assists the needy rather than taking advantage of them.

Greed

These narratives portray the ogres having a trait of not being satisfied with what they had. They always searched for more without considering others. They fed on human beings and in some stories; they could even eat each other when there was no human to eat. The ogres had two mouths to show emphasis on the issue of eating. They could eat everything from the smallest like flies to everything including animals and people as seen in the story of 'A girl and the ogre', 'A Boy and the Ogre' and Njiru and a Boy.

Before their death, they confessed all the evil they had done and even instructed their killers to cut some of its body parts so that they could retrieve all that they had taken. In the story of Njiru, the ogre had swallowed nearly every person but finally after losing a tight battle, it told the young men to cut its finger toes where all the people came out. In the same story, one of the young men became greedy after misusing all that which he had been rewarded. He used his cunning ways to be compensated by the society who had rewarded him earlier.

Destruction

The ogres could cause destruction of property as is seen in the story of Njiru where an ogre uprooted villagers' granaries and other structures during the confrontation with the three young men who finally killed the ogre and liberated the whole village. After the battle, the ogre had destroyed everything. They also caused havocs not only to property but to the natural environment because they could clear a big area using a *Kienji* when chasing after their prey. The story of 'A girl and the Ogre' illustrates their brutality through its bad motives conveyed through the song that was full of threats. This weapon could clear many trees and bushes looking for one girl which did not justify all that destruction.

The story of the 'Woman and the Ogre' tells us how the ogre had collected lots of firewood in readiness to feast on her after she gives birth. The ogres spent most of their time fetching firewood which in some stories were used to cook their prey. The story show huge logs and trees being collected so that they could light a big fire which is also wasteful.

Threats

These ogre narratives are full of threat which make dreadful compared to other genres like fables, tricksters, legends, etiological narratives among others. They are portrayed to have scaring and strange physical

appearance just by the look. The children and girls feared the ogres because they were at a greater risk than young and old men who fought and killed them. Some of the physical characteristics that they possess include: some having one horn at the forehead like in the case of Njiru. The goat is said to have had one horn. This description is scaring and creates an image that instills fear to the listeners. The ogre in the story of 'A girl and the Ogre' had two mouths; one in front and the other at the back which was used to catch flies.

From the songs in the narratives, the messages were threatening for instance when the girl who had been caught escaped; the ogre chased the girl while singing threatening song with messages of how it would cut her. When sang during narration, the voice is usually hoarse and deep that creates the tone of threats and fear. The conversation of the ogres and human beings is not friendly but hostile and scaring.

Portrayal of Ogresin Gikūyū Narratives

In the Abaluhya community[5]say that they appear as always accosting beautiful girls and women and use magic stools or trickery to catch and frighten lost girls who have been left behind in the forest collecting fruits. In other narratives, ogre have tails and are capable of causing drought and famine and when this happens, they demand human sacrifice while in others, they are believed to emit fire. The similarity with the Gikūyū ogres is where they accost girls with an intention of making them their prey and also targeting girls rather than boys and men.

They can be tricked and show a type of stupidity. In one of the Gikūyū tales of Konyeki, the woman tricks her ogre son by cooking rats for him instead of two little boys. The ogre could not differentiate between the children and the rats. A repeat of such an incidence is repeated in many other narratives where ogres are seen not to use their minds and end up being tricked by their prey. In most cases they were tricked by small boys or girls without reasoning though they were physically big and powerful

In Akamba stories, they are seen as the spirits of the people who died long ago that they can't be remembered anymore and now appear in stories. They are believed to inhabit the spirit world and they can live in houses like ordinary people or in caves. Therefore, at times they live with people and engage in activities like cultivating fields, keep cattle, sheep and chicken. They also have families like ordinary people. The Gikūyū narratives also show the ogres living amongst the people while others are hideous and live in caves.

In the Taita community, they say they can run faster than the wind and can discover human secrets readily. They do miraculous things and have greater

powers than human beings and therefore can raise the dead and emit fire. This makes it very hard for human beings to kill them. The story of a boy and the ogre in the Gikūyū narratives portrays the ogre being able to perform miracles like having magic seeds. The ogre had a hen that could lay golden eggs and a guitar that could talk when touched by a human being. The only difference with the Taita narratives is that they don't have characters that are spiritual beings.

Due to their spiritual powers that were used negatively, they are always perpetuating evil and they are depicted as cruel and sadist. This is evident in the story of an expectant woman who gave birth while the husband was away and the ogre took advantage of his absence and oppressed the woman before the husband was informed by a dove. When the husband got the information, he went back home and killed the ogre. The narratives ended with a happy end after the death of the ogres when somebody or a number of people killed the ogre and liberated all the people who were swallowed and their property. The courageous person could be anybody and in most cases they seemed less and not equal to the ogre in terms of size and ability to fight.

Ogres represent the evil beings in the society who go against the norms and are punished by to signify the destiny of all those who practice evil. [4] Emphasizes that this narratives are aimed at promoting moral values and condemning evil. Despite the fact that the ogres seem powerful and threatening, they are defeated and destroyed to show that evil has no power over good. A good example is where a young boy killed an ogre which had killed their people and grabbed all their property by cutting down the tree while it was descending to catch up with the boy. The conflict between the ogres and human being was as a result of the ogres committing evil against the human beings because their interactions with the human beings resulted into the humans suffering or mourning because of their loved ones.

Stylistic Devices in Ogre Narratives

Ogre narratives have used different stylistic devices though in a simplified way. The plot of these narratives is not complex compared to the written literature but it makes use of varied styles that have successfully fulfilled the intended purposes of the community of teaching moral values, entertaining, preserving culture, is a tool of socializing the young among other. They go hand in hand with the themes of the narratives. The narratives have used various stylistic devices which make them interesting and fulfill the purpose it intends in the community. [6, 7] are in agreement that these are a sum total of constituents of literary work that are used by an artist to pass information to the audience. The most commonly used

devices in narratives are: symbols, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, suspense, images, songs, similes among others. [8] adds that they not only help in conveying information but also give the narratives the desired structure that is built by the intertwining of various aspects like plot, narration, characterization and language use.

(a) Symbolism

This is where one thing is used to represent another as a result of the relationship that exists between the two. The Post-Structuralism theory argues that one symbol can be used to have many meanings depending on the societal context. The symbol depends on the way the characters and events are portrayed. A good example is illustrated by [9] in a poem where the death of a husband who oppressed his wife symbolizes freedom.

A Symbol of Fear

Ogres in Gikũyũ narratives are shown to have strange features which pose a threat and instill fear in the society. In this context they symbolize fear. This is from the way they look for example having two mouths and threatening voice. The story of 'Ogre and a Girl' that defied advice and decided to go with a strange young man was scared by the sight of human skull in the ogre's house. The environment which the ogres live is scaring and frightening because some live in caves and hideous places like in the forest as is seen in the story of Njiru where ogres lived in a cave far away from human beings. When a woman asked for help, the ogre took the advantage and gave her a condition of shaving first and when she woman agreed, the ogre did it in a cruel way by eating the pieces of meat from her head. This incidence made her two boys to revenge. When attacked, they reacted in a way that instilled fear. For instance, they caused a lot of fear by uprooting their granaries.

The ogre possessed tools and weapons that were scaring such that many people could not dare confront them. A story is told of a girl who was lured and found herself in an ogre's house. She tricked the ogre and pretended to go for a call and when the ogre discovered the trick chased the girl with a huge knife called '*kienji*' that could clear a large area in the effort of getting hold of her. This scene is scaring and frightening to those who tried to rescue the girl.

A Symbol of Death

Ogres are a symbol of death. In the narratives, the ogres killed people mercilessly. They could swallow the whole village. A good example is where a boy killed the ogre and when it was about to die, it instructed the boy to cut its fingers and all their people came out of its body including all their property. The things in the ogre's house were also creating fear to the

boy for example a guitar could talk when touched and could alert the ogre while in sleep. Its hen could lay golden eggs and this was amazing and strange to the boy. Finally, before its death, it was running after the young boy with an intention of killing him. The boy escaped death narrowly by descending from the tree faster than the ogre and then cut the tree.

All those who found themselves in the hands of ogres waited for death unless someone came to their rescue as is seen in most of the narratives. The story of Njiru shows two of the young men ending up being killed because it had disguised as an old woman. The two young men were killed and hidden above the fire place. In another story where a girl was deceived and followed the ogre, she was astonished to see human skulls under the bed of the people who were previously killed. She realized that she had too fallen into the trap of the ogres and was to be the next culprit. She quickly schemed to save herself otherwise she would have been killed too if she was not rescued.

Even today the term ogre is still used in nearly the same context where there is threat that poses danger or death to human beings. Situations like drought, dangerous disease like AIDS, or outbreak of a strange epidemic, widespread malpractices that can cause harm or danger to the society like corruption and terrorism are referred to as a monster or an ogre. The fear of ogres to a greater extent was because of causing death or destruction. Young people were warned against engaging in activities that would bring destruction to them or cause danger for example interacting with strangers.

A Symbol of Greed

Ogres could also symbolize greed. They were portrayed as beings that were never satisfied with what they had but longed for more. Most of the Gikũyũ narratives depict them as beings that are never satisfied and were always hungry. They could even swallow people and their property the whole village. This trait of ogre is a replica of what we see in the society where powerful people use their powers to acquire or grab everything for themselves and leave the majority who are helpless suffering. The oppressed remain in that state until somebody or the weak people liberate themselves for the interest of the majority or the society.

The story of a woman who had given birth when the husband was away shows the woman suffering in the hands of ogre before the husband was informed by a bird. The ogre ate all that was supposed to benefit the needy woman but instead it planned to feast on the woman with its fellow ogres. In some Gikũyũ narratives, the ogres were cannibals fed as noted by Wamitila [3] where they each other especially

those who were not able to jump over the fire which they had prepared to feast on a girl but found that she had cunningly escaped. They represent a man eat man society because of their greed. In civilized society, the strong cares and protects the weak and less privileged as opposed to the ogre society. The narratives were used to warn the children and young adults against greed or being cheated by strangers because of what they saw in them or what they had. It taught them the value of being contented with who they were and what they had.

A Symbol of Calamity or Disaster

Ogres also symbolize calamity or disaster in the community. When the members of the society entertained ogres, calamities would befall them. Their presence was a sign of looming danger in their society and they were supposed to be careful not to entertain evil because the ogres represented evil. The story of Njiru who was an ogre inform of a goat, clearly illustrates this. The boy's father assumed the warning of his son who complained about the strange behaviour of their goat. The results of this assumption was the whole village being swallowed by the goat which turned out to be an ogre as the boy had said apart from one woman who was pregnant. This story emphasized the importance of not entertaining evil in the society because they would bring harm or calamity which would affect everyone. Even today, it's a lesson to us that compromise to evil no matter how small it looks is a danger in waiting which will destroy the whole community.

A Symbol of Oppression

Ogres were also a symbol of oppression. Wherever people interacted with ogres, they ended up being oppressed because they were portrayed to have more powers than human beings. They used their position to oppress the less fortunate and needy instead of helping them. A good example is the woman who went to beg for fire who was shaved badly and even eaten some parts of her head before being given fire. In another example, a woman who had given birth when the husband was away too was oppressed by being denied food instead of helping. Their relationship with human beings was negative and aimed at oppressing the needy. The end of oppression came when a member or members of the society united or sacrificed on behalf of the society and delivered the whole society. The narratives signified the importance of liberation despite the fact that the ogres have more power than them. Everyone can take part however small it may seem.

(b) Repetition

These narratives have a lot of repetition in terms of the style of narration where different ogre narratives follow a certain way of presentation. Most of them have a similar plot where they start and finish in the same style like having a happy ending after an ogre

is killed and people rescued by a hero who in most cases is small or young. Ogres also portray similar character traits for example being greedy, cruel and similar physical characteristics two mouths among others.

They use songs to convey message from one character to the other, remove the narration monotony, entertain and involve the audience in the narration. It has also been used to emphasize an issue, message, theme or describing an activity. Because of this, it has used idiophones which are repetitive in nature. Example the ogre ran Kaba! Kaba! Kaba!

(c) Figure of Speech

This is a collection of words whose meaning is different from the usual meaning. [10] say it's a concept that explains a deliberate shift of meaning from the usual one. Example is: saying, metaphor, simile, irony, hyperbole, rhetorical question, parallelism, personification among others. This study will look at the most distinctive in Gikũyũ ogre narratives.

(i) Sayings

These are statements that have hidden meaning and require one to think and relate to the context. They vary from one community to the other and are used to communicate in a simplified way but with a deeper meaning and captivating way.

	Gikũyũ	English
(i)	<i>Marũturi-inĩ mokĩte</i> -	As if the blacksmiths have come
(ii)	<i>Kũhaata mahĩndĩ</i> -	Sweep the bones
(iii)	<i>Gũtheca njira</i> -	To travel
(iv)	<i>Gũkuua kĩenji</i> -	To carry a weapon
(v)	<i>Akĩnyita njira</i>	-to start the journey

The first saying is found in the narrative concerning the woman who gave birth in the absence of her husband the saying is used up to today in the Gikũyũ community referring to a person who shows signs of courage all over sudden yet before he or she was fearful. For us to understand the meaning, we have first to understand the source of the saying which traces back to the ogre narratives. As the story goes, when the husband came back and the woman was secure, she answered the ogre in a rude manner to an extent that ogre doubted why she was that rude.

The saying '*kuhaata mahĩndĩ*' is also derived from ogre narrative that involved a girl who had eloped with an ogre and as they drew closer to the home the ogre requested the girl to be allowed to sweep the house. The ogre wanted to sweep the bones of the people he had eaten though the girl didn't know that the man was an ogre. This saying is used to date referring to this narrative to mean preparing the house

before the visitors arrive or putting one's house in order so that the visitors could not know the secrets.

The saying *Gūkuua kīenji* also originates from ogre narratives. *Kīenji* was a very huge weapon believed to be used by ogres that ogres could throw it and it would clear a big portion of bushes. The saying is still used when referring to somebody who uses a lot of energy to do a small piece of work. It can also be used to tell somebody who takes a big step to deal with small issues or exaggerates a situation. The meaning of this saying is embedded in the ogre narrative where we first have to understand the source and the context for us to use it correctly.

Onomatopoeia and Idiophones

Onomatopoeia is where sounds in words resembles the word or suggests what the word refers to or the property of a word sounding like what it represents. Some words explain an action the way it took place by imitating the way it's done. This device helps to create images in the mind of the listener and also it is useful in creating an emphasis. It's commonly used in these narratives to illustrate actions and situations to look natural and realistic. One can relate the sound and description of the real situation. They also make the narratives interesting and therefore captivating the minds of the listener. Examples of some of these devices used in the selected narratives are as follows:

Gīkūryū	English
<i>Ngūgūtīnia ng'we ng'we!</i>	-I will cut you ng'we! ng'we!
<i>Akīnyita njīra kaba! kaba! kaba!</i>	- He ran kaba! kaba! kaba!
<i>Rīkīrūo ūta ka!</i>	- was shot with an arrow ka!

Most of them are emphasizing by creating images in the mind of the listener. These images also bring out the fillings and the mood of the narrative. Most of them have been used to describe how an action took place for instance the first one is describing how the ogre will cut the girl that ran away. It was used to scare its prey. The second describes how the ogre was running *kaba! Kaba! Kaba!* after the girl who had escaped from its house. The third example was used to describe how the ogre was attacked by the young men using arrows. It brings out the feeling of victory against the evil and also a happy mood therefore contributing to the happy ending of the narrative.

(iii) Personification

This is a device where something is treated as a human being or representing it in human form. [11] confirms this and adds that it can be an animal or an imaginary thing. The story of 'A boy and an Ogre' we see the ogre disguising itself and the ogre was in form

of a black goat called Njiru. Njiru means something black depending on the type of noun. The goat could talk like a human being and behave like one during the day as the boy was herding in it in the field but when at home it would behave differently. The boy's father did not believe it until when it swallowed the whole village.

Another example is in the narrative on 'A Boy and an Ogre' which had a guitar that could speak when touched by somebody apart from it. The guitar shouted when the boy tried to steal it and therefore awaking the ogre from sleep. The boy was amazed and frightened by the incidence because previously he had succeeded to steal its hen which was laying golden eggs and had already taken it to his mother.

In the story of a woman who had given birth when the husband was away, a dove went and informed the husband about what was happening at home when he was away. The husband hurried and saved his wife before the ogres ate the woman. A bird in this story was used as a character to pass urgent information to save the life of the oppressed woman. The dove talking to a man is personifying it to take the role of a person.

In the story of three young men, a calf that was called '*Gacaū Mūdū*' would always accompany Thome's wife to know what she was planning then the calf would relay the information to Thome. The role of the calf was great since Thome's wife with his people were scheming on how to poison him so that they could get their property. Finally Thome had to organize and kill his enemies first before they fulfilled their evil plans.

(i) Hyperbole

This is where language is deliberately and obviously exaggerated for effect. Actions are exaggerated and this makes to be unrealistic. An example is the story of 'A boy and the ogre' where we find the ogre having items that could talk like a guitar that awoke it when somebody touched it. It had a hen that laid golden eggs. These activities were exaggerated and it is hard to find them in a normal situation if not in narratives. When the boy exchanged their cow with little bean, the mother out of anger told the boy to throw them away and in the morning the beans had grown into a big tree that the and ogre could climb.

The greed of ogres is far beyond the normal one because they could swallow the whole village with all the people without being satisfied. Not only did they swallow, the people came out of its stomach alive without being digested. The stupidity of the ogres is exaggerated because they could be deceived easily without thinking. Small people seem to have more wisdom than ogres. The act of young and inexperienced boy killing an ogre that had killed people in a whole

village is not usual. The heroes who liberated the community were people who were weak and without fame while the grown-ups could not.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the study shows that the Gĩkũyũ ogre narratives have a complex use of stylistic devices which intertwine to make one complete work. The stylistic devices have contributed greatly in having an appropriate communication and fulfilling the intended purposes through this genre. These characters have been used symbolically to represent various situations and meanings which are dependent on the norms of the society. They were and are still useful even in today's society because of the moral aspect in them which is important to everyone in the society. They condemn evil and have a happy ending after the ogres are killed and those oppressed by its evil activities are set free again this shows that evil has no power over good. Today's ogre may have a different meaning but the purposes remain varied because the society changes with passage of time. There is need to collect narratives from the society so that they can be preserved for the future generations so that they can appreciate their diverse cultures.

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