SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS USED BY THE SAMIA SPEAKERS OF SAMIA NORTH, BUSIA COUNTY, KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and that it has not been presented for an award of a degree in any other institution.

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DEDICATION

This work is a special dedication to the Religious family of the Missionary Congregation of the Evangelizing Sisters of Mary, my biological family of Mama Willimina Nabwire and the late Victor Okello Agunda, and the Next Generation Leadership Program- NGLP- Kenya, who sponsored my studies.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to examine idiomatic expressions and their semantics within the cultural contexts of the Samia speech community (SSC) as the main objective. Idiomatic expressions, or idiomaticity, are a higher level of language use that defines a native speaker's proficiency and resiliency to a specified language and its culture. Idiomatic expressions are a type of figure of speech that, in most cases, are fixed statements; that is, their meaning is not drawn from the meaning of each word in the statement's composition but from the whole statement. The knowledge and resilience of Lusamia language and culture seem to be diminishing, and that was the reason for this research. The study aimed to navigate the Lusamia language and culture to (i) describe different types of idiomatic expressions, (ii) determine the contribution of individual linguistic items to the meaning of idiomatic expressions, and (iii) evaluate the influence of cultural contexts on the meaning of these expressions. The study is grounded on the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) by Kovecses (2015) and the Relevance Theory (RT) by Sperber and Wilson (2002). Koveces' two key principles; contextual influence on meaning and systematic mapping of source and target domains mark CMT as a crucial theory to this research. Contextual influence on meaning is Koveces' tenet that guided the objective of evaluating how context influences the meaning of Lusamia idioms, while the tenet of domain mapping guided the objective of describing the types of idiomatic expressions. RT, on the other hand, complemented CMT in the research by its communicative and cognitive principles. The communicative and cognitive principles backed the objective of determining the contribution of individual linguistic items to the meaning Lusamia of idiomatic expressions (LIEs). A descriptive research design was used for the investigation. Unadulterated Lusamia is spoken in the Nambuku sub-location of Samia North, which served as the study's locale. The target population of the study was LIEs. A total of 10 participants, fluent in Lusamia and conversant with the culture, both male and female aged between 60 and 75 years, were selected through purposive and snowballing techniques. One participant was purposively selected, who helped to snowball the others to form one focus group of 8 participants of 5 males and 3 females. The remaining two participants were a male and a female aged between 72 and 75 years, purposively selected as well for an in-depth interview for detailed information. Language natives of the aforementioned age are believed to have more experience of language and culture. To accomplish the study goals, 121 Lusamia idiomatic expressions (proverbs and non- proverbial) were collected from the participants: 70 from the focused group discussion (FGD) and 51 from the two individual participants. The researcher sampled 73 idiomatic expressions from the total collection for investigation dependent on the study's objectives and their relevance to the study. Interview guides were employed as an appropriate data collection tool for the focus group discussions, while in-depth interview guides were used to collect data from the two individual participants for more detailed explanation. Note-taking and tape-recording, were done to record the raw data and for the validity of the research. The recorded data was transcribed, translated, coded and analysed in line with the tenets of the theories that guided the study. The study findings established that the LIEs are categorized based structural variation, Morphological agglutination is a major defining linguistic feature of LIE and Basamia idioms are deeply rooted in social life reflecting individuals in the family and community and at large. The Basamia community is anticipated to gain from this research in terms of preserving and promoting Lusamia-specific linguistic and cultural quirks. Additionally, the study is expected to support language learning and teaching materials in the field of education as well as linguistic comparative studies in general, without forgetting that it could be the upcoming researchers' resource.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CMT: Conceptual Metaphor Theory

IE: Idiomatic Expressions

LIE: Lusamia Idiomatic Expressions

LC: Language and Culture

MWE: Multi-Word Expressions

NLP: Natural Language processing

PIE: Potentially idiomatic expression

RT: Relevance theory

SA: Semantic analysis

SAIE: Semantic Analysis of idiomatic Expressions

SC: Semantic compatibility

SSC: Samia Speech Community

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Analysis: in-depth examination of idiomatic expressions.

Compositionality: individual lexicon components of a sentence whether they make sense or not.

Culture: diverse system of life which includes a group of people's behaviour, values and language. It refers to the language speakers' traditions or heritage.

Idiom: is a sentence, a phrase, or word whose meaning cannot be accurately conveyed by the literal translation of the word or the constituents in the composition of an expression.

Idiomatic expression: any form of speech peculiarity specific to a community or group of people with their culture.

Language: a tool of communication and social engagement in a community for social interaction in their everyday life.

Language proficiency: being fluent and accurate especially reflected in the application of language expressions such as idioms.

Metaphor: understanding of one domain of experience in terms of another.

Semantics: refers to systematic interpretation of meaning in the Lusamia idiomatic expressions.

Semantic analysis: exploration of all linguistic features of meaning pertaining to Lusamia idiomatic expressions.

Semantic Compatibility: how we relate meaning to potentially idiomatic expressions; whether it is literal or IE.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a foundational overview of the study, outlining key elements that frame the research. It introduces the theoretical frameworks that support the investigation, particularly in relation to the research objectives and the problem being addressed. The significance of the study is also highlighted, emphasizing its potential contribution to the society by promoting linguistic awareness of Lusamia Idiomatic Expressions (LIE). Additionally, the chapter defines the scope and delimitations of the research, offering a clear understanding of the specific focus and boundaries of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

The Samia Speech Community (SSC) is a small Bantu-speaking community residing in the northern and eastern parts of Busia County, in the Western Region of Kenya. They call themselves Basamia, and one is Musamia. They border Uganda to the east, where the Basamia of Uganda live. According to a study conducted by Shivach (2003), the SSC originally migrated from the Sudan, passing through Uganda before settling in their current location. They share borders with the Luo, who are said to be their ancestral forebears based on migration history; therefore, it makes sense that they would naturally absorb much of Luo language and culture, according to Ochieng (1974). The Basamia speakers are of Bantu origin, forming part of the larger Luhya community in Western Kenya. Ogot (2009) notes in his research that the Luhya comprise approximately eighteen dialects, which include Basamia, Baitsukha, Bawanga, Marama, Bukusu, and Maragoli, among others.

According to Nakhayo (2017) dissertation, the SSC is multilingual because most local speakers, in addition to their native Lusamia, can communicate in Luo or Luganda as well as Kiswahili, which is Kenya's national language and essential for social and business interactions across borders and community boundaries. This knowledge raises concern about the Basamia's awareness and resilience regarding their linguistic characteristics, such as idiomatic expressions. The study focuses on the Basamia of Nambuku Location in Samia North, who are perceived to speak pure Lusamia for effective study data analysis.

The study is domiciled predominantly in the three branches of applied linguistics: firstly, sociolinguistics, which studies the relatedness of language and culture; secondly,

psycholinguistics, which is concerned with the operation of the brain and language reflexes or cognitive ability that enable interpretation of the meanings of words, phrases, and sentences; and thirdly, theoretical linguistics, which is concerned with the linguistic levels (morphology, phonology, syntax and semantics) of any language and the theories and rules that govern the language structure. The study, therefore, adheres to linguistic theories and definitions of terminologies within linguistic contexts.

Language and culture (LC) are inseparable components of human identity, each shaping and reflecting the other. Definitions of LC are essential in examining idiomatic expressions (IEs), which are deeply embedded in both linguistic and cultural identities. Many linguists describe language primarily as a tool for communication; that is, encoding and decoding messages between people. Hudson (1996) observes that language serves as a means of both communication and social engagement. For effective discourse, speakers and listeners must share the same language, be familiar with its semantics, and understand its linguistic elements, including IEs. A language speaker who can effectively encode and decode information, including IEs, is appropriately defined as proficient in LC.

Language proficiency (LP) is central to understanding a language's linguistic elements, such as IEs, and analysing them semantically. Cloud, Genesee, and Hayaman (2000) define LP as the ability to use a language fluently and accurately in both oral and written forms across various settings. This proficiency includes knowledge of cultural nuances, beliefs, and social practices of the target language. LP is thus a key variable in analysing the semantics of IEs, as it allows the participants in the research to encode and decode the meaning of IEs accurately. In the case of Lusamia, semantic analysis can only be done through proficiently spoken Lusamia, focusing on IEs used in Basamia daily conversations and references to their cultural traditions. Culture, according to Nababan (1984), encompasses all aspects of human life; ideas, customs, and perspectives shaped by the speakers' environment, ethnicity, and socioeconomic conditions.

Semantics, in this study, refers to the systematic interpretation of meaning in the Lusamia idiomatic expressions (LIEs). Semantic analysis of idiomatic expressions (SAIE), thus aims to uncover how meaning is encoded, interpreted, and influenced by cultural contexts of Basamia speakers. Semantics, the core aspect of the study topic, is precisely the description of meanings in linguistics, including how words, phrases and sentences connect and are understood in relation to one another. Linguistic semantics is further defined by Spencer

(1991) and Kreidler (2002) as the study of how languages organise and express meanings. This provides a useful foundation for understanding idiomatic expressions (IE) and their interpretations in Lusamia.

The ability to navigate the semantic elements of a language is therefore a fundamental component of linguistic competence and cultural awareness. The study seeks to find out how cultural context shapes both the form and meaning of the Basamia idiomatic expressions. Specifically, it seeks to examine how meaning is relevantly conceptualized in everyday communication, with a particular emphasis on the use of idiomatic expressions. Understanding the cultural contexts of Basamia IEs requires language proficiency and knowledge of the semantics of Lusamia in order to translate and map out the targeted meaning in relation to the context in which the idiom is used.

The ideology of the idiomatic expressions and their semantics in a natural language and its culture is well stated by researchers such as Palmer (1981), Gibbs (1995), Cruse (2011) and Gehrke & McNally (2019). They all generally emphasize that linguistic expressions must be correctly encoded and decoded for communication to be successful and that idiomatic expressions require both linguistic knowledge and cultural understanding for correct interpretation of their meaning in discourse.

Idiomatic expressions function as vehicles for cultural quirks and values, yet their usage is declining in many indigenous languages, Lusamia inclusive. Among the Basamia, younger generation is increasingly unfamiliar with Lusamia IEs, partly due to schooling, which keeps children away from extended interaction with elders, as well as language policy, modernity, and urbanization. These forces erode the transmission of cultural nuances embedded in language, contributing to the risk of language endangerment. Baldwin and Kim (2010) define IEs as natural language expressions or figures of speech that are understandable mainly to native speakers or those highly proficient in both the language and its culture. While idioms may have universal types, their meanings are often shaped by specific cultural contexts. Language speakers value idioms as part of their cultural heritage according to (Halliday & Yallop, 2007). Wright's (1999) definition adds to the knowledge of an idiom as an expression that is fixed and recognised by its speakers only or those who have learnt the language with its culture and attained a certain level of proficiency.

The study will navigate the Basamia IEs and their semantics in contexts, supported by the conceptual metaphor theory of Kovecses (2015) and the relevance theory of Wilson and

Sperber (2002). Aitchson (2010) maintains that semantics can address meaning at the level of words, phrases, sentences or larger units of discourse. Semantic analysis of idiomatic expressions (SAIE), for effective analysis should establish an important characteristic of idiomaticity known as, potentially idiomatic expressions (PIE). 'Potentially idiomatic expression' is a phrase justifying the fact that not every expression that appears to be figurative is idiomatic. Some expressions appear to be figurative but have literal interpretations of meaning, or rather, meaning is directly inferred from individual components of the phrase or sentence based on semantic analysis. These could form the basis of categorizing IEs as either compositional or non- compositional which Matifari (2016) in his study refers to as semi- opaque and opaque metaphors in Lubukusu, besides other categories the study addresses.

Betti (2021) emphasises that meaning is constituted by both *extension* and *intention*. Extension denotes the referential link between a word and the object it designates, while intention pertains to the mental images or ideas evoked by that word or phrase. For instance, the object *table* can be directly associated with the corresponding English word *table* in terms of extension. On the other hand, intention captures the mental image or cultural associations that arise in specific contexts. For example, a person who has consumed excessive alcohol may be described as a *drunkard* in English. In Lusamia, such an individual may be referred to as *omumesi*, *omun'gwi*, or *omuhombi*. This demonstrates the presence of semantic ambiguity in Lusamia, as in many other natural languages, where a single concept or idiomatic meaning may be expressed through multiple lexical items. This phenomenon underscores the fluidity of idiomatic expression and supports the view that one idiom can be articulated using different words while retaining the same underlying meaning.

The expression referring to the same mental image may vary depending on the context. Intention meaning is extensive in expression among different language speakers; it has cultural, psychological, or circumstantial backgrounds. In order to comprehend meaning, native speakers' intuition about a word or phrase is crucial, according to Palmer (1997) and Betti and Ulaiwi (2018). They should be able to relate the associated mental image to the cultural attribution to the expression and perhaps the historical background. Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) supports this by suggesting that for communication to be effective, both speakers and listeners must share contextual knowledge. The meaning of idiomatic expressions cannot always be derived from the words themselves but depends on the shared cultural knowledge of the speaker and listener.

This work therefore considered some levels of meaning in semantics such as conceptual, associative and contextual as relevant in the understanding and semantic analysis of IEs. The interpretation of meanings in relation to conceptual and associative meanings can affect how well-understood idioms are in the Basamia's cultural contexts. According to Gibbs (1995), idioms are used in various categories such as binomials, phrasal verb idioms, proverbs, similes, anticipatory idioms and many more that this research sought to investigate among the Basamia bearing in mind the conceptual, associative and contextual levels of semantics, guided by the supporting theoretical frameworks

Conceptual semantics refers to the level of meaning concerned with the core, dictionary-type meaning of words and expressions, independent of particular contexts. It focuses on how meaning is structured in the mind and represented in a mental lexicon. Lyons (1995) notes that conceptual meaning (or denotative meaning) captures the essential features that define a word or phrase, making it distinct from other meanings. For idiomatic expressions, the conceptual level often differs from the literal interpretation of the constituent words. This aligns with Cruse's (2011) observation that conceptual meaning is central to the semantic analysis of figurative language because it underpins the stored, conventional sense of the idiom.

Situational semantics focuses on meaning in relation to specific real-world situations or events that the utterance describes or evokes. Barwise and Perry (1983) developed situational semantics to explain how meaning is derived from the interplay between linguistic expressions and the actual or imagined situations they refer to. In idiomatic interpretation, the situational level matters because an idiom may be understood differently depending on the immediate circumstances of use. In many African cultural settings, including the Basamia, situational semantics ties closely to communal experiences and shared knowledge of events.

Contextual semantics deals with how meaning is shaped by linguistic and extralinguistic contexts, including speaker intention, discourse history, and cultural background. According to Halliday (1985), context operates at multiple levels: context of situation, referring to immediate communicative circumstances and context of culture which refers to broader socio-cultural norms. Idiomatic expressions are particularly sensitive to contextual cues.

For example, the Lusamia idiom *okhudira omukhono* which means to hold the hand, could mean offering guidance, granting support, or even initiating a marriage agreement, depending on the cultural and conversational context. Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1995)

further emphasizes that contextual meaning emerges from the listener's ability to infer the speaker's intended sense based on shared background knowledge.

The conceptual, situational, and contextual semantic elements of idiomatic expressions are universally applicable in the interpretation of metaphors, as reflected in the ways English and Chinese cultures rationalise similar concepts within their respective psychological frameworks, according to Feng (2010). An example of a Chinese idiomatic expression, '***pa ma pi',*** which originates from the Yuan Dynasty of Chinese, is connected to the value that was attributed to a horse: to praise and appreciate the horse. The Yuan dynasty would pat the rear end of the horse, irrespective of its strengths or weaknesses, as a means of providing psychological praise and encouragement. The English interpretation is entirely different and very negative, with the connotation of oppressive or inferior relationships between the subjects and their superiors. This could be as a result of the experience of oppressive rule among the English speakers, leaders or colonisers. It draws attention to the influence of circumstances or speakers' experiences in their history of language. This was considered to potentially influence the Basamia IEs that the study aimed to address.

Conversely, the English idiom "pour cold water on a person" and the Chinese idiom ***'pole leng shui'*** share similarities. In both Chinese and English, the interpretation is to discourage. The universal psychological interpretation of cold is a common natural phenomenon that lowers the temperature, as applied in most languages, according to Gu and Xu (2000). For example, idioms that are based on human emotions, such as anger being associated with heat, are easily understood by even non-language speakers. These include many other physical experiences, such as being sick/well or hot/cold, as stated by Ellis (1997).

The researcher will investigate these similarities among the Basamia IEs in relation to the conceptual metaphor theory of Kovecses (2015), supported by the tenet of mapping the target domain from the source domain. For instance, the Basamia's famous idiom, *namwanagenda ahira n'gina amakesi* which means that a child who is exposed or who moves is cleverer than the mother. The target domain is achievement of knowledge and the source domain is the historical background of the idiom, the Basamia value knowledge and its sources.

This study will involve translation from the target language to English, which will clearly illustrate the aspects of similarities and linguistic diversity in the semantics of IEs, some expressions may lack their equivalence and even loose the attributed value from the source domain. According to Ping (2018), semantic proficiency and cultural awareness are vital in

the translation of idioms from source to target language, with awareness that idiomatic expressions are cultural products containing specific cultural background meaning, as seen in the Chinese phrase ***pa ma pi,*** which is the attributed value of a horse. With lack of this knowledge, we can easily make mistakes.

Idiomatic expressions encapsulate shared experiences, values, or traditions that may not directly translate into other languages, according to the UNESCO (2003), in their plan of action in promotion of multilingualism and native languages for cultural heritage and diversity. Despite the language and cultural diversity, there are common themes in idiomatic expressions around the world that are illustrated in the English language. Most of the themes are related to human experiences of life: love, death or sorrow, good morals, hardworking, and perseverance across languages and cultures. The IEs formed from the universal themes could make one of the categories this study seeks to address.

The study, in determining the categories of Lusamia idiomatic expressions as aforementioned, sought to examine the IEs based on global themes used by the Basamia speakers. This could be determined by inferring meaning of the idiom supported by the conceptual metaphor theory of Kovecses' (2015) with its definition that a metaphor as a fixed expression whose meaning is inferred by systematic mapping of target domain, which refers to the meaning of the IE, from the source domain, which is the familiar theme. For instance, the English idiom 'old is gold,' the wisdom of age is the targeted meaning which is being compared or mapped from the valuable gold. It is undoubted that different cultures have respect for the elders and value the wisdom and lived experiences of the elders in the society. They definitely must have their appropriate source domains to map out the value of wisdom from within their environment or cultural contexts.

The study navigated the Basamia community's relationship between language and culture in establishing the role played by idiomatic expressions to reflect their culture in real life and the universally shared values. Like any other linguistic group, language is used in context and has important pragmatic function.

The speakers of a language therefore need exposure to language input, influences from context and any other language skills pertaining to acquisition and comprehension as stated by Vulchanov and Stankova (2011). Idiomatic expressions are considered by many linguistic researchers as the most powerful source of linguistic innovation. The role played by IEs among a language speaker is vital.

This suggests that language use, vocabulary, and idiomatic expressions are acquired and used to concisely and effectively convey ideas according to Gibbs (1995). The application of IEs is dictated by the mood, emotions, circumstances or context, such as funeral or joyful ceremonies, which the Basamia refer to as *esidialo.* Yagiz (2013), who states that idioms prove to be important decoders of customs, cultural beliefs, social conventions and norms, confirms the argument that IEs are decoders of cultural values and norms of a speech community. Ayers (2015) suggests that all people share common experiences that create universality in the figures of speech, which the study will seek to identify as a knowledge gap to be filled. Besides having common language and cultural experiences globally in the application of IEs, there is also an aspect of diversity that the paper seeks to examine.

The diverse semantic interpretations in Lusamia requires an informed cultural background. This is well put in the Journal of Literature and Arts Studies of Ping (2018) on cultural characteristics of idiomatic expressions. The IEs applicable to physical experiences are, in general, culturally related in their meaning in different cultures. For example, idioms that are based on human emotions, such as anger, being associated with heat, are easily understood by non-language speakers. These include many other physical experiences, such as being sick/well and hot/cold. Those to do with psychological effects often differ or vary depending on the values and social experiences of the speakers of a language. The analysis of the semantics of LIEs required that the researcher has ability to translate the idioms from Lusamia to English and can as translate the data for analysis.

According to Byamugisha *et al*. (2014), agglutination is a common element in Bantu languages. It is a unique language element whereby only one word translates to a whole sentence in English; for instance**, tunaenda** is a Kiswahili word translating to a complete English sentence: We are going. The construction of some idiomatic expressions in Lusamia are likely to adopt the same morphological process considering how it is effected in few Lusamia words; for example, *nandaulira* is one word translating to a sentence of five words:

He who does not listen. This is illustrated in the different types of figurative expressions contained in Ekegusii and the definition of idiom by Otiso (2022) as a conventionalised sequence of at least two words or free morphemes that is semantically restricted so that it functions as a single lexicon unit. The meaning of the lexicon unit can or cannot be deduced from the meaning of its constituents. This information is fundamental to the analysis of semantics in Lusamia idiomatic expressions. It will involve the assessment of the structure of

idiomatic expressions as either similar to the Otiso (2022) analogy of at least two words or not, or the agglutinating effect.

The definition of idiomatic expressions by Otiso (2022), that idiomatic expressions are conventionalised sequences of at least two words or free morphemes that are semantically restricted so that they function as a single lexical unit, whose meaning from a synchronic point of view, cannot or can only to a certain extent be deduced from the meaning of its constituents will influence the investigation Lusamia idiomatic expression (LIEs). It will aid the classification of LIEs, those that are in the form of words, phrasal verbs of a sentence structure as in proverbs. Yagiz (2013), that "idioms are important decoders of customs, cultural beliefs, social conventions and norms". The speaker's familiarity with expressions in the language, understanding the context, and having used the expression before is the basis of proficiency in the application of idiomatic expressions.

Matafari (2016) backs up the objective of relating this study to the literature of African culture and idioms. In his study, he analysed the types of idioms in Lubukusu and how they are comprehended, enabling communication, with a focus on the relevance theory of cognitive and input processing effects. Matifari's study only analyses the two main categories of IEs; Opaque and semi- opaque. The current study is closely related and interested in examining similar linguistic elements in Lusamia idiomatic expressions (LIEs) using different theories in different geographical settings. The study extends to the analysis of more categories of LIEs: binomials, phrasal verbs, words that are peculiar to Lusamia and open clauses besides opaque and semi – opaque LIEs.

Dipio (2019) posits that IEs are repositories of the rich memories and accumulative knowledge of a speech community. Idiomatic expressions aid in the acquisition of behavioural principles, which are grounded in traditional moral values and wisdom essential for the growth and development of societies, as noted by Fayemi (2009).

They play very significant roles in the education and socialisation of youth, according to Onofrei & Iancu (2015). Gyan *et al*. (2020) claim that idiomatic expressions are used as vehicles in interpreting the cultural beliefs and values in society. More importantly, they are symbolic expressions to preserve and disseminate a society's rich history and culture, as documented in Omoera & Inegbeboh (2013) and Amate (2011).

The use of Lusamia idiomatic expressions is influenced by various factors, such as situations, funerals, called *amasika,* or joyous ceremonies referred to as *esidialo.* Age is also a factor influencing idiomatic expressions, whereby the elders have expressions peculiar to them that are not common to the youth. The youth are not a party in the elder's gathering known as *olukhikho,* where they apply a register familiar to their age group. This study may help to better clarify the idea that the environment and culture of the Basamia speakers form the contexts that influence the meanings of their utterances. As was previously noted, marriage, human decency, and uprightness are highly valued. As a result, many idiomatic expressions place a significant emphasis on instilling moral values in the context of marriage, family and community.

The background knowledge about the Basamia indicates a high possibility of losing the rich cultural values and language identity that are influenced by linguistic awareness. The elders of the Basamia people have expressed their outrage over the dwindling cultural values that have historically been passed down through the generations in the language use and its priceless expressions though there isn't any actual data to support this supposition. Therefore, by utilising the Basamia speakers' current usage of idiomatic expressions and their semantics, this study aimed to narrow the knowledge gap. The sole study that appears to be linked to this topic, "African Proverbs with Religious Parallel Interpretation," by Odhiambo (2017), which did not base on linguistic principles of language analysis.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Basamia speech community of Samia North in Busia County of Western Kenya has a rich linguistic and cultural heritage embedded in its use of idiomatic expressions. However, this language, like many other indigenous languages, is endangered due to various factors, which include formal education, urbanisation, modernisation, and the influence of more dominant languages such as Kiswahili and English, besides contact with other indigenous languages. Due to these factors, the younger generation is increasingly disconnected from this cultural heritage and language identity, which threatens the preservation and transmission of the Basamia cultural and linguistic richness.

The literature review of the semantics of Lusamia idiomatic expressions reveals a significant gap in knowledge, as previous research on African languages and idiomatic expressions has predominantly focused on other communities and geographical regions. Consequently, there is limited documentation on Lusamia. To address this gap, the study employs the theoretical

framework of conceptual metaphor theory alongside the referential theory of meaning to conduct a critical analysis of the semantics inherent in Lusamia idiomatic expressions. The study seeks to promote cultural awareness and help safeguard the rich heritage of the Basamia language, while also strengthening the resilience of its speakers. In addition, it aims to provide meaningful contributions to linguistic scholarship and cross-cultural comparative research.

1.3. Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to investigate the semantics of Lusamia idiomatic expressions employed in the daily conversations of Basamia speakers, focusing on how they are influenced by the cultural contexts of Basamia. The specific objectives are:

a) To describe the different types of idiomatic expressions in Lusamia.
b) To determine the contribution of individual linguistic items to the meaning of idiomatic expressions.
c) To evaluate the influence of cultural contexts on meaning of Lusamia idiomatic expressions.

1.4. Research Questions

a) What are the different types of Lusamia idiomatic expressions?
b) How do individual linguistic items contribute to the meaning of idiomatic expressions in Lusamia?
c) How do cultural contexts influence the meaning of Lusamia idiomatic expressions?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The Basamia community, like many others, has a rich linguistic heritage that is encapsulated in its idiomatic expressions. These idioms are not only a means of communication but also a repository of cultural values, history and collective wisdom. By studying these expressions, the research aimed to preserve the intangible cultural heritage, which is at risk of being lost, especially among younger generations and in urban settings where traditional ways of life are fading away. Understanding and documenting Lusamia idiomatic expressions would reinforce the cultural identity of the Basamia people.

It was anticipated to help community members, especially the youth, appreciate and reconnect with their roots. Understanding these expressions could improve social interactions and mutual understanding among community members.

The research delved into the semantics of Lusamia idiomatic expressions, which provided insights into how meaning is constructed and interpreted within the Lusamia language, contributing to the broader field of linguistics through data collection and analysis. The findings were anticipated to inform language education programmes, helping educators develop curricula that incorporate traditional linguistic elements to make language learning more engaging and culturally relevant. The documentation of Lusamia idiomatic expressions could serve as valuable resources for the teaching of Lusamia as well as for comparative studies in language classes. The study supports the promotion of diversity, aligning with global efforts and policies, such as those advocated by UNESCO, to promote native languages and cultural heritage. As the study raises awareness of idiomatic expressions that are disappearing due to urbanization and schooling, it can help revitalize the use of Lusamia in both formal and informal settings, fostering greater pride in the language. Linguistics scholars will gain valuable insights into how idiomatic expressions function within the Lusamia language, as well as how they relate to broader linguistic principles such as morphology, syntax and semantics.

Researchers focusing on idiomatic expressions across languages will use this study to compare Lusamia expressions with idioms in other languages, contributing to a broader understanding of how culture shapes language and meaning. Teachers and curriculum developers, especially those in Samia regions, can incorporate the findings into language and cultural education programs. The study can be used as a resource to teach Lusamia language more effectively for its cultural significance. For those developing language proficiency assessments or teaching resources, the insights from this study can guide the creation of materials that are relevant for promotion of learning and mastering a language. Anthropologists and cultural historians will benefit from the study as it documents the social, historical and cultural contexts that give rise to Lusamia idiomatic expressions. This documentation can contribute to the broader study of East African cultures and the impact of language on social practices and beliefs. In summary, the study has broad implications and benefits for the Basamia community, language learners, linguists, educators, policymakers and those interested in preserving linguistic and cultural diversity.

1.6. Justification of the Study

Idiomatic expressions play a vital role in the semantics and pragmatics of a language, offering insights into how meaning is constructed, understood, and transmitted across

generations. While studies such as Gibbs (1995), Libben & Titone (2008), and Ngugi & Ong'onda (2020) have demonstrated the importance of idioms in cognitive processing, metaphorical mapping, and contextual interpretation, little has been done to apply these frameworks to Lusamia. This study therefore advances academic knowledge by integrating established theoretical models such as Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Relevance Theory (RT) into the Lusamia context, thereby proving the universality of these theories while uncovering culturally grounded patterns of meaning. The study is justified in terms of its potential contribution to the documentation and preservation of intangible cultural heritage. The research not only strengthens linguistic documentation but also offers material that can support cultural education, revitalisation, and comparative studies in African linguistics.

1.7. Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The research was delimited to the topic, semantic analysis of Lusamia idiomatic expressions. The main objective of the research is to investigate the role of idiomatic expression among the Basamia speakers of Western Kenya, which will be analysed based on three specific objectives: describing the different types of idiomatic expressions in Lusamia, determining the contribution of individual linguistic items to the meaning of idiomatic expressions, and finally evaluating the influence of cultural contexts on the meaning of Lusamia idiomatic expressions. One of this study's underpinning theories is the conceptual metaphor theory according to Kovecses (2015), with its two main tenets of contextual influence on meaning and the systematic mapping of source and target domains. The tenet of contextual influence on meaning will guide the analysis of the third objective of the study of determining the influence of cultural contexts on the meaning of Lusamia idiomatic expressions, and systematic domain mapping will be the analysis of the first objective of describing different types of idioms expressed by the Basamia.

Sperber and Wilson's (2002) Relevance Theory was used to supplement the Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Relevance Theory's two primary pillars—communicative and cognitive principles served as the foundation for its examination of the second goal, which is to ascertain how much each individual linguistic item contributes to the meaning of LIE.

The Nambuku Location was used to sample Basamia natives aged 60 and older up to 75 years, who speak Lusamia regularly and have done so for a longer period of time without significant barriers that could affect their fluency, such as exposure to other languages or

social media. Similar characteristics of pure Lusamia was another reason for the location's recognition. A deliberate sample of ten participants; females and males who are proficient in Lusamia and familiar with the culture were selected. Purposive sampling was used to select one participant, who then snowball the remaining participants to create a focus group of eight people, aged 60 and above; 5 males and 3 females.

The gender consideration was factored during data collection because of the feminist characteristics that could influence idiomatic expressions, particularly unique to them and the male gender as well and to avoid being gender biased. The two individual participants were a male and a female for the same reason as in FGD, and aged between 72 and 75 years, with a consideration that the more a native advance in age, the more fluent and conversant with a community's language and culture they become. They were purposively selected as well for an in-depth interview to provide more detailed information. To accomplish the study goals, 121 Lusamia idiomatic expressions were collected from the participants, whereby 70 of them came from the FGD and 51 from the two individual participants. The researcher purposively sampled 63 idiomatic expressions; 32 proverbial and 31 non-proverbial, from the total collection for investigation, dependent on the study objectives and relevance to the study. It's also manageable for in-depth analysis.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research is geographically limited to the Basamia community of Nambuku Location in Busia County, Kenya. As such, the findings may not fully represent the entire Lusamia-speaking population, or in diasporic communities where language use may vary due to different socio-cultural influences. Secondly, idiomatic expressions are dynamic and context-dependent, often varying across generations, gender, and social settings. The data obtained through interviews and focus group discussions may therefore reflect only a partial range of idioms in use. Some idioms might have been omitted either because they are obsolete, rarely used, or known only to specific subgroups within the community.

Thirdly, the reliance on participants' recalls and self-reporting introduces subjectivity, as some idioms may have been misinterpreted, simplified, or remembered differently from their authentic cultural usage. Similarly, translation of Lusamia idioms into English during analysis carries the risk of semantic loss, distortion, or oversimplification, since some cultural meanings do not have direct equivalents in English.

Fourthly, the study employs Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Relevance Theory (RT) as its main analytical frameworks. While these theories provide powerful tools for understanding idiomatic meaning, they may not capture all the nuances of Lusamia idioms, particularly those that are deeply rooted in cultural or ritualistic practices.

1.9. Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by the Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) of Kovecses (2015), a more contemporary proponent whose theory's tenet of context importance and domain mapping in metaphors underpin the study analysis. The CMT will be complemented by Relevance Theory (RT) of Sperber and Wilson (2002) basing on their theory tenets of communicative and conceptual cognitive principles.

1.10. The Conceptual Metaphor Theory

According to Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) original definition, a metaphor is a comprehension of one experience domain in terms of another, or more accurately, a methodical mapping between two domains: source and target. This is the major principal and foundational tenet of CMT that will support this study. The theoretical perspective of Kovecses (2015) will be more appropriate to this study basing on the additional tenet of contextual influence on the meaning of metaphors. Kovecses (2015) also emphasises the tenet of conceptual coherence; that metaphors exist within a network of coherent relationships. They interact with other metaphors to form a unified conceptual system or a flowing communication process. Experiential basis is another tenet that is emphasised by Kovecses in his theory that metaphorical mappings are grounded in everyday experience, which makes the abstract domains comprehensible by relating them to the source or tangible experiences. The tenets are closely interrelated and quite applicable to the logic of idiomatic expressions as a valuable element of language and culture.

Kovecses (2015) is a more contemporary proponent of conceptual metaphor theory and categorically addresses the tenets of context and domain mapping in metaphors which appropriately underpins the study's analysis of Basamia idioms and with reference to the cultural contexts that influence their meaning. Metaphors are dynamic and context-dependent according to Kovecses (2015). The main contexts to which metaphors are dependent are situational, linguistic, bodily and conceptual cognitive. The context in which a metaphor is used can affect its meaning, and metaphors can shift based on new experiences and cultural changes.

Kovecses (2015), in his advancement of CMT, expounds on the original definition of metaphors which is narrowed to the understanding of one domain of experience in term of another that is more familiar or concrete. This forms the theory's main tenet that backs the analysis of the first objective of this study, to describe different types of idiomatic expressions. The description of the type of an idiom can only be possible by ability to map out the domains applied. For example, the idiomatic expression*; life is a journey*. The source domain is a journey, a concrete domain which is clear in the mind and is used to understand the target domain – *life*. This is a statement or clause type of expression that gives people encouragement on the perspective of life. Metaphors are dynamic and context-dependent according to Kovecses (2015). This tenet will guide the analysis of the third objective of evaluating the influence of cultural contexts on the meaning of Lusamia idiomatic expressions.

Gibbs (2008) is a cognitive linguist who has advanced on the CMT when it comes to metaphorical language, taking into account context and a number of important conceptual structural components. One of these is the source domain, which is the place where an idiom or metaphor first appeared, such as in the Chinese idiomatic expression; pai ma pi of Yuan dynasty whose source is the cultural value attributed to a horse according to Wang (2018). The target domain is what the source domain needs to enhance the concept. According to Gibbs, picture schemas are recurrent patterns of perceptual motor experience that serve as the building blocks for increasingly intricate representations.

Otony (1993) is known for his contributions to the understanding of how metaphors shape thought, language and understanding. In his influential book, *Metaphor and Thought*, he explores the cognitive role metaphors play in abstract reasoning and everyday communication. He is one the theorists who advanced on CMT whose work emphasises that metaphors are not merely linguistic expressions but are integral to human cognition and conceptualisation.

In the context of this study on Lusamia idiomatic expressions, CMT provides a theoretical framework to understand how idioms are not just linguistic anomalies but are deeply rooted in the conceptual system of the Samia speakers. Idioms in Lusamia, like in any language, often arise from conceptual metaphors that link abstract ideas to more concrete experiences. For instance, expressions related to wisdom, community values or emotional states are likely metaphorically structured. CMT supports this by demonstrating how cultural experiences

shape the metaphors and consequently, the idioms used by a community. For the Basamia people, their cultural practices, environment and social interactions will influence the conceptual metaphors underlying their idiomatic expressions.

CMT asserts that the meaning of idiomatic expressions can be traced back to underlying metaphors that people in a given culture use to understand their world according to Kovecses (2010). The specific linguistic items (words and phrases) in Lusamia idioms are surface manifestations of these deeper conceptual metaphors. Analysing these linguistic items through the lens of CMT allows for a better understanding of how individual words contribute to the overall metaphorical meaning of idioms as required by the second objective of the study. The conceptual metaphor theory offers a robust framework for analysing idiomatic expressions in Lusamia. It helps to uncover the cognitive and cultural underpinnings of idioms, providing deeper insights into their meanings and functions within the Basamia community. By leveraging CMT, the study can effectively describe, evaluate and determine the significance of Lusamia idiomatic expressions, contributing to the preservation and understanding of the Samia cultural heritage.

The theory might not fully account for the distinctive cultural nuances and local experiences that shape Lusamia idioms. For instance, metaphors deeply rooted in specific Basamia traditions, rituals or environmental factors might not fit neatly into the universal categories posited by CMT. The theory might struggle to account for the fine-grained differences between idioms that appear to be similar on the surface but carry different meanings or connotations in different contexts within the Basamia culture. It will therefore be complemented by Relevance Theory for its communicative and cognitive principals.

1.11. Relevance Theory

Relevance Theory (RT) by Sperber & Wilson, (1995) provides a pragmatic lens that goes beyond the structural and universal focus of Conceptual Metaphor Theory. RT emphasizes how hearers interpret utterances by seeking the optimal relevance**,** balancing cognitive effort with contextual effects. This makes it highly suitable to supplement CMT in the study of Lusamia idioms, which are not only linguistic units but also culturally situated communicative acts**.**

The study was guided by the proponents' latest findings of (2002), concentrating on the communicative and cognitive principles of relevance, which are the two primary pillars of

their theory. Both ideas are related in that conceptual cognitivity is realized in the urgency of communication for information comprehension. Apart from Cognitive and communicative principle, other tenets of this theory include the principle of inferential communication which emphasizes that communication is not just about coding and decoding but about inference that listeners infer the intended meaning based on context, background knowledge and the communicator's ostensive cues; gestures, tone and expressions. Another tenet of RT is contextual effects of meaning which states that meaning is dynamically based on contextual grounds or assumptions which include prior knowledge, situational context, shared cultural or linguistic norms. However much the research focused on communicative and cognitive principles, all the theory's tenets inter-marry and relevant to the interpretation and analysis of idiomatic expressions that this study sought to achieve.

The communicative and cognitive principles of Relevance Theory are the tenets that guided the study in analysing the study's second objective of determining the contribution of individual linguistic items in the meaning of LIE. These tenets highlight how human communication depends on the hearer's capacity to deduce meaning from context. Sperber and Wilson (2002) claim that every word carries a presumption of its own optimal relevance, which is known as the cognitive principle of relevance. This indicates that the hearer's cognitive capacity to process the utterance is what achieves relevance. These principles, as well as the cognitive capacity to map the target domain from the source domain, are necessary for the comprehension of the idiomatic statement. Analysing the relevance of each linguistic item in the formation of an idiom while keeping in mind the metaphoric quality of PIE—possibly idiomatic phrases defined by the compositionality of the idiomatic statements—is the goal of this purpose. For example, the metaphorical expression "life is a journey" necessitates an understanding of a journey in order to comprehend the idea of life.

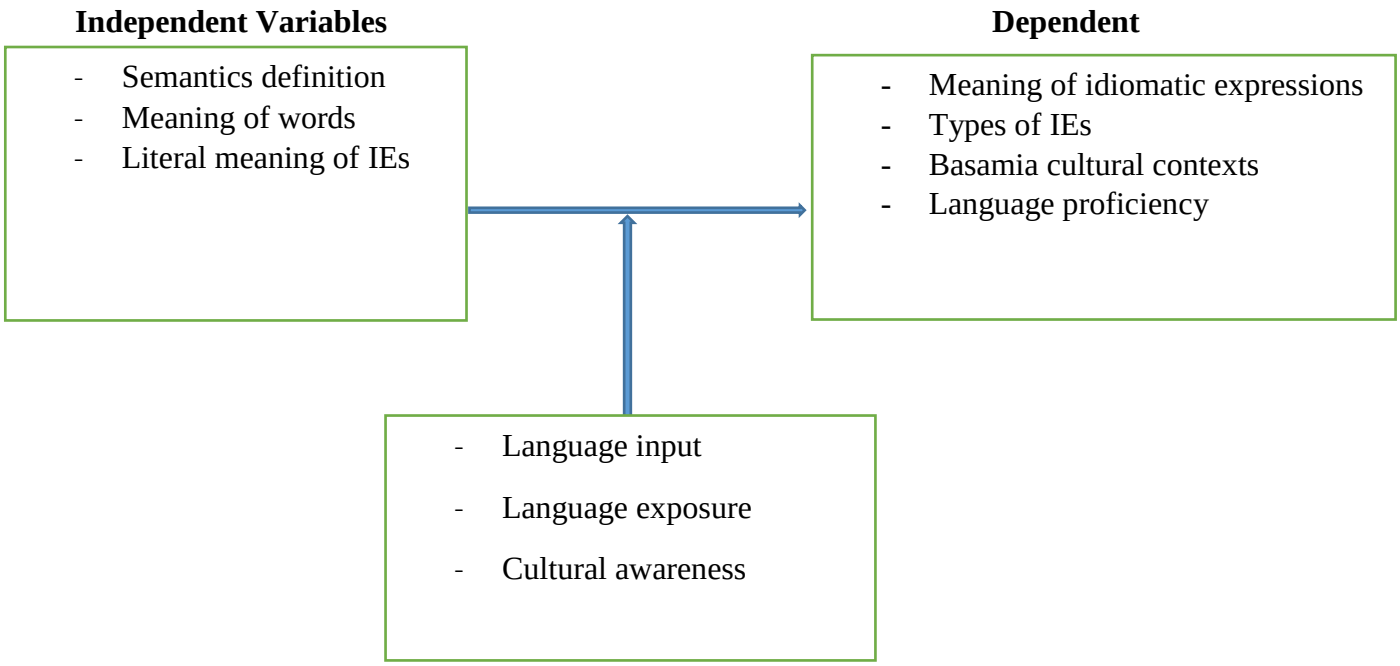
A journey is familiar and the understanding of life can be deduced from the concept of a journey. Cognitive ability determines the communicative comprehension of idiomatic expressions.

There are other researchers who carried out studies using Relevancy Theory such as Carston (2002) exploring how the theory applies to the distinction between what is explicitly communicated and what is implicitly understood in communication. Yus (2010) applies Relevance Theory to internet communication showing how the search for relevance operates in online interactions**.** Clark (2013) provides an accessible introduction to Relevance Theory

covering its application to a wide range of communicative contexts including humour, literature and everyday conversation.In this study on Lusamia idiomatic expressions (LIE), Relevance Theory can be seen as highly applicable complementary for CMT. Relevance Theory supports this by suggesting that for communication to be effective, both speakers and listeners must share contextual knowledge. The meaning of idiomatic expressions cannot always be derived from the words themselves, but depends on the shared cultural knowledge of the speaker and listener. For example, the Lusamia idiom *Namwanagenda akhira ngí'na amakesi* ('A child who moves to others will be wiser than the mother') requires understanding the value placed on wisdom through exposure in the Basamia culture. Without this cultural context, the literal meaning may lead to misinterpretation.Relevance Theory suggests that idioms are a form of communication that balances effort and relevance by conveying a rich, cultural message in a compact form. For example, the proverb Nandakererwa yachia nakwo ebukhwe (A man who does not listen to advice will go to his in-laws with vices) encapsulates the importance of heeding advice through a culturally resonant image, making communication more efficient while preserving meaning. Idiomatic expressions not only convey meaning but serve social purposes, such as teaching, advising or warning. The speaker uses idioms to achieve an optimal level of relevance that will trigger the desired response or understanding in the hearer. This theory's tenets will guide in sampling the 30 idiomatic expression that the study targets from the total collection of idiomatic expressions that will be made.

1.12. The Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Semantic analysis of idiomatic expressions explores how meaning is derived from the idioms, focusing on components of idiomatic expressions such as individual words constituting the idiomatic expression, literal meaning, contextual usage and compatibility of the structure and meaning of the idiom referred to as PIE (potentially idiomatic expressions), which form the independent variables in this research. Thus, the analysis of semantics constitutes the independent variables, while the idiomatic expressions constitute the dependent variables. As a result, language input intervenes in the variables necessitating language comprehension for interpretation and analysis of IE.

The analysis of idiomatic expressions in Lusamia focuses on IEs' grammatical category, structure, composition and relationship between literal meaning and the metaphoric connotation. Meaning and types of idiomatic expressions are of importance in the conceptual framework of this research. It implies that semantic analysis, which focuses on the individual word composition of the idioms and their influence on the meaning, is a crucial variable in this study. Word composition builds up the structure of IEs and helps to categorize the Lusamia idiomatic expressions. Individual words and sentence structure are, therefore, important independent variables that influence the meaning of IE.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0. Introduction

Any academic writing must include a literature review since it highlights previously published materials on the study's topic and lays the groundwork for additional research. The researcher's goal in this chapter is to gather a substantial amount of information about idiomatic expressions to guide the analysis of LIE. Studies on idiomatic expressions that are fundamentally relevant to this topic and come from a variety of linguistic backgrounds will provide support for the research. The goals of earlier research and the theoretical framework's perspectives are crucial. This chapter will be produced with the coherence, superb organisation, and readability that Colling (2003) describes for exceptional literature on a certain subject.

2.1 Types of Idiomatic Expressions

Ayer (2015) conducted research on the study of idioms in relation to language universals. The primary objective of her research was to explore how idioms reflect the relationship between language and culture, focusing on the concept of language universals. She aimed to identify idioms that are common across multiple languages and to examine how these expressions are shaped by cultural factors. Her methodology involved surveying non-native English speakers, asking them to translate idioms from their native languages into English. This helped her to identify which idioms were universally understood and which ones varied due to cultural differences. Ayer (2015) used her findings to investigate how different cultures express similar human experiences through idioms, analysing the impact of language on thought as outlined in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

Ayer's (2015) study is closely related to Semantic analysis of LIE, which seeks to examine the idiomatic expressions and their semantics, with a focus on the relationship between language and culture. This study’s main objective is to examine the cultural function of idiomatic expressions among the Basamia through establishing different types of IEs among the Basamia. Ayer’s (2015) study offers valuable insights into how Lusamia idiomatic expressions might reflect the interplay between language, culture and universal human experiences. By exploring how idioms can be both universal and culturally specific, her

research helps illuminate a few aspects that could be beneficial for understanding Lusamia idioms.

The idea that language influences thought, as proposed in the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, was explored in Ayer's study, and it is highly relevant for Lusamia idiom analysis. This approach can help in examining how the Basamia community worldview and cognitive processes are reflected in their language. The knowledge gap this study address is the seeming insufficient investigation on Lusamia idiomatic expressions, which could contribute to the shaping and reflecting the worldview of Lusamia, compared to the broader global linguistic trends of Ayer (2015). Lusamia idioms may not be as thoroughly documented or analysed in the academic literature as idioms in more widely spoken languages.

McCathy and Odell (2023) critically analysed idiomatic expressions in the movie *Call of the Wild.* The purpose of their analysis was to identify the different idiomatic expressions used in the movie. Their study also aimed at exploring how idioms contribute to the thematic and emotional impact of the text and to understand the role of idiomatic language in shaping readers' perceptions of characters and events and how it enhances the overall narrative experience. They identified and categorised idioms based on their frequency, context and effect on the narrative. They also analysed how these idioms contributed to character development and thematic elements, often drawing on both literary analysis and linguistic theories to support their findings.

The analysis of the data indicated that 7% of the idiomatic expressions were similes, 5% were binomials, 16% were proverbs, 22% were euphemisms, 17% were clichés and 33% were fixed statements. McCathy and Odell's (2023) study informs this study in the sense that both have the objective of critically examining the forms of idiomatic expressions. "The Call of the Wild,'' is a novel where idioms are analysed in a specific narrative context. A Lusamia study might focus on oral traditions, proverbs or everyday conversations, showing a gap in the types of texts or contexts being analysed. The McCarthy and Odell study represents Western world cultural idioms, while Lusamia idioms reflect East African, particularly Luhya cultural experiences. There is a gap in examining how Lusamia idioms convey social norms, taboos and worldviews distinct from English idioms.

The study on the teaching of English idioms in Kenyan Secondary Schools on difficulties and effective strategies, conducted by Gathigia and Njoroge (2016), contributes to the semantic analysis of idiomatic expressions by highlighting the distinction between compositional and

non-compositional idioms. For compositional idioms, it demonstrates how learners can infer meanings based on the literal parts of the idiom.

However, for non-compositional idioms, the study emphasises the challenge of retrieving meaning from individual components, as their interpretation often relies on understanding the idiom's history or etymology. This insight underscores the importance of teaching idiomatic expressions within a context that explains their origin. This study found that learners of English as a second language struggle with understanding idiomatic expressions due to the gap between their literal and figurative meanings. Teachers face challenges in explaining idioms, especially non-compositional ones, where the meaning cannot be derived from individual words. The analysis of semantics in Lusamia idiomatic expressions poses the challenge of compositionality in potentially idiomatic expressions.

Gathigia and Njoroge's (2016) study is grounded on the usage-based theory of language acquisition, which emphasises that language learning is driven by exposure to language in use. This contrasts with more rule-based approaches to language learning. The LIE highlights how idiomatic expressions, which often don't follow predictable patterns, pose a challenge for learners. The research in LIE analysis how these expressions are acquired and processed by learners. Applying this approach to the analysis of Lusamia idiomatic expressions could enhance understanding of how these idioms are learned and used by native speakers and learners. Examining frequency and context in which Lusamia idioms are encountered can provide insights into their acquisition. Collecting and analysing of Lusamia idioms could reveal usage and contexts, contributing to a deeper understanding of these expressions in Lusamia.

Otiso (2022) carried out a study focused on the figurative language used in Ekegusii idioms, specifically examining their types and structures. Her first study objective was to analyse the types of figurative language used in Ekegusii idioms, such as metaphors, similes and euphemisms. The second objective was to investigate the morphological and syntactic structures of these idioms, particularly in an agglutinating language like Ekegusii, and lastly to challenge traditional definitions of idioms, showing how, in Ekegusii, even single words can convey complex idiomatic meanings, confirming the peculiarity of idiomatic expression in natural languages of the world, besides the global English. The research of Otiso (2022) illustrates the different types of figurative language contained in Ekegusii idioms and shows, through some idioms formed only of verb forms, that the very definition of idiom as a group

of words cannot be enough to define idiom in an agglutinating language. It also provides insights into the figurative use of language, which could inform the research on Lusamia idiomatic expression by offering comparative perspectives on how idioms function in Bantu languages with focus to agglutinating language effect common to Bantu languages.

Her analysis of metaphors, similes and morphology may serve as a framework for examining Lusamia idioms similarly. The knowledge gap may lie in the unique idiomatic expressions, syntactic structures or cultural connotations specific to Lusamia, which may not align directly with Ekegusii.

Matifari (2016) carried out descriptive study of the idiom in Lubukusu. The research investigated the types of idioms, the processes involved in their comprehension, and how context influences meaning. The collected idioms were categorised into different types: metaphorical, proverbial or cultural. The categorisation helped in analysing the complexity of meanings and how they are derived within different communicative contexts. Through a qualitative analysis, Matifari (2016) examined how idioms function pragmatically and the way they often carry deeper meanings dependent on cultural knowledge. His analysis showed that idiomatic meaning is heavily reliant on shared cultural and contextual knowledge within the Lubukusu-speaking community.

The Lusamia language, which is a dialect of the Luhya language family like Lubukusu, shares cultural and linguistic characteristics. Both languages rely on contextualised communication and cultural knowledge to interpret idioms. Just like in Lubukusu, Lusamia idioms would require a similar analysis through Relevance Theory**,** showing that idiomatic meanings go beyond literal interpretations and require cultural understanding. The fact that both languages belong to the Luhya family means that many of the idiomatic structures and cultural metaphors might overlap, making Matifari's (2016) findings applicable to Lusamia. For example, idioms in both languages could use similar metaphors derived from shared socio-cultural experiences such as farming, family and relations. In both the Lubukusu and Lusamia studies, the context is key to understanding idiomatic expressions. The Lusamia idioms would likely follow similar patterns in terms of metaphorical expression and reliance on cultural background, making Matifari's study a good reference for comparing idiomatic usage across these related dialects.

The knowledge gap, despite all these similarity facts, is realised by the fact that while Lubukusu and Lusamia are both Luhya dialects, they differ in phonetics, morphology and

syntax. Idioms in Lusamia may reflect unique linguistic features not covered in Matifari's (2016) study. There is a need for specific analysis of how Lusamia idioms utilise these unique linguistic structures. Lusamia might therefore have different idiomatic structures, metaphors or expressions that reflect its specific community.

A study on Lusamia idioms could explore whether there are unique linguistic or syntactic patterns that affect how idioms are formed and understood in Lusamia dialect. Lubukusu and Lusamia communities, though closely related, have distinct cultural histories, traditions and social practices. Idioms often draw from these cultural elements. The cultural references in Lusamia idioms might be different, involving agricultural, familial or spiritual concepts specific to the Lusamia community, which were not addressed in Matifari's (2016) Lubukusu study.

2.2 Role of Linguistic Items to the Meaning of Idiomatic Expressions

Linguistic items in idiomatic expressions play several important roles that contribute to their meaning and function. An analysis of idiom variation in the Framework of Linguistic Subjectivity by Liu (2012), justifies that the word 'idiomatic expression', which covers a broad area in linguistics, refers to fixed phrasal forms whose meaning cannot be predicted from the meaning of their components. They are treated as long words that cannot be separated and further analysed. Liu's (2012) research focused on the way idiomatic expressions adapt and transform across different contexts and regions in China. Liu's (2012) study examined how idioms are influenced by factors such as social change, cultural shifts and language evolution. The study OF Liu (2012), emphasised that idiomatic variation is not random but follows certain linguistic patterns and rules that are often tied to metaphorical, cognitive and pragmatic aspects of language across the globe. The research shed light on how idioms, though seemingly fixed in form, exhibit flexibility depending on speakers' cultural background.

By using Liu's (2012) framework, the researcher in the current study can explore how Lusamia speakers comprehend and use idiomatic language in different social and linguistic settings. Liu (2012) provides valuable insights to Lusamia idiomatic expressions and their semantic analysis, particularly in understanding how idioms evolve, adapt and function within different cultural and regional contexts. Chinese is a Sino-Tibetan language with a vastly different grammatical structure; tone system and word formation processes compared to Bantu languages like Lusamia. Liu's (2012) linguistic framework is tailored to the

specificities of Chinese language structure. A gap exists in applying Liu's (2012) linguistic principles directly to Lusamia, as the structural differences between these language families are significant.

Byamugisha (2019) carried out a study on Lunyankore and its generalizability in which she concluded that natural language is ambiguous, a single event can be expressed in various ways to bring about a linguistic realization.

It involves putting together selected words and phrases to form grammatically correct sentence which includes the correct morphology, verb agreement, prepositions and punctuations. This to some extent can influence semantic analysis of Lusamia Idiomatic expressions, as the researcher seeks to analyse the influence of individual linguistic item in the structure of the IEs to the overall meaning of the expression as one of the objectives. Byamugisha *et al.* (2014) confirmed in their study that agglutination is a common feature in Bantu languages that Lunyankore words can contain up to five morphemes, equivalent to an entire clause forming a single word. This could be relative to the research study of analysing the semantics of Lusamia idiomatic expressions. This is conjunctive writing system, where words are orthographically and semantically merged, could also be present in Lusamia. Bantu languages are indigenous to Africa, most of them having agglutinating morphology; words formed by adding affixes to their bases and each affix carries meaning, for example the Lunyankore word;

Tibakumureeba – ti – ba - ku – mu - reeb- a

/They do not see him/her/

Siyanova-Chanturia and Martínez's (2014) study on idioms explored the processing of idiomatic expressions, focusing on both native and non-native speakers of English, and contributed to the understanding of formulaic language in psycholinguistics. Their study aimed to explore how idiomatic expressions are processed in language comprehension, particularly whether they are processed holistically; as a single unit of meaning or compositionally, by analysing individual word meanings. In their study, Chanturia and Martinez (2014) stated that idiomatic expressions constitute a special category of lexical items presenting a fixed structure and specific behaviour in language. Alqatin (2014) displays the same structural and grammatical relations as other linguistic units.

Siyanoa-Chanturia and Martnez's (2014) study can be related to the semantic analysis of Lusamia idioms in that both studies would examine how idioms convey meaning, either holistically or through individual components. In the case of Lusamia, a focus on linguistic items like cultural and contextual influences on idiom meanings would be complemented by the cognitive and language-processing aspects highlighted in the study of Siyanovo- Chantura (2014). This could help analyse how Lusamia idioms function within their unique linguistic framework. The knowledge gap in Chanturia and Martínez (2014) lies in their focus on idiom processing in English, particularly for native and non-native speakers, without exploring how idioms function across diverse languages and cultures.

This gap could be addressed by a Lusamia semantic analysis of idioms, which would provide insights into the influence of cultural, contextual and linguistic elements unique to Lusamia. Such a study could explore how meanings are constructed in Lusamia idioms, enriching understanding of cross-linguistic variation in idiom processing and comprehension.

Sinclair (1987) conducted studies on idiomatic expressions and collocational patterns. His work reflects insights into the role of fixed phrases and collocations in understanding idiomatic expressions. Sinclair's (1987) broader contributions to corpus linguistics and phraseology is also found in his later works and publications about 'Trust the Text: Language, Corpus and Discourse'**,** which builds on his earlier findings and expanding the discussion of idiomatic expressions within the context of corpus analysis. His insights will tremendously support the analysis of the contribution of individual linguistic items to the meaning of LIE.

According to Sinclair (1987), idiomatic expressions are often fixed phrases where the individual words contribute to a stable and predictable meaning. The predictability of these fixed phrases highlights the importance of word combinations in shaping idiomatic meaning. The individual words within the idiom are crucial for maintaining the fixed nature and conventional use of the expression. Sinclair (1987) also pointed out that the meaning of individual linguistic items within an idiom can be influenced by their context. The surrounding words and context play a role in determining how each component contributes to the overall meaning of the idiom. Contextual usage helps in understanding how the meaning of each word within the idiom interacts with the others to form a coherent expression.

These findings underscore Sinclair's (1987) view that the meaning of idiomatic expressions is significantly shaped by the specific linguistic items used and their combinations, with

collocational patterns and context playing crucial roles in the interpretation of idioms. There might be a gap in comparative studies between Lusamia and other languages or dialects. Comparative research could reveal how Lusamia idiomatic expressions align with or differ from idioms in related languages, providing broader insights into linguistic phenomena. While there is significant research on semantic decomposition of idioms in various languages, there might be less focus on Lusamia. Investigating how individual linguistic items contribute to the meaning of idiomatic expressions in Lusamia can fill this gap and enhance understanding of idiomatic structures in this language.

Munyu (2016) carried out a study on the interpretation of Gikuyu idiomatic expressions. The study's objective was to analyse 51 selected Gikuyu idiomatic expressions to ascertain the meaning of each word, and how it contributes to the overall expression. The study concluded that every word significantly adds to the meaning. Munyu's emphasis on the importance of individual words in enhancing understanding is beneficial to Lusamia. When comprehending Lusamia idioms accurately, it is crucial to be able to identify how each component of an idiomatic expression contributes to its meaning, which is made easier with this strategy.

Munyu (2016) employed the Conceptual Metaphor Theory, whose principle is that meaning is a concrete object that can be metaphorically grasped. The theory that similarly backs the analysis of semantics of Lusamia idiomatic expressions. Both studies' focus is on semantics, to explore the deeper meanings of idiomatic expressions beyond their literal meanings, besides examining how words combine to convey meaning that is specific to the cultural and linguistic contexts. Lusamia may exhibit influences from contact languages that coexist such as Swahili, English, Luo and Luhya dialects that is not be met in Munyu's study.

Kiguta (2020) conducted a study on semantic analysis of absent subjects of idioms in Gĩkũyũ. The study employed a descriptive research design and specifically targeted 20 Gĩkũyũ idioms. Data was gathered through focus groups involving native speakers of Gĩkũyũ. Kiguta's (2020) research focused on how native speakers perceive idioms with implied or absent subjects in order to better understand their meanings. In addition to suggesting more research to examine idiomatic elements that impede comprehension, the study sought to identify specific challenges that native speakers might encounter when interpreting idioms without explicit subjects. One such example ***is Ĩgĩtunyuo mwana nĩ ũkagĩrio mũngũ*** (when the baby is being taken from it, it is given a pumpkin). The missing subject is ***Nũgũ*** -

monkey. Kiguta suggested conducting additional research to identify additional idiomatic elements that impede idiom comprehension in Gĩkũyũ as well as other languages.

Alati (2015) carried out a study on pragmatic analysis of Olunyole idioms. The study employed the descriptive qualitative research design building on functional approach to the study of language. Alati (2015) examined the functionality of Olunyole idioms in socio-cultural interactional contexts. He investigated the relationship between the construction and interpretation of Olunyole idioms and the representation of the social reality as reflected in the native speakers' (Abanyole) world view.

In his study, Alati (2015) concluded that the idioms project the people's cultural beliefs and perpetuate the norms and values of the speakers in their mutual interactive use of language. The composition and comprehension of the idioms are therefore context-dependent in realising deliberate acts that control social interaction. It is recommended that studies need to be carried out on the other systems of Olunyole idioms, such as the syntactic structure. Furthermore, he added that the investigation between idioms and other levels of indirect language could provide enriching insights in language and linguistics.

Lusamia idioms could be examined in this light to determine how the Samia people's worldview is reflected through context-dependent language use. This poses a gap in understanding how Lusamia idioms are employed in similar or different contexts, particularly in managing social interactions and conveying cultural messages. Alati recommends further research into the syntactic structure of Olunyole idioms. Lusamia idioms could benefit from this type of syntactic analysis, which could shed light on how idioms are structured within the language and whether they follow specific patterns distinct from everyday expressions. This would enrich the understanding of Lusamia linguistics at the syntactic level. In summary, the study highlights gaps in pragmatic, syntactic and cultural analyses of Lusamia idiomatic expressions, offering an opportunity for a deeper exploration of how language and culture interact in Samia society.

2.3. The Influence of Cultural Contexts on LIE

Cultural contexts play a significant role in shaping idiomatic expressions because they reflect the values, experiences, beliefs and social norms of a particular group. Idiomatic expressions often emerge from shared history, customs and ways of life, making them specific to the culture in which they are used. Yan (2017) conducted a study on the cultural connotation of

English idioms. His study's objective was to examine how idioms are deeply connected to the historical, cultural and social contexts in which they are used. Yan (2017) established that English idioms are formed in a particular historical period and passed from generation to generation, embedded with unique cultural connotations such as historical development, natural environments, religious belief, custom & habits among others. He analysed how English language historical background has influence the use and meaning of idiomatic expressions.

Yan's (2017) study has a great influence on how cultural contexts are unique to an individual culture and how they influence their use of language.

This helps in investigating how Lusamia idiomatic expressions reflect the community's unique cultural practices, traditions, values and historical narratives. This can guide the study in investigating the historical roots of Lusamia idioms, offering insights into how local historical events, rituals or myths influence the creation and transmission of idioms in Lusamia culture. Yan's (2017) study primarily addresses English idioms rooted in Western historical and cultural contexts. The semantic analysis of LIE could fill the gap by exploring how African languages, particularly Lusamia, contribute to the global understanding of idiomatic expressions and how Basamia cultural contexts impact on the use of Lusamia idiomatic expressions. By addressing these gaps, analysing the semantics of Lusamia idiomatic expressions could contribute to a broader and more diverse understanding of idioms, their cultural contexts and their evolving meanings in a globalised world.

Ngugi and Ong'onda (2020) carried out an analysis of the role of context in the meaning and interpretation of Gikuyu idioms. They analysed Gikuyu idiomatic expressions with a close relation to context. Their study applied the Relevance Theory as the tool for analysis. The data collected shows that idioms are a reflection of Gikuyu culture. Hence, they are used as a tool of enculturation of the values of Gikuyu society. Some of the idioms collected showed the value of generosity which is a virtue and others were on vices such as greed.

Ngugi and Ong'onda's (2020) study can serve as a comparative framework for the research on the cultural nuances and contextual influences that shape Lusamia idiomatic expressions. Since Gîkûyû idioms rely on context for proper interpretation, the same may hold for Lusamia idioms. This helped in investigating how Lusamia idioms change meaning in different contexts and how this affects their usage in communication. Their application of Relevance Theory as a tool for analysing idiomatic meaning is useful to explore whether

Relevance Theory or a similar pragmatic approach could help explain how context shapes the comprehension of Lusamia idiomatic expressions, particularly in how the idioms communicate cultural messages efficiently.

In the light of Ngugi and Ong'onda's (2020) analysis of Gîkûyû idioms, several potential knowledge gaps could be addressed: A gap might exist in the comprehensive documentation and analysis of Lusamia idiomatic expressions in relation to their cultural and social values. Lusamia idioms have not received extensive scholarly attention, particularly in terms of how they encapsulate the virtues, vices and other cultural aspects of the Basamia community.

Ngugi and Ong'onda (2020) apply Relevance Theory to demonstrate how context determines meaning in Gîkûyû idioms of which a similar framework might not have been applied to Lusamia idioms. The Gîkûyû study shows that idioms teach societal values, but the extent to which Lusamia idioms perform this role might not be well-researched.

Luvonga *et al.* (2023) carried out a study on Pragmatic interpretation of Oluluhya idioms in Radio Mambo FM, Witimbule programme. The objectives of the study were to determine the form of idioms which are susceptible to misinterpretation by the fans of Witimbule programme in Radio Mambo FM, analyse how misinterpretation of idioms during the conversation in Radio Mambo FM Witimbule programme arises and establish the most effective strategies of interpreting idioms during Witimbule programme. The study was carried out in the framework of Relevance Theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995/2002). The study adopted the descriptive research design because it is in line with qualitative approach to describe the phenomenon as it occurs in its natural setting. The study area was Western Kenya region (Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia and Vihiga counties).

Luvonga *et al*. (2023) study on Oluluhya idioms provides valuable insights that can inform research on *Lusamia* idiomatic expressions, since Lusamia is a dialect belonging to the Luhya language cluster. The key ways in which it informs this study on Lusamia idiomatic expression is the use of Relevance Theory of Wilson & Sperber, (1995/2002). This framework is applicable to the interpretation of LIE. Relevance Theory best explains why certain idioms may be misinterpreted depending on the contextual clues provided or absent in a conversation. An idiom is said to be ambiguous if context is not provided hence the interlocutor is not versed with the knowledge of cognitive environment to interpret. If context is missing with cognitive environment approach, all the idioms can be difficult to interpret. In

pragmatic interpretation of Oluluhya idioms, the meaning of the idioms is not most what it is but what the speaker intends to communicate.

Luvonga et al (2023) used of purposive sampling, unstructured interviews and saturation in collecting the idioms will guide similar approaches in gathering and analysing Lusamia idiomatic expressions. His focus on recording idioms in natural conversation contexts (radio excerpts) renders authenticity in how idioms are used and understood in Lusamia. Luvonga et al. 2023) research touches on Oluluhya idioms in general. It does not provide a deep analysis of Lusamia idioms.

A study dedicated to Lusamia idioms is necessary to provide detailed insights specific to Lusamia dialect, considering how idioms are shaped by the cultural and linguistic uniqueness of the *Lusamia* speakers.

2. 4. Review of Conceptual Metaphor Theory and Relevancy Theory

Conceptual Metaphor Theory, proposed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), holds that metaphor is not merely a linguistic ornament but a fundamental mechanism of thought. On this view, idioms, and figurative language generally, are motivated by systematic cross-domain mappings. These mappings connect a more concrete source domain, to a more abstract target domain, shaping how speakers conceptualize experience and, consequently, how languages lexicalize meaning. Lakoff, (1993); Kövecses, (2010) stressed embodiment, which refers to recurring correlations in bodily experience, and conventional conceptual systems shared within a culture. Cultural ecology such as, agriculture, livestock and social organization as in age grades, kinship, respect registers, and salient animals or plants are common domains in most speech communities that can furnish Lusamia-specific source domains. Cross-linguistic work shows that conventional metaphors cluster around culturally central experiences in their study, Deignan, (2005) and Barcelona, (2000). Thus, a Lusamia idiom about, say**,** ripening or weeding may systematically map to maturation, moral discernment, or social correction, respectively, reflecting embodied actions reinterpreted as abstract processes.

Early idiom research often treated idioms as arbitrary ‘frozen’ expressions. CMT reframed them as **‘**motivated’: their meanings are anchored in underlying conceptual metaphors and metonymies according to Gibbs, (1995); Kövecses & Szabó, (1996). For instance, expressions equivalent to ‘boil with anger’ across languages, instantiate anger as heated fluid in a container Lakoff, (1987). While idioms vary in decomposability in the study conducted

by Nunberg, Sag, & Wasow, (1994), CMT predicts that even opaque idioms may align with culturally stable schemas according to Dobrovol'skij & Piirainen (2005). These insights project global or universal overview of the theoretical framework of CMT and are crucial for semantic analysis of languages like Lusamia, where idioms draw from local ecology, agrarian practice, kinship systems, and social authority domains that likely supply source structures for culturally specific mappings.

Empirical review indicates that idiom processing accesses conceptual structure: embodied scenarios speed comprehension and prime related inferences, according to Gibbs, (1994) and Citron *et al.* (2016). Decomposable idioms allow component-wise meaning activation, while opaque ones still benefit from scenario knowledge tied to the source domain as stated by Glucksberg, (2001). Such findings justify using CMT to analyze semantic patterns in Lusamia idioms and predict processing of idioms grounded in highly familiar practices such as farming or communal work.

CMT has undergone significant refinements to account for variation, discourse, and cultural diversity. Extended Conceptual Metaphor Theory (ECMT**)** by Kövecses, (2020) introduces a multi-level architecture, explaining how metaphors operate from image schemas (embodied patterns like balance or containment), through domains and frames, to dynamic mental spaces. ECMT is particularly relevant for the Lusamia idiom study because it emphasizes cultural grounding and variation**,** acknowledging that metaphors are not universal in usage but adapted to local experiences and worldviews. This provides a framework for analyzing how Lusamia idioms reflect unique cultural schemas rooted in the community's environment and social practices.

Recent expansions of CMT into multimodal metaphor analysis by Forceville & Urios-Aparisi, (2009) and Yang et al., (2023) reveal that metaphors are not confined to words but extend to imagery, gesture, and cultural artifacts. This may be relevant for the study of SAIE which examines how Basamia idioms' cultural contexts could be embedded in oral performances, rituals, and visual symbols. By applying CMT in a multimodal perspective, the study can capture the holistic nature of idiomatic meaning-making in Lusamia culture.

Further**,** Deliberate Metaphor Theory (DMT) of Steen, (2023) distinguishes between metaphors that are processed unconsciously as background conceptual structures and those used deliberately to guide attention or shape discourse. This distinction could as well benefit the study objective by enabling a nuanced analysis of when Lusamia idioms are employed for

routine communication for instance, reinforcing social norms, versus when they are invoked deliberately in performance contexts such as riddling, storytelling, and songs sung in different occasion; marriage, circumcision, funeral, and lullabies.

Psycholinguistic and experimental studies support the idea that metaphors shape reasoning and interpretation. For example, Thibodeau and Boroditsky (2011) demonstrated that framing crime metaphorically as a "beast" or a "virus" led participants to endorse different policy responses, even with identical factual information.

Such findings underscore how metaphors influence thought processes, reinforcing the argument that Lusamia idioms may not only be decorative linguistic artifacts but also active shapers of reasoning and behaviour within the community. The argument that is highly supported by previous literature review that IEs contribute to the innovative skill in the acquisition and use of a natural language.

CMT in summary provides the overarching objective of this research, to analyze and interpret Lusamia idiomatic expressions in relation to their cognitive, cultural, and pragmatic significance as follows;

1) Linking language and thought – showing how idioms are grounded in conceptual metaphors that structure human understanding. Serves as a tool to explain semantic motivation for idioms, why these forms mean what they mean;
2) Highlighting cultural models – allowing the study to uncover how idioms encode ecological, social, and moral values of the speech community.
3) Accounting for variation and context – through ECMT and DMT, which explain how idioms can vary across contexts and serve different communicative functions.
4) Supporting methodological rigor – by drawing from metaphor identification procedures and corpus-based practices to systematically analyze idioms.
5) Providing a principled way to uncover shared conceptualizations embodied in Lusamia everyday practices.
6) When integrated with pragmatic analysis and community validation, CMT yields a culturally sensitive, empirically grounded semantics of idiomatic expressions.

Thus, applying CMT to Lusamia idioms not only advances linguistic theory by testing its principles in an underexplored African language context, but also fulfils the cultural aim of

preserving and interpreting the community's intangible heritage. Since idioms are context-sensitive, pairing CMT with a pragmatic framework of relevance theory (RT) of Wilson and

Sperber (2002), in the current study helped to explain meaning modulation, implicature, and speaker-intended nuance which Nunberg *et al.* (1994), argues that idioms often carry conventional implicatures and context-enriched meanings.

Communication and Cognition of Wilson and Sperber (1st ed. 1986; 2nd ed. 1995) set the core claims: communication is inferential, guided by the Cognitive and Communicative Principles of Relevance; hearers construct explicatures/implicatures to maximize cognitive effects for minimal processing effort. Relevance Theory, revisited/overview papers in the early 2000s clarified explicature vs. implicature, strengthened the optimal-relevance formulation, and situated RT as a post-Gricean, cognitively realistic theory. An explicature is the explicitly communicated assumption recovered from an utterance once the hearer has fleshed out its logical form. It goes beyond the literal words by enriching them with context-based information such as reference resolution, disambiguation, and supplying implicit elements. In simple terms: What is said + context-based enrichment = explicature.

For instance, Utterance: It's cold here.
Explicature: It's cold here [in this room now].
Here, the time (*now*) and place (*in this room*) are pragmatically supplied by context to complete the speaker's meaning.

An implicature is an implied meaning that the hearer infers, which goes beyond what is explicitly said (explicature). It arises when the hearer uses contextual assumptions + relevance principle to derive what the speaker intended to communicate indirectly.

Utterance: *It's cold here.*
Implicature: *Please close the window.*
OR *Let's move somewhere warmer.*

Here, the speaker is not merely describing the temperature but may be indirectly requesting an action.

Vega-Moreno (2003) argues that idiom meanings are (re)constructed online by relevance-driven inference; even familiar idioms involve constructing occasion-specific phrasal concepts that can be enriched or tweaked by context. This explains how speakers

productively vary idioms *spill the beans→ spill some of the organic beans* while keeping intended meaning recoverable. Hearers recover intended meanings by building occasion-specific phrasal concepts constrained by context, cultural knowledge, and discourse goals. Nunberg *et al***.** (1994) posits that idioms are coded by decomposability/transparency predicting that more transparent idioms require less inferential work and are more productively varied, a prediction that could support the study in categorizing Lusamia idiomatic expressions

Carston's (2021) RT work on lexical pragmatics (ad hoc concepts) provides the theoretical the engine for how idiomatic constituents contribute, not via stored global paraphrases alone, but through contextually broadened/narrowed concepts that yield the RT's treatment of metaphor/loose talk (two processing routes; ad hoc senses) supplies a template for idioms whose meanings shade into metaphor/metonymy, helping explain gradience in figurativity and the ease of creative idiom variation.

Carston, (2012) and Wilson & Carston (2007), posit that relevance-theoretic accounts complement CMT by modelling how hearers infer speaker-intended meaning in context, including irony, mitigation, and politeness. In Lusamia discourse, factors like seniority, in-group knowledge, and setting, home, market, elders' meeting called *baraza* shape whether an idiom admonishes, praises, or softens a directive which requires the cognitive outcomes which CMT alone does not fully predict.

2.5. Critique of Literature Review and Knowledge Gap

The literature provides a broad spectrum of perspectives on idioms, yet the gap in Lusamia-specific research is evident. Most of the studies focus on more widely spoken languages or contexts, for instance, English, Gikuyu and Lubukusu, leaving a need for research that addresses the specific linguistic and cultural nuances of Lusamia idioms. The Lusamia study stands a great deal need to delve deeper into its unique linguistic structures, semantics and cultural contexts that set it apart from Lubukusu in Matifari's (2016) research.

The literature review sets a solid foundation for exploring Lusamia idiomatic expressions by addressing the areas for improvement, particularly in specificity and integration of cognitive insights. This study has room to create a more compelling significance for the research in filling the knowledge gap related to Lusamia idioms and contribute to a richer understanding of the interplay between language, culture and cognition within the Lusamia context. The

literature results to broader implications of filling the knowledge gap in Lusamia idioms that could add depth to the current and future related studies. Considering how understanding these idioms might contribute to broader discussions in linguistics, such as language preservation, cultural identity and educational practices for Lusamia speakers is significant.

The literature presents an opportunity for the Lusamia study to contribute original insights into the specific socio-cultural contexts shaping Lusamia IEs. Gathigia and Njoroge's (2016) study emphasizes the challenges learners face with compositional versus non-compositional idioms.

This distinction is useful in analysing Lusamia idiomatic expressions, particularly in understanding how Lusamia speakers grasp meaning through context. However, Gathigia and Njoroge' (2016) study is largely focused on English idioms and second-language learning, which may not translate fully to the way native Lusamia speakers acquire their idioms. Lusamia idioms, deeply rooted in cultural practices and oral transmission, may not follow the same acquisition patterns, underscoring a gap in how teaching strategies or pedagogical methods would apply to native speakers.

The Lusamia study can fill the identified gap by conducting qualitative research specifically descriptive to collect data and analyse Lusamia idioms and investigate the cultural, social and historical factors that influence idiomatic meaning in Lusamia as the current study aims. Exploring the pragmatic interpretation of idioms within the Lusamia community's oral and conversational traditions, distinct from the written and literary focus of some of the referenced studies was necessary. This comprehensive analysis significantly contribute to the understanding of idioms within lesser-documented languages, highlighting their unique role in cultural expression and identity.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

Research, according to Pandey and Mishra (2015), is an artistic endeavour in science that is defined as a systematic, methodical search for pertinent information on a certain topic. As a result, a thorough explanation of the research strategy and methods used in the study is provided here. Aside from the primary study design, it specified the sample size and method that would be employed, along with a description of the data collection tools. The target population, the study's geographic location, sample size and sampling strategies, research instruments, the instruments' validity and reliability, data collection methods, ethical considerations and data processing strategies are the primary topics of discussion in this chapter.

3.1. Research Design

According to Kombo & Tromp (2006), the research design is a structure presenting how different parts of the research work harmonise to find answers to the research questions. This study employed a descriptive research design of Nunan (1992), within a qualitative research paradigm because of its naturalistic ethnography. Nunan is a proponent of descriptive design who promoted it as a way to observe and describe language teaching and learning without manipulating variables. This is particularly relevant for the study of idioms since idiomatic expressions are often used in spontaneous, everyday communication, deeply embedded in cultural norms, values and contexts.

3.2. The Locale of the Study

The study area was Nambuku Location, which is situated in Samia Sub-County. Basamia in Busia County forms a population of roughly 107,176, according to the (2019) census statistics. Samia is the second-smallest sub-county in terms of size, based on Busia County figures from (2019) statistics. It is significant to note that Samia North Sub-County is divided into eight zones and four wards: Bwiri, Agengá/Nanguba, Namboboto/Nambuku, and Nangina. Nambuku is a location within the four wards, selected for its unadulterated Lusamia due to its lack of or little contact with other languages. Another reason for the consideration of this locale is their rootedness in culture and traditions such as belief in rainmaking. The locale also still has a substantial number of old people, as targeted in this study.

Within the broad field of applied linguistics, this study is grounded in pragmatics and sociolinguistics. Pragmatics is concerned with how meaning is constructed, conveyed, and interpreted in real communicative situations, going beyond the literal meanings of words. Since idiomatic expressions are inherently figurative and context-dependent, the study seeks to investigate how their interpretation cannot be separated from the situational and cultural contexts of the Basamia of Nambuku location. On the other hand, sociolinguistics focuses on the relationship between language and society, paying attention to how linguistic forms reflect cultural values, social norms, and identity.

3.3. Target Population

A target population, according to McRoberts (2015), is the entire population or group that a researcher is interested in or about which the information is required. The target population in this study are the Basamia speakers and Lusamia idiomatic expressions.

3.4. Description of Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Ten people participated in total in the research: two for in-depth interviews and eight for focus group discussions (FGD). Eight participants fall within the required range for an FGD, manageable, and also provides possibility diverse views from participants. Participants were native speakers who are at least 60 years old and no older than 75. In order to create a focus group, eight participants, three women and five men, were chosen purposefully and by snowballing. These were perceived to have spoken Lusamia for a longer time and are consequently familiar with the language and its culture. This was done in accordance with Borg and Gall's (1989) statement that a sample is a smaller subset of the population that has been carefully selected to represent all of the important features of the total population. They are not affected by modern world technology of computer that is extinguishing the use of indigenous languages. The two individual participants aged between 72 and 75 years old, for in-depth interviews were as well purposively sampled. Their age advancement means more language proficiency and acquisition to the culture that will benefit the study with in-depth information on the meaning, origin and use of idiomatic expressions.

The elderly respondents are believed to be custodians of culture; people who are born at the time cultural values and norms were highly exulted and observed by the natives of any African language community.

According to Patton (1990), using the snowball strategy is appropriate because the researcher may not be familiar with the participants' resilience or cultural background, for well-informed data necessitates that the participants are more conversant in language and aware of their culture. The researcher sampled 73 idiomatic expressions from the participants.

The 73 idiomatic expressions were purposively sampled out of the 121 collected idioms on the basis of their relevance to the study's objectives.

3.5 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection is the process of obtaining information to support or validate claims, (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). By gathering opinions, perceptions, observations, behaviours and habits for analysis, it helps researchers better understand and interpret a complex problem and present the facts (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The following tools were used;

3.5.1 Interview Guides for FGD

Interview guides are structured or semi-structured tools used by researchers to facilitate interviews by providing a set of questions or topics to be explored during the conversation. Questions were designed to guide the interview in a focused manner, ensuring that the researcher covers all relevant areas of inquiry, while still allowing flexibility for the interviewee to elaborate on points or introduce new perspectives.

3.5.2 In-depth Interview Guides

In-depth interview guides are tools used to facilitate comprehensive, exploratory interviews that aim to gather detailed, rich information from participants. They were appropriate for the two individual participants. These guides were typically employed and were designed to lead the interviewer through a series of open-ended, probing questions that allowed participants to share their knowledge of LIEs, experiences and thoughts.

3.5.3 Research Materials

The research materials in this research were simply a pen and an exercise book to record detailed data from the participants. A tape recorder and a camera were required for originality and validity of the information to be transcribed and analysed.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques and Presentation

The use of thematic data analysis was ideal for this research. Nowell (2017) suggests that a thorough thematic analysis approach can yield reliable and meaningful results.

This was a research technique for methodically organising and analysing large, complicated data sets in the study's thematic analysis. It entails carefully reviewing and rereading the recorded data to identify themes according to King (2004) as well as Rice and Ezzy (1999). Careful conceptualization of the ideas as they were developed in the literature study was ensured by the researcher and in relation to research questions. The data were presented using coding mechanism of themes as linked to the conceptual framework.

Edwrads & Lampert's (2002) in their study recommended avoidance of cleaning up the analysis transcript which researcher avoided; making grammatical or semantic corrections to the respondents' interpretation of idiomatic expressions. All interview responses were orthographically coded by the researcher in full. A detailed analysis involved the following steps guided by the Referential Theory of Meaning and Conceptual Metaphor Theory. Firstly, a collection of idioms was done by gathering a list of idiomatic expressions used in Lusamia. Then the translation of each idiom literally into a target language with focus to linguistic items in the composition of the LIE. The researcher thereafter categorised the expressions in their different forms or types, such as proverbs, euphemisms and binomials. Idiomatic expressions' meanings as understood by native speakers was provided with cultural, social or environmental contexts that contribute to their meaning. Mapping of target domain from source domain, historical background and the function of the idiomatic expression was explored. The researcher has carefully recorded the information ensuring a distinction between English, Lusamia, Kiswahili and other languages; English is written in normal writing, Lusamia is italicised, Kiswahili is bolded and other languages are italicised and bolded.

3.7. Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

Credible research critically observes all the measures necessary for the validity and reliability of the study records. Validity is assessed based on the adequacy of samples and the sampling procedures used to construct the skills, knowledge, attributes, and attitudes under investigation, as noted by Boyatzis (1998). The researcher ensured a collection of sufficient number of Lusamia idiomatic expressions from a geographical area believed to have native speakers who use authentic Lusamia. Validity also refers to the degree to which the findings

from the data analysis accurately represent the phenomenon under investigation and the data accurately represent the variables. This research adhered to the explained recommendations and carried out the study in the correct and valid manner. The researcher conducted a thorough collection, accurate recording, and in-depth analysis of Lusamia idiomatic expressions.

The reliability of the instruments of this study was deduced through a pilot test that was carried out using critical analysis of a few sampled idiomatic expressions in Lusamia. However, to confirm the reliability of the instruments, the researcher assessed and examined the consistency of the results of the piloted idiomatic expressions, which in turn determined the reliability of the data and research tools so as to arrive at the study's conclusions.

3.8. Pilot study

A pilot study is a small-scale preliminary study conducted before the main research, aimed at testing the feasibility, clarity, and effectiveness of the data collection instruments and procedures according to Polit *et al* (2001). A smaller population is drawn from the target population to test the validity of research instruments or data collection tools. It is also called feasibility study. In this study the researcher picked some few Lusamia idiomatic expressions and sought for their analysis from Basamia speakers. The few idiomatic expressions used for pilot study were not investigated again in the main research.

3.8.1. Data collection and Analysis Process

Purposive sampling with the snowballing technique was used in the pilot project to sample Lusamia idiomatic terms from six native Basamia speakers who speak Lusamia fluently. Unstructured interview questions from the interview guides were used to gather the data which was then thematically evaluated and coded. Additionally, the participants were coded. Two of the six individuals were used for in-depth interviews while the other four were used for the FGD.

3.8.2. Results of the Pilot Study

The interview guides with unstructured questions proved useful in eliciting rich cultural and idiomatic insights from participants. Purposive and snowball sampling ensured participants were genuinely fluent in Lusamia, confirming the approach is suitable for the main study. Some questions were found to be too broad and required rephrasing to guide participants toward idiomatic explanations without imposing meaning. Participants generally understood

the purpose of the study, but probes were refined to elicit deeper metaphorical and cultural interpretations.

Responses confirmed that the selected Lusamia idiomatic expressions carried both literal and metaphorical meanings, which were consistently recognized across participants. The collection of idioms proved that variation in the Basamia idioms is structural besides the obvious universality. The commonly used are proverbial idiomatic expressions. The pilot study revealed minor variations in interpretation depending on age and gender, suggesting the need for balanced representation in the main study. Out of 6 participants, the 4 in focus groups generated diverse examples and cultural elaborations, while the 2 used for in-depth interviews provided richer context and personal perspectives. This confirmed the effectiveness of combining focus groups and in-depth interviews for triangulation.

3.9. Ethical Considerations

Kombo and Tromp (2006) note that data collection procedure involves the researcher seeking permit before embarking on the study and then administering research instruments. The researcher was approved by the Department of Languages, Communication and Literature of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa -CUEA then sought permission from the Ministry of Education's National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) before embarking on the research in Nambuku location. In addition, the researcher also informed the chief of the location of the research.

The researcher complied with all ethical protocols necessary to guarantee the authenticity and dependability of the research. The researcher gave the respondents an efficient introduction and reassured them that the information they submitted would be kept private. In order to obtain informed consent, the researcher had to fully explain the nature of the study to the respondents and give them a chance to ask questions.

Additionally, a researcher must brief and debrief the respondents on the significance of the findings. When gathering, analysing and reporting data, the researcher considered participants' protection which come in a variety of forms, including those pertaining to privacy and secrecy, anonymity, harm to the body and mind, voluntary and informed permission, using vulnerable or special populations, sharing study findings and budgetary concerns in funded studies. The research guaranteed accountability and transparency to the sponsors who paid for the travel and accommodation costs associated with the study.

It is important to recognise that plagiarism is a severe intellectual and academic transgression that can have detrimental effects, including the retraction of a study and the erosion of a researcher's credibility. The high opportunity to obtain online literary references, has significantly increased the danger of plagiarism. This can be accomplished safely by properly citing the sources of the information. This study aimed to identify instances of self-plagiarism, which is defined as republishing or resubmitting portions of one's own work without giving due credit.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

Building on the lively and insightful discussions with the participants, the Lusamia idiomatic expressions collected were analysed and organised according to emerging thematic patterns. Each theme captures a specific aspect of the idiomatic expressions, such as their semantic richness, structural variations, and cultural significance. The collected data contain elements needed for the analysis of (i) the different types of Lusamia idiomatic expressions (LIE), (ii) the contribution of individual linguistic items to the meaning of LIE, and (iii) the evaluation of the influence of Basamia culture on their IEs.

The themes, relative to the aforementioned objectives, are presented in this chapter, supported by direct quotations from participants and identified by being italicised to give originality and authenticity to the study's findings. The phenomenological analysis of LIE is supported by the conceptual metaphor theory (CMT) and relevance theory (RT), on which the interpretation of metaphoric expressions is grounded. The information from correspondents is carefully recorded, ensuring a distinction between English, Lusamia, Kiswahili, and other languages; English is written in normal writing, Lusamia is italicised, quotations from participants are indented in normal font, Kiswahili is bolded, and other languages are both italicised and bolded. All idiomatic expressions discussed are coded as LIE^{1} up to $LIE^{73.}$

The researcher used two categories of participants in collecting the information: a focus group for discussions and two individual participants for in-depth interviews. Each individual participant from the two categories was asked to prepare for the interview and discussions prior to the days of meetings - by being briefed on the main theme (Lusamia idiomatic expressions) and giving them the interview schedules. The exercise was, therefore, quite engaging as the participants collected many Lusamia idiomatic expressions prior to the specified meeting days ready for discussion. Data was first presented in Lusamia to enable contribution of information from all participants then translated to English by the researcher aided by some participants who were Elite in the group for recording and later analysis that must be in English. The correspondents in this study are coded as PTD^{1} and PTD^{2} for in-depth interviews, and $PTFG^{1}$, $PTFG^{2}$, up to $PTFG^{8}$ for focus group discussions.

4.1 Types of Lusamia Idiomatic Expressions

Through data collection, an account of 90 Lusamia proverbs and another 31 non-proverbial LIEs were recorded, out of which 73 were sampled to enable effective transcription, analysis and presentation of data on the various types or categories in which LIEs exist. The Basamia speakers conversant in both language and culture use idiomatic expressions which they call *engaado,* meaning proverbs, in their day-to-day communication among themselves. This affirms what Baldwin and Kim (2010) emphasise in their study: that idiomatic expressions are only understandable in conversations by native speakers with a certain level of language proficiency and knowledge of culture.

The participants acknowledged the gradual disappearance of Basamia cultural values and language expressions attributing this decline to several factors: formal education, language policy, religion, urbanization, and contact with other languages. One of the major influences is formal education as most youths spend more time in school than at home where they primarily use English or Kiswahili. This limits their exposure to and use of Lusamia. Additionally, government language policy has negatively impacted Lusamia proficiency. In local village councils, known as *ebaraza*, Kiswahili is often used to accommodate non-native speakers and to comply with policy requirements that mandate the documentation of official information in Kiswahili. As a result, the use of Lusamia in formal and communal settings has diminished over time causing a limited use of language and application of its linguistic features such LIEs. However, elders still vividly remember and use the Lusamia idioms in their daily conversation.

The study established that idiomatic expressions exist in Lusamia in different forms such as, words, phrases or sentences that were really rich in transmitting cultural values, norms and social bonds which they presume are diminishing. The young generation of Basamia speakers, are engrossed in English and Kiswahili, and they lack enough knowledge of the language and culture, as evidenced by the fact that they do not comprehend *'Engaado'*. The participants in their discussion expressed their acknowledgement for diminishing IEs as expressed by PTFG[3]:

> Many idioms were once employed to teach us principles or to chastise us for our transgressions. If you were a stubborn child, for instance, you could be told, *ewe, wahabukanane nende esiaria Adundwe amolu* (you will meet what ate the nose of Adundwe - a name of a person). This expression impacted the training of morals in children because of understanding the language. One could feel the weight of the reproach and become afraid of repeating a bad trait that is reprimanded. On the contrary the children of these days will rubbish it or even ask who Adundwe is.

PTFG[3]'s narration above depicts the contrast between today's generation and the traditional one. Traditional societies embedded morals, discipline, and life lessons in idioms and proverbs. The idiom about *Adundwe* worked because children grew up in a culture where such references were widely understood. The weight of language and symbolism instilled respect and fear of wrongdoing. For traditional children, idioms were not just words but carriers of cultural memory. They created a sense of belonging and continuity because everyone understood the stories, metaphors, and warnings behind them. This shared understanding reinforced identity and cohesion. Today's children, influenced by globalization, may not know who *Adundwe* was or why the idiom matters. The expression loses force when the cultural background is missing. This highlights a widening gap between traditional wisdom and modern upbringing.

Global culture emphasizes direct communication, individualism, and digital expressions (memes, slang, etc.) rather than symbolic or metaphorical language. This has weakened the effectiveness of idioms as tools of moral education. The narration teaches us that if cultural expressions are to remain meaningful, they must be transmitted and explained in ways that resonate with today's generation. Parents, educators, and community leaders need to contextualize traditional idioms and make them relatable to modern life. It also shows the importance of preserving language as a vessel of wisdom. Losing idioms means losing part of a people's ethical framework.

The research data presents expressions that are unique to the community and categorised them according to their cultural significance and structure. One such relevant structure, is the euphemism '*olubango*' (LIE[24]) which refers to the state of having sons or not having any in the family.

Such expressions serve not only as linguistic tools but also as markers of identity, character, and wisdom within the community's sub-groups known as clans. The use of idiomatic language played a crucial role in the social organisation among the Basamia community to define the individual members personalities and abilities. It was instrumental in identifying leadership qualities and assigning responsibilities such as village elder, women's advisor, or youth representative. Despite the attributed value to the use of idiomatic expressions, participant PTFG[5] acknowledge the fact that they are no longer in use:

> …….Slowly but surely, these proverbs are vanishing. Some of the expressions, like *'oyo abulaho olubango'* required a deep understanding of the Basamia language and culture to comprehend. The sentence means that one doesn't have a son(s). It is a metaphor for the fact that having no males in the family was a social disgrace. Very few speakers nowadays will get that *olubango* signifies sons or boys in the family. There are a few examples of such word phrases.''

Lusamia Universal Idiomatic Expressions - LIE[1] - LIE[6]

The idiomatic expressions in Lusamia are mostly proverbial, and some cut across the globe confirming what Ayer (2015) identified in her study that there are idioms that are common across multiple languages but shaped by the different cultures. In this context, the researcher identified LIEs that are also present in English but are influenced by cultural factors affecting their linguistic proposition.

LIE[1]: *Obukofu nengabo.*

Translation: old is gold.

The Basamia use *engabo*, which means 'shield' to map out the value of old age as the target domain - a significant element in the CMT framework of Kovecses (2015). A shield is familiar and attributed more value as compared to the gold used in the English idiom - which globally is known as a mineral with great value but not familiar to Basamia. The application of the source domains; a shield in Lusamia, and gold in English contributes to the understanding of idiomatic expressions definition of Gibbs (1995) - language nuances that are unique to the individual language's culture.

LIE[2]: *Sioberesia ehanga baho engoho.*

Translation: Whatever you give to a guinea fowl, in Lusamia- *ehanga* consider also giving to a domestic chicken.

Global Equivalent: Charity begins at home.

It is the same as the famous English proverb; charity begins at home. In the Basamia cultural context a chicken is familiar and easy to use to map out the target domain which is charity that should begin at home- reflected in the chicken. *Ehanga* or guinea fowl takes the image of an outsider who can easily leave - fly away. The Basamia emphasize that obligations and generosity should begin with one's family and close relations. Neglecting those nearest while helping outsiders is seen as a distortion of moral duty. The proverb preserves the social fabric by reminding people to uphold kinship ties and domestic responsibilities before extending their resources elsewhere. From this proverb, we learn that the Basamia place a high value on kinship, responsibility, fairness, and moral order using everyday imagery of chickens and guinea fowls to pass down wisdom about prioritizing care for one's own. This shows how proverbs function as tools of social regulation.

More examples of global idiomatic expression included:

LIE[3]: *Esimba yikona abakwanire.*
Literal Translation: A house for boys sleeps only those who get along well.
Global Equivalent: *Birds of a feather flock together.*

LIE[4]: *Owibula amahwana yesika amabeere.*
Literal Translation: The one who produces twins is ready with enough milk.
Global Equivalent: *Don't bite off more than you can chew.*

LIE[5]: *Eng'ombe yitamera enjika hasiyekekera otwoma.*
Literal Translation: A cow that has not yet grown horns cannot attempt to knock heads.
Global Equivalent: *Don't bite off more than you can chew.*

LIE[6]: *Omwana aunya si arire.*
Literal Translation: A child smells of what they have eaten.
Global Equivalent: *You reap what you sow.*

Basamia idioms above demonstrate that while the imagery in the idioms is culturally specific, the wisdom behind them resonates universally. All the examples touch on issues central to all human societies and family responsibility, for example, charity at home and moral correction to either heed advice or face consequences as in the Basamia's meeting what ate the nose of *Adundwe*. Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) shows that idioms map concrete experiences, for example, domestic animals or body parts onto abstract domains, such as charity, obedience and morality. This mapping is a universal cognitive process across cultures.

Basamia idioms enrich the global tapestry of languages by showing how universal truths can be packaged in locally meaningful imagery. They expand the pool of metaphors available for global comparative linguistics and intercultural communication. They preserve African indigenous wisdom, ensuring that global discourse on proverbs and idioms does not remain Eurocentric. Basamia idioms add African-centred lenses to global conversations on morality, responsibility, and social order. By comparing idioms across languages, people see both the uniqueness of Basamia culture and its connectedness with global humanity. This builds intercultural empathy, understanding that while symbols differ, the lessons are shared. They highlight how context, culture, and environment shape language use. This offers valuable insights to global studies in applied linguistics, translation, and philosophy of language.

4.1.1 Potentially Idiomatic Expressions - PIE

This category of Lusamia idiomatic expressions is influenced by the framework of PIE (potentially idiomatic expressions) which aligns with Gathigia and Njoroge's (2016) research on teaching English idioms and compositionality of idioms that some idioms are compositional and others non-compositional. Accordingly, some Lusamia idioms can be readily understood by deriving meaning from the word composition in the structure even though not directly translating the words, and some are not easy to interpret. Matifari (2016), in his study, refers to them as semi-opaque and opaque, respectively, depending on the compatibility of sentence constituents and the metaphoric or fixed meaning of the idiom.

The data on this objective projected the possibility of analysing the proverbs in two themes by using the systematic mapping of the source and target domains of CMT. These themes are coded as PIE^1 and PIE^2 whereby PIE1 refers to compositional or semi-opaque and PIE^2, non-compositional or opaque proverbs. The application of the metaphoric concept of Kovecses' (2015) systematic mapping guided the researcher to distinguish between compositional and non-compositional IEs in the structure of the idiom.

This was determined through the complexity of mapping the domains. Compositional proverbs are easier to map out the domains compared to non-compositional ones. The results from the discussion and interview were tabulated.

PIE[1]: Compositional Lusamia Proverbs- PIE[1]/ LIE[7]- LIE[19]

An idiom is said to be compositional when its overall meaning can be partially or fully derived from the meanings of its individual lexical components. In other words, the idiom's figurative sense is compatible with the literal meaning of its parts**,** so the listener can infer its intended meaning more easily than with fully opaque or non- compositional idioms.

Table 1: Compositional Lusamia Proverbs

	Lusamia	**English Translation**	**Deeper meaning**
LIE[7]	*Alayi siyehola eng'we, embwa chiahakonerenge musiito.*	The goodness of a home does not make it your own.	Encouraged the sense of belonging and attachment to your home.
LIE[8]	*Edebe khaya rifumuhanga.*	An empty tin makes loudest noise.	Referring to the boastful people without much information but louder with words.
LIE[9]	*Amadedete kabiri keta eenda/ babiri bandu/.*	Two nails can kill a louse.	Encourages the spirit of team work and unity.
LIE[10]	*Namwanagenda ahira ngina amakesi.*	A child who moves is wiser than the mother.	It also challenges the assumption that elders always know more, instead recognizing that learning is dynamic and situational**.** Highlights the importance of exposure, travel, and interaction with society in shaping one's understanding.
LIE[12]	*Nandaulira aliurira emakombe.*	One who does not listen will hear from hades/sheol.	When one rejects guidance, correction, or warnings, they will eventually come face to face with harsh realities of life

			that teach through pain or even death.
LIE[13]	*Nandakererwa / Sirihayi yachia nakwo ebuhwe.*	One who does not listen went with vices to the in-laws.	The proverb conveys the idea that failure to heed advice or warnings leads to embarrassment, shame, or trouble in critical social contexts.
LIE[14]	*Sebulandayi yareha okwano.*	Parting well with people leaves a legacy. (Leave with grace and you will be remembered with honour).	Departing from a place with kindness, respect, goodwill, etc leaves a lasting positive impression.
LIE[15]	*Embwa yilondanga omusokonyalo kwa ngína.*	A dog follows the squatting style of its mother (Like mother like child).	Referring to child upbringing, that children take the traits of their parents.
LIE[16]	*Otahuya omuhono kuhurisa.*	Do not beat the hand that feeds you.	Promotes collaboration and respect especially for the people who have helped you.
LIE[17]	*Otaloka yohama.*	Do not bewitch where you milk from.	Promotes tolerance with regard to what is beneficial regardless the disappointment.
LIE[18]	*Njiyuhane yayia ameno.*	The one who harries burnt his teeth. (Haste makes waste Look before you leap).	Encouraging discernment and not hurrying up with issues.
LIE[19]	*Esilayi siomwene siamoni.*	The eye looks at what it cannot have. (You can admire the moon but you cannot take it home).	Promoted acceptance of one's limitations or contentment.

The table represents some of LIE in the category of compositional idioms whose meaning can easily be inferred from the structural composition of the IE, for example:

LIE[7]: *Alayi siyehola eng'we, embwa chiahakonerenge musiito.*
Translation: *Alayi siyehola eng'we* → The goodness of a home does not make it your own. *Embwa chiahakonerenge musiito* → Dogs would remain at the market place.

PIE or Compatibility check

Goodness of a home: Literally makes sense because homes can be good or comfortable. Idiomatically, this aligns with the temptation of external comfort.
Does not make it your own: Literal phrase, ownership is not achieved through enjoyment. Idiomatically, matches the caution against false belonging.
Dogs at the market: Literally true—dogs scavenge at markets. Idiomatically, this image reinforces outsiders benefitting temporarily but not belonging. The constituents; "good home," "not yours," "dogs at market" directly align with the figurative lesson making the idiom semi-transparent and easily interpretable.

LLIE[8]: *Edebe ehaya rifumuhanga.*
Translation: An empty tin makes the loudest noise.

PIE or Compatibility check

The idiom's figurative meaning is tightly connected to the literal imagery:

An empty tin: A hollow object. Literally, when empty, it resonates loudly if struck or shaken. Describes the physical property of hollowness amplifying sound.

The idiom's metaphoric interpretation is: just as an empty tin produces much noise but lacks content, a person without depth in knowledge or wisdom is often the noisiest in speech. Thus, the constituent structure *tin + emptiness + noise* is semantically compatible with the intended figurative meaning (shallow people = loudness without value).

The idiom is iconic in nature: the literal elements closely mirror the metaphorical message that shallow or ignorant people tend to boast or talk excessively and its meaning aligns seamlessly with its constituents—emptiness directly maps to lack of substance, and noise maps to meaningless talk.

LIE[14]: *Sebula ndayi yareha omukwano.*

Translation: Parting well with people leaves a legacy.

PIE/ Compatibility check

Sebula ndayi = part well / separate peacefully → this sets the condition of the idiom. It signals *a* social action that is observable.

Yareha omukwano = leaves/creates friendship (legacy) → this shows the outcome or the effect of the action.

The act of parting *sebula* is conceptually tied to relationships and transitions. Leaving friendship/legacy *(yareha omukwano)* is logically tied to human memory and social bonds. The cause-effect of relationship is clear that a peaceful parting produces goodwill or a legacy. Therefore the proverb's meaning can easily be inferred from the semantics of its constituents as departing from a place with kindness, respect, goodwill among others leaves a lasting positive impression.

The study enrich the knowledge of idiomaticity by showcasing how local images are mapped onto universal social and moral lessons confirming that idioms are not arbitrary but grounded in both linguistic semantics and cultural experiences. CMT helps to explain how literal images map out figurative meaning in ways that are cognitively natural and culturally resonant.

PIE[2]: Non – compositional Lusamia Proverbs -PIE[2] / LIE[20-] LIE[42]

An idiom is non-compositional or opaque when its figurative meaning cannot be inferred from the literal meanings of its individual words. The semantic contribution of the parts does not add up to the idiom's actual meaning making them harder to interpret without cultural or contextual knowledge.

Table 2: Non- compositional Lusamia Proverbs

	LUSAMIA	ENGLISH TRANSLATION	MEANING
LIE[20]	*Oluhwi luwetenyere luhurisa amiasika.*	The firewood you have looked for by yourself is the one which makes you cry.	The choices we make ourselves can make us weep. This was used to help people become careful with choices they make in life, such as marriage partners, business partners or even careers like politics. For example, people who even contest for various seats and later regret it.
LIE[21]	*Murimba ahira Mutekusi.*	A drop of something is better than none.	It's better a person who gives you very little than the one who gives none. The best example here is the CDF bursary which people complain is little yet it has saved so many poor children achieve education.
LIE[22]	*Obukondo bulayi nobukosia eng'ombe.*	You can easily lose a cow by judging it by its colour. (All that glitters is not gold or Do not judge a book by its cover).	Judge things or people by their value and not outward look. The cow itself has more values beyond it colour; milk, beef, ploughing.
LIE[23]	*Amani komweya kari Mumwanangína.*	The strength of the bride is in his sister.	We are our brothers and sisters keepers. The bride was considered very delicate and therefore needed protection, and so all around her were supposed to ensure the required care. This applies to anyone that our help comes from others near us.

LIE[24]	*Otebambogo atebera Humubiri.*	Otebambogo is an agglutinative morph translating to – He who asks about a buffalo, *emboko,* finds it already with him.	A person may fail to recognize that they are already in the situation they are asking about. For example, asking about trouble when the trouble is already at their doorstep.
LIE[25]	*Eifumbuhe siitia olume.*	An animal that has come out of the bush to hunt does not fear the morning dew. (Nothing ventured nothing gained).	Encourages confidence and determination in pursuing a goal. This is the political slogan of the Governor of Busia county Dr. Paul Otuoma.
LIE[26]	*Obusera bunasambe omwana butaho olububi.*	The porridge that will burn a baby puts a hard top (that hard top part of the porridge in a cup).	There are dangerous people who pretend to be good, who cause harm under the cover of protection.
LIE[27]	*Okona amasika niye omanya onakeremao.*	It's only a person who sleeps at the funeral place who can know the man that will inherit the home.	You can only know the secrets of a person or place if are an associate.
LIE[28]	*Efula yanamadoe yekesa Mumbo abwe.*	The rain showed Mumbo his home.	Experience is the best teacher.
LIE[29]	*Esiri mubuyu sisimanyiha obokondo.*	What is in the egg is not known its colour.	What the future holds for us is always concealed.
LIE[30]	*Efulu yakeraka engeke.*	*Efulu* is a small type fish which advised a tilapia.	Wisdom may not have the size or age.
LIE[31]	*Amakada momu kafunira olukendo.*	Dry reads become heavy on the journey.	Do not underestimate things, do good prior preparation before
LIE[32]	*Okwendaya okwotera eyare.*	*endaya* is a type of firewood that burns well. Warm on its fire from a distance.	Beware of a dangerous personality, that that can destroy you.

LIE[33]	*Embwa enjibi yesikanga omukongo.*	A dog that steals prepares or trusts its back.	Prepare for the consequence of doing evil.
LIE[34]	*Esiri nende emboo sisikwaho omuriro*	What has been entered cold cannot feel warmth.	The difficulty of coming out of bad addictions.
LIE[35]	*Omwana akaluhanga yiyere oluoba.*	A child goes back to where she got a mushroom.	We return to where we are welcomed, or repeat successful attempts.
LIE[36]	*Halubi hadaala hachia ahandi.*	Where a beautiful basket of the home has gone, another one follows.	It reflects the cultural worldview of resilience and unending flow of blessings in the community.
LIE[37]	*Ohesera wane sihumala Amaofu.*	Mediated greeting does not finish the urge of seeing someone.	Emphasize the value of physical presence and personal connection over distant or indirect communication.
LIE[38]	*Okudimbisa kuhurinda*	Procrastinated work, will await.	Just like a debt waits for repayment, tasks wait for completion, and the longer one delays, the greater the pressure becomes.
LIE[39]	*Embwa yilonda omusokonyalo kwa ng'ina.*	A dog squats like its mother- it is the same as English idiom; an apple doesn't fall far from the tree.	Children inherit the similar traits and characteristics as their parents.
LIE[40]	*Njira chiaya ahoo harimo.*	There they are grazing! Yours is among.	If there is communal blame or gossip going around, someone might say the idiom to remind you that your own family, child, or concern could be implicated.

			It could be also positive depending with the context, indicating that an individual is a beneficiary of the collective success**.**
LIE[41]	*Embako siyivachanga omurimi.*	A hoe does not deceive a farmer.	Whatever you work for faithfully will eventually show in the results.
LIE[42]	*Embusi yiri nende enjala yananga.*	A hungry goat bleats.	The proverb highlights how unmet needs—whether material, emotional, or social—inevitably compel expression.

LIE[20]: *Oluhwi luwetenyere luhurisia amiasika.*

Translation: The firewood you have looked for by yourself makes you cry.

PIE or compatibility check

Olukhwi (firewood*)* → symbolizes choices or responsibilities**.**

Luwetenyere (the one you fetched yourself) → indicates personal effort of ownership**.**

Luhurisa amasika (causes you tears/smoke in your eyes) → stands for painful consequences**.**

The burdens or consequences of one's own choices often become the source of one's suffering. When people make decisions independently—whether in marriage, friendship, work, or daily life—the negative outcomes are their own responsibility. It teaches self-accountability and caution in making decisions. Firewood selection is personal and often collected by the users, women themselves—if it is wet, thorny, or smoky, the one who picked it suffers. The experiential source domain (firewood) maps to the target domain (life choices, consequences).

The explanation above require a background cultural knowledge of collecting firewood a common practice among the Basamia. In Basamia community, firewood is a daily necessity, usually gathered by the household itself. This everyday experience is metaphorically

extended to life situations. The proverb reflects communal wisdom: everyone must exercise caution, foresight, and responsibility in their personal and communal actions of life's choices.

LIE[34]: *Esiri nende emboo sisikwaho omuriro.*
Translation: What has been entered cold cannot feel warmth.

PIE or compatibility check

Cold = unresponsive/stubborn/indifferent.
Warmth = kindness, guidance, care.
But without cultural context, an outsider might think the proverb is only about food or firewood. In this case, the phrase *"what has been entered cold cannot feel warmth"* does **not** literally refer to a physical object in the cold that resists fire. Among the Basamia, warmth and coldness are metaphors for human character and receptivity. LIE[34] is a Lusamia non-compositional opaque idiom because its meaning cannot be derived directly from the words, and it requires cultural and contextual knowledge to grasp that it refers to stubbornness or emotional unresponsiveness, not to physical warmth or coldness.
LIE[37]: *Halubi hadala hachia ahandi.*
Translation: Where a beautiful basket of the home has gone, another one follows.
PIE or Compatibility Check

Halubi- a basket represents honour or a good woman; another one follows = resilience, continuity of blessings.

The idiom was traditionally used to refer to a good woman in marriage, who deserved a reward of being given another girl in marriage to either her own husband or in-laws. It does not refer to baskets literally but to continuous blessings, resilience, and virtues**,** especially the attributes of a good woman in marriage**:** hard work, generosity, fertility and moral dignity. The idiom fits well with Basamia practices of marriage exchange, community gifting, and harvest celebrations, where one offering was often followed by another, a basket that carried gifts was never returned empty.

All three idioms illustrate that Basamia idioms are deeply non-compositional, since their figurative meaning cannot be fully inferred from their literal words. They require cultural grounding for firewood use, baskets in marriage exchanges, metaphors of warmth and coldness to make sense.

Non – Proverbial Idioms

There are other categories under which Lusamia idiomatic expressions exist in agreement with Gibbs's (1995) argument that idioms appear in various categories which include binomials, phrasal verbs, similes, proverbs and open clause idioms. Participant PTD[1] explained this with a clarification that:

> …the traditional Lusamia had word expressions which were not very direct; for example, coming to the end of the honeymoon period was referred to as *ohweya olulala* **(LIE[48])**. Traditionally the bride was not allowed to sweep the house or do any work until it was officially done ceremonially by one of her sisters. It is not a common phrase, only familiar to the Basamia who understand the culture. These categories are presented in six themes and tabulated to represent each individual category.

Table 3:Phrasal Verbs: LIE43 – LIE48

Lusamia	English	Deeper meaning
LIE[43]*: Ohwita amaofu/ Ohwita obuluo.*	To quench the longing for something. Or To quench thirst.	To satisfy or fulfil a deep longing or desire for something that has been missed or awaited for a long time. The idiom is commonly used when someone finally receives or experiences something they have greatly desired or missed. The metaphor portrays desire as thirst **and** fulfilment as drinking water**,** highlighting the universal human experience of longing and satisfaction.
LIE[44]: *Omalaho omwoyo.*	Remove the heart from something.	To get discouraged or to forget about something.
LIE[45]: *Okwa engwe/ esolo.*	To be an animal.	To behave in a cruel manner like an animal, ant- social. The expression may be used for someone who acts without values, behaves selfishly, or disregards community norms, thus likened to an animal.

LIE[46]: *Oria esilulu*.	To eat something bitter- swearing.	To swear, which was not easy similar to the sacrifice of eating something bitter. Just as eating bitter food leaves an uncomfortable aftertaste, swearing or taking oaths may bind one to difficult obligations or consequences.
LIE[47]: *Otusa olugala.*	To move out of the ancestral home.	Building a home outside your father's home a symbol of self- governance as a man. You not still depend on your father for needs and decisions
LIE[48]: *Okwheya olulala*	Sweeping the bride's house.	This marked the end of the period of honey moon and beginning to work as a married woman in her home. Before this she was not allowed to do any work.

Table 4: Binomials (LIE49 and LIE50)

Participant PTD[1] was clear about these two Lusamia binomials.

Lusamia	English	Meaning
LIE[49]*:Olukina nende esio*	The big grinding stone and a small one	The Basamia men did not segregate a child whom the mother came in marriage with. They believed this child brought blessings in the home. They therefore in their marriage negotiations referred to these two as *olukina nende esio* being inseparable.
LIE[50]*:Esikwada nende engeso*	A sickle and a guard	These were symbols of harvest, wealth and therefore happiness. The Basamia women danced holding these two in marriage ceremonies to symbolise productivity. During the dance a guard contained the products toasted flour *'emuma'* for bear.

Single word IEs

Months of the Year -LIE[51]- LIE[60]

PTD[1] acclaimed the richness of Lusamia language and how innovative its speakers were indeed. *The elderly speakers did not know what we say today; January, February and so on.* Certain months were named after natural occurrences, such as rainfall patterns, dryness, or crop cycles. These names are metaphoric idioms because their meaning is not literal but contextualized in cultural experiences. They guide agricultural planning, cultural rituals, and social memory—serving as a calendar of wisdom rather than just time-keeping.

Table 5: Months of the year

Lusamia	**English**	**Interpretation**
LIE[51]: *Dulienge*	January	Originates from the singing of birds, during the windy and dry season.
LIE[52]*: Efweko*	February	Believed to be the voice of the girl who was betrayed by her own people - she ate on the way food given to carry to her marital home. *'efwe'* means where I come from. *'Efweko'* is the cry, equivalent to saying, Oh my people! It happened at the end of the strong wind but the capping of one common bird- *'efweko'*
LIE[53]*: Mwerasi*	March	These comes from the word *omwera* which means seeds, which are down or in the ground. *Mwerasi* means seeds in the in the ground. All grains are planted.
LIE[54]*:Ofwombole*	April	The rains are falling and all rivers are full, *ofwombole* is the out powering of rivers.
LIE[55]*:Anjala*	May	*Njala* means hunger. The fifth month is/was known for hunger.
LIE[56]*:Unondaye*	June	*Unondaye* means- 'To where are you following me? That children were fond of following their mothers everywhere and some mothers didn't like to be followed - they went to the farms of others to pick ripe farm produce.
LIE[57]*:Mfuna*	July	Harvest
LIE[58]*:Munyala*	August	Everyone is able, because of the harvest.
LIE[59]*: Fulula*	September	The act of children searching for left over grains in the farms.
LIE[60]: *Maungu*	October	Plenty of the type of birds called *amaungu.*

Other Single Word Expressions (LIE[61]- LIE[68])

Even though idioms are often multi-word, some single words in Lusamia as in other Bantu languages, have idiomatic/metaphoric extensions**.** These words do not only denote their literal object but also carry figurative, cultural, or evaluative meanings**.**

Table 6: Other Single- Word expressions

Lusamia	**English**	**Figure of speech**	**Interpretation**
LIE[61]*:Esibakala*	Toilet	Euphemism	Polite word for going to the loo. (which was possibly going to the bush in olden days). A grown up could not use the toilet, they would use *esibakala* and we would understand it very well. (PTFG4, 9/4/2025)
LIE[62]:*Omuterere*	Slippery	Euphemism	This word was used to describe a person, who is not reliable, politely by telling him sometimes; you have started becoming *muterere.* Or when one seems canning in his talking or actions. PTD2,17/4/2025
LIE[63]: *Okhwesaba*	To wash hands	Euphemism	To surrender having dealing with someone or a thing, to give up on something. *Okhwesaba* is also an expression that Basamia used to refer to the first official visit to in-laws of a bridegroom. It specifically referred to eating food there. Instead of using the word eating, they use the polite word *Okhwesaba-* to wash hands. (PTD1, 14/4/2025)
LIE[64]*:Okhukwera*	Shaving ceremony		This was a ceremony that marked the end of funeral rites with shaving off the hair by the close family members of the diseased. It entailed a lot of rituals; going to the river

			to bath and canning. From the river these relatives would be canned and there could fresh wailing. After that shaving is done then they break a pot to mark the end of mourning.(PTD1, 14/4/2025
LIE[65]: *Embariha*	Jealousy	Idiom	This was an expression used to refer to the jealousy and hatred of women rivals. Embariha is one of the Lusamia expression familiar to till today because rivalry is marriage is day to day practice. (PTFG1, 9/4/2025)
LIE[66]*:Esibeyo*	A wife- gift	Idiom	The Basamia women preferred bringing their younger sister or niece as gifts for marriage to their husbands or brother in-laws. This was for their security in old age, to have a younger woman in the home who would take care of them and their husbands. (PTD[5], 9/4/2025)
LIE[67]*:Echibi*	A house	Idiom	A polygamous man had a central house where all wives cooked and brought food each, all meals and would be evaluated who is more efficient in cooking, delicious and on time. He would eat with all boys in that house called 'echibi' (PTD[1], 14/4/2025)
LIE[68]*: Oluvango*	Pillar	Euphemism	This word was an idiomatic expression used to refer to a boy child. It is an euphemism used to refer to a boy child which considered quite essential in the family.
LIE[69]*: Ehira*		Euphemism	A word referring to the aftermath of unfaithfulness in marriage- symbolised by a thing that can lead to death if a solution is

			not sought.
LIE[70]*:Ohukerama*		Euphemism	To inherit a wife after the death of a husband.
LIE[71]**:** *Esibudi*		Euphemism	Referred to the sitting by elders around a drinking pot and conversing. It was cultural, they joked, they communicated in metaphors and above all socialized.

This is an indicator that there are things or words that the Basamia elders would not call by their usual names for the sake of politeness and respect, a figure of speech referred to as 'euphemism'. Politeness, gentleness and kindness were highly valued among the Basamia speakers. Similar to Otiso (2022) study about figurative language used in Ekegusii, euphemisms appear to be common single-word metaphors in Lusamia with complex meaning and peculiar to the language speakers. For example, it's only a Musamia speaker who can relate meaning to some of these expressions, for instance;

LIE[68]*: Oluvango*

Translation: Sons, male children, or lineage.

Oluvango symbolizes strength, continuity, and heritage of a family or clan. In Basamia thought, having sons secures inheritance rights, family name, and social standing**.** Metaphorically, to say *arinooluvango* which means, he has sons, goes beyond the literal interpretation. It indicates social stability, legacy, and immortality through lineage**.** Culturally, among the Basamia and most African cultures, sons are considered "pillars'', in Lusamia, *esiiro* of the homestead, much like strong posts that hold a house. The idiom reflects the patrilineal system of the Basamia, where sons ensure the survival of family land and traditions. Conversely, lacking *oluvango* (sons) is a metaphor for vulnerability, discontinuity, or a "dying homestead."

LIE[69]**:** *Ehira*

Translation: A word referring to the aftermath of unfaithfulness in marriage- symbolised by anything that can lead to death if solution is not sought as believed by the Basamia.

Among the Basamia, *ehira* is more than just marital conflict. It is a deeply cultural and spiritual concept**,** tied to the idea that unfaithfulness contaminates the bond of marriage and introduces dangerous consequences, often believed to manifest in sickness, death, or misfortune if not ritually resolved. Marriage is a sacred institution among the Basamia and breaking it threatens not just the couple but also family and community stability. Infidelity is equated with bringing death, *okhwita* → to kill. Traditionally, cleansing rituals were performed to avert misfortune.

The two analysed idioms are an example of Basamia word expressions that are fixed**,** whose meanings are not directly predictable from individual words but are understood within the Basamia worldview. Thus, these idioms illustrate the linguistic embodiment of culture**.**

They encode values of heritage, fidelity, survival, and warn against threats on lineage loss, and marital betrayal in compact word expressions. Both align with idiomaticity because they are figurative, culturally bound, and interpreted through CMT (metaphors), RT (contextual relevance), and Idiom Principle (formulaic chunks).

Open Clause Expression: Puns- LIE[72] and LIE[73]

Linguistic research supports the idea that idioms can appear not only as phrases as in, *spill the beans*, but also as clauses or proverbs**.** Nunberg, Sag & Wasow (1994), in their analysis of idioms, explain that idiomaticity can occur at various structural levels: words, phrases, or clauses. Open clauses that carry figurative, culturally recognized meaning are accepted as idiomatic expressions**.** They are often found in proverbs, sayings, and wisdom statements in both English and indigenous languages, for example the English clause; *easy come, easy go.* In idiomatic usage, these clauses are fixed or semi-fixed, and though they look like ordinary sentences, their meaning is not always compositional. The participants identified only two which are commonly used by the Basamia.

LIE[72]: *Mama samba esiaki*

Translation- Mother, burn the granary

PTD2 explained LIE72 saying:

> This was used to express contentment with food. To show that one has eaten enough. Instead of saying thank you, they would use the metaphoric clause, 'mama samba esiaki' Basamia also delight and jokes and are humorous.

The exaggeration *burn the whole store* turns the expression into a playful hyperbole. Humour softens the literal harshness of the image and aligns with the Basamia's delight in jokes, teasing, and witty metaphor. In Basamia society, a granary is more than food storage; it represents security, survival, and continuity of life. To mention its destruction playfully shows confidence in abundance. Food-sharing is central. By saying *Mama, burn the granary*, the speaker signals deep gratitude for being hosted generously. The Basamia often mask seriousness with humour. The hyperbolic metaphor reduces the awkwardness of saying *I am too full* directly, with a joke.

LIE[73]: *Embwa yamuhomba amakulu*

Translation: A dog licked their feet.

This was an expression used to refer to someone who never settled at home, was always on the move, making so many journeys, as narrated by PTFG[5], and PTFG[6] saying*;*

> Sometimes we call it '*ohuyiyiana*' an attribute that wasn't recommended by the culture, a sign of laziness and lacking focus in life. A person with this personality could not be respected or assigned any responsibility.

Restlessness was considered a vice *ohuyiyiana*. Unlike in modern contexts where travel may symbolize ambition or adventure, in Basamia cultural worldview, unnecessary wandering suggested idleness, laziness, or avoidance of duties. The idiom reflects that *the Basamia* community valued stability, home-centeredness, and responsibility. A person who was always on the move was viewed with suspicion, as mobility signified lack of discipline or seriousness. Being a largely agrarian community, the Basamia depended on farming, livestock, and cooperative work. Success required stability—tilling the land, tending animals, and being present during communal labour, which they called *obwoko.*

4.1.3. Learning and Acquisition of IEs

Some LIEs in their different categories are complex and may need prior knowledge of it to be able to relate the meaning with its fixed expression. This prior knowledge was gained through learning that took place in different settings as expressed by participant PTFG[4]:

> We could not know these expressions without being taught, although, others needed only the knowledge of language. There was *esibudi* a drinking place for elders where they sat in the evenings and spoke deep Lusamia and anyone who joined these sittings definitely learnt the language.

The narration implies that for the Basamia speech community**,** language learning was communal, oral, and culture-embedded. The *esibudi* served as both a social hub and a cultural classroom, where elders safeguarded and transmitted the linguistic heritage, ensuring that speech reflected the community's values, identity, and worldview.

The statement *we could not know these expressions without being taught* shows that Lusamia idiomatic expressions are not self-evident but learned through interaction, instruction, and immersion in cultural contexts.

PTFG[6] concurred with the former saying*:*

> Grooming both boys and girls into the traditions of the Basamia and its culture was crucial. Girls traditionally slept in one place called *esivinje*, in the house of a woman elder identified by the clan as wise and conversant with the culture with its traditions, who would teach the girls at night what was expected of girls growing to womanhood, how to make good wives along with the language expressions they did not know.

What about boys? And the discussion goes on, picked up by PTFG[3]:

> Boys slept in 'Esimba' a house for boys with alder boys training the young ones to but besides 'esimba' they had time with their grandfathers, or older men to be taught and to learn. He added that there 'engoba' – meaning fortresses for each clan in which culture and traditions were encouraged.

4.2 The Contribution of Individual Linguistic Items to the Meaning of LIE

Munyu (2016) carried out a study similar to this to ascertain the meaning of each word and how it contributed to the overall expression of the idiom and concluded that every word in the composition significantly contributed to the meaning. According to Sinclair (2004), idiomatic expressions are often fixed phrases where the individual words contribute to a stable and predictable meaning. Sinclair (2004) also points out that the meaning of individual linguistic items within the idiom can be influenced by their context. He adds that contextual usage

helps in understanding how the meaning of each word within the idiom interacts with the others to form a coherent expression.

The communicative and cognitive principles of Sperber and Wilson's (2002) RT will guide the analysis of data in addressing this objective. Sperber and Wilson in their theory also have another basic principle of inferential communication which states that communication is not just about coding and decoding but the ability to infer the intended meaning by the speaker. Therefore, the theory will guide this study to explore how relevancy is achieved in the LIEs through individual words that build the LIEs. The hearer from the reviewed literature and theories' highlights requires communicative and cognitive ability in the language. Communicative and cognitive ability entails the ability to understand well the meaning of words and expressions of the specified language, and the advanced use of idiomatic expressions refers to the capacity of relating the individual words to the meaning. RT's tenets integrate closely with the CMT's main tenet of domain mapping of source and target domains. It is clear that without cognitive ability, there is no efficiency in domain mapping entailed in the understanding of IEs. The meaning of Lusamia idiomatic expressions is significantly shaped by the specific linguistic items used in their phrase or structural composition.

4.2.1. Semantic Analysis of Words and Sentence Structure of LIEs

Words in LIEs encode cultural associations**.** For instance, *olukhwi* (firewood) in **LIE[20]** *Olukhwi luwetenyere luhurisa amasika* "the firewood you collected makes you cry" uses *firewood* as a metaphoric domain to map one's choices or responsibilities. When analyzing Lusamia idioms' linguistic items, looking at semantic content of words and syntactic arrangement helps in i) identifying how literal words encode figurative meaning; ii) Showing how sentence form carries hidden cultural inferences and iii) revealing the interaction between morphology, syntax, and pragmatics. Thus, semantic analysis of words and sentence structure provides a dual lens:

At the word level → how meanings shift culturally.

At the sentence level → how structure frames and packages those meanings.

4.2.2. Morphological Agglutination

Lusamia, as a Bantu language, presents a unique interplay between morphological structure and cultural context in the construction of IEs. Idioms in Lusamia are more than fixed phrases; they are morphologically complex constructions that reflect deep cultural embedding

and linguistic identity. This study in trying to analyse the meaning of individual words in the construction of LIEs, has established a morphological characteristic common to Lusamia and its idiomatic expressions. Agglutination, a key morphological characteristic of Bantu languages, shapes the structure, complexity, and interpretation of Lusamia idiomatic expressions. Liu (2012) emphasizes that idiomatic expressions follow specific linguistic patterns influenced by the structure of the language and its cultural norms.

This view aligns with Chanturia and Martinez (2014), who describe idioms as lexical items with fixed structures and unique behaviours. In Bantu languages, these behaviours are significantly influenced by agglutination—a morphological process where words are formed by stringing together multiple morphemes.

Agglutination is a common feature in Bantu languages, as confirmed by Byamugisha (2019) in her study of Lunyankore. She observed that Lunyankore words can contain up to five morphemes, equivalent to an entire clause forming a single word. This conjunctive writing system, where words are orthographically and semantically merged, is also present in Lusamia. The Swahili word ***tunaenda*** (tu-na-enda = we-are-going) exemplifies this process. Similarly, the Lusamia word *khunachia* (*khu-na-chia* = we-shall-go) demonstrates the language's morphological richness that comes out clearly as a linguistic element, for example, the Lunyankore word**:**

Tibakumureeba - /ti/ /ba/ /ku/ /mu/ /reeb- /a/

/they do not see him/her (5 morphemes)

The following examples illustrate how Lusamia idiomatic expressions use agglutination to convey complex meanings:

LIE[10]: *Namwanagenda ahira ng'ina amakesi.*
Translation: *Na-mwana-genda* = a child who moves (4 morphemes)

LIE[24]: *Otebambogo atebera humubiri.*
Translation *O-teba-mbogo* = you ask about a buffalo (5 morphemes)

LIE[13]: *Nandakererwa yachia nakwo ebuhwe.*
Translation: *Na-nda-kererwa* = one who does not heed advice (6 morphemes)

LIE[25]*: Eyifumbuhe hasiyitia olume*

Translation: *Eyi-fumbuhe* = that which- has come out (of the bush), (8 morphemes).

LIE[29]: *Esirimubuyu sisimanyiha obukondo*:

Translation: *E-siri-mu-buyu* = what is in the egg (5 morphemes)

These examples show that Lusamia IEs are often constructed from single words that encode full propositions, reflecting a high level of morphological agglutination.

Agglutination in Lusamia is not merely a structural feature; it deeply influences the semantic and pragmatic interpretation of idioms. For instance, words like *nandaurira* and *nandakererwa* contain the prefixes /na/ and /nda/, signifying "the one who doesn't." These morphemes attach to root verbs to form idiomatic meanings such as "one who does not listen" or "one who does not heed advice." Such constructions enhance the aesthetic and poetic quality of language, drawing attention to idiomatic usage. The cultural relevance embedded in these idioms often renders them opaque to non-native speakers, underlining the importance of cultural context in interpretation.

Despite the linguistic richness of agglutination, participants in the study showed limited awareness of this element. This suggests that while agglutination is intuitively used by native speakers, its significance is often underexplored in linguistic self-reflection. This presents an opportunity for further linguistic education and documentation. Agglutination in Lusamia plays a vital role in the formation and function of idiomatic expressions. It contributes to the language's complexity, cultural depth, and aesthetic appeal. Understanding this morphological feature offers critical insights into how Lusamia speakers conceptualize meaning, structure, and cultural expression. Future research should continue to explore this intersection of form and meaning to enrich the documentation and appreciation of Bantu linguistic heritage.

In some LIEs, words deviate from the usual morphological or syntactic rules leading to poetic structuring. This is a stylistic device realized in LIE to enhance creativity in the use of language, giving idiomatic expressions aesthetic and artistic value. The following idiomatic expression was identified as an example of LIE bearing the poetic feature.

LIE[24]: *Otebambogo-* from the words *oteba emboko.* The two words are combined and produce one word with sound assimilation. /k/ assimilated by vowel sound /o/- /oko/ becomes /ogo/ to suite a pleasant sound delivery of the idiom. It is a linguistic feature

common in oral literature and idiomatic speech where sound blending and contradiction produce the preferred effect.

This aspect of language adds the value of memorability, didactism and emotional impact to Basamia idioms creating their uniqueness and peculiarity to the speech community. The participant were not disposed to give any further information to this category or feature of idiomatic expressions.

4.2.3. Question and Answer Structure

A prominent and distinctive feature of Lusamia idiomatic usage, particularly in the form of proverbs, is the tradition of presenting them in question or partial form. This rhetorical approach does not necessarily seek a verbal response but instead relies on the listener's cultural literacy and interpretive competence. This practice reflects the Basamia community's deep-rooted oral traditions and communicative strategies, which are especially evident in familial discourse, community councils, and public gatherings.

PTD[1] affirmed that Lusamia idioms are often presented in incomplete forms. *"Most of the Lusamia idioms were presented in question form, whereby the one posing did not necessarily expect an answer"* An example was provided involving a typical domestic scenario. When a parent, often a mother, returned home to find that children had not completed their assigned chores, she might simply ask:

Okudimbisa? This single-word utterance is a shortened form of the full proverb:

LIE[38]*: Okudimbisa kuhurinda*

Translation: Procrastination, the work awaits.

The parent does not expect a response but uses the idiom to indirectly reprimand the children. The implication is that the work left undone still awaits completion, and the children are responsible for it. This indirect mode of communication relies on the assumption that the children are familiar with the full idiom and can infer the intended meaning.

Further emphasis on this idiomatic practice was provided by participant PTFG[1] who highlighted its social and cognitive function, an observation that illustrates the role of idioms as a measure of cultural knowledge and intellectual maturity:

> The Basamia elders in their use of idiomatic, expressions, specifically proverbs, stated only the first part and let the listeners finish it to see how wise they were. It was a sign of wisdom to know the idiomatic expressions and to use them correctly.

The tradition of using partial idioms is especially prominent during *baraza* (community council meetings).

In such settings, village elders employed these expressions to address communal issues and encourage desired behaviours. For instance, to promote community involvement in economic development, an elder might initiate a proverb, for instance,

LIE[40]: *Njirachiaya, ahao harimo*

Translation: Point to the grazing field, and yours must also be grazing.

Elder's question: *Njira chiaya?*

Audience's response: *Ahao harimo.*

This idiom subtly encourages individuals to contribute to communal productivity by referencing a shared metaphor of livestock grazing, symbolizing productivity, active participation and responsibility.

Another example:

LIE[20]: *Oluhwi luwetenyere luhurisia amasika*

Question- *Oluhwi luwetenyere* – The firewood you have brought...

Response- *Luhurisa amasika* – ...its smoke makes you cry.

The use of incomplete idiomatic expressions in Lusamia serves several key pragmatic and sociolinguistic functions such as 'economy of Language' which implies stating only a part of the idiom but speakers convey rich meaning concisely. This ellipsis is effective because it draws upon shared cultural knowledge to complete the thought. Promotion of **'**interactive Participation' is another good function ellipses in the idiomatic expressions which allows listeners to engage actively by mentally completing the proverb. This interaction reinforces cognitive engagement and communal values. 'Cultural identity and transmission' is as well developed.

The ability to understand and complete these idioms signals cultural competence and is often associated with maturity and wisdom. It serves as a mechanism for preserving cultural heritage. The Lusamia tradition of using incomplete idiomatic expressions is not merely a linguistic curiosity but a vital cultural practice that encapsulates values, educates members, and fosters communal harmony.

Their use underscores the importance of shared knowledge, respectful interaction, and the deep intertwining of language and social function. As such, they remain an enduring testament to the oral artistry and pragmatic ingenuity of the Basamia people.

4.2.4. Individual Word Relationship to the Meaning of LIE

Idiomatic expressions (IEs) form an essential component of any language, encapsulating the history, values, and cultural practices of its speakers. In Lusamia, idioms serve not only as linguistic expressions but also as vehicles of cultural wisdom and pragmatic function. This analysis examines the semantic role of individual words in Lusamia idioms, based on qualitative data from focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews. It draws upon cognitive and cultural linguistic tenets, of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Relevance Theory, to elucidate how idioms are understood and employed by native speakers.

Compatibility of the Meaning of LIE with its Components

The data reveals two primary perspectives among Lusamia speakers. One group viewed idioms as fixed expressions whose meanings are internalized and used without deconstructing their component words. For these speakers, idioms are part of the language's lexicon, and fluency involves memorization and appropriate contextual use. This non-compositional view aligns with the idea that idioms operate holistically and resist literal analysis according to the explanation of PTFG[3]:

> The words in the idiom did not have much impact on the meaning. People were just learning the idioms and using them the way they are still used today. What was important was to know what the idioms means and to use it correctly.

Contrastingly, another group emphasised the interpretive significance of individual words within idioms. These speakers argued that understanding the surface meaning of words aids in accessing the deeper metaphorical significance of the expression. This compositional

approach indicates a layered understanding of idioms; wherein surface structures serve as cognitive tools to derive deeper meanings which PTFG2 added that;

> *The* words actually give what we call in English surface meaning, and they guide us to arrive at or map out the deep meaning.

Several idioms illustrate how Lusamia speakers map literal components onto abstract meanings through culturally grounded metaphors. Analysis of a few complex idiomatic expressions was done by participants picking randomly complex IEs.

They identified the literal meaning of the idiomatic expressions and then meaning of each individual word in the composition that guided mapping out the source and the target domains. Semantic analysis depends on linguistic items in both the compositional or non-compositional IEs.

LIE[36]: *Ahalubi hadala hachia ahandi*
Translation*:* /A small basket/ of the home/ attracts another one.
*Ahalub*i- a small basket

Hadala- of the home

Hachia – goes

Ahandi – another one

The proverb was originally used to refer to a good wife. Among the Basamia, when a girl was good in her marriage, the in- laws requested for another girl from her family or clan. Only language speakers could be able to give meaning this expression. The meaning of each individual word contributes to its complete metaphoric interpretation. It could be applied today in different contexts, for example business. If your products are good people will always come for your products.

LIE[20]**:** *Oluhwi luwetenyere luhurisa amiasika*
Translation: The firewood you have looked for by yourself makes you shed tears.
Oluhwi- is firewood

Luwetenyere- which you have collected by yourself

Luhurisia- Makes you cry

Amasika- tears

PTD[2] explained,

> In most cases people create problems for themselves and then later cry. They go in for things that later cause them trouble. For example, politicians who contest but later regret their seats for not meeting expectations of the people.

LIE[21]: *Murimba ahira mutekusi*

Translation: It's better a person who give you very little than the one who gives nothing.

Marimba – The one who gives you little

Ahira- is better than Mutekusi- the one who give nothing

Clarified by PTD[2] clarified this expression by saying;

> It's believed that a person who gives you little will one day give you a surprise, for example, the CDF funds is very little but it's better to appreciate because it enables poor children to study! If you become proud that you need big things only, you can easily miss everything. The proverb was meant to help people be appreciative even small offers given to them.

LIE[22]: *Obukondo bulayi nobukosia eng'ombe.*

Translation: You can easily lose a cow by judging it by its colour.

Obukondo- the colour

Bulayi – good

Nobukosia- makes to lose

Eng'ombe- a cow

The main idea is a cow which is familiar to everyone with its value.

> "This is same as the common English idiom do not judge a book by its colour. It is complex in Lusamia for it interpretation. Do not hurry on first impression of peoples or narrow your judgement on very petty outlook. Just like a cow, judge according to how much milk it will produce or how strong is it ploughing, and may be for bull- fight competition.'' Explained by PTD[2]

4.2.5. Relevance and Contextual Use

The Basamia speakers are humorours in speech or conversation as in;

LIE 47: *Mama samba esiaki.*

Translation: Mother, burn the granary.

The idiom is said humorously after a satisfying meal. It depicts the importance of context in Lusamia idioms and satiety. Such expressions rely on shared knowledge and situational cues, aligning with relevance theory in pragmatic linguistics. This analysis supports Sinclair's (2004) view that word meanings in idioms are context-dependent and culturally influenced. Idioms in Lusamia reflect core cultural values, including prudence, responsibility, and social pride. The inclusion of metaphorically rich expressions in daily communication underscores the linguistic creativity and depth of Lusamia speakers.

Furthermore, the findings resonate with Stankova & Vulchanov (2011) and Xu (2001), who argue that idioms encapsulate cultural heritage and are key indicators of language mastery. In Lusamia, fluency in idioms reflects not just linguistic competence but also cultural literacy. Lusamia idioms reveal a nuanced interplay between fixed expression and semantic flexibility. While some speakers emphasize memorization and pragmatic use, others engage in cognitive mapping of literal elements to derive metaphorical meanings. The semantic and cultural analysis of Lusamia idioms confirms that individual words often contribute significantly to the expression's overall meaning, especially when viewed through the lens of cultural practice and conceptual metaphor. This dual-layered understanding enriches our appreciation of idioms as both linguistic and cultural artefacts.

4.2.6. Structural Change and Meaning

In as much as many idioms have fallen out of use, participants generally denied that the structure of the remaining idioms had changed significantly. This points to a phenomenon of structural stability despite functional shifts. The notable development, according to respondents, was the creation of new idiomatic expressions reflecting contemporary experiences and changing community values. This could as well be referred to as a shift towards modern lifestyles and increasing individualism as opposed to the Basamia traditional community social structure. It has influenced not only how idioms are used but also the kind of idioms that are emerging, reflecting a pragmatic adaptation of language to accommodate evolving social realities.

This analysis is prompted by Alati's (2015) pragmatic analysis of Olunyole idioms, which revealed how idiomatic expressions serve not only linguistic purposes but also function as repositories of cultural norms, beliefs, and values.

In the same vein, the current investigation explores how Lusamia Idiomatic Expressions (LIEs) reflect the Basamia community's worldview, shaped by their everyday lived experiences. Alati's observation that idioms are influenced by the variability of human experiences across time and place forms the conceptual basis for this analysis.

Field data from participant interviews revealed a shared concern about the declining use of traditional Basamia idioms. Participants acknowledged that many of these expressions have gradually disappeared due to infrequent usage. This aligns with language endangerment patterns observed in other Bantu languages, where idiomatic attrition correlates with sociocultural changes. As one respondent noted, *"We have forgotten so many of Basamia idiomatic expressions because we don't use them; our children don't know them."* (PTFG2, 9/4/2025). This intergenerational transmission gap underlines the urgency of documenting and preserving these expressions for future generations, which is one of the core objectives of this study.

Moreover, the influence of Kiswahili and broader regional linguistic trends has led to the integration of commonly known idioms from other languages into Lusamia speech. For instance, expressions such as *"Omwana we njuha nenjuha"* equivalent to Kiswahil**i** *Mtoto wa* ***nyoka ni nyoka,*** *Emoonyo nehuwa* from Kiswahili, **Lisemwalo lipo, kama halipo laja,***'Sirihayi arikenda bwera'* equivalent to Kiswahili- **asiyefunzwa na mamaye atafunzwa na ulimwengu,** *'Murimba ahira mtekusi' (*from Kiswahili**- heri nusu shari kuliko shari kamili** were cited as example idioms that are currently used in day to day language use. These examples reveal a pattern of cross-linguistic borrowing and translation, which reflects not only linguistic convenience but also a shift in cultural expression towards more universal, widely understood forms.

To analyze these developments, the study employed a three-tiered model: structural form, semantic shift, and pragmatic function. While traditional idioms may retain their original form and literal meaning, their communicative function and cultural salience may diminish if they no longer align with contemporary values. Conversely, new idioms, though structurally novel, are gaining ground due to their relevance to modern experiences. Idiomatic expressions in Lusamia remain a vital linguistic and cultural resource, yet their continued

survival depends on their perceived relevance, intergenerational transmission, and adaptability to changing social norms. The findings of this section reinforce the need for systematic documentation and revitalization efforts to ensure the preservation of Basamia's rich idiomatic heritage.

4.3. The Influence of Cultural Contexts on the Meaning LIEs

The analysis of data collected to examine how cultural context influences the interpretation of Lusamia Idiomatic Expressions (LIEs) is presented. The analysis is grounded in Kovecses' (2015) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which posits that metaphor and idiomatic meaning are dynamic and context-dependent. Idioms are not merely linguistic expressions but also reflect a community's cultural experiences, beliefs, and worldview. This objective focuses on different Basamia cultural contexts which include social structures such as clans; rituals and ceremonies; traditional beliefs – taboos, oral tradition, and economic factors – *oburimi nende obwayi* (agriculture and animal husbandry). Kovecses' (2015) argument that context is fundamental in understanding metaphorical meaning aligns with Luvonga et al.'s (2023) conclusion that the interpretation of *Oluluhya* idioms is difficult without context, even when cognitive approaches are applied. They emphasise that the speaker's intention overrides meaning in the conceptual structure of the idiom.

4.3.1. Contextual Shifts in Meaning

The ironic use of LIEs was evidenced from the participants' discussion and interviews; the Basamia are sometimes sarcastic in their use of idioms depending on the context in which the IE is applied. Ironies are revealed from the speakers' tone, and they are intended to give depth and humour in the use of language. Among the Basamia speakers, particular attention is given to the speaker's tone during conversation, as it significantly influences the interpretation of meaning in the expression. This demonstrates how context and speaker intention can shift idiomatic meaning, a phenomenon consistent with Kovecses' (2015) CMT. The participants cited two examples of idioms that reflect sarcasm and irony within LIEs, influencing meaning shift.

LIE[1]: *Obukofu nengabo*

Translation: Old is gold

And

LIE[30]: *Efulu yakeraka engeke*

Translation: A small fish called *efulu* advised a big one – tilapia which they call *engeke.*

LIE[1] typically praises the wisdom of age, which is mapped from the familiar *engabo*, in English a 'shield,' a very reliable weapon and symbol of power among the Basamia. *Engabo* depicts cultural contextual connotation of Basamia, which is highly regarded compared to the gold as used in the English idiom. However, the in-depth interview with participant PTD[1] revealed that it could also be used ironically:

> When an older person behaved contrary to societal expectations, the idiom's positive connotation shifts to sarcasm. Another proverb, '*efulu yakeraka engeke'* which means, a small fish advised the big one, could be evoked to highlight that wisdom does not always accompany age.''

Cultural context of age and wisdom are clearly outlined in these figures of speech, so to say concietizing the community to strive against the embarrassment of lacking wisdom in the company of the youth expressed in the sarcasm of 'e*fulu yakeraka engeke'* - a small fish advising the big one. The contextual shift may be rendered interrogatively as in*: 'Efulu yakerakaho engeke?*' which means, Has a small fish ever advised a big one? This rhetorical question could be used to dismiss or resist advice from a younger person to an elder, implying that such an attempt is futile or inappropriate.

4.3.2. Social- Cultural Contexts

The data on this aspect of Lusamia Idiomatic Expressions (LIEs) reveals that they are deeply embedded in the socio-cultural framework of the Basamia community. These expressions are not arbitrary; rather, they are intrinsically tied to key social domains such as marriage, economic activities, and communal values. They serve to convey moral, social, and relational meanings rooted in the community's way of life. Yan's (2017) study significantly informs the understanding of how Lusamia cultural contexts shape and influence language use. Consequently, this study undertakes an in-depth exploration of the historical origins of Lusamia idioms, offering insights into how local historical events, rituals, and myths have contributed to the development and transmission of idiomatic expressions within the Lusamia culture.

The Context of Marriage in the Meanings of LIEs

Marriage among the SSC is a communal institution rich with rituals and symbolic expressions. Idiomatic expressions serve roles such as educating the young, preserving values, resolving conflicts, and celebrating milestones. According to Ngugi and Ong'onda

(2020), Ayers (2015), and Chenenje et. al. (2023), IEs are crucial in transmitting cultural values from one generation to the next. Idiomatic expressions are noted as elements that can socialise individuals into communal life, and the aesthetic value in some can help break tension during marriage negotiations as noted in Ngugi and Ong'onda's (2020) study. When negotiations began having tension the groom's spokesman would use a prover such *as:*

LIE[25]: *Eifumbuhe siyitia olume*
Translation: An animal that has emerged out of the bush to hunt is not afraid of the morning due.

This proverb carries a powerful message of courage and determination, laced with subtle humour. Among the Basamia, as in many African communities, marriage negotiations are often rigorous and emotionally charged. The bride's family deliberately intensifies the process to test the groom's seriousness and resilience. A man who lacks genuine intent may easily give up under pressure. In some cases, the negotiations may even involve playful insults or teasing to provoke emotional responses. This proverb metaphorically encourages perseverance, just like the hunter braves the morning dew, a determined groom must endure every challenge to earn his bride.

Ayer (2015), in her study, states the use of binomials such as 'milk and water'; 'honey and milk' to symbolise union and transformation is inevitable in marriage. Two prominent *binomial idioms* emerged among the Basamia during data collection:

LIE[49]: O*lukina nende esio*
Translation: Big and small grinding stones

LIE[50]: *esikwada nende engeso*
Translation: A sickle and a guard.

The participants elaborated on the cultural connotation of the two binomials. *Olukina nende esio* which means the big and small grinding stones was efficiently explained by participant PTD[1] saying:

> This idiom was applied in the marriage negotiations of a young woman who had given birth at home and was courting a different man for marriage. The phrase signifies inseparability and mutual dependence of mother and child. Literally referring to two grinding stones that work together to process flour, the idiom metaphorically implies that the mother and her child are a unit that should not be separated. The Basamia believed that this child from outside carried along with many blessings.

The community uses this idiom to justify accepting a woman with a child into marriage to symbolise unity and shared destiny. This reflects the Basamia cultural values of inclusivity and communal responsibility mapped from the familiar contexts of grinding stones. The context of married is the historical meaning of the idiom although it can shift to different contexts depending on the intention of the speaker. In the modern world these symbols could reflect any other inseparable units that function together, such as a pen and a book for a student, fish and water, a hammer and nail, needle and thread among others.

LIE[50], *esikwada nende engeso,* a sickle and a guard, are symbols of productivity and partnership in marriage especially between the groom and bride's families. Participant PTD[1]added that:

> Their application was observed during a marriage ritual where the bride's maternal aunts performed a ceremonial dance at the groom's home. The customary dance was accompanied with slaughtering of a goat which they called, embusi yolume meaning a goat of morning dew, a ritual symbolizing gratitude for the challenges endured in raising the children.

Chenyenje *et al* (2023) highlighted what concurs with the participants, information in the discussions, that, idiomatic expressions in Oluluhya which includes Lusamia are best interpreted through cultural events like marriage, where the social and emotional undertones give meaning to figurative language**.**

The idiom represents the tools used during harvest, metaphorically expressing the value of joint labour and the fruitfulness expected in marriage. It reinforces the importance of cooperation, endurance, and the celebration of shared success. Through this ritual and the use of the binomial symbol, both families were encouraged to foster a constructive relationship and to celebrate the union as a foundation for communal growth and harmony.

There are also proverbs within the context of marriage reflecting the cultural influence on the meaning of LIEs according to PTD[2], such as;

LIE[45]: *Eswa chiakadirisa omweya*

Translation*:* White ants deceived the bride.

The name *omweya* came from the cultural practice of Basamia community called *obweya,* a ritual whereby the bride was kept inside the house of the bridegroom and was not supposed to come unless permitted and for a good reason. White ants on the other hand are nutritious and liked by Basamia and on appearance, could tempt the bride to come out of the house to pick them and eat.

The context of marriage helps in mapping out the domains in this proverb. *Omweya* is the source domain, meaning the bride who was respected and so much taken care, and had to prove good behaviour beyond doubt to her in- laws. The target domain is the deception caused by white ants- anything that can steal our focus from the targets in life. Marriage context is used to express how deception come our way sometimes and how careful one ought to be. PTD[2] explained the value of idiomatic expressions as vested in cultural contexts saying; *deception was justified, because it was least expected of the bride to leave the house for white ants.*

LIE[23], *Amani komweya kari mumwanangina,*

Translation: The strength of the bride is in her sister.

LIE[8] as well, according to PTD[2] reflects how much focus was put on the bride among the Basamia. It portrays the care and attention that was given to the bride.

He said: *this proverb evidences that marriage is not just a union between two individuals but a union between families and clans.* The targeted meaning is symbolised by 'sister' to express the support, guidance, and reassurance needed in marriage and in life generally, that is, the need for others in life pursuits. Ngugi & Ong'onda, (2020) have noted in this similar view that, idioms in marriage contexts reflect social structures and roles, with meaning often derived from symbolic associations unique to that culture. Kövecses, (2015, p. 102) in his theoretical framework backs up the concept of marriage as a major cultural context in the understanding LIE, that, idiomatic meanings are not fixed but are activated by the context in which they occur, especially in rituals like marriage where shared cultural experience guide the understanding of the metaphor.

4.3.3. Economic Activities; Agriculture and Animal Keeping

The study found that a significant number of Lusamia idiomatic expressions are grounded in agriculture and pastoralism, reflecting the lived experiences and cultural values of the Basamia community. These idioms are drawn from familiar domains such as animal husbandry and food production and are used metaphorically to convey social values, moral teachings, and practical wisdom. This concept is supported by the findings of Ngugi and Ong'onda (2020), that idiomatic expressions depict the socio- economic activities of the community such as farming influent their creation and meaning to encode moral and pragmatic messages. Other scholars who researched with similar findings include Yankah (1989) and Luvonga (2023).

Farming Context-based LIEs

Participants highlighted the integration of these idiomatic expressions in daily life and cultural practices. One elder recalled:

> There was no Musamia woman who could not rare a chicken. Every grandchild visiting grandparents received eggs to eat and a chick to rare at home in memory of the visit.

This tradition, known as *osebula omwichuhulu*, to gift or send off a grandchild or *omukeni* (a visitor), reinforced values of generosity, continuity, and identity through symbolic gifts like poultry.

Participants expressed concern over the erosion of these practices, noting that modern economic pressures have led to the commodification of what were once tokens of love and tradition. One participant remarked: "*Grandchildren are no longer given eggs. Today eggs are sold and visitors rarely receive a chicken; even if the hosts have them.*" This observation underscores the impact of economic shifts on linguistic and cultural expression, suggesting a decline in the lived metaphors that inform idiomatic usage.

The idiom *Embusi yiri nende enjala yananga* (a goat that is hungry bleats) exemplifies the communicative role of idioms. It teaches that one must express their needs to receive help—an expectation deeply rooted in communal responsibility and transparency

LIE[41]: *Embako siyibachanga omurimi*

Translation: a hoe does not deceive a farmer.

The *hoe (embako*), a central symbol in an agrarian community, stands not just as a farming implement but as a metaphor for *diligence, trustworthiness, and consistent productivity*. It reflects a deep cultural appreciation for farming as a source of livelihood and as a moral compass that encourages self-reliance and perseverance**.** The idiom may also serve as a didactic tool, reminding members of the community particularly the youth, of the virtue of industriousness over idleness. Mbiti, (1990) explores how objects and tools in African societies carry symbolic and ethical significance, especially in agrarian contexts, the study findings that supports the Basamia point of view agriculture and farm tools. PTFG[1] stressed on this point of discussion saying;

> A hoe defined a newly married woman as either lazy or hardworking. Even the way one held the handle was enough to give impression.

LIE[29]: Esirimubuyu sisimanyiha obukondo

Translates: What is in the eggshell, the colour is not known.

LIE[29], was added by participant PTFG[3] in an opinion that it conveys a message of hope and uncertainty about future outcomes, drawing parallels with sowing and trusting for a harvest. The eggshell represents a protective but opaque barrier between the present and the future.

One can see that something is inside the shell or rather that there is life or potential, but one cannot tell what it will eventually look like: case. The idiom reflects the **limits of human foresight**, especially in matters where outcomes depend on time, effort, and chance.

LIE[72]: *Mama samaba esiaki*

Translation: Mother set the granary ablaze.

It is an open clause category, a humorous expression used to express contentment with food that one has eaten enough. The Basamia are very humorous and delight in jokes; instead of saying "thank you" after a meal, one would say, "Mama *samba esiaki."* A granary is a source domain, a symbol of food plentitude, used to express the joy of having plenty. The creation of the expression was influenced by a good farm outcome or harvest. The proverb expresses the Basamia historical background of hard work vested in crop farming and harvest.

This are just but a few idioms used to showcase the metaphorical mapping from agricultural and pastoral experiences (source domain) to human behaviour and values (target domain) of the Basamia community. Their continued relevance, however, is challenged by changing socio-economic conditions. Documenting and interpreting these idioms preserves a valuable linguistic and cultural heritage and reveals the intricate ways language reflects and shapes societal values.

4.3.4. Rituals and Ceremonies

The relationship between rituals, ceremonies, and idiomatic expressions is deeply rooted in the interplay between culture and language use. Idioms frequently encode cultural knowledge, beliefs, and traditional practices, including ceremonial acts (rituals) and culturally prohibited behaviours (taboos). These expressions act as linguistic vessels through which communities transmit and preserve their shared values and norms.

In this analysis, it is crucial to consider Kövecses' (2015) update on Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which emphasizes that metaphors are not solely formed through basic embodied correlations. Instead, they are often shaped by complex contextual factors, including cultural, social, and cognitive elements.

This expanded view aligns with findings from scholars such as Semino (2008), Cameron (2003), Goatly (2007), and Gibbs & Cameron (2008), who argue that metaphorical understanding is heavily influenced by context, including but not limited to cultural experiences. The contemporary world contexts inevitably shape the idiomatic expressions and necessitate the abandonment of traditional expressions.

In the Lusamia context, idiomatic expressions rooted in rituals and taboos are increasingly losing their relevance. During an in-depth interview, a participant noted that many traditional Basamia rituals are fading away — a trend that is not necessarily viewed negatively. Some of these rituals, it was argued, have become obsolete or even detrimental in contemporary society.

For instance, certain rites such as traditional naming ceremonies, initiation into adulthood through the removal of four lower teeth, wife inheritance, and various funeral practices have largely disappeared. Their disappearance has not adversely affected the community but to some extent welcomed as positive progress. PTD[2] specifically criticized the practice of wife inheritance, stating:

> Most of the time, wife inheritance was not out of goodwill; it was driven by selfishness and ambition. Men often fought to inherit families that were presumed to be well-off, not to care for them, but to gain access to their wealth. This sometimes led to the breaking up of their own families, as they prioritized the adopted ones."

Similarly, the initiation ritual involving the removal of teeth was questioned, PTD2 added by saying:

> That form of identity was unnecessary; it interfered with the beauty of creation. Perhaps it was practical at the time, especially for feeding during illness when a person could not chew, but its relevance has since faded.

These data analysis illustrates how cultural practices, once embedded in ritualistic idioms may lose their resonance in modern contexts. This reinforces the updated CMT perspective that cultural and cognitive changes directly influence metaphor and idiom usage over time. The study discusses a few LIEs in this context;

LIE[64]: *Ohhukwera* – Marking the end of the mourning period for the dead.
Traditionally, this involved symbolic performances such as beating close family members of the deceased, communal bathing in the river, and shaving hair. These actions symbolized the transition to a new life for both the deceased and the living. Today, however, with the influence of Christianity, such practices are largely abandoned, and the concept of transition is now framed as divine, with greater emphasis placed on prayer and Christian rituals.

LIE[48]*: Ohweya olullala – Sweeping the bride's house at the end of the honeymoon*. This idiom stems from a practice in which a young girl would stay with her elder sister during the honeymoon period. The performance, now considered outdated, often exposed young girls to early marriages. Its abandonment reflects broader social changes regarding gender roles and child protection.

LIE[70]*: Ohukerama– Wife inheritance*
Once a culturally endorsed practice, *ohukerama* is now contested and increasingly seen as unnecessary.

The idiom, *Okona amasika niye omanya onakeramao* (only the person who sleeps at the funeral place knows who will inherit the widow), metaphorically underscores the secrecy and

closeness involved in wife inheritance. The decline of this ritual reflects changing views on women's autonomy and family inheritance customs.

LIE[69]: *Ehira* - The aftermath of unfaithfulness in marriage.

The expression refers to consequences believed to follow when a woman, unfaithful in her marriage, touches the body of her deceased husband without proper cleansing. One Participant recalled:

> A neighbour was very ill. I heard whispers that he might not survive the day. In the morning, his wife left him and went fishing with other women, a practice called *ohwoya engeni,* common among women. He died that evening, but the wife delayed her return. When she finally arrived, no one had closed the eyes of the deceased. Asked to do so, she stood at a distance and retorted, 'That is how he always slept. *Fulani* never closes his eyes even in sleep.'
>
> I remember whispers among women: *atire ehira* 'she is afraid of *ehira*.' Only to learn that the woman awaited ritual purification. There were elders who specialized in this process using a traditional medicine called *amanyasi.*

This experience highlights the crucial role of oral tradition and elder knowledge in preserving cultural practices. It also underscores the urgency of documenting such traditions, as many are fading with generational shifts and religious transformations.

4.3.5. Seasons

Seasonal changes have influenced language in several meaningful ways across cultures and time in different studies in the literature review: Evans (2004), Hymes (1974), Labov (1972) and Kovecses (2000) (see table 5a). Hymes (1974) elaborates on how seasonal rituals and events influence speech acts and genres in indigenous languages. The Basamia named months of the year according to different contexts within the year. For example, January was named *'Dulienge'* **(LIE[51]) –** the chirping sound of birds. It is windy and dry, with birds all over in unison singing *dulienge! dulienge! Duli! Duli! Dulienge!*

Come February, the chirping changes from *dulienge!* to *efweko!, efweko! Efweko!* This time round its one species of bird heard chirping. They say at the end of *Dulienge (January)* a newly married woman was given gifts by her parents in form of food to carry to her marital home and ate it on the way. When her people wanted to know whether the food reached she was discovered that she ate the food. She became guilty and committed suicide. Her spirit entered the bird and from there henceforth she cries in the bird in the month of February;

efweko! efweko!, *efweko!* which means, oh My people! Oh my people! And all the months up to October, illustrated in [Table 5a) **LIE^{51}- LIE^{60}**].

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the study findings, makes conclusions, recommendations and proposes suggestions for further research.

5.1. Summary of the study

This chapter presents an analysis of data on semantic analysis of Lusamia idiomatic expressions (LIE), gathered through lively and insightful discussions with participants. The data were thematically organised, highlighting key aspects such as semantic richness, structural variation, and cultural significance of LIE. The analysis focuses on the types of idiomatic expressions, the contribution of individual linguistic items to their meaning, and the influence of Basamia culture on their interpretation. To ensure authenticity, direct quotations from participants are italicised.

The phenomenological approach to analysis is supported by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) of Kovecses (2015) and Relevance Theory (RT) of Sperber and Wilson (2002) which guide the interpretation of metaphoric language. Data collection involved two participant categories: a focus group and two individuals for in-depth interviews. The participants were a carefully selected representation of Basamia speakers who proved to be well versed with the language and culture. All participants were briefed on the study's theme in advance and provided with interview schedules, enabling them to collect relevant idiomatic expressions prior to the sessions. The individual participants are coded as PTD^{1} and PTD^{2}, while the focus group participants are identified as $PTFG^{1}$ through $PTFG^{8}$.

5.2.1 Types of Lusamia Idiomatic Expressions

The study aimed to categorize the types of Lusamia Idiomatic Expressions (LIEs) based on data collected from native Basamia speakers. A total of 30 proverbial and 40 non-proverbial LIEs were documented and analysed. The findings revealed that idiomatic expressions in Lusamia—locally referred to as *engaado*—exist in various forms, including words, phrases, and full sentences, serving as powerful tools for transmitting cultural values, norms, and social organization.

Participants emphasized that idioms once played critical roles in instruction, moral reprimand, and social bonding, although their use is in decline due to influences such as formal education, national language policies, urbanization, religion, and language contact. The idiomatic expressions were categorized into six major themes, reflecting their structural forms and pragmatic functions. These themes were presented in a tabulated form for clarity and include:

Binomials – expressions formed with paired words, often with fixed structure.

Phrasal Verbs – verbs combined with particles or prepositions to convey idiomatic meanings.

Similes – comparative idiomatic forms that reflect cultural worldviews.

Proverbs – wisdom expressions encapsulating moral or practical lessons.

Open Clause Idioms – idiomatic statements that are syntactically flexible but culturally fixed in meaning.

Single words – unique expressions tied closely to traditional customs and ceremonies. This involves words that are peculiar and unique to Basamia speakers

A key outcome of the analysis involved further categorization of LIEs into two main types under the Potentially Idiomatic Expressions (PIE) framework:

PIE1: *Compositional or semi-opaque idioms*, where meaning can be partly inferred from constituent words through metaphorical mapping.

PIE2: *Non-compositional or opaque idioms*, where meaning is not directly accessible from surface structure and requires deep cultural knowledge.

This classification was informed by Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), particularly drawing on Kövecses' (2015) approach to systematic mapping between source and target domains. Examples like *Obukofu nengabo* (Old is gold) and *Sioberesia ehanga baho engoho* (Charity begins at home) illustrated how universal idiomatic themes are localized through culturally salient metaphors such as the shield and the chicken, respectively. In addition to their metaphorical richness, the idioms revealed a layered cultural worldview, especially through euphemistic expressions such as *olubango* (absence of a son), which are fading as

younger generations lose proficiency in Lusamia. This underscores the urgency of documentation and revitalization efforts.

Some Lusamia Idiomatic Expressions (LIEs) are complex and require prior cultural and linguistic knowledge for proper interpretation. This knowledge was often acquired through informal education in traditional settings. For instance, elders gathered *at esibudi*, a communal drinking place, where deep Lusamia was spoken and newcomers learned the language through participation. Girls were traditionally taught in *esivinje*, under the guidance of an elder woman selected for her cultural wisdom, where they learned both traditions and idiomatic expressions. Similarly, boys slept in *essimba*, where older boys mentored the younger ones, and they also learned from grandfathers and clan elders. Additionally, *engoba* (clan fortresses) served as spaces where cultural values and traditions, including language, were preserved and passed down in the clans.

5.2.2. Influence of Individual Linguistic Items to the Meaning of LIE

This chapter has explored how individual linguistic items significantly influence the meaning and interpretation of Lusamia Idiomatic Expressions (LIEs), drawing upon linguistic theory, empirical findings, and participant insights. The study supports Munyu (2016) and Sinclair's (2004) assertions that each word within an idiom contributes to the holistic meaning of the expression. Relevance Theory (RT) by Sperber and Wilson (2002) further enriches this understanding by emphasizing the inferential processes and communicative competence required to interpret idiomatic language effectively.

The structural and morphological composition of LIEs, particularly the role of *agglutination*, was found to be a defining feature of some Lusamia idiomatic construction. As a Bantu language, Lusamia strings together multiple morphemes into single, semantically rich words. Despite participants' limited awareness of the morphological processes at play, the study demonstrates that these agglutinated forms are intuitively used and culturally embedded, highlighting the need for further linguistic documentation.

Additionally, the study identified *poetic structuring* within LIEs. Morphological deviations and sound assimilation were employed to enhance the aesthetic quality and memorability of idiomatic expressions. Another unique structural feature identified was the *use of question and answer format or partial idiomatic expressions.* In this structure, idioms are often presented in incomplete form, relying on the listener's cultural competence to infer or

complete the message. This form serves multiple pragmatic functions including indirectness, social regulation, interactive engagement, and cultural transmission.

The examples like *"Okudimbisa?"* and *"Njirachiaya?"* exemplify how individual lexical items carry layered meanings that activate communal knowledge and promote shared values.

Some speakers perceive idioms as fixed expressions learned by rote. For them, understanding individual words is unnecessary, and fluency means using idioms correctly in context. Others emphasize that the literal meanings of individual words help decode deeper metaphorical meanings. This view supports a layered, cognitive interpretation of idioms. Most traditional idioms have retained their structure, showing structural stability. However, there is a noticeable shift in function and the emergence of new idioms reflecting modern lifestyles and increased individualism.

5.2.3 Influence of Cultural Contexts on the Meaning of LIE

This study explores how cultural contexts shape the interpretation and meaning of Lusamia Idiomatic Expressions (LIEs), applying Kövecses' (2015) Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which emphasizes the dynamic, context-dependent nature of metaphorical and idiomatic language. Idioms are not just linguistic forms but reflections of cultural beliefs, practices, and worldviews.

Irony and Sarcasm

Idioms can take on ironic or sarcastic meanings depending on speaker tone and context.

"Obukofu nengabo (Old is gold) can express sarcasm when an elder behaves unwisely.

Efulu yakeraka engeke (A small fish advised the big one) illustrates resistance to youthful advice. Contrasting idioms such as *"Njiuyuhane yayia ameno"* and *"Rinda bunyite yaria nabakeni"* show how context shifts meaning between caution and urgency.

Social Values, Norms and Rituals

Idioms are deeply rooted in Basamia social life, particularly *marriage*, where expressions reflect cultural values and roles. *"Olukina nende esio"* (Big and small grinding stones) signifies unity between a mother and her child. *"Esikwada nende engeso"* (Sickle and guard)

symbolizes joint productivity and marital partnership. Proverbs such as *"Eswa chiakadirisa omweya"* and *"Amani komweya kari mumwanangina"* emphasize themes of caution, deception, and the importance of support networks. Rituals like *"Ohweya olulala"* (ritual sweeping after honeymoon) are tied to idioms that are unique to marriage traditions.

Many LIEs originate from agriculture and animal husbandry, reflecting everyday life and moral values.

Examples include:

Embako siyibachanga omurimi (A hoe does not deceive a farmer) – hard work pays.

Esirimubuyu sisimanyiha obukondo (The eggshell hides the chick's color) unpredictability of the future.

Embusi yiri nende enjala yananga (A hungry goat bleats) – speak up when in need.

Seasonal changes influence idiomatic language. Months were culturally named based on bird sounds and associated events.

January: *Dulienge* (bird chirping)

February: *Efweko* (wailing sound), associated with a tragic tale.

5.3. Conclusions

The findings show that Lusamia idiomatic expressions are not only linguistically diverse but also culturally embedded, with both global parallels and distinctive local flavours that shape identity and social meaning within the Basamia community. The categorization and thematic representation help in understanding the cognitive and cultural dimensions of idiomatic use among the Basamia people.

This chapter concludes that the individual linguistic items within Lusamia idioms whether morphemes, phonological elements, or structural patterns—play a critical role in shaping idiomatic meaning. They not only encode semantic content but also carry cultural, aesthetic, and pragmatic functions. Understanding these items is essential for interpreting the idioms accurately and appreciating their deeper cultural significance. The findings affirm that the interpretation of LIEs depends on a speaker's cognitive ability to map linguistic forms to culturally relevant meanings, supported by RT and CMT theoretical frameworks.

Lusamia idiomatic expressions are rich cultural and linguistic artifacts, shaped by metaphor, context, and social values. Their survival depends on continued relevance, active use, and deliberate transmission to future generations. The study provides a nuanced understanding of how idioms function cognitively, pragmatically, and culturally within the Basamia community.

Cultural context is essential in interpreting Lusamia idioms, which are not standalone linguistic units but cultural signifiers. Their meaning shifts with tone, situation, and intention, as seen in marriage, economy, rituals, and oral tradition. Understanding LIEs requires a culturally sensitive and context-aware approach. The study affirms the value of documenting these expressions to preserve linguistic and cultural heritage amidst modern pressure.

5.4. Recommendations

From the research on analysing the semantics of Lusamia idiomatic expressions (IEs) using Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) and Relevance Theory (RT**)**, recommendations would be:

i) Archive recorded information from elders and fluent speakers in natural discourse to preserve idiomatic expressions pronunciation, intonation, and pragmatics.

ii) Integrate Lusamia IEs into language learning materials at school and community levels.

iii) Observe how idiomatic usage varies among different social groups to understand language change and generational gaps.

iv) Further investigation into how idioms are used to reinforce politeness and sarcasm, in Lusamia and other related Bantu speech communities.

v) Documenting and interpreting these idioms to preserve a valuable linguistic and cultural heritage which reveals the intricate ways language reflects and shapes societal values.

vi) The morphological process of agglutination, was found to be a defining feature of some Lusamia idiomatic construction and participants had limited awareness of the morphological processes at play, the study there recommends further studies on morphological processes in Lusamia IEs.

vii) Documentation on how these agglutinated forms are intuitively used and the literary stylistic devices applied in the construction of LIE and the related Bantu languages.

5.5. Suggestions

1. Further studies to compare Lusamia IEs with those of related Luhya dialects or neighbouring Bantu languages to trace common metaphoric patterns or unique innovations.
2. A study on morphological agglutination in Lusamia language and its influence on the meaning of idiomatic expression.
3. A study to be conducted on the literary stylistic devices in the LIE.
4. A study on the proverbs impartiality in discourse. – one presents only a part for the listeners or the audience to complete the other part.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: UNIVERSITY RESEARCH APPROVAL

THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

AMECEA

05/03/25

To whom it may concern

RE: AGUNDA PAMELA AWINO ADM NO. 1052142

It is our pleasure to inform you that Pamela Agunda Awino is a student in our Department of

Languages, Literature and Communication undertaking a Masters of Arts in Applied Linguistics. She defended her proposal entitled: SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS USED BY THE SAMIA SPEAKERS OF BUSIA COUNTY, KENYA. She is due to collect data and l therefore request that she is accorded the necessary assistance.

Yours faithfully



Dr. Rose Mavisi

HoD Languages, Literature and Communication

Catholic University of Eastern Africa

APPENDIX II: NACOSTI PERMIT

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NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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Date of Issue: 26/March/2025

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APPENDIX III: PLAGIARISM REPORT



APPENDIX IV: DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The questions are structured to allow for discussion, clarity and rich responses from participants; both FGD and in- depth interviews. They are as well compatible with Conceptual Metaphor theory and relevance theory frameworks that guide the study.

FGD Interview Guides

To describe the different types of idiomatic expressions in Lusamia.

Can you share some of the Lusamia idiomatic expressions that you are familiar with. (Prompted participants to mention as many as possible)

How can you tell the difference between idiomatic expression and a regular or literal language?

Besides proverbs what other forms or structures do Lusamia LIEs take?

What are some of the words and phrases that are used metaphorically by Basamia?

Are there words in Lusamia that must be paired or are fixed combination to express the meaning?

To determine the contribution of individual linguistic items to the meaning of idiomatic expressions

Does the meaning of individual word in LIEs help Basamia speakers understand the meaning of the IEs?

Are some words more important than others in conveying the meaning?

In what ways is the meaning of the idiom compatible or incompatible with the literal meaning of its components?

Does the combination of the specific words evoke a culturally shared understanding of LIEs?

How frequently do you use idiomatic expression?

To evaluate the influence of cultural contexts on meaning of Lusamia idiomatic expressions

Identify idiomatic expressions that are context- dependent

In what specific contexts are the selected idiomatic used?

What cultural values or traditions are embedded in the selected idiomatic expressions?

How do Basamia speakers learn and transmit LIEs?

What do these idioms reveal about Basamia?

In-depth Interview Guides

To describe different types of idiomatic expressions in Lusamia

What brings about differences in the in the Lusamia idioms? Syntactic structure or word composition?

What kind of expressions are commonly used? Words, binomials, phrases or sentences?

What do you think has influences of the commonest type of idiomatic expressions?

In what situations are these idioms commonly used?

To what extent does gender, age or social group influence the use of idiomatic expressions type?

To determine the contribution of individual linguistic items to the meaning of idiomatic expressions

How does the individual linguistic items in the composition of IEs relate to the meaning?

Does every word in the composition contribute to the overall meaning of the idiom?

Are their Lusamia idioms that are completely lost and what could be the reason?

Are there any idioms existing in different expressions from the original?

What has been the change? The structure or meaning?

To evaluate the influence of cultural contexts on meaning of LIE.

In what contexts of Lusamia are IEs used?

How much are idioms grounded in Lusamia language and culture?

What impact does the use of idioms create in the culture of Basamia?

What could be the origin of these expressions?

To what extent does the shared cultural knowledge affect interpretation and pragmatic use of IEs?

APPENDIX V: RESEARCH RAW DATA

APRIL 2025, STARTING FROM NINTH

To describe the different types of idiomatic expressions in Lusamia

Lusamia idiomatic expressions from participants

1. Abasebe banyekananga embadi
   Nomads laugh at one another's masking or tags.
2. Abehale nibo ababona
   Those seated can see better
3. Abangi nibo abalulu
   Many are tough.
4. Alayi siyehola eng'we
   A good home is cannot turn to your own
5. Akhuchira eria atkhufwira
   Better for a wife to go for another marriage than to die.
6. Ahalubi hadala hachia ahaandi
   A small good basket of the home if followed by another one.
7. Amani komwea nimwanang'ina
   The strength of a bride is her sister
8. Amabanga namasito kira amachi
   Blood is thicker than water.
9. Amakada momu kafunira olukendo.
   Dry reeds on a long journey become heavy.
10. Amachi kobulwo siketanga
    Water drank to clear thirst cannot kill.
11. Amachai katulanga khusalake.
    Blood come out from a part of the body that is cut
12. Amadete kabiri keta enda.
    Two nails killed a louse
13. Amahino mabi siketa obwicha.
    Poor dancing does not destroy friendship.

11. Babiri bandu

    Two are people
14. Buri esiito yiri nabalalu
    Every market has its madmen
15. Ebukeni sorirayo obukeeni.
    Do not eat left over ugali in a visit
16. Edebe ekhay rifumuhanga.
    An empty tin makaes loudest noise
17. Efula yekanyirisa omwayi.
    The rain warned a shephered
18. Efuma siyimala obwadieri.
    Fame does not complete truth about a person.
19. Egwena yirichanga isilake
    Acrocodile eats its fate.
20. Enyanga nenyingi chiahira obwoya bwengombe
    Days are more than the far of a cow.
21. Enyanga efula yanamadoa irihuba.

One day elnino rain will rain on you.

22. Embosi endayi siyilondwangamo.

A good word or speech is never repeated.

23. Endolo chibula omwami

Sleeping has no king.

24. Efulu yakeraka engeke.

A small fish advice the big fish

25. Emoonyo nekhuwa.

A whisper is a word.

26. Embako siyibachanga omurimi

The hoe does not deceive a farmer

27. Ekhasi yaula esacha

Feminism has conquered masculine.

28. Eswa chiakadirisa omweya

White ants confused the bride. (in escaping)

29. Embusi yirinenjala yananga.

A hungry goat bleats

30. Embwa enjibi yesikanga omukongo

A dog that steals is always ready for the beatings.

31. Ekhwi chibulanga ekohe

Firewood begets ash.

.

32. Esilayi siomwene siamoni

A good thing that belongs to somebody else is only for the eyes.

33. Esinafwe silonderere esinasiite

What is to die follow the killer

34. Esinia obuoya sitbwa

What produces far is feared

35. Ebikwao sibilaka

Happenings do not give notice.

36. Esiri mubuyu sisimanyikhanga obukondo

What is inside the eggshell is known its colour.

37. Eyifumbuhe siyitia olume

The animal once out of the bush does not fear morning dew

38. Esihusinyere obereha

You can send people to buy for what you don't like.

39. Esiye yitakhwenya siyihukwaho

A fly that doesn't like you cannot land on you.

40. Esiruha siongene sielanga esiembiro

He who runs alone thinks is the fastest.

41. Esiri nende emboo, sisikwaho omuriro

That which feels cold does not feel the heat.

42. Efula yanamadoa yekesa Mumbo abwe

The persistent rain showed Mumbo his home

43. Emborerwa siyihumala amaofu

Second hand information does not satisfy.

44. Eritalayi rihira obuyinda

A good name is better than wealth

45. Embwa yilondanga omusonyalo kwa ngína

A dog squats like it mother

46. Embwa yotamanyire sioyita olwala mumunwa

Do not put your finger in the mouth of a dog you do not know

47. Eriato rikwiranga emakoba

A boat capsizes at the show

48. Esimba rifwira murindi

A mongoose dies in anaother

49. Esimba yikona abakwanire

A cottage for boys accommodates only friends

50. Esihayiire eyaywa omuyaka kurihukwisira.

What has diffited an axe the wind will fall it for you.

Endausi ya aambi niyo eiita enjuha

51. Engira siyiborere okenda

The road does not speak to its user.

52. Embeva enyingi sichiyaba obwina

Many rats cannot dig the hole

53. Engombe yitamera enjika hasiyeyekekere otwoma

A cow which has not grown horns cannot knock heads

54. Enyende ndala yabosia oluaba

One maggot spoiled the mashroom

55. Mrimba ahira mutekusa

Better the one who gives little than nothing.

56. Namwanagenda yahira ngína amakes

A child who moves is wiser than the mother

57. Nandakererwa yachia nakwo ebukhwe

The one does not listen to advice misbehaved at the in-laws

58. Nambula mwiho aamba omwicha

The who does not have relatives makes friends

59. Nambula mwana atuma etango

He who does not have a chid sends the thigh

60. Nandaurira ariurira emakombe

The one who does not listen will hear from hell

61. Njirachiaya, ahao harimo

You point cows grazing when you have yours there.

62. Njiyuhane yayia ameno

He harried burn his teeth

63. Obusera bunasambe omwana butaho olububi

The porridge which will burn a child coats

64. Otehoyera esiri ebusiba okoterwe abarimo

Do not rejoice at what is in the deep sea, you may not know who is in it

65. Oria nende owasio husngayayuma

Eat with other to enjoy the togetherness.

66. Omukeni yalala omwenedala

A visitor relieved the owner of the home.

67. Omukesi nokerakwa

Even a an intelligent person can be advised

68. Otakhwenya agoba akhubanja

A person who hates you may escort your enemy to demand his dues from you

69. Omutende amanyihanga amafwa

A stranger is discovered at death

70. Okhumonya abahutire

The one who speaks at your back fears you.

71. Okona amaasika niye omanya onakeremeo

He who sleeps at the funeral is the one who knows who will inherit the wife.

72. Okhuchubia khasi akhuhuyanira

The one incites you may not fight for you.

73. Omwekhorerera sikufuvanga.

The early bird catches the warm.

74. Okudimbisa kuhurinda

What you postpone awaits for you

75. Omusala mutere siwekhyangaho

Never attempt to climb a slippery tree.

76. Okwendaya okwotera eyare

Warm from far the fire from “endayi” type of tree.

77. Obukofu nengabo.

Old is gold

Obuyingi bwakera engombe

78. Obukondo bulayi nobukosia engombe

The appearance of a cow does not define it

79. Otebambogo atebera kumubiri

You ask about a buffalo yet very close

80. Soloka yohama

Do not bewitch where you milk

81. Owibula amakhwana yesika amabeere

When you produce twins be ready with milk

82. Omwana akaluhanga yiyere olwoba

A child returns where she got the mushroom.

83. Omwana aunya siarire

A child smell what she has eaten.

84. Olwiho luri munda

Relationship is in the stomach.

85. Olukhwi luwetenyere luhurisa amasika

The firewood collected by self can cause tears.

86. Sebula ndayi yareha omukwano

Parting well left a legacy.

87. Sionarie sikona siong’ane

What will be eaten sleeps alone

88. Mama nobusuma bwobure ofuka wahayaka

A mother is a millet cake, can be eaten without source

89. Weikama omwicha oteikame ekaka

Take cover in a friend than a tree cut off branch.

90. Yichahumenye simuhinda orekanaOne easily gets misunderstanding the one they choose.

NON- PROVERBIALS- (31)

91.Ohwita amaofu
92.Omalaho omwoyo
93.Okwa engwe/ esolo
94.Oria esilulu
95.Otusa olugala
96.Okwheya olulala

97.Olukina nende esio
98. Engeso nende esikwada

99.Dulienge	January
100.Efweko	February
101.Mwerasi	March
102.Ofwombole	April
103.Anjala	May
104.Unondaye	June
105.Mfuna	July
106.Munyala	August
107.Fulula	September
108.Maungu	October
109.Esibakala	

110. Okhwesaba
111. okhukwera
112.Embariha
113.Esibeyo
114. Echibi
115.Oluvango
116.Esibudi
117.Ehira
118.Ohukerama
119. Ohukerama

Open clause expression

120. Mama samba esiaki

English- Mother, burn the granary

This was used to express contentment with food. To show that one has eaten enough. Instead of saying thank you, they would use the metaphoric clause, 'mama samba esiaki'. Basamia also delight and jokes and are humorous.(PTD2, 17/4/2024)

121. Embwa yamuhomba amakulu

English: A dog licked their feet.