PRAGMATIC INTERPRETATION OF OLULUHYA IDIOMS IN RADIO MAMBO FM *WITIMBULE PROGRAMME*

BY

SOLOMON LUVONGA CHENENJE

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN LINGUISTICS,

SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

MASENO UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

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SIGNATURE……...DATE……..

SOLOMON LUVONGA CHENENJE

REG.NO. PHD/FA/00096/017

DECLARATION BY SUPERVISORS

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University supervisors.

SIGNATURE……..DATE…….

PROF. DAVID ONGARORA

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

MASENO UNIVERSITY

SIGNATURE……...DATE……..

DR. JACKLINE OKELLO

DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS

MASENO UNIVERSITY

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

It is the favour from the almighty God which has enabled me to go through this study. I lend credence to my family, friends and colleagues for their support in different ways to make the study successful. I can not forget the full support I was granted by Mr. Makunda, the retired head teacher of Chimoroni Primary and his successor, Mr. Olenge.I express my gratitudes to my supervisors; Prof. David Ongarora and Dr. Jackline Okello of Maseno University for guiding me during the study. I revere their wisdom. I can not take the expertise of the department of linguistics in the University of Maseno under Dr. Pamela Oloo for granted. Gratitude to the management of Radio Mambo FM station for the assistance it accorded me during data collection.

DEDICATION

Special dedication to my children: Muronji, Nechesa, Pamba, Musire, Tawayi, their mother Nelima and the late koko Matofali who implanted in me the seed of optimism, persistence and determination to become who Iam.

ABSTRACT

Idioms have been applied functionally as regulators of human behaviour, evidence of politeness in conversations, for entertainment, face-saving by mincing the words to show decorum, a sign of linguistic competence and the store of cultural values among the Luhya people. However, there was need to investigate whether or not the fans of *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM interpret various forms of idioms correctly because among the 19 Luhya dialects, there is lexical mismatch which may cause multiple interpretations of idioms and consequently, lead to miscommunication among the fans and listeners of *Witimbule* programme. If the appropriate strategies of interpreting idioms are not applied, the use of idioms can be a hindrance to communication. 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. Significance to the study was to establish the least effort strategies of interpreting the idioms for effective communication. The study was carried out in the framework of relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995/2002). It is a pragmatic theory that explains how discourse can be interpreted during conversation. Some of its tenets which were applicable to this study include: Following the path of the least effort strategies to reach the cognitive effect, the role of context in interpretation of discourse, the complexity of the information being processed in the brain and the cost-benefit basis. 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). The samples were collected by purposive sampling procedure. Sample size was determined by the number of fans from each dialect which was 66. 69 Idioms were collected by listening and audio-tape recording during the programme until saturation stage was reached. The idioms were recorded in context as excerpts. The data from respondents was collected through an unstructured oral interview using an interview schedule because it involved face-to-face questioning for more clarification. The findings were organised in thematic areas, analysed and presented in textual form. The study sought to determine the least effort strategies to interpret idioms and found that idioms are integrated naturally in conversations during *Witimbule* programme. The form of idioms which were mostly misinterpreted is proverbial and hyperbolic. The main hindrances to interpretation of idioms were lack of cognitive environment and native speaker intuition. The most effective, fastest and least effort strategy of interpreting idioms was cognitive environment approach. The other strategies were dependent on cognitive environment approach to be effective. Lexical mismatch among Oluluhya-speaking communities did not significantly impact on the interpretation of Oluluhya idioms because the interlocutors employed the tactics of lexical accommodation, assimilation, code switching and neologism. The study found that the number of fans who misinterpreted the idioms was significant, and therefore the most effective strategy of interpreting idioms was cognitive environment approach. Other strategies were dependent on it. Relevance theory was effective in describing the objectives of the study.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Assimilation - The act of attempting to speak like the speakers of the target dialect in order to accommodate them for the sake of communication.

Cognitive environment – This is the knowledge which the interlocutor has at the time of utterance as a result of accumulated cultural experience, environment, exposure to the information and the situation at hand.

Contextual clue – It is the evidence from the statement or the utterance of the speaker to the hearer during interpretation of idiomatic expressions.

Etymological elaboration - Interpreting the idioms based on its history or culture of the community from which it is extracted.

Face- saving – Avoiding offensive words that cause embarrassment during communication in social settings by mincing the words or using figurative language.

Idioms – A string of words with hidden meanings that can not be interpreted in isolation but as one entity.

Lexical accommodation- It is the process by which new words from the target dialect are adopted into a different dialect in order to communicate effectively. Such words normally become part of that dialect.

Speech community – It is a group of people who speak a common language or share something common in their language that either unites them or makes them a family.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

It is important to have an overview of Oluluhya-speaking communities before studying their idioms**.** According to Mudogo (2018), Luhya is the umbrella term for the 19 language groups in Western Kenya with varying degrees of mutual intelligibility including Lubukusu, Lunyore, Luwanga, Lusonga, Lutura, Lulogoli, Lukabras, Lutirichi, Lwisukha, Lwidakho, Lumarama, Lukhayo, Lushisa, Lumarachi, Lusamia, Lutachoni, Lutsotso, Lunyala East and Lunyala West. This is very important to this study because it has identified the speakers of Luluhya. However, they are not languages, as the previous study (Mudogo, 2018) puts it but dialects because they are mutually intelligible according to Lwangale (2016). Different languages are not mutually intelligible. If they were not intelligible, then *Witimbule* programme would not exist due to lack of uniformity in the language of communication. Such constraints (phonological, morphological, lexical and stress shift) in dialectical variation are the concern of the current study to establish whether they affect the interpretation of idioms.

1.1.1 Idioms

Thyab (2016) found that idioms are widely used in English to make the speech lively and rich. Native speakers apply them in their day-to-day conversations. Thyab points to the fact that idiomatic knowledge makes interlocutors native-like during the conversation. This indicates that if non-native speakers of English are to be proficient in it, they should master the art of using idioms. The study highlights the prominence of idioms in conversations. However, it does not point out the difficulties encountered during the interpretation of such idioms for effective communication and the strategies for interpretation. Whether the conversation is informative or not, interpretation is vital for effective communication. The current study sought to investigate the nature of idioms and how the interlocutors comprehend them for communication of the

message to the hearers. The interpretation of the meaning of idioms lies with the speaker. This implies that if the hearer fails to match the interpretation with that of the speaker, there can be a misinterpretation of idioms.

Idioms are frequently used by the native speakers, especially in media houses, to pass information to the intended audience (Mantyla, 2004).

For istance; *Look someone in the eye:* Possible interpretations are: To look at someone directly without emotions, to look at someone directly to convince them that you are saying the truth,to look at someone directly to convence them you are telling the truth when lying,to look at someone directly although you would avoid their eye(Mantyla, 2004 :105) The idioms which were misunderstood by Finnish include: A head of the game, pull faces, and hedge your bets because of lack of contextual clue.

The media houses have become a platform on which local people air their views and concerns, whether they are literate or illiterate. Mantyla further investigated the difference in idiomatic interpretation between British as native speakers of English and Finnish taking English as the second language. When British University students were compared to Finnish ones, the British were able to interpret idioms better than Finnish. This, therefore, implies that non-native speakers are susceptible to misinterpretation of idioms. British students were able to interpret idioms correctly because they were mainly from their culture. There was a need to study the effective strategies of idiomatic interpretation to accurately communicate the message.

Yus (1998) highlights that decoded meaning of a sentence is compatible with a number of different interpretations in the same context. Therefore, idioms are realized in day-to-day

conversations. Poor mastery of them impedes communication in any social setting. There was therefore, a need to establish the best strategies for interpreting idioms in various contexts.

Wilson and Sperber (2002) emphasize that if the hearer fails to match the intention of the speaker with the interpretation of an idiom, there can be miscommunication in the conversation. The current study aimed at identifying the difficulties that can be encountered by interlocutors when interpreting idioms in conversations

The study of idiomatic interpretation had been necessitated by the fact that interlocutors use more idiomatic expressions than proverbs which are preserved for specific occasions as a result of the native speakers' accumulated knowledge over the years (Cacciari, 1993: 27). Therefore, there was a need to study how idioms can be interpreted for effective communication during conversations.

Isukha dialect among Oluluhya language community uses pragmatic approaches for politeness during public communication that involves proverbs and hidden language (idioms) to avoid being offensive (Ingato, 2020). This is to reinforce that idioms are for face-saving. The current study is interested in assessing how interlocutors interpret such pragmatic idioms to realize politeness in communication. If the idioms are not interpreted correctly, they may fail to serve the functions which they are intended for hence miscommunication between the interlocutors

Alati (2015) indicates that idioms are often used in conversations among the Luhya people to regulate human behaviour in society. He further says that idioms are difficult to interpret. His study reiterates that Luhya-speaking communities notoriously use idiomatic language

unconsciously for social and regulatory functions, and therefore idioms cannot be done away with. This has necessitated the need for this study to investigate whether or not the idioms are interpreted correctly. However, Alati's study does not point out how misinterpretation of idioms may arise, given that the presenter has to accommodate all the dialects used by the fans of *Wi timbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM. This area needs investigation to verify how effective fans from various dialects of the Luhya community interpret the idioms used in communication. Although his study established that idioms are used to regulate human behaviour and social functions, there was a need for an exhaustive inquiry into the nature and process of interpretation of such idioms. Such investigation would bring into light whether or not listeners, such as those of vernacular radio broadcasts, were able to comprehend the idioms used by the presenter.

Mudogo (2018:1) studied language use in *Mulembe* FM and commended that:

> The emergence of vernacular FM stations is one of the most effective ways of communication to many Kenyans, especially those who cannot communicate fluently in English and Kiswahili. However, the presenters are constantly faced with constraints of lexical choices appropriate for heterogeneous Luluhya listeners. This is because of lexical mismatches exhibited by Luhya dialects (Mudogo, 2018: 1)

From this study, the assumption was that due to lexical mismatches, there was a likelihood of misinterpretation of Luluhya idioms during conversations among the fans and presenters of *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM. Apart from dialectal variation, there could be other difficulties that impede idiom interpretation.

1.1.2 The Fans of *Witimbule* Programme in Radio Mambo FM

Witimbule programme in Radio Mambo FM station was introduced by the presenter from Isukha (Lwisukha) in the year 2014 when Mulembe FM network had been tampered with. The programme is aired from Monday to Friday, from 9 PM. to midnight, in Luluhya dialects by two presenters. One speaks Lwisukha, and the other one Lutsotso as Luluhya dialects. The programme attracted many fans and hearers from Western Kenya who speak Luluhya dialects

because it is presented in Luluhya dialects to meet the needs of the local people. The programme involves news from western counties, stories about the origin of Luhya speaking community, political speeches, cultural events and folk songs to entertain and inform the listeners. The study targeted the fans that are registered in the *Witimbule* fans' Club found in Western counties of Kenya which include Kakamega, Bungoma, Vihiga and Busia County.

Lwangale (2016) finds that there is a genealogical connection among Luhya dialects as evidence of common origin. He established that:

> Luhya dialects have the same syntactic structure as a result of similarities of their lexical items. Such similarities across Luhya dialects are an indicator of a once linguistically and anthropologically unified community whose origin was undisputedly one. Luhya dialects use basically the same words only differing in pronunciation, stress placement and vowel length (Lwangale 2016:54).

This is the evidence that Luhya dialects are mutually intelligible. However, there is need for study to investigate how intelligible it is because Mudogo (2018) already found that there is a lexical mismatch among the dialects that may lead to misinterpretation. The current study intended to find whether the variation in pronunciation, stress placement, and vowel length could result in misunderstanding of lexical items that may lead to misinterpretation of idioms in *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM. This study then implied that if you have poor mastery of vocabulary in a particular language, there is likelihood that you may fail to interpret idioms correctly. The current study sought to determine the difficulties encountered during interpretation of Oluluhya idioms.

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According to Mudogo (2018), there is more divergence than convergence among the speakers of various Luluhya dialects as a result of a mismatch between lexical items applied by the radio presenter and the potential listeners in *Mulembe* FM. This shows that there is a possibility of

misinterpretation of idioms during conversation in Radio Mambo FM *Witimbule* Programme. The findings indicate that it demands a lot of expertise for the presenter to accommodate all the Luhya dialects in the radio conversation. This can result in the misinterpretation of idioms due to a mismatch between the speaker and listeners in terms of lexical items. The current study was to investigate the extent to which dialectal variation may cause misinterpretation of idioms during a conversation in Radio Mambo FM, *Witimbule* programme. Idioms do not exist in a vacuum but in those dialects that challenge the speakers and radio presenters to accommodate all fans from various Luhya dialects. The dialects that formed the core of this study were those spoken by the fans sampled. It was from the list of registered fans club members from various dialects of Oluluhya community. Such dialects were 19, according to a recent study by Mudogo (2018).

1.1.3 Form of Idioms

Pragmatic interpretation of idioms proves taxing because the hearer attempts to infer the meaning from the speaker's context perspective. The speaker can manipulate the idioms to convey the meaning differently from what it is known in the community. Therefore in pragmatics, the interlocutors are more interested in what is communicated than what is spoken. This therefore, implies that the interlocutor has to employ appropriate strategies to interpret the idioms correctly. The best strategy for interpreting the idioms in various forms is the focus of the current study. In idiomatic interpretation, idioms are interpreted the way they are used in a particular context by the speaker. If the hearer fails to match the speaker's meaning with that of the interlocutor, there is the likelihood of misinterpretation during conversations.

The study by Gibbs (1993) found that idioms are not dead metaphors because their structure is not that of metaphors and, therefore, should be treated differently. Dead metaphors are overused and out dated. However, previous studies reveal that some idioms exist as metaphors. The

current study seeks to investigate the different forms of idioms rather than only one form (metaphorical), as Gibbs (1993) does.

Lyly and Clausen (1994) attempted to give a demarcation between idioms, metaphors and similes only to find that they are just separated by a thin line. They describe idioms as a phrase and each word is not interpreted individually but similes are merely direct comparison by the use of *as* and *like*, while metaphors are indirect comparison between two unrelated entities by weakening the verb and strengthening the noun. From the above finding, metaphors, idioms and similes are not the same.

Gunner (2022) clarifies that both idioms and metaphors are forms of figurative language which are non literal but different in that, idioms are colloquial way of saying something that can not make sense to someone who is unfamiliar to a particular language while a metaphor compares two things that are different but share one characteristic. Though Gunner gives the demarcation, she further said that well known metaphors can become idioms such as; *she is a black sheep in the family to* mean unfit in the family**.**

Chi (2013) asserts that a good idiom always gives rise to the association of ideas and lets the readers think deeply in the spirit it contains. He further states that idioms are composed of set words, phrases, proverbs and colloquialisms. Therefore, those idioms which are composed of proverbs are proverbial idioms. The current study dwells on different forms of idioms which demand various strategies to interpret due to their nature or uniqueness. Such forms of idioms include proverbial, euphemistic, hyperbolic and metaphorical.

The previous study concentrated on the comparison between English and Chinese idioms only to find that English idioms are culturally rooted, but to an extent, they resemble the Chinese idioms

in terms of meaning. Therefore, context is crucial in idiomatic analysis. The current study dwells on Luhya idioms from the fans of Radio Mambo FM *Witimbule* programme.

Idioms are classified as transparent, semi-transparent, semi-opaque and opaque (Matifari, 2016). They are classified according to their link to literal meaning during interpretation. He used some strategies of interpretation, such as metaphorical broadening and context of utterances with some level of cultural understanding. Therefore, he sticks to the fact that idioms are culture-specific. The present study delves into the categorization of idioms in terms of form which include metaphorical, euphemistic, hyperbolic and proverbial, depending on their relationship with other stylistic elements of the language. This is necessitated by the fact that idioms are based on the speaker's intention and not the literal or implied meaning. This grouping was for the sake of interpretation to gauge those that cause challenges in interpretation.

It is said that idioms are fixed phrasal expressions but not completely frozen forms and the individual words of an idiom can not be replaced by synonyms and still retain the idiomatic reading of the phrases, hence fixed form (Ifill, 2002). Ifill therefore, grouped idioms as transparent and opaque and found that opaque idioms are frozen (fixed) and hence difficult to interpret. The current study grouped the idioms into different forms for the sake of interpretation to gauge those that cause the most challenges, leading to misinterpretation. The study adopted idioms that are culture-specific and interpreted them at pragmatic level since the fans of *Witimbule* programme may find it challenging to know the intention of the speaker in applying the idioms since in pragmatic interpretation of the idioms or any utterance, the hearer is interested in what is communicated rather than what is uttered hence the speaker meaning.

Patricia (2014) analyses the cognitive approach to hyperbolic idioms, Gibbs and Cacciari (1993) elaborate on metaphorical idioms and proverbial idioms. Lonyangapuo (2014) studied the euphemistic idioms. It is found that they did not explain how misinterpretation of those idioms may arise and lead to miscommunication and the least effort strategy to interpret those idioms. The current study sought to investigate the difficulties that can be faced by interlocutors during interpretation of idioms and the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects. It is, therefore, obvious that each form of idioms has specific challenges to address and find the one with the most deterrents leading to misinterpretation.

The scholars in this field, such as Patricia (2014), Alati (2015), Gibbs and Cacciari (1993) did not include pragmatic approaches to interpret idioms; hence most fans may tend to apply the knowledge they have in society over a span of time. Therefore, they did not investigate the cause of misinterpretation during the conversation. This study established various forms of idioms that caused misinterpretations due to their complexity. Wilson and Sperber (2002) reiterate that the greater the processing effort, the lower the relevance. In this study, the form of idioms which require a higher processing effort can be less relevant to the hearer and make it challenging to interpret hence causing miscommunication. The current study aimed at determining the form of idioms that may be more difficult to interpret compared to the rest. The form of idioms which was mostly misinterpreted by the fans was viewed as difficult to interpret; hence investigate the cause of difficulties encountered during interpretation. This demands the most effective strategies to interpret hence efficacy in communication.

1.1.4 Constraints in Interpretation of Idioms

Abdoun and Mousa (2017) investigated the difficulties faced in understanding idiomatic expressions in English and found that idiomatic meaning cannot be derived from the literary meaning of its constituent parts. They also noted that idioms which are frequently used are easier to interpret than new ones. They described idioms as a secret language owned by a particular culture depending on familiarity, frequency, transparency, and context. This means that idioms in context are easier to interpret than those in isolation. Abdoun and Mousa further found that the strategy of interpreting idioms is by guessing from the context. They classified idioms as decomposable (words contribute literally to their figurative meaning), abnormally decomposable idioms (words associated with their figurative meaning but in a metaphorical way), i.e., spill the beans can be mapped to mean to reveal the secret metaphorically. Given that context plays a pivotal role, there are some idioms which may lack clear context and demand extra strategies to interpret. Such is the concern of this study, to establish whether other strategies are applied apart from context.

Schroeder (2012) expounded on the relevance theory that context is an encyclopaedia about the world that contains values and norms. She further concluded that if there is no shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer, there is a high chance of miscommunication. The current study aims at testing whether context plays a major role in interpreting Oluluhya idioms in Radio Mambo FM *during Witimbule* programme. This is an indicator that should the hearer fail to match the speaker's intention with the idiom, and there can be little or no interpretation at all. Therefore, there was a need for the appropriate strategy to interpret idioms for information to reach the intended listeners effectively.

The greater the vocabulary knowledge, the easier it becomes to interpret the meaning of idioms (Maha, 2017). Therefore, if the interlocutors lack the knowledge of vocabulary due to dialectal variation, they will definitely misinterpret Luluhya idioms during conversations, hence causing miscommunication. The current study investigated the extent to which dialectal variation, among other difficulties, could cause misinterpretation of idioms during the conversation in *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM.

The current study seeks to investigate the difficulties faced in the interpretation of idioms from the Luhya community by various interlocutors in the radio Mambo programme (*Witimbule*). The study dwells on idioms to determine those which prove difficult to interpret, hence demanding extra effort. The speaker manipulates the idioms to bring the meaning different from what it usually is. The current study analysed the applicability of relevance theory in finding the possible strategies to interpret Oluluhya idioms during the conversation in *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM.

Mantyla (1997) studies interpretation of idioms by non-native speakers in Finnis and finds multiple interpretations based on their literal meaning by concentrating on single words rather than the whole. The second language learners were able to interpret idioms based on words equivalent to their language in a different setting, which were difficult to interpret.

This dates back to Okoth Okombo in his lecture (2015) in applied linguistics that African languages cannot be viewed through European lenses. The current study analysed various constraints faced during the interpretation of idioms**.** The study sought to determine why some forms of idioms could be susceptible to misinterpretation during conversations in *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM.

1.1.5 Strategies for Interpretation of Idioms

Wilson and Sperber (2002) assert that to reach cognitive effects, the hearer tends to follow the path of the least effort strategy and tests interpretive hypotheses such as disambiguation, reference resolutions, and implicatures. The hearer is expected to stop when expectations of relevance are satisfied. The current study applies relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995/2002) to describe how various strategies are applied to interpret idioms using the least effort.

It has been found that idioms are fixed phrases with arbitrary meaning and use language in metaphorically (Sigrit, 2017). He further says that idioms figuratively are not only for decorative purposes but in everyday communication. Idioms' meaning can therefore be guessed as long as you are given the context. However, context may not be given in some cases hence misinterpretation. The speaker can manipulate the idioms to convey a different meaning from what is conceived by the society, and therefore the intention of the speaker becomes crucial for effective interpretation.

Mohammed and Saleh (2013) also studied the difficulties faced by second language learners in interpreting the idioms and provided the strategies for interpreting them as; the use of literal meaning, context, discussing and analysing idioms, background knowledge and translation from the native language. They found that several strategies can be applied to the interpret idioms. Only that lack of sufficient knowledge of the vocabulary of a target language leads to misinterpretation. Therefore, the current study investigated whether dialectal variation could impede the interpretation of Oluluhya idioms. It also tested whether those strategies could be

applied by the Luhya fans from the Luhya community to interpret the idioms in *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM.

Gibbs *et* al. (1997) found that in most cases interpreters rely on conceptual metaphors to analyse idioms. So, every time people hear of idioms, they activate the knowledge of conceptual metaphors. However, there are some idioms which are not metaphorical and can be interpreted using a different method. The current study explored several methods of analysing or interpreting idioms apart from conceptual metaphors theory.

Kangutu (2014) studies how figurative language is realized through the process of lexical pragmatic narrowing and broadening in the Akamba dowry negotiation. The cultural knowledge is the context in which the interpretation of figurative language is processed. The study dwelled on the communicative effectiveness of similes, hyperbole, and metonymy. It will be vital to the current study because it depicts lexical pragmatic narrowing and broadening as strategies for interpreting figurative language. However, there are other strategies for interpreting figurative language which this study seeks to analyse because such cannot suit the interpretation of all forms of idioms. Since the previous study generalizes three aspects of style, the current study only dwells on idioms in Luhya community. Lexical pragmatic narrowing cannot be effective because idioms will be interpreted as a whole but not as an isolated lexical item. The current study applied various strategies to establish the most effective one to be applicable in the interpretation of Oluluhya idioms during *Witimbule* programme for effective communication.

Before interpreting the idioms, Wanjiku (2016) grouped the idioms as emotive, leadership and praises, determination and hard work, pride and beauty, fortunes and misfortunes, seriousness and intentions, diseases and self-control, information and ignorance, readiness and opportunities, unity, culture, morality, loss, and impossibility. She finds that emotive idioms are the most difficult to interpret. However, Wanjiku did not substantiate what makes emotive idioms complicated to interpret. This study investigated the causes of difficulties in the interpretation of a particular form of idioms and the appropriate strategy for interpreting it.

Wanjiku (2016) contributes a lot to this study because she categorizes the idioms into various forms in Gikuyu for the sake of interpretation. However, she applied the Conceptual Metaphor theory by mapping between a source language and target domain. One idea is described in terms of another. Her assumption was that all idioms are metaphorical. There are other methods which can be applied, such as narrowing and broadening, contextual clue, encyclopedic entries, and truth condition semantic approach. The current study sought the best strategy for interpreting the idioms among those mentioned using the least effort.

The interpretation of idioms during interlocution in *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM may elicit multiple interpretations and consequently lead to miscommunication. The current study sought to test those strategies of interpreting idioms by interviewing the fans to find those which are convenient to be applied for interpretation of various forms of idioms. Sperber and Wilson (2002) reveal that the best strategy is the one that advocates for the least effort to reach cognitive effects. Human cognition is tuned in the manner that it concentrates on reaching cognitive effects with little effort**.** Relevance theory explains that human mind follows the path

of the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects faster. Consequently, the current study seeks to investigate the cause of misinterpretation of idioms during conversation and establish the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects. If the strategy of interpreting idioms has complications during interpretation, human mind tends to reject such information or misinterprets it.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Local radio stations provide the opportunity for both literate and illiterate people to express their concerns in their native language. However, there can be dialectal variation in the language used or lack of clear context between the interlocutors.

Speakers of a particular language tend to integrate idioms in their speeches naturally, provided that they have sufficient knowledge of vocabulary in that language. Given that both fans and presenters of *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM adopt idioms in their local varieties, multiple interpretations of idioms can arise due to the mismatch in lexical items among various Luluhya dialects. Furthermore, there can be a mismatch between the speaker's intention and the hearer's interpretation of idioms. This may lead to miscommunication among the interlocutors. Therefore, there is a need to establish how the presenters of *Witimbule* programme bridge the communication gap occasioned by lexical choices in rendering idioms to the heterogeneous listeners drawn from different Luhya dialects. The efficacy of communication will be hinged on the appropriate application of relevant strategies. There is a need to investigate how the fans and presenters of Radio Mambo FM *Witimbule* programme interpret Luluhya idioms during conversation and the strategies they apply so that the appropriate interventions can be established to make communication effective during the conversation in Radio Mambo FM *Witimbule* programme.

1.3 Research Questions

a) Which form of Oluluhya idioms is susceptible to misinterpretation in *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM.?

b) How do difficulties arise during the interpretation of Oluluhya idioms by the fans of *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM?

c) Which strategies are the most effective in interpreting Oluluhya idioms by the interlocutors of *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study aims at establishing whether or not the fans of *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM interpret Oluluhya idioms correctly using the least effort strategies during conversation.

Specific objectives of the study are to:

i) Determine the form of Oluluhya idioms which is susceptible to misinterpretation in conversations in *Witimbule* programme, Radio Mambo FM.

ii) Analyse how difficulties arise during interpretation of Oluluhya idioms in *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM.

iii) Establish the most effective strategies of interpreting Oluluhya idioms in '*Witimbule*' programme of Radio Mambo FM.

1.5 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumes that some forms of idioms are susceptible to misinterpretation during conversations in *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM., there are constraints encountered during interpretation of idioms in conversation among the fans of *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM., and among the strategies of interpreting idioms, there are those which are most effective in interpreting a particular form of idioms. It also presumes that the information

given by the fans during oral interview would be correct and reliable and that the interlocutors are regular in conversations given that they hail from the Luhya speaking communities.

1.6 Significance of the Study

In the Luhya community, hardly does a social event in any setting end without mentioning an idiom in verbal communication because idioms are naturally integrated in languages (Alati 2015). He also asserts that idioms have a variety of functions in any social setting including entertainment, flavouring the language, social competence and face saving strategy. Given that *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM is deeply rooted among the people from the Luhya community (Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia and Vihiga county) to entertain and inform its listeners on the matter of politics, culture and news, there was a need for the study to investigate whether the lexical mismatch among the dialects of the fans of *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM may be among the hindrances to the correct interpretation of the Oluluhya idioms during conversation that can lead to miscommunication. This study sought to determine the least effort strategy to process information in order to reach the cognitive effects fast. If the interlocutors fail to interpret the idioms correctly there will be misinformation, hence miscommunication between the speaker and the hearer. There is a need to investigate the strategies used to interpret various forms of idioms in the face of lexical mismatch among them. The strategies of interpreting idioms will be applicable to interpret various forms of idioms correctly.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The units of analysis were the Luhya idioms used in *Witimbule* programme. The study investigated how idioms are interpreted during conversation.

The study was restricted to only idioms used by fans during conversations in '*Witimbule*' Programme of Radio Mambo FM. Form of idioms include metaphorical, proverbial, hyperbolic and euphemistic. This is because they are commonly used in conversations, as revealed in the

study by Patricia (2014), Gibbs (1990) and Lonyangapuo (2014). The idioms analysed were those used in conversations during *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM. The study was within the counties of Western Kenya region where the fans of the programme are and it is within the coverage of Radio Mambo FM network. Interview was applicable to the fans of *Witimbule* programme and presenters only because the study investigated their ability to communicate effectively through idioms. The transcripts extracted were only those which have idioms (see appendix iii)

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995 /2002). This is a pragmatic theory that explains how interlocutors interpret a variety of utterances in a conversation. The theory operates on two key principles:

a) *Communicative principle*

Wilson and Sperber (2002) assert that for the processing of information to take place, the information should be relevant enough to warrant processing because the hearer takes the path of least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects during interpretation of an utterance. They also found that the most recent and familiar information is easily interpreted. This forms the basis of objective three where the appropriate strategy for interpreting idioms will be determined.

Wilson and Sperber (2002) said,' "Follow a path of least effort in computing cognitive effects: test interpretive hypotheses in order of accessibility and stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied." This still forms the basis of objective three. They further stated that the inference is based on knowledge, beliefs, and context, which the interlocutors share in a conversation.

The form of idioms which the interlocutor uses the least effort strategy is the one that can be easily interpreted. Such was the concern of the first objective which categorized the idioms in four forms to determine those that could be interpreted using the least effort and the most difficult ones that demanded the most effort. This is because the human mind tends to pick the information that needs less effort to process. It was then deduced that those idioms that demand extra effort to interpret were highly susceptible to misinterpretation.

b) *Cognitive principle*

Wilson and Sperber (1995) explained that human cognition is geared towards maximization of relevance. The more relevant the information is, the less processing effort hence the interpretation of the information given. Objective two, which deals with difficulties encountered during the interpretation of idioms, is in line with this principle. If the information being conveyed is relevant enough to warrant the processing, the idioms used in the conversation will use the least effort to interpret. Therefore, the current study is intended to test the effectiveness of the theory in an attempt to explain how misinterpretation of Oluluhya idioms may arise during the conversation in *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM.

Schroeder (2012) emphasizes that context is an encyclopedia about the world that contains cultural values and norms. This is the knowledge which the interlocutor has during conversations. The mind of the hearer works with encyclopeadic entries, social-

cultural norms and world knowledge. She further explained that if there is little or no shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer, then there is little or no understanding at all. Therefore, new information is rejected or misinterpreted. This tenet is in tandem with objective two which targeted the difficulties faced by interlocutors when interpreting idioms in conversations and how to counteract them. Schroeder also reveals the strategies of interpreting the utterances in conversations but side-lines those which can be applied to interpret specific forms of idioms in variety.

In a nutshell, Relevance theory is a pragmatic theory that explains how information is processed by the brain leading to interpretation and, consequently, communication takes place. If the information is misinterpreted, communication cannot take place. The current study investigates why some fans may misinterpret Luhya idioms used in the same context (culture) and how best they can be interpreted. An utterance is accepted to be relevant when the hearer can draw the possible conclusion at a low processing effort. The more the relevance, the less the processing effort. The more complex the information is, the more the processing effort, the less the interest (Wilson & Sperber, 2002)

Yus (1998, P.1) studied relevance theory and its assumptions:

Relevance theory is a cognition-centred pragmatic approach to human communication, which is based on the hypothesis of a single evolved mental capacity of human beings: to search for the most relevant information from incoming stimuli. In order to achieve the optimal level of relevance, the human mind engages in a cost/benefit procedure intended to select, among the range of possible interpretations of the same stimulus in a specific

> context, the one (possibly) intended by the communicator. This implies then that during the interpretation of the idioms, the hearers or interpreters should use the appropriate strategy to infer the intention of the speaker to get the meaning of an utterance hence pragmatic approach (Yus, 1998)

Ong'ayo *et al*. (2018) applied the relevance theoretical approach to analyse the budget discourse and concluded that information can be relevant in one context but not the other. They found that concepts with phrases were more complex than mere words or lexical units, meaning that a word is much more relevant to explain financial statements than phrases or sentences. It was therefore concluded that simple concepts are more relevant than complicated ones. This is in line with the Gricean maxim of quality.

Ong'ayo et al. (2018, P.7) found that:

> Context is a set of mentally represented assumptions used in interpreting (or processing) a given set of information. Information is relevant in context when it interacts with the context to yield what is called cognitive effects. According to relevance theoretical framework, the higher the processing effort, the lower the relevance and the lower the processing effort, the higher the relevance.

The current study investigated whether relevance theory could be appropriate to explain how Oluluhya idioms are interpreted during conversations in the Radio Mambo FM programme. It also sought to determine the form of idioms which are more complex to interpret than others because of idiomatic language which proves to be arbitrary.

Wilson and Sperber (2002) say that utterances raise expectations of relevance because the search for relevance is the main aspect of human cognition which communicators may exploit. What is so fascinating to warrant the study is that they expounded that an input (sound memory, an utterance, and sight) tend to be relevant to an individual if it connects with background information to yield the conclusion that matters to an individual. It can be by answering the question in mind, improving the knowledge of a particular topic by settling doubts, correcting suspicion and mistaken impression. An impression is appropriate only when it yields positive cognitive effects. Other conditions being equal, the greater the cognitive effects, the greater the relevance to an individual at that time.

The greater the processing effort, the lower the relevance at that time (Wilson & Sperber, 2002, p. 252). From the above assumptions, the idioms used in conversations among the fans of *Witimbule* programme would be grouped into four according to the form to investigate those which are highly susceptible to misinterpretation hence extra processing effort. It also sought to establish the best strategy for interpreting various forms of idioms to reach the cognitive effects with less effort to make the idioms relevant enough to be worth processing. Those idioms which demand extra effort to interpret are difficult and susceptible to misinterpretation

Moreno and Rosa (2001, p.313):

> In understanding an utterance containing an idiom, the hearer takes the concepts encoded by the utterance and by the idioms string as clues to the explicature and implicatures intended by the speaker. Using the relevance theoretical comprehension procedure, he

follows a path of the least effort strategy and starts considering a few highly activated assumptions from the encyclopeadic entries of the encoded concepts to use as contextual assumptions in search for implications.

The current study intended to find the causes of misinterpretation of idioms during communication and the strategy to apply in interpretation for the sake of relevance because idioms have become common and people cannot do without them in day-to-day conversations (Alati, 2015).

Xu (2013) explains pragmatics as the study of context-dependent aspects of utterance interpretation, and its goal is to show how meaning interacts with contextual assumptions during comprehension of the utterances. He applies relevance theory to interpret the advertisements and found that the most authentic aspect is to persuade the consumer with less processing effort to achieve contextual effect. The current study aimed at investigating the difficulties faced by the interlocutors during interpretation of idioms in the Radio Mambo FM, *Witimbule* programme.

This study was to determine the least effort strategy to achieve cognitive effects using the relevance theory. It is a pragmatic approach to interpretation of idioms which differs from advertisement because the meaning of the pragmatic idioms is with the speaker, the intention of the speaker of the utterance who uses idioms. This was so because there could be a misinterpretation of pragmatic idioms hence miscommunication during conversations. This study sought the appropriate strategies for the interpretation of idioms in the framework of relevance theory.

Carston (2015) established that there is a range of pragmatic tasks involved in determining the proposition explicitly communicated including disambiguation and assignment of referents. She further says that adhoc concepts have logical and encyclopaedic entries as mental representations presented in capital letters as DANCE* TIRED* and ANGEL**.**

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the interpretation of idioms based on the 4 forms of other aspects of figurative language that involves proverbial, euphemistic, hyperbolic and metaphoric to determine those that demand the most effort to reach cognitive effects. The second objective discusses the constraints which are encountered during interpretation while the third objective seeks to establish the least effort strategy of interpreting various forms of idioms.

2.2 Form of Idioms

In several studies, linguists have attempted to categorize idioms based on some facts for easy analysis.

In a linguistic journal by Takacs (2015), idioms are categorized for easy interpretation. Therefore, the idioms were classified based on difficulties in interpretation and whether they are direct or indirect as:

> Normally decomposable, in which the referents of an idiom are used literally, e.g., pop the question
> Abnormally decomposable, in which the referents of an idiom's parts can be identified metaphorically, e.g., pass the buck
> Semantically non-decomposable idioms, in which the idiom meaning is less likely to be compositionally derived from the words that comprise the string. e.g. *chew the fat* (Takacs ,2015 :43)

This study reveals that the interpretation of idioms needs to be assigned figurative meaning to be part of the idiom. It highly contributes to the current research because it shows why some idioms are easily interpretable while others are problematic. This study groups idiom according to their form for interpretation. The form can be proverbial, metaphorical, euphemistic, and hyperbolic, meaning that it blends the categories which Takacs (2015) puts across for interpretation.

Saberian and Fotovatnia (2011) postulated that idioms are the indicators of one's fluency in a particular language. They reiterate that idioms are vital in any conversation, whether spoken or written and that ignoring idioms causes a mess in communication. This is quite significant to the current study because of its flexibility in describing the nature of idioms in various settings. The fact that they did not study the strategies for interpreting them paves the way for the current study. If there is no interpretation, its vitality will be in vain. The primary purpose of any language is communication which can be accomplished through correct interpretation of the language used.

Gibbs, *et al*. (1997) has revealed that people use metaphorical mapping of information and think in form of metaphors. Consequently, they concluded that idioms are metaphorical by citing several examples such as LOVE IS A JOURNEY, ANGER IS HEATED FLUID IN A CONTAINER and OPTIMISM IS LIGHT**.** The study is vital as it reveals metaphorical idioms and how they are interpreted by conceptual metaphor theory of mapping strategy. This study then is a departure from the previous because it highlights various forms of idioms not only limited to metaphorical ones but also proverbial, hyperbolic and Euphemistic idioms. The previous study forms a basis for this study. The current study aimed at carrying out the autopsy to ascertain how much effort is needed to interpret metaphorical idioms and attempt to find the least effort strategies to interpret idioms.

Gibbs *et al.* (1997) is henched on conceptual metaphor theory to interpret metaphorical idioms while the current study seeks to investigate the four forms of idioms which are applicable during communication in *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM. Conceptual metaphor theory would be subjected to scrutiny whether it can account for all four forms of idioms. The current

study applied relevance theory to explain how idioms are interpreted during conversation in Radio Mambo FM.

Elshamy (2016) grouped the idioms basing on their functions as; swearing, complaining, sympathizing, opposing, and advising in the framework of speech act theory, meaning that idioms are emotive in nature. Such idioms were used by the lower-class people (Taxi) within their working environment and therefore easily interpretable in their context.

It is applicable in the current study because the idioms are grouped according to the form. The functionality of idioms can be included in various forms for interpretation. The study encompasses people from all social classes in formal conversation in the framework of relevance theory. This study delves into four categories of idioms which include proverbial, hyperbolic, metaphorical, and euphemistic. It investigated the form that possesses the most difficulties during interpretation.

Patricia (2014) grouped the idioms as hyperbolic and explains that idiomatic expressions are conceptual in nature and not purely linguistic because we can not predict their meaning by component parts but other constructions. This means that hyperbolic idioms are full of exaggerations to emphasize the information in humorous manner without offending the hearer or interlocutors. It is important therefore to determine the difficulties encountered during interpretation of hyperbolic idioms so that the appropriate interventions can be put in place for effective communication.

The speakers tend to use cognitive mechanisms such as metaphors, metonymy and conventional knowledge to communicate (Patricia, 2014). Therefore, this indicates that idioms exist in other aspects of figurative language but can not be interpreted at lexical but pragmatic level. This has contributed to this research only that idioms exist in other forms such as proverbs, metaphors, and euphemisms which she did not highlight. Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995) was applicable to the current study because it explains how the complexity of the information may lead to extra effort to reach the conclusion. The study seeks to unearth what makes some forms of idioms which are demanding on the side of the interpreter and arrive at the least effort strategies.

Patricia (2014) analyses the hyperbolic idioms in conversations and attempted to apply cognitive approach to interpret them and on the other hand Gibbs and Cacciari (1993) elaborate on conceptual metaphor theory to analyse metaphorical idioms. Lonyangapuo (2014) discussed on euphemistic idioms. The fact that they did not explain the forms of idioms which are highly susceptible to misinterpretation the current study intends to determine the form of idioms which are demanding extra effort to interpret. Attention was drawn to establish the best strategies to suit interpretation of various forms of Oluluhya idioms. The study also tested the authenticity of relevance theory in explaining the constraints that lead to misinterpretation of all forms of idioms and the appropriate strategies of interpreting such for effective communication. Wilson and Sperber (2002) vividly explain that the information which requires extra processing is likely to be either rejected or misinterpreted. The current study sought to establish whether Oluluhya hyperbolic and euphemistic idioms demand more effort than other forms such as metaphorical and euphemistic.

According to Sigrit (2017), idioms are fixed phrases with arbitrary meanings and use the language in a metaphorical way. From this definition, idioms are not literal, and the meaning of each lexical item cannot be used to derive the meaning but it is sum of the total meaning of the words. This implies that lack of competence in the language being used can lead to idiomatic misinterpretation and leads to miscommunication between the speaker and the hearer.

Idioms are an important part of the language because they convey our feelings in a more concise and effective way (Murali, 2014). Murali further added that their interpretation is very paramount for any successful communication to take place. Without proper interpretation of idioms, there can be a miscommunication in conversation. However, there are forms of idioms which can be susceptible to misinterpretation during conversations. They demand the least effort strategy to interpret in order to minimize the cases of misinterpretation.

Luvonga (2017) points out that in the Luhya community, the artists notoriously use figurative language not only to make their songs interesting but mainly for face-saving. He mentioned the main aspects of figurative language used as a metaphor, euphemism, symbolism and hyperbole. The study emphasizes that artists express their concerns in songs to castigate the societal evils which cannot be spoken directly but *dressed* to be readily accepted by people of all ages and gender. However, the study did not explain how the aspects of figurative language can be interpreted using the path of the least effort strategy. It was only interested in the face-saving rather than interpretation by the interlocutors in day-to-day speeches. If interpretation of idioms or any figurative language is tampered with, there can be minimal or no communication at all.

Lwangale *et al* (2016) findings reveal that though there is a similarity in the syntactic structure of Luhya dialects, there exist variations in lexical items and vowel length. This is reinforced by Maha (2017) who asserts that interpretation of idioms depends largely on good mastery of the vocabulary of the target language. This means that variation of lexical items among the fans of the programme can contribute to the cause of misinterpretation of idioms and consequently there will be misinformation. This has led to the current study to determine the best strategy to avert misinterpretation of idioms during the conversation in *Witimbule* programme.

Ifill (2002) also notes that some idioms are frozen and so cannot exist in passive and retain their meaning. The idioms which undergo passivisation are flexible and can be interpreted based on their elements are transparent while opaque idioms are fixed and frozen. Since this study dwells on the syntactic structure of idioms and interpretation, the current study dwells on different ways of interpreting various categories of idioms in various categories to ascertain the most difficulties encountered and the best strategy to interpret idioms used by fans of *Witimbule* programme.

This implies that linguists have shown a constant interest in idioms and that idioms are not only to colour the language, but they have more impact than non-idiomatic expressions since they are closely associated with a certain language and culture (Anna, 2018). She quoted various definitions from different sources and concluded that idioms are a collection of two or more words whose combined meaning is not deducible from the knowledge of the meaning of its component words and of their grammatical syntactic relations to each other (Meetham and

Hudson, 1969). Therefore, the meaning of idioms is deducible from the sum of the total lexical items that they contain, making it difficult to define correctly.

Alati (2015) already reveals that idioms are difficult to interpret yet they are prevalent in day-to-day conversation. The current study intends to establish when a particular strategy of interpreting idioms becomes effective to interpret idioms for effective communication.

Anna (2018) defines idioms as a number of words which when taken together mean something different from individual words of the idiom when they stand alone. Idioms are peculiar to a language. Therefore, an idiom is a group of words with hidden meaning but draws the content from a particular culture and language. Therefore, they are culturally specific in nature and vary from culture to culture. The current study dwells on the interpretation of idioms in Luhya culture. Anna is interested in the description of idioms rather than the interpretation which is the core of the present study.

It is found that Lonyangapuo (2014) analyses linguistic morality in HIV and AIDS discourses in Kenyan society and finds that cultural aspects, relationships, sexuality and diseases resulting from sexual intercourse are taboo and therefore should not be discussed in direct language of communication as it dehumanizes and defaces the affected participants in the conversation.
Therefore, most of the societies in Kenya use silence, sheng, metaphors and euphemism to substitute direct language. This finding is in tandem with Luvonga (2017) who finds that in Lukabras cultural songs, the artists use substitution features of style such as metaphors, euphemisms, symbolism and metonymy mainly for face-saving. The current study is based on

idioms, their interpretation and strategies of interpretation. It is specific to idioms to test whether they are also for face-saving or other major functions. Whichever functions they are intended for, some fans may misinterpret these idioms leading to miscommunication. The study seeks for the best strategies to the difficulties in the interpretation of Luluhya idioms by Luluhya native speakers.

Wilson and Sperber (2002) in relevance theory, explained that the more complex the information is, the greater the processing effort and the greater the cognitive effects. This shows that if the idiom is complex to the hearer, the more effort will be applied and hence the higher the chance of misinterpretation or rejecting the information. Human mind tends to concentrate on the information which requires little effort to process. So the study investigated such forms of idioms to ascertain those susceptible to misinterpretation during conversations.

2.3 Constraints Encountered During Interpretation of Idioms

This area of study has attracted the attention of linguists in semantics, stylistics and communication. When idioms are being interpreted, the interpreter may face several setbacks that can lead to misinterpretation. Such constraints can vary from one form of idioms to the other. Difficulties encountered during interpretation of idioms are lack of proficiency in native language, lack of exposure to idiomatic language, the degree of fixedness of the idiom, superiority of the first language over the second language, lack of cultural and historical awareness of idioms (Noor and Fallatah, 2010). This has contributed to the current study a great deal only that such constraints are mainly applied in second language acquisition. Some of them can be applicable to the current study such as lack of exposure to the native speaker's language during conversation, not exposed fully to the idioms and complexity of the idioms.

The current study found that such were not enough but several constraints can be encountered such as lack of contextual clue, deficient knowledge of cognitive environment, lexical mismatch, ambiguity of idioms and emerging idioms. Therefore there was need for appropriate strategies of interpretation of idioms to mitigate such constraints for effective communication.

When the context was provided, the children between 5 to 12 years were able to interpret idioms correctly but failed to interpret them without context (Raymond, 2009). This necessitates the current study to investigate the applicability of other linguistic strategies in interpreting idioms out of context. In *Witimbule* programme, some idioms are provided without context and therefore peculiar to many fans. The current study seeks to investigate more strategies to interpret such idioms. This shows that lack of contextual clue results into misinterpretation of the idioms. However, there was need to investigate other strategies of interpreting idioms during communication a part from context. That is what drives the need for the current study.

Wendy (2021**)** emphasizes the usage of idioms in day-to-day conversation without realizing it, but its interpretation becomes a problem due to age gap. Young learners faced the difficulties in idiom interpretation as aresult of lack of exposure to the culture and therefore age should be considered as a factor in idiom interpretation. Such a finding implies that each culture has its own idioms that are interwoven in the language so much that we may fail to identify them easily. If idioms are meaningful in such a manner, there is a need to carry out research on the impediments to interpretation and consequently, effective strategies for interpreting them adequately.

Abdoun (2015) attempted to study the difficulties encountered by the Sudanese students in understanding English idiomatic expressions and found that the idiomatic meaning was not clear, they translated literally, and they lack English cultural background and contextual clue. Since Abdoun investigated the setbacks encountered during the interpretation of idioms, it is the concern of the current study. However, he dealt with students who were learning a second language (English). This study relies on the native speakers of the language who are within the same culture but various dialects. It was to test whether the fans from the Luhya speaking communities could interpret idiomatic language in the face of such impediments.

During interpretation of idioms by the fans of Radio Mambo FM there can be multiple interpretations, meaning that some interlocutors may misinterpret the idioms intended to pass across the message to them in conversations. The current study investigates the challenges that lead to misinterpretation. If the study is not carried out on the constraints that lead to misinterpretation of various forms of idioms during conversation, communication as the main objective of the language can not be accomplished.

Noura and Hassan (2013) also investigated the difficulties in idioms interpretation by Libyan students of English and came up with the same results as Abdoun (2015). They emphasized on lack of exposure to the target language of idioms. This plays a big role in this study because it lays a background on the core difficulties in idiomatic interpretation. This study then digs into the native speakers of the language to investigate the main constraints they encounter in interpreting the idioms in their local language. The current study purported to study the difficulties faced by interlocutors in interpreting idioms because each form of idioms has its own uniqueness hence the appropriate strategy of interpretation.

Amir (2012) investigates difficulties in interpreting idioms in inter-languages and finds that the difficulty lies in translation due to word-to-word equivalence. The current study investigates various dialects and their idiomatic interpretation rather than word translation. Word to word translation is equivalent to literal interpretation. Such is the source of incorrect interpretation of idioms that result in misunderstanding. The current study intends to investigate the constraints that may lead to misinterpretation of various forms of idioms at pragmatic level of linguistic analysis.

Tran (2013) attributed the difficulties to lack of exposure to the target language. The study assessed the intelligibility of the dialects in pragmatics interpretation of idioms. The current study sought to determine the difficulties encountered during interpretation of idioms which included lack of exposure to the target language. During interpretation of pragmatic idioms the interlocutor can be exposed to a particular speech community but fail to adequately interpret the idioms. This is because pragmatic idioms are quite demanding because one should be aware of the intention of the speaker of the idioms to interpret it. This shows that lack of societal knowledge or native speaker's intuition can easily cause misinterpretation and so there was a need to investigate how best the interpretation can be done for communication to be effective.

In processing idioms, Rachel *et al*. (1987) investigated the interpretation of idioms and found that those with more entries in mental lexicon are normally interpreted faster since one of their meanings will be encountered in a short time. Therefore, the difficulties in interpretation are dependent on the familiarity of its lexicon items. This shows that if an idiom is encountered most in the conversation, it can be easily interpreted. This can not be always the case because

such idioms can be used differently depending on the context of the speaker. There is the fact that idioms which are mostly encountered during communication can be interpreted easily (Wilson and Sperber, 1995)

Wendy (2021) finds that translators and interpreters of idioms face challenges of language localization, culture and situation at hand. Such challenges impact on the accuracy of results. This has spearheaded the current study to establish the measures to mitigate such constraints encountered during communication for efficacy in communication during *Witimbule* programme. This therefore implies that lack of cognitive environment is a great cause of difficulties encountered during interpretation of idioms in any setting. This shows that the best strategy is to be applied to achieve the best results during interpretation.

Emphasis is also laid on the fact that pragmatic idioms may lead to multiple interpretations due to their uniqueness in nature (Wendy, 2021). If there are multiple interpretations, there is a great challenge of identifying the correct interpretation. She further explained that idioms are not so simple that machines can be applicable to interpret without cultural knowledge. Therefore the current study seeks to investigate how pragmatic idioms can be interpreted using the least effort strategy. Here is where it is imperative that ambiguity of idioms is such an impediment to interpret idioms correctly and leads to multiple interpretations. Therefore there is need to investigate the least effort strategies to resolve this conflict.

Mudogo (2018) then finds that among the Luluhya dialects, there exists lexical mismatch that makes translation of words from English to native language demanding. This setback can also be a challenge in Interpretation of Oluluhya idioms among the fans of Witimbule programme in Radio Mambo FM because interpretation of idioms depends on good mastery of vocabulary in

the target language. This makes it necessary to study how idioms are interpreted in Radio Mambo FM, *Witimbule* programme. Because the previous study focused on translation of Oluluhya lexical items, there is need for study in idiomatic interpretation of Oluluhya language varieties to ascertain whether this lexical mismatch can contribute to misinterpretation of Oluluhya idioms and cause misinterpretation.

Moreover, the previous study dwells on translation of lexical items while the current study is focused on interpretation of Oluluhya idioms which need the knowledge of vocabulary in the target language.

The current study was set to analyse several strategies for interpreting idioms to determine the most appropriate one given that there can be some misinterpretations. The strategy with minimal processing effort to solve a variety of difficulties will be established in this study. This will reduce the chances of idiomatic misinterpretation during conversation.

Hazen (2006) defines idiolect as the language characteristic of the individual person. He further says that idiolect is the individual style which aggregates to dialect. However he did not elaborate how it affects the interpretation of idioms in the conversation. The current study then tested whether such variation contributed to misinterpretation of the idioms. Through interview to the fans of *Witimbule* programme, the study sought to determine how idiolect affects interpretation of Oluluhya idioms, and if so the extent to which it affects it.

In the same concept, Kuhl (2003) includes mannerism, patterns and habit of an individual as the idiolect. He added pronunciation, lexicon and syntax. This is what makes an individual unique from others in terms of speech in the same dialect. We can conclude that idiolect is the variation within the dialect. The variation in pronunciation and lexical items can impede communication

especially when idioms can not be interpreted. There was need to investigate whether or not the interpretation of idioms can be affected by idiolect.

Trudgill (2000) in dialectal analysis discussed accent as the manner of pronunciation of words by a particular individual or group. It was essential to the current study because it tested whether it would significantly contribute to misinterpretation of idioms during conversation in Radio Mambo FM or not. If it does, there would be need to investigate strategies for mitigating such hurdles for effective communication.

Mastery of a given language is measured by the ability of interlocutors to naturally use the phrasal expressions in diverse but appropriate situation (Alati, 2015). He finds out that idioms are difficult to interpret due to hidden meaning possessed. However, he did not point out the constraints incurred during interpretation of idioms and how they arise. This makes it necessary to venture into this area of linguistics study to investigate how misinterpretation of Oluluhya idioms may arise and seek for the suitable strategy to avert the problem of idiomatic misinterpretation.

Wilson and Sperber (1995) highlight that the more relevant the information is, the less the processing effort hence fast to interpret the given information. On the other hand, Ong'ayo *et al* (2018) reiterates that concepts with phrases are more complex than words or lexical units. It was necessary to test this tenet of relevance theory to authenticate its applicability to find the nature of the form of idioms that makes them difficult to interpret during conversation in *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM. Station. The more complex idioms may demand more

processing effort than the rest and that make it necessary to determine the best strategy that costs less effort.

The contribution of Lubangah (2018) will be necessary to the current study because he reveals that there exists dialect continuum across Oluluhya dialects with some resemblances but slight difference at the level of phonology, morphology and lexicology. The current study tests whether or not such variations can cause constraints during the interpretation of Oluluhya idioms. If so then it will warrant thorough investigation into the solution to the problem.

Lwangale (2016) highlights that Oluluhya dialects only differ slightly in pronunciation, stress placement and vowel length.

This study assumes that Oluluhya dialects are highly intelligible. However, such variation may result into misinterpretation of Oluluhya lexical items and affects the interpretation of idioms because they are dependent on vocabulary of the target language. There is therefore need to study this area critically to find the extend to which dialectical constraints encountered affects interpretation of Oluluhya idioms during conversation in the local radio programme.

From this discussion, the constraints encountered during interpretation of idioms include dialectal constraints, idiolect, accent, ambiguity of the idioms, and lack of contextual clue, absence of cognitive environment knowledge, literal interpretation and emerging idioms.

The study sought to determine the extent to which they affect the interpretation of Oluluhya idioms in the conversation among the fans of *Witimbule* programme in Radio FM, Oluluhya programme.

Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995) explains that the more recent the information the less the effort to interpret it and the greater the cognitive effects. They further reiterate that context and cognitive environment are the most appropriate aspects in idiomatic interpretation without which miscommunication can occur. The constraints of dialects, idiolect, accent, ambiguity, lack of contextual clue and emerging idioms are encountered as a result of lack of native speaker intuition and cognitive environment.

Schroeder (2012) stressed that if there is no shared knowledge between the speaker and the hearer, there is a higher chance of misinterpretation of information. This shows that cognitive environment is such important that if it lacks in conversations, idioms can be difficult to interpret during communication.

This study tests whether relevance theory can be applicable to explain how idioms are interpreted in the face of difficulties encountered. It was found that relevance theory is effective in clarifying how the information contained in the conversation among various Luluhya dialects is processed by the brain to reach cognitive effects hence effective communication.

2.4 Strategies of Interpreting Idioms

Pease (2021) agreed that it is hard for non native speakers to understand idioms because they are specific to a particular environment and situation at hand hence knowledge of the native speaker intuition to interpret them. There was need to try whether such strategy is fit for all forms of idioms or not. Each idiom has its own uniqueness hence specific strategy. It is therefore vital to apply such strategy to interpret all forms of idioms to ascertain where it fits appropriately.

Despite the fact that idioms have elicited a lot of challenges during interpretation (Alati, 2015), linguistic scholars have studied a number of strategies to interpret them though not bearing in

mind that each form of idioms is unique. There are various forms of idioms such as proverbial, euphemistic, hyperbolic and metaphorical. Alati did not highlight such challenges that are encountered during interpretation of idioms and the possible strategies of interpreting idioms during communication. The current study dwelled on the strategies of interpreting idioms in their different forms for effective communication in *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM.

Gibbs (1995) says that there is a figurative connection between idioms and their literal meaning. This implies that interpretation of idioms can also be literal. However, not many idioms are interpreted literally. Hidden language demands effort to interpret as studied currently. Therefore, he attributed the way metaphors are interpreted to idioms. However, a few idioms which are non-compositional can be interpreted using a literal approach. The current research seeks to investigate strategies for interpreting both compositional and non-compositional to find the best strategies for interpreting idioms to be used in the Radio Mambo FM, '*Witimbule*' programme.

Raymond and Gibbs (1980) categorised idioms as conventional (ordinary) and unconventional (figurative). They concluded that context of conversation was vital for the interpretation of both categories of idioms. Some conventional idioms were interpreted without context. From their findings, there can be other strategies which they did not compare to contextual clue to reach the least effort one. It is not true that context can be best to interpret all forms of idioms during conversation. Other idioms exist in isolation. This means that they demand extra strategies to interpret. It is also worth noting that each form of idioms is unique in its own existence and therefore peculiar strategy to interpret.

Mantyla (2014) investigated and found that contrary to Gibbs (1995), learners were unable to interpret idioms basing on literal knowledge or word-to-word equivalence. An idiom is a string of words which can not be interpreted singly but as a whole entity. This study investigates this strategy together with others to find the best one. Since literal interpretation demands no effort to apply it is the easiest of all. However, most idioms have implied meaning and so complicated are they that they demand extra effort to interpret. Such strategies are under the investigation in the current study.

Gibbs (1997) echoed conceptual metaphor theory as a strategy to interpret idioms.This involves mapping the domain to the target language to yield the results. This strategy can only be applicable to metaphorical idioms. The current study has other forms of idioms hence more strategies to identify the best. It also seeks to determine the idioms which are commonly misinterpreted and whether or not the interlocutors apply the best strategies.

Noura and Hassan (2013) outlined the strategies of interpreting idioms as the use of literal meaning and contextual clues. Those who used literal meaning failed while those who used context meaning to interpret idioms interpreted most of them correctly. This study seeks to determine the best strategy of interpreting Luluhya idioms by native speakers because they can have misinterpretations that may lead to miscommunication. Apart from the two strategies, others can be subjected to test whether they are applicable or not. Context clues can be applicable alongside other strategies to find whether it can be applied elsewhere to reach cognitive effects.

Takacs' (2015) comes up with a mapping strategy which adopts the metaphor interpretation. This strategy is applicable to this study but only used in metaphorical idioms. It is then deduced that other forms of idioms need a variety of strategies to be interpreted. There is need to investigate other strategies which can be applicable alongside or better than this one.

From this literature review, the strategies of interpreting idioms are found to be: narrowing and broadening, mapping, contextual clue, cognitive environment approach, literal interpretation, the native speaker's intuition and truth semantic strategy. The study seeks to investigate the best strategies of interpreting various forms of idioms from the conversation in the Radio Mambo FM., *Witimbule* programme.

According to Kamanga (2007), there are strategies for interpreting idioms which include literal interpretation contextual clue, well-formedness condition and Relevance Principle. Well-formedness condition is the same as truth-semantic-condition strategy. Above all, he concludes that contextual clue was the best strategy in interpreting Chichewa idioms. He applied optimality theory to interpret idioms. This has enriched the current study. However, he did not try other strategies such as conceptual metaphor theory and context (cognitive environment) to establish whether they can be applicable with least effort or not. Since the study seeks the best strategy of interpreting Luhya idioms in radio conversations, it involves the fans' conversations in the framework of relevance theory. In Radio Mambo FM, *Witimbule* programme conversations there can be multiple interpretations of idioms due to various difficulties in interpretation, which can differ from those of Chichewa language. Therefore, the current study tests all those strategies with difficulties faced to determine the best one.

Elshamy (2006) studies the function of idioms in Egyptian novel on taxi drivers and found them to be very effective in communication among the lower-class people. The study is grounded in the speech act theory. There is also the need to test the effectiveness of idioms in conversation in the framework of relevance theory. Moreso, Elshamy did not point out the strategies used to interpret the idioms using the least effort strategies.

Human mind follows the path of the least effort strategies to arrive at the conclusion (Wilson and Sperber, 2002). This is the backbone to the current study which aims at testing the strategies of interpreting idioms to find the one with less processing effort than the others.

The idiomatic competence of undergraduates and high school students in Vietnam was investigated by gathering 50 idioms from those commonly used in textbooks and found that students had poor competence in English as their second language due to lack of exposure to idiomatic language (Tran, 2013). He, therefore, deduces that cultural knowledge (context) cannot be overlooked in idiomatic interpretation. The current study then tends to find various ways used by fans of *Witimbule* programme to interpret idioms in their own setting and the extent to which they can use the least effort strategy. It will also test the authenticity of the context in interpreting idioms and the extent to which it can be applied to the study.

Furthermore, Mantyla (1997) dwelled on foreign language interpretation. The current study dwells on native speakers' interpretation of idioms. Because there can be a misinterpretation of idioms by the fans of the programme.

There are various strategies for interpreting idioms that will be discussed in this section. Gibbs (1995) says that not all idioms are non-compositional but there is a figurative connection between idioms and their literal meaning and therefore peoples' understanding of metaphors impacts on how they interpret idioms.

Since idioms are words with hidden meaning, this study tests whether the understanding of metaphors can be entirely applied to interpret all idioms. Idioms which can be interpreted by conceptual metaphor theory are metaphorical idioms. The current study aims at testing the strategies of interpreting idioms to ascertain the best one to be applied to various forms of idioms.

Maha (2017) presumes that since language is full of idiomatic expressions, a person is expected to use idioms to communicate most frequently because it is a sign of language proficiency. However, little or no attention is given to the strategies that learners need to use to interpret unknown idioms. The study also points out that idioms are frequently used in every day's conversations. The current study seeks to investigate the difficulties in interpreting idioms and the best strategy for interpreting them, given that we cannot do without them in our daily communication. Efficacy in conversation is to be achieved through the most effective strategies of interpreting idioms. Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) reiterates that the hearer's mind follows the path of the least effort strategy to process information and if information demands most effort to interpret it risks being misinterpreted or rejected by the mind

Wanjiku (2016) classified the Gikuyu idioms as transparent, semi-transparent, semi-opaque, opaque, and emerging idioms. According to her, transparent idioms have close meaning to the

literal one, semi-transparent idioms carry a metaphorical sense and can be known through common use. Semi-opaque idioms are the ones which figurative meaning is not joined to that of constituent words. Opaque idioms pose difficulties because their meaning is not of some of the literal meaning of its constituent parts. Therefore, culture plays a major role in the interpretation of such idioms. Emerging idioms are used but not passed the test of time.

It is so fascinating that Wanjiku (2016) drew the relationship between idioms and metaphors, proverbs, and similes. The current study categorizes the idioms in form of proverbs, metaphors, hyperbole, and euphemisms to verify the best strategies for each form of idioms.

Cacciari *et al*. (1993) emphasizes on compositionality of idioms basing on a lexical item in the idiomatic structure. They also stressed the role of context in interpreting idioms which are in line with relevance theory as expounded by Schroeder (2012). The current study seeks to unearth the best strategies used by fans to interpret idioms as a whole and not a lexical unit. The idioms will be interpreted at the pragmatics level of linguistics analysis. This is attributed to the fact that lack of knowledge in the vocabulary of a particular language leads to misinterpretation of idioms hence miscommunication (Maha 2017).

Onyango (2014) emphasized on lexical narrowing where the derivation of cognitive effects is reached by narrowing down to the meaning of the word until expectations of relevance are satisfied. Furthermore, lexical broadening involves approximation and metaphorical extension to reach cognitive effects. This strategy is vital to this study except that it is dealing with lexical items. When it was applied in idiomatic interpretation, it was applicable but it consumed a lot of time to reach cognitive effects.

Schroeder (2012) echoed Wilson and Sperber (2002) said that human mind tend to opt for the time saving strategies to reach cognitive effects and it follows the path of the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects. This shows then that a strategy which is brain taxing may not be option to the brain to interpret idioms. Relevance theory explains that if the information is complex, there is a possibility of misinterpretation or rejection.

Mohammed and Raut (2018) had considered idioms to be difficult to interpret. They then found that interpreters use various strategies to interpret idioms correctly. These strategies included context, literal interpretation, word by word, knowledge of the first language and world view. They discovered that still there was incorrect interpretation. This could be as a result of application of a wrong strategy or landing on the most effort strategy to yield wrong interpretation.

There is need to apply all the strategies step by step on various forms of idioms to find the least effort strategy during conversation. The current study sought for the appropriate application of relevant strategies to interpret idioms correctly. Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) advocates for the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects. If we follow the most effort strategy, there can be a misinterpretation or rejection of the information. Besides the above strategies of interpreting idioms, the current study has revealed others which have been applied to interpret them.

The following strategies are applied to interpret various forms of idioms in Witimbule programme of Radio Mambo FM.

2.4.1 Cognitive environment knowledge approach

This is the strategy where the interlocutor uses the knowledge possessed from the speech community and cultural experience to interpret idioms. It is therefore imperative that to be a good interpreter of idioms, you should be versed with the happenings in society at that time. Given that idioms are stored in the society to be passed out from generation to generation being a dweller in a particular society is advantage. Schroeder (2012) laid emphasis on the fact that cognitive environment is the information contained in the mind of the interlocutor at that time of utterance. It is as a result of accumulated knowledge about the culture of the community from which the interlocutor has been for a long time (Schroeder, 2012).The current study tested whether it would be applicable to interpret idioms correctly in the framework of relevance theory. Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) also advocates for the role of cultural context in interpretation of information. It is therefore found that misinterpretation of information can occur if it is not matching with the interpretation of the hearer.

2.4.2 Mapping /conceptual metaphor theory

This is matching the figurative language onto the target language to infer the meaning. If you have knowledge about metaphors you activate it by encyclopeadic entries to get the meaning. Here is the best illustration: *Malulu ni etalanyi* -Malulu is the lion

Under mapping or CMT, we use encyclopeadic entries.

Lion -brave, determination, energetic, fierce or wise. Because it was during campaign in 2022 as he was contesting for a parliamentary seat, the correct interpretation is that he is determined (Determination). However, conceptual metaphor theory could not be used independently to explain how idioms can be interpreted but it is anchored on relevance theory to realise the correct interpretation. Before mapping, there should be the knowledge of cognitive environment to

arrive at the cognitive effects. This implies that before we map the parliamentary candidate to the lion, we are to understand that prevalent circumstances are elections or politics. Such is the knowledge of cognitive environment that interlocutor needs to apply to reach cognitive effects.

2.4.3 Contextual clue

Ngugi *et al.* (2020) analysed Gikuyu idioms and found that they are peculiar to that language and their meaning is context dependent. The idioms were therefore grouped basing on the theme and content. This is therefore an indicator that idioms are unique to a particular culture or speech community. Gikuyu idioms were applicable but the current study uses Oluluhya idioms to determine whether the same results can be achieved. The current study also delved on idioms without contextual clue which proved cumbersome and demanded extra effort to interpret. It is therefore imperative that contextual clue is just one of the strategies of interpreting idioms during communication but not applicable to interpret all forms of idioms.

2.4.4 Narrowing and broadening

Wilson and Sperber (1995/2002) emphasize that human mind tend to be discriminative and only picks the required information and discard the rest (Narrowing) Using encyclopeadic entries as earlier explained also results into narrowing to the required point. Broadening is expanding the information to get the meaning from its narrow sense. According to relevance theoretical framework, narrowing and broadening can be effective if the speaker possess cultural knowledge.

2.4.5 Truth condition semantic approach

This is the condition under which something is true or false. The interpreter keeps guessing the meaning until the conclusion is reached.

Lucid (2021) illustrates that priori truth is the knowledge already possessed by the interlocutors about something before making interpretations. For example, all boys are males, hyenas are animals.

Posteriori truth is the knowledge we have after experience in our daily living. Men have beards... If you have never seen them you can not be sure. Such truth can be challenged if some men will lack beards. For instance, *Mongooses are eating chicken in the pubs of our market.* Using the truth condition semantic approach, mongooses can not enter the pub but people do. . It is believed that native speakers are versed with the trends in the pub. So they are people. Ordinary people do not eat chicken in the pub. They are bar men and women. Chicken are not eaten in the pub. It is money which is consumed in the pub. From this we deduce that prostitutes have landed in the pub to reap the money from those who visit there for leisure, luxury and pastime hence using money**.** This truth is as a result of accumulated knowledge about the culture from which the idiom is derived hence cognitive environment knowledge approach. It can not be applied independently without cognitive environment knowledge. This is online with relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995) when they explained that cultural knowledge is key to interpret figurative language.

2.4.6 Native speaker intuition

Anna and Stefanie (2015) say that it is the knowledge of the language as a result of being born in the speech community with vocabulary and figurative language in the society that make them good at idiomatic interpretation of the language. For instance in the Olunyole dialect :Achunne ofiye - He /she pinched the corpse to mean being selfish. It is cumbersome to interpret unless you are a native speaker of Olunyole. Native speaker intuition is based on communal knowledge as a result of maximum exposure to the target language or speech community. Relevance theory by

Wilson and Sperber (2012) stressed that once you are exposed to the language for a long time, you are likely to master it and when the information is used repeatedly, it is likely to be interpreted correctly by the human mind. Among the fans of *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM, majority of the informants who interpreted the idioms correctly had adopted the strategy of the native speaker intuition.

2.4.7 Literal Interpretation

It is direct method of interpreting idioms during communication. Once you have a good mastery of vocabulary in the target language you can interpret it as it is without constraints. Sprenger et al. (2006) accept that in the absence of contextual clue, the interlocutor can activate the knowledge of literal interpretation of the last word of the idiom to derive the meaning. It cannot be assumed that such a strategy is futile attempt without trying it in the current study. However, there are other strategies which can be applicable alongside this. The current study sought to determine the least effort strategies to interpret idioms correctly.

Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) explains the concept of following the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects. From the strategies which have been discussed in this chapter, the current study seeks to establish the one that the interlocutor should apply the least effort.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter entails the research design, study area, study population, sampling procedure, sample size, data collection techniques, reliability and validity, data analysis, and presentation and ethical consideration.

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted descriptive research design. Inaam (2016) says that such research design can describe phenomena as they exist including social events, structures, and situations. Such is the component of the current study which targets the cultural events, political arena and other events in the Luhya community. Descriptive research design gathers systematically factual information through observation and conducting oral interviews to respondents (Luvonga, 2017).

Wanjohi (2014) further states that descriptive research design yields data that is rich for detailed analysis. The current study described how Luhya idioms were gathered and interpreted by the fans of *Witimbule* programme in their natural setting. Descriptive research design generates the hypotheses in qualitative approach while the analytic research design tests the hypotheses in quantitative approach to the study (Kumar, 2011) and therefore not applicable to the proposed study. This is so because the current study is qualitative as it describes events as they are without quantifying them.

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted in Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia and Vihiga counties of the Western Kenya region where Oluluhya dialects are spoken by the native speakers and it is under the cover of Radio Mambo FM network. The dialects spoken include: Lubukusu, Lunyore, Luwanga,

Lusonga, Lutura, Lulogoli, Lukabras, Lutirichi, Lwisukha, Lwidakho, Lumarama, Lukhayo, Lushisa, Lumarachi, Lusamia, Lutachoni, Lutsotso, Lunyala East and Lunyala West. They border other communities that speak various languages such as Dholuo, Nandi and Ateso. The programme is presented in Oluluhya dialects. The study focused on pragmatic interpretation of Oluluhya idioms in the conversation among the fans of *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM. This information was obtained from Radio Mambo FM station, *Witimbule* Fan's Club. *Witimbule* programme was chosen because it is the Luhya programme that provides a platform for people from various Luhya dialects to express themselves in local language regardless of their status, age and level of education.

3.4 Study Population

The units of analysis were idioms used in *Witimbule* programme of radio mambo FM, forming part of the population. Ogula (1998) explains that the study population is all people who possess the characteristics of interest, institutions, or objects that have at least one characteristic in common. The target population for this study was *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM because it is aired in the luhya dialects, 506 fans registered by '*Witimbule* fan's club. There were two radio presenters of this programme from Luhya community who formed the population. One spoke Olutsotso and the other one Olukabras. The idioms were collected between 9:00 pm. to 12:00 am from Monday to Friday every week for the period of 9 weeks which are equivalent to 2 months. The conversations in this programme focus on politics, cultural aspects and news from Western Kenya counties, cultural songs and entertainment. The idioms were naturally integrated in the conversation, but the study focused on metaphoric, euphemistic, hyperbolic and proverbial idioms in the programme of *Witimbule* in Radio Mambo FM.

3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The study adopted purposive sampling procedure based on the representation of fans from various dialects and period of stay in the fans, club. The criterion for selecting the dialects was based on being part of 19 Oluluhya dialects. In this case 66 respondents were sampled purposively basing on 17 Luhya dialects represented by ensuring that each dialect was represented, age of the participant and length of stay in the fan's club. The two dialects were not represented and so no sample was selected from them.

The 2 radio presenters formed part of the population and were all sampled purposively because they are the initiators of the programme through which fans air their concerns. The number of idioms selected was 69. They were selected through audio tape recording of the clips during the programme until saturation stage was attained. In qualitative approach the researcher do not have a sample size in mind because data collection is based on the predetermined size until saturation stage is attained (Kumar, 2011). He further reiterates that qualitative research is guided by researcher's judgement as to who can provide the best information concerning the study. In this case, the sample size was drawn from 506 registered members in *Witimbule* programme fans' club members inclusive of the 2 presenters who are also registered. Registered fans could be traced easily from the register in the club and are versed in the conversations that go on rather than listeners and callers who can miss several programmes and can not be easily accessible during the stud. Some dialects had a higher representation than others while Olusonga and Olusamia were not represented among the fans. (See table 1 in chapter 4).

The idioms were collected until saturation stage was attained. The number of idioms attained was 69. The idioms were recorded from the audio-transcripts basing on the criteria or parameter of meeting the conditions on the idiom identification tool by Chen Linly (2021) that bears the

distinctive features of idioms. Chen (2021) describes the features of idioms as idiomaticity, structural stability or rigidity and semantic unity. In the real sense, idioms have arbitrary meaning, its components can not be added or omitted without altering the meaning, word order can not be altered or interchanged and synonymous words can not be used to replace idioms.

The 2 radio presenters were the key participants. They were adopted because they speak at least one dialect of Luluhya language as they present the programme which accommodates the fans from various Luhya speaking dialects. They were to explain how they accommodate all the fans from various 19 dialects during conversations that lead to effective communication.

The two presenters also aided the researcher to reach the respondents for interview. Furthermore, the study was manageable by the use of 5 research assistants who aided in transcription of the data from Luhya dialects to English, audio tape recording and translation of the language from English to the native language during field work. It was necessitated by the fact that they were graduate students from their community

3.6 Data Collection Techniques

Kumar (2011) asserts that an unstructured oral interview as a method of data collection is flexible to the interviewer because the questions on the interview guide can be explained depending on the situation to make the respondents understand. The interviewer interpreted the questions to the language which respondents understood during the oral interview. It was effective because the researcher is the native speaker of Olukabras dialect in Luhya community. The data collection tool or instrument was an interview guide and the collection technique or method was an oral interview. On the other hand, a structured interview would not be applicable because of its rigidity to meet the communication needs of the native speakers.

An unstructured interview is highly recommended in qualitative approach to research because Kumar (2011) says that oral interview is in-depth as the interviewer prepares the informants before the interview. The interviewer established a rapport with the respondents to get the required information hence the best technique to be applied in the current study. However, the interviewer took precaution to avoid influencing the respondents in their responses to mitigate the cases of subjectivity.

Ogula (1998) recommends oral interview as the best method of data collection because it is flexible to individual situations and reveals the feelings of the informants. Furthermore, the interviewees are in the right position to freely express themselves in their native language and the unstructured interview is oral and flexible to accommodate fans of all levels of education and age brackets. In the study interview schedule or guide was adopted as a tool or instrument to conduct oral interview to 66 informants. This was necessitated by the fact that the interviewer is the native speaker of Lukabras dialect which forms part of the 19 Luhya dialects and is a listener to *Witimbule* programme from which the idioms were selected. The interviewer clarified the questions in the native language to the informants. Luvonga (2017) recommends this technique because it promotes a higher percentage rate of return and even those informants who are illiterate or semi-illiterate are interviewed in their local language which they understand better. It was found from the current study that most of the respondents are not learned though semi literate. Even though oral interview attracted a high percentage of the respondents, it is time-consuming and brain taxing. To counteract this, the researcher used the mobile phone to contact those who were far away.

The idioms were collected by listening to *Witimbule* programme that was aired on Radio Mambo FM and audio-tape recording. The excerpts were extracted from the audio- transcripts and recorded. The idioms from the excerpts were recorded in tables and the content analysis guide. The speakers of the idioms were conducted by mobile phones or through the connection with radio presenters to give the interpretation of the idioms they used to pass the message in their conversation during the programme. Their interpretation formed the data which the interviewer based on to compare the response from the informants during the interview.

The fans were interviewed orally to provide the interpretation of idioms used in the conversation of Radio Mambo FM *Witimbule* Programme. The study unearthed the strategies for interpreting idioms during communication by listening to the responses from the fans of *Witimbule* programme. The two radio presenters being the participants and the initiators of the programme, gave the correct interpretation of idioms by contacting the fans who used them in their utterances during the conversation in *Witimbule* programme.

The data was collected from 7th, October, 2022 to 7th, December, 2022 by gathering the idioms from Radio Mambo FM, Witimbule programme, the interview and recording of the findings was done from 10th, December, 2022 to 3rd, January, 2023. Data analysis and presentation was completed at the end of January, 2023.

3.7 Reliability and Validity/ Confirmability

Wanjohi (2014) finds that sample size determines the validity and reliability of the study and validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what it purports while reliability is the capability of a research instrument to yield the same results if repeated over a period of time. In this research, the study was carried out within 4 counties in Western region of Kenya. They were Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia and Vihiga because they speak Oluluhya dialects. Validity of the

research instruments was verified through pilot testing a month before the actual research. The study adopted 13 participants for pilot testing basing on their willingness, availability, convenience and varied dialects. It took two weeks and the research instrument being an interview guide was found effective in data collection. 17 idioms were sampled from the programme. The effectiveness of the research instruments and good choice of respondents would eradicate the case of subjectivity in research.

3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

Wanjohi (2014) reveals that it is transforming data by underlining the basic information, suggesting conclusions and decision making. The current study adopted a qualitative research paradigm since it is descriptive. The data of idioms collected was recorded in tables. The four tables were arranged according to the form of idioms as reflected in Appendix (ii). The interpretation of idioms according to speaker meaning or intention were used to match with responses from informants to determine how they interpret.

The study used the content analysis guide to record the findings against the objectives to answer the research questions. The method of thematising idioms was based on the difficulties, and strategies for interpreting idioms. After the analysis, the data was presented in both textual and tabular form.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The Director of the School of Graduate Studies, Maseno University gave a clearance for the field work because it involves the direct contact with human informants from the fans club of Witimbule programme in Radio Mambo FM.

A research permit was obtained from Maseno University Ethics and Review Committee(Appendix viii), and The National Council for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI)See appendix viii before proceeding to the field for data collection. The study involved the fans of *Witimbule* programme and so the precaution was taken to ensure that participants understand the purpose and nature of the study before signing the consent form that is attached in appendix (II).

The researcher observed privacy, confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents during the entire period of study. To attain this, the names of the informants were kept confidential by using numbers to represent them. The information given was only accessed by the researcher or authorised person for the purpose of this study only.

The secondary sources of information used in this study have been acknowledged and cited to avoid plagiarism. The presentation began with characteristics of the fans of Witimbule program, categories of idioms used in the programme and how the fans interpret idioms in various forms. The second one was the difficulties encountered during interpretation to establish whether they would be significant or insignificant. It was followed by the strategies used to interpret various forms of idioms to ascertain the most appropriate one since each form of idioms has its own uniqueness hence a particular strategy to interpret with the least effort. The study would establish the most relevant strategy in line with relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber **(**1995/2002**).**

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the findings of the investigation on how the fans of Witimbule programme in Radio Mambo FM interpret idioms used during conversation. It involved the analysis of the three objectives of the study which were to: Determine the form of Oluluhya idioms which are susceptible to misinterpretation during Witimbule Programme in Radio Mambo FM., analyse how difficulties could arise during interpretation of Oluluhya idioms in Witimbule Programme of Radio Mambo FM and establish the strategies of interpreting Oluluhya idioms during Witimbule Programme of Radio Mambo FM.

4.2 Characteristics of the Fans of Witimbule Programme

The key informant was the presenter of the programme who speaks Olukabras dialect. The presenter manages to accommodate all the fans from a variety of Luhya dialects by code-switching from Olukabras to either English or Kiswahili in some cases but the dialects were mutually intelligible. Most of the respondents were able to converse with minimal code switching. The table below shows the sampled fans from various dialects.

Table 1: Dialects of Sampled Fans

	DIALECT	**SAMPLE**	**POPULATION**
1	Lukabras	7	70
2	Lwisukha	4	40
2	Lutachoni	3	30
4	Lubukusu	6	58
5	Luwanga	4	40
6	Lutura	3	30
7	Lulogoli	2	22
8	Lwidakho	4	40

9	Lumarama	5	47
10	Lutsotso	5	50
11	Lutiriki	2	2
12	Lukhayo	3	3
13	Lushisa	4	4
14	Lumarachi	6	62
15	Lunyala East	4	4
16	Lunyala West	2	2
17	Lunyore	2	2
18	Lusamia	-	-
19	Lusonga	-	-
	Total	66	506

Two radio presenters, their dialects, sample size and population in table below as a continuation from table 1.

Presenter	**Dialect**	**Sample size**	**Population**
1	Lukabras	1	1
2	Lutsotso	1	1

From the above table, there is no equal representation of fans from various dialects in Witimbule Fans' Club. Therefore, the sampling was done purposively to ensure that all dialects are represented. Sampling was done before the interview by selecting respondents from the list of registered fans basing on various dialects and age of the participants. Most of the fans were the speakers of Lukabras, Isukha, Bukusu, Wanga, Idakho, Marama, Tsotso, and Marachi. There are no fans from Samia and Songa dialects. There are a few fans from Lunyore, Lunyala East and West, Lushisa ,Lukhayo, Lutiriki, Lulogooli,Lutura and Lutachoni.

Masolia (2018) finds that Oluluhya dialects are intelligible and if more than two speech communities are in contact for a long time, the weak group gets assimilated. This shows that there is a shift to the stronger dialect as the weak dialect dies. The study shows that when two or more dialects come together, one dialect is formed. Before the year 2000, Kibeya and Kanyoro (1987) have shown 17 Oluluhya dialects but due to assimilation, there exists 19 Oluluhya dialects: Olutura emerged as a result of interaction among A bawanga, Abamarachi and Abakhayo. Lusonga dialect was recently born due to the direct contact among Olusamia, Olunyala West and Dholuo language. This is vital to this study because it shows dialectal variation and hence the reason to investigate whether they are intelligible with other dialects of Luhya community.

The programme is aired within the whole part of Western Kenya (Luhya speaking communities). The interviewer used Olukabras to interview the respondents and insisted that they stick to their dialects until the dialectical constraints are encountered. The fans were engaged in dialogue to interpret the 4 forms of idioms.

Table 2: Age of Participants

AGE IN YRS	**SAMPLE**
Below 30	5
30-40	24
41-50	28
51-60	5
61-70	3
71+	1
Total	66

From the above table, it is concluded that most of the fans are between 30 and 50 years. These are the adults. However, those above 70years are few. This therefore shows that they have acquired sufficient language to interpret Oluluhya idioms. This is attributed to Mudogo (2018)

that mastery of vocabulary in a language is a sign of linguistic competence. The interlocutor cannot interpret idioms used during conversation in a particular language without mastering it to the fullest. Moreover, the age alone was not the factor to prove how far the interlocutor had mastered a particular dialect but what matters most here is the period taken since becoming a fan of the programme. To sample the respondents, the study based on the age of the respondents, their level of education, dialect and frequency of participation. This is how the 66 respondents were sampled:

Table 3: Frequency of Participation in the Programme

AGE IN YRS	**SAMPLE**
Daily	35
Five times	22
Four times	8
Three	1
Twice	-
Once	-
Never	-
Total	**66**

From the above table, it is established that most of the fans are active participants in Witimbule programme. This means that information provided is valid and reliable to this study. The more the exposure to the language, the more proficient one becomes.

Therefore to authenticate whether or not the fans are able to comprehend and interpret the idioms used in the conversation of *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM, the fans were interviewed orally in whichever Luhya speaking dialect. It was found that due to every day's communication, there was a higher rate of intelligibility. According to relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995), if the information is used repeatedly, the interlocutors get used to it

and their mind is used to it. If it comes to the mind, processing is done very fast and consequently less effort is used to reach cognitive effect**s.**

Table 4: Education Level of Participants

EDUCATION LEVEL	**SAMPLE**
Lower primary and below	7
Below STD 8	18
KCPE	24
KCSE	10
College	4
Graduates	3
Total	66

From this table, it is concluded that most of the fans are semi literate because they did not go beyond primary school level. Those above primary school are only 17 out of the 66 sampled. Therefore *Witimbule* programme provides platform for local people to express themselves regardless of their level of education. This indicates that the level of education does not impact greatly on idiomatic interpretation of idioms rather than exposure to the native speakers' language. This is a backup to the finding of Schroeder (2012) that cultural knowledge is the best approach to interpreting figurative language.

Fans express themselves in their native language and acquire the information from various parts of the country. Therefore the level of education or status does not deter the fans from participation in the programme. From the findings it can also be explained that idioms are peculiar to a particular culture and each culture is unique.

4. 3 Form of Idioms which are Susceptible to Misinterpretation

This section analyses objective one which entails the forms of idioms which are susceptible to misinterpretation during conversations in *Witimbule* programme and the reason behind it. The 4 forms of idioms to be analysed include metaphorical, proverbial, euphemistic and hyperbolic. The results on how the informants responded have been recorded in the four tables below as table 5, 6, 7, 8.

Table 5: Metaphorical Idioms

CODE	CORRECT INTERPRETATION	MISINTERPRETATION	NO RESPONSE
01	35	30	1
02	50	16	0
03	60	6	0
04	48	17	1
05	62	4	0
06	33	30	3
07	61	4	1
08	63	3	0
09	40	24	2
10	55	11	0
11	64	2	0
12	47	13	6
13	60	3	3
14	40	26	0
15	50	16	0
16	42	24	0
17	39	25	2
18	30	36	0
19	41	25	0
20	45	21	0
21	64	2	0
22	60	6	0
23	65	1	0
24	58	8	0
25	50	16	0
26	53	13	0
27	50	16	0

This is the form of idioms which were mostly interpreted correctly except code 18,1&6 which were highly misinterpreted because the interpreters lacked the knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker intuition to enable them to use the immediate environment to interpret it correctly.

For instance in example 1: code 1.

Wu-kwile mu-tsi-ndang'unyo

Wu 3SgS -kwile v mu Prep. -tsi-Pl -ndang'unyo N.

He/she has fallen in black ants.

Possible interpretations are: he has found himself in problems, he has created a problem for himself or he has been arrested by police officers.The first two are weak implicatures and therefore the strong implicature is the third one. TSINDANG'UNYO* is an adhoc concept which can be attributed to hostility, pain and suffering. Through narrowing, the interpreter applies the context (cognitive environment approach to hostility and mapping of black ants to police officers.

Interpretation: Has been arrested by the police officers or has landed in the custody of police officers (in cell). There are strong and weak implicatures and so the interpreter applies narrowing technique to reach the specific interpretation as the strong implicatures.

Moreno and Rosa (2001: 313):

In understanding an utterance containing an idiom, the hearer takes the concepts encoded by the utterance and by the idioms string as clues to the explicature and implicatures intended by the speaker. Using the relevance theoretical comprehension procedure, he

follows a path of the least effort strategy and starts considering a few highly activated assumptions from the encyclopeadic entries of the encoded concepts to use as contextual assumptions in search for implications.

The interpreter should have the knowledge of what is being spoken in the neighbourhood at that period. This will make them to map *etsindang'unyo (black ants) to police officers* hence interpretation. Most of the fans used literal interpretation as finding yourself in the real black ants; others interpreted it as being in the dangerous situation. Those who used truth condition semantic approach failed to interpret it correctly. Those who used native speaker intuition knew the meaning of black ants but misinterpreted the idiom. Therefore, cognitive environment knowledge was required in order to activate conceptual metaphor knowledge (mapping strategy).This shows that even CMT as a strategy of interpreting metaphorical idioms depends largely on cognitive environment approach to reach cognitive effects faster than the others. Relevance theory is applicable in provision of implicatures which can be either strong or weak.Weak implicatures leads to misinterpretation of idioms (Carston, 2015)

Example 2: Code 6. *Amang'u kekhupa mupanipepa*

Ama Pl. S -ng'u N. ke AUG -khupa V mu Prep. -panipepa N.

The beasts landed in pan paper (Webuye factory).

Possible interpretations can be; Hostile people came to work in the factory, thugs or thieves came to steal from the factory or corrupt leaders found their way to Panpaper. Just like code 1, the interlocutor should first apply the knowledge of cognitive environment by

the use of ad hoc concept AMANG'U* BEASTS to come up with encyclopaedic entries such as: Greediness, hostility, ferocity and corruption.

Interpretation: The corrupt leaders have been employed to be in charge of pan paper factory in Webuye. Encyclopaedic entries are hostility, ferocity, greediness and corruption. The strong implicature is corruption hence corrupt leaders.

It is then narrowed down to corruption. AMANG"U* are mapped to corrupt leaders. If the interlocutor misses the knowledge of cognitive environment, narrowing and mapping can not be sufficient enough to interpret idioms**.**

The interlocutors' misinterpretation was as a result of lack of native speakers' intuition and cognitive environment. Therefore they failed to apply conceptual metaphor knowledge to map *Amang'u* to our leaders in pan paper factory. Under cognitive environment, they are to use encyclopeadic entries to get the meaning of Amang'u. Amang'u were ferocious beasts which used to exhume corpses and eat everything including bones. This means that they left nothing in turn. Therefore AMANG'U* are very corrupt leaders or managers who misappropriate or squander everything in the company or organization and leave it in financial quagmire. In order to activate conceptual metaphor theory, the interlocutor had to apply the knowledge of cognitive environment approach besides native speakers' intuition to master the vocabulary (Amang'u). The vocabulary was used long time ago and only most of the fans who were adults or those who had been within the Oluluhya speaking communities for more than 20 years would fathom due to native speaker's intuition. The elderly people interpreted this idiom better than the youths. This shows that the capability to interpret idioms correctly depends on how long you have been in the speech community, the frequency in communication using the target language and personal interest

Example 3: Code 18. *Nakhamuna nende wanangwe*

.Na-kha-muna nende wa-nangwe

3SgS -DEM. N.-Squirrel Conj-and. 3Sg . N.-leopard

Squirrel and the leopard .

The squirrel and the leopard.

Interpretation: They are enemies.

Explicature: neighbours, animals.

Implicatures; **Enemies**

The interlocutor with minimal knowledge of cognitive environment could not map the metaphorical animals to the target language to guess the interpretation. The idiom also demanded truth condition semantic approach to detect the relationship between the leopard and the squirrel. They are enemies. Such names were used long time ago and only resurface in oral narratives. In this case you need the knowledge of the native speaker intuition to master the vocabulary to the fullest. These days the animals are respectively called *Eshimuna nende eyingwe. Eshi-muna nende eyi-ngwe (squirrel and the leopard).* Every society or culture has the way it perceives these animals and so interpretation may differ. Given that it differs from one speech community to the other, knowledge of cognitive environment is applicable to make correct interpretation.

Example 4: Code 023: *Ni shulu na munwa*

Ni-shulu na mu-nwa. SgS N -nose Conj -and Sg N-mouth. Are nose and mouth.

Interpretation: Friends or closely related people.

Explicature: they are body parts

Implicature: they are friends

Implicit assumptions; they are close friends

This idiom was interpreted correctly by all except one individual. It only demanded activation of conceptual metaphor theory or mapping strategy because nose and mouth are commonly encountered in every day's conversation. It does not need the knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker intuition to tackle it. The vocabulary used is prevalent in all the settings. The idiom means close relatives or friends. The distance between the two is close. This idiom was not demanding enough to warrant the processing knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker intuition. People from any culture would activate the mapping strategy to map the target domain to source domain.

Example 5: Code 008. *Wakhomba muyapakha. Wa-khomba mu-ya-pakha. 3SgS-He/she V. -licked prep-in .Sg. Pron.-that which V. -fermented* .

Licked the fermentation pot. Interpretation : Things have fallen apart or failure to succeed.

Explicature: Licked the fermentation pot

Implicature: Things have fallen a part

Implicit assumptions: Things have fallen a part because of failure to succeed

This idiom was one of those which were well interpreted. The hearer was just expected to activate the knowledge of the native speaker's intuition or mastery of vocabulary in Oluluhya dialects. Once the function of the fermentation pot is known and map the word licking onto the

situation the interlocutor gets the interpretation correctly. However, cognitive environment approach would be applicable to reach cognitive effects faster than the other strategies. Licking the fermentation pot means you have found when all wine is finished and then opted to lick whatever has remained. The community which does not put great value to traditional wine may not interpret it the same way as the Luhya speaking community, hence miscommunication between the speaker and the hearer.

Among the Abaluhya people, licking the fermentation pot showed the complete failure to achieve what you expected. This is because others have enjoyed the wine. The other factor which has contributed to the interpretation of this idiom is that it has been used frequently in communication in *Witimbule* programme. Its frequency in usage is evidence that it is used commonly in day to day conversation.

From the 5 examples of interpretation and misinterpretations of metaphorical idioms, the key strategies of interpreting idioms are cognitive environment approach, native speaker intuition and conceptual metaphor theory that entails mapping.

In relevance theory, Wilson and Sperber (2002) propounded that an input is relevant to an individual if it connects with the background information to yield cognitive effects. Therefore the greater the cognitive effects, the greater the relevance. Human mind follows the least effort strategy during processing of information.

When the information is repeated, it has a high chance of being interpreted correctly (Wilson and Sperber, 2002). This therefore implies that repetition has a direct bearing on interpretation of idioms. This explains why idiom code 008 has a higher rate of interpretation despite the fact that it demands three strategies to interpret or reach cognitive effects. Most of the idioms of

metaphorical form are not demanding on the side of interpretation once the hearer is exposed to the target language and mastered the vocabulary before activating the knowledge of mapping strategy.

Yus (2006) simplified the explanation that hearers rely on powerful criterion when selecting the most appropriate interpretation, which makes it possible to select one. This shows that when the interlocutor reaches the interpretation, the mind stops there. Metaphorical idioms are widely used and interpreted more than any other form of idioms in the conversation.

Although metaphorical idioms were interpreted correctly, mapping strategy was not sufficient enough to interpret some of them. The best solution was to employ the knowledge of cognitive environment approach and native speaker intuition before mapping.

Table 6: Proverbial Idioms

CODE	CORRECT INTERPRETATION	MISINTERPRETATION	NO RESPONSE
01	40	26	0
02	30	36	0
03	25	41	0
04	30	36	0
05	27	39	0
06	39	27	0
07	26	40	0
08	19	47	0
09	50	16	0

Proverbial idioms were fewer than other forms of idioms in the conversation. According to Alati (2015), they are preserved by the society and commonly used by elders to teach morality to the young generation. They demand a lot of wit to apply them in any conversation. The elderly people were mainly the ones who applied them but sparingly. They demand the native speaker intuition. Lack of vocabulary and history of a particular speech community, the interlocutor

cannot easily interpret proverbial idioms in this conversation. Those who managed to interpret proverbial idioms correctly were mainly elderly people who have been in the community for the better time of their life. Non native speakers of Luluhya dialects can guess the interpretation of other forms of idioms once the context is provided but proverbial idioms are a preserve of the native speaker (Alati, 2015). Such idioms required that the interlocutor should have the context of the speaker to derive the meaning but the context was missing in some cases. The above table shows that proverbial idioms are highly susceptible to misinterpretation during conversations. Therefore there is a need for the best strategy to interpret them correctly because it can lead to miscommunication between the speaker and the hearer.

The best illustration is example 6 which is the proverbial idiom code 008: *Kumusukuni mumatayi .ku-mu-sukuni mu-ma-tayi.*

The hunting rod SgS. N. in Prep. the art. Pl. early or first adj.. The first hunting rod or stick.

Interpretation: The first *attempt is the most crucial one in our life. It also means first impression.*

Explicature: The hunting of birds

Implicature: First impression or first attempt.

The implicit assumption is that first attempt should be done perfectly.

It was highly misinterpreted among others because there was no contextual clue given to guide the interpreter. Truth condition semantic approach which demands that interlocutors have

knowledge of the native speaker intuition cannot be applicable. Narrowing and broadening was unreliable because of lack of cultural knowledge about the proverbial idiom. It was the matter of activating the knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker intuition, meaning that if the hearer is far from the culture of the community in addition to lack of competence in the target language, the idiom cannot be interpreted correctly.

The idiom highlights the importance of the first attempt in any doing. Once the hunter throws the first hunting stick and misses the mark there would be a loss because all the birds will fly away from the tree and leave y nothing to hunt. It emphasizes on utilization of the first opportunity in life. If the context would be given, there would be high rate of interpretation. Most of those people who gave the correct interpretation were those above 50 years and the ones who had been in Bukusu dialect speakers for many years. This implies that lack of societal or cultural knowledge entirely results into misinterpretation of the idioms.

Another idiom is example 7: code 003: *Omukambi wulile amatsukhu. O-mu-kambi wu-lile a-ma-tsukhu*

SgS N O-*mu-kambi.3SgS. -Wu V.lile Pl. N.-ama-tsukhu*

The most selective person has eaten the lungs.

Interpretation: The perfectionist does not get the best part. The most selective person ends up landing on poor quality commodity.

The explicature is that if you keep complaining you will get poor part of the meat.

Implicature: The most selective person ends up choosing the worst thing**.**

> Among the Luhya speaking dialects, a cattle was slaughtered in special occasions such as initiation, wedding, funeral and homecoming. The meat was given to the natives but some kept disputing until they ended up getting the rejected parts. The distribution started from the best to the less valued like lungs, kidneys and intestines which are believed to be tasteless. This is the knowledge of cognitive environment approach.

The idiom needed the knowledge of cognitive environment to use the Luluhya culture to interpret it. You need to know what lungs means among the Luhya speaking communities. It is therefore interpreted that lungs form the worst part of the meat and it is not delicious compared to others like liver, hind quarter and the other soft parts of the cow.

Among the Luhya speaking communities meat from the slaughtered cattle was so important that if one was denied, he could complain all the days. There were some people who used to complain about any part they was given until they ended up getting the remains which were lungs.

To interpret the idioms, the interlocutor applied the strategy of cognitive environment and native speaker intuition then immediately mapped the lungs onto low quality gift of no worth. From the above assumptions the idiom is interpreted as, the perfectionist always lands on poor or unworthy choice at last.

The strategies applied are cognitive environment approach, native speaker's intuition and mapping strategy. The idiom was found to be brain tormenting because it is not widely used in every day's conversation. Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) was expounded by Schroeder (2012) that for any successful communication, cultural knowledge is paramount to interpret idioms correctly. This therefore implies that cognitive environment approach is

effective in interpreting idioms. Cognitive environment approach includes the knowledge which the interlocutor brings to the conversation from cultural environment.

Example 8: Code 005: *Mavanga kalulimi.*

Ma-vanga ka-lu-limi Pl. N.-the blood Prep.-of Sg. N-the tongue.

Blood of the tongue.

Interpretation: The *closest relative or friend. Something which you can not avoid.*

Interviewer: What is the meaning of *blood of the tongue?*

Respondent 29: Being in danger. Weak implicature

Respondent 30: Something which is rare to find.Weak implicature

Respondent 31: Something which is inevitable such as being offended by the relative or closest friend. Strong implicature

You are reminded to bear with the situation which is beyond your control. Implicit assumption

It elicited poor interpretation by the fans. There was no context given hence the interlocutor needed the cognitive environment approach which entails the cultural knowledge of the community from which the idiom is derived. In addition to that, you should have heard the idioms being used before. But they are used sparingly and in most cases if you fail to match the speakers' intention with your interpretation, it can be null and void.

According to Oluluhya culture, blood of the tongue means something you can not avoid. Once your tongue begins to bleed you can not manage to spit out all the blood but you can swallow some even against your wish. Blood of the tongue is inevitable.

The interlocutor brings in cognitive environment approach if there is no context clue. Thereafter, map the tongue onto the person close to you, then blood onto the problem at hand. Then it is found that if a relative crosses your path you have to bear with him or her to survive. In this environment, if you can not change the situation, close your eyes and let it go.

Example 9: Proverbial idiom Code 001: *Eyikhondo yivoyele kwayo.*

Eyi-khondo yi-voye-le kwa-yo 3SgS.-eyi N.-khondo Sg.pron-yi.V-voye-le. Prep-kwa Pron.-yo

The gorilla tied itself with its own. The gorilla has tied itself with its own (tail). Interpretation: In tough time, people use their own resources to survive.

Explicature: People tying themselves with ropes

Implicatures: To apply your own resources to go through the problem

Implicated assumption: To go through the problems with your own resources without assistance from from others.

This idiom was interpreted fairly well in this category because it had 40 correct interpretations and 26 misinterpretations. Here the speaker needed the native speaker's intuition approach to interpret the meaning of gorilla then cognitive environment approach to know how it has tied itself or whether it is its lifestyle. The gorilla can be mapped to a person in need. Tying it to be mapped to assisting itself. Tail means what you have at hand. Collectively the idiom is

interpreted as the needy person has used his or her own resources to go through the problem. Cultural knowledge is paramount to interpret such idiom because according to the Luhya culture, when well-wishers come to lend a hand at the time of adversity, they say they have come to tie them with a rope which presently is a belt. It is also found in Kiswahili *kufunga mkanda kiunoni. (Tie the belt around the waist).* This knowledge is applied by the interlocutors to interpret this idiom correctly.

Example 10: Code 009

*Eisuku ya Eyikhondo nefwile emisaala chirelekhanga mumutsuru.Eyi-suku ya eyi-khondo ne-fwile emi-saala chi-relekhanga m-mu-tsuru (*Sg Adj -the day Prep-of 3SgS N.-the gorilla AUX -will . V-die Pl N.-trees . Pl. pron-they .adj-slippery Prep -in the N-forest.

The day of the gorilla will die (will be killed) trees they slippery in the forest. The day when the gorilla dies all the trees become slippery in the forest. The day when the guerrilla dies all the trees become slippery in the forest.

Interpretation: The fateful day is when everything you attempt falls apart

Explicatures: The gorilla dies because the trees are slippery that day.

Implicature: During a fateful day, everything falls a part.

Implicit assumption: The fateful day is the one when things go wrong and beyond your control.

It was the best interpreted idiom because it did not demand the knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker's intuition among only the Luhya speaking communities but outside the boundaries. It does not need entirely the context and cognitive environment to

interpret but once the interpreter has mastered the vocabulary of the speech community, it is the matter of mapping strategy. Slipperiness of trees in the forest shows that it is not well. There is danger. Slipperiness is mapped to dangerous situation. Slipperiness is associated with cunning if they are people or animals but trees being slippery mean you can not climb them. This shows that it is interpreted as things having fallen apart. This idiom is used more often not only in the Luhya speaking dialects but also in Kiswahili (*Siku ya nyani kufa miti yote huteleza)*

Alternatively, the knowledge of cognitive environment is still applicable in interpretations of the Luhya proverb. The least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects faster is now cognitive environment approach.

Schroeder (2012) already emphasized the relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) that the information which demands a complex strategy to reach cognitive effects are difficult to interpret during conversation. The higher the processing effort the lower the relevance and the lower the cognitive effect. However, they laid emphasis on context clue strategy. In this study most of the idioms exist in isolation.

Ong'ayo *et al*. (2018) expounded further that information is relevant in context when it interacts with the context to yield cognitive effects. This is not true entirely because most of the proverbial idioms do not meet such 7. Then the conclusion from the current study is that cognitive environment approach and native speaker's intuition are paramount strategies of interpreting proverbial idioms. This is so because they are cultural based.

The findings were also in agreement with the relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995) that the more recent the information is, the more it is likely to be interpreted easily. That still reinforces that cognitive environment approach is paramount because the most recent

information is at the back of the mind of the interlocutor hence cognitive environment knowledge.

Previously, the findings of metaphorical idioms revealed that when the idiom is repeated now and then, it is correctly interpreted. Most of the proverbial idioms proved difficult to interpret during *Witimbule* programme because they are used sparingly in conversations. “Everything else being constant, the smaller the processing effort in achieving cognitive effects, the greater the relevance of the input to that individual at that time”(Wilson and Sperber, 2002). This is matching the implication that if the information demands extra effort to interpret, it is likely to be misinterpreted. Proverbial idioms are challenging to interpret because they are not used repeatedly in the conversation. There is a need to establish the best strategy to interpret them for efficacy in communication.

Proverbial idioms were poorly interpreted because they are mainly based in the knowledge of the community from which they are used. Possessing the knowledge of the native speaker intuition approach alone can not make it successful to interpret idioms correctly but the knowledge of cognitive environment approach is a prerequisite. Proverbial idioms can be used to segregate natives from non natives because of the language used that sounds typical of a particular speech community. Proverbs are the reservoirs for the original language that keep it a live. The interpretation of proverbial idioms is therefore imperative to the current generation. In addition to that, (Alati, 2015) already attributed the difficulties encountered to interpret proverbial idioms to their nature of being used sparingly and mostly by elderly people to regulate human behavior politely without offending the doer of the action. Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) emphasize that when the information is used frequently, it is more likely to be interpreted or the most recent the information is, the easier it becomes to interpret. The proverbial idioms are

highly susceptible to misinterpretation because they are not frequently used in conversation and demand the mastery of cultural knowledge.

Table 7: Euphemistic idioms

CODE	INTERPRETATION	MISINTERPRETATION	NO RESPONSE
01	50	15	1
02	60	6	0
03	50	16	0
04	61	5	0
05	65	1	0
06	35	31	0
07	46	20	0
08	50	16	0
09	39	27	0
10	60	6	0
11	32	34	0
12	30	36	0
13	30	36	0
14	40	26	0
15	40	26	0
16	50	16	0
17	40	26	0
18	60	6	0
19	51	15	0
20	40	26	0
21	39	27	0

Example 11: idiom code 5: *Wutsile ekombe. Wu-tsile e-kombe 3SgS Pron.-He/she V.-gone Prep-to .N-kombe. He/she has gone* to kombe.

Has gone to Kombe.

Interpretation: Has died

Explicature: Has physically gone to a place called Ekombe

Implicature: Has gone to the world of no return

Implicit assumption: Has died

Correct interpretation of this idiom is attributed to cultural knowledge and its regular application when death occurs in the society. Among the English idioms, they say, *has kicked the bucket.* If the interlocutors lack the knowledge of the community from which it is extracted, there is a danger of misinterpretation. Most of the people can interpret it correctly because it is used more often in English but they may not understand the concept of what kicked the bucket to be linked to dying. What context the bucket was kicked is not known.

Euphemistic idioms are mostly used apart from metaphorical idioms. This is in line with Luvonga (2017) who concluded that figurative language among the Luhya speaking communities is majorly for face saving. Alati (2015) said that idioms are for regulation of human behaviour. This is true. Among the Luhya speaking communities, the moral behaviour is not imparted directly but through figurative language. Figurative language includes idioms. Such language is used to correct the wrongs or misbehaviour without necessarily causing embarrassment or hurting the doer of the action in public. Therefore euphemistic idioms are inevitable in Luluhya social setting. Primarily euphemistic idioms cut across other forms. They were well interpreted compared to proverbial and hyperbolic idioms. One of the reasons is that they are used in day-to-day conversation and many people are versed with them. People of all age brackets were able to use this form of idioms . Interpretation cost less effort by merely being the native speaker. Sometimes youths can fail to interpret elderly people's language and vice versa.

Wilson and Sperber (2012) in Schroeder's work proved that the more recent the information, the easier it becomes to interpret. When information is repeated in every day's conversation it will

be easily interpreted. It has been repeatedly used during funeral ceremonies until many Luhya speaking communities are used to it. Out of the 66 interlocutors there was only one respondent who misinterpreted. This was either as a result of incompetence or negligence. The Luhya speaking communities fear to mention death by the name and have resolved to say going to *Ekombe* the world of no return. In the funeral context, many people can infer the correct interpretation. Therefore the strategies used are cognitive environment approach, native speaker's intuition and mapping strategy. Cognitive environment approach is where interlocutors have cultural knowledge, have been in the community for a long time and have frequently used the idioms. Thereafter, the word *Ekombe* is mapped to death. That new in Luhya cultural setting can not comprehend the word Ekombe .Good mastery of vocabulary is paramount to interpret idioms, hence cognitive environment knowledge. People from various cultural backgrounds have their different ways of referring to death for instance: English -*kick the bucket.* Kiswahili -*kwenda ahera.*

Example 12: Code 018:

Winyoshe.Wi-nyoshe 3SgS Pron-He/she. V.-gone he gone.

He/she has gone home.

Interpretation: Has died.

Explicatures: Has gone home or to their residence

Implicature: Has died

Implicit assumption: Death is our final home. When people die, they go to their permanent home never to be seen again.

It also means that death is real and the dead will not come back to life. It has been also interpreted well because many people in Luluhya speaking communities commonly use it during death. Mentioning death is a taboo in Luluhya setting and so they have used it frequently until many natives are conversant. Therefore cognitive environment knowledge and native speaker's intuition are prevalent in interpretation of this idiom. *Has gone home* is mapped to has died using the cultural knowledge you possess.

However, Code 6,11 ,12&13 raised the concern due to significant misinterpretation.

Example 13: Code 6:

Okhukanya omufu. Okhu-kanya omu-fu Prep.-to V.-fold 3Sg the . N-dead to fold the dead.

To fold the dead.

Interpretation: To honour the dead by slaughtering the cattle for meat during the funeral but it is believed to be a sacrifice for the departed (**Implicature)**. Folding is mapped to honouring the dead by slaughtering the cattle.

Explicature: To fold the dead person before burial or to dress the corpse.

Weak implicature: To bury the dead

There is need for cognitive environmental knowledge and native speaker's intuition to interpret it in addition to the context. If the interlocutor lacks cultural knowledge then there can be failure to interpret it. It is commonly used by elders to mean slaughter of the cattle to honour the dead. The context is not provided, truth condition semantic approach failed to yield the results. The only approaches applicable were cognitive environment and native speaker intuition.

Example 14: Code 11.

Okhukhalaka emikoye.

Okhu-khalaka emi-koye Prep-to. V-khalaka. Pl N.-emi-koye *to cut the ropes.*

Interpretation: To engage in the first relationship after the burial of the husband as the culture of Luhya dictates.

Explicature: To cut the ropes after burial.

Implicature: The first intimacy with the widow after the burial of the husband

Implicit assumption: Luhya people are euphemistic because they do not mention obscene words in public.

It is believed that if it does not happen, it will cause bad omen to the widow. It is complicated because you need cognitive environmental knowledge and native speaker's intuition. This shows that cultural knowledge is paramount here. This is the funeral of a man and thereafter the widow needs to be inherited. Before the inheritor comes, it is believed that the widow is still tied to the dead husband by the ropes which need to be cut by a different person from the inheritor. The first intercourse after the burial of the husband is called cutting the ropes. If the inheritor does it before rope cutting he will die instantly. Such euphemistic idiom is demanding cultural knowledge in addition to native speaker's intuition. This is because the idiom is culturally rooted among the Luhya people. The funeral can be the context but cognitive environment approach is paramount without which miscommunication can occur.

Example 15: Code 12

Okhukhalaka amakhola.

Okhu-khalaka ama-khola Prep-to v.-cut Pl. N.-banana fibres to cut the banana fibres.

Interpretation: The first relationship after the woman has given birth.

Explicature: To cut the fibres for domestic use.

Implicature: To have the first intimacy after the woman has given birth

Implicit assumption: The first intercourse after giving birth is of great essence among the Luhya people.

If the hearer has the knowledge of the code 11 it can be applicable to interpret this one. There is need for extra effort to interpret that ropes are stronger than banana fibres then conclude that it is the first intercourse after giving birth to a child. It is euphemistic because it dilutes the effect of vulgar language in the conversation.

If the interlocutor bases on the knowledge of code 11, there can be application of truth condition semantic approach to detect the meaning of this idiom. In order to interpret such idiom correctly, the knowledge about the culture of the community from which it is extracted is necessary.

Example 16, Code 013:

Weimoni indala.

We-i-moni i-ndala Pron prep -that of. Sg N. Adj -eye one. That of eye one.

That of one eye or money-eyed. Interpretation: The man or woman of little or desperate of the opposite partner. It was highly misinterpreted because it was ambiguous idiom that is hard to interpret without a context.

Explicature: Semi-blind

Implicature: Low value

Implicit assumption: There are low and high valued men and women**.**

If the hearer has mastered the vocabulary used with native speaker's' intuition the interpretation can be done correctly. If the hearer is reading the same script with the speaker, interpretation can be done with little or no constraints. This then signifies that you should mark your interpretation with the intention of the speaker to yield cognitive effects faster. Being in the same environment with the speaker means you have an idea at the back of your mind. That is cognitive environment. One-eyed person can be a woman of no value or any woman you come across for marriage. Alternatively elders used to refer to a monogamist and such was of low status. Culturally it means a monogamous relationship. When she dies it is as if you had one eye and when lost you are totally blind. An eye is mapped to a wife.

Such language cannot be spoken in plain. Euphemistic idioms save us from causing embarrassment. However, their interpretation is an issue of concern to be addressed by researchers. Therefore the current study found that cognitive environment approach is paramount for interpretation of euphemistic idioms in *Witimbule* programme. After activating this knowledge we then map the domain to the target language to reach cognitive effects.

In relevance theory, Wilson and Sperber (2002) explain that context is provided to disambiguate the idioms but they did not provide an alternative in the absence of contextual clue. The current study has investigated and found that the most effective strategy is cognitive environment before mapping strategy.

Schroeder (2012) reiterates that interlocutor should posses the knowledge of cognitive environment which includes cultural knowledge and what is at the back of the hearer during

interpretation period. The knowledge which the interlocutor brings to the conversation is cognitive environment. It is factual then that there is a wide gap between the sentence meaning and speaker meaning which has to be filled inferentially (Yus,2006). If there is a gap between the speaker meaning and the interpreter, there is a high chance of misinterpretation. Therefore, it is imperative to breach the gap between the two in order to reach the cognitive effect first.

Euphemistic idioms are vital in any social setting because they enable the speaker to communicate the message effectively without offending the hearer or causing embarrassment to both parties. The unwanted behaviour can be corrected politely to regulate human behaviour. Their interpretation is therefore paramount in every conversation. Most of the interlocutors are able to interpret such idioms because of their functions and the situation in which they are used.

Table 8: Hyperbolic Idioms

CODE	CORRECT INTERPRETATION	MISINTERPRETATION	NO RESPONSE
01	22	44	0
02	26	40	0
03	40	26	0
04	42	24	0
05	46	20	0
06	37	29	0
07	41	25	0
08	48	18	0
09	30	36	0
10	30	36	0
11	34	32	0
12	35	31	0

Hyperbolic idioms are highly susceptible to misinterpretation during conversations apart from proverbial. They are also not commonly used in conversation. They are associated with exaggeration and mockery. They demand extra effort to interpret, possibly including truth condition semantic approach aside cognitive environment knowledge approach. They also demand activation of conceptual metaphor theory of mapping strategy.

Schroeder (2012) emphasizes that if information demands most effort to interpret, it strains the mind yet human mind shifts to the least effort strategy to process the information. The idiom that warrants the most effort strategy to interpret is either given less concentration or rejected.

Example 17: Code 1 *Achunne* ofiye. A-chunne o-fiye 3SgS Pron.-He/she V-pinched . 3SgS Pron.,-that who V-is dead. He /she *pinched that who is dead* .He/she pinched the corpse.

Interpretation: The person who is egocentric.

Explicature: Was an enemy to the dead person

Weak implicature: Gave a bad testimony about the dead**.**

Strong implicature: The person is egocentric**.**

It has the highest level of misinterpretation. Most of the respondents activated the knowledge of truth condition semantic approach that proved futile. Conceptual metaphor theory could not solve it. The interlocutor had to apply the native speaker's intuition and cognitive environment approach to reach the cognitive effects. Lack of context and cultural knowledge leads to misinterpretation of idioms during conversation.

To pinch the corpse can be mapped to hatred towards the dead which is wrong. If we apply truth condition semantic approach it will still be mapped to mean doing nothing or attempting impossibility which is still incorrect interpretation. If you have the knowledge of the native speaker's intuition and cognitive environment as a result of accumulated experience about the culture from which it is set, you can interpret it correctly. The idioms are only found among the Abanyole dialect of Luhya speaking community.

Lack of exposure to the vocabulary used in the idiom made fans to misinterpret it greatly. All Banyore dialect speaking people interpreted it correctly. It is interpreted as being selfish. The meaning of the idiom is not correlated with the meaning of the words used. There is a higher need for only cognitive environment approach to interpret this idiom. Abanyore can map pinching the dead onto selfishness but there can be miscommunication among other communities which attribute it to being courageous, unfair or attempting an impossibility.

Example 18: Code 003:

Waluma musikalo.

Wa-luma mu-si-kalo 3SgS Pron-He/she V.-bitten Prep.-in Sg. N.-the palm. He/she has bitten in palm.

He /she has *bitten in the palm.* Interpretation: It means the person leads difficult life. It is life in abject poverty.

This is the idiom which demands the knowledge of cognitive environment approach besides native speaker's intuition. If you lack cultural knowledge of the community from which the idiom is derived, it will be difficult to interpret it. As a result, human mind tends to reject such information. Such an idiom is derived from Olunyole speaking dialect.

It means to lead difficult life with persistence. To bite the palm means to persevere in difficult life.

Example 19: Code 008:

Amarevo kekala amarwi .A-ma-revo ke-kala a-ma-rwi Pl. AUG.-a-ma N-questions . *Pron-that v.-closed Pl.* AUG. N-ears.

questions that have closed ears. Deaf questions.

Explicature: Questions which people failed to hear

Implicature: Hard questions to answer**.**

Interpretation: Difficult questions. This idiom was interpreted correctly by many fans.

It does not need the knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker's intuition but the partial knowledge of the target language to understand idioms. Blind questions can be immediately mapped to difficult questions to understand. Common knowledge can still be used to interpret the idiom.

Ong'ayo et al. (2018) acknowledged that the context of the speaker is important for the hearer to process information correctly. Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995) explain in the same vein that having a shared knowledge is crucial to interpreting the utterances in a given setting. Therefore cultural knowledge which is under the umbrella of cognitive environment is appropriate for the interpretation of idioms.

Tables 5-8 show how the fans of Witimbule programme interpret idioms used during conversations. The form of idioms which is rarely used and highly susceptible to misinterpretation is proverbial. Only code 01 and 06 were well interpreted but the rest were mostly misinterpreted by the fans. This is attributed to the fact that proverbs are old and preserved by the society over a long period of time. If the interpreter is not versed in a particular culture, it can be difficult to interpret. It can also be noted that most of the fans lack cultural knowledge that led to misinterpretation of proverbial idioms.

Those few idioms which were well interpreted are commonly used in day-to-day conversation making it familiar to most fans. Idioms which are commonly used in day-to-day conversation are interpreted easily. This is in line with relevance theory (Wilson & Sperber, 2002) who said that, "…the most recent and familiar information is easily interpreted" while idioms which were used during the ancient times are rarely used today such as proverbial idioms are difficult to interpret. Majority of fans who cannot interpret proverbial idioms are aged below 40 years meaning that they have minimal exposure to the native language.

It is therefore concluded that misinterpretation of a particular form of idioms is commonly not as a result of dialectical variation but lack of exposure to societal knowledge and idiomatic expressions.

The form of idioms which was mostly interpreted was metaphorical because it was the matter of activating the knowledge of mapping the domain onto the target object. Once you are exposed to the context of the idioms or cognitive environment, you can easily interpret them. From the above findings, relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) vividly explains that the knowledge of cognitive environment is applicable to interpret information and it includes cultural aspects and repetition of information.

Euphemistic idioms form another category which is mainly well interpreted because they are mainly applied in day-to-day conversation. Luvonga (2017) unearthed that the Kabras people who belong to Luluhya language use figurative language (idiomatic) majorly for face saving besides making their speech alive.

Euphemistic idioms are commonly used to caution people from various vices and expose societal evil without causing embarrassment to the public. They are majorly used in conversation of

Witimbule programme of Radio Mambo FM. Given that the fans encounter them frequently, they interpret them with ease.

Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995/ 2002) explains that the information which is frequently encountered during communication has a high chance of being interpreted correctly. This is because the human mind tends to concentrate on the information which is repeated in every aspect of life. They also reiterate that knowledge of a particular culture is crucial to the interpretation of figurative language because most of the idioms are peculiar to specific culture. This is in line with the findings in this objective which finds that proverbial idioms are difficult to interpret during *Witimbule* programme conversation because some interlocutors lacked cognitive environment which is the umbrella term for cultural knowledge, situation at hand and what is at the back of the mind of interlocutor at that time of utterance or conversation. Relevance theory explains why proverbial and hyperbolic idioms are susceptible to misinterpretation. It also explains role of cultural environment in idiomatic interpretation.

Proverbial idioms are difficult to interpret during communication because of their own uniqueness in demanding for the cultural knowledge about the society from which they are derived. Their interpretation depends on how exposed you are to the current community and native speaker intuition knowledge. Hyperbolic idioms are sarcastic and exaggerative hence demanding extra effort to interpret, whether you are exposed or not. Context is highly needed to interpret such idioms. Truth condition semantic approach is also applicable to interpret hyperbolic idioms. Therefore the idioms which are susceptible to misinterpretation are proverbial and hyperbolic. If interlocutors are to be proficient in idiomatic interpretation, they should master the art of using the native language correctly besides being versed in the cultural knowledge of a particular speech community.

However, the previous study concentrated on the role of idioms during conversation in the social setting oblivious of the setbacks which impede communication. Such was carried out in the current study because Alati (2015) had already studied and found that interpretation of idioms is difficult because it has several constraints encountered during communication. If such constraints encountered are not resolved there will be miscommunication. The current study sought to investigate the constraints encountered during interpretation of Oluluhya idioms.

Kaburise and Klue (2014) recommended that because language belongs to the society and its users, there is a need for it to grow and transform the society by creating new words or broadening the old ones. They further said that communication is articulating one's intentions in such a manner that the hearer can interpret it. The interpretation is aided by shared language, cultural background and interlocutors' willingness. The current study sought to investigate whether such factors affect interpretation of idioms in Radio Mambo FM *Witimbule* Programme. This is so because interpretation of idioms in any language during conversation is paramount hence the study to establish the form of idioms which is susceptible to misinterpretation during conversations and the reasons behind it. The study sought to determine whether the new words accommodated can make interpretation of idioms easier.

Bozena and Zuzana (2018) conceived idioms as figurative and cultural specific by describing them as cultural bound. The current research has also ascertained that it is true only that the previous study concentrated on the nature of idioms rather than the solution to the problem. The current study found that because they are cultural based, there is a need for the application of knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker's intuition before other auxiliary strategies can be applied.

Idioms were further categorized as lexemic (the meaning can not be deduced from their individual components) and sememic (have cultural, pragmatic and institutional dimensions) Sememic idioms include proverbial, hyperbolic and institutional (Bozena and Zuzana, 2018). They also reiterate that idioms express reality in compressed form to demonstrate metaphorical quality.

The current study still emphasized on proverbial, hyperbolic, metaphorical and euphemistic idioms in terms of interpretation rather than mere description in the previous study.

This is in line with relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) which stresses that the more the interest the more the exposure and the easier it becomes to interpret the information.

This section entails the findings on how frequently the idioms are interpreted or misinterpreted from various forms to ascertain the most susceptible to misinterpretation. Such idioms include proverbial, metaphorical, hyperbolic and euphemistic idioms. The metaphorical idioms (27) were more than others, followed by euphemistic idioms (21). The hyperbolic idioms were less than the former (12) and lastly the proverbial idioms were less than the rest (9).

4.4 How Misinterpretation Arises During Interpretation of Oluluhya Idioms in Radio Mambo FM *Witimbule* Programme

This is objective two which establishes the causes of misinterpretation of idioms during communication in *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM. During conversations, especially in idiomatic interpretation there are factors that can lead to misinterpretation. Such factors have been discussed in this section.

This section sought to establish whether or not the constraints were encountered during interpretation of Oluluhya idioms in radio Mambo FM *Witimbule* Programme. The findings were that metaphorical idioms which were highly misinterpreted were metaphorical idioms code 01 :

u-kwile mu-tsi-ndang'unyo . (SgS Pron -He/she AUX -has V-fallen Prep -in Adj N-black ants) He/she has fallen in black ants.

Interpretation: Has been arrested by the police officers. The misinterpretation was as a result of lack of native speaker intuition, use of literal interpretation and little knowledge of cognitive environment. This was attributed to the fact that they are emerging idioms which are not commonly used in day-to-day conversation throughout the Luhya speaking communities. Such idioms have already been analysed in the previous section 4.2. Refer to table 6,7,8, and 9 for illustration.

It is also found that most of the proverbial idioms were poorly interpreted as a result of lack of cultural knowledge or native speaker's intuition which makes the respondents use literal knowledge. Most of the elderely people interpreted the proverbial idioms correctly. However, the speed at which they interpreted was slower compared to that of metaphorical idioms. It is therefore imperative that proverbial idioms are as a result of accumulated knowledge about a certain community's culture and norms. Out of 69 idioms, proverbial are only 9, meaning that they are used sparingly and one at a time.

The proverbial idioms were used sparingly because they are culture specific and only peculiar to the native speakers. They are rarely used and because they are not encountered every now and then during conversation, human mind is not used to them hence misinterpretation.

Euphemistic idioms are mostly interpreted by the fans except a few which are attributed to lack of contextual knowledge and native speaker's intuition.

Out of 69 idioms, only 12 were hyperbolic. The rate of interpretation was slightly higher than that of proverbial idioms. The misinterpretation was mainly as a result of lack of native speaker's intuition. A few were attributed to dialectical constraints but quite insignificant as they were overcome by code switching. The conversation between Maragoli and Babukusu exhibited dialectical mismatch due to dialect continuum. However, it was not to a great extend to which communication would be compromised. It was successful because the fans encounter each other more often than not during the conversation in the programme.

Koracs (2016) observes that idioms are general and envelopes the metaphors, metonymies, similes, sayings and pair of words. He noted that such idioms are hard to interpret because the vocabularies which compose them can not be analysed as a different entity but collectively. The findings imply that idioms are implicit and therefore demand strategies to interpret them correctly. The current study has revealed several strategies of interpreting such as conceptual metaphor theory or mapping, cognitive environment approach besides native speaker's intuition and contextual clue.

The challenges that lead to misinterpretation of idioms during translation include dialectal variation, literal interpretation and lack of exposure to idiomatic language and culture specific nature of idioms (Koracs, 2016). This study was quite appropriate because of revealing the constraints encountered during interpretation of idioms. Since he was dealing with translation, the current study sought to determine such challenges during interpretation of idioms. It was found necessary to investigate them to find necessary strategies of interpreting them correctly.

Vasiljevic (2015) had also explored that idiomatic expressions are intrinsic features of all languages because they make one to be native like after clear mastery of vocabulary. It is therefore imperative that idioms are widely spread in all languages and are not dead metaphors as Lackoff puts it. Dead metaphors are outdated ones and therefore they can not become idioms because idioms occupy their own space in the language different from metaphors. Idioms are acquired through exposure but lack of sufficient vocabulary in the target language is the cause of misinterpretation during conversations (Vasiljevic, 2015). Idioms are culturally embedded and therefore the current study found that the best strategy to interpret them was cognitive environment and native speaker's intuition approach. Mere use of context may not be sufficient enough to warrant the processing of unfamiliar idioms.

The other constraints encountered according to Vasiljevic (2015) are lack of cognitive environment knowledge, bias to literal interpretation and lack of contextual clue to disambiguate the idioms. The current study has investigated the strategies of interpreting such idioms for effective communication in any social setting and sought to establish the most effective strategies of interpreting idioms to mitigate such constraints encountered. If it is not resolved, there can be miscommunication between the speaker and the hearer.

Anjarini and Hatmanto (2021) outlined the difficulties faced in understanding idioms as interpreting word by word, lack of exposure to idiomatic language and poor mastery of vocabulary in the target language. The strategies of interpreting idioms during communication were the use of contextual clue, and internet (Anjarini and Hatmanto, 2021). They also found that language and culture are inseparable. This is the truth that to be proficient in the language, you should be versed with that culture and their idiomatic expressions.

This is in line with the current study only that it investigated the second language speakers. Speakers who are not proficient in the language they are using will not be in position to interpret idioms correctly.

Given that the previous studies by Anjarini and Hatmanto found context and internet as the primary approaches to interpret idioms, the current study finds it not sufficient because context provided can be weak to be anchored on to process idioms. Furthermore, internet can only be applicable to interpret English idioms. Oluluhya idioms are not online hence need for the current study that has revealed a number of strategies to interpret idioms sufficiently.

4.4.1 Constraints in interpretation of Oluluhya idioms

From the above findings, constraints encountered during interpretation of Oluluhya idioms include insufficient knowledge of cognitive environment, absence of contextual clue, unfamiliarity of idioms or emerging idioms, literal interpretation, ambiguity of idioms, lexical mismatch or dialectical constraints, lack of vocabulary or native speakers intuition, absence of the subject part of the idiom and idiolect. This is the illustration on how such constraints encountered contributed to misinterpretation of various forms of idioms during conversation.

4.4.1.1 Cognitive environment deficiency

This was the major cause of idiomatic misinterpretation. When tackling most of the idioms the knowledge of cognitive environment is paramount.

For instance, example 20:

Metaphorical idiom code 001:

Interviewer: What is the meaning of ‘’Wu-kwile mu-tsi-ndang’unyo ‘’ SgS AUG. V. Prep Pl. N

Has fallen in black ants

Respondent 1: Has been involved in accident. Weak implicature

Respondent 2: Has been attacked by the robbers.Weak implicature

Interpretation: Has been arrested by the police officers. Strong implicature

This is a misinterpretation as a result of lack of the knowledge of cognitive environment. The respondent should have answered that fall in black ants is to be arrested by the police officers or to find yourself in the custody of police officers. Police officers are mapped onto black ants. Black ants are known to be ferocious and painfully bite when you step in and so many people avoid them by the use of any means. The characteristics of black ants being hostile are mapped onto that of the police officers being hostile.

The interlocutor should first have the knowledge of black ants and their encyclopeadic entries before mapping them to police officers.Lack of the knowledge of cognitive environment results in misinterpretation of the idiom. People from different cultures may map black ants differently depending on how they perceive them and how they symbolize.

Example 21: Metaphorical idiom code 004:

Interviewer: What is the meaning of ‘’*Akhamanga elinani’’* A-khamanga eli-nani SgS AUG-He/she V-milks .SgS AUG. N-the hyena. He/she milks the hyena.

Respondent 2: Leads miserable life. Strong implicature

Explicature: Milks the hyena

Implicit assumption: Hyena is attributed to something unbearable

Interpretation: Leads difficult or miserable life. Among the Luhya speaking dialects the hyena is perceived as an evil, unbearable and a nuisance. Something difficult or annoying is mapped to hyena.

The second respondent has given the correct interpretation. The interlocutor needs the knowledge of cognitive environment to interpret how Luhya speaking communities attribute the hyena to then encyclopeadic entries before mapping the idiom to unbearable life. You should know the status of the one who milks the hyena hence cognitive environment knowledge. Some communities only associate hyena with greediness but among the Luhya speaking dialects they associate it with a nuisance, annoyance, wild and ferocity. In Luluhya oral narratives, they were used to scare the young children from disobedience because they were regarded as evils. *Amanani -ogres.*

Example 22: Metaphorical idioms code 007:

Interviewer: Interpret this idiom, "*Lekha okhweteta etsinyende mubwoba" Lekha okhu-eteta etsi-nyende mu-bwoba.*

Do not to search worms in mushrooms.

V.-Do not Prep.-to V.-search Pl. AUG.-worms Prep.-in N-mushrooms. Do not concentrate on worms in the mushrooms.

Respondent 3: Do not focus on minor issues but concentrate on the main ideas.

Explicature: Eliminating the rotten mushrooms from the rest

Implicature: To major on minor issues.

Implicit assumption: If you focus on minor, you may not succeed in your deals.

Interpretation: Do not focus on minor issues but concentrate on the main ideas to solve the problem.

Correct interpretation of this idiom is as a result of cognitive environment approach.

Respondent 4: Do not go for worms. Look for mushrooms. This is literal interpretation as a result of lack of cognitive environment knowledge approach.

This idiom demands the knowledge of cognitive environment to identify how worms are perceived in the mushrooms before mapping the idiom as focusing on the weaknesses in a particular person. Mushrooms serve as delicious meal among the Luhya speaking dialects. If you focus on the worms which can be within, you may not enjoy the delicacy. It is therefore to use the knowledge of cognitive environment approach to map worms onto minor problems and mushrooms onto good plan or issue.

Example 23: Metaphorical idiom code 014: *Elinani lisievile evukhwe. E-li-nani li-sievile evu-khwe 3SgS AUG.-Eli N-nani Sg AUG.-li V-sievile Pl.N.-evukhwe. The hyena danced at the in-laws residence.*

Interpretation: To misbehave or cause embarrassment before reputable people or gathering.

There is need for the knowledge of cognitive environment to detect attributes of hyena and the in-laws according to the Luhya culture. In the absence of such, there will be misinformation. The hyena is mapped to a person with abnormal behaviour and dancing before the in-laws is

misbehaviour in public. It lowers the dignity because it is done by people of low status in most cases. To speak carelessly before the public is the same as dancing at the in-laws premises.

Example 24: Proverbial idiom code 003:

Omukambi wulile amatsukhu.

Omu-kambi wu-lile ama-tsukhu SgS AUG-omu.N.-kambi Sg AUG.-wu v.-lile Pl AUG-ama *N-tsukhu* A *Perfectionist has eaten the lungs.*

Interpretation: Whoever struggles for the perfection ends up with poor quality good.

Luhya community does not attach value to lungs when selecting beef because it is tasteless. When the cattle were slaughtered, villagers scrambled for the most delicious meat such as liver, hindquarters or neck. Perfectionist tends to find only lungs as a result of complaining for any part of meat they are given. The knowledge which the interlocutor has at the time of utterance is the knowledge of cognitive environment.

There is the need for the knowledge of cognitive environment to interpret how Luhya speaking communities value the lungs as part of food before mapping the perfectionist landing on lungs to getting poor quality or valueless gift after complaining.

Example 25: Proverbial idiom code 004:

Kakwile khushivoya

Ka-kwile *khu-shi-voya AUX-have. V.-spilled Prep-on. Sg. AUG-shi N.-voya has spilled on the costume (cloth).*

Interpretation: The closest friend or relative has crossed your way and you are to bear with him or her by keeping a blind eye. *Eshivoya* was worn by traditional people in Luhya community as clothes or attire.

Once you bleed and the blood spills on the clothes, you would assume and go on with your business because it would be difficult to remove or wash away. To interpret this idiom, knowledge of cognitive environment to interpret that blood has spilled on the traditional clothes called *eshivoya* is paramount. The Luhya speaking communities attribute it to the relative or closest friend having wronged you and you are to bear with the situation. If the context is provided you can easily interpret the idiom correctly but if not there can be a misinterpretation. In a nutshell, all proverbial idioms can not be interpreted in the absence of cognitive environment approach unless the context is provided. If the interpreter does not understand how such costumes were used and the value attached to them, they are likely to misinterpret the idiom.

Interviewer: What is the interpretation of *Kakwile khushivoya? Has spilled on the traditional clothes.*

Respondent 5 : It means someone has landed in problems and is struggling to come out of it.

Respondent 6: It means you are to bear with the situation as it is inevitable.

Respondent 7: It means that the problem is to be overlooked due to its inevitability.

From the above, respondent 5 did not get the correct interpretation because of lack of native speaker intuition and cognitive environment approach. Respondents 6 and 7 interpreted it correctly because of the knowledge of cognitive environment.

Example 26: Euphemistic idiom code 001:

Interviewer: What is the interpretation of *Amasimba kayelile mufulavu khusoko.Amasimba ka-yelile mu-fu-lavu Mongooses have landed in the clubs.* Pl S. AUG.-mongooses AUX. Pl-have . V.-landed Prep-in. Pl.N-clubs.

Respondent 8: Policemen have come to the clubs. Weak implicature

Respondent 9: Clients have come to the clubs. Weak implicature

Respondent 10: Thieves have invaded the clubs. Weak implicature

Respondent 11: The harlots have frequented the clubs. Strong implicature

Before mapping mongooses to prostitutes, you need to understand the cultural setting or whatever is going on at that place hence cognitive environment knowledge. If not, mongooses can be attributed to thugs, thieves or police officers who come to arrest those who brew local beer. Lack of context paves the way for the knowledge of cognitive environment. Respondent 11 gave the correct interpretation because of the undertones in the village and market place about the harlots who had just come to the market clubs. This is the knowledge of cognitive environment. Respondent 8,9 and 10 misinterpreted the idiom due to lack of cognitive environment knowledge which is as a result of exposure to the target language and culture. Other communities may value the mongooses and perceive them differently hence misinterpretation of such idiom. To some communities it can be a bad omen. For instance in Luluhya culture, black dog is attributed to bad omen. In the other one a black cat is a symbol of bad omen. Example 27 below shows the illustration of a black dog in Luluhya cultural setting.

Example 27: Euphemistic idiom code 003 :

Interviewer: What is the interpretation of, *Imbwa imali yakhomba musikele.* I-*mbwa i-mali ya-khomba mu-si-kele. SgS-I N-mbwa. Sg.-i Adj-mali. AUX-ya . V-khomba . Prep.-mu Sg.-si N.-kele Dog black has licked in foot. Black dog has licked my foot.* Interpretation: To be unlucky and unsettled in life due to bad omen.

Respondent 12: In danger. Weak implicature

Respondent 13: Unsettled in life. Weak implicature

Respondent 14: To be unlucky in life. Strong implicature

The cultural knowledge of the community from which the idiom is derived is needed to interpret idioms through analysing the attributes of the black dog. Each community has the way they value or devalue the animals. Among the Luhya people, black dog is attributed to the bad omen. If the knowledge of cognitive environment is applicable, it can be interpreted correctly. It means unlucky and being unsettled in life. All euphemistic idioms are culturally rooted hence cognitive environment knowledge to be the foundation to other approaches. Respondent 12 failed because of lacking the knowledge of cognitive environment. Elderly people and middle aged people have interpreted it better than youth because of maximum exposure to the culture from which the idiom is derived.

Example 28: Hyperbolic idiom code 003:

Interviewer: What is the interpretation of ,*Ndanina eshikulu shekarara vwelavula Nda-nina eshi-kulu she-karara vwelavula.* 1SgS Pron.-I V.-traversed Sg AUG N.-the hill Prep-of . N-karara. Adj-evening.V.-*came.* I *traversed the hill of Karara evening came (but I did not make it).* I traversed the hill of Karara from dawn to dusk.

Respondent 15: Toiling without success.

With the knowledge of the culture of the community, traversing the hill of Karara can be attributed to toiling without success. Traversing up to evening is mapped to the whole life struggling. The community also uses it euphemistically to mean something different from what it really is. It is also interpreted as living to be old enough in marriage without siring the children. Therefore correct interpretation of this idiom is anchored on the ability of interlocutors to be versed with what is happening at the time of utterance of the idiom. This is because the idiom is ambiguous. In pragmatic interpretation of idioms the problem of ambiguity of idioms is resolved by the time of utterance which is in line with cognitive environment approach.

Example 29: Hyperbolic idiom code 009 :

Ni shakhaya wamaruu. Ni Sha-khaya wa ma-ruu AUX.-is Sg AUG.-that V-defeated . Prep-*with* Pl. N-banana fibres is that defeated that with *banana* fibres. It has defeated the one with banana fibres.

Interpretation: Something difficult to attain. Hard nut to crack or difficult person to convince.

Cultural knowledge is paramount here for the interlocutor to identify the other information left out(drop of the subject part of the idiom). It is the anthill that defeated the most experienced from harnessing the white ants. Meaning that it can be mapped onto the person who is difficult to control or accommodate.

This idiom means the same as that of example 30: code 010 :*Shiakhaya weng'ang'a . Shia-khaya we-ng'ang'a SgS Pron.-that which V.-defeated Sg DIM. N.-ibis. That which*

defeated the ibis. In full it is that what defeated the ibis from swallowing who could swallow it?

In relevance theory by Schroeder (2012) cognitive environment deficiency leads to misinterpretation of idioms during conversation. She elaborated that cognitive environment is the knowledge which the interlocutor has at the time of utterance or the knowledge the interlocutor brings to the conversation. It is also what is at the back of the mind of the interlocutor at the time of utterance and interpretation. This is as a result of accumulated knowledge about the culture of the community from which the idioms are extracted and the situation at hand during the incident.

4.4.1.2 Lack of contextual clue

Cacciari *et al*. (1993) found that contextual clue is of great essence during interpretation of idioms without which miscommunication can occur in any conversation involving idiomatic language. Context is crucial in disambiguation of ambiguous idioms. If the speaker does not have the knowledge of cognitive environment, context is provided to unravel the puzzle. All idioms can be easily interpreted in the presence of context, however complicated it can. Once it misses it becomes cumbersome especially to non native speakers of the language.

For instance metaphorical idiom Example 31: code 001 in context :

Interviewer: What is the interpretation of this idiom? *Avefi vetsingokho vakwile mutsindang'unyo mungolove wa vatsile.Ave-fi ve-tsi-ngokho va-kwile mu-tsi-ndang'unyo mu-ngolove wa va-tsile. The thieves of chicken have fallen in black ants in yesterday where they went. The chicken thieves landed in black ants yesterday where they went(to steal). Interpretation:* The thieves have been arrested (by the police officers).

Stealing can be used to interpret that they landed in the hands of police officers. Stealing is the contextual clue.

Respondent 16: The thieves have been arrested.

Out of context: Vakwile *mutsindang'unyo …have fallen in black ants.* It sounds ambiguous because someone can interpret it by mapping as the one who has landed in problems or attacked by terrorists or *robbers.*

Respondent 17: Attacked by terrorists.

Respondent 16 interpreted the idiom correctly because of the contextual clue. Respondent 17 misinterpreted the idiom due to lack of contextual clue and yet the idiom was ambiguous.

Wilson and Sperber (1995) view context as dynamic and mental entity of a person's assumption about the world. It means that if the interlocutor has the hint about the idiom from the surrounding environment, there is a possibility of getting the correct interpretation about the idiom.

4.4.1.3 Emerging idioms

These are idioms which are used currently and have not passed the test of time. For people who are new in the community from which the idioms are being used there can be a misinterpretation unless the context is provided to lead the interpreter to the correct interpretation. Not all idioms in this conversation are emerging but suppose it happens there can be a misinterpretation unless the context is provided. For example, Euphemistic idiom code 4: Ya-sena khu-Lu-waya lwa esi-tuma. Stepped on wire of electricity (3SgS AUG. V. Prep Pl. N. Prep. SgS N.) He/she stepped on electric wire. It elicited multiple interpretations such as : Respondent 18 : Lost the memory.

Respondent 19: Involved in an accident. Respondent 20: Suffer from HIV AIDS. From the above interview, respondent 20 gave the correct interpretation due to the knowledge of cognitive environment as a result of accumulated knowledge about the culture from which it is extracted.

4.4.1.4 Literal interpretation

This is directly interpreting the idioms as they are. This causes misinterpretation because idioms are phrases or a string of words with hidden meaning. Those who used this method misinterpreted the idioms. However, a few interlocutors use it.

> Example 32: Metaphorical idiom code 004 : Interviewer : What is the meaning of this idiom? *Akhamanga elinani. A-khamanga eli-nani .He/she milks hyena. SgS AUG V. Sg AUG. N. Milks the hyena.*
>
> Respondent 21: Gets bad milk (Literal interpretation) Misinterpretation.
>
> Respondent 22: Leads difficult life (Cognitive environment knowledge approach). Correct interpretation of the idiom. Direct translation leads to misinterpretation of the idiom. Literal interpretation is one of the causes of misinterpretation of idioms.

Interpretation: Leads miserable life.

4.4.1.5 Ambiguity of idioms

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.

In the conversation, all idioms can be ambiguous depending on how it is used. Idioms can mean different to different people in various settings and so they are cultural based. We have already discussed in the previous section that contextual clue is the treatment of ambiguous idioms.

4.4.1.6 Lexical mismatch

Lexical mismatch among the dialects of Luhya speaking communities was evidenced. This was commonly between the Lubukusu and Maragoli, Lukabras and Lunyore. This is also called dialectal constraints. This is the illustration of lexical mismatch: Example 33:

Table 9: Lexical Ambiguity

English	**Lukabras**	**Lunyore**	**Lulogoli**	**Lubukusu**
Close the eyes	Fulasia	Mwasia	Mwalidza	Timba
In the river	Mmuchela	Musitao	Mukidaho /Mmugela	Muluchi
Blood	Mavanga	Matsai	Masai	Kamafuki
Stand	Sinjila	Sinjila	Singila	Inyokha
Go home	Inyokha	Tsia ingo	Dzia yengo	Chengo
Speak	Lakaya	Lomaloma	Komoloma	Loma
Cry	Lila	Lakaya	Lila	Lila
Curse	Laama	Laama	Laama	Loma
Pray	Saala	Laama /Saaya	Saala	Saala
In it Latrine	Mushio Muchoo	Musio Muchoo	Muchoo Muchoo	Musio Muchoo

Apart from dialectal variation, there are ambiguous words (one with different meaning in various dialects). For instance: Example 34: Refer to table 9. Lexical ambiguity is where one word has

different meanings in various dialects, leading to miscommunication. For instance, *speak* (*Lakaya -Lukabras)*. Cry (*Lakaya -Lunyore).*

Curse (*Laama -Lukabras). Pray (Laama -Lunyore). In Latrine (Muchoo -Lukabras). In it (Muchoo -Lulogoli).* Go home (*Inyokha -Lukabras). Stand (Inyokha -Lubukusu).*

These cases exist in Oluluhya speaking communities only that it proved insignificant in the conversation among the fans of *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM due to maximum exposure to the target language during day-to-day conversation. These lexical items from various dialects may not be very accurate because the fans who utter them may either use lexical accommodation and assimilation or living close to the boundaries of two or more dialects. Those at the boundaries tend to speak the language closer to the bordering dialects. That gives them advantage of speaking and understanding both bordering languages and dialects although they are not fluent speakers of either dialect.

Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995) reiterate that knowledge of cognitive environment is acquired by being exposed to the target language. Such exposure leads to mastery of vocabulary in the language. This makes interpretation of idioms fast.

The cases of lexical mismatch proved insignificant as an impediment to interpret idioms during communication because of exposure to societal knowledge and idiomatic expressions.

Relevance theory explains that when information is repeated in every aspect of communication, it becomes familiar to the hearer and the more familiar it becomes, the more the cognitive effects hence interpretation of information (Wilson and Sperber, 1995). Relevance theory is effective in clarifying that once the Luhya speaking communities interact in various settings, the easier it

becomes to accommodate each other in conversation. Once the information is used repeatedly, the mind gets used to it and as it gets used to it, the more the interest hence correct interpretation.

From the idioms collected during the conversation in *Witimbule* programme, the findings reveal the following incidences of lexical mismatch among the dialects of Luhya speaking community:

Table 10: Examples of Lexical Mismatch

Lexical item in English	**Lukabras**	**Luwanga**	**Lubukusu**	**Lulogoli**	**Lunyala West**
Vegetables	Etsifwa	Eliani	Chinyenyi	Tsingudza	Riani
River	Omuchela	Omwalo	Muluchi	Mukidao	Mushinoko
Chair	Eshifumbi	Eshisala	Sisala	Endebe	Eshifumbi
Night time	Mushilo	Eshilo	Siilo	Mbudigu	Eshilo
Day time	Mushitere	Mushitere	Kumuusi	Mukidete	Musitere
Sorry	Kalaa	Kaala	Kalaa	Modi	Poole
Play	Omubayo	Omubayo	Kumwinyawe	Omusolo	

From this illustration, there exist lexical mismatch among the 5 Luluhya dialects that can cause a challenge in idiomatic interpretation of Oluluhya language and lead to miscommunication among fans and hearers of *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM.

Cases of lexical mismatch among the Luhya dialects include : *Vegetables (Etsifwa, eliani, Chinyenyi). The river (Omwalo, Mmuchela, Muluchi, Mushinoko). The chair (Eshifumbi, esisala, indebe)*

4.4.1.7 Native speaker intuition deficit

Most of the findings illustrate that native speaker intuition is the knowledge of vocabulary in the target language. Good mastery of the vocabulary of the speech community easen the

interpretation of idioms. If such knowledge becomes deficient interlocutors cannot interpret idioms correctly because they are cultural- based. Almost a half of the respondents misinterpreted the idioms because of lack of native speaker's intuition, more especially proverbial idioms.

For instance example 35: proverbial idiom code 003: Amatsukhu. *Ama-tsukhu.(Pl. AUG N.).* Interpretation*: The* commodity of poor quality. During special occasions when cattle were slaughtered, people of low status or those who came late risked getting such part of meat.

Example 36: Euphemistic idiom code 018 :*Winyoshe.* Wi-nyoshe 3SgS AUG. AUX. V. N. He *has gone home. (Lukabras).*

Interpretation: Has died.

Bukusu speakers misinterpreted it as has stood and then attributed it to a politician vying for a seat in the parliament. Such misinterpretation is as a result of lexical mismatch in dialectal analysis. This is true because it was found that culture of the community is revealed in the language which is spoken. Therefore language and culture can not be analysed in isolation but as one entity.

Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995) reiterates that cultural knowledge is crucial for the interpretation of any aspect of figurative language. Therefore using the approach of native speaker intuition to interpret idioms is applicable in line with relevance theory. Culture and language are two sides of the same coin because language exists in culture and culture is expressed in language.

4.4.1.8 Lack of the subject part of the idioms

Boers, *et al.* (2004) emphasized that etymological elaboration is the art of associating the whole idiom with its origin or literal interpretation that brings mnemonic effect to idiomatic interpretation.

Bagheri and Fazel (2010) brought the concept of etymological elaboration as a strategy of comprehending idioms by associating their meaning with literal interpretation. This is vital to the current study which narrowed down to Oluluhya idioms which also posses such property. Its core aspect is the interpretation of idioms.

Kiguta *et al.* (2020) aimed at investigating how the absence of the subject part of the idioms may hinder the interpretation. He found it impeding interpretation of idioms and came up with the strategy of etymological elaboration to find the subject.

That is quite significant to the current study which intends to investigate the constraints encountered during interpretation of idioms in conversations. It also identified such idioms then established whether etymological elaboration would be sufficient or has weaknesses.

> These are examples of idioms without a subject: Example 37: Metaphorical idiom code 001 :*Wukwile mutsindang'unyo*. Wu-kwile mu-tsi-ndang'unyo AUX. V. Prep. Pl. N. *Has fallen in the black ants.*

The subject (who has fallen in black ants) is missing .Using etymological elaboration (literal meaning) we are unable to identify the subject. Based on the knowledge possessed about the cultural environment and the prevailing circumstances (cognitive environment approach) it is determined that it was a thief. Therefore if a thief has fallen in black ants, it can act as a hint or mnemonic to map the target domain to the source domain that the thief has been arrested by the

police officers. Etymological elaboration is also the history of the idiom which can be traced from cognitive environment. Whether etymological elaboration is applicable or not the knowledge of cognitive environment approach is still paramount for the correct interpretation of idioms without subject part.

Example 38: Metaphorical idiom code 004: *Akhamanga elinani.. Milks the hyena.* We do not know who milks the hyena.

If etymological elaboration is applied it is found that it is the person but go back to cognitive environment approach to trace that it is a desperate person then map the target domain to source domain as the desperate person who leads miserable life by attempting the impossibilities for survival.

Example 39: Metaphorical idiom code 011: *Akanyile omukhono. A-kanyile omu-khono V. Pl AUG N. Twisted or bend the hand.*

Interpretation: He is mean. Failed to contribute generously.

It cannot be interpreted without identifying the subject and yet the interlocutor cannot identify the subject if the historical background of the idiom is not known by inferring from the cognitive environment knowledge then etymological elaboration.

Example 40: Proverbial idiom code 004: Kakwile khushivoya. Ka-kwile khu-shi-voya AUX.-has V-spilled. Prep-on Sg AUG. N.-traditional cloth. Has spilled on traditional cloth.

Interpretation: The relative or closest friend has wronged you and you are to bear with him or her.

The interlocutor should fast activate the knowledge of cognitive environment that leads to etymological elaboration. All the knowledge that is brought to the idiomatic world is from the culture or the community from which the idiom was extracted. Such is cognitive environment approach without which etymological elaboration can yield fruits.

Example 41: Euphemistic idiom code 002 : *Wayile eliani liavene… Has plucked someone's vegetables.*

Interpretation: Engaged in extra marital affairs with somebody's wife.

Activate the knowledge of etymological elaboration based on the whole idiom to find out that it was a thief who can be mapped onto adulterous man. Vegetables can be mapped onto wife still basing on cognitive environment approach. Among the Luhya speaking dialects they do say *Sister-in-law is the vegetables.* This means that you can have a relationship with them because there is no blood relationship. From this knowledge of the cultural environment, the vegetables can be mapped to someone that the other one of the opposite sex can have an intimate relationship with. From this assumption it can be concluded that somebody's vegetables is somebody's wife or girlfriend. The knowledge which the interlocutor has at the time of utterance is from cultural environment and such is cognitive environment approach. Other communities have different attributes to vegetables and therefore they are likely to misinterpret such idiom. For the correct interpretation, cognitive environment approach is paramount before mapping strategy to map vegetables onto the wife of someone.

Example 42: Euphemistic idiom code 005:

Wutsile ekombe.. Has gone to Ekombe.

We use etymological elaboration to know that it is the corpse as the subject because we have already used the cultural knowledge we have to map Ekombe to the world of death hence corpse.

Example 43: Euphemistic idiom code 0020:

Walia amachungu.Wa-lia a-ma-chungu SgS AUG AUX -He/she has V. -eaten Pl N-the rats. He/she has eaten the rats.

Interpretation: has engaged in extra marital affairs or relationship outside the marriage.

Some say has had the side chic (Mpango wa kando). To interpret such idiom the hearer needs the knowledge of cognitive environment. It is peculiar to the Luhya speaking community only. It was only applicable during the funeral of the husband whose wife was subjected to test whether she has eaten the rats. It is then mapped onto having engaged with side chic (extra marital affairs). More than 20 idioms out of 69 have no subjects hence extra effort on the part of the interpreter to apply the knowledge of cognitive environment approach to reach the missing subject part then mapping it to the target domain.

The current study found out that etymological elaboration was applicable but not in isolation. There was need to apply the knowledge of cognitive environment before coming to etymological elaboration that needed literal interpretation of the idiom. This study also emphasize that etymological elaboration should not only dwell on literal aspect of the idiom but historical background.

The table 11 below shows how various constraints encountered contributed to misinterpretation of various forms of idioms.

Table 11: How various constraints contributed to misinterpretation of various forms of idioms

Cause of difficulties	**Number of idioms misinterpreted**
Lack of knowledge of Cognitive environment	66
Lack of contextual clue	30
Emerging idioms	15
Literal interpretation	60
Ambiguity of idioms	30
Lexical mismatch	6
Native speaker's intuition deficit	50
Idiolect	5
Lack of subject part of the idiom	20

From the above Table 11, what causes the difficult during interpretation of Oluluhya idioms are literal interpretation, emerging idioms, dialectical mismatch,lack of context, ambiguity of idioms, lack of subject part of the idiom and lack of cognitive environment.

Dialectical variation and idiolect contributed less to misinterpretation of Oluluhya idioms. This is an indicator that the Luhya speaking communities which are represented in the study are intelligible. Those who are passive audience in the Programme found some dialectal constraints. Therefore *Witimbule* programme plays a big role in nativising the Luhya speaking communities hence proving that they are dialects and not languages. From this finding it can be ascertained that with maximum exposure to the target language, efficiency in it can be achieved. Most of the fans had no problem of dialectical constraints due to exposure to the varied dialects during the conversation.

Bingham (2008) expounds that accommodation of languages or dialects depends on frequency of conversation. That therefore implies that the frequency of participation in the programme, the more deeply they are likely to accommodate other dialects hence effective communication. In relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) and expounded by Schroeder (2012), it is

concluded that the more frequently the information is conveyed the higher the chance of interpretation. Therefore the idioms which are repeated in a particular dialect are accommodated and consequently effective interpretation which leads to apt communication.

From the above discussion we can also ascertain that the more the mastery of vocabulary in a given language, the more you sound native like and stand a chance of interpreting idioms correctly. In this study, most of the fans were able to comprehend and interpret idioms due to their ability to get the vocabulary of each other in a variety of dialects due to dialectical accommodation in *Witimbule* programme.

Taylor and Francis (2007) have also agreed with the previous findings that speakers accommodate their speeches to their addressees by shifting their style of speech to be like their interlocutors. The current study then sought to determine whether speech accommodation can impact positively on interpretation of Oluluhya idioms. It was found that it is the combination of both accommodation and frequency in vocabulary usage that fans from various dialects are able to communicate effectively with each other.

Through lexical accommodation and assimilation, there can be effective communication due to correct interpretation of idioms.

> Example 44: euphemistic idiom code 005: *Wutsile Ekombe or Emakombe… Has gone to Ekombe.*

The vocabulary Ekombe is understood by very many fans ,infact all of them because of its frequency in usage. To go to Ekombe means to die. Among the Luhya speaking communities, death is feared so much that it can not be mentioned directly but idiomatically. Such is euphemistic idiom.

Ondondo (2013) found that Oluluhya dialects are highly intelligible and ended up joining two dialects of Olunyala West and Olunyala East as one. However they are varied. The current study found that Olukabras dialect is more intelligible with Olunyala West than Olunyala East which borders them.

Literal interpretation of Oluluhya idioms and ambiguity of idioms did not cause significant difficulties compared to the remaining 3. This therefore implies that some idioms are ambiguous and still a few fans interpret the idioms directly without implicit knowledge. The idioms which are ambiguous can be interpreted basing on context given. If there is little or no context at all, knowledge of cognitive environment is applicable.

Emerging idioms are difficult to interpret during *Witimbule* Programme if the interlocutor is not versed with what is happening in the community at that time. Such respondents also lack the context to simplify the interpretation.

Such idioms include example 46; code 001 of euphemistic idioms :

Interviewer : What is the meaning of *Amasimba kayelile mufulavu khusoko. Ama-simba ka-yelile mu-fu-lavu khu-soko.(Pl AUG. N.-the mongooses AUX-have V.-landed Prep.-in Pl. AUG. N.-market clubs).Mongooses have landed in the clubs at the market. Mongooses have landed in the clubs at the market.*

Respondent 23 : Mongooses are catching chicks in the village market

Respondent 24: Police officers are taking bribes in the market clubs

Respondent 25: The harlots have frequented the village market clubs and they are really harvesting money from the community men.

Interpretation: The correct interpretation is that harlots have frequented or come to the market clubs in the village to trap men into being exploited for the relationship.

Those without context may apply literal knowledge to say that mongooses are finishing chickens at the market or foreign men are tampering with village girls. This interpretation is made possible by use of cognitive environment.

Lack of cognitive environment was the main cause of difficulties in interpretation of Oluluhya idioms. Most of the idioms demanded cognitive environment but those who were deficient in it were partly or unable to interpret. This then signifies that the difficulties encountered during interpretation of Oluluhya idioms are lack of cultural knowledge, interaction with the target community which is the store of such idioms.

Lack of native speaker's intuition means poor mastery of vocabulary in the target language domain.

Idiolect can be one of the difficulties encountered during interpretation of Oluluhya idioms during communication in *Witimbule* programme. Interpretation of idioms varies from one individual to the other (Tilmatine *et. al*, 2021). This means that information can be interpreted differently by different people (Idiolect). This shows that personal characteristics affect how interpretation of idioms can be. This include environment, exposure to the native speakers language or idiomatic expressions and personal interest. The current study sought to investigate the ways of mitigating such hindrances for effective communication. Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995) postulated that the more the interest in the information communicated the less the cognitive effort, hence high cognitive effects leading to communication.

The main cause of difficulties encountered during interpretation of Oluluhya idioms is lack of cognitive environment knowledge approach as a result of lack of cultural knowledge and the situation at hand.

4.4.2 How the interlocutors mitigated or counteracted the difficulties encountered during interpretation of idioms.

Several difficulties encountered during interpretation of Oluluhya idioms were overcome in various ways: Cognitive environment knowledge deficit and lack of native speaker's intuition were overcome by searching for the context in which the information was gathered from. This shows that lack of the knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker's intuition automatically leads to misinterpretation and can not be overcome.

Idioms being the essential element of communication in the social setting can not be interpreted without communal or cultural knowledge entirely. Having been exposed to the language of the speech community for a long time and mastering the vocabulary is advantage to the interpreter in dealing with whichever form of idioms. Schroeder (2012) laid emphasis on cultural knowledge and native speaker's intuition besides knowing the situation at hand to tackle figurative language accurately.

Dialectal variation was overcome by code switching and code mixing. This is in line with Magdalena (2012) who found that two speakers can understand each other when speaking dialects of the same language but if they do not understand each other, then they are speaking two different languages. From this assertion we can deduce that Oluluhya is made of dialects because they understand each other. If the assumption was contrary, there would be no conversation in Radio Mambo FM *Witimbule* Programme.

Magdalena (2012:1) resolved that human beings have innate ability to accommodate each other in communication to foster interaction with others. She said that people have the way of making their speech similar to that of hearers to create smoothness in conversations. Such process is called dialectal accommodation. Among the Luhya speaking communities, the presenter manages to accommodate speakers from various dialects by dialectal accommodation. In this case, those fans who have been active in the programme for over three years have mastered the art of accommodating each other during conversation without many dialectal constraints. Relevance theory a accounted for dialectal accommodation by highlighting that being exposed to the target language, good mastery of the vocabulary and the knowledge of cognitive environment makes communication easy during conversation. However, it was found to be partial because to accommodate each other we should strike a deal between the two dialects to convincingly carter for each others' constraints. Magdalena (2012) provides the solution by shedding light on accommodation theory. However, accommodation theory was narrowed down to dialectal variation but failed to explain how idioms can be interpreted without difficulty. The current study found that knowledge of cognitive environment approach was of paramount importance to linguists in pragmatic interpretation of idioms.

4.3.2.1 Lexical accommodation

Mudogo (2017) expounded that the presenters of Mulembe FM radio station programme attempt to accommodate all the speakers of Luluhya languages in order to communicate effectively. However, the hearer can understand that language but still misinterprets the idioms applied. The current study found the knowledge of cognitive environment approach to be superior to the native speaker intuition.

Magdalena (2012) resolved the problem of dialectal constraints by dialectal accommodation through neologism where a word from either Kiswahili or English is borrowed into the local dialects by only changing its morphological structure or phonological aspects. Several words have been applied in Oluluhya language using such process. For instance example 47 which is table 12 below shows the illustration.

Table 12: Lexical Accommodation

Kiswahili	**Lukabras**	**Lubukusu**	**Lunyala East**	**Lutirichi**	**Lwisukha**	**Lumarachi**	**Lutura**
Mkono	Omukhono	Kumukhono	Omukhono	Omukhono	Mukhono	Mukhono	Mukhono
Kitabu	Eshitabu	Sitabu	Esitabu	Eshitabu	Shitabu	Shitabu	Shitabu
Ulimi	Olulimi	Lulimi	Olulimi	Olulimi	Lulimi	Lulimi	Lulimi
Mgunda	Omukunda	Kumukunda	Omukunda	Omukunda	Mulimi /Mukunda	Mukunda	Mukunda
Sokoni	Esoko	Esoko	Esoko	Esoko	Isoko	Esoko	Esoko
Mzungu	Omusungu	Omusungu	Omusungu	Omusungu	Musungu	Musungu	Esoko
Mfu	Omufu	Omufu	Omufu	Omufu	Mufu	Mufu	Omufu
Waya	Oluwaya	Luwaya	Luwaya	Oluwaya	Luwaya	Luwaya	Luwaya
Jirani	Chirani	chirani	chirani	Chirani	chirani	chirani	chirani
Mtu	Muntu	Omuntu	Omuntu	Omuntu	Omuntu	Omuntu	Omuntu

Both English and Kiswahili words are finding their way into Luhya dialects as a result of accommodation processes. This is called code switching or code mixing but once the word is adopted into the new language it becomes neologism. In this study, the process has been used successfully and has yielded the fruits because the idiom has been interpreted correctly. If such words are used idiomatically, it becomes cumbersome especially to the elderly people to

interpret them if they are not versed with current affairs in the general world. Youth can take advantage to downplay the elderly by applying such idioms. See the example below.

Example 49: Metaphorical idiom code 021:

*Enetiwaka yilovile. E-network yi-lovile (*SgS AUG. N-the network . AUX.-has V-refused.)

The network has refused.

Interpretation: There is a confusion or misunderstanding in the conversation.

The network has failed. English word *Network* is adopted into Luhya speaking communities as *Enetiwaka.* The prefix e is the marker of singular noun. Luhya dialects as Bantu languages are, is characterised by vowel insertion for the word to fit into their language morphology. Luhya speaking communities insert |*i*| after t sound and *a after the= consonant sound* k. Then the word fits into the Luhya lexicon. This is a morphological process. In fact the word *Network* has been personified. Instead of it failing, they have said that it has refused. This is a figurative language which characteristically Luhya. Luvonga (2017) reiterates that Luhya speaking community mostly applies figurative language in speeches or songs subconsciously to make it interesting and drive the message home without offending the hearer. More examples are given. Example 50: Table 13 has the illustrations about it.

Table 13: Neologism

English	Lukabras	Lubukusu	Lulogoli	Lunyala East	Lwisukha
Network	Enetiwaka	Enetiwaka	Enediwaga	Enetiwaka	Inetiwaka
Panpaper	Mupanipepa	Mupanipepa	Mupanipepa	Mupanipepa	Mupanipepa
Wire	Luwaya	Luwaya	Luwaya	Luwaya	Luwaya
Radio	Eretio	Eretio	Eredio	Eredio	Iretio
Box	Lipokisi	Lipokisi	Libogisi	Libokisi	Lipokisi
Tv	Etivi	Etivi	Edivi	Etivi	Itivi
Battery	Epeturi	Epeturi	Libeturi	Ebeturi	Ipeturi

Katie (2001) explained that neologism is a newly invented word in a given language. This shows that a word can be borrowed or invented in a particular language from another . Once it is borrowed, it is calibrated to fit into that language using a morphological processes called coinage. Such word changes its morphology to that of the target language. For instance Example 51: metaphorical idioms code 006:

Mupanipepa. Mu-panipepa *(Prep. Comp N.)* In pan paper .

Panipepa is Oluluhya word coined from English word *pan paper.*

Mupanipepa is translated as *in pan paper.*

Enetiwaka.. Network

Example 52: euphemistic idioms code 001:

Khusoko. Translation from Kiswahili *Sokoni or in the market.*

It is the matter of changing the affixes from one position to the other or removing it completely. Therefore, neologism is an accommodation process in solving the problem of dialectal constraints.

Muhind and Ningsih (2021) have done a lot of study in this area and their contribution cannot go in vain. They explained that various dialects should adopt inter-dialect accommodation for convergence. This is where one speaker adjusts their dialect to be like that of the second speaker. The current study found out that the speaker of one dialect who acquires more words from the other dialect makes it superior to the other because of increase in vocabulary. When one interlocutor strives to speak like the other one, it is also called dialectal assimilation process. In this study some dialects have followed this suit. Example 54: Table 14 has given elaboration below

Table 14: Dialectal Assimilation

English	**Lukabras**	**Lunyore**
Chair	Eshifumbi	Essala, esifumbi
Praying	Okhusala	Okhulaama, okhusaaya
River	Mmuchela	Musitao, mumwalo, Mumuchela
Teacher	Omwalimu	Omwivali, omwalimu
Examination	Elichela	Amareevo omutiani
Pastor	Omwilwatsi	Omukambi, omwelwachi

From this table it is concluded that Olunyole dialect has passed the test of assimilation process and hence superior to Olukabras dialect. Olunyole has borrowed more words from Lukabras in order to accommodate them in the conversation. This is how Oluluhya speaking dialects manage to accommodate each other hence effectiveness in communication.

Lack of context was overcome by cognitive environment and native speakers' intuition. Emerging idioms as a difficulty would be overcome by cognitive environment. This shows that lack of societal knowledge (Cognitive environment) was the main difficult encountered during interpretation of idioms. This is because lack of such knowledge would mean that the interlocutors look for an expert but deficiency of other methods or difficulties encountered would be mitigated by cognitive environment. Therefore cognitive environment knowledge approach is the best strategy to interpret idioms without which miscommunication can be encountered in the conversation among the interlocutors.

Ambiguous idioms were mitigated by using contextual clue or cognitive environment approach when context is not provided by the speaker. This section establishes that dialectal constraints can be mitigated by lexical accommodation, assimilation, neologisms and code-switching.

4.5 Strategies of Interpreting Idioms during Communication in *Witimbule* Programme.

This is objective three which aimed at determining the best strategy of interpreting idioms correctly using the least effort. In this section, the puzzle of the research was unearthed.

The fans of *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM employ various strategies to interpret Oluluhya idioms. Some strategies are mostly appropriate to interpret some forms of idioms while some can be applicable to more forms of idioms. This study tests whether there can be the most effective strategies of interpreting a variety of Oluluhya idioms.

Example 55:

Okhwitsila omukhono omukhasi .

Okhu-itsila omu-khono omu-khasi Prep v. Sg AUG. N. Adj *to come through the hand female* .

To come *through the left hand.*

Interpretation: To tackle using a wrong approach or strategy. To do something in the wrong manner.

This shows that Luhya speaking communities associate a female person with misdoings. If you come from the culture where women are superior gender such as Britain and other Western countries, such idioms will have a different meaning. Luluhya speaking communities are patriarchal. Therefore the knowledge of the community's culture and norms is of great essence during interpretation of idioms. This is the knowledge of cognitive environment which is enshrined in the tenets of relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002).They lay emphasis on context and cultural knowledge that lead to the correct interpretation of information by the hearer. Most of the proverbial idioms were poorly interpreted because some respondents activated the knowledge of conceptual metaphor theory and truth condition semantic approach. CMT could not work out the interpretation of proverbial idioms. Proverbial idioms were well interpreted by a few interlocutors who applied the strategy of activating the knowledge of cognitive environment and the native speaker's intuition. A good example is this conversation:

Interviewer: What is the meaning of proverbial idiom code 6, *Inyungu yalunga namasaka (the pot that boiled black night shade)*

Interpretation: It means something memorable or something pleasant in your life which you keep remembering specifically if you had the girlfriend or boyfriend in early years then you parted. It was used to warn men to desist from getting married to ladies who earlier on married or had a child out of wedlock because it was believed that once they meet, the early sweet memories arise and there is likelihood of extra marital affairs. Other communities may regard

black nightshade as delicious or traditional vegetables and interpret it as food eaten while young is never forgotten. The cooking pot can be interpreted differently depending on the culture of the community. Cognitive environment approach proves effective strategy to interpret idioms correctly.

Respondent 15: A harsh person (**weak implicature)**

Respondent 16: A resourceful person (**weak implicature)**

Respondent 17: A difficult person to handle (**weak implicature)**

Respondent 18 : Being an expert in doing something. (**Weak implicature)**

Respondent 19 : The early memories never fade away from a person. (**Strong implicature)**

Hyperbolic idioms were fairly interpreted except the first three which demanded the cognitive environment. The rest demanded contextual clue and truth Semantic condition. The first three are particularly used by a Banyore dialect and therefore peculiar to many fans. Banyore fans are very few among the interlocutors in the Programme. However, conceptual metaphor theory was also applied with ease. The paramount aspect was cognitive environment.

Euphemistic idioms were well interpreted except a few. The knowledge of cognitive environment was paramount. Other authentic methods were conceptual metaphor theory and truth condition semantic approach. Such idioms are majorly used for face saving besides entertainment.

Metaphorical idioms were interpreted better than the rest. This is because the respondents activated the knowledge of conceptual metaphor theory which involves mapping the domain to

the target language. However the strategy would not be applied solely without the knowledge of cognitive environment because some idioms are purely Luhya culture.

Example 56:

Wakhomba muyapakha.

Wa-khomba mu-ya-pakha 3SgS V. Prep. Sg AUG. V. Has licked that of fermentation (pot) Has licked the fermentation pot.

Interpretation: Failure to acquire something expected.

There is need for cognitive environmental knowledge to interpret that licking fermentation pot means the local beer was finished and you had nothing to turn to rather than the pot licking. It is interpreted as failing to achieve your goals or objectives. It means things have fallen a part. To interpret the idiom correctly, you should have known the fermentation pot and its significance to the community. If a clan's man found that the local beer was finished, he would lick the brewing pot which was used to ferment it. That showed that he was desperate. The licking of the pot is mapped to being desperate and beer is mapped to a pretty commodity. The strategy of conceptual metaphor theory is applicable but it is in vain if the hearer lacks the knowledge of cognitive environment approach or native speaker intuition.

In this section the study investigates the best strategies of interpreting Oluluhya idioms. The findings are that each form of idioms is unique in its own way and hence a particular strategy of interpretation. A specific idiom can be interpreted by two or more strategies but there is the most effective one: Proverbial idioms are best interpreted by Native speaker's intuition and cognitive environment approach only. The rest of the methods are try and error.

Metaphorical idioms are best interpreted by conceptual metaphor theory or mapping strategy but to be effective; you need the native speaker's intuition approach because being proficient in the language is having the ability to interpret idioms used during conversation. Even so, cognitive environment is much applicable without which the idioms can be interpreted.

Werkman *et al*. (2021) aimed at processing metaphorical idioms and found that they are difficult to interpret due to polysemous words. However, it only challenged the second language speakers yet native speakers made the correct interpretation because they encounter such idioms frequently in their daily conversation. This shows that native speaker's intuition is vital for interpreting metaphorical idioms. The fact that this study dwelled on metaphorical idioms and assumed other forms of idioms such as proverbial, euphemistic and hyperbolic idioms, the current study sought to ascertain whether the strategy could be applicable to interpret them correctly.

Euphemistic idioms demanded for the sufficient knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker's intuition. Even though you can activate the knowledge of conceptual metaphor theory to interpret, the former are superior to the latter.

Hyperbolic idioms were interpreted better by truth condition semantic approach and the native speakers intuition. Knowledge of conceptual metaphor theory and cognitive environment was also applied but the most effective one was the combination of the above 2.

For instance, example 57:

Hyperbolic idioms code 003 :((*Ndanina eshikulu she karara buelavula. Nda-nina eshi-kulu she-karara buelavula (1SgS AUG. V. Sg. AUG N. Prep Adj .prep Adj) I traversed the hill of Karara from dawn to dusk.*

I traversed the hill of Karara from dawn to dusk but I did not reach my destination. Interpretation: I was unlucky after toiling all my life.

Fans interpreted differently depending on their cognitive environment but the speaker meaning was too general. It meant toiling without success associated with being unlucky in life. Everything you touch falls a part. Others interpreted that it meant taking many years in marriage without children, working hard at school but failing examination at last. Therefore its interpretation is dictated by the context of the speaker hence contextual clue. This still takes us to the assumption that cognitive environment is paramount during interpretation of hyperbolic idioms. There is an indication that in whichever version the hearer interprets, there is a need for the knowledge of cognitive environment approach besides native speaker intuition to reach cognitive effects.

Emerging idioms are the recently coined depending on the situation of the community at hand.

A good example is euphemistic idioms code 004: Yasena *khuluwaya lwa omulilo.Ya-sena khu-Lu-waya lwa-omu-lilo. He stepped on the wire of electricity. (3SgS. V. Prep N. Prep N.)* He/she stepped on electric wire.

Such demands the knowledge of cognitive environment. Each community has a name associated with HIV and Aids. Therefore if you lack cultural knowledge as at that time you will definitely misinterpret the idioms of this type. Literal interpretation demands also the knowledge of the community but not much applicable because idioms are meant to have a hidden meaning from the literal one. The Luluhya speaking community fear HIV and AIDS and associate it to danger of stepping on electric wire because it can lead to death. The electric wire is mapped to HIV and AIDS hence conceptual metaphor theory. Conceptual metaphor theory can lead to

misinterpretation without application of the knowledge of cognitive environment approach to interpret them correctly and fast.

The current study finds that uniqueness of idioms can lead to multiple interpretations because of the prevailing circumstances. Furthermore, people who share the same culture and language can understand idiomatic expressions in their daily conversation.

The current study has shown that the most effective strategies of interpreting idioms during communication in *Witimbule* programme were knowledge of cognitive environment, native speaker's intuition and contextual clue. Other strategies are applied but it begins with the first two strategies because others are deficient in nature.

Mapping strategy proves to be first and least effort strategy but in order for it to reach the cognitive effect first, the cognitive environment approach and native speaker's intuition approach are maximally accessed first.

Schroeder (2012) had expounded on relevance theory by laying emphasis on cultural aspect in interpretation of idioms. It came under the umbrella of cognitive environment knowledge. This is in line with the findings of objective three.

4.5.1 Applicability of various strategies to interpret idioms

The following strategies were applied during interpretation of various forms of Oluluhya idioms in Radio Mambo FM *Witimbule* Programme:

i. Cognitive environment

ii. Contextual clue

iii. Native speaker's intuition

iv. Truth condition semantics

v. Narrowing and broadening

vi. Mapping (CMT)

vii. Literal interpretation (direct)

Some strategies were applicable to interpret some idioms but not others. However, a particular strategy could be applied to interpret several forms of idioms besides others.

4.5.2 Cognitive environment

Schroeder (2012) explained that cognitive environment is the knowledge the interlocutor brings to the conversation as a result of accumulated cultural experience, exposure to the target language and education. Such strategy is where the respondent has the knowledge of the idioms at the time of utterance interpretation. This is as a result of encyclopedic entries and the respondent reaches the conclusion. It entails knowledge from the community or cultural knowledge of the community from which the idiom is derived. It is the knowledge the interlocutor has at the time of utterance or conversation.

Wendy (2021) explained that accuracy of interpreting idioms' results depends on language localization, culture and situation .Idioms can be difficult to non native speakers because each language has its own uniqueness in expression as dictated by the prevailing conditions at that time. That is cognitive environment approach that uses such information to interpret idioms. Wendy did not explain how to apply such strategy to interpret idioms correctly.

Wilson and Sperber (2012) expound that the more recent the information is, the more it is likely to be interpreted. They also reiterate the fact that the information which we encounter most is subject to interpretation with ease. This is as a result of encountering it in our daily conversation.

Most of the proverbial, hyperbolic and euphemistic idioms were interpreted by this strategy. Even though other strategies were applicable, this was the best because most idioms are community based hence communal. Though metaphorical idioms were interpreted by mapping strategy, the interlocutor was compelled to apply the knowledge of cognitive environment approach and native speaker's intuition before completing interpretation of an idiom.

Example 58: Proverbial idiom code 004:

Kakwile khushivoya.

Ka-kwile khu-shi-voya (AUX V. Prep. Sg N.) *has spilled on traditional clothes.*

Interpretation: Something inevitable to be tolerated to survive.

This proverbial idiom proves to be brain taxing without reaching cognitive effects because there is no context given, no encyclopeadic entries for mapping strategy while narrowing and broadening can not work either. Therefore the best strategy is to apply the knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker's intuition to interpret the idiom correctly. In this cultural environment, the traditional clothes meant something personal which you can not do without. Once blood spills on such clothes, you could not disown it. Therefore from the knowledge of cognitive environment approach, it is interpreted as something inevitable. If your relative does something wrong to you, it means that you bear with him /her since you can not do without them completely. That knowledge which the interlocutor has at the time of utterance and cultural knowledge of the community enables the hearer to interpret the idiom correctly.

Example 59: Proverbial idiom code 005.

Mavanga ka lulimi.

Ma-vanga *ka-lu-limi(Pl.S prep. Sg. N.) Blood of the tongue.* The blood from the bleeding tongue.

Interpretation: Your close relatives can not be avoided but to be accommodated whenever they do wrong to you.

Relatives are inevitable and keep doing wrong to us. The fact that such idiom is applied in the culture of Luluhya, the knowledge of cognitive environment approach is paramount without which miscommunication can occur.

The interlocutor applies the knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker's intuition to map tongue to the closest relative or somebody you can not avoid. Therefore if blood comes from the tongue you may spit some but not all. Instead you swallow some. If your relative crosses your lane because you can not avoid them, just assume and go on. Whether you apply other strategies such as mapping, the first one is cognitive environment approach and then native speaker's intuition.

Mass misinterpretation of proverbial idioms was as a result of lack of knowledge of cognitive environment and overreliance on mapping strategy and truth condition semantic approach.

Example 60 : Proverbial idiom code 009.

*Emisaala chireleshe mumutsuru (*Lukabras) Emi-saala chi-releshe mu-mutsuru. –*Trees are slippery in the forest.(*Pl.S N. AUX Adj. Prep. NP.)

Interpretation: Things have fallen apart.

This idiom demands the knowledge of cognitive environment to have the history of the society from which it is extracted. It is derived from the proverb: *Eisuku ye yikhondo nefwile emisaala*

chosi chirelekhanga mumutsuru –Ei-suku ye yi-khondo ne-fwile emi-saala chosi chi-relekha-nga mu-mu-tsuru (SgS Adj. Prep. Sg AUG. N. AUX V. Pl N. Adj. AUX Adj. Progr. Prep. Pl N.) The day when the gorilla dies trees all become slippery in the forest. The day when the gorilla dies all the trees become slippery in the forest. Interpretation :On the fateful day all things fall apart. In Kiswahili it is written as *siku ya nyani kufa miti yote huteleza.* Possessing the knowledge of this proverb makes the interlocutors to use mapping strategy by matching slipperiness of trees onto things falling a part for someone.

Example 61: Metaphorical idiom code 004 :

Akhamanga elinani. A-khama-nga eli-nani.

(SgS AUG -V. Prog. Sg AUG N.) He/she milks the hyena.

Interpretation: Milking hyena means living difficult or hard life.

The hyena is mapped to something ferocious and unbearable. Milking it is something difficult to attempt. The knowledge of cognitive environment approach is paramount to interpret such idiom. There is need for cognitive environmental knowledge to interpret how Luhya speaking communities attribute hyena to and how milking is done. Other communities in the world can attribute hyena to something else such as greediness, hunger or ugliness. If there interpretation is dictated by such, they may not interpret such idiom correctly.

Example 62: Metaphorical idiom code code 009 :

Eyingwe yevula amasimba Eyi-ngwe ye-vula Ama-simba.

The leopard had sired the mongooses. (SgS AUG N. AUX. V. Pl. AUG N.). Interpretation: A famous person siring the descendants of low status.

There is a need for cultural knowledge of the community from which the idiom is derived (Oluluhya). What the elephant and mongooses means to people before mapping them to paramount person siring valueless children. In Luhya setting, mongoose is regarded as a nuisance, ugly, destructive and unwanted. In the other social setting it can be attributed to tourist attraction to earn income, hence positive perception. This finding still reinforces that cognitive environment approach is the best.

Example 63: Metaphorical idiom code 019 :

Omukunda kwo luyongo. Omu-kunda kwo lu-yongo.

The farm of the Luyongo weed (SgS AUG N. Prep. N.)

Interpretation :Something of no value

To unravel this idiom the interlocutor should have the knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker's intuition to analyze what Luyongo is. After that, map it to unfertile land. The land with Luyongo weed is always barren and therefore of no value. Whenever such weed grew somewhere, there was nothing that could be planted or grow to yield substantial harvest at last. Such weed does not feature in all cultural settings and so it can prove difficult to interpret it by such people.

Example 64: Metaphorical idiom code 024:

Katsa olulimi Avavunyala vekhale.Katsa Olu-limi Ava-vunyala ve-khale.

Twist the tongue Avavunyala are seated (V. Sg N. Pl AUG N. AUX V.).

Interpretation: It means that you change the subject of discussion or use idiomatic language because the unexpected participants are in the midst.

Avavunyala were the enemies of the other sub-clans and therefore they were not supposed to hear their secrets. There is need for cultural knowledge about the community to ascertain how they treat Avavunyala. Once the interlocutor has the knowledge of cognitive environment there is a need to change the topic or use idiomatic language because an enemy is present. Avavunyala were enemies and so the term was implying that enemies or unauthorized party is present. One of the roles of the idioms was to hide the information from reaching unintended audience.

Example 65: Euphemistic idiom code 002 :

Wayile eliani lia vene. Wa-yile e-liani lia vene.

*2*SgS AUG *Wa* V *yile* Sg e N. *liani* Prep. lia N *vene*. *Plucked the vegetables of others. He has plucked the vegetables from another person or which is not his.*

Interpretation: There is need for cognitive environmental knowledge so that you map vegetables to the wife.

When you mention vegetables in other contexts it can warrant another meaning different from this depending on how they value the vegetables. In other communities, vegetables can be interpreted as just food, accompaniment or something of great value. Knowledge of cognitive environment approach is highly applicable to interpret such idiom. The topic of discussion in the community at a given period can guide the interpreter to get the correct interpretation.

Example 66: Euphemistic idiom code 012 :*Okhukhalaka amakhola.* Okhu-khalaka ama-khola. (Prep. V. Pl AUG N.) *To cut the banana fibres.* Interpretation: The first relationship after the wife has given birth.

The interlocutor needs cultural knowledge and experience in that speech community at that time frame. Then map the banana fibres to something simple to accomplish. We use the cultural knowledge to interpret it that it is the first intercourse after giving birth to the child. While code 011 involves cutting the ropes means the first intercourse after the death of the husband.

Example 67: Euphemistic idiom code 019 :

Yakwile nelikunia.

Ya-kwile ne li-kunia He /she fell with a sack. (SgS AUG V. Prep. Sg AUG N.)

Interpretation: A man who cannot meet his rights as a man

The interpreter only activates the knowledge of cognitive environment to interpret the idiom. It is the idiom which has been used frequently in communication among the Luhya speaking communities and so if you are the native speaker residing there you can interpret it correctly. Even if you are the native speaker you can not interpret it if you have never heard of it.

Example 68: Hyperbolic idiom code 001 :*Achunne ofiye. A-chunne o-fiye He /*she *Pinched the corpse (*SgS AUG *Pron. V. Sg AUG V.).*

Interpretation*:* Selfish.

It is Olunyole idiom which was highly misinterpreted by non native speakers of Lunyore because it is not commonly used among the speakers of other Luhya dialects who are not versed with it. That is cognitive environment approach. To pinch the corpse is to be selfish.

For instance: Interviewer: What is the interpretation of *Achunne ofiye?*

Respondent 26: Arrogant (Lukabras)

Respondent 27 : Negligence (Lubukusu)

Respondent 28: Selfish (Lunyore)

From the interpretations above, it is concluded that native speaker intuition and cognitive environment are key to interpret such idiom.

Example 69: idiom code 006: *Amakavuli mumavivi . Ama-kavuli mu-mavivi (Pl S. N. Prep. Adj.) white ants at sunrise.* Interpretation: Something that happens prematurely before its rightful time.

The knowledge of cognitive environment is applicable to tell the time when white ants fly out. In the absence of cultural knowledge as a result of having lived in the speech community you will be stranded in conversation using idioms. This means that idioms vary from community to the other. White ants fly out in the evening. Then you can map it to doing something before the right time comes. If the speaker was a politician vying for a seat then it was early campaigning before the end of even three years after elections in Kenya.

The above findings reveal that without cognitive environment knowledge, you can not interpret proverbial idioms correctly. That is why they are hard nut to crack. Some of them are interpreted easily using mapping strategy or contextual clue if it is evidenced. Metaphorical, euphemistic and hyperbolic idioms need the knowledge of cognitive environment first before the next method comes in place

4.5.3 Mapping strategy

Example 70: Metaphorical idiom code 004:

Akhamanga elinani. A-khama-nga eli-nani. (SgS AUG Pron. V. Prog. Sg AUG N.) He /she Milks the hyena .Interpretation: Leads difficult life.

Milking hyena can not be analysed word by word successfully without misleading the interpreter. Once you have the knowledge of one word *elinani* you can use encyclopeadic entries as follows:

Greediness, fierceness, ferocity and unbearable.

However, the hearer should activate the knowledge of cognitive environment to interpret metaphorical idioms correctly. The hearer can use the narrowing to trace the strong and weak implicatures to make the correct interpretation. The strong implicature is unbearable. The act of milking the hyena is then mapped to leading unbearable life.

According to Gibbs and Cacciari (1993), mapping is matching the figurative language onto the target language domain. Conceptual metaphor theory is the knowledge we already have about metaphors and how it is applied to process the metaphors. Once you activate this knowledge, you can easily interpret the metaphor. However, to be the most effective interpreter of such idioms, you need the knowledge of the community from which the idiom is derived. Therefore CMT is applicable but not entirely because the interlocutor needs the knowledge of cognitive environment approach before activating it.

Chen (2013) also agreed with Gibbs and Cacciari that although idioms are difficult to interpret during conversation, they can be processed by metaphorical mapping or conceptual metaphor that means comparing two concepts to reach cognitive effects. This is true but not entirely because not all idioms can be interpreted using this strategy. Even those metaphorical idioms that are processed by this strategy need activating of cognitive environment and native speaker's intuition approach for the effectiveness.

Nguyen and Huyen (2019) presented the idioms basing on conceptual metaphors with two domains of correspondences or mapping human (target domain) to animals (Source domain). In this case the target domain is mapped onto the source domain. In this case, animal's behaviour is attributed to human. This is true only that they only dwelled on animal metaphors at the expense of other types of metaphors. The current study generalizes all metaphorical idioms which are commonly used by the presenter and the fans of *Witimbule* programme in Radio Mambo FM to establish how they are interpreted. It is therefore imperative that mapping strategy can not be effective in isolation but be blended with cognitive environment knowledge approach to reach cognitive effects faster and effectively.

Aydin (2019) analysed the cognitive processing of idioms using visual techniques and pictorial representation of figurative meaning of idioms. Interpretation of idioms depended largely on instructional techniques but proficiency had little effect. This study was in line with metaphorical idioms where mapping strategy works effectively. Aydin (2019) was dealing with students and such tactics can only work on metaphorical idioms. However, the current study found that one strategy was not enough for the interpretation of any form of idioms but a combination of two or more.

CMT could not be applied to interpret proverbial and hyperbolic idioms without misleading the interpreter. CMT could be applied to interpret euphemistic idioms when combined with cognitive environment.

Example 71: Metaphorical idiom code 006

Amang'u kekhupa mupanipepa. Ama-ng'u ke-khupa mu-panipepa

(Pl S. AUG N. AUG V. Prep. N.) The beasts landed in pan paper.

Interpretation: The corrupt leaders in Pan Paper.

To interpret such idiom, the interlocutor should have the knowledge of *the beast* then apply cognitive environment approach to map the idiom onto the corrupt managers who misappropriated the money to make the pan paper factory to collapse. The knowledge of cognitive environment will enable the interpreter to have the history of pan paper and how it failed because of corruption among the leaders. After applying cognitive environment approach, there is need for application of mapping strategy to reach cognitive effects faster and effectively. We use knowledge of cognitive environment to interpret *Amang'u* as corrupt fellows which makes us to interpret the whole idiom. The contextual clue is also applicable because the word *pan paper collapsing* is the evidence that beasts that made it to collapse are corrupt. Therefore both mapping strategy and contextual clue are applied to interpret such idioms besides cognitive environment approach that is activated first. This can be mapped onto causing the problem to you. Once you have activated your knowledge of cognitive environment, you can be able to know encyclopeadic entries of beasts to have a clue. Then you interpret it correctly as known by many people in various settings that enable them to interpret it accurately.

Example 72: Metaphorical idiom code 012.

Alasile amachina mutsinzushi.

*A- lasile ama-china mu-tsi-nzushi (*SgS AUG Pron. V. Pl AUG N. Prep. Pl AUG N.) He /she threw the stones in the swarm of bees.

Interpretation: Causing the problem to you or landing in danger.

Through stones can be mapped onto causing the problem and bees can be mapped onto danger or problem. Therefore, it is interpreted as causing the problem to you.

Example 73: Metaphorical idiom code 014:

Elinani lisievile evukhwe.

The hyena danced at the in-laws residence. Can be mapped onto a person who causes embarrassment in public or does anomalies.

Example 74: Metaphorical idiom code 016:

*Abaluhya valia amakhanu. A-baluhya va-lia ama-khanu (*Pl AUG N. AUX V. Pl AUG N.)

The Luhyas have eaten tough meat (usually at the back neck of the cattle).

Interpretation: Luhyas are conservative or rigid to changes

The tough meat is mapped onto the concept of being argumentative or rigid.It is being conservative in nature. Such part of meat is tough to break down before swallowing. Tough meat is mapped onto rigidity.

Example 75: Metaphorical idiom code 021:

Enetiwaka yilovile.

The network has failed.

Interpretation: To be confused or unable to understand the situation.

The failure of the network is mapped onto personal mind not comprehending or understanding the current situation.

Example 76: Proverbial idiom code 001:

Eyikhondo yivoyele kwayo.

Guerrilla has tied itself with its own tail.

Interpretation: The person has used his or her own resources for sustenance.

Using the native speaker's intuition, it can be mapped onto a lonely person struggling on their own to meet ends meet.

Example 77: Proverbial idiom code 002:

Omuyingani wurunjile angolove. Omu-yingani wu-runjile a-ngolove.

(SgS AUG N. AUX. V. Prep .Adj.)

The uncompromising person has paid in the evening. The sceptic person has paid the debt in the evening.

Interpretation: People who are conservative normally surrender at long last when it becomes tough to bear. It can be mapped onto the rigid people who tend to surrender at last minute.

Example 78: Proverbial idiom code 008 :

Kumusukuni mumatayi.

Ku-mu-sukuni mu-ma-tayi (SgS AUG N. Prep Pl Adj.)

The hunting rod in first. *The first hunting rod.*

Interpretation: The first attempt or first impression matters a lot.

During hunting when you hurl the first rod to the bird on a tree and miss the target, the bird flies away and you lose everything. The interlocutors can activate the knowledge of cognitive environment to know the function of the hunting rod and what it did before mapping it to the first attempt in the deal. It therefore reinforces the vitality of the first impression or attempt to get or do something.

Example 79: Proverbial idiom code 009 :

Emisaala chosi chireleshe mumutsuru.

All the trees are slippery in the forest.

Interpretation: Things have fallen apart.

Using the knowledge of cognitive environment you can analyse and find that trees were slippery for the guerrilla and chimpanzee to climb in order to escape hunters. Then the concept can be mapped onto the fateful day when all things fall apart.

Example 80: Euphemistic idiom code 003 :

Imbwa yimali yakhomba musikele. I-mbwa yi-mali ya-khomba mu-si-kele. (SgS AUG N. AUX V. Prep. Sg. N.)

The dog black has licked me in the foot.

The black dog licked my foot (when I was a sleep.)

Interpretation*:* To be unsettled in life.

Knowledge of cognitive environment precedes other approaches because it makes us comprehend what a black dog is and what it means by licking the foot then it is mapped to a

person who is always unlucky and unsettled. The black dog is attributed to bad luck in life hence unsettled. The knowledge of cognitive environment approach makes the interlocutors to interpret the idiom correctly because of maximum exposure to the native speakers language during conversation and the cultural beliefs of the people in the society from which the idiom is derived.

Example 81: Euphemistic idiom code 007 :

Okhutsukha amanyasi.Okhu-tsukha ama-nyasi.

(Prep v. Pl AUG N.) To pour the grasses .

To pour the grass.

Interpretation: To pour the traditional herbs as the way of cleansing.

The knowledge of cognitive environment precedes mapping it onto cleansing someone. In case the interlocutor fails to apply the cultural knowledge of cleansing, the idiom can be misinterpreted. Therefore, mapping strategy is aided by cognitive environment knowledge to reach cognitive effects.

Example 82: Euphemistic idiom code 008 :

Okhwitsila omukhono omukhasi.

Okhwi-tsila omu-khono omu-khasi

(Prep V. Prep. Sg AUG N. Sg AUG Adj.)

To come through the hand female. *To come from the left hand side.*

Interpretation: To use a wrong approach to tackle an issue.

The knowledge of cognitive environment precedes us to map the female hand to wrong direction hence messing up with someone or something.

Example 83: Hyperbolic idiom code 011 :

Warema khuluvisi nende khulumu.

Wa-rema khu-lu-visi nende khu-lu-mu.

(3SgS AUG AUX. V. Prep Sg AUG Pron. Adj. Conj. Prep. Sg Adj.) Has cut on soft and hard.

Has cut on both soft and hard (firewood.)

Interpretation: To be desperate after trying all the means in vain.

The interlocutor applied cultural knowledge that leads us to map it onto trying all the means in vain.

Mapping strategy is applicable to interpret all forms of idioms with a few exceptions. This then signifies that Gibbs et al. (1997) were on the track to say that when the interlocutor hears the concept of idioms, there is a tendency to activate conceptual metaphor theory of mapping strategy where one concept is immediately mapped onto the other. The current study only found that idioms are cultural based and peculiar to a particular culture or speech community. It implies that interpretation of idioms using mapping strategy is insufficient. The interlocutor first applies the knowledge of cognitive environment before mapping strategy. It is this strategy that involves cultural knowledge that leads interpreter to interpret idioms correctly. Schroeder (2012) expounded further that in relevance theory, the intention of the speaker of the language should be understood by the hearer to reach cognitive effects faster and effectively. For this reason,

cognitive environment approach is still reigning in idiomatic interpretation. Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (1995) explain further that human mind is geared towards maximization of relevance by using information already available in environment. Such information is what cognitive environment approach encompasses.

4.5.4 Contextual clue

Example 84: Euphemistic idiom code 009 :

Okhwakana. Okhu-akana (Prep V.)

To meet.

Interpretation: To have a relationship between male and female.

Meet can be attributed to convergence, discussion, friends, spouses, and togetherness. Apply knowledge of cognitive environment or context of the speaker to narrow down the idiom to mean the intimate relationship. This is mapping strategy. Because euphemistic idioms are purely communal to dilute obscene language for face saving, apply cognitive environment approach to infer the meaning of the idioms. Each community has its own uniqueness in expression of euphemistic words.

Example 85 : Euphemistic idiom code 016 :

Avasakhulu vekhale. Ava-sakhulu ve-khale

(3pl.S.N. AUX. V.) Elders are seated.

Interpretation: Respectable people are making important decision and they need to be paid for the service rendered.

Pick the key word elders and the encyclopeadic entries: Respectable, old, adults, decision making, putting things right and wisdom. The word seated can be joined to elders to mean that things are getting right and you need to give them something, possibly money as a reward for putting things right.

Next, example 86 : hyperbolic idioms code 005 :

Okhulola omusungu. Okhu-lola omu-sungu

(Prep V. Sg AUG N.)

To see a white man.

Interpretation: To seek for the assistance from an able person or to meet a wealthy person for monetary gain.

White men are associated with pride, smartness, wealthy, and authority. To see or meet means interact. To see a white man can be mapped onto going to beg from the wealthy person. There is need to have knowledge on how the society regards the white man and the context in which it is used to interpret it correctly.

Example 87 : Hyperbolic idiom code 012 :

Wambumuli wumalile avana musikulu .

Wambumuli wu-malile ava-na mu-sikulu

(3SgS AUG. AUX . V. Pl. DEM. Prep. Sg N.)

Wambumuli has finished children from the school. Wambumuli has finished all the children from the school.

Interpretation: Wambumuli has defiled many girls in the schools. It is truly exaggerative.

The interlocutor activates the knowledge of cognitive environment to get encyclopeadic entries of allegoric name Wambumuli to be a man, known in the community for defilement. Not discriminative in selecting the partner for a relationship. The word finish is used to mean he has defiled many school girls. This means the man with allegoric name is known for indiscriminatively defiling school going children .Many people interpreted this idiom correctly because of maximum exposure to it in the community hence cognitive environment approach. Once the interpreter hears the allegoric name *Wambumuli* the idea of defilement comes into the mind. In the context of *Wambumuli* the idiom can be interpreted correctly. Such a name is as a result of the knowledge of cognitive environment.

Suchaniya (2021) reveals that context clue strategy is used to derive the meaning of unfamiliar words in a statement or a context. It was found that it saves time in deriving the word meaning without inquiring or referring to the second source such as dictionary, texts and resource people. It was found that when the context is given, idioms are easily interpreted. Therefore context clue is one of the best strategies of interpreting idioms with least effort. It is only that in *Witimbule* programme, some idioms were used without contextual clue, hence demanding extra effort to interpret.

Some scholars fail to draw a clear demarcation between cognitive environment and contextual clue. Contextual clue is just the knowledge of the context. When the idiom is used in a sentence or statement, the speaker shows a clue of that idiom the way it is used in that utterance. The interlocutor relies on that evidence to guess the interpretation of that idiom. If the speaker does not give a hint, then this strategy fails to work. This means that the interlocutor will shift to cognitive environment to interpret the idioms.

When the speaker has mastered the art of using idioms with context or clue, his idioms can be interpreted even by non native speakers.

Anybody has the ability to interpret idioms the moment the context is given. Most of Oluluhya idioms have not been used in the situation where the respondent can use contextual clue hence difficult to interpret unless the interpreter possesses cultural knowledge from the community. Cognitive environment plays a vital role in idiomatic interpretation.

Tilmatine *et al.* (2021) represent idiomatic expressions as a single unit in mental lexicon which requires the reader or hearer to integrate the incoming information with stored mental knowledge to derive the meaning. They found that context clue was appropriate in idiomatic interpretation. The finding was true only that some idioms occur in isolation and demand extra strategies to be interpreted correctly. The current study found other strategies such as cognitive environment approach, mapping strategy, narrowing and broadening, native speaker's intuition and truth condition semantic approach.

Schroeder (2012) had echoed Wilson and Sperber (2002) who found that if the interlocutor fails to match the speaker meaning with the interpretation, there will be misinformation. In pragmatic interpretation as in this study, the hearer is more interested in what is communicated by the speaker rather than what is spoken.

Warambo (2017) already found that contextual clue is the strategy of analysing ambiguous idioms. This was true but whenever the contextual clue is not evidenced, ambiguous idioms can not be interpreted. This demanded for the other strategies to interpret ambiguous idioms. It was established that the knowledge of cognitive environment approach is paramount in interpretation of ambiguous idioms.

Raheel (2013) on the other hand asserts that idioms are frequently used in conversational language. What is fascinating is that she grouped the idioms as transparent, opaque, allusive, phrasal verbs, similes and proverbs. Then the conclusion was that idioms are best analysed in context in which they appear. Idioms existing in context are easier to interpret than those in isolation. From this study, context is crucial in idiomatic interpretation. The fact that this study assumes that idioms are contextual, paves the way for the current study on pragmatic idioms which occur in isolation and can not be correctly interpreted unless the interpreter knows the intention of the speaker, status and the situation at hand. That means cognitive environment approach is paramount without which miscommunication can occur in any conversation involving the idioms. This is in the framework of relevance theory that explains the role of context in interpretation of discourse.

4.5.5 **Narrowing and broadening**

Example 88: Metaphorical idiom code 002:

Yesinjile netsingubo.Ye-sinjile ne tsi-ngubo

(3SgS v. Conj. Pl AUG N.) He /she bathed and clothes. He bathed while still wearing the clothes.

Interpretation: Did something in vain or without benefit.

Narrow down the mind to bathing which has the following encyclopaedic entries: cleaning, remove dirty, done naked, in hiding place. Then we broaden our mind to bathing with clothes which is mapped to doing something in vain or something useless.

Example 89: Metaphorical idiom code 004:

Akhamanga elinani.

Milks the hyena. HYENA is an ad hoc concept that can be attributed to: Greediness, unwanted, danger and wild. Basing on the above encyclopaedic entries, the interpreter can use danger as a strong implicature through narrowing technique. Milking the hyena can be mapped to doing something dangerous

Broaden the mind to milking hyena it is concluded that it is doing something dangerous, something impossible or miserable. Therefore milking the hyena can be mapped to doing the hard task hence leading miserable life. It can also be mapped onto getting something from an egocentric person. The person who milks hyena is the one who attempts difficult option in life. Milking hyena is attributed to living difficult life. From the above example, there is a weak and strong implicatures and when the hearer picks on the weak implicatures there is a possibility of misinterpretation of the idioms. Relevance theory emphasizes on the use the knowledge of cognitive environment to reach cognitive effects with less effort.

Example 90: Metaphorical idiom code 008 :

Wakhomba muyapakha.

Has licked the fermentation pot. Narrow down the mind to the word licking which has the following encyclopeadic entries: using the tongue directly to get food, getting a little bit of something, being desperate.

It can be broadened to getting the remains from fermentation pot after all beer is consumed. It is missing the beer. It can then be mapped onto failing to realize your fortune. Failure to acquire something is likened to licking the fermentation pot. Narrowing and broadening is aided by cognitive environment knowledge approach to interpret the idiom correctly.

Example 91: Metaphorical idiom code 010:

Yavaya omupila kwa hasi.Ya-vaya omu-pila kwa hasi (3SgS AUG Pron. Sg AUG N. Prep N.) He/she played the ball underground. He played underground ball.

Interpretation: Used secretive means to achieve.

Broaden our environment to underground to have the following encyclopaedic entries: Not easy to notice, hidden, unware by most people. It is then narrowed down to doing something secretive. Therefore the one who plays underground ball is mapped to those who are secretive in their deals in order to succeed. It can also be noted that doing something secretive is a strong implicature but the rest (cunning, hidden and not noticeable) are weak implicatures.

Example 92 : Metaphorical idiom code 015 :

Amatuma amakhasi. Ama-tuma ama-khasi (Pl S. N. Pl adj .)

Maize females. Female maize.

Interpretation: Well spaced and big in size while male are slender, squeezed and clustered.

Apply cognitive environment approach to broaden our mind to the word female that means weak, wrong side, large in size, and not serious. Then narrow down the mind to map female maize to scattered maize in the land. It is scattered and larger in size. Weak, not serious and on the wrong side are correct interpretations in a different context but here they are weak implicatures, leaving large size as the strong implicature.Basing on the native speaker intuition, female is attributed to weakness because Luhya is a patriarchal society.

Example 93: Metaphorical idiom code 019:

Omukunda kwoluyongo.

Interpretation: Unproductive land or barren.

The farm of Oluyongo weeds. Narrowing down to the word Oluyongo to have the following encyclopeadic entries :

weed, unproductive, unfertile and unprofitable.

The land of weed means unproductive land. Such weed is a symbol of infertility of the land where it grows.

Example 94: Metaphorical idiom code 027 :

Omuchela kwefu. Omu-chela kwe-fu

(SgS AUG N. Prep Pl. Pron.)

The river of us. *Our river.*

Interpretation : Harlot. The word river is attributed to the source of water, livelihood, where all village meet, quenching thirsty. (Broadening)

Apply the knowledge of cognitive environment to map our river to the woman who belongs to everybody in the community. The river can be attributed to something communal and a necessity. This is category extension. Narrowing can be done to land on a strong implicature as communal. From narrowing the river being communal can be mapped to harlot in a given cognitive environment, proving that without the knowledge of cognitive environment, idioms can be difficult to interpret.

Example 95 : Proverbial idiom code 004 :

Kakwile khushivoya.

Spilled on the traditional cloth.

Apply the knowledge of cognitive environment and narrow down to traditional clothes. Encyclopeadic entries show the outer cover, dress, cover from shame, close to us. Apply cognitive environment approach to infer what spilled on the clothes to be blood. It is concluded that it is something we can not avoid. Possibly our relatives or friends who can do wrong to us and then we accommodate them or keep a blind eye for life to go on.

Example 96 : Proverbial idiom code 006 :

Inyungu yalunga namasaka.

Inyungu ya-lunga na-masaka (SgS AUG N. Pron. V. AUG. N.) The pot that cooked black night shade.

The pot in which black nightshade vegetables were boiled.

Interpretation: The past memories.

It is derived from the proverb which states that the pot that cooked black night shade remains bitter for long. Cognitive environment approach is paramount to aid the interlocutor to narrow down the mind to black night shade. Encyclopeadic entries are vegetables, food, bitter taste, common in Luhya speaking communities. It is derived from the proverb *Bitterness does not fade away from the container where such vegetables were cooked. Cognitive environment approach* precedes us to map it to past memories in life that still linger a fresh. Early childhood friends or memories never fade away.

Example 97: Proverbial idiom code 009 :

Emisaala chireleshe mumutsuru..

Trees have become slippery in the forest.

Narrow down the mind to slippery of trees then broaden to our encyclopeadic entries as dangerous, cunning, unbearable and bad condition. Knowledge of cognitive environment directs us to think that slippery of trees in the forest is for the monkeys and gorilla and chimpanzee. Map slippery of trees onto dangerous situation hence the fateful day in our lives.

Example 98 : Euphemistic idiom code 001 :

Amasimba kayelile mufulavu khusoko

Mongooses have landed in the pubs at the market.

Here the context is provided as pub hence the key word to be followed by being broadened to Entertainment, drunkardness, prostitution, careless spending, solace. Then mongooses can be analysed as destructive, unfriendly, greedy, uncaring, unwanted and unloved by chicken farmers. The interlocutor can then connect the two to map the mongooses to prostitutes using the context of pub or cognitive environment approach as the knowledge acquired after being somewhere for sometime as a result of exposure to societal environment.

Example 99: Euphemistic idiom code 004 :

Yasena khuluwaya lwa omulilo

Stepped on the electric wire. Conclude that electric wire is for transmission of electricity.

Stepping on electric wire can be mapped onto contracting HIV AIDS using cognitive environment approach as a result of accumulated knowledge about Luhya speaking communities that find it a taboo to mention the deadly disease by name. Because the disease has stayed with

us in Luluhya speaking communities for over thirty years, such idiom has been used frequently until most of the fans are versed with them.

Warambo (2017) established that narrowing is picking only what is required and leaving out all other possibilities. This means that we use encyclopeadic entries and narrow it down to the target possibility. Broadening on the other hand constitutes approximation, categorical extension, hyperbole, metaphorical extension and neologism.

Narrowing and broadening involves pinning your mind down to something or synthesizing the information or deriving the meaning of the idioms from generalization of information you have. The following is the illustration of how idioms are interpreted using this strategy.

This study tests and finds that in this strategy, you need to first narrow down to the key word to guide you basing on its encyclopeadic entries then you broaden it by generalization. In several times you had to activate the knowledge of cognitive environment before other procedures follow.

This is in line with Wilson and Sperber (1995/ 2002) who emphasize that human mind being discriminative, follows the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects. That is proved when we narrow down our mind to reach cognitive effects faster. From this strategy, we can deduce that in each string of idiomatic words, there is a key word which the interlocutors narrow down to before broadening to reach the cognitive effects. If the key word misses due to lack of subject part of the idiom, it will be impossible to interpret idioms correctly until the knowledge of cognitive environment approach is applicable to reach cognitive effects. That is where relevance theory is applicable to explain how interpretation occurs in human mind.

4.5.6 Truth condition semantic approach

This is the condition under which the information is true or false. When an idiom is applied, sometimes the interlocutor begins to guess whether it is true or not before drawing a conclusive remark. This strategy is majorly used during interpretation of hyperbolic idioms.

The speaker exaggerates information to make the information interesting to the hearer and mostly for entertainment. The interlocutor has to infer truth before interpretation.

For instance : Example 100 : Hyperbolic idiom code 008.

Amarevo kekala amarwi.

Ama-revo ke-kala ama-rwi. (Pl. S AUX. V. Please. N.)

Questions have closed ears. Deaf questions.

Interpretation : Difficult questions.

Questions have no ears to be deaf. Under truth condition semantic approach we conclude that they were difficult questions. This demanded the strategy of truth condition semantic approach. Truth condition semantic approach is not applied in most cases because it specifies the demands under which something is true. The idiomatic usage is a blatant violation of truth condition semantic approach. Such strategy is made possible by activating the knowledge of cognitive environment.

Example 101 : of hyperbolic idiom code 006 :

Amakavuli mumavivi.

White ants in the morning. White ants are interpreted as food, delicious, white, fly in the evening.

It can be concluded that something good comes at a wrong time. The interlocutor then applies the truth condition semantic approach to know that white ants never fly in the morning. It should be something else prematurely. The hearers apply cognitive environment approach to map it onto politician's campaign earlier than usual. This strategy demands a lot of reasoning whether the information is true or false. Such strategy may not be applicable in many cases because idioms are meant to have hidden meaning and can be a blatant violation to the truth semantic condition (Wilson and Sperber, 1995). Relevance theory explains further that human mind being discriminative; tend to follow the path of the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects. Relevance theory rules out truth condition semantic approach because it fails to meet the condition of being the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects. It therefore shifts back to cognitive environment knowledge approach where the interlocutor has prior knowledge which is brought to the conversation to yield cognitive effects.

4.5.7 Native speaker intuition

This is the knowledge of the language as a result of being born in that speech community and having exposed to the language for a long time. It means you did not learn the language but acquired it through exposure. If you are the native speakers you have advantage of mastery of vocabulary that makes you to infer the meaning of idioms.

Ngoge and Abas (2021) found that idioms are prevalent in all languages of the world as a string of words whose meaning is different from that of individual words. It was found to be challenging to interpret idioms because they are cultural based and posse a great challenge to non native speakers. This is an indicator that to interpret idioms correctly, you need to have a good mastery of vocabulary and culture of the target language.

This is quite significant to the current study only that it investigated how the non native speakers interpret the idioms of the second language. The study dwelled on only metaphorical idioms. The current study sought to determine how Oluluhya native speakers interpret Oluluhya idioms and still found that native speaker's intuition is paramount during interpretation of all forms of Oluluhya idioms. This is so because idioms are culturally rooted and they are inseparable with culture of a particular speech community.

Maha(2017) Stressed on proficiency in a particular social setting as the avenue for using idioms in speech, hence interpretation. This strategy was successfully applied to interpret a number of idioms in this study. Only emerging idioms would evade this strategy and called for cognitive environment. Emerging idioms cut a cross all the 4 forms of idioms hence cognitive environment knowledge were at a high demand to interpret.

Respondents without native speaker's intuition and cognitive environment failed to interpret Olunyole idioms such as example 102: Hyperbolic code 001

Achunne ofiye -pinched the corpse to indicate being selfish by not responding the way dead fails to respond to the pinch.

Example 103: Hyperbolic 004

Okhwiyachila essokori. Okhwi-yachi-la es-sokori (Prep. V. Sg AUG N.)

Interpretation: To lead difficult life due to poverty or to be in financial quagmire.

Scratch yourself with a maize cob. Lack of vocabulary, maize cob, leads to misinterpretation of the whole idiom hence miscommunication. The interpretation is to be impoverished. . Native speaker's intuition plays the role. However, you should have the knowledge of that speech

community, culture and the setting or history of what is there at that time, hence cognitive environment approach.

4.5.8 Literal interpretation strategy

This is also called direct method. The idiom is taken as it is without processing. It is almost saying that there is no strategy applied. Once you have the knowledge of the language of the community, native speaker's intuition, you will get the interpretation correctly. Such idioms are insignificant in this Radio programme because idioms should have a hidden meaning to hide the information from non natives or make audience to think abit. Many respondents who used direct method failed to interpret most of the idioms.

For instance example 104: metaphorical idiom code 002:

Yesinjile netsingubo.

Bathed with clothes. A person went to bath and became clean. It does not make sense at all.

Example 105: Proverbial idiom code 006 :

Inyungu yalunga namasaka -The pot that boiled black nightshade.

Interpretation: The past sweet memories.

Respondent 40: The harsh or hostile person

Respondent 41: Spoiled pot

Respondent 42: Inedible vegetables

Respondent 43: The past food you eat while young

Respondent 44: The past sweet memories that resurfaces.

Respondent 40, 41, 42 and 43 have mostly attempted to interpret proverbial idiom using literal interpretation approach and still failed to give the correct interpretation which leads to miscommunication among the interlocutors. Respondent 44 gave the correct interpretation of the idiom because of using the knowledge of cognitive environment approach, cultural knowledge of the target language community. This has shown that literally interpretation approach is least effective in idiomatic interpretation.

Example 106: Euphemistic idiom code 007:

Okhutsukha amanyasi (to pour the grass)

Interpretation: To pour the traditional herbs for cleansing.

Literally interpretation approach is deficient in interpretation of this idiom because grass has no cleansing power in the Luhya speaking community but the word grass is used euphemistically to avoid mentioning the herb. The herb is associated with cleansing the widow and widower immediately after the burial of the spouse, people who have been involved in incest or anything unbearable in the community. Those who applied direct interpretation failed. Native speaker intuition and cognitive environment approach proved effective strategies of interpreting such idioms correctly.

Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) is applicable to this study because it explains that human mind follows the path of the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects. It is from this fact that the study establishes the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects to be cognitive environment approach besides native speaker intuition. If the strategy is quite

demanding on the side of the interpreter, the mind can either misinterpret the information or reject it (Wilson and Sperber, 1995).

4.5.9 How idioms are interpreted by the fans of *Witimbule* Programme in Radio Mambo FM broadcast.

There are various strategies of interpreting idioms including cognitive environment approach, native speaker's intuition, narrowing and broadening, truth condition semantic approach, literal interpretation, conceptual metaphor or mapping strategy and contextual clue. When interpreting idioms during communication in *Witimbule* programme, Radio Mambo FM, the above strategies were applicable to o interpret all four forms of idioms. The interlocutor had to apply the knowledge of cognitive environment first then other approaches. Therefore cognitive environment approach cuts across the boundaries of idioms because all idioms are culturally based or peculiar to a particular speech community.

Activation of conceptual metaphor or mapping strategy was successfully applied to interpret metaphorical, euphemistic but some hyperbolic and proverbial idioms were exceptionally out of the strategy. But most idioms are interpreted using this strategy but after cognitive environment approach besides native speakers intuition. This was the fastest strategy of interpreting idioms after the precedence of the above two.

Contextual clue was found to be effective strategy to interpret all forms of idioms only that context was not provided in all forms of idioms except a few. It was pragmatic interpretation where you had to know the intention of the speaker. When the context clue is not given, activate the knowledge of cognitive environment to interpret the idioms correctly.

Narrowing and broadening was also applied successfully to interpret idioms. However, you had to first apply the knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker's intuition to narrow

down to the key word. You would then use encyclopeadic entries and finally map the domain to the concept. It involves a variety of processes which are ruled out by Wilson and Sperber (2002) in relevance theory by explaining that human mind is geared towards maximization of relevance. The best strategy is the one that leads to cognitive effects using the least effort at the highest speed.

Literal interpretation was applied but yielded little or no fruit at all because idioms are implicit but not explicit. The speaker shifts from denotative to connotative meaning to communicate effectively. Though it was a strategy applied to interpret idioms in this study, it did not have impact and therefore ruled out.

Table 15: How various strategies are applied to interpret various idioms

Strategies of interpreting idioms	**Applicable to interpret**	**Not applicable**
Cognitive environment approach	69	00
Native speakers intuition	50	19
Contextual clue	20	49
Narrowing and broadening	35	34
Conceptual metaphor /mapping	46	23
Literal interpretation approach	0	69
Truth condition semantic approach	10	59

From the above table, it can be concluded that cognitive environment approach is paramount for interpretation of all forms of idioms which are used in the conversation. Literal interpretation approach is not applied in interpretation of idioms because idioms have a hidden meaning which a particular strategy should be applied to interpret them correctly. Literal interpretation approach takes the idiom directly as it is without processing therefore it is not applicable. The rest of the

strategies are applied to interpret various forms of idioms but inappropriate without cognitive environment knowledge approach which makes it possible for other strategies.

4.5.10: The procedure of interpreting idioms

For every idiom encountered during conversations in Oluluhya speaking communities, use the contextual clue to interpret but in the absence of context approach it on the basis of cognitive environment knowledge then the other strategy can follow.

For instance, example 107: Metaphorical idiom code 14:

Elinani lisievile evukhwe –the hyena danced vigorously at the in-laws premises.

Interpretation: To misbehave and course embarrassment.

The interlocutor has to apply the knowledge of the native speaker intuition to comprehend that dancing at the in-laws premises is a taboo and embarrassing. Then cognitive environment approach to detect that someone with abnormal behaviour did something shameful before reputable company. Then the knowledge of conceptual metaphor of mapping strategy: Hyena is mapped to a greedy and uncaring person. Dancing is mapped to doing something odd to bring shame on yourself and the others. In-laws premises mean a respectable place or the presence of guests. It is therefore imperative that you will reach the correct interpretation by following such procedure. It means a person caused embarrassment before the guests by doing the abnormality. Without the knowledge of cognitive environment which includes culture, experience and competence in the language one could not interpret it. That is cognitive environment approach. The above metaphorical idiom can also fall under euphemistic idioms because it does not directly embarrass the doer of the action.

The current study found that interpretation of idioms is hinged on sum of the total amount of words or vocabulary used but not an individual word. However, the current study has shown that you need the knowledge of at least one key word that can lead you to interpret the whole idiom correctly. Should you fail to identify the key word and use it for the rest, you will end up misinterpreting it.

Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002/1995) highlights that human mind is geared towards maximization of relevance by looking for the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects. It emphasizes on the strategy that leads to the target possibility faster than the rest with least effort and time on the side of the interpreter. When the information is repeated over and over it becomes easy to process, meaning that those idioms which are encountered frequently during conversation have a high chance of being interpreted correctly. Yus (2006) said that the interpreter follows the path that demands the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects. Human mind is tuned in a manner that it rejects the information which is complicated to process. If the correct strategy is followed, it becomes simple to interpret the idiom by comprehending the information. Therefore, the choice of the strategy to interpret idioms during communication is of great essence.

From the above findings and discussion, cognitive environment approach is the most effective strategy of interpreting idioms correctly in any social setting. Other effective strategies such as mapping, native speaker intuition, and broadening and narrowing, truth condition semantic and contextual clue are dependent on the knowledge of cognitive environment approach to be realised. Most of the idioms are communal and therefore demand strategies that are anchored on the culture of the target community. It is also deduced that language and culture can not be realised in isolation but as one entity because there can be miscommunication between the

speaker and the hearer if the cultural knowledge is not applied to interpret idioms correctly. Each culture has its own uniqueness in terms of what they value and devalue hence affecting idiomatic interpretation.

Among the Luhya or other African communities, a young man looking down when being addressed by an elderly person is a sign of respect but among the Western countries or Europeans it is a sign of rudeness or negligence to the elderly. Such aspects immensely affect the interpretation of idioms in the conversation among the members of the society or community.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

The study sought to find out whether or not the fans of *Witimbule* programme of Radio Mambo FM are able to interpret Oluluhya idioms correctly using the least effort strategies during conversation. This section entails the summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations under the specific objectives of the study. It was found that fans of *Witimbule* programme apply various forms of idioms including metaphorical, euphemistic, proverbial and hyperbolic idioms. Metaphorical and euphemistic idioms are commonly applied even though euphemistic idioms seem to cut across the board due to their nature of face saving as fancied by the speakers of Olukabras dialect in Luluhya speaking communities (Luvonga, 2017).

It was also found that most of the idioms which are highly susceptible to misinterpretation during conversations are proverbial and hyperbolic. Most of the idioms that were well interpreted were metaphorical and euphemistic. However, code 1, 6 & 18 of metaphorical idioms really challenged the interpreters who had poor mastery of vocabulary in the native language

Proverbial idioms were used sparingly by mainly elderly people to caution and regulate social and moral behaviour (Alati, 2015). They were susceptible to misinterpretation during conversations because they demanded extra effort to process. Human mind follows the path of the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects (Wilson and Sperber, 2002/ 2012). Information which is complicated and quite demanding in terms of processing is rejected. Mostly the proverbial idioms can be interpreted effectively using cognitive environment approach and native speaker's intuition.

Hyperbolic idioms were found to be exaggerative, sarcastic and satirical. To be interpreted correctly, the interlocutor had to apply truth condition semantic approach and Conceptual Metaphor Theory. CMT is dependent on cognitive environment knowledge approach hence deficient. TCS approach is demanding, yet human mind tends to concentrate on the information which can be easily interpreted. Demanding information is either rejected or misinterpreted. Relevance theory is effective in explaining the objective of the study by highlighting cultural knowledge which is entailed in cognitive environment knowledge approach that is derived from culture, personal experience and exposure to the target speech community. Interlocutors who are versed with cultural knowledge after being exposed to a particular speech community were able to interpret idioms correctly.

Under objective 2, the causes of difficulties encountered during interpretation were attributed to lack of knowledge of cognitive environment, native speaker intuition deficit, lack of context clue, lexical mismatch, idiolect, literal interpretation approach, lack of the subject part of the idiom and ambiguity of idioms. Lexical mismatch among the dialects of Luhya speaking community was mitigated by code switching, assimilation and dialectal accommodation process. Therefore the constraints encountered during interpretation of idioms mainly include lack of cognitive environment knowledge and application of literal knowledge. Relevance theory explains that in order to interpret the given information, the hearer should have knowledge of that culture, be familiar with the context in which it is set and readiness to interpret the information. Therefore cognitive environment knowledge is very important for any idiomatic interpretation hence in tandem with relevance theory that lays emphasis on context, culture and situation at hand during the utterance and interpretation of idioms.

In objective 3, various approaches or strategies were used to interpret various forms of idioms which were unique in their own nature. Cognitive environment approach needs the interlocutors to have knowledge of the idioms at the time of utterance, cultural knowledge, and prevailing circumstances in that environment at the present time. It was the main strategy of interpreting idioms effectively. Such idioms include proverbial, metaphorical, hyperbolic, and euphemistic.

Mapping (CMT) is matching figurative language onto the target language domain, meaning that you should activate the knowledge of metaphorical idioms. It was found to be the fastest and least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects in most of the idioms. The assumption is that the interlocutor should have the knowledge of cognitive environment and native speaker's intuition for the mapping strategy to be effective. Relevance theory rules it out because it is anchored on cognitive environment knowledge approach, hence dependent. In the event of cognitive environment knowledge approach the interlocutor can activate the knowledge of other strategies to interpret idioms correctly and fast.

Native speaker intuition involves mastery of vocabulary of the speech community as a result of accumulated knowledge from the culture after being born or stayed there and exposed to that language for many years. Metaphorical idioms are best interpreted by this strategy in addition to other strategies depending on the nature of idioms. Euphemistic idioms are commonly interpreted by such a strategy. This strategy is inline with relevance theory as it explains how cultural knowledge is crucial in idiomatic interpretation. It is as a result of accumulated knowledge about the cultural environment from which the idiom is derived.

Contextual clue is the environment under which an idiom is used in a statement. When context is provided, any interlocutor including a non native speaker can interpret it. Therefore, it is the easiest strategy with least effort to reach cognitive effects. It cuts across all the idioms only that

in *Witimbule* programme, most of the idioms lacked context. More especially proverbial and hyperbolic idioms that are demanding lack context clue.

Narrowing and broadening is yet another strategy that involves synthesizing or analyzing a given information to reach cognitive effects. Alternatively, it is pinning your mind down to a certain aspect yet a mind-boggling strategy. It is less applicable in most cases because it is demanding a lot of effort. The strategies which are quite demanding in terms of usage in interpretation of idioms are likely to cause misinterpretation. Such is the concern of relevance theory that explains how various utterances are interpreted using the least effort strategy.

Truth condition semantic approach includes reasoning about something whether it is real or blatant violation of the norm. It is generally applicable to interpretation of hyperbolic idioms due to their philosophical approach in nature. Etymological elaboration is applicable to interpret idioms that lack the subjective case and the speaker meaning can be reached by tracing the history of the idiom. In order to reach the cognitive effects, apply the knowledge of cognitive environment if there is no context clue. Literal interpretation is also called direct method by taking idiomatic statement as it is without processing. Interlocutors who rely on this strategy tend to misinterpret the idioms because idioms have a hidden language. Despite the other strategies applied, cognitive environment approach and native speaker intuition have become paramount for interpretation of any idiom. Before other strategies, cognitive environment approach comes first. It is therefore imperative that relevance theory is applicable to the current study in this objective 3, because it explains the importance of cultural environment knowledge in interpretation of idioms. Furthermore, it is elaborated that human mind follows the path of the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects. The least effort strategy is cognitive environment

approach besides native speaker intuition. The rest of the strategies are deficient in interpretation of Oluluhya idioms.

5.2 Conclusion

From the findings, it is concluded that idioms are used by fans of *Witimbule* programme unconsciously to present their message to the audience and among themselves. Idioms are the dress of any thought to be presented orally to the audience to make the idea interesting and meaningful without embarrassing the speaker and the hearer. The speaker who fails to apply idioms is like the person who is walking naked in public. Hardly does the daily programme elapse without mentioning an idiom. The fans of *Witimbule* programme are widely spread in Luluhya speaking communities as illustrated in Table 2. There is a need to classify idioms into 4 forms depending on whether they adopt the form of metaphors, euphemisms, proverbs and hyperboles in order to maintain the flavour of figarativeness in conversations. This therefore implies that idioms take the form of other aspects of figurative language with various levels of complexity to interpret**.** The forms of idioms which are susceptible to misinterpretation during conversations in Witimbule programme are proverbial and hyperbolic idioms. Euphemistic idioms seem to cut across the board due to their nature of face saving among the Luhya speaking communities. Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) emphasizes that the information which is quite demanding to be processed by the interlocutors is likely to be misinterpreted or rejected by the mind of the hearer. The theory also highlights that human mind is geared towards maximization of relevance, yet the information which is frequently encountered during communication is more relevant and makes it easy to interpret.

The constraints encountered during communication caused misinterpretation. They include lack of cognitive environment, lack of context, native speaker intuition deficience, emerging idioms,

lack of subject part of the idiom, ambiguity and lexical mismatch that resulted in dialectal constraints. Relevance theory by Wilson and Sperber (2002) stated that if the information is complex to the mind of the interlocutor or the hearer, there is a possibility of misinterpretation during conversations. Lexical mismatch was not significant due to interlocutors' ability to mitigate it through code-switching, neologisms, assimilation, etymological elaboration and lexical accommodation. Such constraints encountered contributed to misinterpretation during conversations by making the information complex to the hearer. The main hindrance was lack of the knowledge of cognitive environment approach and native speaker intuition. Relevance theory lays emphasis on context, cultural knowledge and whether it is consistent in the day to day conversation.

The most effective strategy that cuts across the boundaries is the cognitive environment approach because it is the matter of the interpreter being exposed to the language of the community from which the idiom is derived, their culture, physical environment and the prevailing conditions at that time. It is what is at the back of the mind of the interlocutor at the time of utterance of the idioms. This therefore implies that the interlocutor should be able to match the speaker meaning with the interpretation. Should there be a mismatch between the speaker and the hearer, there can be a misinterpretation of the idioms, hence miscommunication between the two groups of people. In Pragmatic interpretation, the interlocutors are interested in what is communicated rather than what is spoken. Table 16 below summarizes the applicability of various strategies to interpret different forms of idioms:

Table 16: Application of various strategies to interpret different forms of idioms

Forms of idioms /Strategies	**Metaphorical**	**Euphemistic**	**Hyperbolic**	**Proverbial**
Cognitive environment	√	√	√	√
Native speaker's intuition	√	√	-	√
Contextual clue	√	√	√	-
Narrowing and broadening	√	√	_	_
Truth condition semantics	_	√	√	_ _
Literally interpretation	_	_	_	_
Conceptual metaphor theory /mapping	√	√	_	_

From the above table, it is concluded that cognitive environment, context and native speaker's intuition are the most effective strategies of interpreting idioms of whichever form. Furthermore, metaphorical and euphemistic idioms are not demanding because most of the strategies are applied to interpret them. This is a deviation from Gibbs *et al.* (1997) that we activate conceptual metaphor theory for every idiom that resurfaces. Each form of idioms is unique and demanding a specific strategy to interpret it .However, to interpret all idioms from a given language, the hearer should apply cognitive environment approach in addition to native speaker's intuition in the presence or absence of the context.

It was therefore found that some fans were not able to interpret idioms correctly despite the fact that they were able to accommodate each other by assimilation process. Therefore lexical mismatch is not the main cause of idiomatic misinterpretation because its effect is almost insignificant. To interpret idioms correctly, the hearer needs the knowledge of cognitive environment as a result of cultural awareness and native speaker's intuition.

Relevance theory is sufficient to explain the objectives of the study because it highlights the tenets that are in line with the study. CMT as a theory only accounted for metaphorical idioms but not entirely because the interlocutor needed the cognitive environment knowledge approach first before activating conceptual metaphor theory. Relevance theory accounts for all the objectives of the study by highlighting on the human mind that follows the path of the least effort strategy to reach cognitive effects faster, rejecting the complex information or misinterpreting it and matching the intention of the speaker with that of the interlocutor to interpret the information contained in the conversation.

Noor and Fallatah (2010) have expounded that idioms colour the language and help people to observe, emphasize, judge and explain the ideas in a lively manner. A speaker can communicate multiple information using just a few words (Noor &Fallatah, 2010 a). It also found that it is difficult for the native speakers to express themselves without using idioms. This is an implication that idioms can not be done away with. Therefore there was need to investigate into the nature and process of interpretation to communicate effectively in every day's life. Although this study was conducted in American setting, the same conclusion was reached during conversation in Oluluhya.

It is imperative that language and culture can not be analysed in separation but as an entity because idioms need cultural knowledge from the community in which they exist to be interpreted correctly. The approach which entails the cultural knowledge is the cognitive environment knowledge approach, being the pillar on which other strategies depend to be realised.

5.3 Recommendations

The study sought to investigate whether or not the fans of *Witimbule* programme in Radio FM are able to interpret idioms correctly by investigating the form of idioms which are susceptible to misinterpretation during conversations. It was found that proverbial idioms are complicated and recommends the application of the cognitive environment knowledge approach and native speaker intuition to interpret them correctly. The study also recommends the classification of idioms based on the 4 forms for easy identification and comparison

There were difficulties encountered during interpretation of idioms but were overcome by code switching, lexical accommodation, assimilation process, neologism and cognitive environment. Therefore, the study recommended the frequency in the use of Oluluhya dialects in *Witimbule* programme, funeral setting, political rallies, wedding and other social ceremonies among the Luhya speaking communities to enhance effective communication using idioms.

The strategies of interpreting idioms during communication in *Witimbule* Programme were established but the most effective strategy was cognitive environment knowledge approach. The study recommended that *Witimbule* Programme in Radio Mambo FM should be used as the platform to spread the cultural knowledge through conversation in Luhya dialects to foster unity and solidarity among the Luhya people. Through Radio Mambo FM *Witimbule* Programme, figurative language which includes idioms is learned unconsciously, hence dissemination of knowledge.

It is also recommended that being an effective native speakers of a particular speech community, you should be versed with idiomatic usage and interpretation as a result of accumulated knowledge about the culture from which idioms are applied with the aid of listening to the oral narratives, riddles, sayings and speeches in community's social ceremonies.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

This study focused on pragmatic interpretation of idioms in conversations among the Luhya speaking communities in Western region of Kenya and found that the form of idioms which is susceptible to misinterpretation are proverbial.There is a need for further study on the demarcation between idioms and metaphors, proverbs, euphemism and hyperbol because Luhya speaking dialects collectively call them *etsingano*

Dialectal constraints were not a significant hindrance to interpretation of idioms. Therefore, Luhya dialects have a high degree of mutual intelligibility. However, there is a need for further study on the dialect that can be a protolanguage among the Luhya speaking communities to be widely used as a guide on how communication can be made effective.

The most effective strategy of idiom interpretation is cognitive environment approach before other strategies. There is a need for future study on whether the knowledge of cognitive environment is still paramount in interpretation of the themes in Luhya cultural songs.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX (I) INTERVIEW GUIDE

This research seeks to find difficulties encountered and strategies of interpreting idioms used in the Radio Mambo FM programme, '*Witimbule*' conversations in order to come up with the best strategies for interpreting them. Kindly respond to the following questions:

1. How old are you?
2. How often do you listen to *Witimbule* programme?
3. What is your dialect?
4. What is your highest level of education?
5. Interpret the following idioms as used in the conversation: (Appendix 'ii')
6. The difficulties faced during interpretation of idioms in (Appendix 'ii')
   A) Literal interpretation
   B) Emerging idioms
   C) Dialectal variation
   D) Lack of context
   E) Ambiguity of an idiom
   F) Any other difficulties
7. Which strategies have been used to interpret idioms in (Appendix 'ii')?
   a) Narrowing and broadening
   b) Mapping (CMT)
   c) Contextual clue
   d) Cognitive environment (Context)
   e) Truth condition semantics
   f) Native speaker's intuition
   g) Any other strategy

APPENDIX (II): RESEARCH PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Name of the Researcher: Solomon Luvonga Chenenje

Reg.No.: PHD/FA/00096/2017

Maseno University.

Research Topic: *Pragmatic Interpretation of Oluluhya Idioms in Radio Mambo FM Witimbule programme.*

Hallow participant, respond to complete this form carefully if you accept to participate in this study. After responding you will be required to sign at the end of it.

1. I have heard the research explained to me satisfactorily in verbal by the researcher. YES/NO

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and may withdraw from this study at any time without giving reason.YES/NO

3. I understand that all information about me will be treated in confidence and that I will not be named in any written work arising from this study. YES/NO

4. I understand that any information from me will be used solely for the research purposes. YES/NO

5. I understand that you will be discussing the progress of your research with others in Maseno University. YES/NO

I freely give my consent to participate in this research study.

Participant……Signature…….. Date……..

APPENDIX (III) EXCERPTS FROM *WITIMBULE* PROGRAMME

Excerpt One:

Radio presenter: Emwinjisianga mu *Witimbule* ,eshivutsilo sha Valuhya., (I welcome you to *Witimbule* where Luhyas belong). Omumenya wundi Esumeyia anyoleshe nanyolanga eliani liavene (Another inhabitant at Sumeyia was found ***plucking the owner's vegetables).*** Amalanga yeyikamamo eyifula lelo atilishe (He normally ***shelter from the rain while there*** but then was caught.

Fan 1: Kekholeshele khulala nende Esamitsi wefu lwa omusiani wundi anyoleshe natsile Okhukhalaka amakhola wa chirani watsia khuilovi (It happened concurrently with another man from Samitsi who went to ***cut the banana fibres from the neighbour*** who went to Nairobi)

Fan 2: Avandu valacompleinanga saana. ***Emichela chefu*** chavira vuli mukukwa sivakhanywele muwenomo (Natives are complaining a lot. ***Our rivers*** have passed in every locality why can't they quench their thirst from there)

Fan 3: Eshivala shawa khane. Chenda khuve netsimoni tsivili shichila ***avandu veimoni indala*** nivo valayanga etsifwa tsiavene (The world has reached the end surely. Let us have two eyes because ***people with one eye are the ones plucking others vegetables)***

Radio Presenter : Omundu khuli omwenoyo vakholanga variena? (What did they do to such a person?)

Fan 1: Yarunganga eying'ombe yeshiruchi ne ***vatsukha amanyasi*** (He used to compensate a cattle for overstepping then ***they poured the grass)***

Fan 4 : Yiwefu yino vanyola owundi nivamukhupa paka ***natsia Ekombe*** (In our village here they found another one and beat him until he ***went to Ekombe)***

Excerpt Two :

Radio Presenter : *Witimbule* ! Ovuruchi vuno vurie? (How is this leadership?)

Fan 5 : ***Kenya ilenyanga avasolili (Kenya needs strong young men)*** .Avandu muvunyinji ***veyachila essokori.*** Vuli litukhu evindu vininanga epeyi (In most cases people ***are scratching themselves using a maize cob)***

Radio Presenter : Ovwami novwasio (Leadership is subject to change from one person to the other)

Fan 6 : Lwakhwopa ekura khane ***khwesinganga netsingubo*** oh! (Oh! When we were voting ***we were bathing with clothes.)*** Okhumenya mukenya ***nokhukhama elinani*** vutswa. (Living in Kenya is just ***milking the hyena)***

Radio Presenter : Sivamwelesia etsikasi mukholanga? (Haven't they created the jobs for you and you are working?)

Fan 7 : ***Nokhwiyachila vutswa eshisokori*** ekasi yene yilena? (***It is just to scratch with a maize cob.*** Where is the job itself?)

Radio Presenter : Khukhole khuriena shichila khandi ***Amakavuli kachaka mumavivi*** .(What do we do since ***the white ants are flying at dawn)***

Fan 8 : Chenda ***khulume musikalo*** okhwola lwa chirano chiliwa. (Let us ***bite the palm*** until five years end.)

Radio Presenter : Khulime emikunda khurache ***khukhume eyinzala*** (Let us cultivate the lands and plant to ***send away hunger)***

Fan 9 : Nakhukhume eyinzala khuriena neyifula yavira, emikunda cheyembe chimo ***Oluyongo*** nechindi ***amatuma karula amakhasi (***How do we ***send away hunger*** when there is no rain, the lands of Yembe have ***Oluyongo weeds*** and others have ***female maize***)

Radio Presenter : Esirikali yalaka okhumuulusiakho fwokhuraka mumikunda **(**The government has promised to subsidize the farm inputs)

Fan 10 : Sirikali ***ivayanga omupila kwa hasi (***The government ***plays underground ball)*** .

Excerpt Three :

Presenter : Ndamulerira amacheni okhurula mutsingurianguria (I bring for you news from various parts). Mumasika Emayanja amarava kanyoleshe avamenywa vane ***nivatsia ekombe*** (During the funeral at Mayanja there was an accident where four natives ***went to Kombe*** .

Fan 11: Kho avandu ***varema khulumu nende khuluvisi*** avandi ***vayeyachila essokori*** amarava kakhenya shina (If people have ***cut on both fresh and dry firewood*** and others ***have scratched themselves with the maize cob*** what does the accident want.

Presenter : ***Eyi-suku ya Eyikhondo nefwile emisaala chirelekhanga mumutsuru (The day when the guerrilla dies all the trees become slippery in the forest***

Fan 12: ***Omundu yakhavakonela khumaika? (Did somebody sleep for them on cooking stones?)***

Presenter : Eshivala shawa vana vefu (the world has come to the end my siblings)

Fan 13: Chenda khusaye weikulu (let us pray that one from above)

Presenter :***Ne vakanyile omufu mwenoyo? (Did they fold that deceased?)***

Fan 11: Chikhafu chirano chalia kimivano (Five cows ate the knives)

Presenter : Amasika kenako nakave kariena mutsinyinga tsia ***elinani liasievela evukhwe tsino? (***How will that funeral be in the days when ***the hyena danced vigorously at the in-laws premises?)***

Fan 14: Kano lelo vuli ***yikhondo yilevoyela kwayo! (***This one now every ***gorilla will tie itself with its own). Avasakhulu vekhale nivanyanya mumakhuva kenako (The elders sat and chewed those words)***

Presenter : Eshivala shino neshitinyu. Vachelitse ***okhukwa mufutsakha*** omutuka nikuvalondakho mulukuku yomo (This world is difficult. They tried to ***fall in the bush*** but the truck followed them.

Fan 15: Omwami somanyile ori ***eyisuku ya eyikhondo nefwile emisaala chirelekhanga mumutsuru? (***King don't you know that the day when the gorilla dies all the trees become slippery in the forest?)

Ove niwakasa nomba niwaviya inyinga niyula ***olenyokha*** (Whether you are good looking or ugly when your day reaches ***you will go home)***

Presenter : Elifwa likhunyolanga hoosi, ove ***wasena khuluwaya lwa omulilo*** nomba tawe olatsia (Death find you everywhere, whether ***you have stepped on electric wire or not, you will go)***

Excerpt Four :

Presenter : Okhulondekhana nende eyinzala, avamaaka vapomole elituka khusoko ne **nivakwa** ***mutsindang'unyo halunari vali mushimuna (***Because of hunger, the deviants broke into the shop at the market but ***fell in the black ants now in squirrel)***

Fan 16 : Shilachilanga ***namasimba kayelile mufulavu khusoko*** khwenokho (The problem are ***the mongooses that have landed in clubs at the market)***

Presenter : Ne avamenywa ***sivakanya omukhono***(Why can't the residents ***fold the hand)***

Fan 17: Sivanyala tawe, ***eyinyungu yalunga namasaka ovululu sivuwetsangamo tawe (***They won't manage because ***the pot used for boiling black nightshade will always retain the bitterness)***

Presenter : Nikava olalolanga omundu ***wasena khuluwaya lwa omulilo*** natsia ***okhwiyikamayo eyifula. Avandu vefu valia amakhanu (***If you are seeing a person ***has stepped on electric wire*** and then you ***go there to shelter from the rain. Our people have eaten the tough meat)***

Fan 18: Chenda khusaye weikulu mwene akhunyalile (Let us pray the one above to manage for us)

Presenter : Vana vefu ***khuvaye emipila cha haasi khandi Khufulasie etsimoni*** khumalala khukoneo khavili (My siblings ***let us play underground games /balls and close the eyes*** to some things ***to live twice)***

Excerpt Five :

Presenter : Vulano emusutile amacheni ***mwikunia (****Today I have carried the news for you in the sack.)*

Fan 19 : Omushele mulala anyoleshe niyevanga amakanda mumulime kwa vene. Vamurevile ***Amareevo kekala amarwi*** (One woman was found plucking beans from somebody else land. She was asked ***deaf questions)***

Presenter : Amasika kaveele Idakho mungolove. Eshikha ***shokhuvikha*** lwa shola, omushele yatsia ***okhueleswa amanyasi*** shichila yali ***walia amachungu (***There was funeral at Idakho yesterday. When the time of ***storage*** reached, the widow went ***to receive grass*** because she had ***eaten the rats)***

Fan 19: Omeilwatsi lwa yareva avasanji nivamuvolela vari shiina? (When the pastor inquired what did church members tell him?)

Presenter : Vamuvoolela vari ***akatse olulimi Avavunyala vekhale.*** Yavoola ari ***chenda Khufulasie etsimoni khumalala (***They told him to ***twist the tongue because Avavunyala were seated.*** He said that they had to ***close their eyes to other things)***

Fan 20 : Lwa avandu veetsa ***vatasia yikatushe khale*** (When the multitude was attentive, ***they tapped water from already stopped rain)***

Presenter : Lwavavikha omuvili, omwilwatsi ***siyayenya okhulasa amachina mutsinzushi tawe.*** Yamala amasika yako (When they ***stored the body*** the pastor did not want to ***throw stones in the swarm of bees.*** He completed the funeral service.

APPENDIX (IV): CONTENT ANALYSIS GUIDE

Metaphoric Idioms

Code	Luhya Idioms	Gloss	Pragmatics interpretation	Constraints	Strategy	Response
001	Wukwile mu tsidang'unyo	Has fallen in black ants	Arrested by the policemen			
002	Yesinjile ne tsingubo	He/she bathed with clothes	Did useless job/ worked in vain			
003	Yekhonyile khu esahani yiye	Defecated on his/her plate	Spoilt relationship with his well-wishers			
004	Akhamanga elinani	Milks the hyena	Lead unbearable life			
005	Watasia yikatushe khale	Tapped water when the rain already stopped	Delayed and failed			
006	Amang'u kekhupa mupanipepa	Beasts landed in PanPaper	Corrupt fellows landed in PanPaper			
007	Lekha okhweteta estsinyende mu bwoba	Don't search for the worms in mushrooms	Don't focus on weaknesses			
008	Wakhomba muyapakha	Licked the fermentation pot	Failed to achieve			
009	Eyingwe yevula amasimba	Leopard gave birth to mongooses	Prominent leader sired the thugs			
010	Yavaya omupila kwa hasi	Played underground ball	-cunning -secretive			
011	Akanyile omukhono	Twisted the hand	Selfish			
012	Alasile amachina mutsinzushi	Threw stones to the bees	Created a problem			
013	Okhunyanya mumakhuva	Chew the words	Analyse the information critically			
014	Elinani lisievile ebukhwe	Hyena danced at in-law's home	Do unexpected anomalies			
015	Amatuma kamela amakhasi	Female maize	Unevenly distributed maize in the farm			
016	Avaluhya vaalia	Luhyas have eaten tough meat	Not flexible to unite			

	amakhanu					
017	Kenya ilenyanga avasolili okhuruka	Kenya needs strong men to rule	Able leaders are needed in Kenya			
018	Nakhamuna nende wanangwe	Squirrel and the leopard	Enemies pretending to cooperate (politics)			
019	Omukunda kwo luyongo	The farm of weeds	Unproductive people			
020	Wayesika etaywa ya chirani	Depends on the neighbor's rooster	Depends on others totally			
021	Enetiwaka yilovile	Network is not catching	Not understanding what others are talking about			
022	Wakwile mufutsakha	Has fallen in the bush	Escaped the reality			
023	Nishulu na munwa	They are nose and mouth	Close friends			
024	Katsa olulimi avavunyala vekhale	Change the tongue avavunyala are seated	Change the topic because strangers are present			
025	Inzofu yisinjile mumuliango	Elephant is at the doorway	A person under the authority is barring you from achieving			
026	Chenda khufulasie atsie	Let us close eyes so that he goes	Overlook the weakness to let it go			
027	Nomuchela kwefu	She is our river	prostitute			

Proverbial Idioms

Code	Luhya idioms	Gloss	Pragmatics interpretation	Constraints	Strategy	Response
001	Eyikhondo yivoyele kwayo	The gorilla has tied itself with its tail	Struggle on your own			
002	Omuyingani wurunjule angolove	The sceptic person has paid in the evening	The sceptic person at least surrenders.			
003	Omukambi wulile amatsukhu	Ever selective has eaten the lungs	Ever selective gets poor quality at last			
004	Kakwile khushivoye	Blood has spilled on the clothes	Your relative has wronged you			
005	Mavanga kalulimi	It is the blood from the tongue	Bear with the situation			
006	Inyungu yalunga namasaka	The pot used to cook black nightshade	The significant memories in life			
007	Chiniali wufutule elisombo	Chiniali has broken the offals	The conservative person has messed up with the deals			
008	Kumusukuni mumatayi	The first hunting stick	The first attempt or impression matters a lot			
009	Emisala chosi chireleshe mumutsuru	All the trees are slippery in the forest	Fateful day Things fall apart			

Euphemistic Idioms

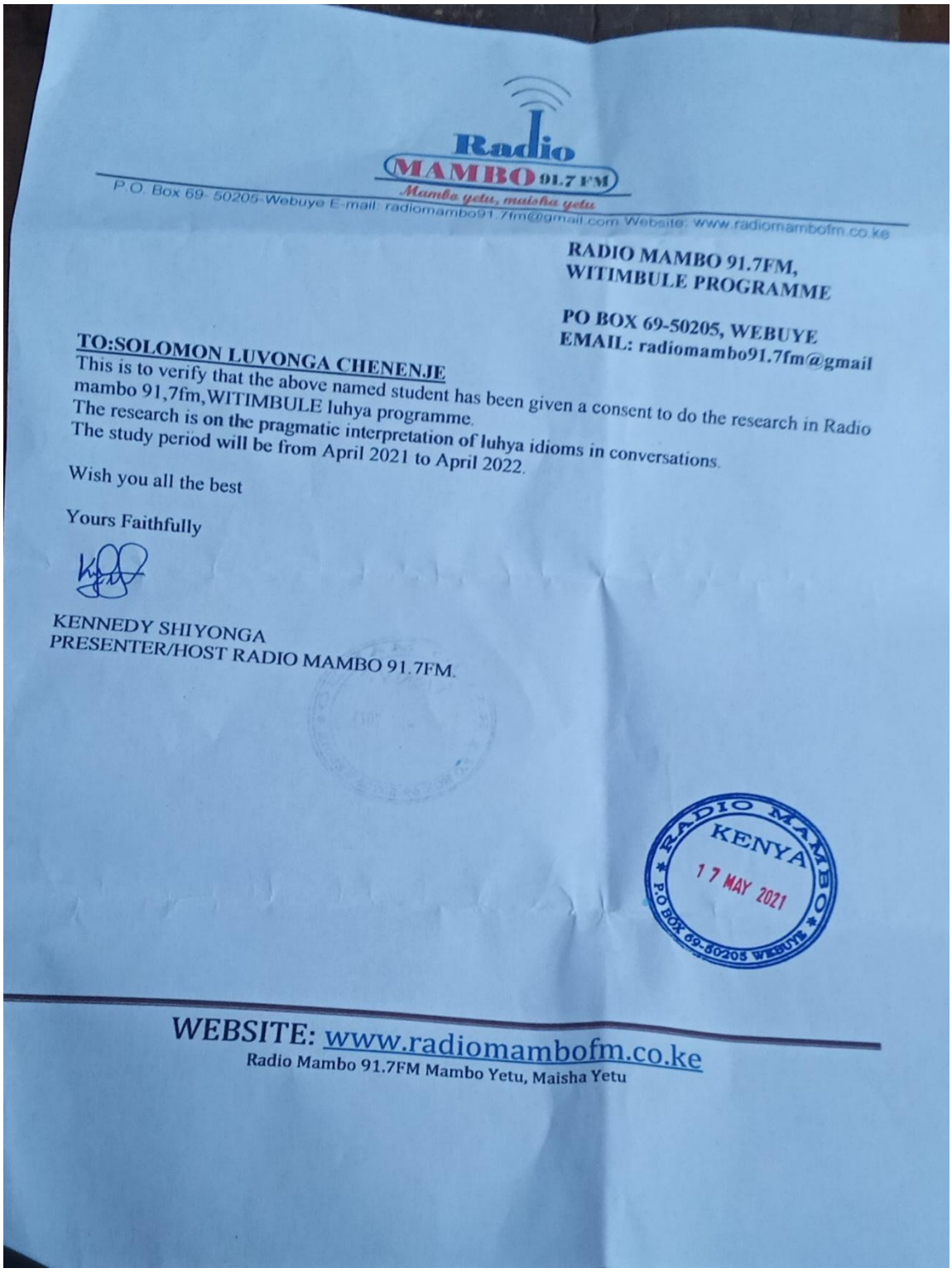
Code	Luhya Idioms	Gloss	Pragmatic interpretation	Constraints	Strategy	Response
001	Amasimba kayelile mufulavu khusoko	Mongooses have landed in the bars in town	Harlots in the bars in towns			
002	Wayile eliani lia vene	Has plucked someone's vegetables	Taken someone's wife			
003	Imbwa imali yakhomba musikele	Black dog licked my foot	Always unlucky			
004	Yasena khuluwaya lwa omulilo	Stepped on electric wire	Infected with HIV/AIDS			
005	Wutsile ekombe	Has gone to ekombe	died			
006	Okhukanya omufu	To fold the dead	Slaughter the last cattle for the deceased.			
007	Okhutsukha amanyasi	To pour grasses	Cleanse the bereaved			
008	Okhwitsila omukhono omukhasi	To come from female hand	To mess up the person			
009	Okhwakana	To meet	To have a relationship			
010	Okhuvikha omuvili	To keep the body	To bury the dead			
011	Okhukhalaka emikoye	To cut the ropes	To be the first to inherit the widow			
012	Khalaka amakhola	To cut the banana fibres	The first relationship after giving birth			
013	Weimoni indala	One-eyed man	A monogamist			
014	Wakhupwa etsilavushi tsinyishi	Has been whipped severally	Has married several men			
015	Waiyikama vutswa eifula	Has only sheltered from rain	Not fully married Part-time married			
016	Avasakhulu vekhale	Elders are seated	You need to appreciate those who assisted you			
017	Omushele Wariokha eshilenje	A woman with a broken leg	Expectant woman			
018	Winyoshe	Has gone home	died			
019	Yakwa nelikunia	Fell with a sack	Not able to marry			

020	Walia amachungu	Has eaten rats	Has had extra-marital affairs before her husband died			
021	Okhwimika	To commit suicide	To claim for a gift from where your daughter is married			

Hyperbolic Idioms

Code	Luhya Idioms	Gloss	Pragmatic interpretation	Constraints	Strategy	Response
001	Achunne ofiye	Pinched the corpse	selfish			
002	Waluma musikalo	Has bitten the palm	Persevered in times of distress			
003	Ndanina eshikulu she karara buelabula	I traversed the hill of karara till evening	Toil without success			
004	Okhwiyachila eshisokori	Scratch yourself with maize cob	To lead poverty life			
005	Khulola omusungu	To see a white man/ European	To be a beggar			
006	Amakavuli mumavivi	White ants early in the morning	Premature deals			
007	Yangonele khumaika	Slept on the cooking stones for me	Struggle for my failure (bewitch)			
008	Amarevo kekala amarwi	Deaf questions	Very difficult questions			
009	Ni shakhaya wa maruu	Is the one that defeated that of banana fibre	Invincible/ unconquerable person			
010	Shakhaya weng'ang'a	Defeated the ibis from swallowing	A hard nut to crack/ a difficult person to tackle.			
011	Warema khuluvisi nende khulumu	Has cut the fresh and dry firewood	Tried all the ways but failed			
012	Wambumuli wumalile avana vosi musikulu	Wambumuli has finished all children in school	The victim has defiled many girls in the school			

APPENDIX (V): Letter of Consent From The Radio Station



Radio MAMBO 91.7 FM
Mambo yetu, maisha yetu
P.O. Box 69- 50205-Webuye E-mail: radiomambo91.7fm@gmail.com Website: www.radiomambofm.co.ke

RADIO MAMBO 91.7FM,
WITIMBULE PROGRAMME

PO BOX 69-50205, WEBUYE
EMAIL: radiomambo91.7fm@gmail

TO:SOLOMON LUVONGA CHENENJE
This is to verify that the above named student has been given a consent to do the research in Radio mambo 91,7fm,WITIMBULE luhya programme.
The research is on the pragmatic interpretation of luhya idioms in conversations.
The study period will be from April 2021 to April 2022.

Wish you all the best

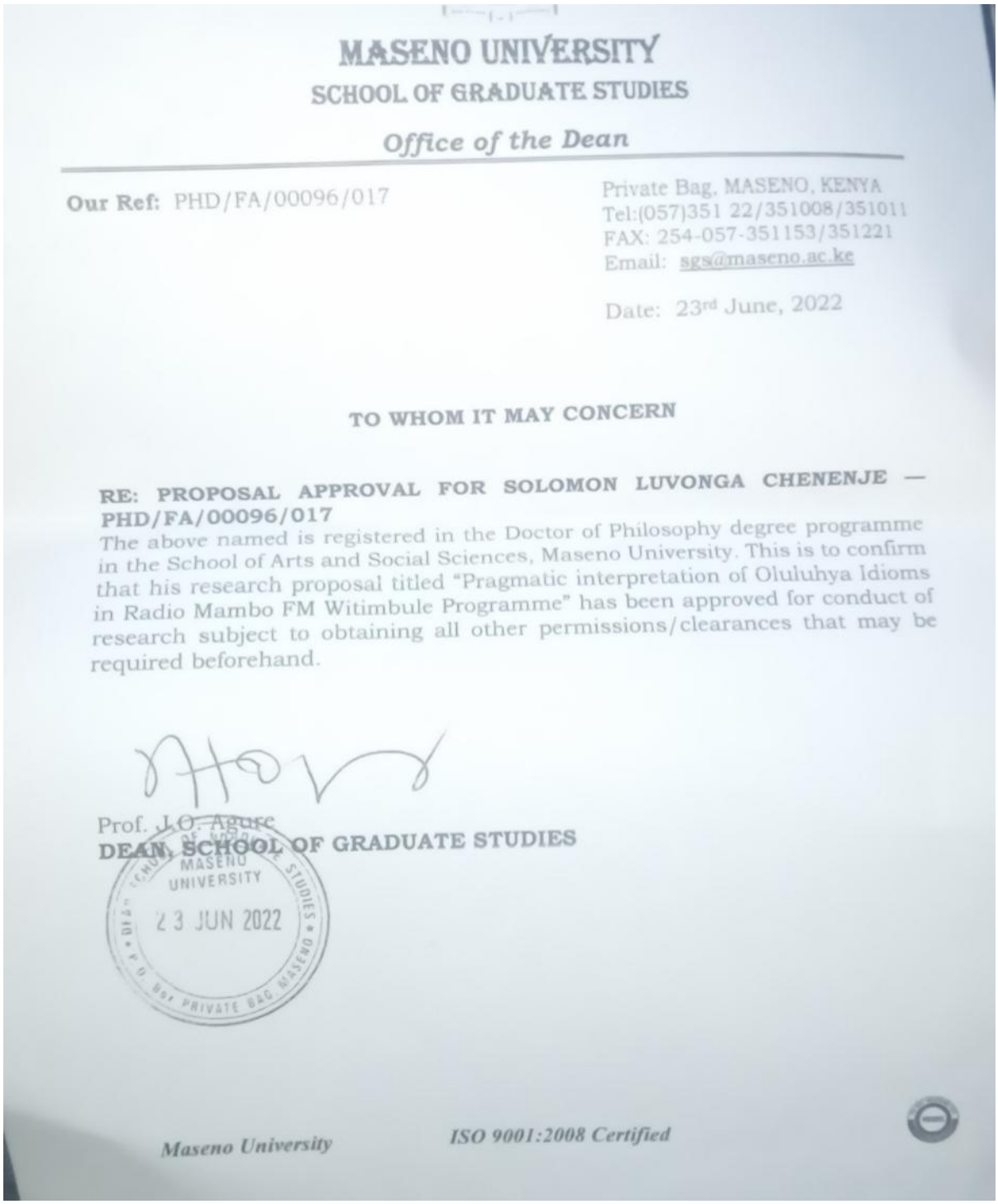
Yours Faithfully

KENNEDY SHIYONGA
PRESENTER/HOST RADIO MAMBO 91.7FM.

RADIO MAMBO KENYA
17 MAY 2021
P.O BOX 69-50205 WEBUYE

WEBSITE: www.radiomambofm.co.ke
Radio Mambo 91.7FM Mambo Yetu, Maisha Yetu

APPENDIX (VI): Letter from SGS



MASENO UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Office of the Dean

Our Ref: PHD/FA/00096/017

Private Bag, MASENO, KENYA
Tel:(057)351 22/351008/351011
FAX: 254-057-351153/351221
Email: sgs@maseno.ac.ke

Date: 23rd June, 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: PROPOSAL APPROVAL FOR SOLOMON LUVONGA CHENENJE — PHD/FA/00096/017

The above named is registered in the Doctor of Philosophy degree programme in the School of Arts and Social Sciences, Maseno University. This is to confirm that his research proposal titled "Pragmatic interpretation of Oluluhya Idioms in Radio Mambo FM Witimbule Programme" has been approved for conduct of research subject to obtaining all other permissions/clearances that may be required beforehand.

Prof. J.O. Agufe
DEAN, SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

MASENO UNIVERSITY
23 JUN 2022
P.O. BOX PRIVATE BAG, MASENO

Maseno University *ISO 9001:2008 Certified*

APPENDIX (VII): Ethical Approval

MASENO UNIVERSITY SCIENTIFIC AND ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

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

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

REF: MSU/DRPI/MUSERC/01117/22

Date: 26th September, 2022

TO: Solomon Luvonga Chenenje
PHD/FA/00096/2017
Department of Linguistic
School of Arts and Social Sciences
Maseno University
P. O. Box, Private Bag, Maseno, Kenya

Dear Sir,

RE: Pragmatic Interpretation of Oluluhya Idioms In Radio Mambo FM *Witimbule* Programme

This is to inform you that **Maseno University Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MUSERC)** has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is MUSERC/01117/22.The approval period is 26th September, 2022 – 25th September, 2023.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by Maseno University Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MUSERC).
iii. Death and life threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to Maseno University Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MUSERC) within 24 hours of notification.
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to Maseno University Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MUSERC) within 24 hours.
v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to Maseno University Scientific and Ethics Review Committee (MUSERC).

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) https://oris.nacosti.go.ke and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely

Prof. Philip O. Owuor, PhD, FAAS, FKNAS
Chairman, MUSERC

MASENO UNIVERSITY ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE 26 SEP 2022

APPENDIX (VIII): Research License

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **207518**

Date of Issue: **07/October/2022**

RESEARCH LICENSE

This is to Certify that Mr.. Solomon Luvonga Chenenje of Maseno University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Bungoma, Busia, Kakamega, Vihiga on the topic: Pragmatic interpretation of Oluluhya idioms in Radio Mambo FM, Witimbule programme for the period ending : 07/October/2023.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/22/20788**

207518

Applicant Identification Number

Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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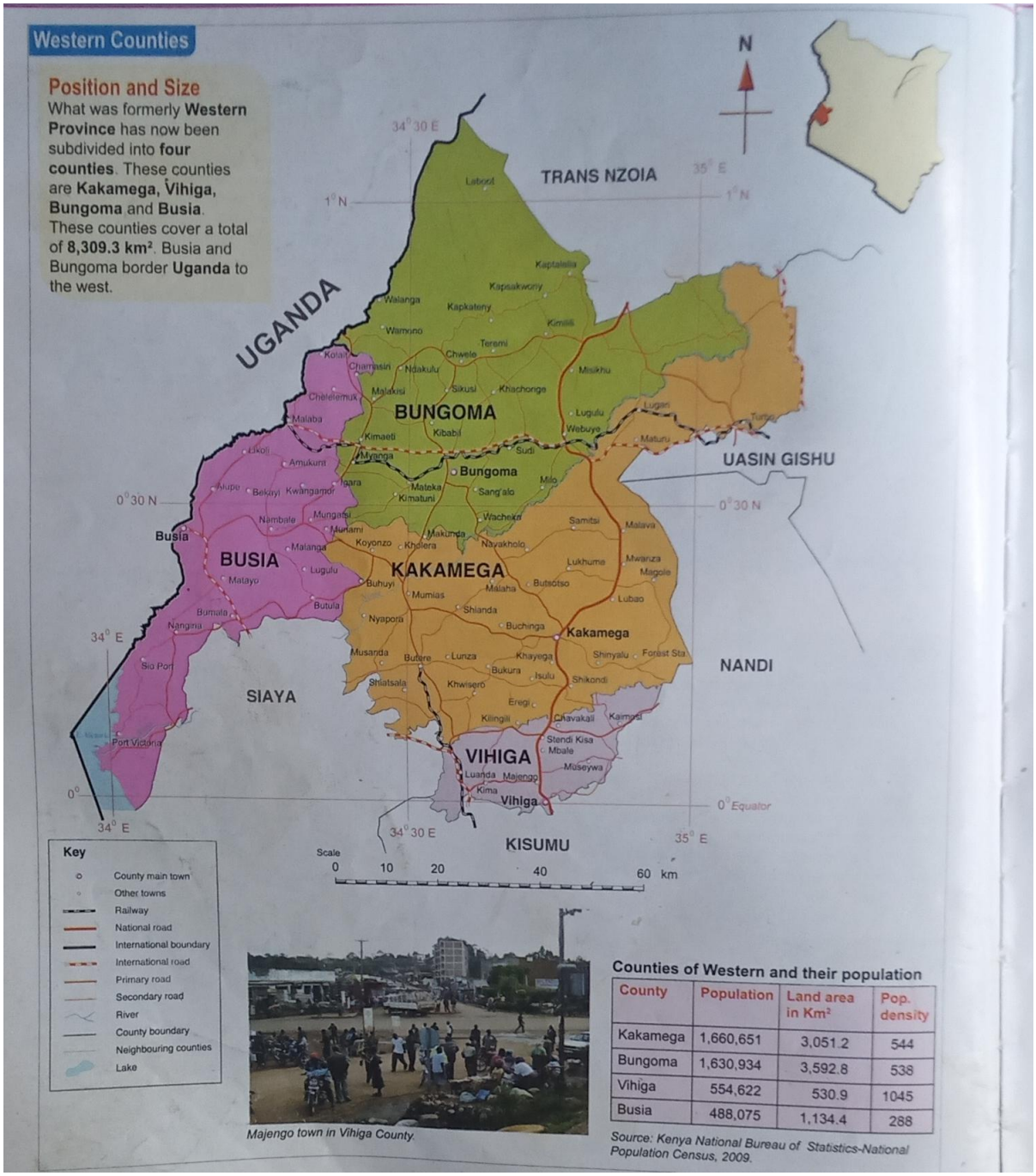
See overleaf for conditions

APPENDIX (IX): Research Budget

S/NO	Item	Quantity	Unit Price	Total Cost
1	Printing papers	4 Reams	600	2400
2	Note books	2pcs	400	800
3	Computer services	Lump sum	-	10400
4	Binding services	Lump sum	-	9000
5	Flash disc and memory card	2	1200	2400
6	Phone calls &SMS	-	-	5000
7	Traveling to the field	-	-	30000
8	Legal affairs and research processing	-	-	10000
9	Consultation	-	-	20000
10	Research Assistants	-	-	10000
11	Total Estimates	-	-	100000

Appendix (X): The Map of Western Kenya Counties Extracted from the Kenya primary schools Atlas