# HYPONYMY IN GĨKŨYŨ CHURCH SERMONS IN NYERI COUNTY, KENYA

**Catherine Nyambura Gitonga[i],**
**Moses Gatambuki Gathigia,**
**Naom Nyarigoti**
Department of Languages, Karatina University,
P.O. Box 1957-10101, Karatina, Kenya

**Abstract:**

Hyponymy is a fundamental semantic relation which highlights the relationship between a generic term (hypernym) and a specific instance of it (hyponym). In order to understand hyponymy, the inclusion relation between a hypernym and hyponymy within a lexical field must be interpreted. This study, therefore, looks at hyponymy in Gĩkũyũ church sermons with a view of interpreting the nexus between hypernym and hyponyms. The study also looks at the influence of gender on hyponyms used in Gĩkũyũ church sermons. The study is anchored in the Semantics Field Theory (SFT). The Semantics Field Theory is a study of word meanings that stresses the way meanings are related in a particular area of the lexis. The study employed a descriptive survey research design. Data was collected through tape recording of eight live sermons delivered in the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) in Nyeri County, Kenya. Content analysis was used to describe hyponymy in Gĩkũyũ church sermons. The hyponyms used in Gĩkũyũ church sermons were classified into four broad semantic fields of animals, human beings, religion and objects. The study also found that there are super-ordinate terms, sub-ordinate terms and sets of co-hyponyms manifested in the Gĩkũyũ church sermons. The study also noted that hyponymy sense relation is used more by women than men in Gĩkũyũ church sermons. The study concludes that hyponymy is employed in Gĩkũyũ church sermons in order to create relationships between hyponyms and super-ordinate terms. The study recommends the use of hyponymy in Gĩkũyũ church sermons as well as in other domains like songs and prayers. The findings of this study will be of importance to lexical semanticists and other scholars in linguistics as they will highlight the nexus between hypernyms and hyponyms.

**Keywords:** hyponymy, hyponym, hypernym, Gĩkũyũ, church sermons

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[i] Correspondence: email catherinekanyoro@gmail.com

## 1. Introduction

Hyponymy has been defined in a number of ways by different scholars (Saeed, 2003; Crystal, 2003; Finnegan, 2004; Mohammed, 2009). According to Saeed (2003), *"hyponymy is a relation of inclusion in the sense that the meaning of a hyponym is included in the meaning of a more general word called superordinate"* (p.68). The term "superordinate" is a general word in a certain semantic field. Finnegan (2004) argues that a hyponym is a subordinate, whose referent is included in the referent of a superordinate term. Hyponymy, therefore, describes what happens when we say that "a*n X is a kind of Y or simply, a daffodil is a kind of flower*" (Crystal, 2003, p.25). According to Mohammed (2009), hyponymy is a sense relation in semantics that serves to relate word concepts in a hierarchical fashion and is a relation between two words in which the meaning of one of the words includes the meaning of the other word. In the hierarchical fashion of hyponymy sense relation, the general word which is at the higher level is referred to as the superordinate while the words at its lower level are the hyponyms. Similarly, Udofot (2004) also supports the idea of hierarchical relationships in the meaning of words and defines hyponymy as "*class membership and the items which constitute the class are co-hyponyms*" (p. 51).

Hyponymy can also be identified in many areas of the lexicon, for example, the word "to cook" has many hyponyms like toast, boil, fry, grill, roast, bake among others (Finnegan, 2004). While hyponymy is found in all languages, the concepts that have words in hyponymic relationship vary from language to the next. For example, in Tulivan, a Polynesian language, the term "ika" (fish) has hyponyms not only all terms that refer to the animals that English speakers refer to as fish but also terms for whales and dolphins, which English speakers would recognize as mammals (Finnegan, 2004). According to Mohammed (2009), hyponymy often functions in discourse as a means of lexical cohesion by establishing referential equivalence to avoid repetition.

The present study focused on hyponyms used in church. According to East Africa Living Encyclopedia (2015), Kenya is a predominantly Christian country with about 70% Christians. Approximately 45% of the Kenyans are Protestants while 33% are Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholic, the Anglican and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) Churches are the most established Christian denominations in Kenya. Other well established Christian denominations include the African Inland Church (AIC) and the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA). In addition, there are Evangelical churches and Independent African Christian churches. The old denominations like the Roman Catholic church, the PCEA, the Anglican church, the Baptist church, the Methodist church and the AIC are referred to as mainstream churches while the mushrooming ones like Redeemed Gospel Church, Nairobi Pentecostal church and Deliverance church among others are referred to as Pentecostal Churches.

The study focused on church sermons in the PCEA Church due to various reasons. First, Kenya has nearly 80% Christians and 45% of the Christians are Protestants under which the PCEA church falls (National Bureau of Statistics, 2009). Second, the PCEA is the first protestant church to be established in Nyeri County (PCEA Head office, 2015). Third, the first

Agīkūyū believers in the PCEA church were found at Kikuyu in Kiambu county and Tumutumu, Nyeri county (PCEA Head office, 2015).

The study focused on the hyponyms used in church sermons. The word sermon is used to describe many famous moments in Christian history and the most famous example is the "Sermon on the Mount" by Jesus of Nazareth which was given around 30 AD (Kent, 2015). There are different types of sermons that differ both in their subject matter and by their intended audience. The sermons include: expository, topical, biographical, evangelistic and redemptive – historical preaching (Mohler, 2013). The expository preaching refers to sermons that expound and explain a text to the congregation (Perry, 2011). Topical preaching is concerned with a particular subject of current concern. Biographical preaching involves tracing the story of a particular biblical character through a number of parts of the Bible. Evangelistic preaching seeks to convert the congregation or bring them back to their previous faith through a recounting of the Good News. Redemptive - Historical preaching takes into consideration the context of any given text within the broader history of salvation as recorded in the canon of the bible (Mohler, 2013). The study focused on expository sermons as it is the type of sermons that demands the central place in Christian worship and is respected as the event through which the Living God speaks to His people (Mohler, 2013). Expository sermon is also suitable for the PCEA Church as preaching is mainly based on the readings of the day.

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The study employed the Semantic Field Theory (SFT). The SFT was proposed by a German Scholar Jost Trior in the 1930s, whose version is seen as a new phase in the history of semantics. The SFT is a theory to the study of word - meanings which stresses the way such meanings are related within a particular area of the vocabulary. Each of these areas is called a semantic field or lexical field domain (Trask, 1997). The lexical field domain refers to the combination of a bunch of words with interrelated meanings and dominated under a same concept (Zhou, 2001). According to Hameed (2013), the SFT starts from the idea that the vocabulary of a language consists of not only a list of words, but rather of many associated networks of lexical relations between words.

Wu (1988) summarises the Trior's Semantic Field Theory in a number of ways. First, the vocabulary in a language system is semantically related and builds up a complete lexical system. Second, the system is unsteady and changes consistently. Third, since the vocabulary of a language is semantically related, we are not supposed to study the semantic change of individual words in isolation but to study vocabulary as an integrated system. Wu adds that since lexemes are interrelated in sense, we can only determine the connotation of a word by analyzing and comparing its semantic relationship with other words and that a word is meaningful only in its own semantic field. The SFT is significant for this study since the analysis of hyponymy falls under the theory's classification. The SFT will, therefore, help a learner to learn a Gīkūyū word like "Kanitha" which means church by studying its hyponyms like "Katholiki" (Catholic), "Anglikani" (Anglican), "Indi" African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCEA), "Akorino" among others which clearly show that

they are different churches; hence, the learner is able to tell that the superordinate "Kanitha" means church.

## 3. Methodology of the Study

The study employed a qualitative research design with a bias towards the descriptive method. Moleong (2001) describes a qualitative research design as "*the research that presents the descriptive data in the form of written or oral words of people and behaviour which can be observed*" (p.3). According to Surakhmand, (1994), "*a descriptive method is a kind of research method using technique of searching, collecting, classifying, analyzing the data, interpreting them and finally drawing the conclusion*" (p.134). Descriptive research design was applicable to the current study as data to be collected was in form of oral words, that is, hyponyms uttered during the delivery of Gĩkũyũ church sermons. The study involved attending church services in order to collect data through tape recording which was later classified, analyzed and finally conclusions were drawn.

A total of eight live sermons were sampled through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a selection method where the investigator relies on his / her expertise or expert judgment to select units that are representative or typical of the population (Orodho, 2009). Purposive sampling enables the researcher to select cases that are available for the research. Moreover, purposive sampling helps the researcher to select respondents that can best help them to understand their central phenomenon (Cresswell, 2012). Therefore, the current study purposively sampled 10% of the sermons delivered in the 84 parishes of PCEA in Nyeri County, Kenya. 10% was used because Neuman (2003) indicates that 10% - 20% is an adequate sample in a descriptive study.

The study utilized tape recording research instrument to collect data. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), tape recording is an instrument in which the interviewer's questions and the respondent's answers are recorded by using either a tape recorder or a video recorder. This study used a tape recorder as it involves collecting data from live performances which are not easily recorded by note taking. Rapley (2007) recommends tape recording as an important research instrument in qualitative research as he posits that "*the actual process of making detailed transcripts enables you to become familiar with what you are observing. You have to listen / watch the recording again and again…*" (p.50). Data was tape recorded and then the researcher played the tape for transcription purposes which allowed the identification of hyponyms before subjecting the data for analysis.

Qualitative data analysis was used as well as content analysis where data was collected, transcribed, categorized and then analyzed to explain the differences in the use of hyponyms by men and women in their delivery of sermons. Kerlinger (1986) defines content analysis as a method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables. Data analyzed qualitatively was presented by verbal descriptions and explanations. The hyponyms were described and explained. The hyponyms collected were presented in Gĩkũyũ orthography and their gloss provided.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

The findings and discussion of the study on the hyponyms used in the eight Gĩkũyũ sermons in the study and the influence of gender on their use are presented as illustrated below:

### 4.1 Hyponyms Used in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons

Data collected for the study was analysed and the hyponyms used identified. The hyponyms identified were classified under four broad semantic fields of animals, human beings, religion and objects as summarized in Figure 4.1 below:
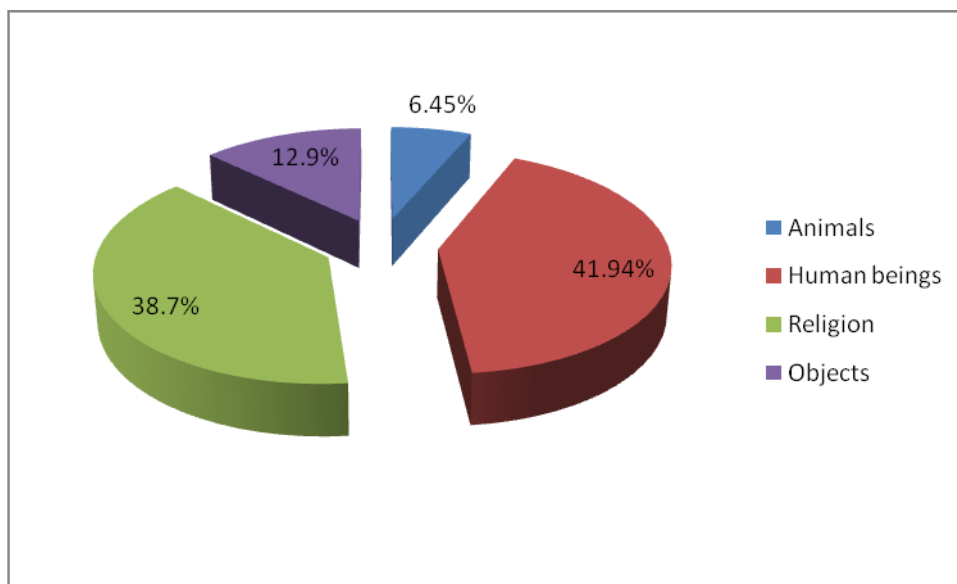


**Figure 4.1:** Hyponyms Used in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons

As noted in Figure 4.1 above, various hyponyms were identified in Gĩkũyũ church sermons. The hyponyms were categorized under different semantic fields. 26 hyponyms, for example, were classified under the semantic field of human beings. This accounted for the highest frequency of the hyponyms identified based on semantic fields recording 41.94% of the total hyponyms identified. The hyponyms that accounted for the second highest frequency were those based on religion which recorded 38.7% (n=24) of the total hyponyms identified. This is a clear illustration of the fact that religion and human beings go hand in hand. That is, religion cannot thrive without human beings. This finding is in agreement with Levinas (1996) concept of religion as inter-human and a relation between self and others. The hyponyms based on objects and animals registered the lowest frequency of 12.9% (n=8) and 6.45% (n=4) respectively. This illustrates the insignificant relationship between animals and objects with religion, the field under which sermons fall.

### 4.1.1 Hyponyms Used in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons Based on Animals

The study identified two hypernyms and four hyponyms used in Gĩkũyũ church sermons based on animals as tabulated in Table 4.1 below:

**Table 4.1:** Hyponyms Used in Gīkũyũ Church Sermons Based on Animals

| S/No | Hypernym (super-ordinate) | Gloss | Hyponym | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mahiũ | Cattle | Ng'ombe<br>Mbũri | Cows<br>Goat |
| 2 | Nyamũ | Animal | Mũrũthi<br>Ndũiga | Lion<br>Giraffe |

Table 4.1 shows that two hypernyms with two hyponyms each were identified under the theme of animals. This indicates that there is a very little relationship between religion, under which sermons fall, and animals. Religion, the field under which sermons fall, is for human beings not animals. The findings are consistent with Long-Crowell (2003) that religion has been a central part of all known human societies. The study established that "ng'ombe" (cow) and "mbũri" (goat) are co-hyponyms under the super-ordinate "mahiũ" (cattle). Similarly, "mũrũthi" (lion) and "ndũiga" (giraffe) are co-hyponyms of the super-ordinate "nyamũ" (animals). This, therefore, illustrates that church sermons employ a number of super-ordinates and sets of co-hyponyms as elaborated by the Semantic Field Theory.

**4.1.2 Hyponyms Used in Gīkũyũ Church Sermons Based on Religion**
The hyponyms identified in the eight sermons under the study were further analysed based on the semantic field of religion. Six hypernyms and 24 hyponyms were identified as tabulated in Table 4.2 below:

**Table 4.2:** Hyponyms Used in Gīkũyũ Church Sermons Based on Religion

| S/No | Hypernym | Gloss | Hyponym | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Injiri | Gospel | Luka<br>Johana<br>Mariko<br>Mathayo | Luke<br>John<br>Mark<br>Matthew |
| 2 | Magerio | Trials | Mbaara<br>Mĩrimũ<br>Mĩtino<br>Ihoru | War<br>Diseases<br>Accidents<br>Sorrow |
| 3 | Mehia | Sins | Kũũnũha<br>Marakara<br>Rũthũũro<br>Kũiya | Destruction<br>Anger<br>Hatred<br>Theft |
| 4 | Ibuku | Book | Aroma<br>Agalatia<br>Ayubu<br>Petũrũ<br>Kĩambĩrĩria | Romans<br>Galatians<br>Job<br>Peter<br>Genesis |
| 5 | Mũtungatĩri | Pastor | Ndungata ya Ngai<br>Mũhunjia<br>Mũthĩnjĩri Ngai | Servant of God<br>Preacher<br>Priest |
| 6 | Kanitha | Church | Anglikani<br>Indi<br>Gatoriki<br>Akorino | Anglican<br>AIPCEA<br>Catholic<br>Akorino |

Table 4.2 indicates that six hypernyms under the semantic field of religion were used in the eight Gīkũyũ church sermons in the study. Each of these hypernyms has a set of co-

hyponyms. This is a significant number and illustrates the significance of religion being the field under which sermons, the topic of the study, fall. This finding agrees with Crabtree and Pelham (2008) postulation that neither employment status nor education level is as significant as religion. The importance of sermons as illustrated by the study is also in consonance with Esimaje (2012) that sermons are structured to achieve the sermon-giver's extended aim to portray God as the solution to man's problems. The study also notes that church sermons employ hyponymy and co-hyponyms which illustrate the hierarchical order as established by the Semantic Field Theory. For example, religion is the super - ordinate, "kanitha" (church) is the sub-ordinate while Anglican, the AIPCEA, Catholic and Akorino are co-hyponyms. This concurs with Mohammed (2009) that hyponymy is a sense relation in semantics that serves to relate concepts hyponymy as class membership and that the items which constitute the class are co-hyponyms.

### 4.1.3 Hyponyms Used in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons Based on Human Beings

This study identified seven hypernyms and 26 hyponyms used in Gĩkũyũ church sermons based on human beings as tabulated in Table 4.4 below:

**Table 4.3:** Hyponyms Used in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons Based on Human Beings

| S/No | Hypernym | Gloss | Hyponym | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mũndũ | Person | Mũkristũ<br>Mũrata<br>Thũ<br>Mũthamaki<br>Ndungata<br>Mũira | Christian<br>Friend<br>Enemy<br>Leader<br>Servant<br>Witness |
| 2 | Nyũmba | Relation | Gukagwo<br>Thoguo<br>Gacũcũ<br>Mwarĩ<br>Mũrũ | Grandfather<br>Father<br>Grandchild<br>Daughter<br>Son |
| 3 | Kĩama | Association | Athuri<br>Atumia<br>Andũ ethĩ | Men<br>Women<br>Youth |
| 4 | Irũngo | Position | Mũikarĩrĩ gĩtĩ<br>Karani<br>Mũigi kĩgĩna | Chair<br>Secretary<br>Treasurer |
| 5 | Mũhĩrĩga | Clans of the Agĩkũyũ community | Mũnjirũ<br>Mũmbũi<br>Mũgacikũ | Mũnjirũ<br>Mũmbũi<br>Mũgacikũ |
| 6 | Ruriri | Tribe | Agĩkũyũ<br>Njaluo<br>Ikamba | Kikuyu<br>Luo<br>Kamba |
| 7 | Ciiga | Organs | Ngoro<br>Moko<br>Magũrũ | Heart<br>Hands<br>Legs |

Table 4.3 shows that seven hypernyms, comprising 26 hyponyms, under the theme of human beings were used in the eight sermons under study. This is in agreement with Mohammed (2009) postulation that in the hierarchical fashion of hyponymy sense relation, the general word which is at the higher level is referred to as the super-ordinate while the words at its lower level are the hyponyms. The number of hyponyms based on human beings was only

two higher than the hyponyms used under religion. This is a clear indication that religion and human beings go hand in hand, that is, none can do without the other. This is in agreement with Levinas (1996) concept of religion as inter-human and a relation between self and others. The study also noted that the meaning of the hyponyms is included in the meaning of their respective hypernyms. For example, the meaning of the hyponyms "ngoro" (heart), "moko" (hands) and "magũrũ" (legs) are included in the meaning of their hypernym "ciĩga" (organs), that is, they are all organs of the body. This concurs with Saeed (2003) argument that hyponymy is a relation of inclusion in the sense that the meaning of a hyponym is included in the meaning of a more general word called super-ordinate. Thus, the study established the nexus between a hypernym and a hyponym as per the objective of this study.

### 4.1.4 Hyponyms Used in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons Based on Objects

Hyponyms collected were further analysed based on the semantic field of objects. Only two hypernyms and eight hyponyms based on objects were identified as illustrated by Table 4.4 below:

**Table 4.4:** Hyponyms Used in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons Based on Objects

| S/No | Hypernym (Super-ordinate) | Gloss | Hyponym | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Irio | Food | Ngwacĩ<br>Ndũũma<br>Ucũrũ<br>Cai<br>Mũgate | Sweet potatoes<br>Arrowroot<br>Porridge<br>Tea<br>Bread |
| 2 | Mũtĩ | Tree | Mũgumo<br>Mũbaũ<br>Mũbarĩti | Fig tree<br>Gum tree<br>Cinder |

Table 4.4 shows that 8 hyponyms, based on objects, were used in the eight Gĩkũyũ sermons in this study. The eight hyponyms were classified into two hypernyms. This is evidently the least used hyponyms in the Gĩkũyũ sermons analysed. The findings illustrates that the relationship between religion and objects has very little significance. This enhances Levinas (1996) view that religion is inter-human, that is, religion is a relationship between humans but not objects.

### 4.2 Influence of Gender on Hyponyms Used in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons

The hyponyms identified were subjected to a further analysis to establish the influence of gender on their use. Hyponyms used by women and those used by men were identified and listed down in tables. Table 4.5 below illustrates the use of hyponyms by both men and women in their delivery of Gĩkũyũ church sermons:

**Table 4.5:** The Influence of Gender on Hyponyms Used in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons

| S/No | Gender | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Women | 59 | 77.63 |
| 2 | Men | 17 | 22.37 |
| **Total** | | 76 | 100 |

Table 4.5 indicates that women used 59 hyponyms in the eight sermons recorded while men used 17. This shows that gender variable has a significant influence on the use of hyponyms in Gĩkũyũ church sermons. The study notes that the hyponym sense relation is used more by women than men in Gĩkũyũ church sermons. This is in disagreement with Paul (2006) who notes that there are few discernible gender differences in the way people conceptualize religious issues.

## 4.2.1 Hyponyms Used by Women in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons
The hyponyms identified for each gender were further illustrated in individual tables. The hyponyms used by women were analysed under the four themes of animals, human beings, animals and objects. The table below highlights the hyponyms used by women in the four sermons under the study delivered by women based on animals:

**Table 4.6:** Hyponyms Used by Women in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons Based on Animals

| S/No | Hypernym | Gloss | Hyponym | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mahiũ - | Cattle | Ng'ombe Mbũri - | Cows Goats |
| 2 | Nyamũ - | Animal | Mũrũthi Ndũiga - | Lion Giraffe |

Table 4.6 shows that only four hyponyms and two hypernyms based on animals were used in the four church sermons delivered by women. Each of the two hypernyms used had a pair of co-hyponyms. This illustrates that hyponyms used in Gĩkũyũ church sermons based on animals delivered by women are minimal. This demonstrates the insignificant relationship between religion and animals. This is consistent with Kilka (2005) who posits that Christians believe that humans are made in God's image which gives them a separate status from the rest of the animal kingdom. This is also in agreement with Lee (2008) who notes that it is not found anywhere in the scripture that a Christian man or woman is an animal or part of the animal kingdom. The study is also in agreement with Durkheim (1976) who notes that religions originated in primitive humans. The table below highlights the hyponyms used by women in Gĩkũyũ church sermons based on human beings:

**Table 4.7:** Hyponyms Used by Women in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons Based on Human Beings

| S/No | Hypernym | Gloss | Hyponyms | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Nyũmba | Family | Thoguo<br>Gukaguo<br>Gacũcũ | Father<br>Grandfather<br>Grandchild |
| 2 | Cĩĩga | Body parts | Kaara<br>Kũgũrũ | Finger<br>Leg |
| 3 | Mũndũ | Person | Mwana<br>Mũira<br>Mũkristiano<br>Mwanake<br>Mũirĩtũ<br>Mũtumia<br>Mũthuri<br>Mũrata | Child<br>Witness<br>Christian<br>Young man<br>Young woman<br>Woman<br>Man<br>Friend |
| 4 | Mũhĩrĩga | Clans of the Agĩkũyũ community | Mũnjirũ<br>Mũgacikũ<br>Mũmbũi | Munjiru<br>Mugaciku<br>Mumbui |
| 5 | Kĩama | Association | Athuri<br>Atumia<br>Andũ ethĩ<br>Ciana | Men<br>Women<br>Youth<br>Children |
| 6 | Rũrĩrĩ | Tribe | Njaluo<br>Agĩkũyũ<br>Aembu | Luo<br>Kikuyu<br>Embu |
| 7 | Irũngo | Position | Mũikarĩri gĩtĩ<br>Karani<br>Mũigi kĩgĩna | Chair<br>Secretary<br>Treasurer |
| 8 | Mũtungatĩri | Priest | Mũhunjia<br>Mũthĩnjĩri Ngai<br>Ndungata ya Ngai | Pastor<br>High Priest<br>Servant of God |

Table 4.8 illustrates that 29 hyponyms based on human beings were identified in the four sermons delivered by women. This registered the highest number of hyponyms demonstrating the significance of human beings in religion, the context under which the subject of the study, sermons, fall. Human beings are the targets of sermons and hence religion. This agrees with Long - Crowell (2003) that religion has been a central part of all known human societies. This is also in agreement with Rajael (2010) that religion and spirituality have important effects on the quality of human's life and meanings. Sermons are mainly addressed to human beings and usually serve as a source of encouragement to the faithful in their challenging life. This is also consistent with the findings of the study by Khoynezhad (2012) which demonstrates that basic religious beliefs have a positive relationship with good characteristics that help people resolve the challenges of their lives and identity crisis. The findings are also in agreement with Ano (2005) who notes that a growing body of literature suggests that people often turn to religion when coping with stressful events. The table below tabulates the hyponyms used by women in the sermons under study.

**Table 4.9:** Hyponyms Used by Women in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons Based on Religion

| S/No | Hypernym | Gloss | Hyponym | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Injili | Gospel | Mathayo | Mathew |
| | | | Luka | Luke |
| | | | Johana | John |
| 2 | Ibuku | Book | Ahibirania | Hebrews |
| | | | Kiambĩrĩria | Genesis |
| 3 | Magerio | Trials | Mĩrimũ | Diseases |
| | | | Mĩtino | Accidents |
| 4 | Kanitha | Church | Indi | AIPCEA |
| | | | Anglikani | Anglican |
| | | | Katholiki | Catholic |
| | | | Akorino | Akorino |
| 5 | Mehia | Sin | Kũũnũha | Destruction |
| | | | Marakara | Anger |
| | | | Rũthũro | Hatred |
| | | | Kũiya | Theft |
| 6 | Mũtungatĩri | Priest | Mũhunjia | Pastor |
| | | | Mũthĩnjĩri Ngai | High Priest |
| | | | Ndungata ya Ngai | Servant of God |

Table 4.9 above highlights that 18 hyponyms used in the four sermons delivered by women were based on religion. This shows that all the hyponyms based on religion identified in the sermons under study were used by women. Men did not use any hyponym based on religion making this category of hyponyms most popular among women. Men preferred to use other types of hyponyms rather than those based on religion while women utilized all the categories of hyponyms based on different themes. This shows that women have a tendency of using religious terms in their sermons more than men. This is in agreement with the findings of Paul (2006) that women are more likely than men to say religion is very important in their lives than men. However, Paul (2006) is in disagreement with the findings of the study when he argues that there are few discernible gender differences as far as religion is concerned. Hyponyms based on objects used by women in the Gĩkũyũ sermons in this study are illustrated in Table 4.10 below:

**Table 4.10:** Hyponyms Used by Women in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons Based on Objects

| S/No | Hypernym | Gloss | Hyponym | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Irio | Food | Ngwacĩ | Sweet potatoes |
| | | | Ndũũma | Arrowroot |
| | | | Ucũrũ | Porridge |
| | | | Cai | Tea |
| | | | Mũgate | Bread |
| 2 | Mũtĩ | Tree | Mũgumo | Fig tree |
| | | | Mũbaũ | Gum tree |
| | | | Mũbarĩti | Cinder tree |

Table 4.10 highlights that only eight hyponyms based on objects were used in the sermons delivered by women in this study. The hyponyms were classified into two hypernyms as shown in Table 4.10 above. This shows that sermons are intended for human beings and not objects. This finding concurs with Croucher, Zeng, Rahman and Sommier's (2017) argument that religion is an essential element of a human condition. This is, however, inconsistent with

Nietzche (1996) who views organized religion as society and culture controlling man. Hyponyms used by men were also identified and illustrated as per the discussions below.

## 4.2.2 Hyponyms Used by Men in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons

Hyponyms used by men in Gĩkũyũ sermons delivered by men were also identified and listed down in a table as shown below.

**Table 4.11:** Hyponyms Used by Men in Gĩkũyũ Church Sermons

| S/No | Hypernyms | Gloss | Hyponyms | Gloss |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Mũndũ | Person | Mũici<br>Mwanake<br>Niĩ<br>Wee | Thief<br>Young man<br>Me<br>You |
| 2 | Ibũkũ | Book | Isaia<br>Ezekieli<br>Jeremia<br>Ayubu | Isaiah<br>Ezekiel<br>Jeremiah<br>Job |
| 3 | Mathĩna | Problems | Ihoru<br>Mbaara<br>Rũhuho | Sorrow<br>War<br>Wind |
| 4 | Rũciaro | Generation | Isaaka<br>Jakubu<br>Iburahimu | Isaac<br>Jacob<br>Abraham |
| 5 | Ciĩga - | Body Parts | kĩande<br>kũgũrũ<br>Ngoro | Shoulder<br>Leg<br>Heart |

Table 4.11 shows that only five hypernyms were used by men in the four sermons delivered. Each of these hypernyms had three and four co-hyponyms. For example, the hypernym 'mũndũ' (person) has four co-hyponyms "mũici" (thief), "mwanake" (young man), "niĩ" (me) and "wee" (you). This shows that hyponyms are not very popular among men in their delivery of church sermons. This also illustrates the nexus between hypernyms and hyponyms in that the meanings of the hyponyms 'muici' (thief), 'mwanake' (young man), 'nii' (me) and 'wee' (you) are all included in the meaning of the hypernym 'mundu' (peson). This is consistent with Saeed's (2003) argument that hyponymy is a relation of inclusion in that the meaning of a hyponym is included in a more general term, hypernym.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

First, this study identifies 62 hyponyms used in the eight Gĩkũyũ church sermons which were then classified into four broad semantic fields of animals, human beings, religion and objects. Second, the study also noted that hyponymy sense relation is used more by women than men in Gĩkũyũ church sermons. This study, therefore, concludes that hyponymy is manifestly employed in Gĩkũyũ church sermons. The study also concludes that hyponymy is employed in Gĩkũyũ church sermons in order to create relationships between the hyponyms

and the super-ordinate terms. In other words, the hyponyms employed in Gĩkũyũ church sermons can be accounted for by the Semantic Field Theory.

The study recommends the use of hyponymy in Gĩkũyũ church sermons as well as in other domains like songs and prayers. This will go a long way in promoting Gĩkũyũ and other indigenous languages among the young children and especially the youth. This will equip all Gĩkũyũ speakers with a good command of the language which will enable them to explore the sense relations in Gĩkũyũ intensively. Second, the government, researchers and scholars in lexical semantics should come up with programmes that will promote Gĩkũyũ. For example, the learning of Gĩkũyũ and other indigenous languages should be emphasized in schools to make the speakers of different indigenous languages more conversant with all the spheres and usage of their languages. This will encourage the learners to recognize and appreciate the similarities and differences in their language structures and that of other languages hence encouraging more scholars to study sense relations in Gĩkũyũ.

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