



Metaphors on HIV/AIDS Discourse Among Oluluyia Speakers of Western Kenya

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Abstract

Since the emergence of Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (herein referred in this essay throughout as HIV/AIDS) epidemic in Kenya in the 1980s, studies on the same are numerous (Kwena 2004, NACC 2005, Achoka 2007). Quite a number of studies have been done on metaphor (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Sontag 1989, Goatly 1997, Kovecses 2002, Charteris-Black 2004, Machakanja 2006). Since the first case of HIV/AIDS was reported in Kenya in 1984, many allusions and metaphors have been created and used by various speech communities to communicate the message on the pandemic. However, scholarly studies on metaphors used in relation to HIV/AIDS in general, if any, are very few. As far as the researcher is concerned, studies on metaphors related to HIV/AIDS among Oluluyia speakers of Western Kenya, in particular have been lacking. The abundance of utterances conveying metaphors used in reference to HIV/AIDS and related issues in Oluluyia is a sociolinguistic-cum-discourse analytical issue that calls for investigation. This essay, analyses language used in relation to HIV/AIDS and related issues among the Oluluyia speakers of Western Kenya.

1. Background to the Oluluyia Speakers

The Abaluhya or Luhya community populates the Western Province, some parts of Nyanza and Rift Valley Provinces of Kenya. The Kenyan population is estimated to be around 40 million people. Available statistics reveal that Abaluhya are the second largest community in Kenya after the Agikuyu. The Agikuyu constitute 21%, Luhya 14%, Luo 12%, Akamba 11%, Kalenjin 11%, Abagusii 6% (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007). Based on these figures and percentages, it can be estimated that the Luhya number approximately 5.6 million.

Historically, before 1940, there was no name like Luhya or Abaluhya. The term 'Luhya' was coined and introduced in 1940 when the Abaluhya Welfare Association was formed and the term was further strengthened when the Luhya Language Committee was established (Osogo, 1965: 8). Since then, the

term has been used to refer to them. In this essay, the terms Abaluhya, Luhya and Baluyia will be used to refer to the people, the term Buluyia or Luhyaland will be used to refer to their geographical setting, the term Oluluyia will be used to refer to the language, while each dialect will be identified specifically, if need be.

Oluluyia language has numerous dialects. Available studies differ on the exact number of dialects that make-up the Oluluyia language (Angogo 1980, Kebeya 1997, Kabaji 2005, Onyango 2006). However, it is estimated that there are sixteen dialects of the Oluluyia language. These are Lulogooli, Lubukusu, Lwitakho, Lutachoni, Lumarama, Lukisa, Lutsotso, Olunyole, Olunyala, Lukhayo, Lukabras, Lumarachi, Luwanga, Lwisukha, Lusaamia and Lutiriki (Angogo, 1980; Onyango, 2006). However, in his study of Abaluhya sub-tribes, Osogo (1965: 18) argues that there are 18 sub-tribes of the Abaluhya tribe in Kenya. He adds Abakhekhe and Abakangala, whose dialects are Lubakhekhe and Lubakangala respectively. Data¹ for this study was collected from fifteen out of the sixteen dialects of the Oluluyia language. This study has not analysed utterances in Lukhayo, Lubakhekhe and Lubakangala dialects.

A dialect, according to Trudgil (2003: 35), is “a variety of language which differs grammatically, phonologically, and lexically from other varieties, and is associated with a particular geographical area and/or a particular class or status group.” The differences among the Oluluyia dialects are more pronounced geographically than socially. For instance, Lubukusu is widely spoken in Bungoma District while Lulogooli is spoken in Vihiga District.

Despite the dialectical differences among the Oluluyia speakers and the expansive geographical distribution of the dialects, the varieties are highly mutually intelligible. There is frequent contact among Oluluyia dialects. Hence an Olunyole speaker may communicate and understand a Lulogooli speaker and vice versa. A dialect becomes more intelligible to another, if the neighbouring dialects are near and there are cross-border contacts through trade or other daily interactions. This is true to all Oluluyia dialects.

This paper analyses the meanings of utterances made by various Oluluyia speakers as they occur in their natural social contexts. Data for this study was collected in matatus², funeral meetings, hotels, bars, campuses and other social gatherings within Luhyialand. The examples of utterances on metaphors related to HIV/AIDS analyzed in this paper were collected from people’s conversations in various contexts within Luhyialand. These utterances have been analyzed within the tenets of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) to reveal the meanings and messages inherent in them. This study identifies, analyses and decodes utterances; allusions, metaphors, myths and connotations used by speakers of Oluluyia language in Western Kenya, in relation to HIV/AIDS discourse.

HIV/AIDS is a taboo topic among many speech communities in Kenya (Achoka 2007). The Oluluyia speakers are not an exception. Hymes (1974: 51) views a speech community, as ‘a community sharing knowledge of rules for conduct and interpretation of speech.’ As a result of this, there are many terms, allegories and metaphors used by the speakers to refer to HIV/AIDS and its associated terminologies. The Oluluyia speakers, in this study, are

viewed as a speech community. This study analyses utterances, herein referred to as HIV/AIDS discourse, made by Oluluyia speakers in specific contexts.

2. Theoretical Considerations

This paper employs Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) as theoretical orientations to the study of metaphor and eclectically blends the relevant principles of the two approaches. Proponents of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) include Fairclough (1992, 1995), van Dijk (1997), Wodak (1995), Blommaert (2005) among others. These scholars are of the opinion that CDA approach involves social interactions among people, using language. CDA basically analyses the relationship between language and society. As a theoretical framework, CDA, focuses on the intersection and interrelationships between language, discourse, speech and social interactions (Blommaert, 2005: 25).

According to Fairclough (1992), CDA has three-dimensional framework. The first dimension is discourse-as-text. The analyses of text should focus on linguistic features like vocabulary, grammar, cohesion, wording and text structure. The second dimension of CDA is discourse-as-discursive-practice. This dimension views discourse, text or utterances as something that is produced, circulated, distributed and consumed in the society. The final dimension of CDA is discourse-as-social-practice. This means that discourse occurs in a specific social structure. In this essay, the main focus is on discourse-as-discursive-practice dimension, with reference to utterances produced, circulated and consumed by the Oluluyia speakers of Western Kenya in relation to HIV/AIDS. However, the other two dimensions are used to support the arguments advanced using the discourse-as-discursive-practice dimension.

The major tenets of CDA as summarized by Fairclough and Wodak (1997: 271-280) include: CDA addresses social problems, power relations are discursive, discourse constitutes society and culture, discourse does ideological work, discourse is historical, the link between text and society is mediated, discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory and finally, discourse is a form of social action. These tenets are crucial in the analysis of metaphors that relate to HIV/AIDS because HIV/AIDS is not only a health problem but also a social problem. Additionally, there are historical facts associated with HIV/AIDS like its origin and spread, which makes any analysis of metaphors related to the disease to adopt an historical perspective. Hence the metaphors analyzed in this essay using CDA are interpreted and explained within the social, cultural and environmental contexts of the Oluluyia speakers.

According to one of the leading proponents of Critical Metaphor Analysis (CMA) Charteris-Black (2004) , metaphors contain 'verbal evidence'. This evidence is in the form of utterances. The study of metaphor using CMA helps us to understand the major role that it plays in shaping and directing our understanding and interpretation of messages in it. A metaphor may influence one's thinking and perception about a certain issue and may shape one's behaviour especially with regard to HIV/AIDS discourse. This is unlike plain language, which may not figuratively attract and retain the attention of the listeners.

3. The Concept of Metaphor

Metaphor has been a widely researched concept within various disciplines including cognitive linguistics, sociolinguistics, pragmatics, semantics and discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1995, Fairclough & Wodak 1997, Blommaert 2005, Ngonyani 2006, Todoli 2007). This essay analyses metaphor within the wider discipline of discourse analysis but more specifically within Critical Discourse Analysis.

Metaphor is seen as a ‘means of understanding something in terms of something else by “mapping” one conceptual domain to another’ (Muller, 2005: 55). Metaphor, in the words of Cienki (2005: 1) ‘can provide a tool for reasoning about one thing in terms of the other’. A metaphor is like a chemical equation, which should balance. A metaphor has two domains; Source Domain (SD) and Target Domain (TD), which though unidentical, should operate at the same level. For example, among the Lulogooli speakers, there is a metaphor, KIHARATO (DROUGHT) used in reference to HIV/AIDS, which is Source Domain for the Target Domain SUFFERING.

Oluluyia speakers use metaphors in their conversation on HIV/AIDS because sex is a taboo topic in most African communities. Also, the speakers may use metaphors because they “may communicate something which is difficult to express in literal speech because literal words are lacking’ (Mio, 1997: 121), ‘may add vividness to a speech’ (Gibbs 1994: 125) and are used in ‘... situations in which it is more appropriate to speak a topic in an indirect way’ (Charteris-Black, 2004). Besides, metaphors help to make complex and controversial issues understandable to public (Todoli, 2007: 51) and also deconstruct myths and reveal the reality in an approachable way, without offending anyone in the speech community.

Metaphor as a communication discourse invokes powerful images, that shape public opinion, perception, comprehension and interpretation of a certain issue. As Ngonyani (2006: 15) elaborately notes, ‘metaphors provide a conceptual framework, or prism through which information and events are viewed’. This information reaches the audience in a more powerful and captivating manner through use of metaphors, than use of plain language. For instance, metaphor of *khumulilu* (FIRE) in reference to HIV/AIDS invokes the image of DESTRUCTION or DANGER and therefore cautions one to be extra careful in matters of sex. The metaphor *khumulilu* relates closely to the notion of the cognitive contribution of metaphor which enables the users to conceive the world (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

Most metaphors used by Oluluyia speakers in reference to HIV/AIDS occur in their conversations. However, as Todoli (2007: 52) cautions, ‘metaphors should not be accepted uncritically; rather, their inferences should be made explicit, and then challenged and alternative metaphors should be explored’. Some of the metaphors uttered by Oluluyia speakers in their everyday experiences may have more than one meaning. On the other hand, one may encounter more than two metaphors having the same meaning. A critical discourse analyst should therefore be careful so as not to be drawn into haste conclusion based on only one metaphor.

Discourse, in this essay will be viewed as, the meaning conveyed through spoken utterances using Oluluyia language. The utterances made by people in

their daily conversation may be referred to as voice. According to Blommaert (2005: 4), voice, is the way in which people manage to make themselves understood or fail to do so. In order for people to be understood, they make utterances in specific contexts using language or dialects known to their audience. In this essay, I use the terms **utterance** as a spoken discourse and **text** when the spoken discourse is written. These forms of discourse that are produced, distributed and consumed in a communicative event, within a specific linguistic context among Oluluyia speakers of Western Kenya.

4. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

Native speakers of various dialects of Oluluyia language, in their natural and original settings, collected the utterances used in this study. Hence, the meaning in each text is analyzed within the social, cultural and environmental contexts in which the utterances are created, made and reproduced within Buluyia. The following section discusses the metaphors related to HIV/AIDS used among Oluluyia speakers. The discussion and arguments advanced are based on a blend of the tenets of CDA and CMA approaches.

4.1 Metaphors of HIV/AIDS as Accident

Accidents are unpleasant events that cause injury, damage or even death. Accidents are abrupt occurrences. However, some accidents can be avoided by being extra careful. Speakers of Oluluyia use numerous metaphors that express or equate HIV/AIDS to accidents. The metaphors are shown in Table 1 below. These include:

Table 1: Oluluyia Metaphors of HIV/AIDS as Accident

Dialect	Metaphor (Oluluyia)	English
Olunyala	Kauna muonjoka	Pierced by a thorn
Olunyala	Omuya kwa futukhile	Slow puncture
Olunyala	Kanywa amachi amatumbufu	Has drunk dirty water
Luwanga	Yasena khubembe indoro	He stepped on a piercing grass
Luwanga	Yanyola epanja ya kalaha	Slow puncture
Luwanga	Yasena ewa kalulire	He stepped where the brew was strongest
Luwanga	Yasena khwiva	stepped on a thorn
Lwisukha	Yali nachenda butukhu ni yituya khushisishi	As he was traveling at night he was hit by a stump
Lwisukha	Waituya mwisisi	He has hit the wall
Lwisukha	Yasena mwitabalia	He stepped in dirty rainwater
Lulogooli	Yasira mu kidende	Has stuck in a swamp
Lulogooli	Yamila inailoni	He swallowed plastic bag
Lulogooli	Yanwa lidavalia	Drunk muddy water

Lubukusu	kamila luwembe	Has swallowed razor blade
Lutiriki	Yang'wera likhava mmatsi	Has drank water that has spirogyra
Lunyore	Okhumila esumu	Has swallowed poison

From the examples given above, one can easily conclude that HIV/AIDS is a disease that one contracts by accident. For instance, the Lwisukha speakers say, *Waituya mwisisi* (He hit the **w**all fatally). This is in reference to a bird, which, while flying hit the wall of a house and died. Like an accident, nobody can predict when HIV/AIDS will hit him/her. However, some road accidents can be prevented. One way is by observing traffic rules established. In the HIV/AIDS discourses, this can be compared by being faithful to one partner and avoiding many partners. This is well articulated through the use of metaphors that warn people against 'writing many books', 'digging many farms', 'drinking in many wells', 'eating bananas without peels' or avoiding 'travelling at night so as not to be hit by stumps' among others. These metaphors act as warnings. Metaphors such as the above act like filters (Black, 1979). The metaphor thus establishes a bi-directional relationship between the two conceptual domains.

One of the metaphors common in all dialects of Oluluyia, relating to HIV/AIDS, is fire (*Omulilo, mulilu, khumulilu*). Although fire is considered useful in a number of ways to human beings, it also can be very destructive. The metaphor of fire as it related to HIV/AIDS, in this essay focuses on the latter. For example, among Lubukusu speakers, HIV/AIDS is referred to as *kumulililo* (fire) and if one is infected he/she is whispered to as *kabocha kumulilo* (he/she has caught [touched] fire). In Olunyole, the metaphor of fire is expressed as *busalananga singa na omulilo* (It [HIV/AIDS] spreads like fire). *Yashia umulu* (He/she has been burnt by fire) is the Lulogooli metaphor; Olunyala speakers state that *omulilo kumusamba* (the fire is burning him/her), while Luwanga and Lukabras express it as *wasena khu machenga* (He/she has stepped on fire). Lwisukha and Lutsotso speakers indicate that once one steps on the fire, he/she is surely bound to be burnt. Lwisukha say, *yasena khumulilu yayia* (he/she stepped on fire and was burnt, while Lutsotso say, *watsana yayia* (He/she has already been burnt).

From the few examples cited above, it is evident that, just like fire is fierce and destructive so is HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS has destroyed friendships, families, communities and nations of the world economically, socially and even politically. The metaphor of HIV/AIDS as fire among the Oluluyia speakers implies that the disease is devastating, detrimental and injurious to the community and the nation at large. Fire, especially burning, spreads very fast and this metaphor compares well with the galloping (consuming) nature of HIV/AIDS. Since the disease was discovered, it has spread to virtually all parts of the world causing disastrous effects.

Closely related to the metaphor of fire which is also used to refer to HIV/AIDS, is another common metaphor of an electric wire (*luwaya olwe esitima, khuluwaya lwa isitima*). The term electric refers to something that produces electricity. An exposed electric wire is dangerous because if one steps

on it he/she can be electrocuted. Various dialects of the Oluluyia have numerous phrases uttered orally that refer to electric wire, barbed wire or simply wire as a metaphor that relates to HIV/AIDS. For instance, the Lwisukha speakers say *yasena khu luwaya* (He/she has stepped on a live wire), the Abanyole say *kasena oluwaya olwesitima* (He/she has stepped on electric wire), Lubukusu speakers have utterances like *kasena khuluwaya lwa kumulilo* (He/she stepped on hot wire), Olunyala speakers say *kasena khu luwaya olwe esitima* (He/she has stepped on live electric wire), while the Lulogooli say *yasiena ku ising'enge yo omulu* (He/she has stepped on barbed wire) or *yatsiena khu luwaya rwa isitima* (He/she has stepped on electric wire). Other dialects that use the metaphoric reference of an electric wire include Lutsotso, Lutiriki, Lukisa and Lumarama.

The use of electric wire as a metaphor for HIV/AIDS among various Oluluyia speakers is a manifestation of how the speakers perceive the disease. The metaphor implies that HIV/AIDS is dangerous. It therefore sends a cautionary note to speakers and recipients not to expose themselves to the disease. An electric wire may mean someone very beautiful or handsome but precarious especially infected by HIV/AIDS. Electricity has sometimes accidentally caused ruinous effects to people and property. The same applies to HIV/AIDS, which has serious impacts on socio-economic development. HIV/AIDS as an accidental occurrence is as hazardous as an exposed electric wire.

4.2 Metaphors of HIV/AIDS as a Calamity

If one has to understand metaphor, he[she] should internalize, perceive and map it from the source domain to the target domain. To be able to internalize the metaphorical mapping, one also has to consider the shared attributes between the source domain and the target domain. A similar argument is presented by Torangeau and Sterberg (1982) who point out that the suitability of a metaphor depends on whether the vehicle and the topic are different and whether the domains are unrelated.

Quite a number of metaphors in Oluluyia are used to refer to HIV/AIDS as a calamity, catastrophe or a tragedy. The source domains are the calamities like floods, drought, soil erosion, thunderstorms, hailstorms and lightening which are used for the target domain, HIV/AIDS. Table 2 below shows this relationship.

Table 2: Oluluyia Metaphors of HIV/AIDS as Calamity

Dialect	Source domain	Source domain	Target domain
	Oluluyia	English	Interpretation
Lulogooli	Kimaravandu	Massive killer	HIV/AIDS kills
Lulogooli	Kiharato	Drought	AIDS causes untold suffering
Lulogooli	Imbuza	Strong wind	AIDS is injurious
Lulogooli	Kihunguza	Hailstorms	AIDS is ruinous
Olunyala	Olweni	Lightening	AIDS can occur anytime

Olunyala	Muhembo	Soil erosion	AIDS carries away all the gains made
Lubukusu	Kumuyaka/ embeo	Wind	AIDS spreads very fast, far and wide
Olunyala	Muyembo	Floods	AIDS is destructive
Oluwanga	Omuyembo	Floods	AIDS is destructive
Olunyore	Imbumbuye ka	Storm	AIDS has adverse effects
Lusamia	Omuyaka	Strong wind	AIDS is detrimental
Lutsotso	Muyeka	Strong wind	AIDS is injurious
Lumarachi	Omuyaka	Wind	AIDS can carry anybody
Olutachoni	Olweni	Lightening	AIDS is deleterious
Olukisa	Nelikulu	Lightening	AIDS is a catastrophe
Lwisukha	Luheni	Lightening	AIDS is a misfortune

From Table 2 above, the metaphors of HIV/AIDS reveal that the disease is a catastrophe that has hit the world. It is viewed as a strong wind or storm that causes devastating effects including deaths. For instance, the metaphor of *imbuza*, *omuyaka muyeka*, *embeo*, (strong wind) indicates that HIV/AIDS does not discriminate. It affects and infects people of diverse culture, age, race, sex, tribe, size, religion and creed. The metaphors reveal that once the epidemic occurs in an area, it spreads very fast among the people. Like *muyembo* (floods), HIV/AIDS devastates the gains made after many years of investments.

Most of the Oluluyia metaphors analyzed equates HIV/AIDS to death. This is because there is no cure for the disease. However, with the availability of antiretroviral (ARV) drugs, the Oluluyia speakers have coined a word for the ARV, *chimbunwe* in Lubukusu dialect. Although, HIV/AIDS is perceived as a disease like any other, it is viewed as a dangerous, destrutive and incurable disease. It is for this reason that, it is refered in Olukisa as *obulwale obukali* (the big disease, See Table 6).

The metaphors of HIV/AIDS like wind, hailstorm, floods, thunderstorms and lightening depict the climatic conditions that surround the Oluluyia speakers. For instance, the people of Western Kenya experience thunderstorm and lightening due to proximity to Lake Victoria, which cause frequent rainfall most parts of the year. Likewise, there are severe floods especially in Budalangi area of Bunyala District. If HIV/AIDS is metaphorically represented as a *muyembo* (FLOOD), the permanent solution to this lies in the construction of DYKES (PREVENTION). This thus means that, since AIDS is dangerous and sweeps all, the 'cure' lies in prevention of the infection and spread rather than in finding a cure after the infection. This clearly shows that language reflects geographical and social realities in the communication utterances of the speakers.

4.3 HIV/AIDS as a Journey

A close study of metaphors in Oluluyia reveals that the origin, spread and how HIV/AIDS infects can be expressed as a journey. The concept of journey is an act and process of traveling from one place to another. A journey involves moving from point A to B and in most cases these points are far apart. Some of the metaphors on HIV/AIDS that expresses the concept of journey are shown below:

Table 3: Oluluyia Metaphors of HIV/AIDS as a Journey

Dialect	Metaphor (Oluluyia)	English
Olunyala	Alikhulukendo	He is on the journey
Olunyala	Khakhalaka etikiti	Has already acquired bus ticket/visa
Olunyala	Alikhuluchendo	He is on the way
Luwanga	Okhukhalaka itikiti	He has the bus ticket
Luwanga	Yasumukha oluchendo	Has began the journey
Lwisukha	Mundu oyo yasimukha	He has gone/set off
Lwisukha	Yanyota itikiti ya khukhutsa	Has the ticket to death
Lwisukha	Yara bindu bie mustendi	Has put his luggage on the bus stage
Lumarachi	Ali khusitendi	At bus stop awaiting to board
Lumarama	Ali musitendi alindanga omutoka	At the stage waiting for a car
Lunyore	Ali musitendi	One is at the bus stop
Lunyore	Atsitsanga	He is going
Olusamia	Ari khusitendi	At bus stage waiting for “death bus”
Lumarama	Obwene bwetse bunu	The disease that came (HIV/AIDS)
Lutsotso	Oli omusebute	Goodbye
Lutsotso	Yatira ilaini	On the queue
Olukisa	Yakhalaka itikiti yo mwikulu	Has ticket to go to heaven
Olukisa	Okhusimukha	Has started the journey
Olukisa	achendanalo	He travels with the disease
Lukabras	Olumbe lwa avalafu	HIV/AIDS was brought by the Whites
Lubukusu	Mukeniya	One who visits (visitor)
Luwanga	Omulambo okuchenda	Walking corpse

Lulogooli	Agendera ku kuruvusi	Walking over a thread/string
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It is worth noting that every journey has its start and destination. The same applies to HIV/AIDS. When one get infected he/she has started and embarked on a long journey whose destination is when one dies of the disease. From Table 3 above, according to Lumarama speakers, *Obwene bwetse buno* (The disease that came), the verb ‘came’ means it (HIV/AIDS) has its origins somewhere; therefore there are aspects of movement (=travelling?). This implies that HIV/AIDS is foreign to Oluluyia speakers and its exact origin is not yet known. Utterances like *Yatira ilaini* (On the queue), among the Lutsotso speakers, implies that very many people are dying as a result of the pandemic and more are on the process (queue). It means that HIV/AIDS kills masses of people and it cautions that if preventive measures are not adopted, more are going to die.

HIV/AIDS is viewed as an unexpected and unwelcome visitor, *mukeniya*, to the world and in particular among the Abaluyia. In all these metaphors, the destination of the journey once someone is infected is death. However, the metaphor of journey gives hope because if one is infected it does not mean the end of life; it is a journey that may take even 20 years. The metaphor of journey to articulate HIV/AIDS messages among Oluluyia speakers serves various purposes. It warns those not infected and at the same time gives hope to those infected and affected.

4.4 Metaphors related to Animals

Metaphors in relation to animals analyzed reveal the geographical environment of Luyhaland. The use of these metaphors in utterances is meant to conceal meanings to untargeted audience like children. At the same, it helps to communicate the message in a powerful and influential way to the target audience like the youth and adults. Some of the metaphors that use animals to enunciate HIV/AIDS discourse among the Oluluyia speakers are as shown in Table 4 below:

Table 4: Oluluyia Metaphors of HIV/AIDS as Animals

Dialect	Metaphor (Oluluyia)	English
Luwanga	Akhasolo	Bad animal
Luwanga	Ikwena	Crocodile
Luwanga	Ibaka	Serpent
Luwanga	Nende	Big ant
Luwanga	oluchwasi lwa mwingilie	Safari ants have invaded him/her
Lulogooli	Ezing'ende	Jiggers
Lulogooli	Gwe imbuli	Goat's tail
Lulogooli	Gwe imbwa	Dog's tail
Lulogooli	Enzogu	Elephant
Lulogooli	Kiguguli	Maggot

Lulogooli	Enzoka	Snake
Lubukusu	Lumbembe	The elephant killer
Lubukusu	Ekwena	Crocodile
Lubukusu	Ingeza	Stalk borer
Lutiriki	Inyende	Jigger
Lukabras	Eshichinji	An insect
Lwitakho	Likhukhuni	Liverfluke
Lwitakho	Shisiavembe	An insect
Lwitakho	Shichinji	Jigger
Lusamia	Ebaka	Python
Lunyore	Inyende	Jigger
Lunyore	Isi	Housefly
Lunyore	Esolo	Wildebeest/ A very dangerous animal
Lunyore	Imboko ngali	Fierce and mighty buffalo
Olunyala	Ekee	Ant
Lutsotso	Linani	Hyena
Lutsotso	Itinaini	T-nine
Lutachoni	Injofu	Elephant
Olukisa	Lichungu	Rat
Olukisa	Omweri	Big snake
Lwisukha	“Jimi”	Name of a dog
Lwisukha	Uriambu	Chameleon
Lwisukha	Mache	Ants

From the examples of animal and insect metaphors on HIV/AIDS above, it is indicative that the scourge is destructive, dangerous, unpredictable and a killer. For instance, the metaphor of HIV/AIDS as *lichungu* (a rat) in Olukisa. A rat is a very destructive rodent. As a pest, it destroys food, documents and even spreads a disease. Of particular concern is that a rat gnaws, bites a person slowly but at the same time anaesthetizes the person. Hence the person may not feel the pain but a rat will destroy some body parts especially a toe and ultimately cause the disease. In the same way, HIV/AIDS slowly causes the body to lose its immunity and finally one dies.

A similar meaning to the above applies to metaphors of *ingeza* (stalkborer), *ebaka* (python=killer/crusher), *ekwena*, *engwena* (crocodile=pretender, dangerous), *shichinji* (jigger) and *likhukhuni* (liverfluke). There are various utterances that reinforce the argument advanced in this discussion. For

example, the Lwisukha speakers say, *Jimi yamuluma* (He/she was bitten by 'Jimi' [a dog's name]) and *yalwola uriambu yumulukongo* (He/she has the chameleon of family line). Lulogooli speakers have utterances like *yasiena kumukira gwe imbwe* (He/she has stepped on a dog's tail), *yamira engende* (swallowed a jigger), *Yadumba mwi rina rienzoka mayamuruma* (has put in a hole which accidentally had a snake which bit him) and *yalwala enzogu* (is suffering from elephant). The Olunyala speakers when stating that HIV/AIDS is destructive say, *amakee kamutotola* (ants are eating him up). These utterances emphasize the destructive nature of HIV/AIDS hence caution people to avoid practices like polygamy, wife inheritance and promiscuity which encourage the spread of HIV/AIDS among the masses.

4.5 Metaphors on HIV/AIDS related to Plants

Various utterances on metaphors on HIV/AIDS by Oluluyia speakers portray the botanical diversity of the Luhyaland. The Abaluyia are agriculturalists. They grow crops like bananas, potatoes, and sugarcane, among others. Crops are normally affected by weeds, which include lantana, stinging nettle, grass and creepers. There are numerous metaphors that refer to HIV/AIDS whose source domain are the plants, weeds and fruits found within Luhyland. Some of these metaphors are shown in Table 5 below:

Table 5: Oluluyia Metaphors on HIV/AIDS as related to Plants

Dialect	Metaphor (Oluluyia)	English
Luwanga	Okhulia litunda liengende	Has eaten a fruit with an insect
Luwanga	Ukhulia liramwa libula amakhoba	To eat banana without peels
Luwanga	Yalia liramwa eliakhobolwa	He ate a peeled banana
Luwanga	Omulandira	Creeper
Luwanga	Isambakhulu	itchy plant
Luwanga	Ingetso	Big potato
Lwisukha	Ane anishibembe	Grass
Lwisukha	Yalia maremwa na makhanda kene	He ate bananas with their peels on
Lulogooli	Libwoni linene	Big potato
Lulogooli	Yalia libwoni lie izing'ende	Ate potatoes with had worms
Olunyala	Landana	Lantana
Olunyala	Kalia echemwa eliuma amakhova	Ate a banana without peels
Olukisa	Litunda lie inyende	Fruit that is poisoned by an insect
Lubukusu	Luyongo	Weed
Lubukusu	Lubembe	Itchy grass
Lutsotso	Ne ilantana	Lantana

Lusamia	Lunyasi	Grass
Lumarama	Ilandana	Lantana
Lwitakho	Isambakhalu	Stinging nettle

From the above examples, it is clear that there are numerous botanical metaphors used in Oluluyia that refer to the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Some of the metaphors indicate how the disease is spread, symptoms of someone who is infected or the nature of the disease.

HIV/AIDS spreads very fast. It is estimated that over 700 people die every day as a result of HIV/AIDS in Kenya. The galloping nature of HIV/AIDS compares well with the metaphors of *anishibembe* (grass), *ilandana* (lantana) and *omulandira* (creeper). For instance, a creeper is a plant that grows along the ground or on walls. It often winds and coils itself around other plants and ultimately 'kills' its host. Just like *omulandira* (creeper), HIV/AIDS is not easily noticed, weakens the body immunity system and finally kills the victim. It causes general body weakness and makes the body prone to other opportunistic diseases like Tuberculosis. Like any *luyongo* (weed), HIV/AIDS affects the growth of body cells by 'eating them up'.

4.6 Other Metaphors in Relation to HIV/AIDS

There are other metaphors used by Oluluyia speakers to refer to HIV/AIDS and related matters. Table 6 gives a summary of the metaphors.

Table 6: Other Oluluyia Metaphors on HIV/AIDS

Dialect	Metaphor (Oluluyia)	English
Lunyore	Obusuma	Ugali
Lunyore	Sheiyo	Broom
Lutachoni	Esieyo	Broom
Luwanga	Eshieyo	Broom
Luwanga	Ukhulia iswiti sibula likaratasi	To eat an unwrapped sweet
Lwisukha	Shirembe	Broom
Lulogooli	Cheyo cheya hosi	Broom that sweeps completely
Lulogooli	Ludelu lwilulaa	Winnowing tray
Lulogooli	Isindani	Needle
Lulogooli	Oyo ni rugembe	Razor blade
Lulogooli	Lifwa	Thorn
Lulogooli	Yanwa isumu ya galaha	Drank poison
Lwisukha	Ali nende butsiba	He has poison

Olukisa	Tsindolio	Bullets
Lubukusu	Esokisi	Socks (condoms)
Lubukusu	Marikobo	Gumboots (condoms)
Lubukusu	Chimbunwe	ARVs
Lubukusu	Oluwasi	Thread
Lunyore	Obukhi bwiranga	Honey that kills
Lulogooli	Aveeye nende izibirabiri m'muvili gwigwe	Has pepper in his/her body
Lulogooli	Uyu alugaa uvuchima	He is preparing ugali
Lulogooli	Yasundula amatsi muvonyoto	Has poured water on ash that is too hot
Olunyala	Kanywa musevere ya vene	Drank water from other people's wells
Olunyala	kaandika mu vitau vingi	he wrote many books
Luwanga	Yalima emikunda emingi	he has dug many farms
Lukabras	walima khalwanda	he has dug on a rock
Olukisa	Yaandika mu bitabu biosi	he wrote on other people's books
Lubukusu	kaandika mu bitabu bia babasie	he wrote on other people's books
Lusaamia	Ejuala	Nylon paper
Lusaamia	Esibo	Ball made of polythene paper gets torn easily
Luwanga	Lisubo	Ball made of polythene papers
Luwanga	Efilaro efia omubayi	Condom
Lutachoni	Oluvia	Metal
Lutachoni	Akhakina	Small stone
Lutiriki	Mushipi	Condom
Lubukusu	Slimu	Slim
Lubukusu	Lulwefwe	Ours
Lubukusu	Siwanja sia Kasarani	Moi international sports center, Kasarani (matrimonial bed)
Lubukusu	Siwanja sia musilima	Night stadium
Lubukusu	Bwakhaya basungu	That defeated the whites

Lubukusu	Ibulosi	Witchcraft
Olukisa	Okunani	Monster
Olukisa	Obwetsa buna	That came
Olukisa	Obulwale obukali	Big disease
Olukisa	Obwamunane	Eight disease (8-4-4)
Olukisa	Eshilindwa	Grave
Olukisa	Eshing'ang'a	Monster
Olunyala	Munane	Eight (AIDS)
Lwisukha	Ishila	Curse

From the metaphors above, it is clear that traditional practices like polygamy and cultural freedom of men to have multiple partners coupled with promiscuity have compounded the HIV/AIDS prevalence. This is evident in metaphors like, *Kanywa musevere ya vene* (Drank water from other people's wells) in Olunyala, *yalima emikunda emingi* (he has dug many farms) in Luwanga, *kaandika mu vitau vingi* (he wrote many books), in Olunyala, *kaandika mu bitabu bia babasie* (he wrote on other people's books) in Lubukusu, *yaandika mu bitabu biosi* (he wrote in other people's books) in Olukisa and *walima khalwanda* (he has dug on a rock) in Lukabras. In the examples given, a book metaphorically refers to a wife or woman, and further critical discourse analysis of the metaphor of book reveals it is the woman's sexual organ. To write a book, one requires a pen. The metaphor of a pen in this case, is a man and more critically the male sexual organ. So the metaphor of writing books using pens among the Oluluyia speakers implies having sexual intercourse with multiple partners. Writing in other people's books therefore means a man having an extra marital affair. The same message is passed through the use of the metaphor of a farm.

One of the messages that are passed through use of such metaphors is that to have unprotected sex is risky. The major mode of HIV/AIDS transmission in Kenya, is through sexual intercourse, which accounts for 70-80% of the mode of transmission (Republic of Kenya, 2005). As a result of this, metaphors that caution against casual unprotected sexual intercourse are many among the Oluluyia speakers. For instance, among the Luwanga speakers, they say, *Ukhulia iswiti ibula likaratasi* (To eat a sweet that is not wrapped up), warning that it is risky to have sex without a condom. Such metaphors advise people, that if they must have sex with multiple partners, they must use a condom (wrapped sweet) as a preventive measure. The utterances that use these metaphors advocate the use of condoms though this is a delicate and controversial topic among some religious groups in Kenya. It is not interesting nor is it fun at all to eat a sweet that is wrapped. The same applies to eating a banana that is not peeled. However, if one must eat (read, have sex) especially if unmarried, he/she should have the wrapper (read, condom) as this decreases the chances of contracting HIV/AIDS.

According to a study by NACC (2005), it was reported that based on gender, women are the most affected by HIV/AIDS in Kenya. According to the study, women in the age group of 20-24 years form 10% of HIV/AIDS prevalence in

Kenya compared to 6% of men in the same age bracket (NACC, 2005). This perhaps explains why among the Oluluyia there are utterances which refer to HIV/AIDS as “the disease of the women”. For instance, the Lumarama speakers, term it as *obwabakhasi* (the woman’s disease). This can be viewed as gender discrimination and prejudice against women, because HIV/AIDS knows no gender boundary as the disease came into the world *okhumala bandu* (to finish people) and *omala pee* (destroys all) as the Lusamia speakers say. High levels of poverty have contributed to spread of HIV/AIDS. Commercial sex has complicated the issue of HIV/AIDS. It is no wonder that the Oluluyia speakers have words for prostitutes, *ling’ang’ule* (female prostitute) and *likhulukhungu* (male prostitute, a womanizer, wayward), yet in the traditional setup there was no terminology for prostitute in this community. Although the erosion of morals in the society is to blame for prostitution, which is illegal in Kenya, unemployment, increasing poverty levels share part of the blame.

The concept of prostitution is represented by metaphors like *isindani* (needle), *rugembe*, *mchembe*, *luwembe* (razor blade), *lifwa* (thorn), *isumu* (poison), *obukhi bwiranga* (honey that kills), *lidavalia* (muddy water), *amachi amatumbufu* (dirty water), *ewa kalulire* (the strongest brew) and *likhava mmatsi* (water with spirogyra). For example, a metaphor of a PROSTITUTE as HONEY. As we know, honey is sweet. A prostitute may look beautiful (or handsome in the case of men) superficially but she [he] may be dangerous. Sex with a prostitute, may be risky because they may be infected with HIV/AIDS, hence they are HONEY that can easily KILL. Most of these metaphors view prostitutes as waste, rubbish or unworthy as exemplified by use of metaphors like *amachi amatumbufu* (dirty water) and *likhava mmatsi* (water has spirogyra).

There are quite a number of myths and superstitions associated with HIV/AIDS among the Oluluyia speakers which are reflected in some of the metaphors cited in Table 6 above. Some of these are reflected in metaphors which view HIV/AIDS as *ishila* (curse), *ibulosi* (witchcraft), and the Olukisa speakers believe that once one is infected with the virus the destination is *eshilindwa* (grave). Other misconceptions about HIV/AIDS revealed in this essay is that an infected person is slim (*slimu*), weak has a skeleton structure (*eshing’ang’a*), very thin, *oluwasi* (thread), *kamila luwembe* (has swallowed a razor blade) *yamila inailoni* (has swallowed nylon) *ejuala* (paper bag), *uyu alugaa uruchima* (he is preparing ugali, which means on the way to die).

People tend to view HIV/AIDS as something that is here on earth to stay. This is due to its vast spread and impact on human beings. For instance, among the Lubukusu speakers, term HIV/AIDS as *lufwefwe* (ours) meaning our disease. By saying so, the speakers have accepted the reality and hence it is possible to find apt measures to contain its spread. The incurability of HIV/AIDS and its complexities are expressed through elaborate figurative metaphors. These include in Lubukusu, *bakhaya basungu* (that defeated the whites), in Olukisa, *obwulwale obukali* (the big disease), *obwetsa buna* (that came), *tsindoli* (bullets), in Lutachoni *oluvia* (metal) and in Lulogooli, *itsibirabiri* (pepper).

4.7 Concluding Remarks

The metaphors that are used in relation to HIV/AIDS discourse among the Oluluyia speakers of Western Kenya reveal the magnitude of the disease and their perception of the disease. This essay has uncovered and explored metaphors used in communication discourse that underlie the perceived origin, spread, signs and ways of combating the pandemic. The metaphors perform crucial roles like information, caution, persuasion, justification, comprehension and even threatening. The production, construction and deconstruction of the metaphors are deeply rooted in the socio-cultural fabric of the Oluluyia speakers.

It is estimated that HIV/AIDS kills over 150,000 people every year in Kenya (NACC, 2005). This cannot be attributed to lack of awareness and information anymore. More people are informed today more than ever before due to increased access to mass media. However, what is lacking is serious behavioral change. This can be achieved effectively through use of metaphors using local language that people can identify with and understand. From the foregoing discussion presented in this essay, it can be observed that metaphors used by Oluluyia speakers communicate powerful images and messages by advocating abstinence, faithfulness in marriage and use of condoms as appropriate ways of combating the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Equally important is that metaphors use indigenous, local and understandable concepts drawn from the immediate social, physical and cultural environment of the Oluluyia speakers. The use of local metaphors makes people relate easily with the target domain inherent in the metaphors. They are metaphors that they can easily identify with and help them to conceptualize the “world” of HIV/AIDS. The metaphors analyzed in this essay, ably construct and deconstruct reality about HIV/AIDS in the region. It has been noted that metaphors play a crucial role in disseminating messages that would otherwise be seen as taboo in plain language, which consequently affects the audience’s perception about HIV/AIDS.

Notes

1. I am truly grateful to my first year Kiswahili students of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, under the School Based Programme 2007/08 Academic Year, for collecting the data analyzed in this paper.
2. Matatu is a term used to refer to public means of transport used in Kenya especially Nissan vans.

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