

VERBAL-TEXT AS A PROCESS OF COMPOSITIONAL AND IMPROVISATIONAL
ELABORATION IN BUKUSU LITUNGU MUSIC

by

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DECLARATION

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I declare that **VERBAL-TEXT AS A PROCESS OF COMPOSITIONAL AND IMPROVISATIONAL ELABORATION IN BUKUSU LITUNGU MUSIC** is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

SIGNATURE
(Miss A N Masasabi)

DATE

DEDICATION

To the late Japheth Muia Mutangili and my daughter Grace Buyanzi.

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ABSTRACT

The Bukusu community is predominantly found in Bungoma district of Western Kenya. The *Litungu* is a word referring to a lyre among the Bukusu community. Music accompanied by this instrument is what is referred to as *Litungu* music. This music makes use of sung text and “verbal-text”/ *silao-sikeleko* (speech and speech-melody) and *silao-sikeleko* is the focal point of this study. *Silao-sikeleko* is performed in alternation with sung text in *Litungu* music. This study seeks to identify the cultural and compositional role of *silao-sikeleko* in the music.

To achieve the objectives of this study I used a qualitative approach to collect and analyze data. Data collection included the use of interviews and observation. The interviewees included performers of *Litungu* music, whose music was audio recorded and video recorded for analysis. In addition, I made observations of the performance sites and performance behaviour, taking notes and making audio and video recording. Music for analysis was then selected on the basis that it had the *silao-sikeleko* component.

The Bukusu cultural view of *silao-sikeleko* is discussed in relation to their customs and way of life. The execution of *silao-sikeleko* is based on a culturally conceived framework that allows the involvement of various performers in the performance composition process. Here the contexts within which *silao-sikeleko* is performed are identified. Analysis of the relationship between sung text and *silao-sikeleko* established that whereas the two are thematically unified, *silao-sikeleko* substantiates the sung texts by facilitating an understanding of messages contained in the songs. The analysis of language use ascertained that *silao-sikeleko* makes use of language devices such as proverbs, idioms, symbolism, riddles and similes.

I established that *silao-sikeleko* as a performance compositional element has its own presentational structure that influences the overall structure of the *Litungu* music. *Litungu* music has a quasi-rondoic structure whose output is not static but varies according to context and the wishes of the soloist. The soloist interprets how effectively a given message has been communicated during performance determining how much *silao-sikeleko* should be performed. *Silao-sikeleko* is in most cases composed and performed by various members of a performing group.

Key terms: Kenyan music, Bukusu music, Bukusu culture, *Litungu* music, *silao-sikeleko*, performance composition, music composition, song text, music structure, improvisation.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Abaluhya

This word refers to a community in Western Kenya. The word is used interchangeably with the words Baluhya, and Luhya to mean the same thing.

Composition

As a product, compositions are musical concepts that have been assimilated and are integral to a Bukusu musician. They are called upon to inform the process of music making. As a process composition is the act of formulating new musical ideas within the Bukusu musical cultural genre. The ideas are mainly conceived and rehearsed before the actual performance.

Dominant

The fifth tone on the fifth open string, a perfect fifth from the referential tone.

Improvisation

Creation of music in the course of performance; this is similar to extemporization.

Improvised drum

This is a plastic water container turned upside down whose base is struck by sticks to produce rhythmic accompaniment in *Litungu* music. It is used instead of the traditional drum called *Efumbo*.

Khulaa-khukeleka

To verbalize or utter the speech and speech-melody sections of Bukusu *Litungu* music.

Mediant

The third tone of the third open string, a major third from the referential tone.

Omukeleki

The person who speaks or performs speech-melody in *Litungu* music. In plural they are called *Bakeleki*.

Performance composition

This is the process of formulating new musical ideas as variations of the existing melodies and *silao-sikeleko* within a given context during performance.

Quasi-rondoic

A musical form that is similar to rondo form with some deviations from the conventional rondo format. It does not always start with an “a” section alternating with other sections (b, c, d, and so on).

Silao-sikeleko

Silao-sikeleko encompasses speech and speech-melody as musical elements in *Litungu* music. The term is used as a synonym to verbal-text.

Subdominant

The fourth tone on the fourth open string, a perfect fourth from the referential tone.

Supertonic

The second tone, on the second open string, a major second from the referential tone.

Tonic

This is the referential tone in *Litungu* music which is normally on the first open string of the *Litungu* from the left.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Performance composition and/or improvisation are common characteristic features of musics on the African continent.¹ Performance composition refers to the creative perspective of music during a performance in a given socio-cultural context. Such a process is facilitated by the fact that musics from oral cultures are not notated but passed on orally from one generation to another, thus memory is essential. This study is based on the Bukusu people's *Litungu* music. The Bukusu culture has been transmitted orally thus the musicians who are cultural transmitters depend heavily on their memory. Within this culture musical composition can be perceived as products and processes. As a product, compositions are musical concepts that have been assimilated and are integral to a Bukusu musician. They are called upon to inform the process of music making. As a process composition is the act of formulating new musical ideas within the Bukusu musical cultural genre. The ideas are mainly conceived and rehearsed before the actual performance. In the process of performance, anyone listening to *Litungu* music cannot escape hearing verbal-text/ *silao-sikeleko* as part of the musical experience. The occurrence of *silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music is as captivating as it is educative and appears many times in the performances of this musical genre.

Silao-sikeleko is a term I use to refer to both speech and speech-melody. My study of *Litungu* music separates sung text from speech and speech-melody. The speech aspect of *silao-sikeleko* is performed as narrations and/or dialogue. I have preferred to consider speech-melody as part of *silao-sikeleko* for three reasons. First, the amount of text used and the rate at which words unfold as speech-melody are similar to that of speech. Second, speech and speech-melody unfold in prose, and third, speech-melody and speech in *Litungu* music are so intertwined that it is sometimes not easy to separate the two when listening to the music.

¹ For a further discussion of performance composition and improvisation as used in this thesis refer to chapter seven.

In order to understand the compositional process, I analyze how *silao-sikeleko* is composed and performed, and also where and when *silao-sikeleko* occurs in *Litungu* music. In this regard, the study perceives *silao-sikeleko* as a musical element and relates it to other musical elements within *Litungu* music. Furthermore, there is emphasis on the comparison between *silao-sikeleko* and sung text, because both *silao-sikeleko* and sung text are made up of words. I also analyze the instrumental phrases over which *silao-sikeleko* is performed. Once the relationship between *silao-sikeleko* and other musical elements within *Litungu* music is established, it becomes easier to identify the function of *silao-sikeleko* in the music.

Even though *silao-sikeleko* is both a process and a product, my study concentrates primarily on *silao-sikeleko* as a process of performance composition. As a product, *silao-sikeleko* normally exists after the performance has been completed in the minds of the audience and the performers. Likewise, the recordings of *Litungu* music obtained during my fieldwork also contain examples of *silao-sikeleko* as the products of the performance compositional events. As a process, *silao-sikeleko* keeps unfolding during the performance composition of *Litungu* music. A song performed on different occasions by the same band has different words as *silao-sikeleko* but the song theme is maintained. The performance composition of *silao-sikeleko* takes place within the Bukusu socio-cultural environment. To create relevant social context, the following sections describe the Bukusu people and their cultural beliefs and practices that affect the performance of *silao-sikeleko*. This is then followed by a discussion of Bukusu music and *Litungu* music in particular.

1.1.1 Who are the Bukusu?

The Bukusu, who call themselves “Babukusu”, are a sub-tribe of the Abaluhya community, who migrated from the region around Cameroon as part of the large group of Bantu-speaking people. They moved eastwards to what is presently central Uganda and then settled around the Mount Elgon. From there they settled in their current location (Makila 1978: 26). In Kenya, the Abaluhya settled mainly in western Kenya and parts of the Rift valley. With regard to social communication, the Luluhya language consists of seventeen dialects with the prefix “Ava”, “Aba” or “Ba” depending on the Luhya dialect of origin. Apart from the Babukusu dialect, the other sub-tribes are Bamarachi, Bakhayo, Babedakho, Babesukha, Batiriki, Basamia, Banyole,

Barakoli, Bawanga, Bamarama, Bakisa, Bamateka, Bachochi, Bakabarasi, Batachoni and Banyala (Wanyama 2006: 1-3). Even though the sub-tribes are many and appear different, they do have some similarities in their cultural practices (Gwako 1998: 176). For instance, they believe in God whom they call “Were” or “Nyasaye” depending on dialect; they name their children after climatic conditions or major social events; they practise male circumcision as a rite of passage; and they have lengthy greetings as exemplified by Salome Nanyama’s greeting dialogue on page 8 and 9. More significant to this study is the fact that the sub-tribes also share some melodies but with slightly different words due to the close geographical location of the sub-tribes.² A common instrument among them is the one-stringed fiddle called *eshilili*, *isiriri*, *siiriri* or *kiiriri*, depending on the dialect.

1.1.1.1 Bukusu Origin and Settlement

The Bukusu have a myth that serves to explain their origin, namely, that *Wele Khakaba* (God) created Mwambu (man) out of mud. He also created a wife for him called Sela (Makila 1986: 18-23). The stories about Mwambu and Sela as the fore-fathers are narrated in Bukusu music as both *silao-sikeleko* and sung text (see the song *Sellah* in Appendix 1, page 240).³ It is believed that the creation took place at Mumbo (west) from where they migrated to settle at the foothills of Mount Elgon. In this area they were in constant conflict with the Kalenjin community who forced them to move further south west which is their present location (Wanyama 2006: 1-3). The migration story is so deeply entrenched in the Bukusu culture that it is addressed in their music with the song entitled *Ewuyo Ino* (see Appendix 1, page 242). This song stands out in the community as it is frequently performed by various musicians within the community. Makila (1978: 134-162) informs us of the migration movements of the Bukusu in detail and cites overpopulation, differences among members of the community and wars with neighbouring communities as the chief reasons for the migration. As they moved, several of their kinsmen like the Ugandan Bamasaaba or the Gisu, remained in Uganda.

² The Abaluhya community is made up of various sub-tribes as mentioned and each sub tribe is made up of related families called clans.

³ The two words Sela and Sellah refer to the first female parent of the Bukusu. Makila spells the name using one L while the Lugulu Bumusika Band use two Ls.



Figure 1.1 Map of Kenya showing the location of Bungoma District
 Source: "District Development Plan, Bungoma 1994-1996": page Vii. In Rural Planning Department, Office of the Vice President and Ministry of Planning and National Development

This group of people are constantly mentioned among the Bukusu because they share their cultural beliefs; the Babukusu and the Bamasaaba are brothers. The circumcision music performed among the Babukusu and the Bamasaaba is so similar that at times it is difficult to tell the difference. The Bukusu are predominantly found in the former Bungoma district at the foothills of Mount Elgon, while others have spilt over to the neighbouring Trans-Nzoia and Mount Elgon districts (Wanyama 2005: 1-3). The Bungoma district in the Western province of Kenya is bordered by the Kakamega District to the east, the Busia District to the south, Mount Elgon to the north and Uganda to the west as shown on the map (see Figure 1.1). The “cultural identity of a people is based upon and consists of the totality of their values, norms, traditions, customs, languages and their inward and outward manifestation” (Were 1985: 5). These are influenced in part by their environment. The Bukusu practice agriculture because

Bungoma is blessed with many rivers and streams, and has open, undulating grasslands that in some places are interrupted by rocky hills and patches of forests. The land is fertile and well watered, experiencing a two months dry spell between December and late January. [The main rainy seasons occur between March and May, and between September and October. This together with the availability of rich agricultural soils] ... contribute immensely to the cultivation of food crops like millet, sorghum and maize, and rearing of farm animals. (Wanyama 2005: 1-3)

Farm work is basically a woman’s work, and in addition, they are expected to attend to all household duties. “Wives are ... responsible for cultivating enough food for themselves and their children and husband[s] and must prepare it” (de Wolf 1977: 32). The importance of cultivation is echoed in some of their songs such as *Lijembe* (hoe) as performed by the Lugulu Bumusika Band (see CD1 track 5). Apart from cultivation, the Bukusu rear cattle which are an important source of wealth and the main the form of bride price. The value placed in cattle used as bride price is depicted in the song *Kunikina* as performed by Kwane Band. The cattle in their environment also provide the required materials (animal tendons) for the construction of their musical instruments.

The Bukusu regard weather conditions as important within their culture, not only for the purpose of knowing when to plant and harvest but as a reference point in their oral traditions. Periods of famine have been nicknamed by the community according to the memorable events of those

periods. The names are well known to the members of the community and are even used to estimate the ages of some members who have no written records of their dates of birth. Similarly, seasons are reflected in the choice of names, for example, a child born during the rainy season is called “Nafula” or “Wafula”. The suffix “*fula*” comes from the word “*efula*” meaning rain. The prefix “N” is used to denote female names while “W” is used for male names. The names “Nekesa” or “Wekesa” are usually given to those born during the harvesting season, where the suffix “*kesa*” comes from the verb infinitive “*khukesa*” meaning “to harvest”. Likewise, people with the name “Nanjala” or “Wanjala” are born during drought or famine, where the suffix “*njala*” comes from the word “*enjala*” meaning “famine” or “drought”. Extreme weather conditions such as drought become a theme of musical composition, where their drastic effects are mentioned, for example as in the song *Yekamakanya* as performed by the Mvumilivu Band.⁴

1.1.1.2 The Bukusu Family and Social Life

Most families among the Bukusu are polygamous. Traditionally, a man can marry many wives depending on his wealth, as the number of wives signifies his wealth. Among the wives, the first wife is highly esteemed and her children, especially the sons, are given first priority when it comes to property inheritance. In fact, the “Bukusu say that elder sons can take over the younger widows of their father” (de Wolf 1977: 32). De Wolf (Ibid.) continues to explain that daughters have virtually no permanent position in Bukusu families: they are viewed as other men’s future wives, and are brought up to fulfil this role. They do not inherit property and are excluded from decision-making within the family. In the villages, the village elders (*Omukasa*) have the highest authority, while in the families, the man is the highest authority followed by his first wife’s eldest son. However, the changes in the political and societal structure arising from colonialism and subsequent independence in Kenya, introduced other administrative units. From the lowest level upwards, they include the village elder, Assistant Chief, Chief, District Officer, District Commissioner, Provincial Commissioner and the President. This administrative structure was implemented during the colonial era in Kenya and it is perceived as an extension of the systems of leadership that is culturally practiced among the Bukusu. Jackson Kisika, a seventy-five year old *Litungu* player, perceives the above-mentioned seven administrative jurisdictions as reflected in the construction of the *Litungu*, especially on account of the fact that the seven strings

⁴ This word does not have an English translation. It is just a name given to a famine period.

represent the seven levels of administration (interview, February 6, 2007).⁵ According to Kisika the seven strings represent the seven levels of administration.

Families identify themselves with the father's name and clans which underscores the place of men in the society. Once a woman gets married, she takes her husband's name as her surname (last name). The children also use their father's name and clan name. A married woman is identified by her husband's clan. Among the Bukusu, clan identities are very important; it is believed that each clan has a unique quality or characteristic feature. For example, the *Bakhone* and *Babasaba* people are circumcisers while the *Balunda* people are traditionally known as rainmakers. Some of these clan identities are mentioned as part of *silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music when the performers of *Litungu* music introduce themselves and other members of the community.

The ability to procreate is hailed among the Bukusu. A woman who is unable to give birth is the subject of mockery. It is a

pre-requisite that one must have had children in order to be honoured with the ritual of *kumuse*. This emphasizes and celebrates procreation as a means of ensuring survival and continuity of the community. It is accordingly seen as a means to neutralize the tragic effects of death (Makokha 2002: 4).

Where there is polygamy, the issue of stepmothers is inevitable as well as the mistreatment of children by their stepmothers. Since the children are not allowed to speak openly about their mistreatment, they do so in song. A common example of a song sung to express their sentiments is *Mayi muro sali mayi* (A stepmother is not a mother) (see CD 1 track 1, CD 2 track 4) for the different renditions of the song.

Bukusu verbal communications are enriched with proverbs and sayings which find their way into musical performances. The proverbs are a means of communication that circulate messages to educate, reject bad behaviour and uphold good morals. The sayings, proverbs and symbols exist to emphasise what is being said. The frequent use of proverbs by the older generation, portray

⁵ Out of all the interviewees in this study, it is only Jackson Kisika who relates the seven administrative levels to the number of strings. I believe that this is his personal opinion since the *Litungu* existed long before colonialism.

the latter's prowess and eloquence in the language. Such language is a form of aesthetic expression that is highly regarded among the Bukusu.

One ceremonial occasion that is greatly enhanced with the use of proverbs is during a beer party. This is an occasion that grants the older men in society an opportunity to socialize with their peers. Participation in beer parties is restricted to men who are married, have recognized social status and are mature in age. Sylvester Mukubwa (interview, 3rd May 2007) explained that, a man without a wife was not welcome in gatherings (beer parties) where other men were. This is because the Bukusu community believes that he had nothing to share and tell the others thus he was not qualified to address people. Mukubwa (Ibid.) further explains that conversations of the old men were done in hushed tones as they exchanged proverbs and sayings. Women accompanying their husbands could silently participate in beer parties. The community's code of conduct required them to sit on the ground while their male counterparts sat on three-legged stools. The women only remained for a short while and then left to prepare food for their men and children. Musicians invited to perform in this kind of gathering played and sang in hushed tones, especially during the solo sections; the choral responses were a little bit louder. They used hushed tones to ensure secrecy of the discussions. Music performed in this context was aimed at praising the old men and their achievements. In such a context, proverbs and sayings both in the music and the conversations were never substantiated (Ibid.). However, the kind of privacy that was experienced in the pre-colonial days has been discontinued. Nowadays the youth drink with the old making a mockery of what was deemed "sacred". Young people's preference for loud musical performances has marred the serene drinking environment. Incidences of drunk and disorderly behaviour are now much more prevalent than they were in the past.

The Bukusu are known for their elaborate greetings, earning them the name the *Mulembe* people, a term meaning "greetings" or "peace". The Bukusu salutation involves inquiries about the wellbeing of other family members, livestock and the weather. In some cases the greetings include a brief summary and acknowledgement of one's lineage. Hand shaking is a common practice and does not only involve the clasping of hands but a vigorous jerking of the arm. I remember the elongated greeting I received from my grandmother when I went to the village to visit her. In brief this is how it would sound,

Lubukusu

Mwana wo mwana wase, oriena?
Olimulamu? Mulembe, mwana wase.
Mwana womumaina, wakhebulile luno?

Omwana we lukhamba lwase mubuele,
Mwana we Bakiabi, ofuototokha?
Bukokhe mayi wasala, owandela, kanunia,
Nekhoile khukhubona.

Nabumbo mukhana wase okhanjibilila ta
Niwe oliisikha.

Bawandaye bariena?
(Salome Nanyama, personal communication, 5th June 2004)

English

The child of my child, how are you?
Are you fine? My child I greet you.
Daughter of the circumcised,
Omumaina⁶ you have remembered me
this day?
Child of my pride in youth,
Child of the Bakiabi, are you well?⁷
Bukokhe my mother, the one who
Brought me up and breastfed me,
am glad to see you.
Nabumbo my daughter, do not forget
about me. You will be the one to bury
me.
How are your brothers and sisters?

This type of greeting could last for five minutes in certain instances. Such greetings are also expressed in Bukusu music and are typically displayed in the form of *silao-sikeleko*, when the musicians are given an opportunity to salute other members of the community. Snippets of such greetings are exemplified in the songs *Omundu* and *Enju Yo Muluya*, both performed by the Lugulu Bumusika Band.

Initiation as a rite of passage among the Bukusu is very important. They practise male circumcision and every male member of the community must be circumcised either as part of the initiation ritual or in hospital. Circumcision takes place during every even-numbered year. The practice is linked to a myth that is often told. The myth states that there was a beast that lived in a cave near the Bukusu and the Sabaot, a sub-tribe of the Kalenjin community. This beast was a nuisance to the two communities and caused a lot of fear. The beast killed their livestock every day. Mango, a very brave warrior among the Bukusu, planned an attack on the beast and then single-handedly fought and killed it. The Sabaot were amazed at his bravery and decided to circumcise him. It is then that Mango sung the song, *Sioyaye*, a victory song sung during the circumcision rite when the initiate goes to his father's home from the river (Wanyama 2006: 4-1

⁶ A circumcision age set among the Bukusu in which my father belongs.

⁷ Bakiabi is the name of my father's clan.

to 4-4). From that moment the Bukusu adopted the circumcision practice, imitating what their neighbours, the Sabaot, were doing. Once a member of the community is circumcised he belongs to an age group that has a name; some of the age groups are *Bachuma*, *Basawe* and *Bamaina*. This event is accompanied by music and dance; the content of the music in terms of *silao-sikeleko* depicts the history of the circumcision ritual with messages of encouragement to the brave and loathing to the coward.

1.1.2 Bukusu *Litungu* Music

1.1.2.1. *Litungu* Music in the Community

Nandwa and Bukenya (1983: 85) state that, “Song and dance pervades the whole spectrum of African traditional life. There are songs for every stage and occasion of a person's life from cradle to the grave”. Music is an important aspect of the Bukusu community's culture. Music in African communities is functional (Okafor and Emeka 1998: 141). In fact, this means that every social occasion has a specified musical performance that is acceptable in the community. The main musical instrument of the Bukusu people is the *Litungu*. The *Litungu* plays an important role in any accompanied music making. For the Bukusu people, the instrument is a source of aesthetic appeal; that is why they also refer to it as “*Lusia*” that literally means ‘a string’. The author (2002:14) states that, “the words ‘*Lusia lulayi*’ used to describe good music” literally mean “a good string” in reference to appealing music which is performed on the *Litungu*. It is this attribute that led her to choose their accompanied music, but this does not mean that all their music is accompanied. Songs may be accompanied by musical instruments or unaccompanied depending on the occasion within which the music is performed. In cases where musical instruments are used, they are not all utilized at the same time. For instance, during circumcision, especially when the initiates move from one relative to the other to inform them of their intention to be initiated, they basically use the instrument known as *Chinyimba* (indigenous hand bells). At this stage in the circumcision ceremony the *Litungu* is not used (Wanyama 2006: 4-5). Social control is exercised regarding occasion, time and place as well as age and sex of members of the audience.

1.1.2.2. Gender Issues in *Litungu* Music

As gender discourse in ethnomusicology continues to gain significance in current research approaches, this section offers commentary on some gender issues, cultural beliefs and practices among the Bukusu that affected this study. A woman has specified roles within the Bukusu community; this includes cooking for the family, fetching water from the river or well, fetching firewood, cultivating, planting and harvesting, grinding grains and taking care of her husband and children (this involves attending to their emotional and physical needs). These very roles are identified by Bwonya (1998: 56-63) who explains the gender roles among the Maragoli, another sub-tribe of the Luhya community. Ownership of property is reserved only for men; women and children are also owned by the men together with the farm land and houses. The function of women is demonstrated in the fact that they are expected to defer to men especially their husbands, fathers-in-law, and the older brothers of their husbands. Thus in a conversation with any of these men, women will tend (or are expected) to lower their heads, fold their hands, and look down. This is regarded as a sign of submission. Women have no voice of their own; they “are expected to yield to the wishes of men” (Ibid.). They also “identify themselves according to their father’s clans” (Hakansson 1994: 517). As a woman in this community, I have witnessed several instances that relegate women to a subordinate position. For instance, in May 2007 while carrying out fieldwork, a friend was to get married and the usual dowry negotiation was planned. Before this took place, a formal introduction was made whereby the lady to be married, Mary (not her real name) was to introduce her fiancé Tom (not his real name) to her family members. These family members did not only include the immediate family but the extended family of the Bukusu community. Tom came with his mother and uncle since his mother and father were separated. After the usual celebrations of feasting, came the occasion’s core purpose, namely, the introductions. When Tom’s mother introduced herself and her brother-in-law, there was uproar from Mary’s relatives who were mainly Mary’s father, uncles and grandfathers. They instigated a tense environment as they demanded to know why Tom’s father was not present. Accusations were thrown at Tom’s mother for stealing someone’s son, since according to them a child belongs to the father and not to the mother. The Bukusu men refused to talk to her, noting that they could not discuss such matters with a woman. It took the intervention of Mary’s mother, who sought permission from her husband to speak, to have the Bukusu men listen to her, albeit reluctantly. When Tom’s mother left, she was a very distressed woman. Such situations attest to

the community's perception of women and their societal roles even within the performance of *Litungu* music.

Women were not allowed to play or even to touch the *Litungu* in the traditional setting. Playing was the preserve of the male members of the community, but recent changes in the socio-cultural context have seen a few women venture into *Litungu* playing. When I was interviewing the Namatete Band members, I observed a young girl dressed in primary school uniform play a smaller version of the *Litungu*. Regarding this matter we had a conversation with Tom Kukubo (Interview, 7th February 2007).

Researcher: Who could have taught this young lady?

Tom Kukubo: Some children have learnt how to play the *Litungu* from school.

Researcher: You mean there are lessons on how to play the *Litungu* at school?

Tom Kukubo: No! There is a teacher in one of the primary schools in Sirisia, who has been teaching some pupils the Bukusu traditional dance, *Kamabeka*, for the music festival. In the process, the teacher has been forced to teach some pupils how to play the *Litungu* to accompany the dance.

He went on to reveal that she was a female teacher who taught some pupils and had been taught how to play the *Litungu* by her father.

1.1.2.3. Construction of the *Litungu*

The *Litungu* (see Plate 1A) was originally constructed with seven strings. In relation to the pitch given to the first string by the performer/composer, the successive intervals between the strings from left to right form the structure as shown in Figure 1.2.

This instrument is made out of wood measuring “about 75 cm long and approximately half of its entire length is taken up by its oval body. Over the open part of this sound-box is stretched a skin, usually that of a giant monitor lizard, but also nowadays a cowhide is used for this purpose, which is secured round the edges by wooden pegs or, in modern times nails” (Wanyama 2007: 2-3).

In order to emulate other bands, the traditional instruments such as the *Litungu* have been modified by increasing the number of strings from the traditional seven to twelve strings.⁸ However, not all *Litungus* are modified. Seven-stringed versions are performed alongside the modified varieties. The seven-stringed ones are at times performed alongside the guitar and keyboard. Consequently, there is a new sound that is packaged for the music industry.

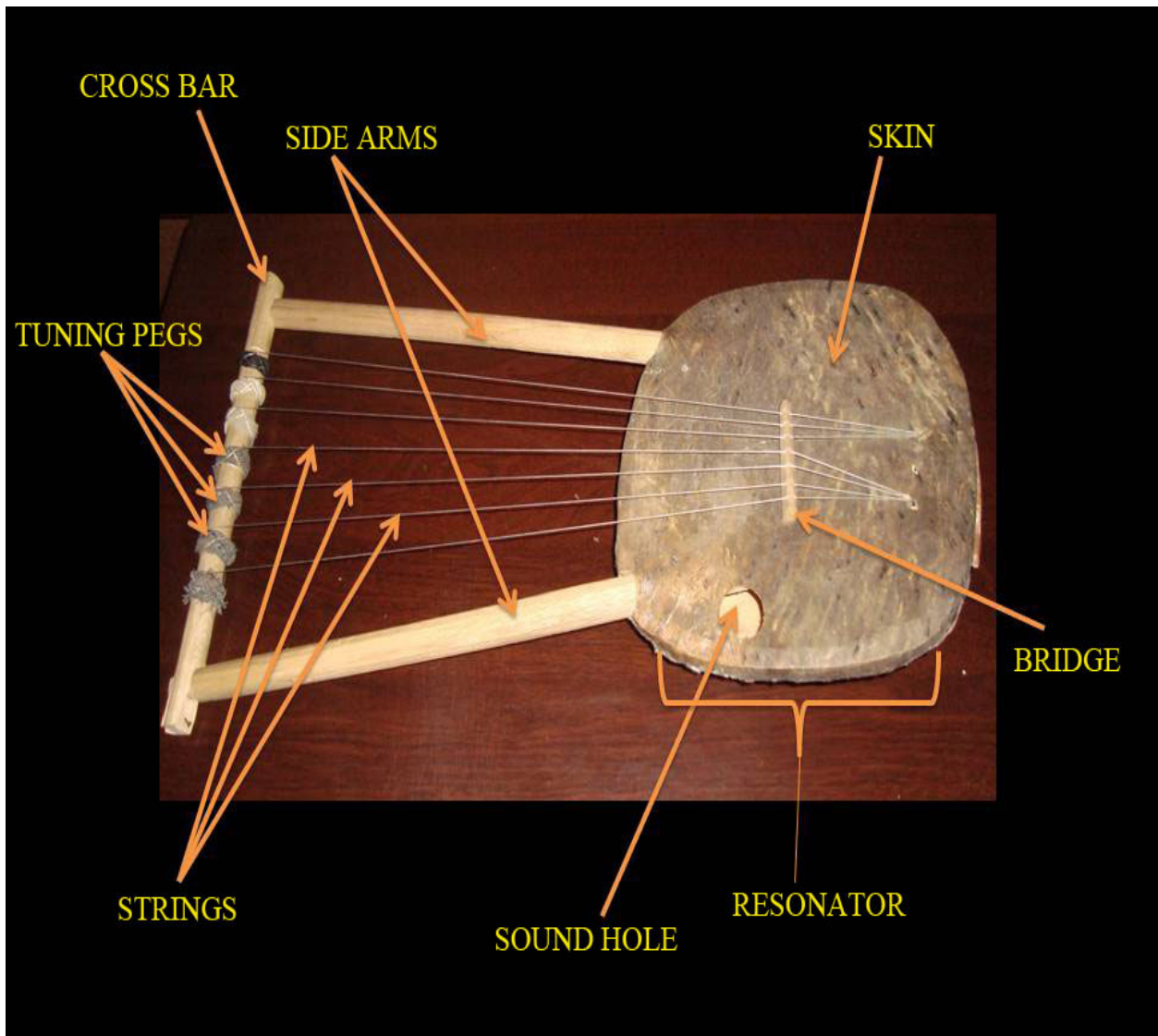
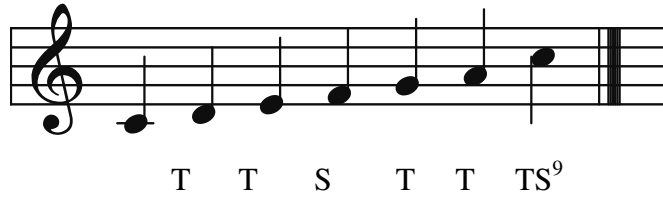


Plate 1A. Parts of the *Litungu*, Photograph taken by Nancy Masasabi, on 7th May 2010 and labelling done by Dominic Khaemba

⁸ The *Litungu* musicians listen to different bands through live performances and mass media in Kenya.

Figure 1.2. An Example of a Seven-Stringed *Litungu* Scallic Pattern



Such changes to musical instruments are as a result of social contact with musics foreign to *Bukusu* culture. As the *Litungu* has been made to perform alongside the guitar, in some cases, the *Litungu* has to conform to a compromised tuning system. The eight-stringed *Litungu* has the following intervals between its strings; T T S T T T S, (see Figure 1.3) while the twelve-stringed one has the intervals T T S T T T S T T S T (see Figure 1.4).

Figure 1.3. An Example of an Eight-Stringed *Litungu* Scallic Pattern

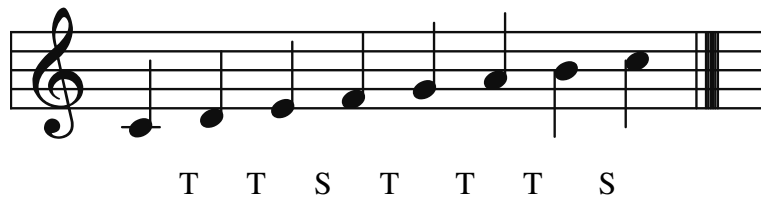
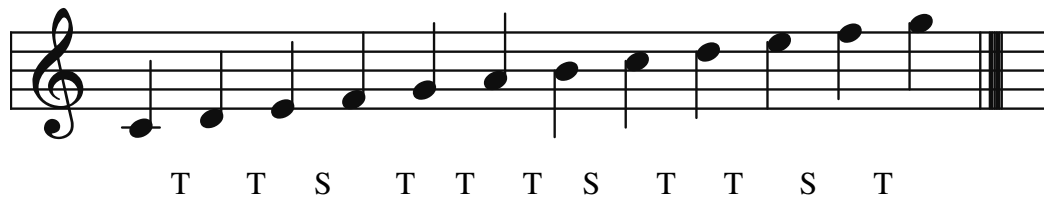


Figure 1.4. An Example of a Twelve-Stringed *Litungu* Scallic Pattern



1.1.2.4. *Litungu* Performance Technique and Ensemble

In performance, the instrument is placed across the lap with the performer in a sitting position (see Plate 1B). The strings are then plucked to produce sound. As the music builds to a climax, the player stands up and begins to dance. It is customary for the player to introduce himself, his instrument and his performance by stating the song title.

⁹ The use of western terms to refer to *Litungu* musical scale is due to the lack of alternative terminologies to depict the relationship between and among the different notes.



Plate 1B. Playing position of the *Litungu* demonstrated by Wekesa Kusienya. Photograph taken by Nancy Masasabi on 12th May 2010. Used with permission by Kusienya

As the music proceeds, the soloist begins a spoken dialogue with other members of the performing group or a member of the audience. The *Litungu* is used to accompany song during weddings, funerals, circumcision and general entertainment. The player can play an ostinato while singing a melody or he can play harmonic accompaniments to the vocal melody. This technique is similar to that of the Batachoni and Bakabras, two Luhya sub-tribes that neighbour the Bukusu. Other techniques executed by the *Litungu* player are encapsulated in Wanyama's statement as follows,

Sometimes, the [*Litungu*] player ... creates variation by singing in a different rhythm from [*sic*] that of the instrument. He may also engage in a solo – response ... between himself and the instrument by calling as the instrument responds and vice-versa. Depending on his experience and level of dexterity, he may also be manipulative in such a way that his left hand may play the melody while the right hand adds harmonic effects, or a counter-melody or other ornamental embellishments ... The player may also purposively [*sic*] initiate interest in his performance by varying singing with chants or normal conversation... Occasionally, most of the [*Litungu*] players are fond of metaphorically commenting on socio-cultural and political issues afflicting the immediate and wider society; hence aesthetically and artistically giving their audience food for thought (Wanyama 2007: 8-9).

The other Bukusu traditional musical instruments include the *Isiriri* (a fiddle), *Chinyimba* (hand bells), *Chimbengele* (wooden sticks), *Siiye* (wooden box), *Engoma* (drum), *Bichenje* (leg jingles), *Lulwika* (horn) and the *Litungu* (a lyre). The *Litungu* is primarily accompanied by the *Isiriri*, *Siiye* and improvised *Engoma* (see Plates 2, 3 and 4 respectively).

The percussion instruments and the horn are added to the performance at the discretion of the performing groups and are not used in all songs. While the *Engoma* is considered an authentic Bukusu musical instrument, it has recently been replaced by an improvised one which is a plastic container whose function is also to carry and store water (see Plate 4). Each of the performing groups in the study did not use the original drum even though it exists. The performing groups liked the sound produced by the plastic container, saying that it provides a good bass sound. The container is turned upside down with the base at the top on which a musician plays the required rhythm using some sticks. The rhythmic patterns traditionally performed on the *Engoma* are performed on this instrument.

During my fieldwork (4th- 7th February 2007, 2nd - 4th May 2007), I observed that it has become common to hear of “Bands” among members of the community who play *Litungu* music, for example the Bungoma Municipal Band, the Nabukambisi Jazz Band and the Namatete Band. These groups have created neo-traditional idioms of *Litungu* performance, while other musicians like Jackson Kisika retain the traditional idiom and instrumental ensemble.



Plate 2. The Isiriri. Photograph taken by Nancy Masasabi, on 6th February 2007. Used with permission by Jackson Kisika



Plate 3. Siiye. Photograph taken by Nancy Masasabi, on 6th February 2007. Used with permission by Jackson Kisika



Plate 4. The improvised drum played by Wekesa Kusienya. Photograph taken by Nancy Masasabi, on 12th May 2010. Used with permission by Kusienya

The Bukusu main cultural dance is *Kamabeka*, the execution of which involves shaking of the shoulders. The *Kamabeka* dance accompanies *Litungu* music. Different terminologies are used to explain the actual movement of shoulder shaking, for instance “‘*khunikinia kamabeka*’ which means to make shoulders tremble or to vigorously shake them, ‘*Khukhupa kamabeka*’ means to flap shoulders backwards and forwards or upwards and downwards, [whereas] ‘*khutiembukha*’ means to sway the upper part of the body, above the abdomen, up and down in response to the [*Litungu* music” (Wanyama 2007: 11). (For examples of these dance movements, see video clips one, two and three on VCD). During my fieldwork, I came across two performing groups whose performance included this dance namely, the Namatete Band and the Sinani Group Band. These two groups have special members whose role is to dance. The other groups do not have an organised dance troupe but normally encourage members of the audience to dance during their performances. As this takes place music acts as a socializing agent for members of the community, allowing for interactions of members of the same or different age group depending on the contexts of musical performance.

In conclusion, we have seen the cultural background in which *Litungu* music and thus *silao-sikeleko* is performed. The construction, tuning and performance techniques of the *Litungu* have been discussed and the *Litungu* accompanying instruments identified. Alongside *Litungu* musical instruments, we have also seen the impact of modernity on the *Litungu* musical instruments. This is particularly in the increase of the number of strings from seven to twelve as well as in the inclusion of the improvised drum. The instrumental ensemble has been appropriated as the performers are exposed to different musics through mass media. Therefore it is important to attend to some of the factors that have enhanced continuity and sustainability of *silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the latter decades of the twentieth century, new contexts and themes have emerged within which music is performed such as the performance of gospel music, and commentary on AIDS and the political situation in Kenya. Together with the new contexts are the traditional contexts that have been affected by the changes in society. For example, some marriage ceremonies are

nowadays conducted in the church in which *Litungu* music is performed. With the changing socio-cultural contexts, the performance of *silao-sikeleko* is likely to be affected. There are some cultural principles that govern the performance of *silao-sikeleko* that can be used within these contexts. Such principles have not yet received scholarly attention within the Bukusu culture. Since *Litungu* music is a chief communicative agent among the Bukusu, and since *silao-sikeleko* is an integral part of this music practice, the study of *silao-sikeleko* gives an insight into the Bukusu musical worldview. Moreover, it is important to analyze the cultural meaning of *silao-sikeleko* that can easily be eroded as a result of socio-cultural, economic and political changes affecting the Bukusu community and the performance of *Litungu* music. The analysis of *silao-sikeleko* can give insight into its origin, meaning, function, occurrence and performance practice. It therefore becomes necessary to address *silao-sikeleko* as an element of musical composition. Hence, the study sets forth to examine the cultural and structural roles of *silao-sikeleko* in the performance compositional process of *Litungu* music.

1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In order to study the cultural and compositional role of *silao-sikeleko* in Bukusu *Litungu* music, I identified four research objectives for this study which are;

1. To identify manifestations of *silao-sikeleko* in Bukusu *Litungu* music;
2. To articulate the thematic relationship between *silao-sikeleko* and other segments of the music such as sung text and the instrumental accompaniment.
3. To identify the structure and socio-cultural context of *silao-sikeleko*.
4. To assess and determine the process and basis of *silao-sikeleko* rendition in the music.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was guided by the following research questions;

1. How is *silao-sikeleko* manifested in Bukusu *Litungu* music?

2. What is the thematic relationship between *silao-sikeleko* and other segments of music such as sung text and the instrumental accompaniment?
3. What are the structure and the socio-cultural context of *silao-sikeleko*?
4. What is the process and basis of *silao-sikeleko* rendition in music?

1.5 RATIONALE AND SIGNIFICANCE

This study is specific to the Bukusu people. The occurrence of *silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music is as captivating as it is educative and appears many times in the performances of this musical genre. This motivated me to look into the function or compositional role of *silao-sikeleko* within the entire musical performance. Such information gives some insight to the formal structure of African musics and the compositional thought processes. With the changing socio-cultural arena it is vital to identify how the compositional process and products are being formulated in the continuous development of the Bukusu musical culture. Thus the study will give guidance to composers of African art music and/or popular music, as well as provide cultural information to ethnomusicologists and others concerned with cultural studies.

I offer four significant aspects of this project. First, I attempt to contribute to the existing knowledge on the creative-compositional procedure of African music in general and Bukusu music in particular. Second, the transcriptions of music could be one way of archiving the said music. Even though transcription of African music does not capture all activities in its performance, it provides a guide as to what researchers and anybody interested in *Litungu* music can expect. Third, the study findings can be useful as a reference source to ethnomusicologists and composers of African music, the characteristics of which can be understood and used as raw material for the composition of Neo-traditional African or contemporary African music. This is because “African composers frequently quote traditional phrase patterns. In newly-composed pieces, phrases often incorporate traditional motives, and these provide the tools for period-construction and working out an entire composition” (Mensah 1998: 224-225). For instance, this is exemplified by the different renditions of common songs among the Bukusu such as *Mayi Muro* by different bands. Fourth, an analytical approach enables an in-depth study of *silao-sikeleko* as a compositional element in its socio-cultural context. It is important to attend to the

functional aspect of this music since “utilitarian musics are said to be incompletely understood whenever analysis ignores the social or ‘extra-musical’ context” (Agawu 2001: 8).

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATION

The scope of this study included the performers and composers of *Litungu* music found in the Bungoma district. The music analyzed was that containing the *silao-sikeleko* element. Whereas Nketia (1988: 177) uses the term “verbal text” to refer to the words or lyrics of a piece of music, Akpabot (1986: 69) uses the term “oral poetry” to refer to song text. According to the above authors, verbal text and oral poetry are both song texts. But, Nketia (1988: 178) further states that “speech and song may alternate within the same piece”, thus suggesting the existence of another category of text that is not sung but spoken. Whichever terminology is used here, there is agreement among scholars about the presence of sung text, spoken text and speech-melody or chants in some African musical renditions (Akpabot 1986: 71; Coplan 2001: 208). My study of *Litungu* music concentrates on speech and speech-melody.

The limitations were in terms of the number of respondents, the number of songs used and methodology. Even though I used snowball sampling it was not easy to contact all the respondents who my research assistants had identified. Some had moved to the neighbouring country Uganda, due to the clashes that took place in Mount Elgon, while others had moved to other parts of Kenya. The areas “affected [by the Mount Elgon clashes] in Bungoma district are Chwele, Malakisi, Mayanja, Tamlega, Sirisia, Lwandanyi, Tulienge, Machakha and Changarai” (Mwai *et al*, 2007: 3). This necessitated the use of the telephone interview for those who were within Kenya, and thus it was not possible to obtain and analyze the visual and audio parts of their music. I was given some audio-recorded songs of the Muvumilivu Band and the Nabukambisi Jazz Band by the Lugulu Bumusika Band. There was no performing group that had all its members present when the research was conducted. Groups took a long time to gather and this often resulted in them performing fewer songs than I had anticipated. However, some groups like the Namatete Band and the Lugulu Bumusika Band provided some of their studio-recorded music to supplement what they were unable to perform.

Through previous experience and being a member of the community I found it necessary to seek the presence of male research assistants. This is because women among the Bukusu are not taken seriously; any serious discussions therefore require the presence of a man (Fred Kusienya, personal communication, 2007).

1.7 THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is informed by three theories; the first one is the theory of musical meaning by Mans (2006) and Nketia (1975), the second is the theory on the relationship between composition and performance by Elliot (1995), and the third is Qureshi's (1986) performance model for musical analysis.

The first theory concerns musical meaning. Musical meaning in African communities is two-fold; intrinsic, that which arises from the music itself and extrinsic, that which is derived outside of the music. This is stated by Nketia (1975: 11-13) as follows,

In African societies, a person is said to understand a piece of music when he is able to relate or respond to it in certain culturally defined ways... Meaning is therefore, related to the musical experience itself (which) consists of both what is derived from the music itself and what is occasioned by it in the musical situation... This meaning may be communicated in several ways: through internal properties of music, expressive changes in them which may be mirrored in observable behaviour; through creative expressions of verbal texts, the nexus between music and dance movement and between music and the context of use.

Similarly Minette Mans (2006: 32) postulates that there is an inherent meaning and delineated meaning in African musics. She explains the inherent meaning as lying "within the configurations of musical materials, such as tonal sequences, chords, harmonic series or cadences, and their relationships, as experienced by the individual" (Ibid.). These materials are basically musical elements that also include rhythmic structures, texture and melody. Mans goes on to define the delineated meaning as derived from the "associations that a culture ascribes to them wherever music is produced, distributed or received" (Ibid.). When meaning is related to the music itself, the materials that constitute that music come into play. In this regard, in order to

fully comprehend Bukusu *Litungu* music, one needs to appreciate *silao-sikeleko* as an element of that music in the same manner as one appreciates song text. Moreover, *silao-sikeleko* has some relationships with other musical elements, especially song text with which it is closely associated. I used Mans' theory to study *silao-sikeleko* as a musical element relating it to sung text and the instrumental phrases in chapter five and six. The delineated meaning is important in this study as the Bukusu community ascribes its own meaning to *silao-sikeleko* within the Bukusu culture. In this sense I studied the Bukusu culture in order to understand how it influences *silao-sikeleko* in Chapter Four.

The second theory is on the relationship between composition and performance. Elliot (1995: 169) explains the relationship between performance and composition stating that “[c]omposing and performing are not mutually exclusive but interdependent”. This is in regard to the improvisational process where composition takes place during performance. Hence, “improvisation involves both performing and composing” (Ibid., 170). Even though Elliot's argument is based on general music, it suffices for African music. Nzewi argues that “Africans practice improvisation as well as performance-composition...In performance-composition, a performer-composer re-creates a piece spontaneously in order to fulfil the demands of an extra-musical intention or a non-musical context” (Nzewi 1997: 67). Nzewi combines the two terms, composition and performance, to create the term performance-composition, a form of improvisation in music that is contextual. This theory is relevant to my study as *silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music is composed during the performance process as one way of elongating the music. *Silao-sikeleko* has a structure of its own which is formulated according to the wishes of the soloist. The creative process of *silao-sikeleko* is not isolated from the compositional thought process of the entire musical piece. As *silao-sikeleko* is composed during performance, it influences the structure of the entire musical performance. The use of the theory of performance composition is discussed and illustrated in Chapter Seven.

The third theory is Regula Qureshi's performance model of musical analysis. Qureshi (1987: 57-58) argues that,

"Musical sound will vary with variation in the context of its performance."¹⁰ Such an undertaking requires an analytical model capable of representing on one side the musical sound structure and on the other, the structure of the performance occasion. On that basis the contextual input into the music can then be assessed through an analysis of the performance process. Ideally, the resulting "grammar" should enable a musically literate reader to understand how variation in performance is generated, or how, abstractly, he could generate such variation himself.

Qureshi's premise stems from the concept that in ethnomusicology, musical meaning is incomplete without an understanding of the contextual input. Here Qureshi (Ibid., 58) states that, "the inclusion of the contextual dimension is indeed indispensable to gaining a full understanding of musical sound, and ... the extra-musical meanings inherent in musical sound give music the power to affect its context in turn". Although Qureshi analyses Indian musical sound in deriving this model, the conclusion that contextual meaning is important in understanding the sound, is similar to the delineated meaning by Mans and Nketia above. An analysis of the performance context encompasses an inquiry into the setting and procedure. Setting includes the dimensions of time, place, personnel, and rationale while procedure includes the behaviour of the performers and listeners, and the listening process (Qureshi 1987: 70). This study does not only entail the sonic aspects of the music which presume transcription of music notation, but an analysis of the contexts within which *silao-sikeleko* is articulated.

The contexts are drawn from the cultural aspects of the Bukusu people since music and culture are inseparable (Hood 1985: 22). Thus, *silao-sikeleko* must be perceived within the Bukusu culture attesting to the delineated meaning according to Mans as discussed above. This calls for the perception of *silao-sikeleko* from the perspective of the community, one community that prescribes what occasions are best suited for elaborate *khulaa-khukeleka*. Music among the Bukusu is performed as an integral part of various socio-cultural functions. In this respect it is significant and meaningful as the targeted audience is expected to decipher its meaning. The producers (performers) of the sound (*Litungu* music) are also important contributors in the construction of musical meaning. Their behaviour is affected by external factors such as time of day and occasion, making musical meaning contextual and complex. Therefore the necessity for contextual analysis of the music is inevitable.

¹⁰ Quotation marks appear in the original version by Qureshi.

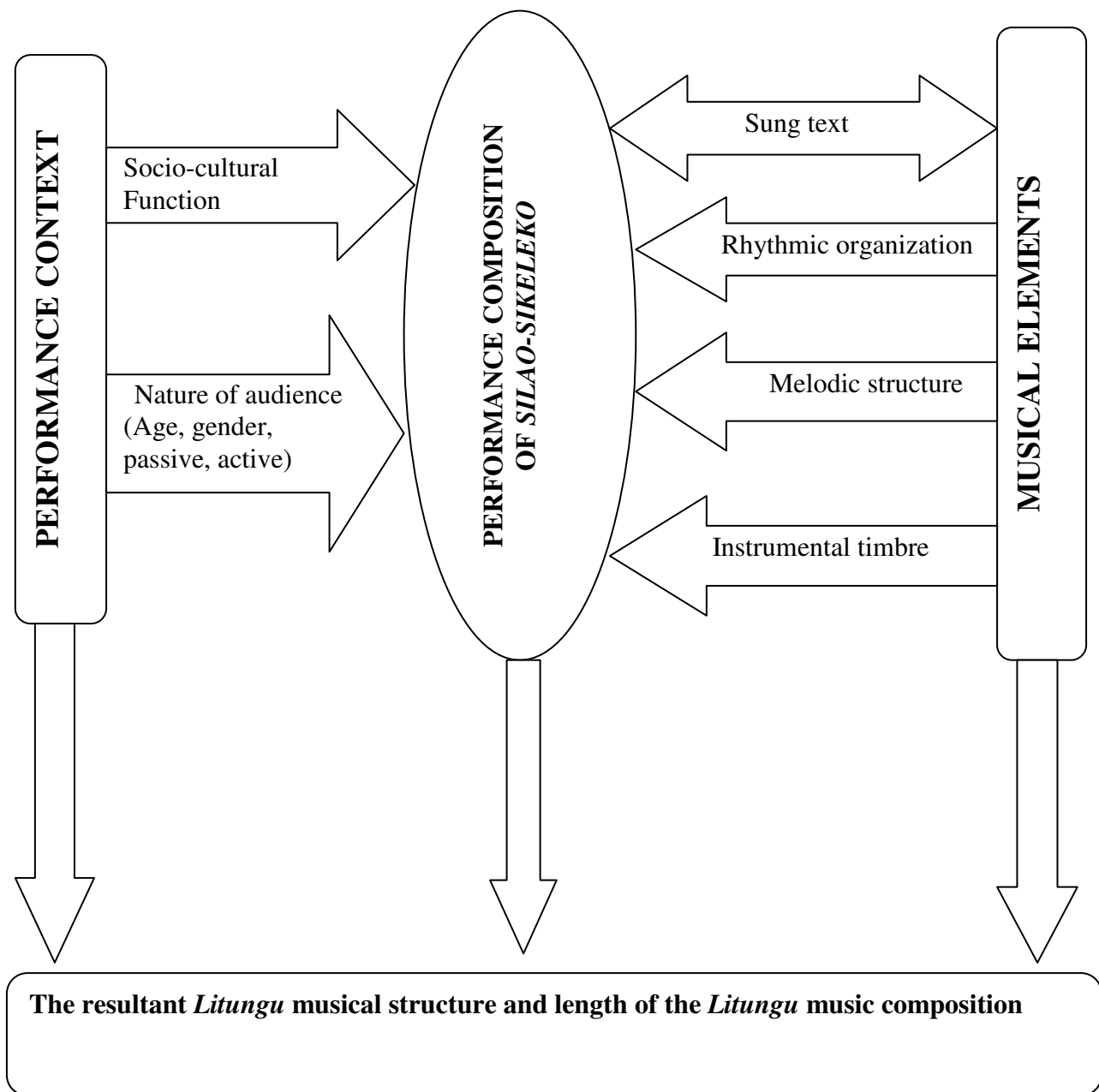


Figure 1.5. Researcher's illustration and interpretation of Regula Qureshi's (1987: 77-78) performance model of musical analysis

In this study the performance composition process of *silao-sikeleko* is of quintessential importance. At the conceptual level, the performance composition process is guided and influenced by the music itself (consisting of various musical elements) and the situation in which the music is performed (see Figure 1.5). The situations entail social and cultural factors that inform and mediate the musical composition. This musical sound, for purposes of this study incorporates rhythm, instrumental ensemble, melody, musical form and *silao-sikeleko*.

There is a relationship between *silao-sikeleko* and other musical elements in Bukusu *Litungu* music such as the sung text and the instrumental phrases. *Silao-sikeleko* and sung text influence each other that is why there is a two pointed arrow for the sung text in Figure 1.5. *Silao-sikeleko* length, words, theme and language use are influenced by the context of musical performance and the performer composers' behaviour. The interface between the musical sound and the context of performance is the performance compositional process. As the context changes, the musical elements especially *silao-sikeleko* also change, creating a variation or change in the resultant sound or music. The musical context and the organization of musical elements similarly affect the resultant structure and length of *Litungu* music.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

A review of the literature that is related to and of concern to this study revealed a lot of information on the compositional aspects and the discussion of song text of east, west, and southern African musics. There is an overwhelming inclination towards communities from Zimbabwe, South Africa, Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana where various compositional elements have been identified and discussed. Even though this is the case, it can be noted that some theories and findings on musics from the above named countries are applicable to Bukusu *Litungu* music, since it is a part of African musics. The review also targets literature on studies on Kenyan communities other than the Bukusu, such as the Luo, Kamba and the larger Abaluhya community. However, *Litungu* music has its own philosophy and aesthetic orientations that separate it from other Kenyan musics. Many scholars who have written about song text (whether they refer to it as song text or oral poetry) do not evade a discussion of the contextual undertones to the music. This study adopted this approach in the discussion of *silao-sikeleko*. There is a paucity of research on the comparison between *silao-sikeleko* and song text.

This chapter is divided into three sections: the first deals with literature that addresses compositional elements in African music; the second deals with speech as a springboard in the formulation of African melodies, song texts and *silao-sikeleko*; and the third addresses the creative process in African music. The conclusion to this chapter identifies and summarizes the knowledge gaps that have been left in relation to the literature reviewed and those that this study sought to fill.

2.2 COMPOSITIONAL ELEMENTS IN AFRICAN MUSICS

In order to understand the compositional process of music, analysis is inevitable. The various musical elements namely, pitch, rhythm, timbre, texture, form, tempo, phrasing and shades of dynamics, provide a convenient basis for analysis. Musical meaning in this sense draws from the

formalism theory particularly with the understanding that, “[m]usical meaning lies exclusively within the context of the work itself, in the perception of the relationship set forth within the musical art” (Meyer 1994: 6). Reimer (1970: 240) also affirms that “formalism concentrates ...exclusively on the internal qualities of an art work and their inherent excellence of proportion”¹¹. I interpret internal qualities as relating to the above-mentioned elements. Therefore, formalism sets the stage for analysis of musical meaning which is grounded in the various musical elements. During fieldwork I noted that among the Bukusu there is no ethnic name for pitch, rhythm, scale, harmony and so on even though the elements exist in their music. To them, music is music in totality. Nevertheless, this conception of music emanating from America and Europe, has not escaped music from the African continent. Indeed as Akuno (2005: 155) notes, “perhaps one of the biggest setbacks that African music has had to suffer is its analysis and judgement using foreign terms and rules”. This study thus asserts that music in Africa also contains the attributes of aesthetics, history and composition which are also attributed to Western music. Therefore what is in the musical composition process of Western music or any other music is equally present in African musics.

Scholars in Ethnomusicology have also had to use European languages to write about music in African communities, because African languages are not universal. This becomes a setback when musical concepts are labelled inappropriately due to lack of vocabulary. The use of non-African languages to analyze music in African communities has served its purpose of disseminating and archiving information on African musics. English has been used mainly as a language for scholarly argument in musicology. Therefore it is used to describe African music and bears upon the current study on *Litungu* music.

Even though structural analysis is essential, musical context in African music cannot be underrated as it also contributes to structure. Chernoff hails an approach that “seeks validity through richly contextualized portraiture ...of particular people in particular places” (1989: 61). The social function or role of music in African society is very important. Music is organized as a community event. In other words, it functions in a given context and draws its meaning from it.

¹¹ Even though Meyer (1994) and Reimer (1970) in their explanation refer to western musical elements, African music constitutes the same musical elements whose study sometimes results in musical analysis. Thus the relationships of the various musical elements in African music also contribute to musical meaning.

In this case meaning in African music draws from the functionalism theory that Akuno (2005: 160) defines as a “view of music that sees meaning in the role that the music plays in the life of those who make it’. Thus “the study of ‘music in culture’ ignores neither music nor culture, neither formal structure nor function but unites both in a comprehensive statement of meaning” (Nketia 1962: 1). In the same vein, Scherzinger (2001: 11) asserts, “[o]n the one hand, then, no amount of context-sensitivity eludes its own formalist tendencies and, on the other, no amount of formalism eludes its socio-contextual insights”. For this reason the study of Bukusu *Litungu* music’s *silao-sikeleko* sections, which form an element of music composition, will be examined in relation to other elements in the music and in respect to the socio-cultural context.

At this juncture I will address some of the compositional elements that have been studied and discussed in African music. Scholars have addressed elements of African music in reference to specific ethnic communities exhibiting unique qualities. Nzewi has discussed African rhythms and states that:

almost every writer on African music (especially on West African music) has had something to say about the intriguing rhythms of the music. The statements made so far seem to unanimously confirm that the rhythms are complex, cross rhythmic, polymetric, polyrhythmic, asymmetric and confoundedly undecipherable. (Nzewi 1974: 23)

In a bid to decipher African rhythm, Nzewi states that, “I use the term *melo-rhythmic* to refer to rhythmic organization that is melodically conceived and melodically born” (Ibid: 24). With specific reference to Nigerian music, Nzewi discusses how rhythms are created and varied in terms of pitch when played on the drums. However, the *Litungu* plays a rhythmic motif on two pitches. This motif is a melody that is rhythmically conceived and is called *kumukhupilkumukhupilolekhupilo*. The *Litungu* rhythms are highly syncopated and create polyrhythms when played against the other musical instruments in an ensemble.

Both the general characteristics of African rhythms and those of specific African communities have been studied. For instance, Temperley (2000: 65-96) pays special attention to rhythm as perceived in children’s and work songs among the Ewe of Ghana. He addresses the organization of rhythm into different groupings in context. Temperley discusses African rhythm from the

perspective of music theory. Rhythmic motifs together with melodic structures are a vital component of this study as their creation and improvisation form a basis upon which the *silao-sikeleko* is articulated.

Anku (1997: 211-238) in his study on the *Adowa* ensemble of the Akan community, transcribed the rhythms performed by various instruments and analysed the resultant rhythms. He emphasized the importance of rhythm in Akan drumming and identified the themes and variations of different structural rhythmic patterns. Anku breaks down the rhythms into different levels of structural units, identifying the “internal” holistic perspective and “external” holistic perspective. He points out that, “the main considerations in understanding the internal holistic perspective are the descriptions of how the performers find their cues and maintain their relationship with other composite parts of the ensemble: ...how the performer perceives his entries” (Ibid., 217). Anku’s internal holistic perspective is vital to this study as the observation and understanding of different cues in a musical ensemble is an important aspect of musical performance in *Litungu* music. Among the performers of *Litungu* music, the soloist gives both auditory and verbal cues from the *Litungu*. Auditory cues include musical passages that signal the entry of another instrument or voice; they also signal a climax. Using a verbal cue, the soloist indicates to a member of the group when to start *khulaa- khukeleka*. In the same way *omukeleki* cues the soloist when he has finished his statements. Also “the external perspective represents a holistic consideration of the ensemble’s rhythmic configuration” (Ibid., 227). Here Anku actually focuses on the playing technique as well as tonal and timbral contrasts. Similarly, in the performance of *Litungu* music, the musicians have different techniques of performance. For instance, some musicians mute the strings while others do not. Some of the performers use the left hand to play the ostinato while others use the right hand. The playing techniques that Anku discusses are not specific to *Litungu* music, but are relevant in this study as the information helps to explain some techniques of *Litungu* music performance.

Rahn (1996) discusses rhythm from the premise that Europe-derived analysis does not give attention to rhythm but concentrates on pitch and form. He states that, “rather than depicting syncopated rhythms merely as deviations from a four-square metrical hierarchy, I endeavour to show how they can be portrayed as highly integrated wholes in their own right” (Rahn 1997: 71).

With this he creates an “alternative to orthodox, Europe-derived accounts” (Ibid). By addressing syncopated rhythms as new entities in their own right, he still acknowledges the fact that when African rhythms are placed against each other, they become variants of the original rhythms. The rhythms keep mutating, a characteristic feature well established in Bukusu *Litungu* music. *Litungu* music also has syncopated rhythms whose complexity is perceived when different instruments perform their individual rhythmic patterns. Rahn’s analytical approach to African rhythm is vital for the purposes of analysis of *Litungu* music as an element that has a close relation with the song texts and *silao-sikeleko*.

Kubik (1964) engages a discussion on *akadinda* music of Uganda. He addresses the techniques of performance, tuning of the *akadinda*, and describes the process of learning how to play. He further transcribes the rhythms and analyses the rhythmic structures. Kubik identifies that there are several rhythmic patterns that unfold concurrently forming a multi-layered rhythmic structure with a rhythmic ostinato. Such a characteristic feature is common to other African musics including *Litungu* music. However, *Litungu* music’s rhythmic structures are drawn from the performance of various percussive instruments. Drawing from Kubik’s approach this study engages a discussion on the structural basis of *Litungu* music through some transcriptions of musical fragments. In addition, *akadinda* music is made up of melodic-rhythmic gestalt patterns similar to those described by Nzewi (1974) in Nigerian music and which are common in *Litungu* music.

In Kenya the rhythm of different communities (Luo, Samia and Kamba) is described in various analytical works in the scholarly literature (Kavyu 1977: 20-31; Ogalo 1995; and Musungu 1999). Ogalo and Musungu analyse rhythms from the Luo and Samia communities respectively and use their findings to compose creative works, but they do not address the Bukusu *silao-sikeleko*. Wanyama (2005) offers some insight into the Bukusu musical rhythm as one element of composition. Wanyama transcribes circumcision songs of the Bukusu music with an aim of analyzing the melodic structures. He however does not pay attention to *silao-sikeleko*. The rhythmic characteristics are qualities Masasabi (2002) used to compose a creative work. These very rhythms are evident in Masasabi’s dissertation project which pays attention to Bukusu music. The songs and *silao-sikeleko* together with the instrumental rhythms create certain

complex textures that bear upon the entire musical performance. The variation of song text and *silao-sikeleko* exhibits a different kind of texture from that found in performances with only song texts.

Harmony is another element that has received attention in African music. Harmony is defined as the simultaneous sounding of melodic parts (Agu 1999: 44; Akpabot 1986: 104). Kubik (1975: 41) identifies African texture as including harmonic counterpoint, homophony and *faux-bourdon*. He discusses harmony in African musics by giving a brief history of how and when it was discovered. Kubik then identifies the streams of African harmony “the so-called thirds tribes and the 8-5-4 tribes, the latter being mainly those ethnic groups which predominantly use either unison and octaves or fourths and fifths in their vocal music” (Ibid., 42). Kubik thus gives a general overview of the state of harmony on the African continent without specific reference to Bukusu music. His argument is supported by Agu who adds that “singing in parts is a usual practice among Africans” (1999: 44-45). The duplication of melodic parts creates harmony which becomes even more interesting when some melodies are varied in some musical phrases against the original melodies. Indeed this organization of harmony is prevalent in *Litungu* music in which the *Isiriri* and voice part duplicate a melody with each part varying the pitches as the performance unfolds. Likewise, Olivier (2007: 108) examines the formal structure of Ju’hoan music and identifies that the melodies are “divisible into segments marked by their falling contour...what is perceived as counterpoint is then the varied and simultaneous repetition of melodic lines which are structurally equivalent”. A similar view is put forth by Senoga-Zake (1986: 3) who asserts that “most Kenyan music singing is in unison, and can be in octaves when women and children are singing together with men, but it is noticeable that in a number of ethnic groups authentic polyphony and harmony are used. In all the above examples, harmony is thus secondary to melody. Traditional music on the African continent is not only made up of vocal music. The complexity of African harmonies arise from a combination of vocal and instrumental genres”. Among the Bukusu, “music is also characterized by parallel harmonies in thirds, which adhere to textual-tonal inflexions and hence enhance textual sense and meaning” (Wanyama 2006: 6-2).

Melodies from the African continent are yet another interesting feature which is closely related to rhythm. They are mostly short repetitive motifs arising from diatonic, tritonic, tetratonic, pentatonic, hexatonic, and heptatonic scales (Akpabot 1986: 5; Senoga-Zake 1986: 2-3; Agu 1999: 34;). Voisin (1994) carried out a detailed study into the construction of musical scales in central Africa. He points out the necessity of “consider[ing] the conceptual dimensions of scale in the various cultures studied” (Ibid: 90). Following this idea, I assume that each community in Africa uses its own scale. In some cases, the scales can be derived from the tuning of some musical instruments within the various communities (see Agawu 2001). Moreover, Uzoigwe (1998) explains the scale structure to which the *Ukom* drums are tuned stating that it is a pentatonic one; while Wood (1983) identifies both the tetratonic and pentatonic scales in Botswana music. She (Ibid., 108) analyses four Tswana melodies and concludes that they are all based on five pitches; mi re do la sol. Wood (Ibid., 111-112) further analyzes Basarwa music and notes that the music is based on four pitches; sol fa re do in shifting order. Likewise I identify the scale to which the *Litungu* is tuned.

Regarding musical form, Wachsmann (1958:55) describes it as “the by product of several processes which include the participation of single persons and groups, the dance formation adopted by these persons and groups and the application of commas, semicolons and full stops in speech when word groups, phrases and paragraphs are shaped.” Wachsmann’s statement suggests the complexity of describing African musical form. Not only do we attribute form to the intrinsic components of music but we also address the extra-musical. The dialogue between solo and response, together with the dance patterns bears upon musical form. In this study the use of solo response is inevitable in *Litungu* music. The latter part of Wachsmann’s statement explains how text contributes to form. This text could be song text or *silao-sikeleko* as both have phrases that are punctuated even if the musicians may not be aware of it. Jacobs (1986: 145) describes form as “the layout of a piece of music considered as a succession of sections”. This is important in this study, as it analyzes the structure of *Litungu* music, which is made up of different sections (sung text, *silao-sikeleko* and pure instrumental sections).

From a general African perspective, Agu (1999: 15) maintains that the main structural forms of African songs are:

- a) The Call and Response
- b) The Call and Refrain
- c) The Solo and Chorused Refrain, and
- d) The Mixed Structural Forms
- e) Through composed

Agu goes on to describe these forms with the assistance of examples from Nigeria. Nketia concurs with this and explains these forms in detail as follows:

The simplest form is the one in which the lead singer sings an entire verse through, repeated immediately by the chorus. Other songs are organized into clear sections for a lead singer and a chorus. In the simplest type, each section consists of a single phrase, sung by the lead singer and answered by the chorus with a set response...a masai chorus may be organized in three parts: one for the lead singer, one for the chorus that responds to the lead sections, and an ostinato, which is sung by another group against the alternating call-and-response phrases. (Nketia 1988: 141-143)

All the musical forms described above can be found in *Litungu* music. The use of an ostinato among the Bukusu is done by the *Litungu* and performed against a vocal call and response. Nketia does not address *silao-sikeleko* as being in this form yet *silao-sikeleko* in the Bukusu *Litungu* music has instances of a dialogical structure which can also be in a manner similar to that of song texts. These structural forms arise from the presentational aspect of the music which relies on context and the creative ability of the performers/composers. This is why Nketia (2002: 147) says, “details of form and structure grow out of the creative process”. Indeed *Litungu* musical performances exhibit this characteristic feature of an unfolding form as the performance ensues: the structural aspects arise from the creative input of the performers during the entire musical activity. Apart from presentational and ensemble forms we have thematic forms. Wanyama explains that “thematic development is based on spontaneity, extemporization and creativity... moreover, by extemporizing and improvising, soloists in Bukusu circumcision music create melodies/thematic variations, which constitute developmental procedures in the tradition of performance-composition” (Wanyama 2006: 6-2).¹² The themes are drawn from life experiences of the composers and other members of society and events in the community. While

¹² Extemporization and improvisation mean the same thing, which is composition in the process of performance.

Wanyama bases his conclusions on circumcision music, the current study concurs that these ideas can be applied to *Litungu* music of the Bukusu community.

Studies that reflect on a particular musical instrument upon which musical analysis is done are common. For instance, Anku (1997: 212) describes a specific ensemble, which is “the *Adowa* ensemble (Akan funeral music)...made up of ...two boat-shaped bells (*dawuro*), two hourglass drums (*donno*), one hand drum (*apentemma*), one stick drum (*petia*) and a pair of talking drums (*atumpan*)”. Paul Berliner (1976: 451-482) discusses the songs accompanied by the Shona instrument known as the *Mbira Dzavadzimu*. He places special emphasis on the context and social functions of the text. Another example is given by Cooke (1971: 79-90) who highlights the *Ludaya*, a flute among the Gisu of Eastern Uganda. He provides information on the *Ludaya*'s construction, method of performance and the musical and social context of its performance. Cooke explains that “it is played mostly for entertainment and has no significant part in any ritual” (Ibid., 82). He goes on to analyze the songs performed on the *Ludaya* in terms of rhythm, tones and phrases. This kind of specialization allows for a thorough insight into musical structures of various musical types in the different communities within Africa.

In Kenya, some scholars (Njoora 2000; Mushira 2005; and Otoyoy 2006) have attended to the incorporation of traditional musics from various ethnic communities and popular music in the school curriculum. This is because music plays a major role in national solidarity; hence teachers should familiarize themselves with the various ethnic musics in Kenya. These scholars (Ibid.) have approached Kenyan music from a general perspective. However, there are other scholars who have paid attention to specific ethnic musics. Omolo-Ongati (2005: 12-20) analyses the current trends in Orutu music with the aim of identifying the changes that have taken place in performance contexts. The approach taken here is focusing on the music performed by a specific musical instrument (Orutu) of the Luo community. The construction of this instrument is similar to the *Isiriri* found among the Bukusu. Among the Isukha and Idakho communities in Kenya is a drum set called the *Isukuti* drums which Mindoti (2005) discusses. He describes the playing technique on the instruments, mentioning the accompanying instruments and describes the *Isukuti* dance accompanied by the *Isukuti* drums. Miya (2005) likewise focuses on *Isukuti* music with the aim of establishing the educational content in the music. In the process transcriptions of

Isukuti rhythms are given. Similarly in this study transcriptions of melodies are provided as examples of songs performed on the *Litungu*. Miya explains the functions of song texts in the Isukha community and states that, “the texts relay messages related to their cultural norms and practices; behaviour expected of the societal members which render them as good” (Miya 2005: 86). I approached the study of *Litungu* music in the same manner adopted by the above scholars (Omolo-Ongati, Mindoti and Miya), by focusing on a particular musical instrument in Kenya. I address the role or function of *silao-sikeleko* as performed in *Litungu* music.

In his thesis, Akumu (2004) pays attention to an ensemble music called “*Ohangla*” performed among the Luo of Kenya. Akumu analyzes song texts by collecting and transcribing music. He identifies the musical characteristics of *Ohangla* in terms of tonality, intervallic patterns, rhythm, harmony, vocal techniques, dynamics, tempi and themes. He concludes that the musical form of *Ohangla* is ternary, the song structure is solo and response and the two main themes are love and praise. Akumu does not mention *silao-sikeleko* in his analysis. This study goes beyond the two themes (love and praise) studied by Akumu. However, his method of transcription and analysis of song texts is also employed in this study in order to establish the role of *silao-sikeleko*. Like various scholars, he uses staff notation which is a convenient method of musical representation. Likewise I use this method to reveal the rhythmic and melodic phrases of Bukusu *Litungu* music.

Kamenyi (1980: 30-31) takes a descriptive approach to articulate the construction of the *Litungu* together with the materials used in its making. He describes the accompanying instruments, method of playing and tuning of the *Litungu*. Although Kamenyi’s information is brief, it concurs with Senoga-Zake (1986: 142), who provides the following information about the Bukusu *Litungu* ensemble:

...formerly each player used to play alone, and sing in unison with his instrument, but such players have found it more entertaining to play in groups of two or even three, and also play different strings as an accompaniment instead of playing in unison with the voice. The *litungu* is played to the accompaniment of the *luyengele*, also known as *chimbengele* or *luhengele*, a long, narrow piece of wood, [and] a board, which is struck with sticks.

In addition, “[a]part from the earlier mentioned *luhengele*, the traditional *litungu* ensemble may comprise of other instruments such as jingles (*bichenje*), a drum, *efumbo*¹³ (in plural *chifumbo*), the horn, *lulwika*, an antelope horn and a fiddle, *silili*. In most cases, the ensemble alternates between playing on its own and accompanying [the] singing” (Wanyama 2007: 4). Wanyama’s instrumentation is the ensemble this study identifies as the musical accompaniment for *silao-sikeleko*.

It has been noted above that various musical elements have been studied in specific African communities. The Bukusu community is one such community whose various elements have been addressed (Masasabi 2002; Wanyama 2006). Various musical elements have received scholarly attention including, instrumental musics, harmony, rhythm, melody, scales and musical form. The concept of *silao-sikeleko* as an element of composition is not given much attention in scholarly works as addressed above and this is a focal point of this study. The methods of collecting songs through recording and transcription of songs using staff notation informs this study and plays a significant role in establishing the musical and thematic content of song texts and *silao-sikeleko*.

2.3 SONG TEXTS AND *SILAO-SIKELEKO*

This section deals with studies on song texts. By song texts I refer to the sung words set to music and interpret these as different from *silao-sikeleko*. Arom (1985: 10) maintains that “melody is only conceived as clothed in the words that it conveys ... it then becomes ‘song’ ”. In other words, one ingredient of a song is words or song text. The function of song texts cannot be underestimated; they are “an avenue of communication, a medium for creative verbal expressions which can reflect both personal and social experiences” (Nketia 1988: 189). In Bukusu *Litungu* music the songs also reflect the experiences of the performers. They represent an avenue through which members of the community relay their artistry and emotions. According to Myers (1996: 28) there are two renditions of speech in music; one is “story telling,

¹³ “The *efumbo*, [*chifumbo* in plural] found among the Samia and Marachi, is also found among the Bukusu. It is slightly longer than the *Isukuti*. It rather resembles the *musondo* of the Giriama and slightly shorter than *embegete* of the Kuria. All the above are covered with a skin and played on one side only, which is the only side covered. The tuning is done by warming the drums in on a fire or leaving them in a hot sun” (Senoga-Zake, 2000: 179).

in which the narrator (or audience) may sing when appropriate to the tale”. This rendition of speech is common in many cultures on the African continent after the evening meal. Olson (1982: 73) discusses five examples of such tales from the Arimi of Tanzania. He explains the tale and the song accompanying the tale. Another rendition of speech is “a song [that] may begin with a spoken call-and-response section, followed by a section in which the singing voice is used; similarly, a song may begin with a sung section, followed by a spoken section and another sung section” (Nketia 1988: 178). It is the latter rendition that is of interest in this study. This alternation is also found in Bukusu *Litungu* music but performed as an inherent feature against a continuous instrumental background. This study is limited to the use of speech and song among the Babukusu. The bulk of literature on song text shows minimal attribution to *silao-sikeleko*. This study discusses song texts *vis-à-vis silao-sikeleko* in each musical performance, in terms of meaning, context, messages and length. Various African song texts from Zimbabwe, South Africa and Kenya are artistically devised and have been the focal point of scrutiny by scholars who pay attention to their contexts and use as cultural indicators, social commentaries, proverbs, metaphors and poetry (Nandwa 1976; Berliner 1976; Coplan 1991; Olilo 1991; Bwonya 1998; Mindoti 1999; Coplan 2001 and Idamoyibo 2006).

Idamoyibo (2006) provides an in-depth discussion of language use in the Igoru music of the Okpe community of Nigeria. He begins by transcribing music with text in the original language and providing English translations. This is followed by a discussion of metaphors, imagery, symbolism, proverbs among others in the song text. He ends by addressing the philosophical thought processes and poetic forms in the music. His study is similar to the current one in the sense that both refer to a specific traditional music within an African community. The use of language is a key aspect of this study. Whereas Idamoyibo concentrates on the sung texts, this study on *Litungu* music will address sung text alongside *silao-sikeleko* in its cultural context.

Coplan (2001) looks at the origin of Basotho migrant songs and analyses their poetry and texts (*sefela*). He points out that, “in mode of performance *sefela* clearly falls ambiguously between songs and aesthetic speech... as a song *sefela* employs stabilized pitches, but in a declamatory style in which the tune is made to serve textual rhythm and emotional impact” (Ibid., 208). In a sense the *silao-sikeleko* in this study has similar characteristics to the *sefela*. It sometimes falls

between song and speech but has indefinite pitches. This occurs where *silao-sikeleko* in Bukusu *Litungu* music takes the form of speech-melody. Nevertheless, *silao-sikeleko* goes beyond speech-melody to also include talking against instrumental accompaniment. There is a strong use of metaphors in the *sefela* which Coplan (1991:188) explains as follows, “Like the composers of Yoruba *Jújú*, Basotho migrant singers employ cultural metaphors by turn profound and comic to cross social boundaries and integrate opposing social domains”. Coplan (2001: 63) explains that “the ability to make metaphor is an essential aspect of talent and expertise for musicians as for the composers of verbal text”. Coplan’s use of the term verbal text refers to the half spoken-half sung texts which take the form of speech-melody that are a part of my definition of *silao-sikeleko*. The use of metaphors in music is important in the artistic creation of *silao-sikeleko* among the Bukusu.

Ojaide addresses song texts as being poetic with specific reference to *Udje* dance songs of the Urhobo people of Nigeria. The argument given by Ojaide is that *Udje* dance songs are used satirically to punish those who commit crimes within the community as “songs strongly attack what the traditional society regards as vices” (Ojaide 2001: 44). Here Ojaide provides a role or function of songs among the Urhobo people. He goes on to give a historical contextualization of the performance and composition of the *Udje* dance songs, writing the song texts and providing their English translations. From a literary perspective Ojaide pays attention to the song texts without the sonic aspect and also omits a detailed discussion of the instrumental accompaniment to these songs. However, themes captured in the songs are discussed in detail with a whole section on the language used in the song texts. He uses concepts such as ellipses, metaphors, symbolism and neologism among others in his discussions of the song texts. Likewise this study on *Litungu* music provides a brief history of the Bukusu people and the written song texts. It analyzes the themes used in song texts together with those of *silao-sikeleko* which is not addressed by Ojaide. The study also examines the language devices inherent in the *silao-sikeleko* and song texts in *Litungu* music.

Eyoh (2001: 105) discusses Clark-Bekederemo’s poetry which is basically song text. The songs are from the Urhobo community in Nigeria. Here song texts are poetry just as is the case in most songs among the Bukusu. Eyoh places emphasis on the rhythmic aspect of the songs. He

highlights the interrelationship existing between African musical rhythm and African oral and written poetry, quoting Finnegan (1970: 75-76) who states that, “[m]usic is so common in African poetry that its occurrence has sometimes been taken as one of the main differentiating marks between prose and verse [...]. To allow ourselves to forget the importance music may assume in certain cases of African poetry is to minimize the [...] aesthetic appeal of these instances of literature”. Eyoh concentrates on the stylistic devices in the poem and how effectively the message is communicated. Stylistic devices may not be the core of my study but they cannot be avoided when dealing with language use in Bukusu songs.

In terms of text definition, Euba uses the term “text” to refer to all words that are used within a musical performance. He explains that there are two modes of text, the song mode and that where text is spoken rather than sung. He gives examples of texts in the English language which are performed against “pre-composed music for African instruments” (Euba 2001: 128). These kinds of texts are of concern to this study. Euba, however, does not give a specific name for the second mode of text which is spoken rather than sung. He also addresses the texts in the English language using his own creative compositions while in this study the musical examples are derived from the Bukusu community’s *Litungu* music in the Lubukusu language. The core of Euba’s argument is that text is a signifier in a musical composition and texts are used to establish African identity in a composition. However, he does not analyse the structural role of text in the musical compositions.

Van Damme (2000: 8-20) discusses verbal arts as comprising proverbs and sayings. He addresses them as a means of understanding African cultures, approaching verbal arts as rich sources of cultural values. He discusses several authors from the same perspective. However, Van Damme does not relate the proverbs to music or view them as song texts; yet, verbal arts are a subset of *silao-sikeleko* in Bukusu *Litungu* music. This is because some of the *silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music is made up of proverbs while the rest relay information in the form of stories and the personal experiences of the *bakeleki*.

Vail and White (1991) discuss oral poetry and the functions of oral poetry among the southern African communities. They conclude that poetic license allows people to express their versions

of history. Thus “songs and poems...embody ...themes [which] are in themselves definitive readings of history” (Ibid., 320). Oral poetry is used here to refer to song texts and poetry. Song texts are written down in their original language, accompanied by their translations. A detailed analysis of the meaning of the songs then follows. Next is a description of how language has been used in the song. This method of analysis is useful to this study which also has written song texts that are analyzed in terms of meaning and language used. Experiences are not only “mapped” in southern African songs but also among the Bukusu. Vail and White use the term “mapping of experiences” to refer to the process of recording or storing of human experiences by musicians in their songs. Songs thus encode and communicate a people’s history. The history of the Bukusu is given in *Litungu* music’s song text and *silao-sikeleko*. While Vail and White emphasize praise poetry among the different southern African communities, my study addresses song texts with various themes and concentrates on the relationships between *silao-sikeleko* and song texts.

Amuka (1991) explains the process of creating texts with particular reference to oral texts. Oral texts include songs as they are expressed and communicated aurally in African traditional societies. He provides a different angle to his explanation by including the audience, stating that, “oral literary texts are part of a discourse that includes the audience” (Amuka 1991: 1). The audience in this study is vital as it determines the kind of language used in songs and especially in sections that require *khulaa-khukeleka*. Amuka uses the term “genres” to refer to proverbs, sayings, riddles and narratives and argues that they generate one another. His description of proverbs is that, they “are the juice with which words are eaten in certain African societies” (Ibid., 12). These genres which Amuka considers are also discussed in this study as language devices found in song texts and *silao-sikeleko*.

Amuka (1978) in his thesis addresses the figurative nature of the *Luo* language. He establishes an ordinary and extra-ordinary use of speech, the former as use of language in ordinary sense and the latter refers to language use in figurative context. Amuka identifies another style of language which he calls the “purposive in the use of sounds”. First and foremost it is a truism that all language sounds are purposive in every case that they are applied. And this is the case whether they convey sense or nonsense” (Ibid., 343). Amuka implies that all language sounds are

intentionally used. Similar to Amuka's approach, this study discusses the contextual use of language in songs. The use of sounds such as "Ai" "Oh" and "Ee" are common in *Litungu* music and their main purpose is to express emotions. Examples of these are found in the song *Eswa* by the Kwane Band.

Berliner (1976: 451) uses the term "*kudeketera...* to refer to the verbal accompaniment of mbira music... [and to the] word as a noun referring to the general style which it implies and to the texts themselves". Berliner goes on to analyze the content and social function of the texts, placing much emphasis on their contextual meanings. Thus Berliner identifies the name given to that kind of poetry which he also terms as a verbal accompaniment to music. Similarly I analyze music of the Bukusu played on the *Litungu* but with emphasis on the *silao-sikeleko* being different from song texts.

Jones (1975/6) studies *Utenzi* which is a Swahili word for epic poems. He concentrates on establishing the Bantu and Arabic influences on the poetic metre and lay-out of the *utenzi*. Indeed Jones (Ibid., 120-121) establishes that in *utenzi*, "the tune is in Arabic mode: the words are in an Arabic poetic metre (eight syllables to a line), with an Arabic system of rhyme...each musical phrase, while preserving its musical identity, is subject to a large number of subtle variations both in the notes used and in the rhythm. These variations are thoroughly in line with African (including Bantu) musical practice where in tonal languages the tune must as far as possible agree with the rise and fall of the speech-tones". Even though this study did not examine the text-tune relationship, it was able to identify that the musical phrases lengths governed the amount of text sung in that phrase. Here ellipses were common and also the use of sound syllables as explained earlier, thus this was a case of variation. Moreover, there was a lot of variation during cyclic repetition of the instrumental phrases upon which *silao-sikeleko* was performed.

2.4 CREATIVE PROCESS IN AFRICAN MUSIC

Music making in African society evokes communal activity. Even though there are instances of solo musical performances, African communities participate more in group musical activities than solo performances. This means that “all members of the species [community] are basically as capable of dancing, singing and making music, as they are of speaking a natural language” (Blacking 1981: 9). In addition, Machlis (1963: 6) postulates that, “man possesses in his vocal cords a means of producing sound, in his body an instrument for rhythm, and in his mind the capacity to imagine and perceive musical sound”. The latter argument implies that every member of the community is a musician. In the African traditional setting, at least every member of the community would be involved in music making on several occasions. The current context of the Bukusu people does not allow for this because members of the Bukusu community do not stay together in one area as in the past. Instead, they are scattered all over the country in search of education and jobs. This has made the Bukusu people less involved in their cultural musical activities as compared to the past. Therefore, the performers of *Litungu* music who are part of the Bukusu community are the main performers, creators and listeners. Other members of the community are passively involved in the musical performance. A few become involved in the performance through dancing and singing, depending on the context. The performers of *Litungu* music in this study have all proved to be composers of music and therefore they have a creative ability.

If indeed African traditional musics are embedded in an oral tradition, how much of it is created? Also, who are the owners of African music? Before something is created there must be a creator. Whereas in the Western art music context scores of music are provided, each giving credit and acknowledgement to the composers/arrangers of texts and/or music; in Africa, the composition of music is not always credited to a specific person. Much of folk music in African society is communally owned. However, the contribution of individual composers in the performance of African musics can not be underestimated as this has been an issue of concern with a number of scholars, who argue that African composers must not be rendered invisible (Blacking 1961; Erlmann 1989 and Ballantine 2000). These scholars have identified certain individuals within the African society who actually compose or improvise. For example Blacking (1989: 19- 23)

identifies Ida Sakala, Annia Banda and Lekesina Banda of Ng'oma clan, Ciluku village, from Western Zambia as composers not only of folk music but also of art music. These women took turns performing a pounding song (*nzimbo za muwende*) and a beer song whose lyrics reflected some of the problems women faced in a matrilineal society and the misfortunes that could afflict young women. Blacking explains how Ida creates new texts on existing melodies by varying some texts and adding new conversations within the songs. Such conversations were personal and very emotive. With this, Blacking (1989: 23) concludes that, "to refer to that lovely composition as 'ethnic music' would be an insult to the creativity and sensitivity of its composer". Another composer is Joseph Shabalala, who has been described as a composer of the male choral style known as Isicathamiya (Ballantine 1996: 3). Ballantine further describes the process through which Shabalala's compositions undergo, and where his melodic ideas come from. Shabalala specified that his musical ideas originated from dreams. At times he closes his eyes and sees something which he later writes a song on while other times he draws from situations and experiences around him. These two composers create within an existing traditional musical style. Similarly, in *Litungu* music when a performer composer creates new text and new musical motives in a given context, he actually composes. As a result the copyright of such a performance can be credited to the performer composers.¹⁴ When a composer creates music during performance, the product is a culturally-accepted art work. This work becomes the traditional rendition of a piece that another performer composer uses to extemporize. Before being permitted to perform in public, musicians in African communities are expected to have an interest in and attend musical events. Indeed as Nketia (1988: 59) points out, "Exposure to musical situations and participation are emphasized more than formal teaching". Therefore musicians must spend time listening to music and observing how other musicians perform and demonstrate their abilities.

In his work, Uzoigwe (1998) attends to the structural aspects of Ukom music as performed in Igbo communities in Nigeria. He identifies variation as the central organization principle in the music and discusses four types of variations. They include perpetual variation, limited variation, ostinato variation and chainsong variation. For each of these he transcribes music examples to

¹⁴ For an in-depth study of music and copyright in the context of archived African music recordings in South Africa, see McConnachie (2008).

substantiate his arguments. Similarly, Bukusu *Litungu* music makes use of repetitions which are actually variations of an established musical construct. Uzoigwe also analyses the cultural background of various texts and explores their underlying conceptual framework. In other words he explores the processes through which a performer composer creates texts in the performance of Ukom songs. Likewise I use the same methodology but in relation to *silao-sikeleko* and not just song texts.

In his discussion of Nzewi's argument, Wa Mukuna (1997: 240) states that "the improvisational creative process in instrumental music...is an attainment in itself. It exists as a process of fulfilment during the creation and ceases to exist after its completion". Wa-Mukuna acknowledges the reality of this statement in reference to instrumental music and not vocal music and argues that language is the governing principle of vocal music because melodic structures adhere to language contours. Hence, "the creative process in African music is culturally defined, inspired by a variety of cultural manifestations and practices peculiar to an ethnic group" (Ibid.). This makes the performance of African music sound different each time the same piece is performed. Consequently, "a time-line pattern is recycled but not repeated with each recurrence, thereby providing a *same-but-different* pattern to the total creative process of the performance-composition" (Ibid., 242). Each culture has its own mode or basis for creativity. Since each culture has its own language, the very language is crucial in the organization of vocal music. Thus Bukusu musicians have their own basis for the inception and execution of *silao-sikeleko*; an area this study seeks to uncover.

Akpabot (1986: 76) explains that "ritual poets do not compose their own material. What they do is bring their individual expertise to bear on an established traditional format", which they must of course, learn first. In this respect his argument reveals an existing background that acts as a basis for the creative process. The performers in this respect do not necessarily come up with something new. The use of a cultural format upon which performers base their musical composition is a concept that is shared by Elliot (1995: 162) who maintains, "one learns to compose by being inducted into culture-based and practice-centered ways of musical thinking that the [particular] group of musical practitioners maintain, refine and embody in landmark composition". To do this, composers of music in indigenous African idiom must be conversant

with their ethnic language as well as the rhythmic, melodic and structural concepts of their music. This approach guides one's musical thinking to the cultural practice of one's own community. Among the Bukusu, musicians must be conversant not only with their language in order to perform the *silao-sikeleko* fluently and skilfully, but also with the various social and cultural contexts that allow for the performance of *silao-sikeleko*. An orientation of the structural features of *Litungu* music is also important for them. After listening, one then begins to apply what was heard through performance. It is upon the learnt criteria that composers "decide to follow, adjust, redevelop or transcend" (Ibid.). The following are some examples of this in the literature on African music. First, among the Ibibio, "the cantor enriches the performance by shortening a sentence here, lengthening a phrase there, introducing ululation and sometimes introducing the opening declamation with a slight variation" (Akpabot 1986: 76). Second, "in the *Neporo* music of Ghana, women [singers]...improvise along set rhythmic phrase patterns by lengthening or shortening notes with anticipations and other heterophonic devices". Wiggins (1998: 139) further explains that there is a greater individual variation in the performance of the melodic rhythm. A third example is taken from Nketia (1988: 55) who observes that, "a good Akan singer... must be able to improvise texts, to fit tunes to new words [and] to set tunes to words extemporaneously". These examples may be from West Africa but the idea of variation is common in all African musics and thus is applicable to Bukusu *Litungu* music.

Similarly, Chernoff (1985: 3) supports the above argument by stating that, "most African artists...orient themselves more towards creating within the continuing of their traditions". He emphasizes the importance of tradition in a person's life which allows him/her to be creative and innovative. Even though his argument is based on the African drum, it can suffice for an African stringed instrument. Since one cannot create outside his/her orientation, *Litungu* musicians have a framework within which to create. *Silao-sikeleko* therefore follows the same trend where composers have a point of reference, namely their tradition.

Cox (1985: 373) philosophically examines the theory that musical works are discovered and concludes by arguing for the fact that musical works are created. He states that:

- (a) The number of elements and possible combinations of or relationships among elements available to a composer is virtually inexhaustible. It seems we are likely to refer to a work as a creation when the compositional process involves an

infinite array of possibilities. (b) Most musical systems are artificial and dynamic. As a result, sonic elements have new and different implications in different historical contexts. (c) The style of a musical work is the result of human action, and is usually quite personal. The import of a discovery is that which is discovered, but the essence of a musical composition is a personal expression.

Cox's argument is drawn from a general perspective of music creativity in the sense that musical creativity does not differentiate the cultural aspects that bear upon a musical creation. It is true that the Bukusu *Litungu* musician has a pool of elements to choose from but the musician is limited within the acceptable Bukusu tradition, within which he/she creates. The second point applies to *Litungu* music because changes are introduced to suit different occasions or contexts.

2.5 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to identify knowledge gaps in the musical elements of African music. The review noted that a number of musical elements have been studied in the context of various musics of West, East and Southern Africa. Among the elements that have received scholarly attention are rhythm, melodies, scales, harmony, form and sung text. Speech and speech-melody have not been studied as musical elements in detail. For each element an analytical approach is taken in its discussion. I take a similar approach in addressing *silao-sikeleko* as a musical element and proceed to break it down into structural units and relate it to other musical elements within *Litungu* music. A common method of scholarly enquiry has been attending to a certain musical element in relation to music on a specific instrument such as the flute and *mbira* among others. This approach can be utilized in the study of Bukusu *Litungu* music. The literature revealed that the creative processes of African musical composition are culture specific. The role or place of a community's culture cannot be underestimated as this is what shapes the aesthetic and philosophical orientation of performing musicians. This has been discussed in the theoretical framework using Qureshi's model of musical analysis. This model cites the influence of cultural context on the sonic aspect of *Litungu* music that creates variation in the performance composition. There is a need to have studies on the creative process of specific musics of specific communities on the African continent since each community's culture differs even though they may have some shared characteristics.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with a discussion of the fieldwork experiences. I also outline the research design and methodology used in this study. Implicit to this discussion are the qualitative and quantitative aspects in this case study as well as the ethnographic research design. The data collection methods and the data analysis process are also discussed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the scope and limitations of this study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

The foundation of this study is ethnographic and textual analysis research design. Ethnographic, case study can be described as “studies that are usually qualitative in nature and that aim to provide an in depth description of a small number (less than 50) of cases” (Mouton 2001:149). Textual analysis refers to “analysis of texts (religious or literary) in order to understand the meaning of such texts” (ibid: 167). The study of Bukusu *Litungu* music called for attention of a small group of people who were the performers of the said music. Every aspect of their music necessitated a detailed description of how, when, where and by whom, the music was performed. In this study *silao-sikeleko* was analyzed in order to establish its meaning *vis-à-vis* that of song text, and how the ensuing *silao-sikeleko* related to other musical elements. The process of *silao-sikeleko* performance involved human behaviour which is best explained using words; hence it necessitated the use of qualitative research techniques. Dooley (2004: 265) states that “Qualitative research from the tradition of phenomenology describes social process from the point of view of particular actors rather than testing general causal claims”. I understood these actors to be the musicians. O. Mugenda and A. Mugenda (1999: 202) also support the use of a qualitative approach to study African art forms of which *Litungu* music is one. They argue that:

Some research and evaluation experts have argued for the qualitative approach especially in Africa because communities in Africa have traditionally

communicated information by word of mouth rather than in written form...Because of the tendency of African communities to pass information orally, there is a strong argument that the most appropriate research and evaluation approach in Africa is the qualitative approach because it emphasizes oral communication and gives respondents a chance to state their problems the way they perceive them and participate in seeking solutions to these problems as well as in effecting such solutions.

Arising from this understanding, this study adopted a qualitative approach to collect and analyze data. I utilized an interview method which enabled respondents to give their views; where clarity was required the questions were paraphrased in Kiswahili and at times the Bukusu language. I noted and described the observed performance behaviour and analyzed the results qualitatively. I also applied the quantitative approach to identify the frequency of *silao-sikeleko* and point of occurrence in a musical entity.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.3.1 Target population

The study targeted performers of Bukusu *Litungu* music and this musical genre formed the focal point of this study. These performers of *Litungu* music are found predominantly in the Bungoma district which is the cradle of the Bukusu community. However, there are some who may have migrated to other parts of Kenya. Such did not form part of the study's target population. As such all the music performed by the interviewees was recorded for the purposes of additional analysis and scholarly interpretation.

3.3.2 Purposive sampling

In purposive sampling the respondents are selected on the basis of their ability to provide the required information so that the prescribed study objectives are achieved (Bernard 1988: 97).

In a bid to identify the musicians who could be interviewed for this study, I consulted the Bungoma District Cultural Office to verify the number of Bukusu *Litungu* music performers.¹⁵

¹⁵ Kenya is divided into eight administrative provinces, which are further subdivided into districts (Law 2005). Each district has a cultural office, part of whose duty it is to identify, promote and preserve cultural aspects of the

The office identified four performing groups, three of which were purposively sampled for this study since they performed music that exhibited the *silao-sikeleko* which was the focal element in this study. They included the Sinani Group Band, the Jackson Kisika's Band and the Namatete Band. The other group did not perform Bukusu *Litungu* music; therefore it was irrelevant to the study.¹⁶ Each group was made up of several members, some of whom were performer composers while others were strictly performers (dancers). Information from the District Cultural Office suggests that it is difficult to determine how many musicians of Bukusu *Litungu* music exist. No one seems to know and yet they are the exponents of the music. I believe this is because of several reasons: first, the musicians do not all register at the cultural office, claiming that they do not benefit in any way from their registration; second, there is no place other than the cultural office where the performing groups and musicians register their presence; third, performing groups keep breaking up as musicians disagree and move to other areas of the country to work. As they move to other places they stop performing; and finally, new splinter groups emerge as the need arises to perform on certain occasions and they also do not last for long.

In this study information was required about *silao-sikeleko* in Bukusu *Litungu* music. I collected a total of fifty-nine songs. I used purposive sampling when selecting songs for analysis, selecting those containing *silao-sikeleko* which were thirty-four. I also included two songs which were performed without *silao-sikeleko*. The two songs performed without *silao-sikeleko* were performed by different bands that exhibited variations in the performance of *silao-sikeleko*. This was in order to compare their rendition to that performed with *silao-sikeleko*. In total I analyzed thirty-six songs out of fifty-nine.

3.3.3 Snowball sampling

Bernard (1988: 98) states that “in snowball sampling you locate one or more key individuals and ask them to name others who would be likely candidates for your research...It is useful in studies of small... or difficult to find populations”. I used snowball sampling since it is useful in studies

Kenyan heritage. Music is a part of culture; therefore musicians are to some extent supported by this office that facilitates their performance, especially at state functions.

¹⁶ This group performed music from the Bakhayo community even though the performers lived within Bungoma district.

of small populations such as this one on the performers of *Litungu* music. This method enabled me to locate the interviewees. Using purposive sampling, two performers of *Litungu* music became my research assistants; they identified other performers for inclusion in the research process. I conducted interviews with the two performers on separate occasions, in order to test the validity of the data collection instruments. Later they assisted in rephrasing some of the questions in order to achieve the research objectives in a language the performers could easily understand. An explanation was given to them as to what the research entailed and they offered to assist in the research project through the identification of other key interviewees. Further inquiry, through snowball sampling via my research assistants, revealed the presence of some additional musicians, namely those from the Lugulu Bumusika Band, the Kwane Band, the Nabukambisi Jazz Band, the Muvumilivu Band and the Tindikiti Band. These bands were also included in the study. I was given the names of some performing musicians (Wanyonyi Wangwelo and Alfred Magende, sons of Jackson Kisika; Wanyonyi Kakai and Manyali) from Emman Wanjala of the Sinani Group Band. Shitubi identified Samuel Elima of the Lugulu Bumusika Band who led us to Sylvester Mukubwa and David Barasa of the Tindikiti Band. In one instance, the group leader of Kwane Band, Sylvester Mukubwa, identified his brother as his mentor in music performance. I made arrangements later on to interview his brother, Wanyonyi Wafula, about the role and performance of *silao-sikeleko* in Bukusu music. In total I interviewed fifteen performers of *Litungu* music.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION

I went to the field on three occasions for data collection. The first trip was from 5th to 8th February 2007; the second from 2nd to 5th May 2007 and the third from 7th August to 8th August 2008. But consultations with my research assistants took place from September 2006 until May 2010. Data collection methods included the use of interviews, focus group discussions, observation, note taking, photography, audio and video recording. I discuss each in more detail below.

3.4.1 Fieldwork

In order to achieve the objective of the study I sought assistance from two male research assistants, Fred Wekesa Kusienya and Isaac Shitubi. They are my colleagues and friends. Fred Kusienya is from the Bukusu community and lives in a town outside Bungoma district. Isaac Shitubi lives in Kimilili, a town within the Bungoma district. Having lived among the Bukusu for some time, he speaks Lubukusu and understands the language well. These men are performers of *Litungu* music and thus were able to identify other performers and easily create a rapport with them. The decision to work with male assistants was important as it was necessary to alleviate feelings of suspicion and lack of genuineness from the respondents. As indicated in the brief story above, the Bukusu do not take women seriously; any serious discussions require the presence of a man (Fred Kusienya, personal communication, 2007). Through previous experience and being a member of the community I found it necessary to seek the presence of male research assistants. I explained the objectives and ethics of the study to them and thereafter formally requested their verbal and written consent (see Appendix 11 page 252-253). I also used them in my pilot study, after which we discussed the interview questions and rephrased some for clarity. They agreed to assist in any way possible. As Dooley (2004: 267) explains, “[t]he researcher typically begins the entry process by persuading one or more members of the setting to accept him or her. If an observer can define his or her role in a satisfactory way, other members of the setting will permit entry as well”.

The two research assistants know each other and were able to co-ordinate their identification of other musicians. As Shitubi lives within the Bungoma district, he went to the villages to identify performers of Bukusu *Litungu* music. He explained to them (leaders of the performing groups) the objectives of the study and sought their consent. He then called me and provided details of the performers’ locations and contacts for follow up. I then proceeded, by introducing myself to them on the phone and explaining my study. Consequently, it was easier for the musicians to give their consent since Shitubi had talked to them and I was able to set convenient dates for data collection when the group leaders had their members present. I obtained contacts of three performing groups through the district cultural office and four through snowball sampling. Even though my two research assistants attended the interviews, I conducted the interviews and my

assistants at times clarified a question or answer especially for appropriate English or Kiswahili translation of Lubukusu words used by the interviewees.

3.4.2 Interview method

I preferred semi-structured interviewing because it was best suited to situations where the interviewer could not easily find another opportunity for an interview (Bernard 1988: 204). The use of an oral interview (see Appendix IV, page 256) was necessary as it allowed my research assistants and I to have an in-depth discussion with the interviewees and use Kiswahili (the national language of Kenya), English (the official language) and Lubukusu (the native language) of the Bukusu people in order to clarify their answers. For instance, I asked Alex Wafula of Lugulu Bumusika Band, in Kiswahili, to give me the title of his next song and explain when and why the song is performed. He responded, also in the Kiswahili language saying, “*Unajua, khekhura lulwimbo bali Mwana mbeli. Omwana omubele nekebulwe, khwikhoyeranga babana befwe. Khe khuche ebweni*” (You know, we are starting the song, “*Mwana mbeli*”. When a first born child is born, we celebrate our children. Let us proceed) (Wafula, interview, May 3, 2007). Another example took place during an interview with Namatete Band members. I asked Samuel Namatete to let us know the title of his next song in English. He responded in English saying, “The next song is titled ‘*Omukoko*’ or ‘*namwe*’ a daughter”. The word *namwe* is a Bukusu word meaning “or”. Namatete used this word in his sentence to mean, the title of the song is “*Omukoko*” which means a daughter.

The semi-structured interview had three levels; namely the face to face interview, the telephone interview and the focus group discussion. The face to face interviewing took place where I met with different performers of Bukusu *Litungu* music and sought information from the performers and/or group leaders. This was possible in cases where there was only one soloist throughout the group performances. In these cases I interviewed the soloist and at least one other member, after listening to their music and observing their performance behaviour. After introductions were made by Shitubi, my research assistant, I explained the objective of the study to the performers and sought their consent, promising and confirming that I would not use their music for commercial purposes. This together with the presence of my research assistants enabled them to talk freely. Jackson Kisika, for example, provided details which my research assistants and I had

not even requested. He took time to express himself, explaining how he has performed in various state functions, as he was considered a *Litungu* expert.¹⁷ He despised the younger *Litungu* players saying that they are not skilful; they are not artistic and are uncultured. This he expounded in Kiswahili by saying, “*kuna vijana wengine wanaimba eti ‘mayi ling’angule, mama amenishinda’*”. How can your mother be ling’angule? Mama anawesaje [sic] kukushinda?” (There are some young boys who sing ‘my mother is a prostitute, my mother has defeated me’. How can your mother be a prostitute? How can your mother defeat you?) (Kisika, interview, February 6, 2007). What Kisika meant, is that it is inconceivable that one should talk of a parent in such a negative manner. Thus, before he performed for us, Kisika took the opportunity to complain about the lyrics used by upcoming, younger artists. When I organised the interview dates with the performers, one of them, Samuel Elima (personal communication, April 27, 2007) asked, “Will you come with Shitubi?” When I stated that I would, the tone of his voice changed because he was so happy. He then explained to me how he and Shitubi knew each other and stated that he (Shitubi) was one of them.

The second type of interview was telephone interview. I conducted this kind of interview with two performers who were not available at the time agreed-on due to unavoidable circumstances, some of which will be discussed under the study limitations. They were unable to get back to their home area but were contacted on phone through snowball sampling. These two were sought for their abilities in *Litungu* music performance; they are leaders of the Tindikiti band, a famous group that always graces various occasions in the district. I was particularly interested in obtaining their views on the place and role of *silao-sikeleko*. This group did not give me much information on *silao-sikeleko*, as they were always busy with other activities. I also used telephone interviews to clarify certain messages and meanings of some proverbs from members of performing groups I had interviewed earlier.

Focus group discussion was used in a group which had more than two soloists, for example, the Lugulu Bumusika Band. In this case, questions (see Appendix V, page 256) were raised and any member was free to contribute his ideas. Where one member seemed unsure another clarified an

¹⁷ At the time of interview, Jackson Kisika, was a seventy-five year old and preferred to distance himself from the younger musicians whose compositions he considered mediocre.

idea and provided an answer agreeable to all members. The soloists were an important source of information since they are usually the ones who cued the onset of *silao-sikeleko*. In one instance, the interviewees differed in opinion concerning the name, if any given to the *silao-sikeleko* as performed in their music. The discussion continued until all members agreed that *silao-sikeleko* actually had no Bukusu name (personal communication, April 27, 2007).

3.4.3 Observation

Human behaviour during musical performance was under observation. I used non-participant observation since the music of my study is performed by men. The *Litungu* was originally performed solely by men. Even though some women can play the instrument, there were no instances where I found a woman playing any instrument during the study. However, in two performing groups I observed, namely the Sinani Group Band and the Namatete Band, some women were dancers and back-up singers. In terms of the arrangement on site while performing, the dancers were placed on one side of the instrumentalists and kept moving about. I could easily note these aspects of placement as well as the performers' behaviour through non-participant observation as the music unfolded. In cases where there were dancers, their response to music affected the instrumentalists' and vocalists' execution of the entire musical performance in terms of intensity and length. It was thus necessary for me to observe "the whole complex of social interaction and cultural patterning that relates to the institutionalization of structured sound" (Chernoff 1989: 60). This is discussed in detail in Chapter Four. I also observed that a song would have differing lengths when performed by different groups in different contexts. Even in a similar context, musical performance is not necessarily the same each time it is performed or repeated.

3.4.4 Note taking

I used note taking alongside the interviewing and observation methods of data collection. It was necessary to take notes to supplement the other methods, and at the same time as a reminder of some important points. What I wrote down included answers to the interview questions. This information supplemented the primary source of data in cases where some of the recorded

interviews were not clear. My field notes together with the audio and video recordings provided information which was categorized for analysis and isolation of emerging issues.

3.4.5 Audio and video recording¹⁸

I used this method to supplement note taking. Since note taking is time consuming, audio recording captured the ideas of the respondents and the music much faster and with more immediacy. I later transcribed the recordings into written texts and also transcribed the verbal aspects of the recorded songs. Video recording was important in storing musical events in their performance sites together with the behaviour of musicians during the actual performances. At some points, the video camera battery went flat in the field and we had to rely on the audio recording. While I was taking notes, Shitubi was audio recording while Kusienya and Chetambe (our driver during the fieldwork) did the video recording. The musicians' behaviour was video recorded as well. During the performances of music, I noted that some groups performed songs mainly without the *silao-sikeleko* element. On inquiry they insisted that they do practice it, but it became clear that since some group members were absent, they could not perform fully. As a result some interviewees, through their group leaders, provided some of their pre-recorded music on audio cassette that exhibited the element I was interested in. I later listened to the music in the tapes and analyzed the music they contained in relation to the study objectives.

3.4.6 Photography

My research assistants and I took some photographs using Sony Handycam DCR-HC21 NTSC and Sony DSC-W120. This included photographs of the musical instruments and the performers of *Litungu* music as they presented themselves during their performances. It was important for us to take photographs in order to document the sites of *Litungu* music performance, and the arrangement of musicians and musical instruments during performance.

¹⁸ I used Sony WM-SR10 Walkman for audio recording and Sony Handycam DCR-HC21 NTSC for video recording.

3.5 DATA PROCESSING, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The recorded interview sessions together with the field notes provided data which I analyzed. I synthesized the answers given to various questions in an orderly manner. Information was extracted from the video and audio recordings of the performances. I counted the number of songs by each band and used a table to record how many of their songs contained important elements for analysis (see Chapter Four).

The process of analysis and interpretation involved writing down the sung text and the *silao-sikeleko* with an aim of comparing the two. I made translations of the text from Lubukusu to English. Where I encountered problems deciphering the meanings of texts, I consulted Kusienya, one of my research assistants, for clarification. I transcribed some songs using the facility of both Noteworthy software and Sibelius computer programs. The transcriptions involved musical motives as performed by the *Litungu*, *Isiriri*, and the vocal melody. I related musical meaning to the context and function of performance. Of the music selected, I listened to entire pieces and tabulated the performance process. Here I sought to establish how many times the *silao-sikeleko* appears in the music and its points of occurrence against pure instrumentation, singing and chanting. Hence I counted and noted whether a given song had one, two, three or more occurrences of *silao-sikeleko* and whether the *silao-sikeleko* appeared at the beginning, middle or end of a performance. From the video recordings I observed and noted the instrumental arrangement on site and the performers' behaviour as they performed. Consequently, I divided the above information into chapters according to the research objectives.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter discussed the methodology used in this study. It focused on the research design with an explanation of fieldwork experience. The cultural beliefs of the Bukusu community affected the methodology to some extent. This necessitated the use of two male research assistants. There is a discussion on how I used several data collection tools to achieve the objectives of my study. These included the use of interviews, observation, audio recording and video recording that complemented each other. With the aid of my research assistants I was able to obtain the audio

and visual aspects of the music. I discussed how I processed, analyzed and interpreted the data collected. In the next Chapter I attend to the formal structure of *silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music

CHAPTER FOUR

FORMAL STRUCTURE OF *LITUNGU* MUSIC

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The construction of Bukusu *Litungu* music requires skill and materials that are culturally acceptable to the Bukusu community. The music contains elements that make up the whole. Each of the elements has a function in the overall shape and size of the end product, which in this sense is the music composition. The elements in *Litungu* music are similar to what Agawu calls “dimensions” when referring to African music, and argues that “Africans can and do control the procedures within dimensions like harmony, melody, and form with comparable skill” (Agawu 2003: xx). In this study the selected musical elements will not be addressed separately but together, when they form musical phrases performed by the *Litungu*, *Isiriri*, voice and *Chimbengele*. The aim of highlighting the elements is to identify their structural role in the entire musical performance.

The differences in the musics of various cultures exist, in among other factors, “how much” of each element is used and in the element’s characteristic variations. Small (1987: 25) observes “rhythm is to the African musician what harmony is to the European”, which means that African music seems to place emphasis on the rhythmic aspect of the music while Europeans emphasize harmony. He argues that “this emphasis on rhythm implies also the existence among Africans of what has been termed a ‘metronome sense’- an ability to hear the music in terms of that common beat even when it is not explicitly sounded.” Even if this is true, African music has harmony as an element but the western concept of harmony is different from the African conceptualization of harmony. Such a quality is explicit in *Litungu* performances. I have observed that in *Litungu* music, harmony is as a result of such features as melodic counterpoint. This is a confirmation of the varying levels and emphasis of certain musical elements, such as melody and rhythm by the Bukusu community.

This Chapter begins by discussing the *silao-sikeleko* structure. This leads to identification of how often the *silao-sikeleko* occurs in a musical performance and points of its occurrence. It then

discusses how instrumental phrases are organized in Bukusu *Litungu* music and their relationship to the song text and *silao-sikeleko*. This is finally followed by a discussion of the overall musical shape and formal structure of *Litungu* music.

4.2 SILAO-SIKELEKO STRUCTURE

Since *silao-sikeleko* is interspersed with song text, the soloist determines how many times it will be implemented in a given song. This depends on how well the message has been communicated by the song. A soloist who is a cultural representative has the sole right to make this kind of judgement, at the time of performance. This conforms to Okot P'Bitek's postulation, "it is only the participants in a culture who can pass judgement on it [a creative work]. It is only they who can evaluate how effective the song or dance is" (P'Bitek 1986: 37). The soloist can *khulaa-khukeleka* the message and/or allow other members of the group to execute it. If he decides that something more needs to be added, he calls upon another member of the group. It is one's skill in *khulaa-khukeleka* that allows the soloist to call upon him. One cannot be allowed to speak unless called upon by the soloist. The soloist does this by saying for example, "Wafula can you tell us one or two things about this issue". The *omukeleki* can talk for as long as he has something to say. When he is through with his part he simply says "let us proceed" or "let us go on". This cues the soloist to continue with the music.

Social order is also reflected in the musical organization of the Bukusu. In every meeting among the Bukusu, one does not talk unless authorized or permitted to do so, as a way of exercising social order. The number of those who *khulaa-khukeleka* can vary from one to all members of the group, as each gives his/her version or experience of a given issue. The performance of *silao-sikeleko* reflects this social order, where one must be authorized to speak. Ultimately, the musical performance is not an individual performance but a group activity.

Silao-sikeleko is sound just like the other sonic aspects of *Litungu* music. Since, *silao-sikeleko* is sound and Dibben (2003: 196) states that "sounds always have a compositional function", it means that *silao-sikeleko* also has a compositional role. The organization of *silao-sikeleko*

reveals an artistically conceived form. Where for instance the soloist invites a member to speak, there are two different vocal qualities; that of the soloist and that of the second *omukeleki*. In the following examples, the letter ‘V’ is assigned to *silao-sikeleko*. Each time *silao-sikeleko* is executed in a piece of music by different persons; it acquires the label V1, V2 and so on. This indicates that ‘V’ for *silao-sikeleko* is constant while 1, 2 and so on refer not to an increase in quantity but a variation in quality (in other words, timbre), since two spoken voices cannot be exactly the same. At another level, where one person does the *khulaa-khukeleka* throughout the piece there is just ‘V1’ since the vocal quality is the same as it alternates with the sung sections.

Silao-sikeleko is expressed as a narration by a soloist and as a dialogue. Where *silao-sikeleko* is expressed as a dialogue, there is a complex form not only in terms of timbre but texture, where solo parts alternate with chorus sections. The solo sections are also interjected by other solo parts. So we can perceive V1, VC, V2, V3, where V1 is a solo part asking a question. The VC represents a choral *silao-sikeleko* having a thicker texture followed by a solo answer by a different *omukeleki* V2, with a comment from another *omukeleki* V3. The implementation of *silao-sikeleko* unwinds in the form of narration, dialogue and speech-melody. There are at least four types of *silao-sikeleko* structural organizations: as a narration by the soloist; between two or more members each with a different story to support the theme; as a dialogue between two or more members sometimes in the form of questions and answers; and narration without an instrumental accompaniment.

4.2.1 Narration

The first structure is one in which one person *khulaa-khukelekas* throughout the song; he does not call on any other person. This is narration where a story is told by one person, usually the soloist, from beginning to end. One example of this is found in the song *Eswa* (Mukubwa 2007); thus having the form V1. This story, if long, can be interpolated by singing sections. Another example is the song *Ewuyo* by Sylvester Mukubwa. In this song the *khulaa-khukeleka* takes place against an instrumental accompaniment. In some performances, especially towards the end, the soloist utters words that do not make sense or are not in full sentences. The words are just ‘thrown’ in with pauses in between. This is an aesthetic-artistic device that allows the musicians

to give their comments in a slightly different way from pure singing or *silao-sikeleko*. Such a device fills up gaps that would otherwise be pure instrumental sections performed for relatively long durations. For instance in the song *Endakano* (Lubao 2007) we have the words,

Lubukusu text

Sakwa, achilia sasa,
Maina, mayi wanchibula.
Beatrice, wachana na pombe bwana,
fanya biashara.

English text

Sakwa let go now,
Maina, mother who bore me.
Beatrice, leave beer
do some business.

4.2.2 Dialogue by Two People

The second type is that executed by two people. Short stories or narrations can be performed by different people on the same theme in a song, for example the song *Basakwa* as performed by the Nabukambisi Jazz Band. Among the Bukusu the term “*Basakwa*” is used to refer to two kinds of relationships. The first one occurs, when a man and woman get married; thereafter, the man’s parents and the woman’s parents call each other *Basakwa*. The second occurs when two sisters get married; thereafter, their husbands call each other *Basakwa*. It is the second kind of relationship that is explained in the song. This relationship is therefore similar to the in-law relationship in western society. In the song *Basakwa*, the soloist invites one member of the group to speak and below is an excerpt of the *silao-sikeleko*:

Example 4.1: Extract from song entitled *Basakwa* (Manyali 2000)

Lubukusu text

V1. Khukhwama khale akhakho,
babukusu bama khutyukhanga babana
kamasina nende likila. Yani abele onyala
wanyola omwana bamulanga Wekesa
namwe Nekesa nga bebulwa mwekesa.
Lulwimbo luno lwa Basakwa, basakhulu,
khulamanya lisina Basakwa lino lili sina.
Khura rekeresianga khuli Basakwa tawe.
Abwenao khulanyola mwana Anthony
akhueleselekho khumanye lisina Basakwa
nga lianja.

English text

V1. From a long time ago, the Bukusu have been naming their children with a purpose or meaning. In other words you can find a child called *Wekesa* or *Nekesa* meaning they were born during the harvesting season. In this song *Basakwa*, old men, we will find out, the meaning of this name *Basakwa*. Do not just hear *Basakwa*. On that note we will find Anthony to explain to us how this name came about.

V2. Orio musakhulu. Lisina lino lianja liri, babao bandu babili. Bandu bano baba mungo mulala, babakhilakhila kimiandu, omuinda nende omutambi...

V2. Thank you old man, the name *Basakwa* began like this; there were two old men living together, with differing socio-economic status, a rich man and a poor man...

This performance of *silao-sikeleko* has an opening and closing formulae. The opening formulae include phrases like “can you tell us something on this issue”, while the closing formulae include phrases like “Let us proceed” and “Let us go”. The example reveals V1 and V2 respectively. Two speakers are explaining an important concept within the community. One begins a story then invites another person to explain the theme further. I used the numbers V1 and V2 at the beginning of words to delineate their sections. This occurs at one point in the song where *silao-sikeleko* is heard. This structure of *silao-sikeleko* (see plate 5) is the one most commonly found in Bukusu *Litungu* songs taking the form:

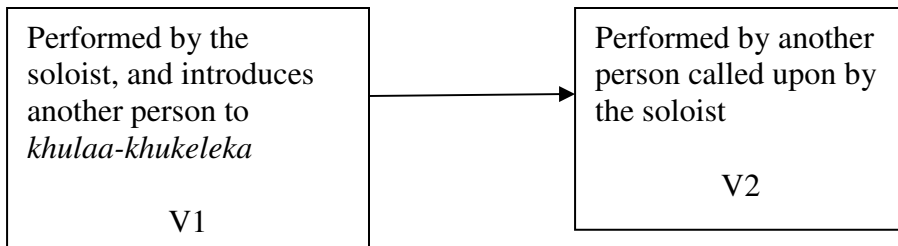


Plate 5. First structure of *silao-sikeleko*

4.2.3 Dialogue by More Than Two People

Here two or more people discuss issues in the form of questions and answers. In most cases the soloist calls upon another member of the group to comment on the theme, resulting in an exchange of words. This is the most common form of *khulaa-khukeleka* and is exemplified in the song *Nekoye*.

Example 4.2 Extract from the song entitled *Nekoye* (Manyali 2000)

Lubukusu text

V1. Okhutabusya nende Okhwakila, alina okhila okundi? mbolele chilomo.

English text

V1. “One who weeds” and “one who Accomplishes a task”, who of the two is better than the other? Tell me this saying.

V2. Okhuakila akhila okhutabusya basakhulu

V3. Ah! Bwana George wabea wase, andi wareba Bamaina

V4. Eh balebe Liabirakho busa. Ama khuloma ali si?

V3. Ali okhuakila akhila okhutabusya

V2. Basakhulu, nano okhuakila niye nanu ne okhutabusya niye nanu?

V1. Okhuakila niye omukhasi omukara, oli omuila emukundeyo efufula busa Oli akalukha engo alia bibindu bya wayo Wase, akhulekha nende kumutambo. Lakini okhutabusya ali omukhasi omulayi, kang'ona emukunda eyo wase, kecha kang'onele mungo omwomo, kakhwelesia emali nende bilio.

V2. "One who weeds" is better than "one who accomplishes a task", old men.

V3. Ah! Mr George you are cheating, you would have asked the *Bamaina*.

V4. Eh my goodness, it passed me. What did he say?

V3. He said "one who weeds" is better than "one who accomplishes a task".

V2. Old men, who is "one who weeds" and who is "one who accomplishes a task"?

V1. "One who weeds" is a lazy wife, you take her to the farm, she reluctantly works.

She goes back to the house and consumes all your things leaving you in poverty.

But "one who accomplishes a task" is a good wife. She attends to the farm, comes and attends to the home, giving you wealth and food.

In Example 4.2 a saying is posed to a group of musicians, who are supposed to explain its meaning. One person gives his answer and that is met with scepticism. The saying is posed again and finally receives a clarification. Reference to the *Bamaina* age set implies that the age set was made up of members of the community who were highly esteemed because of their wisdom. This attests to the community's belief that elders are a source of wisdom. The message is then carried out in the rest of the song that alternates between sung and *khulaa-khukeleka* sections. Their conversation results in the structure V1, V2, V3, V4, V3, V2, V1 as shown (see plate 6):

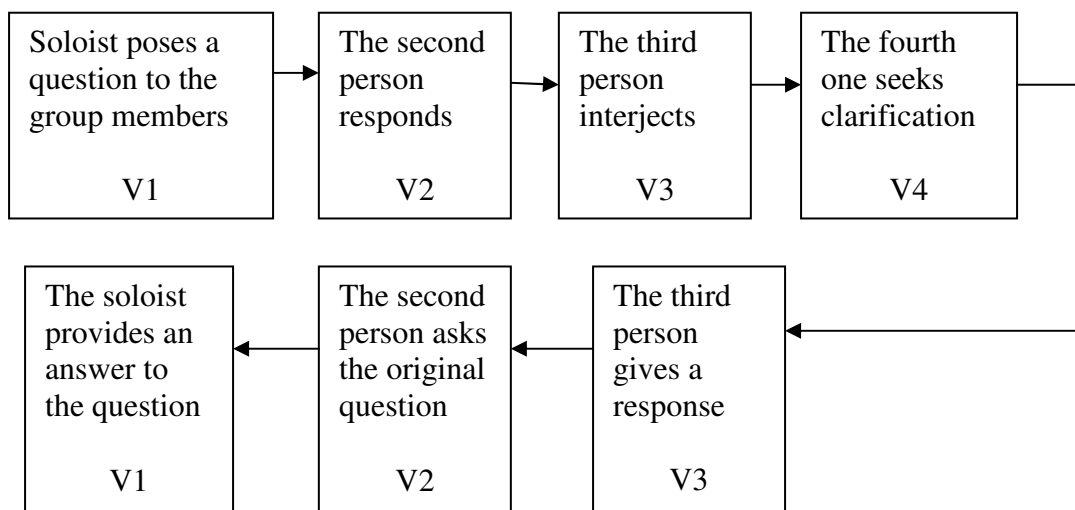


Plate 6. Second structure of *silao-sikeleko*

4.5.4 Dialogue With Choral Response

The fourth type of structure is exemplified in the song *Endakano*.

Example 4.3 extract from song titled *Endakano* (Lubao 2007)

Lubukusu Text

Basakhulu mwekhale?
 Eeh khwekhale.
 Ndikho nende elomo, munyala mwandekeslesia?
 Eeh. Khukhwama khale,
 endebe ye bikele bitaru onyala wesayirakho
 omwana wesikhana?
 Ah tawe, khukhwama khale
 musimachamacha, omwana wesikoko
 kekhala khulisielo kapa kumuliango
 emukongo mala bamusayilakho.

English Text

Old men, are you seated?
 Yes we are seated.
 I have a saying, can you listen to it?
 Yes. From time immemorial,
 can you allow a girl to sit on a three legged
 stool?
 Oh no, from time immemorial, a young
 child sits on a skin with the back facing the
 door way, on which prayers are offered
 for her.

The example 4.3 involves a choral section which creates a dialogue. There is a conversation between one person and a group of people. The leader in this case poses the questions. The first two responses (“yes”, “we are seated” and “yes”) are given as a chorus. The last response is uttered by one member of the group. The choral sections are indicated by **VC** thus creating V1, **VC**, V1, **VC**, V1, V2 as

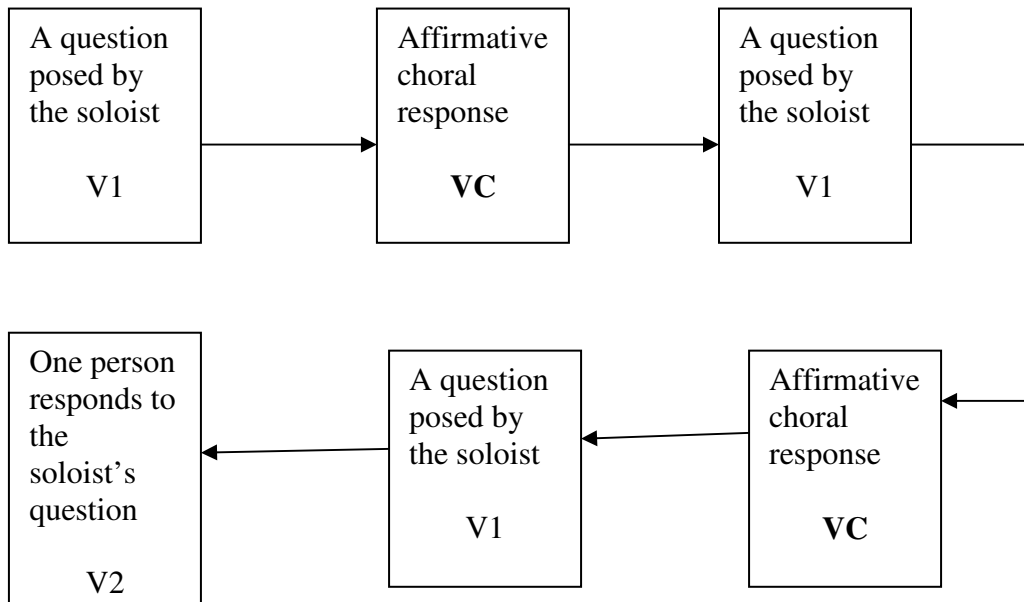


Plate7. Third structure of *silao-sikeleko*

Therefore each musical entity has its own *silao-sikeleko* structure. One thing that is common in the rendition of *silao-sikeleko* is that it is performed solo by an individual who in most cases is the soloist in the sung sections; it can also be in the form of solo response, where two people are involved and finally it can be in the form of a dialogue where more members of the group are involved in a conversation. Most songs exhibit the use of more than one type of *silao-sikeleko* structure. When these structures are studied in relation to the presentational form of *Litungu* music, the resultant is a composite structure.

4.3 OCCURRENCE OF SILAO-SIKELEKO

How many times does *silao-sikeleko* appear in a musical performance? The answer to this question helps us to understand whether the occurrence of *silao-sikeleko* is haphazard or is skilfully organized thus creating a pattern. If a pattern is created we can then identify what kind it is and how it influences the *Litungu* musical structure. Another reason why the above question should be answered is that the number of times *silao-sikeleko* occurs will highlight its relationship with the sung text. This will also reveal the kind of information contained in the *silao-sikeleko* performed at different points of the *Litungu* music.

In answering the question, “how many times does *silao-sikeleko* appear in a musical performance?” I wrote down the occurrence of different sections as they unfolded within the musical performance. Each section has symbols such as (I) for instrumental sections, (S) for singing, (D) for dialogue sections of *silao-sikeleko*, (C) for speech-melody sections and (N) for narrated sections of *silao-sikeleko*. *Silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music unfolds as a narration performed by one person; as a speech-melody; and as a dialogue or conversation incorporating more than one person. For this reason the *silao-sikeleko* is divided to show its form each time it appears in a musical performance. After stating the different sections, I counted the number of times *silao-sikeleko* occurs in a piece of music performed by different musicians. The Table 4.1 shows thirty-six songs by various performing groups indicating the number of times *silao-sikeleko* appears. There are some renditions of songs included in the table that were performed

without *silao-sikeleko*. This is done in order to compare them to those performed with *silao-sikeleko*.

The Table 4.1 indicates the presence of *silao-sikeleko* from zero times to a total of eight times in a piece of music. It is imperative to note that some songs like *Ewuyo Ino*, *Mayi muro* and *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* were performed by three different groups. These songs have a varying number of *silao-sikeleko* manifestations. The song *Ewuyo Ino* has *silao-sikeleko* occurring twice in the Kwane Group Band's rendition, five times in the Lugulu Bumusika Band's rendition and in the Sinani Group Band's rendition it is not executed at all. In the song *Mayi muro*, the Kwane Group Band executes *silao-sikeleko* three times, while the Lugulu Bumusika Band has it only once. In *Kulukulu wa Bwabi*, the Kwane Group Band does not make use of *silao-sikeleko*, while in the Lugulu Bumusika Band's rendition it appears three times. Consequently, it is evident that the *Litungu* music does not have a fixed number of times for the occurrence of *silao-sikeleko*. The same music can have varying patterns each time it is performed, even by the same group. *Silao-sikeleko* is spontaneously executed depending on the soloist.

The possible reason for this variation in the occurrence of *silao-sikeleko* is four-fold. First of all the performance space determines how long a musical performance takes. This entails the time and venue and whether there is an audience or not. The length of a song is the first factor that determines how many times *khulaa-khukeleka* takes place; the longer the song the longer *khulaa-khukeleka* takes place. The second factor is how effectively a message is communicated. When the soloist believes that a message has been well communicated, the *khulaa-khukeleka* process ceases. Where he feels that more information is required he allows for more *khulaa-khukeleka*. The third reason is that it allows for a "mental break". In cases where the soloist is also the sole narrator, he takes a break from narration to allow for the singing section before proceeding with his narration. During the break there is a solo-response section that gives him time to relax. These moments of relaxation increase the number of *silao-sikeleko* occurrences. The fourth reason is the composition of band members at the time of performance. There are some members who are more proficient in the art of *khulaa-khukeleka* than others. In the Kwane Band, for example, the leader Mukubwa commented that they did not *khulaa-khukeleka* much during their performance because some of their members were not present.

Table 4.1. Frequency of *Silao-sikeleko* in Bukusu *Litungu* Music

Performing group name	Song title	Order of section	Occurrence of <i>silao-sikeleko</i>
Kwane Band	<i>Kulukulu Wa Bwabi</i>	I, S,	0
Kwane Band	<i>Mayi Muro</i>	I, C, N, C, N, C, N, C	1
Kwane Band	<i>Ewuyo Ino</i>	I, S, I, S, N, S, N, S	2
Kwane Band	<i>Eswa</i>	I, S, N, I, S, C, S, C, N, C, S, C, S	4
Kwane Band	<i>Kunikina</i>	I, S, I, S, I	0
Sinani Group Band	<i>Bikumba</i>	I, S, C,S, I, C, S, N, C, S, C	4
Sinani Group Band	<i>Ewuyo Ino</i>	I, S, C, S, C,	2
Sinani Group Band	<i>Enda Yo Muluya</i>	I, S, C, S, I, S	1
Sinani Group Band	<i>Khola Ndie</i>	I, S, I, C, S	1
Sinani Group Band	<i>Wachonge</i>	I, S, I, C, I, S, I	1
Namatete Band	<i>Mayi Muro</i>	I, S, I, S, N, S,	1
Namatete Band	<i>Lukendo Lwe Babukusu</i>	D, I, S, N, S, N, S, N, S, N, S	5
Namatete Band	<i>Khulila V.P. Wamalwa</i>	I, S, I, S, I, S, I, S, I, N, S, I, S, I, S, C,	1
Namatete Band	<i>Namulobi</i>	N, I, S, N,S, I, D, S	3
Namatete Band	<i>Okhina Bali Sakhina</i>	I, S, I, S, I, D, S, N, S, D, I, S, N, I	4
Jackson Kisika Band	<i>Mayi Muro</i>	I, S, C, I, C, I	2
Jackson Kisika Band	<i>Wachonge</i>	I, S, I, C, I	1
Jackson Kisika Band	<i>Ewuyo Ino</i>	I, C, I, C, I	2
Nabukambisi Jazz Band	<i>Nekoye</i>	I, S, I, S, I, D, I, S, N, D, I, S, I, N, I, S, N	4
Nabukambisi Jazz Band	<i>Basakwa</i>	I, N, S, N, D, I, S, N, C, N, I, S, N,	4
Mvumilivu Band	<i>Yekamakhanya</i>	I, N, S, C, I, S, C, N, C, S, N, S, I, C, S	4
Lugulu Bumusika Band (LBB)	<i>Mayi Muro</i>	I, S, N, S	1
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Ewuyo Ino</i>	I, N, S, N, S, N, I, S, N, D, C, I, D, I	5
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Mwana Mbeli</i>	I, S, D, S, N, S	2
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Kulukulu Wa Bwabi</i>	I, N, S, N, S, N, S, N, I, S, N	5
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Lijembe</i>	I, N, C, N, S, I	1
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Endakano</i>	D, I, C, S, N, S, C, S, N	5

Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Paulinah</i>	I, N, S, N, C, N, S, N, S, N	4
Lugulu Bumusika	<i>Lisaye</i>	I, S, C, N, S, N, D,	3
Lugulu Bumusika	<i>Simba (Swahili)</i>	I, S, D, S, N, S, N, S	4
Lugulu Bumusika	<i>Enyanja</i>	I, N, S, N, C, S, C, S, N	4
Lugulu Bumusika	<i>Sellah</i>	I, S, C, N, I, N, S, I	2
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Chingubo</i>	I, N, S, D, C, S, N, C, S, N, I, S, N	5
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Enju Yo Muluya</i>	I, N, S, C, N, C, N, C, N, C, S, N, C, N, S, N, C, N, S	3
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Omundu</i>	I, N, S, C, S, C, S, D, S, N, S, C, S, D, S, N	8
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Baluhya</i>	I, S, I, C, S, C, I, D, S, N	4

Key:

I- Instrumental section

S- Singing

D- Dialogue sections of *silao-sikeleko*

C- Speech-melody

N- Narrations

When my research assistants and I arrived at Mukubwa's home, we had to wait for a while as he assembled some of his band members some of whom had gone to work on their farms. The band began performing with three members. During this time only Mukubwa *khulaa-khukeleka*. Another member later joined the group and was called upon by the soloist to *khulaa-khukeleka* as well.

The Table 4.1 also indicates that in some cases it can be found at the very beginning of music even before any instruments are heard. In this case there are two songs that commence with *silao-sikeleko* before any instrumental accompaniment while ten songs out of twenty five have *silao-sikeleko* performed after an instrumental introduction. Thus twelve songs out of twenty five have *silao-sikeleko* being performed at the beginning. *Silao-sikeleko* also occurs at the end of a performance. Thirteen out of twenty five songs end with one of the three forms of *silao-sikeleko*;

that is dialogue, Narration and speech-melody. In most cases *silao-sikeleko* occurs within the musical performance in alternation with sung sections.

Moreover, a performing group does not have a standard way of performing a given song. In other words one song will not be rendered in the same way each time it is performed. This sometimes makes it difficult but not impossible to explain some aspects of the music. Where *silao-sikeleko* is executed it may not have exactly the same wordings the next time the same performer is asked to repeat the song in which the *silao-sikeleko* appears. This is because *silao-sikeleko* is not written down but undergoes performance composition. Performance composition allows for variations in the wordings of events or experiences retold but the theme is maintained. The execution of *silao-sikeleko* finds itself at various points within an ensuing musical performance.

4.4 THE CONSTRUCTION OF INSTRUMENTAL PHRASES

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (Simpson and Weiner 1991:959), the term “structure” refers to “[t]he coexistence in a whole of distinct parts having a definite manner of arrangement”. In their definition Howell, West and Cross (1991: 2) state “[i]n one sense of the word, structure is an attribute of all objects and events: it is the way that this may be decomposed into subunits and the relationships between them. In another sense it is the attribute which objects and events may have to differing degrees”. Howell adds an idea of subunits which exist harmoniously or coexist. The study interprets the ‘whole’ or ‘object’ in question as the *Litungu* music that is further subdivided into distinct parts. The parts or sub-units are the vocal parts, *Litungu* part, *Isiriri* part and the *Chimbengele* part. These can be further subdivided into phrases with distinct melody, harmony, and rhythm which can be further subdivided into melodic contour, intervals, note values, chords and instrumental texture. Each instrumental part is made up of these phrases that coexist according to a given relationship. According to Cooke (1989: 211) “single phrases may be expressive in themselves but they have to be built up into an overall structure; and surely this building up must proceed by the laws of purely musical logic, needless of expressive considerations”. The organization or arrangement of the various instrumental parts

(*Litungu*, *Isiriri* and *Chimbengele*) leads to a formal structure, which is the subject of this section.

Silao-sikeleko is sometimes performed against an ongoing instrumental accompaniment whose essence is an echo of what was previously heard during the singing parts. The *khulaa-khukeleka* sections have their own rhythm and tempo that conforms essentially to the spoken Bukusu language.¹⁹ Tom Kukubo, chairman of the Namatete Band, pointed out that in *khulaa-khukeleka* parts the strings also “talk”. In other words the strings converse with the vocal part, even when the strings and voice perform concurrently (Tom Kukubo, interview, 7th February 2007). His reference to the strings and not the other instruments is based on the important cultural placement of the *Litungu* and *Isiriri* because they carry the meaning-loaded melodies. As a result the ensuing rhythm is intricate and complex, and creates a rhythmic counterpoint. *Litungu* music is performed by a string and idiophone orchestra. Even though Samuel Elima (interview, 3rd May 2007) stated that they also use *Lulwika* (the horn) in their performances, I did not encounter any band that incorporated this instrument. This type of orchestra is similar to the strings plus rhythm orchestra described by Akpabot (1986: 36). Akpabot (Ibid.) states that, “in its traditional setting in Nigeria, the orchestra is made up of three musicians – a string player, a vocalist and a third person playing the calabash drum”. The string and percussion orchestra among the Bukusu is made up of a minimum of three players. This is because there are a number of idiophones incorporated in the performance. The players are also vocalists. In some cases, there is a group of dancers during the performance. As witnessed during my fieldwork, the Sinani Group Band and the Namatete Band each had a group of dancers.

Since *silao-sikeleko* is performed with a continuous instrumental background, it is vital to examine some of the underlying musical phrases. The use of staff notation allowed for the transcription of sounds to represent an approximation of what was originally performed. I made use of staff notation because it is a conventional method of music notation and there is no standard representational notation of African musics. I established the referential tone by relating the tonal centre of what is heard in the recordings to the keyboard, thus establishing the music’s

¹⁹ The *khulaa-khukeleka* sections have with their own tempo as exhibited in speech. Sometimes one may speak slowly and at other times speak quickly. The speech tempo performed against the instrumental tempo creates two different speeds or tempi which is polytemporalism.

tonality. The tonic in this study is the referential tone. Below is an analysis of the instrumental parts of three songs, *Chingubo*, *Endakano* and *Mayi*.

In *Chingubo* as seen in Figure 4.1, the *Isiriri* and *Litungu* parts begin differently with the *Isiriri* playing a repeated dominant note for four bars before duplicating the *Litungu*. The repeated note acts as a pedal.

Figure 4.1. *Chingubo* (Lubao 2007) by the Lugulu Bumusika Band showing *Isiriri* and *Litungu* phrases



The *Isiriri* and *Litungu* play an ostinato that is two bars long with a one bar antecedent phrase (a) and one bar consequent phrase (b). The antecedent phrase begins with the dominant note descending down by step to the subdominant, then the mediant ending with the supertonic. The consequent phrase also begins with the dominant but takes a leap to the mediant before rising to the subdominant and ending on the mediant. The ostinato is syncopated with an ending that anticipates some form of continuity, in other words the ending is “fa-mi”. This fundamental structure is then varied by the *Isiriri* in terms of rhythm and pitch. Here are some variants played by the *Isiriri* as the *Litungu* continues to play its given phrase. Figure 4.2 shows one variation while Figure 4.3 shows another variation

Figure 4.2. First variation performed by the *Isiriri* in the song *Chingubo* (Lubao 2007)



Figure 4.4. Solo-response of the song entitled *Chingubo* against instrumental accompaniment

CHINGUBO

Lugulu Bumusika Band

♩=120

Chi-ngu-bo chie - chi-le wa - se,

Chi-bo-na bu - bi, chie - chi-le, chi-bo-na bu - bi mu-

This system contains the first four measures of the piece. It features a vocal line in the upper staff and a piano accompaniment in the lower staff. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 120. The lyrics are: 'Chi-ngu-bo chie - chi-le wa - se,' followed by 'Chi-bo-na bu - bi, chie - chi-le, chi-bo-na bu - bi mu-'.

Chi - ngu - bo chie - chi - le wa - se.

- sia - lo. Chi - bo - na bu - bi, chie - chi - le,

This system contains the next four measures. The lyrics continue: 'Chi - ngu - bo chie - chi - le wa - se.' followed by '- sia - lo. Chi - bo - na bu - bi, chie - chi - le,'.

♩=120

chi-bo-na bu - bi mu - sia - lo.

This system contains the final four measures of the piece. The lyrics conclude with 'chi-bo-na bu - bi mu - sia - lo.'.

The second song *Endakano* (Lubao 2007) begins with a verbal dialogue without an instrumental accompaniment. The instrumental part is introduced by the *Litungu* with a two-bar ostinato melody of two phrases. The first part of the melody begins on the tonic ending on the leading note while the second part begins and ends on the tonic (see Figure 4.5a). The second phrase is similar to the first one except for the last two notes which are the mediant and the tonic respectively. The *Isiriri* joins the *Litungu* with a similar musical phrase an octave above (see Figure 4.5b).

Figure 4.5a: *Litungu* phrase of the song entitled *Endakano* (Lubao 2007)



Figure 4.5b: *Isiriri* phrase of the song entitled *Endakano* (Lubao 2007)



This song also contains a speech-melody section before the sung part made up of a responsorial organization which is independent in pitch and rhythm but complements the ostinato rhythmically.

The third song *Mayi* contains an instrumental part built upon two bar phrases (see figure 4.6). Both the *Litungu* and *Isiriri* have a similar melodic structure performed an octave apart. The solo-response and instrumental parts complement one another.

Figure 4.6. *Litungu* phrase of the song *Mayi* (Namatete 2007)



The imitation has some variation in note values and pitches within the phrases and gives a steady pulse of a continuous figure of a dotted quaver followed by a semiquaver in the *Chisasi*, *Chimbengele* and improvised drum. The resultant instrumental phrase is as follows (see Figure 4.7),

Figure 4.7. Resultant instrumental music of the song *Mayi* (Namatete 2007)

A three-staff musical score in 4/4 time, key of D major (two sharps). The top staff is labeled 'Isiriri' and contains a whole rest. The middle staff is labeled 'Litungu' and contains a continuous rhythmic pattern of eighth notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The bottom staff is labeled 'Chimbengele/Drums' and contains a continuous rhythmic pattern of eighth notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. The score is divided into two systems. The first system has three measures. The second system starts with a measure number '3' and also has three measures. The piece ends with a double bar line.

When *silao-sikeleko* is accompanied, it is performed against an instrumental ostinato just like the sung text. Each song has an ostinato or cycle, two bars long. A song such as *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band is performed using forty-six cycles. Each cycle is made up of twelve pulse beats taking place over two bars (see Figure 7.13). Of these, eleven cycles are purely instrumental; ten are performed alongside the song text while twenty five are performed alongside *silao-sikeleko*. Another example is in the song *Mayi* where there are a total of eighty-two cycles each with eight pulse beats (see Figure 4.6). Twenty-five cycles are purely instrumental; forty-five are performed alongside the song text while twelve are performed against the *silao-sikeleko*. Sung text phrases correlate with the instrumental phrases or cycles, but *silao-sikeleko* has a distinct phrase which is independent. This is because in chants and speech, “the tempo or rate of verbal delivery may be accelerated” (Nketia 2002: 154). When the tempo is accelerated, there are more verbal phrases to one instrumental phrase. When the tempo is slowed, one verbal phrase spans across two or more instrumental phrases. Thus, when a song has more *silao-sikeleko* than sung text, the number of cycles used to support it is more than that used to support the sung text.

In conclusion, most vocal melodic phrases in *Litungu* music are duplicated by the *Isiriri* and sometimes by the *Litungu*. The melodies are extended by intervals of a second, third, fourth and fifth. Stepwise movement is the most common. Melodic range is either a fifth or a sixth. The instrumental phrases in *Litungu* music are usually between two and four bars long. The four bars are repeated several times within the performance with variations in either the *Isiriri* part or in very rare cases the *Litungu*. This acts as the ostinato in a cyclic variation form. The use of theme and variation in music is also common in other African communities, such as the Shona. In this community, according to Berliner (1976: 453-454), “the performance of a mbira piece consists of variations played on a basic theme.” As the four bars of *Litungu* music are performed, they may be played exactly the same or varied rhythmically or melodically. The *Litungu* is the lead instrument introducing the melody. This instrument is considered a male instrument among the Bukusu and therefore takes the leading role as a man would in a home (interview, Kukubo 7th February 2007). It is then duplicated by the *Isiriri* one or two octaves above. This doubling is a common practice in African songs (Agu 1999: 46). Doubling also helps to place emphasis on the melody; strengthening the sound and enriching it (Ibid.). The *Isiriri* performs variations of the

original theme while the other instruments, *Chimbengele*, *Chisasi* and the improvised drum play a continuous figure in duplication but offering different textures. Therefore there is thematic unity in all the performing forces.

It is common in *Litungu* music to find the dominant pedal points in the music. These pedal points are performed by the *Isiriri* while the *Litungu* plays the ostinato. They occur in most cases at the beginning of a performance, and sometimes in the middle to create a climax. Performers of the music do not necessarily think much of the resultant complex rhythmic effect. Each performer articulates his rhythm. In the end it is a matter of teamwork as each strand of music converses with the other to communicate a given message.

4.5 OVERALL FORM OF LITUNGU MUSIC

The structure of Bukusu *Litungu* music is summarized in Table 4.2 below is the key to the symbols used in the table:

I- instrumental sections,

SR- solo and choral response,

C- *silao-sikeleko* in the form of speech-melody

V, V1, V2- *silao-sikeleko* in the form of narration or dialogue by different individuals

VC- narrated *silao-sikeleko* by a chorus.

The general structure is quasi-rondoic form with or without an instrumental prelude. Quasi-rondoic form presentation in *Litungu* music is not exactly the same as Rondo form in Western classical music; the form is basically a schematic guide that varies according to its output. For instance, when the section A is stated, it varies not only in terms of rhythm and pitch but also in terms of text especially where a strophic structure is presented in the sung section. In some cases the melodic structure changes totally but bears a similar theme to that of a previous A section. This study uses the term quasi-rondoic due to the unfolding order of events in *Litungu* music. Quasi-rondoic form here refers to the alternation between sung texts and *silao-sikeleko*.

Table 4.2. Structure of songs

Performing Group	Song Title	Structure of Songs
Kwane Band	<i>Kulukulu</i>	I, SR, S, SR, I
Kwane Band	<i>Mayi Muro</i>	I, C, V1, C, V1, V2, C, V1, C
Kwane Band	<i>Ewuyo Ino</i>	I, SR, S, C, S, I, SR, V1, SR, V1, SR
Kwane Band	<i>Eswa</i>	I, SR, S, V1, I, S, C, SR, C, V1, C, SR, C, SR
Kwane Band	<i>Kunikina</i>	I, SR, I, SR, I
Sinani Group Band	<i>Bikumba</i>	I, SR, C, SR, I, C, SR, V1, C, SR, C
Sinani Group Band	<i>Ewuyo Ino</i>	I, SR, C, SR, C
Sinani Group Band	<i>Enda Yo Muluhyia</i>	I, SR, C, SR, I, SR, I
Sinani Group Band	<i>Khola Ndie</i>	I, SR, I, CR, I
Sinani Group Band	<i>Wachonge</i>	I, SR, I, C, I, SR
Namatete Band	<i>Mayi</i>	I, S, I, S, V1, S
Namatete Band	<i>Lukendo Lwe Babukusu</i>	VC, V1, VC, V1, VC, V1, VC, V1, VC, V1, VC, V1, VC, V1, VC, V1, VC, V1, VC, V1, VC, V1, I, SR, V2, SR, V2, SR, V1, SR, V2, SR
Namatete Band	<i>Khulila V.P. Wamalwa</i>	I, SR, I, SR, I, SR, I, SR, I, V1, SR, I, SR, I, SR, C
Namatete Band	<i>Namulobi</i>	V1, I, SR, V1, VC, SR, S, I, V1, VC, V1, VC, V1, VC, V1, VC, V1, SR
Namatete Band	<i>Okhina Bali Sakhina</i>	I, S, I, S, I, V1, V2, S, V1, S, V1, V3, I, S, V1, I
Jackson Kisika Band	<i>Mayi Muro</i>	I, S, C, I, C, I
Jackson Kisika Band	<i>Wachonge</i>	I, S, I, C, I
Jackson Kisika Band	<i>Ewuyo Ino</i>	I, C, I, C, I
Nabukambisi Jazz Band	<i>Nekoye</i>	I, SR, I, S, I, V1, V2, V3, V4, V3, V2, V1, I, SR, V1, V2, V1, I, SR, I, V1, V3, I, SR, V1
Nabukambisi Jazz Band	<i>Basakwa</i>	I, V1, SR, V1, V2, I, SR, S, V1, C, V1, I, SR, V1
Mvumilivu Band	<i>Yekamakhanya</i>	I, V1, SR, C, I, S, C, V1, V2, V1, V2, C, S, V1, V3, V1, S, I, C, S
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Mayi Muro</i>	I, S, V1, V2, S
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Ewuyo Ino</i>	I, V1, S, V1, S, SR, S, V1, I, SR, V1, V2, C, I, V1, V2, I
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Mwana Mbeli</i>	I, SR, V1, V2, SR, V3, SR
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Kulukulu</i>	I, V1, SR, V1, S, V1, S, V1, I, S, V1
Lugulu Bumusika	<i>Lijembe</i>	I, V1, C, V1, C, V1, SR, I

Band		
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Endakano</i>	V1, VC, V1, VC, V1, V2, I, C, SR, I, V1, V2, V1, SR, C, SR, I, V1
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Paulinah</i>	I, V1, SR, V1, V2, C, V1, V2, SR, V1, SR, V1, V3
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Lisaye</i>	I, SR, C, V1, S, V1, V2, V1, SR, V1, V2, V3, V1, V2, V3, V1
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Simba (Swahili)</i>	I, SR, V1, V2, S, SR, V1, V2, SR, S, V1, SR
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Enyanja</i>	I, V1, SR, V1, V2, C, SR, C, SR, V2, V1, V2
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Sellah</i>	I, SR, C, V1, V2, I, V1, V2, SR, I
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Chingubo</i>	I, V1, SR, V1, V2, V1, V2, C, SR, V1, V3, C, SR, V1, I, S, V1, V2
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Enju Yo Muluhya</i>	I, V1, SR, C, V1, C, V1, C, V1, C, SR, V1, V2, V1, C, V1, V3, SR, V1, C, V1, S,
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Omundu</i>	I, V1, SR, C, SR, C, SR, V1, V2, SR, V1, SR, C, R, V1, V2, SR, V1
Lugulu Bumusika Band	<i>Baluhya</i>	I, SR, I, C, SR, C, V1, V2, V3, SR, V1

The sung texts are repeated with some variation, which are interspersed with new words in the form of *silao-sikeleko*. In this sense, the “A” sections are the sung texts while the “B, C” and so on, are *silao-sikeleko*. There are three presentations of this quasi-rondoic form: the first one begins with an instrumental prelude followed by sung text then *silao-sikeleko*; the second, begins with an instrumental prelude followed by *silao-sikeleko*; and the third begins with *silao-sikeleko* without instrumental accompaniment, then proceeds to a section with either sung text or *silao-sikeleko* with instrumental accompaniment.

The three presentations of quasi-rondoic form have components that are essential to the performance of *Litungu* music. The components are known to the performer composers and give the music a definite form that is basically a schematic guide.

Variation within the form is part of its overall structure. In all presentations the sung section is not always repeated in its original form. This is because African musics exhibit several structural forms such as: Solos, Call and Response, Call and Refrain, Solo and Chorused Refrain, and the Mixed Structural Forms (Agu 1999: 15).

According to Agu (1999: 17), in Call and Response, “the soloist... sings a phrase referred to as the call, while the chorus or choir responds with another short phrase ... which differs in text and melody from the call”. In Call and Refrain, the refrain is longer than the solo part and appears as a chorused refrain (Ibid., 22). In Solo and Chorused Refrain, the “soloist sings the entire verse of the song and the Chorus or Choir repeats it after him” (Ibid., 23). In addition, the strophic form also occurs, in which one melody is sung severally each time with different text. The following are examples of how Agu’s (Ibid.) terminologies can be used in *Litungu* music (see Figures 4.8 – 4.11).

Figure 4.8. Call and Response excerpt from the song *Ewuyo Ino* (Mukubwa 2007)

Call $\text{♩} = 125$
 Ba - kha-li - la, e - ba - ko-ne-la khu-ngi - la. Ba - kha-li - la, e - ba - ko-ne-la khu-ngi - la.

Response
 Eh! Eh! Eh! Eh!

Figure 4.9. Call and Refrain excerpt from the song *Nekoye* (Manyali 2000)

Call $\text{♩} = 125$
 Nga-li nga-li khu - re - ba.

Refrain
 Ne-ko-ye, Ko-bo-le - ngo ya - ya le-kha-na ne-ke - ba - sa - li.

Figure 4.10. Solo and Chorused Refrain excerpt from the song *Ewuyo Ino* (Mukubwa 2007)

Solo $\text{♩} = 125$
 E - wu - yo i - no e - ba - so-re-ri ba-li - la, E - wu - yo i - no pa - pa ba - ko-ne-la chi-ngi -

Chorused Refrain

la.

E - wu - yo i - no e - ba - so-re-ri ba-li - la, E-wu - yo i - no pa - pa ba - ko-ne-la chi-ngi - la.

20

Figure 4.11. Strophic form excerpt from the song *Namulobi* (Namatete 2007)

$\text{♩} = 130$

Mwi-ku-lu bu-ya - nzi bwo - nge-ne, Mwi-ku-lu bu-ya - nzi bwo - nge-ne,
Mwi-ku-lu be-mba-ngaha - le - lu - ya, Mwi-ku-lu be-mba-ngaha - le - lu - ya,

Mwi-ku-lu bu-ya - nzi bwo - nge-ne, Mwi-ku-lu bu-ya - nzi bwo - nge-ne.
Mwi-ku-lu be-mba-ngaha - le - lu - ya, Mwi-ku-lu be-mba-ngaha - le - lu - ya.

The first presentation of quasi-rondoic form is shown in Table 4.3. The alternations between “A” and other sections of *silao-sikeleko* vary from performance to performance even by the same performing group. Instrumental accompaniment occurs in a cyclic variation form. The cycle is repeated several times; each repetition can be exact or varied either rhythmically or melodically; it is the most common form. The diagrammatic representation of form has two levels moving concurrently; the vocal part against the instrumental part. Twenty-one out of thirty-six songs use this form. Output of the form varies and is evident in the songs *Nekoye* (Manyali 2000), *Mayi muro* (Elima 2007) and *Ewuyo Ino* (Mukubwa 20007).

²⁰ In Bukusu *Litungu* music there is an organization of meter alternating between triple and quadruple in every bar. As a result there is a strong accent after the third pulse resulting in a 9/8 and 12/8 time signature. This is an example of polymeter.

The first example is the song titled “*Nekoye*” as performed by the Nabukambisi Jazz band. The song begins with an instrumental introduction where the *Litungu* plays a phrase followed by the *Isiriri* and *Chisasi* and then the *Chimbengele*. The soloist then begins singing against the above instrumentation that is heard throughout the music. There is an instrumental interlude leading to another solo part with different text. It is followed by a choral part with a different melody. An instrumental interlude leads to *Silao-sikeleko* in form of a dialogue. Next is another instrumental interlude followed by a solo part; the melody is similar to the previous solo melody but differing in text. This leads to an instrumental part, then a solo narration followed by a dialogue section of *Silao-sikeleko*. After this, an instrumental part occurs, with vocal interjections and ululation that invite an instrumental part with a different melody. The latter can be perceived as a ‘B’ section because of its contrasting instrumental accompaniment. This sets off an overlapping solo-response section. The initial response to the solo section is short while the second response is longer. In other words we have a call and response section, and a call-refrain section. The next part is similar to the previous one, but having no singers, the instrumentalists play solos and the choral group responds with varying text but similar melody in strophic form. An instrumental interlude leads to a solo narrated part and then a dialogue. This is immediately followed by a call and refrain section and then an instrumental solo part and chorused refrain. Thereafter, another instrumental part leading to a narration takes place and then yet another instrumental part. Following is a call and refrain part similar to the previous call and refrain section that leads to a fading instrumental part with vocal interjections. The resultant structure is A B A¹ C D A² A³ E A²A³ in eleven minutes and six seconds (see Table 4.4, audio CD1 track 7).

The Lugulu Bumusika Band’s rendition of the song “*Mayi muro*” is the second example the first presentation of quasi-rondoic form. The song commences with an instrumental introduction. In this section the *Litungu* begins the performance followed by the *Chimbengele* and then the *Isiriri*. Following is a solo part accompanied by instruments leading to an instrumental interlude. A solo narration followed by solo singing is then executed, ending with an instrumental part of the *Litungu* ensemble. The resultant structure is A B A in three minutes seventeen seconds (see Table 4.5, CD2 track 4).

The third example is “*Ewuyo Ino*” performed by Kwane Group Band. The *Litungu* introduces the performance followed by the *Chimbengele* and then the *Isiriri*. A vocal section with a mixed structure comes next. Here there is a solo and chorused refrain part leading to a solo part and then a solo and chorused refrain part in strophic form. The next section is instrumental which leads to a second melody that is solo response and in strophic form. This is followed by yet another melody, the third melody sung solo response in strophic form. Next is a solo narration part. It is followed by the third melody sung as solo response part in strophic form. The story then continues as a narration. The third melody sung as a solo response in strophic form ends the song. Its overall structure is A A¹ A² B A² C A² in six minutes eleven seconds (see Table 4.6, CD1 track 3).

The second presentation of quasi-rondoic form has the *silao-sikeleko* coming at the beginning immediately after the instrumental prelude. There are twelve out of thirty-six songs with this form. The output of this form varies for example in the songs, *Yekamakhanya* (Manyali 2007) and *Lijembe* (Lubao 2007). The first example is the song “*Yekamakhanya*” by Muvumilivu Band. It begins with an instrumental accompaniment which is followed by a narration. This is immediately followed by a solo and chorused refrain section without any instrumental interlude; then follows speech-melody. After the speech-melody is an instrumental interlude than a solo and chorused refrain in strophic form. Next are speech-melody then a dialogue of *Silao-sikeleko* and another speech-melody. This is followed by a solo and chorused refrain section in strophic form, a *Silao-sikeleko* narration, solo and chorused refrain then an instrumental interlude. Following is another chant then a solo and chorused refrain section. The overall form is B A C A D E F A G A H A in six minutes forty-three seconds (see Table 4.7).

The second example is a song titled “*Lijembe*” (Elima 2007) as performed by the Lugulu Bumusika Band. The music begins with the *Litungu* playing a melody followed by the *Chimbengele* then the *Isiriri*. A narrated part by the soloist ensues, which leads to speech-melody, a narration, speech-melody and another narration. It is followed by a solo and chorused refrain section. The music culminates with a fading instrumental section. The overall form is B A in four minutes thirteen seconds (see Table 4.8 and audio CD1 track 5).

The third presentation of quasi-rondoic form has the music beginning with *silao-sikeleko* but without instrumental accompaniment. The instrumental accompaniment is performed immediately after the *silao-sikeleko* to introduce the sung text. Three out of thirty-six songs exhibited this form. I will use two songs to show the articulation of this form. The first song is “*Namulobi*” (Namatete 2007), while the second one is “*Endakano*” (Lubao 2007). In the song “*Namulobi*” every time the *Silao-sikeleko* is performed, it has no instrumental accompaniment. The instruments thus only accompany the sung texts. After the *Silao-sikeleko* introduction is a call and refrain section in strophic form. It is followed by another narration of *Silao-sikeleko* then an instrumental interlude. The next section is choral singing then a solo and response section followed by another choral singing section to a different melody from the previous choral section. There is an instrumental interlude followed by a narrated *Silao-sikeleko* part. This is immediately followed by a call and refrain section similar to what was at the beginning. The resultant form is B A C A¹ D A in four minutes fifty-seven seconds (see Table 4.9, CD2 track 8).

In the song “*Endakano*” the performance begins with *Silao-sikeleko* as a dialogue. Following is an instrumental interlude leading to speech-melody. Next is a section of call and refrain in strophic form followed by narrated “Verbal Text”. Following is a section of call and refrain in strophic form, speech-melody, a repeat of call and refrain then a *Silao-sikeleko* narration. The resultant structure is B A C A D A E in six minutes nineteen seconds (see Table 4.10, CD1 track 6).

As each performer works to communicate the intended message in a given context, the resultant structure of *Litungu* music becomes a complex quasi-rondoic form. Each type of text, sung or verbal, has its own structure. The instrumental accompaniment also has a structure of its own. In the vocal section, the alternations between sung text and *silao-sikeleko* serve to create both variety and unity. *Silao-sikeleko* creates aesthetic variation, interjection and contrast. However, unity is achieved through similar message content between the sung text and the *silao-sikeleko*. As a result, there are many variations of each quasi-rondoic form presentation in a performance creating an open-ended arrangement. This confirms what Onyeji (2005: 255) suggests, namely that “in African music the presentational form of a piece of music is open-ended”.

Table 4.3. The first quasi-rondoic form presentation

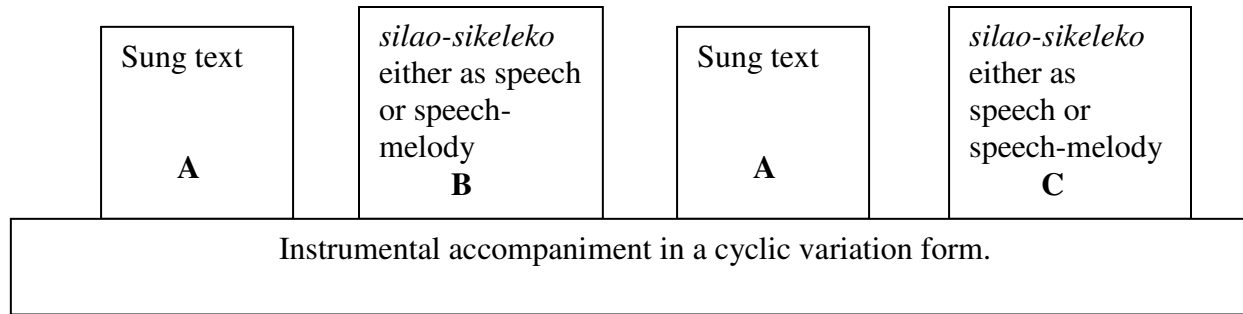


Table 4.4. Structure of the first presentation of quasi-rondoic form in the song *Nekoye* (Manyali 2000) (See CD1 track 7)

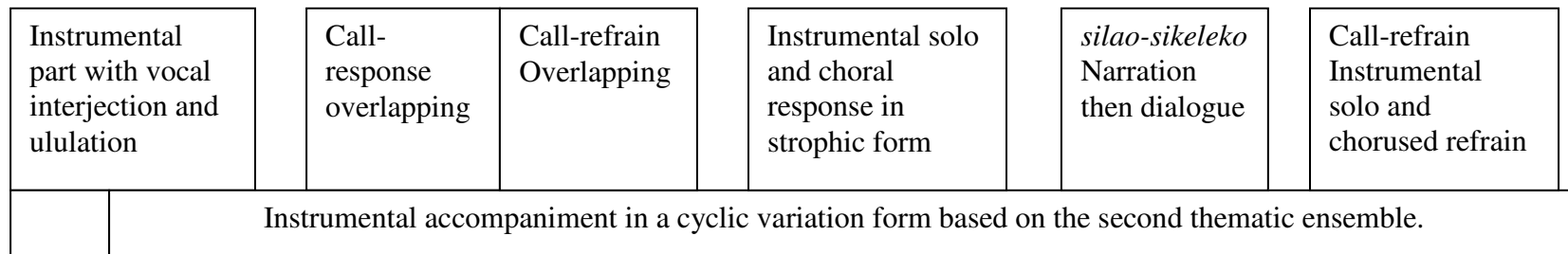
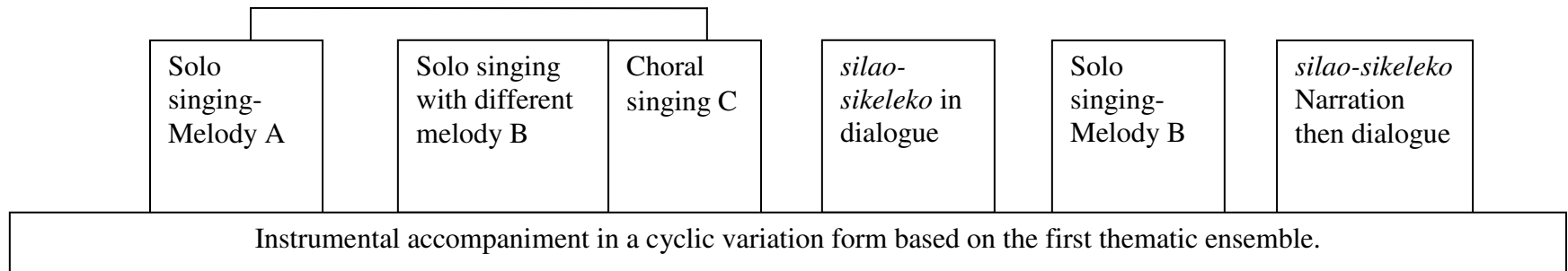


Table 4.5. Structure of the first presentation of quasi-rondoic form in the song *Mayi muro* (Elima 4) (see CD2 track)

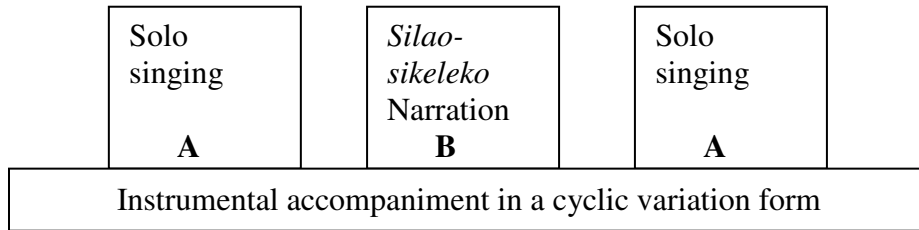


Table 4.6. Structure of the first presentation of quasi-rondoic form in the song *Ewuyo Ino* (Mukubwa 2007) (see CD1 track 3)

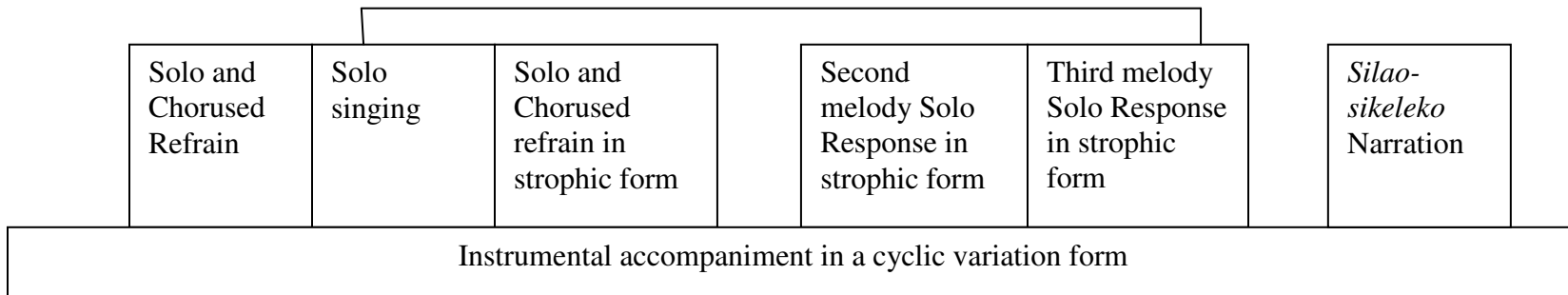


Table 4.7. Structure of the second quasi-rondoic form presentation in the song *Yekamakhanya* (Kakai 2007)

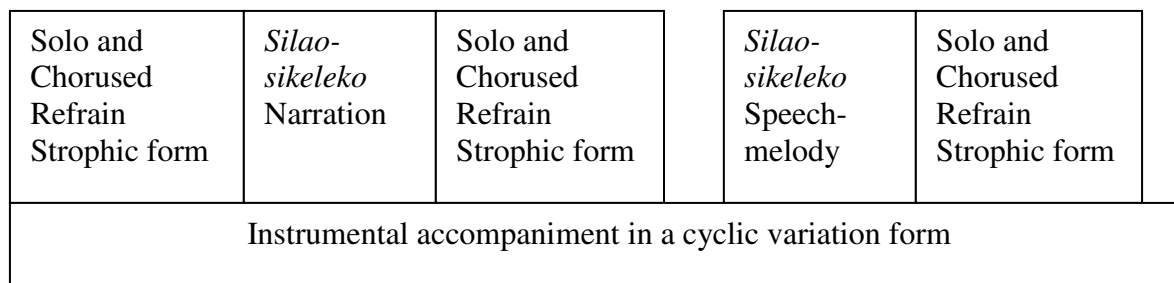
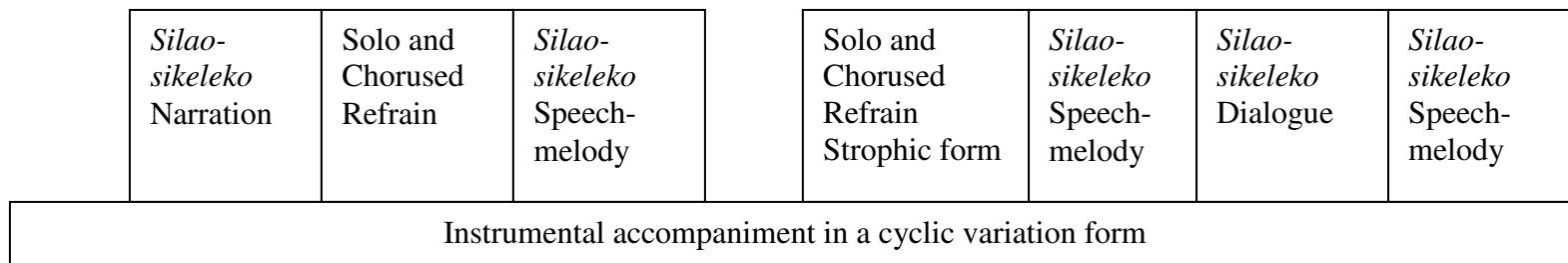


Table 4.8. Structure of the second quasi-rondoic form presentation in the song *Lijembe* (Elima 2007) (CD1 track 5)

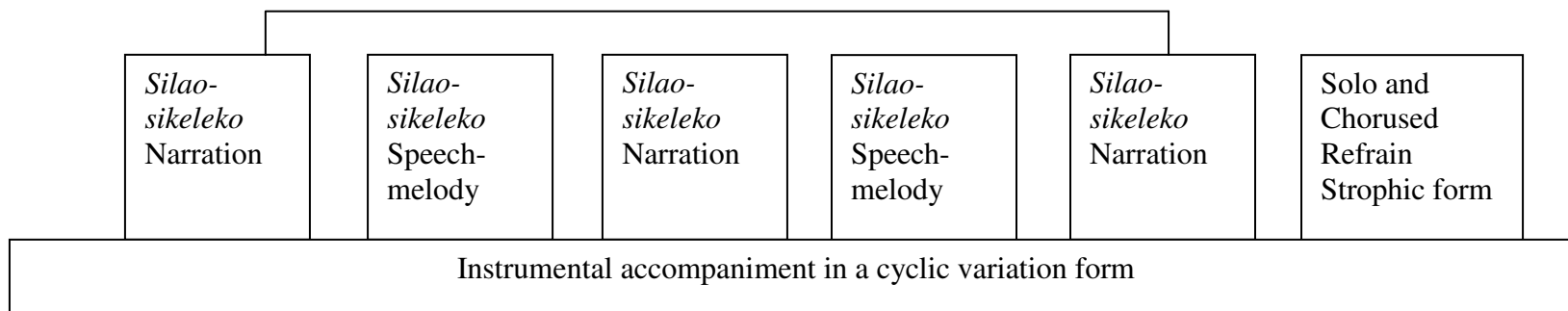


Table 4.9. Structure of the third presentation of quasi-rondoic form in the song *Namulobi* (Namatete 2007) (see CD2 track8)

<i>Silao-sikeleko</i> Narration	Call and refrain strophic form	Solo Chorus performance of <i>silao- sikeleko</i>	Choral singing	Solo and Response	Choral singing in Strophic form	Solo Chorus performance of <i>silao- sikeleko</i>	Call and refrain strophic form
Instrumental accompanimen t in a cyclic variation form		Instrumental accompaniment in a cyclic variation form				Instrumental accompanime nt in a cyclic variation form	

Table 4.10. Output of the third presentation of quasi-rondoic form in the song *Endakano* (Lubao 2007) (CD1 track 6)

<i>Silao- sikeleko</i> Dialogue	<i>Silao- sikeleko</i> Speech- melody	Call and Refrain in Strophic form	<i>Silao- sikeleko</i> Narration	Call and Refrain in Strophic form	<i>Silao- sikeleko</i> Speech- melody	Call and Refrain in Strophic form	<i>Silao- sikeleko</i> Narration
Instrumental accompaniment in a cyclic variation form							

Figure 4.12. Background, middle ground and foreground features of *Litungu* music

KUNIKINA

Kwane Band

J.=120 Voice

Ku - ni - ki -

- na 'mu - ma - sa - ta. Ku - ni - ki - na 'mu - ma - sa - ta.

In his discussion of African musical structures Kofi Agawu (1997, [O]) explains that “surface musical patterns or ‘foreground’ features hide simpler patterns at the background”. In the case of *Litungu* music, the background features in most cases arise from the instrumental accompaniment performed alongside text. The patterns created by the instrumental accompaniment elicit a polyrhythmic structure or pattern, as each of the instruments (*Litungu*, *Isiriri*, *Chimbengele*, *Chisasi* and improvised drum) has its own rhythmic pattern. In a Bukusu ensemble each instrument plays a significant role that allows its musical material to fall into the background, middle ground or foreground.

The instrumental accompaniment heard on its own is foreground material but when it is heard against the vocal part it is relegated to the background so that prominence is given to the voice that carries a message which forms the foreground material (see Figure 4.12). Musical form among the Bukusu, is also affected by the traditional norms of functionalism. One function of *Litungu* music is to communicate messages by the performers for and to the members of the community. This confirms Ekweme's statement that "functionality is a known feature of music in Africa and in the functionality, communication becomes a primary objective" (1994: 6). The communicative essence determines how much text (both verbal and sung) would be in a performance.

When *silao-sikeleko* is used in a performance, it lengthens the music each time it is performed in alternation with the sung text. This is evident in the many episodes designated as B C D and so on. The oral compositional process is known to the performer composers of *Litungu* music who articulate it to differing degrees. There are two reasons for the differences in oral compositions, one reason for this is the obvious fact that the music is orally conceived and has no written score to guide its performance. This allows for a lot of variations in a piece that the performer composers view as the same. The other reason is that the music is affected by extra-musical factors. When a performance receives a good audience response, the performer composers elongate the music through repetition of parts and give more information in the form of *silao-sikeleko*. This element is vital in the music and its manipulation is a form of cultural aesthetic and vehicle for the demonstration of musical prowess.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter's aim was to establish the structural implications of *Silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music. The study established that *silao-sikeleko* has four presentational forms. The first is that performed by *omukeleki*, who is in most cases the soloist, who also leads the sung sections. The second form is that performed as a dialogue between two *bakeleki*. One *omukeleki* invites the other to speak and when the second one is through he signals the other to proceed. The third form involves several *bakeleki* who engage in a discussion over a given issue. The fourth

involves *omukeleki* who receives a choral response from several *bakeleki*. These structural presentations elicit different textures and timbres, which I denoted as V for narration, and V1, V2 for different *bakeleki* and VC for the choral response. *Silao-sikeleko* occurs frequently in a *Litungu* performance but not all performances of *Litungu* music exhibit the use *silao-sikeleko*. When *Litungu* music incorporates *silao-sikeleko*, *silao-sikeleko* can appear at the beginning, within the music interspersed with sung text, or at the end. The sung texts have a mixed structural form encompassing solo sections, solo response, call and refrain, call and chorused refrain, which further appear in strophic form.

This study established that the *Litungu* is accompanied by the *Isiriri*, *Chimbengele* and the improvised drum. In most cases the vocal melody is performed on the *Isiriri*, while the *Litungu* and the *Isiriri* sometimes double each other when the *Litungu* plays a “song specific” accompaniment. A “song specific” accompaniment is one that echoes the vocal melody. There are also *Litungu* accompaniments that can be used to accompany more than one song effectively. The instrumental ensemble has two bar phrases performed as an ostinato in theme and variation form. These phrases are the background material upon which the sung text and *silao-sikeleko* are performed. As the main musical instrument, the *Litungu* begins the performance followed by the *Isiriri*. In most cases the *Isiriri* begins by performing a repetitive note against the *Litungu*’s one or two thematic cycles. Such an introduction by the *Isiriri* acts as a pedal point on the tonic or dominant. Pedal points in *Litungu* music occur at the beginning, and at the climax.

Generally, *Litungu* music results in a quasi-rondoic form which presents itself in three different ways. The first one begins with an instrumental introduction followed by sung text. The second begins with an instrumental introduction followed by a *silao-sikeleko*. The third begins with *silao-sikeleko* without any instrumental accompaniment. This provides a schematic guide to the performer composers of the music. The alternations between *silao-sikeleko* and sung text are common and their frequency is subjectively determined by the soloist. Moreover, details of form and structure grow out of the creative process. This is because the soloist’s decisions during the performance process affect the overall structure. The next chapter discusses the cultural function of *silao-sikeleko* in Bukusu *Litungu* music.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CULTURAL ROLE OF *SILAO-SIKELEKO* IN BUKUSU *LITUNGU* MUSIC

5.1 INTRODUCTION

It is usual to find members of the Bukusu community taking part in musical activities. But among them are both professional musicians and semi professionals, who guide the performance process. Professional musicians according to Akuno (2005: 88), “is one who has not only learned to play a musical instrument, but can also make his own instrument and create his own original music”. In addition professional musicians are full time performers of music, earning their living through tokens they receive for their musical performances. However, the *Litungu* musicians I interviewed are semi professionals. They engage in other activities and jobs such as farming and teaching in order to sustain their families. These musicians create time to practice and master the *Litungu* music genre. Each musician is required to have a mastery of language and proficiency to articulate the messages in a culturally-acceptable manner. It is paramount for the performers to internalise the main musical beat against which text would be *khulaa-khukeleka*, so that they can align their text to fit into a given instrumental interlude. This allows the musicians to keep to the required tempo and rhythm. Formerly, *Litungu* playing was a preserve of the male members of the community; more recently some women are allowed to play. Tom Kukubo (Interview, 7th February 2007) explained that women are nowadays allowed to play the instrument.

This change has come from the introduction of formal education where girls are also required to participate in co-curriculum activities such as the Kenya Music Festival.²¹ However, the fieldwork revealed that many band members were mainly men. There were a few cases where some women were involved in performances. Even in these instances they played a subordinate role, which involves responding to solo sections, dancing, ululation at a climax; they very rarely perform sections of *silao-sikeleko*.

²¹ The Kenyan education system has a calendar for co-curriculum activities. These are activities that are performed alongside the formal curriculum in schools; they include drama festival, music festival and games. The activities are governed by the Ministry of Education under the Department of Quality Assurance and Standards.

The execution of *silao-sikeleko* is governed by certain principles, also articulated within the Bukusu community's culture. Therefore it is necessary to examine *silao-sikeleko* as it is viewed by the Bukusu people. This Chapter aims to explain the cultural position of *silao-sikeleko*. To achieve this, the Chapter begins by explaining the origin of *silao-sikeleko* together with what governs its conception in the Bukusu community. The chapter discusses the performers' views on the importance and place of *silao-sikeleko* in the music. As a result it highlights the contextual aspects within which *silao-sikeleko* is executed. Consequently, the discussion establishes the cultural role of *silao-sikeleko* in the music and the community. All the song texts discussed in this chapter are available in full in the Appendix I, pages 216-251.

5.2 THE ORIGIN OF THE *SILAO-SIKELEKO* ELEMENT IN LITUNGU MUSIC

As stated elsewhere in this study, speech and speech-melody are part of a song. When the performers of Bukusu *Litungu* music say that they learnt their musical skill from their fathers, uncles and grandfathers, one is tempted to ask who taught their forefathers. According to Bukusu history, Mwambu and Sela were the first parents created by God, *Wele Khakaba* (the provider). These people had in them the skill of musical composition and performance that was passed on orally to the next generations (Tom Kukubo 2007). The Bukusu people have no linguistic term for speech and speech-melody. In the course of my fieldwork, I asked members of the different bands the question, "what name is given to sections of talking and speech-melody in Bukusu songs? The answer was unanimous from leaders of the Sinani Group Band, the Namatete Band, the Kwane Band and the Kisika Band (interview, 2007). They agreed that there is no specific word for speech and speech-melody, as it is taken as being part of the music. Among them are such terms, *khukhwimba* (singing), *khukhupa Litungu* (playing the *Litungu*), *khukhupa Chinyimba* (playing the *chinyimba*), and *khukhupa Siriri* (playing the *Isiriri*). *Khukhwimba* refers to singing, speech-melody and talking. When all these entities are combined, this is referred to as *lulwimbo* (a song). I held a group discussion with members of Lugulu Bumusika Band and posed the same question. James Maloba, a band member responded, "*inaitwa khulaa*" (it is called *khulaa*) (interview, 3rd May 2007). "*Hilo neno 'khulaa' lina maana gani haswa?*" (What is the meaning of the word *khulaa*?) I enquired. Samuel Elima (interview, 3rd May 2007) quickly responded stating that it would indicate "praise". On further discussion, it was evident that not all

sections of speech and speech-melody reveal some form of praise, since contexts and themes vary. However, this aspect of musical performance (*khulaa*) is common. I believe that this section of music was originally called *khulaa* but has expanded to incorporate themes other than praise. The soloist praises himself in respect to his maternal lineage when performing *Khulaa*. He can then praise other people whom he deems fit for praise. Makila (1978: 49) also concurs with this definition stating that:

when declaring his paternal ancestry, [a person] made claims as to what past achievements his paternal clan had made or was capable of remembering (*khukhwilaa*)... *khukhwilaa* reveals clan origins in terms of corporate achievements, migratory movements and even common ancestry, if any. Whenever a person made utterances of *khukhwilaa* he assumed an air of solemn swearing.

In his statement above Makila uses the word *khukhwilaa* meaning “self praise”. This praise trait is evident in the *sefala* of Basotho migrants which Coplan (2001: 88) explains stating that, “a *sefala* is a poetic autobiography composed in social context”. Similarly, statements of self praise and praise for members of the singer’s family are evident in *Kudeketera* (which is a mixture of singing, talking and sighing) of the Shona (Berliner 1976: 467). *Khulaa*, *Kudeketera* and *Sefala* offer important salutations to members of the community. But when the speech/speech-melody sections of music go beyond self praise, the name *khukhwilaa* among the Bukusu does not describe the texts adequately. This is the reason why some performers of *Litungu* music refer to this section as music. However, Mukasa Wafula (personal communication, 5th April 2010) who is also a performer of *Litungu* music explained that in the community the term *khukeleka* means to advice and this is what some of the speech and speech-melody sections of the music entail. I combine the terms *khulaa* and *khukeleka* to form the word *khulaa-khukeleka* which refers to the action of performing the speech and speech-melody sections of the music. As a result I have coined the term *Silao-sikeleko* as a noun to encompass speech and speech-melody in *Litungu* music.

5.3 CONTEXT OF *SILAO-SIKELEKO* IN *LITUNGU* MUSIC

This section is not necessarily specific on the content or subject matter that arises out of the events. The content would be an additional message. *Silao-sikeleko* plays an important role in the performance of *Litungu* music. Martin Wanyama (interview 3rd May 2007) commented that “*Nyimbo ambazo tuna ongeamo sana ni zile za kina babu*” (the songs that make frequent use of *silao-sikeleko* are those traditional songs by our forefathers). This means that the newly-composed songs do not have much of this element although they try to fit *silao-sikeleko* into the traditional rendition of musical performance. A good performance of music that has been orally transmitted would at least make use of this element. The traditional performance contexts include beer parties, marriage, circumcision, and funeral rites. However, modern contexts are those that have arisen from social change and include political life; worship in church; social commentary on education and dress code; and studio recording of *Litungu* music.

The first traditional context worth discussing is the beer party ceremony. This context has similar messages to those relayed during various entertainment sessions. The beer party as an occasion enjoys a relatively large audience and is favourable for the communication of various messages to the community. Messages are about events taking place within the community. This is an opportunity to rebuke members of the society whose behaviour is culturally unacceptable, and praise good behaviour.

The second traditional context is marriage ceremonies, during which, “song text communicates important marriage values to the couple”, and these are also relayed in *silao-sikeleko* (Mindoti 2006: 166). Bride price is highly esteemed among the Bukusu. It is customary for the man to pay thirteen head of cattle to the bride’s family. Names are given to the animals and songs sung in praise of not only the couple but the cattle as well (Sylvester Mukubwa, interview, 3rd May 2007). Mukubwa sung the song *Kunikina*, to demonstrate his point (see CD2, song number six). Part of the *silao-sikeleko* is,

Lubukusu text

Kunikina omumasata
Wecha nacho munane

English text

Kunikina of the *Bamasata* clan
She came with eight of them

Chyosi chilio chimbesemu
Chiama busa wa khalayi.

They are all brown
They have come from the “good one”.

In this song, a woman called Kunikina from the *Bamasata* clan got married. Her kinsmen praise her in this song, for bringing them cattle which were paid as bride price. The animals were eight in number and brown in colour. The bride price is not paid at once but in instalments. So in the case of Kunikina, eight had been paid leaving a balance of five. Here *silao-sikeleko* is used to restate the history of an important event in Kunikina’s family.

Circumcision ceremonies present a third forum for the execution of *silao-sikeleko*. At every stage of the circumcision rite there is music and dancing that allows for praise, encouragement and rebuke, and performers relate past events of those who were cowards and the shame they had to bear. Even though the interviewees did not perform any circumcision song during my fieldwork, they cited circumcision as one context in which *silao-sikeleko* is executed. The circumcision songs are as sacred as the circumcision ritual among the Bukusu community. Therefore, the community disapproves of and discourages the performances of these songs out of context. Wanyama confirms this point by observing that, “songs performed in the Bukusu circumcision ritual have specific functions and meanings” (Wanyama 2006: 4-22). He provides an example of the song *Sioyaye* and warns that,

it is a taboo to sing this song at any other time other than in the circumcision context. It is believed that if it were sung out of context, a bad omen would befall the singer or his family members... [T]his belief may have been advanced and perpetuated for reasons of respecting the ritual, highlighting its sanctity, and qualifying it as a Bukusu symbol of achievement and identity (Ibid.).

It is for this reason that the interviewees were reluctant to perform the songs for me. Moreover, circumcision songs among the Bukusu contain obscenities that are only mentioned within the circumcision ritual context.

Funerals are the fourth context. The performance of music during funerals serves to comfort the bereaved, remind the community of their ancestry and detail what the deceased has done in the community. This information was also reiterated by one of the interviewees (Elima 2007).

During the mourning period several rituals take place, one of them is the burial ritual and the other is the *kumuse* ritual. Karani (1992) explains about this ritual and says that “the ritual of *kumuse*, like other rituals ... employs varied communicative devices. These include songs, proverbs, riddles, narratives and general oratory skills. The ritual of *kumuse* involves re-enacting significant historical events in the context of the local community. For instance, the ritual leader re-enacts myths and/or legends and tries to relate them to specific issues of the time”.²² During mourning when songs are sung, narrations in the form of *silao-sikeleko* are present. The song titled *Omundu* was performed by the Lugulu Bumusika Band. The title as indicated in the translation means “A person”. The song begins with a profound statement made by the soloist in the form of *silao-sikeleko* which is, “God created us but he did not give us the day of death”. The song basically highlights those who have passed on and the effect of death on their living relatives. The theme “you mean a good person can also die?” is carried in the song text, and is repeated several times. It elicits a feeling of being in shock yet it is well known that death is inevitable. The *khulaa-khukeleka* sections capture the names of some victims and their clans. This is then interrupted by an acknowledgement of the *omukeleki*’s relatives before proceeding with the core message. Such a song is performed after the death of a community member. It is common for mourners to remember the deaths of those who died much earlier, as they mention their names. That is why this song has a list of several names even if it was used at one funeral.

The Bukusu perceive death as an inevitable reality; nevertheless it is greatly feared (Makokha 1993: 97). This statement is reiterated by Enright (1983: 21) who states that, “men fear death as children fear to go in the dark, and as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other”. As a result of this fear, the members of the community do not always write wills in preparation for death. It is believed that no one is ever ready to face death, and yet it is a non-negotiable rite of passage. The feeling that it is a rite of passage is “well captured in customs practised by the *Balunda* clan of the Bukusu community who bury the dead in a sitting posture. The symbolism here is that even in death, one is still active and capable of moving about” (Janet Barasa 2007: 118). There is a spirit world, *Emakombe*, where one moves to after death. This world is considered high above the present world, and a place where one joins the ancestors.

²² *Kumuse* is a vital post-burial ceremony among the Bukusu performed three days after burial, for elderly male members of the community.

Such a belief is evident in the song *Omundu* where names of those who became spirits are mentioned (see Appendix I, page 220). Shisanya (1993: 82) observes that the “Abanyole view death as a life occurrence that enables an individual to join the ancestral world”. The Abanyole, a sub-tribe of the Abaluhya, shares the belief with the Bukusu of life after death.

Modern contexts have emerged as a result of changes in societal organization during the colonial era (Euba 1999: 68). The first of these contexts is political life. Here, the political landscape, made up of political campaigns and national days, has served as an opportunity for the performers to execute their prowess in composition and creative extemporization. Similarly “music has been appropriated ...to fulfil political functions of reporting on current affairs, exerting political pressure, spreading propaganda and reflecting and moulding public opinion” (Wekesa 2002: 4). Moreover, with the independence of Kenya came a movement called the Harambee Movement. This is an event at which politics and the political assignments occur. The term literally “means ‘let us all pull together’ and is variously described as a way of life in Kenya...and a traditional custom of Kenyans ...[I]t embodies ideas of mutual assistance, joint effort, development strategy of the people, by the people” (Chieni 1999, [O]). The people participate in developmental activities such as building of roads, schools and hospitals with opportunities for fund raising, which is organized to benefit members of the community. It is during such occasions that *Litungu* musicians are invited to entertain the public. The performers compose music that befits the occasion praising the guests of honour.

The song *Enyanja* as performed by Lugulu Bumusika Band relates to the character of the Luhya people as a whole. They are likened to a great lake that cannot easily be crossed. The song begins with an introduction of the Band members, and then the story is told. The soloist *khulaa-khukelekas* how the white man came to Kenya and met tough personalities such as the first president of the republic of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta, and the second president Daniel Arap Moi. The vastness of the Luhya then seems to dwindle as the song moves on to a sung section that reveals how the great lake is diminishing or shrinking in size. In the process they mention a number of Luhya members of parliament. This is followed by a speech-melody that reveals the pain of having lost Wamalwa of the Baengele clan. Kijana Wamalwa was Kenya’s Vice-President after the 2002 elections and the chairman of the political party, Forum for the

Restoration of Democracy (FORD). The *omukeleki* cries in pain and expresses his anguish that as Wamalwa died he left leadership to Kombo, a person who was unable to hold the party together.

The political context for this song is as follows, during the onset of multiparty politics in Kenya, a second party was formed called FORD. The members of the party began quarrelling and some left, leaving behind a weakened party. This party later on split into FORD Kenya and FORD Asili.²³ FORD Kenya was led by the former Vice-President of Kenya, Wamalwa Kijana until his untimely death. FORD Kenya elected Musikari Kombo to succeed Wamalwa. The tussle of leadership in FORD Kenya led to the formation of New FORD Kenya with some members of parliament like Mukhisa Kituyi and Soita Shitanda moving to the New FORD Kenya, leaving Musikari Kombo in the original FORD Kenya (Makabila 2007). Consequently, “FORD Kenya leaders have been trying to conduct a cleansing and appeasing ceremony at the shrine of Masinde [a respected leader within the FORD Kenya party and a Bukusu] to rediscover their dwindling strength” (Ojwang and Wambilyanga 2007).

According to the song *Omundu* (which also contains political commentary), the Luhya were so mighty that they could travel abroad by whatever means they wanted, be it by air, land or sea. As other personalities are mentioned it is reiterated that the image of the Luhya as a lake is shrinking thus the Luhya are decreasing not only in size but also in political power. In another section of lamentation it is stated that a Luhya person placed a log in a well and it shrunk. This metaphor is similar to the image of the shrinking lake, in that the log in the well also symbolizes the diminishing power of the Luhya people. The song ends by one of the musicians imploring the Luhya to live in peace. This song captures the political landscape among the Luhya community. Fundamentally, the “traditional songs are still being incorporated in commenting on aspects of the Kenyan political process” (Wekesa 2002: 7). The political situation in Kenya and in Western Kenya especially among the Abaluhya, has presented itself as an opportunity for the performance of *silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music. The performers of *Litungu* music have the freedom to comment on issues and express their sentiments.

²³ FORD Asili party was led by Keneth Matiba who belongs to the Kikuyu community. This is why the party is not mentioned in the Bukusu songs as the musicians concentrate on the party where their members of the community belong.

Church worship is yet another context in which *Litungu* music is performed. When the white missionaries came to Kenya, they came with the Bible and introduced a new religion to the Africans. This new religion is Christianity and it was forced upon Africans with disregard to their traditional religion (Turkson 1992: 65). Even though Christianity was met with resistance, it was accepted fully by some Africans and partly by others. Those who did not fully embrace Christianity formed independent churches and these African independent churches sought to use African instruments and language to evangelize. The Bukusu community did not escape this influence, which has shaped and affected the musical creative process of the *Litungu* performers. For example, Elijah Masinde, a religious leader, led the Dini ya Musambwa (Sect of the Spirit) which is an independent church. Other members of the Bukusu community embraced Christianity and changed their lifestyles (De Wolf 1977: 39; Thomas 2000: 2). To demonstrate this, the Jackson Kisika Band has a performance in which they begin by praising God with the song *Yesu Afuma* (Praise be to Jesus). In the same vein, the Namatete Band provided fourteen songs all in praise of God in both Kiswahili language and Lubukusu language. These songs centre on the theme of salvation, accompanied by a traditional musical ensemble. My observation is that the majority of these songs do not make use of *silao-sikeleko*, when performed in the church context. An exception which occurs is the presence of *silao-sikeleko* in the song *Namulobi* (Namatete 2007) by the Namatete Band (see CD2 song number eight).

Example 5.1. *Namulobi*

Lubukusu text

Speech:
 Namulobi!
 Enyange, bindu bye kamakana
 Yabao endalo ndala, Namulobi wakenda
 wakanana nende Enyange.
 Enyange sindu sye kamakana.
 Enyange yesinga, Enyange yebikha.
 Lundi emyolokha busa oli Myie! Myie!
 Myie!
 Namulobi wauka.
 Oli auka, Enyange imba, ali emba
 Solo: Matunda kongene,
 Chorus: Mwikulu matunda kongene x3

English text

Speech:
 Namulobi!
 Enyange, things you think about.
 There was one day,
 Namulobi walked and met Enyange.
 Enyange, something you think about.
 Enyange took a bath, Enyange dressed.
 He was clean, clean! Clean! Clean!
 Namulobi got surprised.
 As he was surprised, Enyange sung, he sung,
 Solo: Only fruits,
 Chorus: In heaven, only fruits x3

Solo: Mwikulu buyanzi bwongene,
Chorus: Mwikulu buyanzi bwongene x3
Solo: Mwikulu bembanga haleluya,
Chorus: Mwikulu bembanga haleluya x3

Speech:
Enyange yamaya yapa lukano litalanali.
Kamalwa nende emicho, bibindu ebyo,
mubimanya?
Khale ne khale wele kalima
kumukunda kwewe.
Setani khabona ali alima, khesenda simbi.
Khali, "Ewe omwami, olima sina?
lekha ese khulimile."

Chorus:
Wele karurayo, walekha setani khalima.
walekha setani khalima.
Khabukula kamaemba khamicha.

Solo: Mala setani khaloma khali,
Chorus: Sabila munda ndila muno

Etalang'i khera
Emicho khera
Khayuni khera
Khabukula kamalasile
Khamicha, kharurayo.
Kamaemba karomba
Kamaemba karura
Kamaemba kachowa
Kamaemba kalaba.
Mwana wa Adamu kecha kakesa.
Wenikha karomba
Wakoya kamalwa kanywa
Wefuala, wamela,
Wamela bali amela

Speech:
Warakikha khuchekhachekha,
Liba lye khayuni.
Wakwa mulutondoyi
Liba lye mbichi.
Warafuwa, bali arafuwa
Wekomba khukhwira wandaye

Solo: In heaven, only joy,
Chorus: In heaven, only joy x3
Solo: In heaven, they sing hallelujah,
Chorus: In heaven, they sing hallelujah x3

Speech:
Enyange then told interesting stories.
Beer and seeds, those things,
do you know them?
Long time ago God
cultivated his land.
Satan saw him dig and moved closer.
He said, "You my Lord, what are you
digging? Let me help you."

Chorus:
God left, he left Satan digging.
He left Satan digging.
He took sorghum and sowed.

Solo: Then Satan said,
Chorus: I beg from the heart and eat
from here.
He killed a lion
He killed a seed
He killed a bird
He took the blood
He sowed and left.
The sorghum germinated
the sorghum sprouted
the sorghum grew
the sorghum matured.
Son of Adam came and harvested.
He soaked the sorghum
He brewed beer and drunk
He dressed, he got drunk,
He became very drunk

Speech:
He started laughing,
a lifestyle of a bird.
He fell in a swamp,
a lifestyle of a pig.
He became very angry
and longed to kill his brother,

Liba lye talang'i	a lifestyle of a lion.
Bana bo mwami,	children of the almighty,
Liba lye khusibala aba lye khusibala,	a lifestyle of this earth belongs to this earth,
Bye mwikulu bili ne wele.	That of heaven is with God.
Khulekhasia mbaos ta.	There is no comparison.
Namulobi niye omundu,	Namulobi is a person,
Enyange niye malaika we mwikulu.	Enyange is an angel from heaven

Solo: Matunda kongene,	Solo: Only fruits,
Chorus: Mwikulu matunda kongene x3	Chorus: In heaven, only fruits x3
Solo: Mwikulu buyanzi bwongene,	Solo: In heaven, only joy,
Chorus: Mwikulu buyanzi bwongene x3	Chorus: In heaven, only joy x3
Solo: Mwikulu bembanga halleluya,	Solo: In heaven, they sing hallelujah,
Chorus: Mwikulu bembanga halleluya x3	Chorus: In heaven, they sing hallelujah x3

This song unfolds as an allegory about the Garden of Eden. The interchange between singing and *silao-sikeleko* continues to the end. Here Satan planted sorghum and took care of it until it was ready for harvesting. Man partook of the sorghum and used it to brew beer. He drunk himself silly and became a mess. The soloist ends by stating that what belongs to heaven should remain there while what belongs to earth should remain on earth. He then divulges that Namulobi is man while Enyange is an angel. The gospel message and Bible stories like the above story are sometimes told using *silao-sikeleko* as a medium.

The third modern context is musical performance for studio recording and commercial dissemination. Okumu (2005: 117) observes that, “the period after independence [in Kenya] saw an influx of Congolese music”. This was advanced by exposure through radio, television and print media. Consequently many Kenyans have imitated the Congolese organization of band groups with an aim of disseminating their music through the recording industry. Examples of some of these local bands are the Ulinzi Orchestra, the Limpopo International and the Maroon Commandos (Ibid., 121). A *Litungu* Band consists of any combination of the following, vocalists, the *Litungu*, *Isiriri*, *Chimbengele*, *Bichenje*, *Chisasi*, guitar, and keyboard. Some of the groups I identified include the Lugulu Bumusika Band, the Nabukambisi Jazz Band, the Namatete Band and the Sinani Group Band. These bands have members who meet regularly for rehearsals and performances at various social functions. Eman Wanjala of the Sinani Group Band commented that the imposition of a four-minute time limit for songs for competition and studio recordings hampers the traditional elongation of songs (Wanjala, interview on 5th

February 2007). This time limit is an imitation of the Kenya Music Festival's time limit for songs performance.²⁴ This event and its regulations are part of modernization and development, and the performance of oral based folk songs cannot escape such effects of modernization. The choice of whether to combine traditional forms of performance and contemporary ideas is left to the discretion of the band members.

Bauman (1997:250) theorizes that, "performance itself is an aspect of that which is performed. The medium is part of the message; more precisely it is a meta-message about whatever is encoded in the ritual". Thus, performance is a means of relaying that which is performed (*Litungu* music) while the instrumentation, song text and *silao-sikeleko* contain the messages. The instrument has a language of its own; Kukubo (interview on 7th February 2007) says that, "*Litungu* also speaks". Therefore the instrumental language and the *silao-sikeleko* together relay important messages in various contexts. There are various occasions in which *silao-sikeleko* is executed among the Bukusu.

5.4 CULTURAL FUNCTION OF *SILAO-SIKELEKO* IN *LITUNGU* MUSIC

Silao-sikeleko in Bukusu *Litungu* music has four functions that depict much of the Bukusu cultural beliefs and practices. They include: the introduction and acknowledgement of personalities; education; self expression; and social commentary. Below is a detailed explanation of each function.

5.4.1 Introduction and Acknowledge Personalities

This includes two aspects, one is the introduction of the performers or soloist of a piece of music and the other is acknowledgement of other members of the society. During the introduction, it is common to find the musicians mentioning their names, clan, parents, place of origin and the title of song. The identity of any member of the community is presented in terms of his/her lineage, since continuity of lineages is important in this society. This is why a comprehensive

²⁴ The performance of African folksongs in the Kenya Music Festival takes not more than four minutes (Kenya Music Festival Syllabus 2009: 39).

introduction of oneself must reveal one's descent by answering such questions as, who are you? Who are your parents? From which clan are you? Where do you come from? The title of the song and a brief exposé of its theme prepare the audience for what follows. At the core of this is a revelation that the performer belongs to a particular group of people. According to Makila (1978: 49), "there are two stages of self-introduction... First, a person mentioned his own name, his parent's names, and declared his paternal and maternal ancestries. [this is called] *khukhwitacha*." The second stage of self introduction is *khukhwilaa* as discussed above. Here are three examples of *khukhwitacha* from different songs:

Example 5.2.1 Introductory *silao-sikeleko* sections in the song *Enyanja* (George Lubao 2007) by the Lugulu Bumusika Band (see Appendix I, page 217 and CD1, song nine)

Lubukusu text

Ese mbukanga sana. Eno eli Bumusika band,
Lugulu.
Nekhale nende basoreri nebali bakuka,
Alex Wafula khukhwama Naitiri ali
khukamba saba. Nekhale nende Joseph nail
munyange mwana wa Maloba. Nekhale
nende Martin Wanyama ali khubesi.
Wanyonyi mwana musekese ali khuluyengele.
Kyaluka, wa John omunyange omuwaya.
Khulera kumwenyao kwe enyanja.

Efwe benyanja embofu, abele wakhasoka
sowambukha tawe.

English text

I am so amazed. This is Bumusika band,
Lugulu.
I am seated with young boys who are my
grandchildren: Alex Wafula from Naitiri who is
on the seven strings; Joseph from the *Banyange*
clan and son of Maloba; Martin Wanyama on
the Bass;
Wanyonyi of the *Basekese* clan is on the
Luyengele, and Kyaluka son of John from the
Banyange Bawaya Clan.²⁵
We are performing a song titled "A lake".²⁶
We are a people of a great lake, even if you
try to swim through it; you cannot cross to the
other side.

Example 5.2.2 Introductory *silao-sikeleko* sections in the song *Basakwa* (Manyali 2000) by the Nabukambisi Jazz Band (see Appendix I page 237 and CD1, song eight)

Lubukusu text

Ese mwene nendi Bernard Manyali,
omwana wa marehemu dokta Nyongesa
khukhwama Muokape, nicha ne lulwimbo
lwa Basakwa, ne manile omubukusu kaloma

English text

Me, myself being Bernard Manyali, son of
the late Doctor Nyongesa from Muokape,
I come with a song *Basakwa*, knowing that
a Bukusu said a short person does not attempt

²⁵ Luyengele is singular for Chimbengele, the wooden sticks used to strike the Siiye (a wooden box).

²⁶ The Bukusu word used here refers to a large water body that can be a sea or an ocean.

ari “omwimbi sakelekanga enungo tawe”. to reach *enungo*.

Example 5.2.3 Introductory *silao-sikeleko* sections in the song *Yekamakhanya* (Kakai 2001) by the Mvumiivu Band (see Appendix I page 245)

Lubukusu text

Yaa! Basoreri ba Mvumilivu Band
khwarekukha. Khwekhale ano ne basoreri
nga Paulo Wanyonyi Kakai,
omwene oyo nali mwana mulichati ta.
Endi ano nende Edward Wafula.
Nekhale nende Mukai mwana mukhone,
alala nende Sifuna omwene oyo nali
mwana muemba, alala nende mayi
Nameme nali khulukalakala.
Okholoma oyu ali Robert Wangila omwana
mukhwani. Khuchie.

English text

Yes! Young boys of Mvumilivu band,
we have begun. We are seated here with Paul
Wanyonyi Kakai, he is from *Balichati*.

I am here with Edward Wafula. Am seated
with Mukai a child of the *Bakhone*,
together with Sifuna a child of the *Baemba*,
together with mother Nameme on the
ululation.

The one speaking is Robert Wangila, a child
of the *Bakhwani*. Let's go.

The person narrating in Example 5.3.1 is older than the other band members since he refers to them as his grandchildren. All band members are introduced, as they name the instruments they are playing. This is followed by an introduction of the song title and an explanation about it. The second example (5.3.2) has one person introducing himself and requesting people to listen to him as they may benefit from what he has to say. The third example (5.3.3) contains all the performers introduced by name and clan. It is important among the Bukusu for the band members to introduce themselves using *silao-sikeleko*. This takes place at the beginning of their performance. This practice is evident both among songs performed before an audience and those performed in recording studios for commercial purposes. It was important for the members of the community to introduce themselves elaborately for three reasons; First, it was used to deter young members of the community from marrying their close relatives. As they interacted they knew each other's ancestry. Second, it was used to endear performers to an audience. And third, it was used as one way of identifying strangers in their midst.

Silao-sikeleko creates an opportunity to acknowledge other members of the community and greet them. The soloist determines when acknowledgements are done and allows his group members to recognize people they feel are worth acknowledging. Greetings in the Bukusu community are often lengthy. It is not just a matter of saying, 'How are you?' with a response, 'I am fine', or 'I greet you so and so'. In *silao-sikeleko*, greetings include the name of the person, his relationship

to the one talking, his clan, his parents, his wife, his occupation at times and where the person comes from. In some cases the *bakeleki* address members of the community by name and express their views directly to them. Similarly the *bakeleki* capture the views of the very persons they acknowledge. Acknowledging one another reveals a sense of respect, appreciation and bonding. Here are some examples,

Example 5.3.1. From the song *Omundu* (Lubao 2007)

“I will not forget my wife Rose Nang’unda who cooks for me, who is at Ebisunu and the father Daniel Wabuyeka, the mother who is Junai Nang’unda from Endengelwa, my father’s children; together with my in-law John Sikuku who is a visitor to Violet, and Juma who is a grandchild”.

Example 5.3.2. From the song *Endakano* (Lubao 2007)

“I will not forget mother Nasimiyu, she is our eldest. Eh! I will not forget my mother’s neighbours together with Omukobolo”.

Example 5.3.3. From the song *Mayi* (Namatete 2007)

“Director Mr Misiko who is a guest of mother Diana supports. Geoffrey Khisa from Kibabi, Juma of Bungoma Tourist also supports the fact that, there is none better than mother”.

Example 5.3.4. From the song *Basakwa* (Manyali 2000)

“I will not forget Sanja Pius, together with my in-law Regina. *Basakwa*, give me my respect”.

5.4.2 Education

The second function is providing education, which entails the clarification of messages; an explanation of the cultural way of naming children and places; and the narration of the community’s history. *Silao-sikeleko* aids in the clarification of messages. In a song such as *Ewuyo Ino* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band, the performers explain experiences of the migration story in detail (see Chapter One). According to their history, the Bukusu migrated to their present location from central Africa. The difficulties experienced by their fathers included hunger, the deaths of relatives and the deaths of their animals. The song also portrays another migration that

took place when the Kenyan government planned to construct the Nzoia Sugar Company. This company is situated between the towns of Webuye and Bungoma. It was inevitable that the locals would be relocated to other regions to pave way for the construction. As a result important events are conveyed in song and narrated as *silao-sikeleko*. Here is a story narrated by Sylvester Mukubwa in his rendition of the song *Ewuyo Ino*. This song reveals events that took place during the movement of an old man and his family (for the entire song text and *silao-sikeleko* see Appendix I, page 234).

Example 5.4, *Ewuyo Ino* (Mukubwa 2007)(see CD1, song three)

Lubukusu text

Muchalicha omwo, bamakhwicha bauya bandu munzoia.
 Basakhulu bamakhulila sana oli mwabukula kamaloba kefw. Bakali bama khukhaya. Khwama khuba nende omusakhulu bali Raphaeli, omulunda.
 Bali ese mwakhatimania bandu mwa mala semuundusia muchalicha muno tawe. Likhuwa liama khurura omusakhulu wakhaile ali Ta! Ta! Ta!
 Sendura muchalicha muno ta Ee!
 Yamakhuba oli basungu bola, oli omusakhulu kakhaile sinano?
 Ama khukhaya barera egiripu yema khunju. Omusakhulu alila ali tawe khendusie bibindu biange.
 Yamakhuba oli basuta bibindu. Kabirusya ne babana bewe. Egriripu yamakhusyuba enju. Omusakhulu kalila baye. Ee!
 Kamakhucha oli bola bukembe khulinda ebasi, abele bamubole ye ekolongolo engaki.

Ebasi yamakhwicha bali Rodiwesi. Omusakhulu kamakhuramo bindu byewe ne babana bewe. Liyeye liamakhubira Misango, ese Masika Mukubwa nalola.
 Musakhulu arerekho enyungu yewe ali papa enyungu yase eyo kamabele kase kalimo, ekhecha yakunukha tawe. Eh!
 Kondakita wabona enyungu yomusakhulu yamiliya Eh!

English Text

In that place they came and moved all the people.
 Old men cried so much because of their ancestral land but many did move. Many had refused. One old man called Raphael from the clan *Balunda*.
 For me even if you move all people from this place, you will not remove me.
 Word came that the old man was adamant saying No! No! No!
 Am not leaving this place. Ee!
 The white men arrived saying why has the old man refused?
 He was stubborn and they brought a bulldozer at his house. The old man cried saying no!
 Let me remove my belongings.
 He packed his belongings together with his children.
 The bulldozer brought down his house as the old man cried. Ee!
 They came and arrived at Bukembe to wait for a bus heading up towards Kolongolo.

A bus called Roadways came in which the old man put his things and his children.
 The carriage passed Misango,
 I Masika Mukubwa saw.
 The old man put his pot saying father this pot of mine has milk, let it not be opened. Eh!
 The bus conductor saw how beautiful the old man's pot was.

Ali “enyungu ino, khakhola ndio nakitingisa”.
 Omusakhulu abola ali kamabele kewe kalimo
 kakhachichukha tawe.
 bamakhwicha bauya
 bandu munzoia.
 Basakhulu bamakhulila sana oli mwabukula
 kamaloba kefwe. Bakali bama khukhaya.
 Khwama khuba nende omusakhulu bali
 Raphaeli, omulunda.
 Bali ese mwakhatimania bandu mwa mala
 semuundusia muchalicha muno tawe.
 Likhuwa liama khurura omusakhulu
 wakhaile ali Ta! Ta! Ta!
 Sendura muchalicha muno ta Ee!
 Yamakhuba oli basungu bola, oli omusakhulu
 kakhaila sinano?
 Ama khukhaya barera egiripu yema khunju.
 Omusakhulu alila ali tawe khendusie
 bibindu biange.
 Yamakhuba oli basuta bibindu.
 Kabirusya ne babana bewe.
 Egriripu yamakhusyuba enju.
 Omusakhulu kalila baye. Ee!
 Kamakhucha oli bola bukembe khulinda ebasi,
 abele bamubole ye ekolongolo engaki.
 Ebasi yamakhwicha bali Rodiwesi.
 Omusakhulu kamakhuramo bindu byewe ne
 babana bewe. Liyeye liamakhubira Misango,
 ese Masika Mukubwa nalola.
 Musakhulu arerekho enyungu yewe ali papa
 enyungu yase eyo kamabele kase kalimo,
 ekhecha yakunukha tawe. Eh!
 Kondakita wabona enyungu yomusakhulu
 yamiliya Eh!
 Ali “enyungu ino, khakhola ndio nakitingisa”.
 Omusakhulu abola ali kamabele kewe kalimo

Bamakhuchia bali bola Webuye,
 musakhulu kemile khale enje.
 Khulola enyungu yewe kana yatikhe.
 Kalola enyungu yewe endayi busa.
 Liyeye liamakhuba liola Webuye bana base,
 bachenja emutoka.
 Kabolela webasi ali papa enyungu yase eliyo,
 njakhwikhala busa nenayo.
 Ali ah! ah! Enyungu khurechanga khungaki. Eh! No! No! Pots, we put on top, on the carrier. Eh!

He said, “this pot, let me not shake it”.
 The old man says that his milk is in it and it
 should not pour. Muchalicha omwo,
 In that place they came and moved all the
 people.
 Old men cried so much because of their
 ancestral land but many did move. Many had
 refused. One old man called Raphael from
 the clan *Balunda*.
 For me even if you move all people from this
 place, you will not remove me.
 Word came that the old man was adamant
 saying No! No! No!
 Am not leaving this place. Ee!
 The white men arrived saying why has the
 old man refused?
 He was stubborn and they brought a bull dozer
 at his house. The old man cried saying no!
 Let me remove my belongings.
 He packed his belongings together with his
 children.
 The bull dozer brought down his house as the
 old man cried. Ee!
 They came and arrived at Bukembe to wait for
 a bus heading up towards Kolongolo.
 A bus called Roadways came in which the old
 man put his things and his children.
 The carriage passed Misango,
 I Masika Mukubwa saw.
 The old man put his pot saying father this pot
 of mine has milk, let it not be opened. Eh!
 The bus conductor saw how beautiful the old
 man’s pot was.
 He said, “this pot, let me not shake it”.
 The old man says that his milk is in it and

They came and got to Webuye, the old man was
 standing out of the vehicle, to check whether
 his pot was broken.
 He saw that his pot was just okay.
 When the carriage got to Webuye, my children,
 they moved to another vehicle.
 He told the bus owner, father, my pot is there,
 I will just sit with it.

Chiamakhuola saa saba che kumusi,
 omusakhulu kekha mukolongolo.
 Khane basoreri bekhisiangaka bibindu bana
 befwe, sebaamanyile enyungu yo musakhulu
 esutile mabele sina tawe.
 Oli omusoreri wekhisia oli kola asi,
 lifundo nilio omusakhulu aboile liafunukha.

Oli kimiremu kiepe enje. Eh!
 Basoreri oli batima chimbilo.
 Kamakhuwa ako si, basoreri. Eh! Eh! Eh!
 Wase chichupa chyatikha mubaa, bindu oli
 bichichukha, basoreri batima musoko chimbilo.
 Babaanikhile chingubo bakikuyu Batimile bali
 bakukula musoko. Eh!
 Omusakhulu ema ali “Ah papa
 mwambakala sibakala”. Eh!
 Ema oli alanga chindemu chiakalukha
 mushati wase.
 Babandu belukhe Ekolongolo musoko
 bawelekho sio. Eh!
 Kamakhuwa ako sina. Eh!
 Oli, “Wafula papa wambakala sibakala”. Eh!

Basakhulu bama khuamayo, babandu becha,
 chifu be bakasa, bamuila khusiamba lia
 Wanamino, mukolongolo khane akana
 kimiremu kikwa.
 Khuchie ebweni.

At around one in the afternoon,
 the old man alighted at Kolongolo.
 The luggage handlers who were lowering things
 from the carrier, were not aware of the kind of
 milk the old man’s pot carried.
 One young man lowered the pot from the
 carrier, as the pot reached down, the note tied by
 the old man became loose.
 Large snakes came out. Eh!
 The boys took off running very fast.
 Those are the issues my brothers. Eh! Eh! Eh!
 Bottles got broken in the bar, things spilled,
 the young boys ran very fast at the market.
 All those who had laid their clothes for sell, the
 Kikuyu ran screaming at the market. Eh!
 The old man stood saying, “Ah my father,
 you have hung me out to dry”. Eh!
 He stood and called back his snakes, and they
 went into his shirt.
 The market place was empty as people had
 run away. Ee!
 Those were the issue, Ee!
 He said, “Wafula my father; you have hanged
 me out to dry”. Eh!
 From there the old men, the chiefs and the
 elders came and took him to Wanamino’s farm
 in Kolongolo to deal with him, in case the
 snakes fell.
 Let’s go

The contextual differences in the rendition of this song *Ewuyo Ino*, exhibit what is reported in other parts of Africa. Berliner (1976: 437) states that, “performers may also sing in one context poetic lines originally improvised in another”. Moreover, Nketia (1974: 203) argues that, “themes of songs are not rigidly compartmentalized” and “contextual categories may overlap”.

Every vital message is communicated to the audience. The soloist determines how well a message has been communicated. The soloist may invite one or two members of the performing group to have their say on the topic they discuss. When he feels that the message has been well relayed he does not call upon other members. In the above example of the song *Ewuyo Ino*, the soloist is the only *omukeleki* in the song as he expresses his view on the song theme. There are

instances of performances that require less *silao-sikeleko*. In such cases the soloist presumes an understanding of the intended message by the audience. Here a saying is stated without elaboration, leaving the audience to decipher its meaning. In essence, such a situation implies the maturity and a mastery of language by the audience; the message is not intended for those who do not understand.

The Bukusu have a traditional way of doing of naming places and children, and a perfect example is highlighted in the song, titled *Enju yo muluya* (House of the Luhya) (see Appendix I, page 222). The soloist begins by asserting that he is still alive and ready to spell out some issues. The song text emphasises the fact that the Luhya household is the womb of Masaba. This reference to the Luhya is not inclusive of all the Abaluhya sub-tribes; instead it refers to the Bukusu whose history relates them to Masaba. Using *silao-sikeleko* the soloist continues to state the relationship between the Bukusu and Masaba. He then focuses on the core of his message regarding the naming of places as done by the Bukusu ancestors Masaba and Mubukusu. As the two moved from one place to the other they came across several people. Mungoma was one such person; this led them to name the place Bungoma. Another place they came to was named after the condition of their body at that time. After climbing the hills, their thigh muscles (*chindelwa*), got tired, so they named the place Ndengelwa. The soloist then begins lamenting that Christianity has changed the naming tradition among the Bukusu especially with regard to naming of children, and maintains that anyone calling himself a Christian should be ashamed. The soloist is not happy concerning this issue and mentions other members of the community who have similar sentiments.

Silao-sikeleko is used to narrate the community's history. An example of this is in the song *Ewuyo Ino* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band. Such songs “remind people of the past and of the values of a society, and require some knowledge of oral tradition before one can understand them” (Nketia 1988: 196). The story captured in this song relates the painful experiences of migration. Water was scarce, and the forefathers wept, they had no comfortable place to sleep but the roadside. Cows gave birth at the roadside and a man called Chemuku wished that if his cow were a baby girl, he would have named her Nangila and if the cow were a boy, he would have named him Wangila. History can also be narrated in a context that has a large audience; for

instance, the effects of a drought which the community calls *Yekamakhanya*. Peter Amuka (1990: 245-246) reiterates that “song ... stresses the historicity of events and the relevant personalities”. A good example is in the song *Yekamakhanya* (Kakai 2001) which narrates the devastating effects of a drought that hit Bukusu land in the past.

5.4.3 Self Expression

The third function of *silao-sikeleko* is that it is an avenue through which people express their sentiments, especially where verbal expression through conversation would be inappropriate. For instance, it is inappropriate to tell one’s stepmother that she is not his/her mother. Several groups performed a song entitled *Mayii muro sali mayi* (A stepmother is not a mother). In order to clarify this concept, *silao-sikeleko* is used. Here is one of the reasons given in terms of *silao-sikeleko*; “Mother tells you to go work (taking care of goats and washing the dishes) and when you return, you find that the others have eaten all the food” (Juma 2007). It is fascinating to note that one other musician, Jackson Kisika, sings the opposite, saying “*Mayi muro yesi mayi*” (a stepmother is also a mother) (Kisika 6th February 2007). He narrates that “My father’s second wife is also my mother because she took care of me after the death of my mother” (Ibid.). A stepmother among the Bukusu is supposed to be respected and treated as one’s biological mother, as polygamy is accepted and practised in the community. As this is a sensitive topic, anyone who complains about the parent’s behaviour is openly cursed. Each performer is allowed to express their sentiment about their experiences and observations through using music. For instance, the Namatete Band expresses the beauty/benefits of having a mother in the song *Mayi*. The main message is captured in the repetition of the rhetorical question, “Who is better than mother?” (see Appendix I, page 244).

5.4.4 Social Commentary

The fourth function of *silao-sikeleko* is that it draws the attention of the audience to specific issues of concern and comments on social events. *Silao-sikeleko* provides an opportunity to teach and give advice. Vices are hereby discouraged while virtues are encouraged. For instance, laziness is discouraged among the Bukusu. Advice given to women is that they must know how

to use the hoe in order to be useful to the community. The song entitled *Nekoye* (Manyali 2000) as performed by the Nabukambisi Jazz Band, teaches good behaviour using a story, for example,

Verbal Text:

Old men, I have been on this earth my dear, hoping to live. I came and found one girl called Nekoye Singula Nabwami. Then you would find me with my chest forward, as I had been elected an elder.

He was proud, little did he know that he was priding in laziness. Ah!

A Bukusu says that to know a lazy wife, you know her through the plough.

You know I left this morning, and then I alighted at Malakisi to buy a hoe and plough. On coming back home, I wanted my wife to help me plough the uncultivated land. When we got to the land my wife started vomiting. Little did I know that she had taken ripe bananas and mashed them to look like a wild fruit. What do I do my people? She said, “I have been vomiting at home”. Yet she had been hiding bread, cakes, meat and everything in the home.²⁷

This excerpt begins by addressing old men. They are requested to listen to issues concerning the Bukusu. This in itself suggests the presence of a large audience when this song is performed. Therefore it can be performed in the evening, during beer parties and at other social gatherings that call for entertainment sessions. The soloist continues (beyond the excerpt provided here) to highlight that their forefathers talked about an issue which is later revealed in the song. Therefore the musicians or performers are rhetorically asking the Bukusu to substantiate the issue at hand by referring to various clans (*Basawe, Bamaina, Banyange, and Batunda*) among the Bukusu.

A riddle is placed before the people by one of the band members, to which an answer is expected in the form of *silao-sikeleko*. There is a brief discussion about this and then finally an answer is given. The riddle is “‘*Omundu’ okhutabusya nende okhwakila, nanu okhila okundi?* (One who accomplishes a task and one who weeds, who of the two is better than the other?) (Manyali 2000). The literal translation of the riddle is as given above. The term *khutabusya* (to accomplish a task), among the Bukusu, is always used in the context of farming. Agriculture is an activity that is practised by the Bukusu (see Chapter One). Farming involves several stages including cultivating, planting, weeding and harvesting. One who carries out all these activities is one who accomplishes a task. One who weeds is somebody who does only a section of the work, and thus is considered lazy. Therefore, there is a difference between “one who weeds” and “one who

²⁷See Appendix I for the full text of the song.

accomplishes a task”. Although both of them work, one does more work than the other. Contextually the soloist explains that one who weeds is a bad wife who is not useful in terms of housework. She consumes what the man has without carrying out her culturally-accepted roles. This implies that a woman who only weeds is a lazy wife. On the other hand, one who accomplishes a task is a good wife and of noble character; she makes sure that the home is neat, everything kept in order and that the farm is also taken care of thus enriching the man of the house. The meaning of the riddle used in this song is context specific; when used in another context it has a different meaning from what is portrayed in this song.

Culturally, women are a form of wealth to their husbands and are also “expected to fetch more wealth for their families” by taking care of their husband’s property (Barasa 2007: 18). In the first part of the song, the soloist proceeds to give his experience, he married a woman called Nekoye Singula Nabwami and was proud of her. A member of the performing group interrupts him and makes fun of him saying, “He was proud, little did he know that he was boasting in laziness”. This woman Nekoye never carried out her duties as expected. When it came to cultivation, as this is a main occupation of the Bukusu, she was reluctant to work and gave all sorts of excuses for her inability to work. Nekoye was also untrustworthy; thus she made her husband carry his money in his hands. He could not leave his money in his coat for fear that she would take it. To add insult to injury, Nekoye decided on family planning to reduce the number of their children. Among the Bukusu, children are not only a blessing but make work in the fields lighter. Nekoye really made her husband’s life miserable and that is why he comments that he has suffered on this earth. The gender roles of women portrayed in this song are not only confined to the Bukusu community. Akuno (2005: 10) identifies the roles of a girl child in Africa and states that, “the girl’s education was geared towards making her an efficient mother and home maker. Her duties revolve around taking care of children and home management, as well as cultivation”.

The second part of the song highlights something else that Nekoye did. She went to visit *Basali* “Those who pray”. In other words she decided to go and pray instead of spending time at home attending to household duties as expected. The advent of missionaries to Kenya introduced Christianity. Over time the converts introduced a period set aside for prayer which seemed

strange to the community's established traditional way of worship. This group of Christian converts spent a lot of time in prayers as compared to the time they spend with their families thus earning the description of "Those who pray". "Those who pray" were accused of several things in the song, for example, being liars, wronging God, carrying evil spirits, causing conflict in people's homes, calling Nekoye's husband an evil spirit, attempting to steal a child from Nyongesa, an old man who had been unwell, and labelling the Bukusu ancestors witches, yet they (the prophets themselves) were the witches. As a result, Nekoye is advised to leave these people and go back home. Thus Nekoye was rebuked for her bad behaviour.

When rebuking, the performers make use of proverbs and sayings; they thus hide the identity of the offender. It is important to do this in order to curb conflict between the offender and the musicians.²⁸ This concept is similar to a study of Zimbabwe war songs by Alec Pongweni (1997: 65) who states, "the home artists addressed the socio-political issues of the day through an idiom that was characterized by that innuendo and linguistic camouflage which is the soul of metaphor, in order to avoid being arrested for politicizing the masses". During the interview, Kisika expressed disappointment in the younger generation of musicians who are unable to adhere to a rule of musical performance which is "[t]he objects of criticism are not mentioned by name because traditional wisdom takes care of that through among others, the proverb" (Pongweni 1997: 66). Kisika, during the interview, gave an example of an incidence in which a musician explicitly mentioned the name of someone in the community who misbehaved. Within that week of performance, the mentioned individual killed the musician by poisoning him. Here is an excerpt of my interview with Kisika (6th February 2007);

Researcher: So at what point do you use the proverbs?

Kisika: When we want to also say something without actually revealing the identity of the parties involved... you know these young boys of today are not as skilful as I am. Am an old man now with years of experience...when they are busy singing *mama nyumbani amenishinda* (mother at home is impossible), how can your own mother be impossible to deal with. Recently, one of these young musicians accused somebody of doing wrong in his music and actually mentioned his name. Do you know that person poisoned the musician in his own house and he died? This was very recent. The man died the same week and we buried him.

²⁸ According to Jackson Kisika (2007), the mention of one's real name in a musical performance is only done when it is in a positive way.

Love as a virtue is encouraged. The members of the community are asked to love one another just like their first parents Sella and Mwambu as portrayed in the song *Sellah* (Lubao 2007). The love expressed by the community's first parents is also told in a folktale in which Mwambu risked his life to save Sella from an ogre called Mbilimbili Nyanja (Makila 1986: 18-23).

A song by the Lugulu Bumusika Band called *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* (Elima 2007) is another example that teaches good behaviour (see CD1, song four). The song is based on a myth that serves to teach the appropriate behaviour for a woman who marries among her husband's people. A story is told of a beautiful woman who got married to a man of the *Balunda* clan. The real name of this woman is not given, instead the musicians use her nickname namely, Kulukulu of Bwabi. She lived among the *Balunda* as one of them, consuming their wealth, but later on she turned against them. She decided to reveal to the rest of the community that her husband's people were witches and were capable of changing the weather to make rain or otherwise at their pleasure. When she revealed this she was struck by lightning and was badly burnt in the face. This woman thought she was setting a trap for her husband's people but instead she set a trap for herself, as the rain had symbolically seen her and punished her. She lost her beauty and earned the name Kulukulu, an onomatopoeic sound used to call the chicken at feeding times.

Culturally this song served to warn women to refrain from revealing family secrets as a bad omen would befall them. In its rendition of this particular song, the Lugulu Bumusika Band, unlike other performing groups, includes another angle to the story about a conflict between the white man and the black man. At some point the black man brags of being a Bukusu who eats *Ugali* (maize meal). This meal is the staple food among the Bukusu and it is considered more satisfying than other foods, and makes someone strong and hard working. On the contrary the soloist suggests that he does not eat light foods, such as rice and bananas, for example. The white person is thus portrayed as being weak and lazy and does not like mixing with the black man. The white man is credited for inventing the aircraft but is still despised in the final statement for not having brains, he just sits and eats. This song is performed for entertainment. Views expressed in the above songs attest to the fact that the Bukusu exalt virtues in their community and shun vices.

Silao-sikeleko has been used to comment on various modern socio-cultural changes. The introduction of formal education in Kenya presented a topic for *Litungu* music performers. This necessitated the composition of melodies related to education, as the musicians responded to the changes in society. At first the idea of educating children, especially the girl child, was greatly resisted by the society. This is because the community felt it was a waste of time spending money on girls as they would get married to another family and not benefit their parents. The community's perception was that girls had domestic roles to play which would be interfered with if the girls went to schools. Girls who were educated, were shunned by the community and looked down upon as being proud and poorly brought up. This is highlighted in the song *Yekamakhanya* (see Appendix I, page 245). For girls, going to school was perceived as one way of delaying marriage. When the Friends church missionaries came to Kenya they set up schools with an aim of educating Africans and teaching the gospel. They set up schools in various parts of western Kenya including Bungoma where the Bukusu are settled. Girls' boarding schools were set up with a curriculum, whose aim was "explicitly domestic" (Thomas 2000: 3). However, Thomas continues to explain that:

the girls themselves... showed no inclination to conform to the domestic model set out by the missionaries, but rather manipulated the mission to frustrate the expectations of both missionaries and their elders. The girls used the mission to delay marriage and control their choice of partners... They used the skills gained at the GBS [Girls Boarding School] to move beyond the domestic sphere to which the mission had hoped to limit them, and in doing so the girls helped to reshape the social and economic landscape of Luhya society (Ibid.).

The Kenyan government also introduced adult education and this created another reason to compose music on this theme. The Namatete Band has a song titled *Elimu* in which they commend adult education. This song is used by the band to enlighten the community on the importance of education even at an older age. It is sung in Kiswahili to the accompaniment of a *Litungu* instrumental ensemble.

Another aspect of social commentary by the *Litungu* performers centres on dress code. Globalization, mass media, trade and industry have affected traditional societies. Interactions with people from foreign cultures and consumption of what the media portrays, has seen the introduction of fashion in dressing that imitates the European dress code. These forms of dress

have been received with reservation and contempt by some members of the Bukusu community. Their points of view are given in a song as performed by the Lugulu Bumusika Band, entitled *Chingubo*, as follows,

Example 5.5. *Chingubo* (Lubao 2007)

Lubukusu text

Solo: Chingubo chyechile wase
Chorus: Chibona bubi, chyechile eh,
chibona bubi khusialo
Solo: Chingubo chyechile baye
Chorus: Chibona bubi, chyechile eh,
chibona bubi khusialo.

Speech:

Nekhachilila tawe, khe ndebe Wanyonyi.
Wanyonyi? Yah!
Wase mwana wa papa onyala wambolelakho
kesibala kano, nga kakendelesia?
Kamakuwa kano bwana Alex,
ese nakamanyile.
Ndakhubolela busa sendaria efumo ta.
Kamakuwa kechingubo chinyimbi chino
nakabonela munairobi.
Ata ebungoma luno bandu baukanga sana
bali ngubo sina chino, omwana nafwarire
uka ori alisichula.

Lakini kamakuwa kano niyo bali
mukosi Elija kaloma kamakuwa
ke chingubo chinyimbi, kali ne sifwabi.
Konaka basiele nende babana besikhana,
ne khuli khulukendo luno.
Aba Elija nga kaba omukosi kakenda ne
bakhana Bataru... mala kamanani kalia
bakhana bano.
Mala nga kaba omukosi kabaonia...

Speech-melody:

Ya, balebe bange enywe khamubolele.
Awase ese, abele babolanga Alex kakwa.
Musani nechile, nechile nechimoni busa.
Mureba base ebungoma...

English text

Solo: Dresses have come
Chorus: They are bad, they have come eh,
and they are bad on this earth.
Solo: Dresses have come, my goodness
Chorus: They are bad, they have come eh,
and they are bad on this earth.

Speech:

Before I proceed, let me ask Wanyonyi.
Wanyonyi? Yes!
Child of my father, can you tell me
about events in this world as they unfold?
I know about these issues, Mr Alex,

I will tell you and will not fear reproach.
I saw these short dresses in
Nairobi.
Even in Bungoma today people are so
amazed, wondering what kind of dresses are
these when a child is wearing them you
think she is naked.
But on these issues, there is a cherished
person Elija who said that these issues
of short dresses bring shame.
They have spoilt old women and young
girls, as we are on this journey.
Elija being a cherished person, walked with
his three daughters and the ogres ate
these girls.
But since he was cherished he saved them...

Speech-melody:

Yes, you my relatives, let me tell you.
Here at my place they say Alex fell.
As a man I have come with my own eyes.
You can ask my people at Bungoma...

Chingubo chino wase chyarera chimbi
khusialo. Kefwarire ngubo yaya,
kefwarire fashoni...

These dresses have brought sin on this earth.
She is wearing a dress my dear,
she is wearing fashion...

Speech:

Senibilila mukhasi wange.

Namunyola Uganda.

Bafwara chingubo nechola asi khubikele...

lakini mukenya, onyola omukhasi

wefwarire elongi nende mayiwe.

Speech:

I will not forget my wife;

I got her from Uganda.

They wear dresses that reach down their
legs. But here in Kenya you find a
wife wearing a trouser with her mother.

The viewpoint here is that held by men in the Bukusu community. They express their dislike for short dresses and trousers, as highlighted in the above song in the form of *silao-sikeleko*. The musicians claim that these kinds of attire spoil young girls and women. Such attire, they argue, brings shame and sin on earth. They go on to compare the kind of dress code found in Uganda where one of the performers claims to have found his wife. In Uganda women wear traditional attire that totally covers the legs; this is called *Gomesi*. This is perceived as a respectable way of dressing which is used by many communities in Uganda (Mutabaazi 2006 [O]). Thus the Bukusu men approve of the wearing of long dresses by their women. However, since the interviewees in this study were only men I did not get the views of women on this subject.

The above two examples of social commentary reveal that musicians critique and interpret their social environment. This supports Swingewood's (1998: 72) statement that, "music represents indirectly, almost unconsciously the 'life-process' of society, expressing, interpreting and critiquing reality". Thus *silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music is also used to criticize real events in the societies.

Every song is addressed to one or more members of the community. For instance where laziness is condemned as exemplified in the song *Nekoye* (Manyali 2000), the message is directed to a particular person. But the song also serves to warn other members of the community against the same conduct. Some of the above functions of *silao-sikeleko* attest to the fact that performers of Bukusu *Litungu* music enjoy poetic license. Song is a privileged discourse therefore, "criticism expressed in song is licensed criticism" (Vail and White 1991: 41). Such criticisms are those that cannot be *khulaa-khukeleka* as they are unacceptable in the society. For instance, even though a stepmother is accepted in the Bukusu family setup, songs are sung refuting a stepmother as a

mother. Such allegations are not stated in everyday conversations as they are deemed taboo. Vices are also criticized. However, when one individual is addressed in relation to a negative behaviour pattern; his or her real name is not used. Instead a performer composer's mastery of language allows him to use symbolic language, proverbs and sayings to disguise his/her identity. Likewise, performers of *Litungu* music are free to critique behaviour within the society.

5.5 CONCLUSION

I have established that the origin of *silao-sikeleko* is similar to that of the music of which it is a part. The practice of *khulaa-khukeleka* is derived from a culture of self-praise, where an individual musician strives to praise himself, his music, his *Litungu*-playing prowess and his family members or lineage. However, *silao-sikeleko* is not always self-praise but encompasses numerous themes and is performed in various contexts that are part of the Bukusu community's social activities. They include wedding, circumcision, beer parties, general entertainment, funeral, political campaigns and during church worship.

This study identified four functions of *silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music. First it allows opportunities for the band members to introduce themselves and their song, preparing the audience for what follows in the song performance. At the same time it is an opportunity for saluting other members of the community. Second, *silao-sikeleko* educates the community on various issues such as; cultural beliefs such as the Bukusu way of naming children and places, *silao-sikeleko* provides an opportunity for the narration of historical events within the society. The events are stored in music and passed on to the next generation as a reminder of history. Various messages are substantiated using *silao-sikeleko* which ensures clarity of the theme. The third function is that of social commentary. Here the musicians comment on the issues such as the effect of education on the traditional roles of women, and the new dress code. It is common to hear virtues such as love being exalted, while laziness is shunned as explained above. This means that the community has great regard for good morals and virtues; these are communicated through *silao-sikeleko*. Fourth, the musicians' (often negative) views of a stepmother were common among the various bands and they used music and *silao-sikeleko* in particular to express

their feelings on this topic. This is done without any reproach from the community. The next chapter discusses the relationship between the verbal-text and the sung text.

CHAPTER SIX

SUNG TEXT AND *SILAO-SIKELEKO*

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The presence of *silao-sikeleko* and sung text in a piece of music may appear as redundancy and one is tempted to find out why it is necessary to have both. Is it that sung texts alone are insufficient to carry the intended messages? What kinds of messages are contained in the *silao-sikeleko* and sung texts? The answers to these questions form the focus. I begin by comparing *silao-sikeleko* and sung text in terms of theme, length, and underlying instrumental accompaniment. I also compare the messages contained in both sung text and *silao-sikeleko*. I note and compare the length and number of words used in both *silao-sikeleko* and sung text, and identify the instruments used to accompany sung texts and *silao-sikeleko* as performed. I analyse the kind of language used in the *silao-sikeleko* and sung text. I also discuss language use in *Litungu* music in terms of imagery, symbolism, neologism among others; because “traditional music is highly text oriented [and therefore] it is reasonable to conclude that texts are crucial to the understanding of music in African societies” (Euba 2001: 121).

To justify the various poetic elements that inform language use, examples of songs collected during fieldwork are used. Language in turn reveals the knowledge system of the Bukusu community; knowledge that is recorded and stored in the minds of members of the community. As argued by Axtell (1985: 14-15), “due to the difficulties of acquisition, memory and recall, oral knowledge... is stored in flexible units of memory, such as adages, proverbs, and repetitive, thematic formulas”. The transmission of this knowledge system in song is a vital component of good music. Whereas several scholars (Ojaide 2001, Eyoh 2001, Van Damme 2000, Amuka 1991, Berliner 1976) have attended to language use in sung texts alone this Chapter addresses language use in *silao-sikeleko* as well thus answering the question, what is the role of *silao-sikeleko* in relation to that of sung text? How then are these texts formulated in a *Litungu* song?

6.2 THEMATIC ROLE OF *SILAO-SIKELEKO*

The following paragraphs provide a discussion of the substance of songs performed with *silao-sikeleko* and their content without the *silao-sikeleko*, in order to justify the role of *silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music. Five songs are used to exemplify the points under discussion. The first example is taken from the song *Eswa* as performed by the Kwane Band. When *silao-sikeleko* is removed from the song, what is left is given in Example 6.1.

Example 6.1: The song *Eswa* (Mukubwa 2007)

Lubukusu text

Solo: Chingila chilingo baye, chingano
chilingo baye. Makhuwa kaliyo ng'ali.
Eswa yalila, eswa yalila.

Chorus: Eswa yalilaa, namenya e asi
mwiloba, namenya e asi mwiloba, namenya
ne walunabe. Walunabe kakhaire khanine
mungaki wa wele. Walunabe kakhaire
khanine angaki wa wele, yayako

Engenda ndila, yayako, engenda ndila.

Solo: Chingila chilingo baye, chingano
chilingo baye. Eswa yalilanga, eswa yalilaa.
Bali e asi mulilo.
Eswa yalilaa ng'ali mwikulu mulilo. Ah!

Solo: Chingano chilingo baye. Eswa lila
ng'ali mwikulu mulilo.
Eswa lila ng'ali asi mulilo.
Chingano chiliyo ng'ali makhuwa
akako. Chingano chiliyo ng'ali, eswa yalilaa.
Ah!

Solo: Eswa yalilaa
Chorus: Eswa yalilaa, namenya e asi
mwiloba, namenya e asi mwiloba, namenya
ne walunabe. Walunabe kakhaire khanine
mungaki wa wele, Walunabe kakhaire
khanine mungaki wa wele, yayako
Engenda ndila, yayako, engenda ndila.

English text

Solo: The ways are there and the
stories are there. Truly there are
Issues. The white ant cried, the white
ant cried.

Chorus: The white ant cried, I stay
down in the soil, I stay down in the soil,
and I stay with the mole. It is impossible to
live with the mole so let me climb up to God.
It is impossible to live with the mole so let me
climb up to God, my brother.
I walk crying my brother, I walk crying.

Solo: The ways are there, and stories are
there. The white ant cried, the white ant
cried. That down here there is fire.
The white ant cried even in heaven
there is fire. Ah!

Solo: Stories are there. The white ant
really cried, in heaven there is fire.
The white ant cried that down here
there is fire. Truly there are stories, there
are issues. Stories are truly there.
The white ant cried. Ah!

Solo: The white ant cried.
Chorus: The white ant cried, I stay down in
the soil, I stay down in the soil, and I stay
with the mole. It is impossible to live with the mole
so let me climb up to God. It is impossible to live
with the mole so let me climb up to God,
my brother. I walk crying my brother, I walk
crying.

Solo: Wambundo ali sabirira khungila ino.	Solo: The Bat will never pass on this road.
Chorus: Sikila engila eno yakila ekhafu yatiba.	Chorus: The cow got lost because of this road.
Solo: Oli Ee! Ee!	Solo: That Ee! Ee!
Chorus: Balekha wambundo khumuse. (Repeated five times).	Chorus: They left the Bat at the gathering (Repeated five times).

The message is implicitly communicated in this song. The sung text tells a story of the suffering white ant, who complained of the presence of fire both on earth and up in heaven. (The Bukusu community believes that heaven is upwards, a place where God dwells and in this case any movement upwards is in the direction of heaven. The concept of fire actually refers to hardships and not real fire.) Since it was impossible for the white ant to live with the mole, the white ant opted to climb up but no detail is given as to what transpired up there. The bat was left at a gathering. One question arises: What gathering was it and who was there? The sung text does not give answers to these questions. However, the full version of the same song by Kwane Band (see Appendix I, page 231) provides more information using *silao-sikeleko*. The message in this song is a warning to people to refrain from double standards or trying to please two opposing views. In the song, after the meeting was over and a verdict had been passed, the animals disowned the bat, leaving him alone at the place of the gathering. This is a consequence of the bat's behaviour of trying to belong to two groups, one of the animals and the other of the birds. *Silao-sikeleko* in this song compliments the sung text, as the two are used to give details of the story. In some cases, however, the *silao-sikeleko* reiterates what the sung text has stated. For instance (see Example 6.2),

Example 6.2: Similarity of sung text and *silao-sikeleko* in the song *Eswa* by the Kwane Band.

Lubukusu text

Chorus: Eswa yalilaa, namenya e asi mwiloba, namenya e asi mwiloba, namenya ne walunabe.

Verbal Text:

Eswa yalilaa sana, asi mulilo, mwikulu mulilo. Asi namenya, walunabe wakhaya.

English text

Chorus: The white ant cried, I stay down in the soil, I stay down in the soil,

Verbal Text:

The white ant cried so much, down here fire, in heaven fire. Down here I stay with the mole who is difficult to live with.

The second example is the song *Ewuyo Ino* by Kwane Band. Example 6.3 shows the information contained in the sung text.

Example 6.3: The song *Ewuyo Ino* by the Kwane Band,

Lubukusu text

Solo: Ewuyo ino ebasoreri balila.
Ewuyo ino papa bakonera chingila.

Chorus: Ewuyo ino ebasoreri balila.
Ewuyo ino papa bakonera chingila.

Solo: Bakhhalila, ebakonela chingila.
Bakhhalila, ebakonela chingila.

Ewuyo ino papa bakonela chingila.

Solo: Ewuyo ino papa bakonela chingila.

Chorus: Ewuyo ino papa bakonela chingila.

Solo: Ewuyo ino mayi bakonela chingila.

Chorus: Ewuyo ino mayi bakonela chingila.

Solo: Bakhhalila,
Chorus: Ee
Solo: bakonela khungila.
Chorus: Ee.

Solo: Bakhhalila,
Chorus: Ee
Solo: bakonela khungila.
Chorus: Ee.

Solo: Bakhhalila,
Chorus: Ee
Solo: bakonela khungila.
Chorus: Ee.

Solo: Bakhhalila,
Chorus: Ee
Solo: basoreri balila chingila.
Chorus: Ee.

Solo: Kang'ali muchalicha.
Chorus: Bauya

(Solo-response repeated four times)

English text

Solo: This migration, young boys wept.
This migration our fathers slept on the way.

Chorus: This migration, young boys wept.
This migration our fathers slept on the way.

Solo: Even if they weep, they slept on the way. Even if they weep, they slept on the way.
This migration, our fathers slept on the way.

Solo: This migration our fathers slept on the way.

Chorus: This migration our fathers slept on the way.

Solo: This migration our mothers slept on the way.

Chorus: This migration our mothers wept on the way.

Solo: Even if they weep,
Chorus: Ee
Solo: they slept on the way.

Chorus: Ee
Solo: Even if they weep,
Chorus: Ee
Solo: they slept on the way.

Chorus: Ee
Solo: Even if they weep,
Chorus: Ee
Solo: they slept on the way.

Chorus: Ee
Solo: Even if they weep,
Chorus: Ee
Solo: young boys wept on the way.
Chorus: Ee.

Solo: Surely in the locality.
Chorus: They moved.

(Solo-response repeated four times)

Solo: Papa bakaloba
 Chorus: Bauya.
 Solo: Kang'ali muchalicha.
 Chorus: Bauya
 (Solo-response repeated twice)
 Solo: Papa bakaloba
 Chorus: Bauya.
 Solo: Kang'ali muchalicha.
 Chorus: Bauya. Ee!

Solo: Our fathers refused
 Chorus: They moved.
 Solo: Surely in the locality,
 Chorus: They moved.
 (Solo-response repeated twice)
 Solo: Our fathers refused,
 Chorus: They moved
 Solo: Surely in the locality,
 Chorus: They moved. Ee!

This song may sound complete in this form without *silao-sikeleko*. The message is clearer here than in the previous song, it is very explicit. The issue of migration is well reflected here, for example, that there was suffering during the migration process; but the soloist of this song provides more information in the form of *silao-sikeleko*. This includes the following Example 6.4,

Example 6.4: *Silao-sikeleko* in the song *Ewuyo Ino* by Kwane Band

Lubukusu text

Ebasi yamakhwicha bali Rodiwesi.
 Omusakhulu kamakhuramo bindu byewe
 ne babana bewe. Liyeye liamakhubira
 Misango, ese Masika Mukubwa nalola.
 Musakhulu arerekho enyungu yewe ali
 “papa enyungu yase eyo kamabele kase
 kalimo, ekhecha yakunukha tawe”. Eh!
 Kondakita wabona enyungu
 yomusakhulu yamilya Eh! Ali enyungu
 ino, khakhola ndio nakitingisa...”

Chiamakhuola saa saba che kumusi,
 omusakhulu kekha mukolongolo. Khane
 basoreri bekhisiangaka bibindu bana befwe,
 from
 sebaamanyile enyungu yo musakhulu
 esutile mabele sina tawe.
 Oli omusoreri wekhisia, oli kola asi,
 lifundo nilio omusakhulu aboile liafunukha.
 Oli kimiremu kiepe enje. Eh! Basoreri oli
 Batima chimbilo.

English text

A bus called Roadways came in which
 the old man put his things and his children.
 The carriage passed Misango,
 I Masika Mukubwa saw.
 The old man put his pot saying,
 “Father, this pot of mine has milk, let it not
 be opened”. Eh!
 The bus conductor saw how
 beautiful the pot was, he said, “This
 pot, let me not shake it...”

At around one in the afternoon,
 the old man alighted at Kolongolo.
 The luggage handlers who were lowering things
 from
 the carrier, were not aware of the kind of
 milk the old man’s pot carried.
 One young man lowered the pot from the
 carrier, on reaching down, the knot tied by
 the old man became loose. Large snakes
 came out. Eh! The boys took off running
 very fast.

The entire story (see Appendix I, page 234), focuses on a single event in history. Apart from the obvious information about the misfortunes of migration, this song reveals evidence of witchcraft in the community. The *omukeleki* reveals the mode of transportation of snakes that are a sign of witchcraft, in the course of his storytelling as he entertains his audience. Whereas one may just enjoy the story as entertainment, another person in the same audience may decipher the message of witchcraft in the community, since the *omukeleki* of *Litungu* music does not simply say that such a thing takes place in society, but he says it metaphorically. This information is lacking in the sung text. The same song performed by the Lugulu Bumusika Band (see Appendix I, page 242) narrates a totally different story in the form of *silao-sikeleko*. This concentrates on the migration route taken by the Bukusu to their present geographical location. In the process one old man complained about the delivery of his cow saying: (see Example 6.5)

Example 6.5: *Silao-sikeleko* of the song *Ewuyo Ino* by the Kwane Band.

Lubukusu text

Chemuku ng’ali walila, “ekhafu yange
yebulila khungila, abanga omwana
mukhana niye andi natyukha niye
Nangila. Aba kamusinde naye
khulomaloma, andi natyukha ndi
Wangila, Eh! Balebe bange”
Ewuyo ino bapapa balila Eh!

English text

Chemuku cried, “My cow gave birth
on the way, if it were a girl, I would
have named her Nangila. If it were a
circumcised boy that we are talking about,
I would have named him Wangila,
Eh! My relatives.”
This migration our fathers cried eh!

The *omukeleki* wishes that his calf which was born during the migration were a child so that he could name this child as a memorial to the event that took place. The naming system of children among the Bukusu is revealed in this *silao-sikeleko*. A girl child born at the roadside is called Nangila while a boy is called Wangila. This information also reveals the value placed on cattle by the community, as the *omukeleki* is saddened about his cow that had to give birth during the migration. Since the *omukeleki* treasured his cow, he felt that it should have given birth in a more comfortable environment such as his homestead.

The third example (Example 6.6) is from the song *Basakwa* as performed by the Nabukambisi Jazz Band as follows.

Example 6.6: Extract of the song *Basakwa*.

Lubukusu text

Solo: Papa bareba,
Chorus: Basakwa, niye nanu?
Solo: Mayi bareba,
Chorus: Elisina lia Basakwa lianja lirie?

Solo: Yaya bosu bario,
Chorus: Rekeresia, fwe babene khujibe.
Solo: Khusibala sino enywe,
Chorus: Abandu fvesi khukhoya khumanye.
Solo: Limenya liye musialo,
Chorus: Elianja khale, babandu bakhilana.
Solo: Ewe noli nasiyo,
Chorus: Sima wele, okhachia ostoile.
Chorus: Kamakhuwa kano kachia
Khu Basakwa. Basakwa niyo olirekeresia.
Basakwa khaba nowa baya.

Chikhafu chyoo khoywa omuwai.
Basakwa, khaba nowakula.
Mikunda kyoo, khoywa okhulimilaa.
Basakwa khaba nowombokha.
Echigorofa okhoywa okhulindilaa.
Ah!

Solo: Khusibala sino enywe,
Chorus: Abandu fvesi khukhoya khumanye.
Solo: Limenya liye musialo,
Chorus: Elianja khale, babandu bakhilana.
Solo: Ewe noli nasiyo,
Chorus: Sima wele, okhachia ostoile.
Bubi sana.

English text

Solo: Fathers are asking you,
Chorus: *Basakwa*, who is he?
Solo: Mothers are asking,
Chorus: This name *Basakwa*, how did it
begin?
Solo: Brothers, in the same way
Chorus: Listen, we ourselves will answer
Solo: On this earth you,
Chorus: All of us should know.
Solo: Life in this world,
Chorus: Began long ago, people differ.
Solo: You, if you have,
Chorus: Thank God, do not be proud.
Chorus: This issue went to the *Basakwa*.
It is *Basakwa* who will listen.
Basakwa, even if you have been to great
heights
Your cows require a herdsman.
Basakwa, even if you have bought
your land, you need someone to dig for you.
Basakwa, even if you have built
storied houses, you need a caretaker.
Ah!

Solo: You, on this earth,
Chorus: All of us should know.
Solo: Life in the world,
Chorus: Began long ago, people differ.
Solo: You, if you have,
Chorus: Thank God, do not be proud.
It is so bad.

There is a good flow of information from the beginning of this story on *Basakwa*. Fathers, mothers and even brothers are asking, “What is *Basakwa*?” “Listen we will answer” and then the story proceeds. But somehow the details of what *Basakwa* means are missing, though the song suggests the usefulness of *Basakwa* in one’s life as well as the need to denounce pride. The *silao-sikeleko* in this song provides insight about the meaning of the text, and explains what *Basakwa* means through the story as exemplified in Example 6.7 below.

Example 6.7: Extract of the song *Basakwa*.

Lubukusu text

Orio musakhulu. Lisina lino lianja liri,
babao bandu babili. Bandu bano baba
mungo mulala, babakhilakhila kimiandu,
omuinda nende omutambi. Omutambi
oli siamulia munju ali tawe,

Oli lekha enjie wasieange, sekhe.
Abukula omukhaye wewe bachia,
lakini nga bolayo abele omuinda,
khulekha khuyeta omutambi, yenza
khukhola khukwaso khu mulamuwe.
Lakini kila basakhulu babao simbi,
bekhala mala baloma bali,
“Apana! Ewe wenyile khumocha mulebe”,
mala bulebe buno bwakwa khwanza
khulanga wasye Basakwa. Kali kario
basakhulu. Khuchie ebweni.

English text

Thank you, old man. This name began
like this, there were two people. These
people lived in the same home. They
differed in wealth, a rich man and a poor man.
The poor man, something ate him in the
house (he became uneasy) and he said no,
let me go elsewhere and stay there.
He took his wife and left,
but when he got there, the rich man,
not assisting the poor man, wanted to
provoke his brother-in-law.
But since the old men were nearby,
they sat down and said,
“No! You wanted to tease your relative”,
so this relationship became the first to be
called *Basakwa* that is how it is, old men.
That’s how it is old men. Let us go ahead.

The message is clearly communicated, but towards the end there seems to be some missing information which is implied but understood within the community.

The fourth example of the song *Yekamakhanya* without *silao-sikeleko* (see Example 6.8):

Example 6.8: Extract of the song *Yekamakhanya*.

Lubukusu text

Solo: Enjala yekamakhanya embi yakila
bakhana bebikuliabela.

Chorus: Enjala yekamakhanya embi yakila
bakhana bebikuliabela.

Solo: Enjala yekamakhanya embi yakhulak
bakhana bebikuli mumasomo.

Chorus: Enjala yekamakhanya embi yakhula
bakhana bebikuli mumasomo.

Solo: Enjala yekamakhanya embi yakhula
bakhana bechifisi khulami.

English text

Solo: *Yekamakhanya* famine is bad; it made
the school-going girls miserable.

Chorus: *Yekamakhanya* famine is bad; it
made the school-going girls miserable.

Solo: *Yemakhanya* famine is bad it uprooted
the school-going girls from education.

Chorus: *Yemakhanya* famine is bad it
uprooted the school-going girls from
education.

Solo: *Yemakhanya* famine is bad it uprooted
the school-fees girls from the road.

Chorus: Enjala yemakhanya embi yakhula bakhana bechifisi khulami.

Chorus: *Yemakhanya* famine is bad it uprooted the school-fees girls from the road.

Solo: Enjala yekamakhanya embi eyo niyo yanyala bechifisi khulami.

Solo: *Yekamakhanya* famine is bad it is the one that managed the school-fees girls on the road.

Chorus: Enjala yekamakhanya embi eyo niyo yanyala bechifisi khulami.

Chorus: *Yekamakhanya* famine is bad it is the one that managed the school-fees girls on the road.

Solo: Enjala yekamakhanya wasiyange eyo niyo yanyala bechifisi khulami

Solo: *Yekamakhanya* famine my friend it is the one that managed the school-fees girls on the road.

Chorus: Enjala yekamakhanya wasiyange eyo niyo yanyala bechifisi khulami

Chorus: *Yekamakhanya* famine my friend it is the one that managed the school-fees girls on the road.

Solo: Enjala yakolongolo baye niyo niyo yamala bechifisi khulami.

Solo: *Yekamakhanya* famine is bad it is the one that finished the school-fees girls on the road.

Chorus: Enjala yakolongolo baye niyo niyo yamala bechifisi khulami.

Chorus: *Yekamakhanya* famine is bad it is the one that finished the school-fees girls on the road.

Solo: Enjala yekamakhanya balebe, eyo niyo yanyala bechifisi khulami.

Solo: *Yekamakhanya* famine my friend, it is the one that managed the school-fees girls on the road.

Chorus: Enjala yekamakhanya balebe, eyo niyo yanyala bechifisi khulami.

Chorus: *Yekamakhanya* famine my friend it is the one that managed the school-fees girls on the road.

Before explaining the essence of this song, it is important to understand the terms “school-going girls” and “school-fees girls” as used in this song. Among the Bukusu the girl child is subordinate to a boy child. Since the Bukusu perceive women’s roles as that of bearing children and taking care of their husband’s property, educating women/girls was seen as a fruitless and worthless endeavour. However, with the onset of formal education in Kenya, members of the community have had to contend with spending large sums of money on educating the girl child. In some cases educating a girl would mean selling some of the family’s precious cattle to obtain fees. This was only acceptable in the case of boys. Those girls who have managed to go to school have thus been branded the “school-going girls” in a derogative manner. The label, “school-going”, implies a sense of being unrefined, arrogant and out of order. Sometimes the girls are also referred to as “those lost in education”, as if it were an abomination. In the song, there was a

famine called *Yekamakhanya* that struck the land, sparing no one. *Yekamakhanya* famine is said to have been so bad because it had an effect on school-going girls as well. These girls are singled out in the song story because the famine taught them a lesson although the lesson is not communicated explicitly in the sung text. The sung text is a refrain that is slightly altered without much detail as to what took place. *Silao-sikeleko* communicates the details of some of their ordeals.

In summary, there was a man who was requested to exchange a cow for one “school-going girl”. He sought advice from his friend, Kanyistus, who advised him to go ahead and marry since he had no wife. As a wife, this girl was to go and fetch water from the river using a pot. She broke the pot and was given a plastic water container to use. This too was broken as she was unable to carry it in the culturally acceptable manner. Among the Bukusu, women carry water on their heads but this girl attempted to carry water on her back using a piece of cloth that was borrowed from her mother-in-law, which also got torn. This in itself shows that the “school-going girl” did not know how to carry out some of her culturally-prescribed roles in the society. She ran away from home for a while and slept at the roadside without any bedding. After this experience, the girl decided to carry sugarcane on her head with all the soil and forgot about going to school. In this story, the sung text explains clearly how *Yekamakhanya* uprooted the school-going girls from education. At the same time the *silao-sikeleko* shows the cultural values of the community. This is apparent in the way the school-girls are treated. Surprisingly, boys are not mentioned in this song and yet they also went to school during the famine period. The message here is very clear.

The fifth example is from the song *Endakano* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band. Its sung text recurs and is as follows:

Example 6.9: Extract of the song *Endakano*.

Lubukusu text

Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Jirongo ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.
Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Jirongo ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.

English text

Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Jirongo to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.
Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Jirongo to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.

Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Kombo ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.
Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Kombo ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.
Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Mudavadi ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.
Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Mudavadi ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.

Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Kombo to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.
Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Kombo to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.
Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Mudavadi to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.
Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Mudavadi to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.

In this song the Abaluhya are looking for some personalities to “hold the hoe and accomplish the task”. The message in sung text is hidden. One wonders what task they are to accomplish and why the different personalities are the ones to accomplish it. However, the answer is found in the following *silao-sikeleko*, explicitly stated:

On that note we tell the FORD Kenya party, a person like Mudavadi of ODM, if the party does not give him space at the front, he returns and takes a person like Muskari Kombo and Jirongo and then the Baluhya sit together in unity and have one person. Maybe the party FORD Kenya would be intact. Let’s proceed my brother.

The information given here has to do with politics in Kenya. FORD Kenya and ODM are political parties. In Kenya, the personalities mentioned are politicians from the wider Abaluhya community. In the song they are requested to unite politically and support their own Luhya candidate to contest for the highest office with candidates from other ethnicities in Kenya, rather than supporting candidates from other communities.

Most *Litungu* songs that make use of *silao-sikeleko* ensure a continuity of story or thought from the beginning to the end. The stories or ideas presented may be different when told by various *bakeleki* but they usually contain the same theme. Deviation from the main theme is evident in cases where the *omukeleki* takes time to acknowledge and salute some members of the community as discussed earlier (see Chapter Four, the sixth function of *silao-sikeleko*). The themes reveal the beliefs of the Bukusu regarding various issues. Akuno (2000: 11) postulates

that a “close scrutiny of the text of older people’s songs ... indicates lessons that spell out the singing community’s beliefs and practices”. The themes are elaborated through *silao-sikeleko* while the sung text gives a summary of the theme and acts as a refrain. In reference to the song *Omundu* (see Appendix I, page 220), the total sung text is “*Mundu mulayi khusialo khane afwichanga ee*” (So, a good person on this earth dies) while the *silao-sikeleko* elaborates stories that support the statement of the sung text. The events recorded in the sung text are fragmented events of the past that attest to the theme. The song, *Enyanja* (Lubao 2007), has a recurring sung text with the alternation of Kenya’s Luhya politicians’ names. The alternation of names appears in the solo part (see Example 6.10).

Example 6.10: Extract of the song *Enyanja* (Lubao 2007).

Lubukusu text

Solo: *Enywe Baluya*
 Chorus: *Bona enyanja embofu*
 Solo: *Enywe Baluya*
 Chorus: *Sobona khetenya*
 Solo: *Ewe Kombo*
 Chorus: *Bona enyanja embofu*
 Solo: *Ewe Mudavadi*
 Chorus: *Sobona khetenya*

English text

Solo: You the Luhya
 Chorus: See the great lake
 Solo: You the Luhya
 Chorus: Why don’t you see how it is shrinking?
 Solo: You Kombo
 Chorus: See the great lake
 Solo: You Mudavadi
 Chorus: Why don’t you see how it is shrinking?

The *silao-sikeleko* provides disjointed information to support the given view. For example, the beginning of the song, *Enyanja*, reports on the great personalities in Kenya. It is followed by the mourning of some personalities among the Luhya community; then there is a mention of the dispute in one of Kenya’s political parties. Another example is in the song *Chingubo* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band. The *omukeleki* discusses his view on short dresses, then shifts to give a story about Elija and his three daughters who were almost eaten by an ogre but Elija saved them. Then the *omukeleki* addresses politicians who are members of parliament to say that this journey cannot be completed. From this point the soloist takes over and continues with the theme of short dresses.

In some cases it is not very easy to follow the story especially where other issues are mentioned without much substantiation. Since the stories are told by different people, it is not easy for the

silao-sikeleko sections to have a continuous flow of information, as each *omukeleki* tells his own version or experience of what happened. It is also possible to lose some information in the process of oral transmission of songs as performed among the Bukusu. This creates some gaps resulting in fragmentation of information. For example, in the story of Elija and the three girls, in the song *Chingubo* we are not told why the ogre wanted to eat the three girls. This is because it is assumed that the audience is familiar with the folktale.

Idamoyibo writing about the Igoru music of the Okpe community in Nigeria, established that “messages are rather fragmented [*sic*] and presented in manners that require the listener’s further reasoning in order to deduce the full meaning of the songs” (2006: 6-19). Even though this applies to Igoru music, there is a similarity with Bukusu *Litungu* music whose messages are also fragmented. In cases where information is not fragmented, one or two events are told in the story in the form of *silao-sikeleko*. This presents an easy-to-follow unfolding of events in the form of prose. The sung text here varies a little more, moving between a varied refrain and through-composed forms. Some examples of these include the songs *Nekoye*, *Basakwa* and the Kwane Band’s rendition of *Ewuyo Ino*. Because of the amount of information contained in *silao-sikeleko*, it has more sentences than the sung text which is poetic in form.

In conclusion, the above examples indicate the thematic role of *silao-sikeleko*. Each song has its *silao-sikeleko* section loaded with information concerning the messages being communicated in song. The choice of what is to be included as *silao-sikeleko* in a song is subjective, as each performer composer is at liberty to state what he pleases when granted the opportunity to speak; whatever comes out is an experience or observation by the *omukeleki*. *Silao-sikeleko* provides additional vital information to the audience. The absence of *silao-sikeleko* in a song that is usually sung with it leaves a void in the message being communicated. This attests to the value of *silao-sikeleko* in Bukusu *Litungu* music. While there are songs in the community that are performed without the *silao-sikeleko*, there are few instances of *silao-sikeleko* without some sung text. The sung texts, however short, are frameworks upon which the *silao-sikeleko* is built. Where *silao-sikeleko* is used in *Litungu* music, sung text and *silao-sikeleko* exhibit a symbiotic relationship that facilitates the communicative function of songs. Sung text and *silao-sikeleko* complement each other, as *silao-sikeleko* expounds on what has been stated in sung text.

6.3 QUANTITY OF *SILAO-SIKELEKO* IN *LITUNGU* MUSIC

Having discussed the themes of *silao-sikeleko*, I examine the frequency of *silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music. This is in an attempt to answer the questions; does *silao-sikeleko* affect the length of a *Litungu* performance? If so, how much *silao-sikeleko* is there in *Litungu* music and how long is the music? The frequency of *silao-sikeleko* is measured by counting the words and establishing the duration in terms of minutes of performance.

First, I begin by counting words in the original language for the song. This is in order to compare the quantity of words performed as sung text against those performed as *silao-sikeleko* (see Table 6.1A). I count the number of words performed as sung texts and those performed as *silao-sikeleko*, and then I establish the percentage of *silao-sikeleko*. Out of the thirty-six songs tabulated only fourteen songs have a percentage of *silao-sikeleko* below fifty (see Table 6.1A). Even though the soloists of performing groups have the mandate to decide how much is *khulaa-khukeleka*, Table 6.1A shows that some performing groups perform *silao-sikeleko* more than others. This means that when the group decides to *khulaa-khukeleka* through their soloist, they have more of the lyrics performed as *silao-sikeleko*. Thus, more of their songs have a *silao-sikeleko* percentage of fifty and above (see Table 6.1B). Articulation of *silao-sikeleko* is confined to established musical phrases. These phrases are basically the instrumental accompaniment upon which the text is uttered. In this respect every *omukeleki* must master when to come in and exit; an attribute that Bickford (2007: 467) describes, as the musicians must adhere to the language syntax. They include: the Lugulu Bumusika Band which has twelve out of sixteen songs; the Kwane Band which has three out of five songs; the Jackson Kisika Band which has three out of three songs; and the Nabukambisi Jazz Band which has two out of two songs.

The other groups, the Sinani Group Band and the Namatete Band, have majority of their songs with a *silao-sikeleko* percentage of less than fifty. This tendency can be attributed to the talent within the performing group and preference of the group members and soloist. I observed during fieldwork that the leader of the Kwane Band, the Jackson Kisika Band and Alex of the Lugulu Bumusika Band skillfully performed speech-melodies and speech to elaborate issues, more than other members of their group.

Table 6.1A. Quantity of *Silao-sikeleko* and Sung text

Song Title	Number of words in Sung text	Number of words in <i>Silao-sikeleko</i>	Percentage of <i>Silao- sikeleko</i> in Song
<i>Kulukulu Wa Bwabi</i> (KB)	74	00	00
<i>Mayi Muro</i> (KB)	00	161	100.0
<i>Kunikina</i> (KB)	50	02	3.8
<i>Eswa</i> (KB) ²⁹	162	302	65.1
<i>Ewuyo Ino</i> (KB)	117	315	72.9
<i>Ewuyo Ino</i> (SGB)	116	91	44.0
<i>Bikumba</i> (SGB)	144	125	46.5
<i>Enda Yo Muluya</i> (SGB)	102	29	22.1
<i>Khola Ndie</i> (SGB)	156	65	29.4
<i>Wachonge</i> (SGB)	146	35	19.3
<i>Mayi</i> (NB)	135	26	16.1
<i>Lukendo Lwe Babukusu</i> (NB)	256	233	47.6
<i>Khulila V.P. Wamalwa</i> (NB)	183	108	37.1
<i>Namulobi</i> (NB)	122	112	47.9
<i>Okhina Bali Sakhina</i> (NB)	108	141	56.6
<i>Mayi Muro</i> (JKB)	15	95	86.4
<i>Wachonge</i> (JKB)	09	55	85.9
<i>Ewuyo Ino</i> (JKB)	0	109	100.0
<i>Nekoye</i> (NJB)	245	447	64.6
<i>Basakwa</i> (NJB)	92	346	79.0
<i>Yekamakhanya</i> (MB)	136	424	75.7
<i>Mayi Muro</i> (LBB)	122	49	28.7

²⁹ LBB stands for the Lugulu Bumusika Band, NJB stands for the Nabukambisi Jazz Band, KB for the Kwane Band, NB for the Namatete Band, JKB for the Jackson Kisika Band and MB for the Muvumilivu Band.

<i>Ewuyo Ino</i> (LBB)	66	244	78.7
<i>Mwana Mbeli</i> (LBB)	246	80	24.5
<i>Kulukulu wa Bwabi</i> (LBB)	109	104	48.8
<i>Lijembe</i> (LBB)	40	308	88.5
<i>Endakano</i> (LBB)	160	276	63.3
<i>Paulinah</i> (LBB)	121	345	74.0
<i>Lisaye</i> (LBB)	64	308	82.8
<i>Simba (Swahili)</i> (LBB)	230	186	44.7
<i>Enyanja</i> (LBB)	144	288	66.7
<i>Sellah</i> (LBB)	48	258	84.3
<i>Chingubo</i> (LBB)	116	399	77.5
<i>Enju yo Muluya</i> (LBB)	81	275	77.2
<i>Omundu</i> (LBB)	93	247	72.6
<i>Sellah</i> (LBB)	48	257	84.2
<i>Baluhya</i> (LBB)	76	297	79.6

Table 6.1B. Percentage of *Silao-sikeleko* by Group

Performing Group	Number of Songs with <i>Silao-sikeleko</i> Above Fifty Percent	Number of Songs with <i>Silao-sikeleko</i> Below Fifty Percent
Kwane Band	03	02
Sinani Group Band	00	05
Namatete Band	01	04
Jackson Kisika Band	03	00
Nabukambisi Jazz Band	02	00
Mvumilivu Band	01	00
Lugulu Bumusika Band	12	04

Table 6.2. Length of *Silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* Music

Song title	Length of Piece in Minutes and seconds	Duration of <i>Silao-sikeleko</i>	Percentage of <i>Silao-sikeleko</i> length
<i>Kulukulu Wa Bwabi</i> (KB)	1 min 12 sec	0 min 0 sec	0.0
<i>Mayi Muro</i> (KB)	2 min 36 sec	2 min 01 sec	84.6
<i>Ewuyo Ino</i> (KB)	6 min 11 sec	3 min 06 sec	50.1
<i>Eswa</i> (KB)	6 min 20 sec	4 min 10 sec	65.8
<i>Kunikina</i> (KB)	2 min 23 sec	0 min 5 sec	3.5
<i>Bikumba</i> (SGB)	5 min 17 sec	1 min 50 sec	34.7
<i>Ewuyo Ino</i> (SGB)	2 min 40 sec	1 min 11 sec	43.8
<i>Enda Yo Muluya</i> (SGB)	2 min 10 sec.	0 min 15 sec	11.5
<i>Khola Ndie</i> (SGB)	2 min 11 sec	0 min 38 sec	29.0
<i>Wachonge</i> (SGB)	2 min 33 sec	0 min 18 sec	11.8
<i>Mayi</i> (NB)	3 min 10 sec	0 min 17 sec	8.9
<i>Lukendo Lwe Babukusu</i> (NB)	6 min 15 sec	3 min 15 sec	52.0
<i>Khulila V.P. Wamalwa</i> (NB)	7 min 59 sec	2 min 03 sec	25.7
<i>Namulobi</i> (NB)	4 min 57 sec	1 min 03 sec	21.2
<i>Okhina Bali Sakhina</i> (NB)	5 min 11 sec	2 min 19 sec	44.7
<i>Mayi Muro</i> (JKB)	2 min 46 sec	1 min 23 sec	50.0
<i>Wachonge</i> (JKB)	1 min 45 sec	1 min 14 sec	70.5
<i>Ewuyo Ino</i> (JKB)	3 min 27 sec	2 min 00 sec	58.0
<i>Nekoye</i> (NJB)	11 min 06 sec	4 min 40 sec	42.0
<i>Basakwa</i> (NJB)	5 min 40 sec	3 min 15 sec	57.3
<i>Yekamakhanya</i> (MB)	6 min 43 sec	5 min 02 sec	74.9
<i>Mayi Muro</i> (LBB)	3 min 17 sec	0 min 30 sec	15.2
<i>Ewuyo Ino</i> (LBB)	4 min 49 sec	3 min 15 sec	67.5
<i>Mwana Mbeli</i> (LBB)	3 min 18 sec	0 min 45 sec	22.7
<i>Kulukulu Wa Bwabi</i>	3 min 21 sec	1 min 12 sec	35.8

(LBB)			
<i>Lijembe</i> (LBB)	4 min 13 sec	3 min 16 sec	77.5
<i>Endakano</i> (LBB)	6 min 19 sec	3 min 59 sec	63.1
<i>Paulinah</i> (LBB)	6 min 36 sec	4 min 30 sec	68.1
<i>Lisaye</i> (LBB)	6 min 59 sec	3 min 53 sec	55.9
<i>Simba (Swahili)</i> (LBB)	5 min 42 sec	1 min 50 sec	32.2
<i>Enyanja</i> (LBB)	7 min 18 sec	3 min 55 sec	53.7
<i>Sellah</i> (LBB)	5 min 35 sec	4 min 07 sec	73.7
<i>Chingubo</i> (LBB)	6 min 09 sec	4 min 19 sec	70.2
<i>Enju Yo Muluya</i> (LBB)	6 min 07 sec	4 min 17 sec	70.0
<i>Omundu</i> (LBB)	5 min 59 sec	3 min 51 sec	64.3
<i>Baluhya</i> (LBB)	5 min 58 sec	4 min 21 sec	73.0

It is evident from the table that a majority of songs with *silao-sikeleko* have more words executed as *silao-sikeleko* than sung text. This can be attributed to the role that *silao-sikeleko* plays in every song as discussed earlier.

Second, I establish the duration of *silao-sikeleko* in terms of minutes in comparison to the total length of the song (see Table 6.2). Table 6.2 shows that in most songs the performance of *silao-sikeleko* takes at least more than fifty percent of the total duration of each song. Sixteen songs fall below fifty percent. The difference in percentages between the two tables are as a result of two factors: one, the duration of each song is inclusive of instrumental interludes which are not factored in Table 6.1; two, it is possible for an *omukeleki* to slow down the tempo of delivery thus taking a longer time to *khulaa-khukeleka* while at other times the *omukeleki* uses a faster tempo thus performing more words in a short time. The longest duration of *silao-sikeleko* in a song is 84.6% while the shortest is zero percent. The lengths of *silao-sikeleko* are not standard; variations are as a result of subjectivity by the soloist. As the instrumental music is prolonged through performance composition so is *silao-sikeleko* elongated.

6.4 LANGUAGE USE

The Bukusu language, Lubukusu, is the main communication mode in *Litungu* music. For effective communication speakers must understand each other, and decipher what has been said in order to interpret its meaning. Language “embodies both individual and the social process” (Clark 1996: 3) thus allowing an individual listener and a group, whose interaction affects the overall structure. The choice and organisation of words in *Litungu* music is intentional, hence performers may use as few words as possible and yet still meet their communicative goal. This is why they prefer to use sayings and proverbs that are contextually understood and significant. It is a cultural norm to use short phrases or sentences that are heavily loaded with meaning to avoid wasting precious time with elaborate explanations. For instance, I noted that none of the interviewees was willing to explain some of the messages contained in their songs. The research assistants and I coerced the respondents to provide the required detailed interpretation of the *silao-sikeleko*.

Culturally the Bukusu do not keep expounding on their sayings, as it is believed that every community member understands. Explanations are given on very rare occasions as the members of the community are expected to understand the sayings with contextual meaning. Jackson Kisika (interview, 6th February 2007) explained this by observing that too many explanations tend to dilute the essence of the message, thus the few words used must be carefully chosen to substantiate the message fully. A good orator therefore is one who uses words that are loaded with meaning. Song is an art with a lot of poetry, therefore requiring an artistic choice of words. In the process a descriptive approach is taken to every song, whereby events are described using words that are familiar to the community. The community’s language use portrays their beliefs, customs and traditions that make them unique in comparison to other African communities. For instance the use of the word *efula* (rain) can mean both the water droplets from a heavy cloud after condensation takes place, or lightning depending on its contextual use. Below is a discussion of the figures of speech in sung text and *silao-sikeleko* as expressed in various songs.

Stylistic devices are means of artistic expressions. Artistic expression is a skill that is aesthetically appreciated within the Bukusu community. A *Litungu* performance can be deficient without some form of *khulaa-khukeleka*, because *khulaa-khukeleka* allows for more personal

expression of sentiments than the sung text does. The ability to use sayings and proverbs in a musical item, use more than one saying or proverb to mean the same thing, and/or expound on others, is a sign of linguistic ability. This form of linguistic aptitude is similar to that of the West African griots.³⁰ Hale (1998: 114) explains that “the speech of these African wordsmith [griots and griottes] combines both poetic art and, in many cases, a much less clearly defined power.” Therefore, poetic art is not only a preserve of the Bukusu musicians but is common among other communities in Africa. In a performance, musicians criticize one another and designate roles to each other in a performing group. This is why, for example, Alex of the Lugulu Bumusika Band *khulaa-khukelekas* more than the other members of the group. This is not to say that the others are unable to *khulaa-khukeleka*, as they also *khulaa-khukeleka*: but his linguistic prowess puts him on a pedestal above the rest. A good orator who can play the *Litungu* is highly respected in society. The art of praise or *Khulaa* is vital in a musical performance. While some performers have short sections of this, others have elaborate sections of the same. In most cases when a *Litungu* player begins his performance with self-introduction, he will include some form of self-praise, answering the question: “Who am I?” Wekesa (Personal communication, 2008) explains that the *Litungu* is a praise instrument. During a performance when a person in the audience is praised, this person responds by standing up and dancing towards the performers in appreciation. Indeed as the Bukusu say, *Litungu lifumianga oli fuile* (the *Litungu* praises one who gives it a token of appreciation) (Ibid.). This saying personifies the instrument and gives it powers to respond to what is going on around it. In reality it is the *Litungu* player who praises someone who has given him a token of money or some foodstuffs such as maize and beans. As a member of the audience dances towards the musicians he or she may give a token to the musicians. In response the musicians shower praises on this person in the form of both sung text and *silao-sikeleko*.

Of course the praise would use a number of the language devices discussed in this section. One’s linguistic competence and dexterity on the instrument render him an accomplished musician. This is expressed using the various stylistic devices, including imagery, metaphors, proverbs, sayings, symbols, similes, idiomatic expressions and riddles. The devices enrich *silao-sikeleko*.

³⁰ It is also possible to compare *Silao-sikeleko* with the *Isicathamiya* genre of the Zulu people of South Africa as well as the *Maskanda* genre from this country (see Muller 2004, 2008).

A discussion of these devices as used in thirteen songs from different bands will follow shortly. The thirteen songs were selected as they depict a variety of stylistic devices common in *Litungu* music.

6.4.1. Prose vs Poetry

All the songs are organized in the style of both prose and poetry. *Silao-sikeleko* unfolds in the form of prose as various stories are narrated while the sung text is poetic in structure. An example of this is in the song *Ewuyo Ino* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band as follows (see Example 6.11):

Example 6.11: Extract of the song *Ewuyo Ino*.

Lubukusu text

Verbal Text:

Basani abo bali, “Tawe, khekhukonekho ano khubone”. Bakona oli saa kumi na moja chyola, namunyu oli auma akhirire ta. Bali omusakhulu mulala ali omukwangwa nail bali Chemuku walila ali, “Ah! Khwechile lukali bona esolokho yakhaile, mumbekho kamechi ninywele”. Batima kamechi chinyungu chitaru. Banywa kamechi kakhila. Bonakho Chemuku walila ali niyo nese njole emaeni?

Solo: Ali nese njole emaeni, ese njola,

Chorus: Ese njole emaeni.

Solo: Ese njola

Chorus: Ese njole emaeni.

Solo: Enje sabe,

Chorus: Enje sabe muba luwa.

Solo: Enje sabe,

Chorus: Enje sabe muba luwa.

English text

Verbal Text:

Those boys said, “No, let us sleep here and see”.

They slept until 5 a.m, when a hyena was

heard roaring so much.

One old man, from the Bakwangwa clan, who was

Chemuku cried, “Ah! See how far we have come,

I am thirsty. Please give me some water to drink”.

They ran and fetched three pots.

They drank a lot of water.

Look, Chemuku cried, when will I reach Maeni?

Solo: That, will I reach Maeni, I will reach,

Chorus: I will reach Maeni.

Solo: I will reach,

Chorus: I will reach Maeni.

Solo: I go beg,

Chorus: I go beg from those who are tired.

Solo: I go beg,

Chorus: I go beg from those who are tired.

These stories are narrated in a way that allows them to coincide with the phrases in the underlying instrumental accompaniment. The flow of words is not regular; at times the words are narrated at a fast tempo while in some cases they unfold slowly with pauses in between words so that they are in synchrony with the instrumental line. On the other hand the sung text is in most

cases poetic in rendition. It is rhythmical and repetitive, an “organised form of communication whereby words are skillfully and wittily put together in manners that only few words may cleverly be used to express a body of ideas” (Idamoyibo 2006: 6-3).

6.4.2. Persona

The concept of narrator and whether or not he/she is part of the story is briefly explored. Idamoyibo (2006: 6-13) describes “Persona” as “a narrator or a character who in a poem speaks in the first person”. He quotes Burton and Chacksfield (1979: 91) who argue that “persona is not the poet, but functions as a mask or disguise that the poet puts on for the purpose of enacting a poem in a narrative form”. The narrator in *Enyanja* begins by using the first person and then shifts to the second and third persons in the *silao-sikeleko*. This kind of shifting continues in the *silao-sikeleko* section while the sung text makes use of the third person throughout. This shifting means that the narrator includes himself in the story at some point and then divorces himself from the story. This is indeed a kind of role playing that is also common in mbira performances. Berliner (1976: 462) states that, “it can be part of a singers’ nature to shift back and forth elusively from first to third person during the performance of a mbira piece, manoeuvring behind the statements which he or she makes, as if playing different roles”.

Following is a brief explanation of how the persona is used in various songs, in the song *Omundu* (Lubao 2007), the narrator begins by using the second person and then moves to the third person in the *silao-sikeleko*. The sung text is in the third person. It is followed by the *silao-sikeleko* using the third person who later appears in the first person while the sung text is constantly in the third person. In the song *Enju yo Muluya* (Lubao 2007), the narrator uses the first and third person interchangeably in *silao-sikeleko* while the sung text is constantly in the third person. In the song, *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* (Elima 2007), the narrator uses the third person throughout the song in both sung text and *silao-sikeleko*. In the song, *Nekoye* (Manyali 2000), the *bakeleki/singers* begin by using the second and third persons as sung text. The *silao-sikeleko* shifts from third person and then the second person to first person. In this case the narrator includes himself in the story then divorces himself from the story. In the song, *Ewuyo Ino* (Mukubwa 2007), the performer composer uses the third person throughout in both sung text and

silao-sikeleko. In the song, *Basakwa* (Bernard Manyali 2000), the narrator uses the first, second and third persons in the *silao-sikeleko* while the sung text is in the second and third persons. The song *Sellah* (Lubao 2007) uses the second person in the sung text and keep shifting between the first, second and third persons in the *silao-sikeleko*. This means that they at times divorce themselves from the story and at other times they are part of the story. The song *Ewuyo Ino* (Elima 2007) relates the story using the third person entirely in both the sung text and the *silao-sikeleko*. The narrator divorces himself from the story as he relates events that took place during the migration of the Bukusu to their present location. The song *Mayi* (Namatete 2007) is in the third person, as the performer composer narrates the goodness of his mother. The song *Yekamakhanya* (Manyali 2000) shifts from second person to third and first persons in the *silao-sikeleko* but maintains the use of third person in the sung text. The song *Endakano* (Lubao 2007) uses the third person in the *silao-sikeleko* while the sung text shifts between the second and third person.

In as much as the *omukeleki* who is also the narrator divorces himself from the story by using the second and third persons, it does not mean that he is always talking about other people. In fact there are instances where he actually talks about himself. This technique is common among other African communities. For instance in the performance of *Kudeketera*, “performers may sing in the second or third persons, when actually experiencing their own ideas or referring to themselves” (Berliner 1976: 460).

6.4.3. Imagery

Imagery is very prominent in this song; the title, *Enyanja* means “a lake”. Thus the use of words to evoke mental images is evident in the expression “*Efwe benyanja embofu, abele wakhasoka sowambukha tawe*” (We are of a great lake, even if you attempt to swim you cannot cross over to the other side), as part of the *silao-sikeleko*. One can imagine a great lake that cannot easily be crossed. The Bukusu as a community is compared to such vastness. The composer of the song perceives the community as being massive and that is why in the song *Enyanja* there is frequent reference to a great lake as in the words “*Bona enyanja embofu*” (See the great lake). This very lake on the other hand is shrinking as in the words “*Sobona khetenya?*” (Why don’t you see how it is shrinking?). Shrinking or receding of lake can normally be attributed to climatic factors. But

the Bukusu as a community is shrinking or becoming smaller, not only in numerical size but also in political position and importance. The last two examples here are part of the sung text performed as a refrain in the entire song. In this song, the musicians make reference to the political climate in Kenya which has embraced democracy. As a result the Abaluhya community have had their share of setbacks as its politicians seek supremacy within the community. The personalities mentioned in the song are politicians within the community who are requested to stand up and salvage the situation. They should stop disagreements and work together.

Asaka chilomo khuchie (hit the tongues/sayings so that we can proceed) is imagery from the same song *Enyanja* (Lubao 2007). This imagery is part of *silao-sikeleko* in a conversation between Alex and George, two members of the Lugulu Bumusika Band. It is as follows (see Example 6.12):

Example 6.12: Extract of the song *Enyanja*.

Lubukusu text

Verbal Text

Alex mwana wefwe!

Ee! Abwenao George ngo oloma oriorio...

Ah! George, sendachia lukali tawe.

Asaka chilomo khuchie.

Speech-melody:

Ooi! Kumwoyo lulila kunyi.

English text

Verbal Text

Alex our child!

Yes, on that note George...

Ah! George, I will not proceed for long.

Hit the tongues we go (Let us proceed).

Speech-melody:

Ooi! My heart is weeping for you.

From the conversation, Alex tells George that he would not continue talking for a longer time and requests George to continue talking instead. It is at this point that George takes over and weeps in the form of speech-melody. Therefore *Asaka chilomo khuchie* in this context means continue speaking/recounting the tale as we proceed.

The use of imagery is a common poetic device in Africa. Imagery entails artistic recreations of the idealistic world into realism in a way that jostles one's mental capabilities. Scheub (1985: 3) states that, "patterning of imagery is the most visible artistic activity" in reference to African oral tradition.

6.4.4. Ellipsis

Words are shortened to fit into the melodic structure. For instance, the word *omundu* is shortened to *mundu* while the word *omulayi* is shortened to *mulayi*. These are used in the sung text appearing as Example 6.13:

Example 6.13: Extract from the song *Omundu*.

Lubukusu text

Solo: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane
afwichanga ee

Chorus: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane
afwichanga ee.

English text

Solo: So, a good person on this earth dies.

Chorus: So, a good person on this earth dies.

In *Enyanja*, the *silao-sikeleko* the words *babana ba papa* are shortened to *bana ba papa* (children of my father) and *omusani* is shortened to *musani* (see Appendix I, page 217). In the song *Nekoye*, the word *okhila* is shortened to *khila* in the *silao-sikeleko*.

6.4.5. Neologism

Neologism is also found in this song. A dictionary definition of neologism is “a new word or expression or a new meaning of a word” (Wehmeier 2000: 786). Tanuri (2001: 24) uses the term “neologism” to refer to the various coinages of words with roots in English and other African languages. This study adopts Tanuri’s concept of neologism. The words coined in *Litungu* music come from the English and Kiswahili languages. Babukusu use these words due to a lack of equivalent word in the Bukusu language as the items referred to, are not found in the traditional community. The introduction of the two languages to the community as a result of the changing social structure after independence has a lot to do with this as formal education became part of the community’s way of life. In order for the musicians to communicate messages effectively they cannot do without these words that with time have become so familiar to them.

Neologism is evident in about five songs. First, *silao-sikeleko* in the song, *Enju yo Muluya*, has this statement, *Yani bubu khusibala khuno omundu wikholanga omukristayo khukhwama luno*

amanye. (The problem on this earth, the person who pretends to be a Christian from today should learn). Here the word *omukristayo* is borrowed from the Kiswahili word *mukristo* (a Christian). The second song *Mayi* (Namatete 2007) has the words “*musibito*”, “*esuti*”, “*direkta*”, which are coinages from the English words “hospital”, “suit”, and “director” respectively. Wholesale borrowing of words from the Kiswahili language is also evident in this song, as the word “*dakitari*” (doctor) and “*aunga mukono*” (he supports). The third song is entitled *Yekamakhanya* (Manyali 2000). Neologism takes place as *bechifisi*, *mumasomo*, and *khulami* in sung text while *kumupira*, *khulami*, *lilesa*, and *bechifisi* in *silao-sikeleko*. The word *bechifisi* is coined from the English words “school fees” while the other words are coined from the Kiswahili words *masomo* (education), *lami* (tarmac road), *mpira* (plastic container), and *leso* (a piece of cloth). The fourth song is *Endakano* (Lubao 2007) in which neologism is found as *bajirani* from the Kiswahili word *jirani* meaning “neighbour”; and *wachana na pombe*, *fanya biashara*, which mean “leave beer or alcohol [and] do business”. The fifth song is *Nekoye* (Manyali 2000). In this song neologism is expressed in the words *kimikati*, *chikeki*, *khutai*, *famili planingi*. The first word is coined from a Kiswahili word *Mkate* meaning bread. The next three are coinages from the English words cake, a tie and family planning.

6.4.6. Proverbs and Sayings

Proverbs and sayings are statements that entail teachings and express what is believed to be true by a people (Wehmeier 2000: 939). The Babukusu make use of sayings and proverbs in their everyday conversations. As a result proverbs find expression in every social gathering where there are two or more people present. The way a saying or proverb is used depends on the audience. Older members of the community usually make use of proverbs. When they do so, the proverbs and sayings are not substantiated since the audience is expected to comprehend what is shared. In this case the interpretation of a saying is left to the discretion of the audience. Where young people are present, the proverbs are sometimes substantiated in the form of stories to help the young understand. It is therefore not surprising to find the same expressed in the sung text and *silao-sikeleko*.

Sylvester Mukubwa, one of my informants, explained the context in which his group performs the song *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* together with some of the proverbs surrounding it. In his discussion of the prerequisites for the performance of *Kumuse* ritual, Nangendo (1998: 40) explains that the ritual is performed for an elderly man who is “generative enough to have a circumcised paternal grandson at the time of passing”. It is this group of men that are honoured in society while “the rest of the men, like all women and children, still remain jural and physical minors” (Ibid., 42). The number of wives one had bestowed greater status on him and earned him the honour of being a topic of praise and discussion both verbally and in song. Since beer parties were a preserve of the mature members of society their conversations were infused with proverbs and sayings that were never explained. Talking was in hushed tones and so was the music. Vulgar language was freely used since younger members of society were not in their company. Mukubwa provided the following example, “*Khatuluku khosi khema, obotokha nio wakanina*” (A hill is firm; you go round it to get to the top). It means, “Do not just look at an ant hill and feel you can climb it, there are many ways of getting to the top” (Mukubwa, Interview 3rd May 2007). This saying has various meanings according to the context of its use. Literally it means that for you to get to the top of a hill you need to go around it. In other words one has to figure out how to accomplish a task and not just assume that it is as easy as it looks. Its meaning can be equivalent to the saying, “do not judge a book by its cover”. This very saying can be used in reference to a woman, meaning that one should not just despise a small-looking woman (Ibid.). After this Mukubwa laughed and said that it had some other meaning as well but refused to divulge anymore information, because it had a sexual meaning, which is, one should not despise a small-looking woman and imagine that he can just force her to sleep with him. Mukubwa felt uneasy stating this before me (a woman) and also he felt that he had already said too much by giving my research assistants and me the meaning to this proverb.

According to Mukubwa, when a saying or proverb is used in a gathering without being substantiated, the message is only meant for those who can understand it. To pass across such a message, is another saying, *kamalwa Kano kelubitilo sekali kesiyotelo ta* (this beer is for a blessing ceremony and not for a social gathering). Literally this saying is used to isolate members gathering together for a specified purpose without interference from outsiders. For instance, during circumcision periods the circumcisers come together in a ceremony to invoke

spirits and get blessings from their ancestors before they begin circumcising. The circumcision ceremony is a ceremony that invokes praise and blessings for the initiates. In this ceremony there is beer that no other person can partake of since it carries spiritual connotations. Therefore, if one does not understand a saying, proverb or any other statement and would like some clarification, that person would be told the above saying instead of an answer, meaning that the statement is not meant for such a person.

Following are examples of proverbs and sayings in *Litungu* music. The first song *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* relates the story of a girl who married a man from the *Balunda* clan. She discovered that her husband's family are witches. So she attempted to reveal this secret to her own people but failed since she set a trap for something (the rain) that had seen her. In this story the rain is personified to see the actions of the lady. There were severe consequences for her actions as she was burnt by the rain. Here rain refers to lightning that struck her face. This goes to warn members of the community that their actions are not always a secret; there is someone who sees what they do. A proverb is used in this song, *Ali khareka epumu khane khareka emubone* (She wanted to set a trap but did so for something that had seen her). The rain saw her. Another lesson here is that when you go to a place, do as those people do and become a part of them. This saying is narrated as part of the *silao-sikeleko* in the song and does not appear as sung text.

In the second song *Nekoye* (Manyali 2000) uses several sayings, such as *Omukhasi khumumanya omumanyila khumbako* (you can know a wife using a plough). This saying is found in the form of *silao-sikeleko*. The narrator states the saying before he embarks on giving the story that supports this view. The measure of laziness or industriousness in a woman is associated with the tool used in cultivation. So, if somebody wants to know the worth of a woman, one simply observes her performing various tasks. The next two are “*Omwene nakhurere khusindu ouririra khusisyo wase*” (when you love something, you feel the pain) and the other is “*Yesingula khane yesingula bukara*” (He was proud, but he was proud of cowardice); both in the form of *silao-sikeleko*. The former saying simply means if you like something so much and things happen to go wrong, you will feel the pain directly or through something that is closest to you. In the song, the *omukeleki* loved his wife and her behaviour caused him pain. The latter saying is a remark made by a person other than the main *omukeleki*. It is an interjection to his unfolding story. This

statement is announced as the *omukeleki* explains how proud he felt. The cowardice referred to here is that of his wife Nekoye as she was unable to take good care of her husband's home. The sung text in this song *Nekoye* does not make use of proverbs.

The third song, *Basakwa* (Bernard Manyali 2000), has two proverbs. The first one is *omwimbi sakelekanga enungo tawe*, (A short person cannot attempt to reach the *enungu*); this occurs in a section of *silao-sikeleko*. Before I explain this proverb it is best to describe *enungu*. There seems to be no one English word for it. In a traditional Bukusu kitchen the cooking place is made up of three stones and firewood is used. Above it, there is a kind of shelf normally made of wood where firewood is placed. The placement of firewood on it is a convenient way of storing firewood, as it is near the cooking place and also ensures the continued drying of the wood. The position of the shelf allows smoke to get to it. It is sometimes used for smoking foods like fish and meat while fruits like bananas can be kept to ripen. It is this place that is referred to as “*enungu*”. Shortness implies an inability to access certain spaces, therefore one who has limitations cannot seek to carry out certain difficult tasks. The second proverb is “*khu ulilisania ne likhese, bibindu makhuyu*” (If you agree with a sheep things go wrong). Sheep stand for someone with whom you cannot communicate. In the song context the *omukeleki*'s uncle is advising him not to bother going to discuss or confront his brother-in-law since he may not understand, and advises him to just forgive his brother-in-law.

Another saying from the song explains the fact that if one is in search for something, one will always get it. The saying is *Nisio wikomba ng'ali onyola wase* (whatever you long for, you get). The *omukeleki* in the song wanted to know whether his brother-in-law respected him or not. As the story is narrated the *omukeleki* was able to get his answer which was a painful experience for him as his in-law did not accord him the respect he hoped for. The two sayings from the song *Basakwa* are narrated in *silao-sikeleko*. In this sung text, the word *kimikunda* is shortened to *Mikunda*.

In the fourth song *Sellah* (Lubao 2007), there are two sayings which actually mean the same thing. They are “*Obikha okhubikha*” (you dress he who dresses you) and “*Obiila okhubiila*” (you inaugurate he who inaugurates you). These two sayings simply mean that you do well to those

who do well to you and you do evil things to those who do evil things to you. The message in this song is rather disjointed but these sayings are echoed in the *silao-sikeleko* (see Appendix 1, page 240). The word “*obita*” also means someone who praises you. This person, the *omukeleki* proceeds to state, must be an Abaluhya like you; since the performer composer addresses the Abaluhya. The word “dress” in the first saying is used as an analogy; it does not literally mean to cover one’s body with some cloth. To “cover” referred to here encompass the use of positive words in praise of someone. The performer composer also encourages his audience not to seek praise from anyone; it must be from someone well known to you.

In the fifth song, *Endakano* (Lubao 2007), there is a saying which occurs as part of the sung text. It is *Ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka* (hold the hoe and complete the task). In most cases the task to be accomplished is in reference to cultivation or digging, thus the saying would mean “hold the hoe and complete digging”. Contextually the task referred to in the song is that of leadership. Several personalities are mentioned and advised to accomplish the task began by the late Kijana Wamalwa, the former Vice-President of Kenya. This saying in the sung text acts as part of the refrain in the song as the contextual explanation is found within the *silao-sikeleko*.

Meaning of sayings and proverbs among the Bukusu is very contextual. When sayings and proverbs are stated in a different context their meaning is likely to vary. This attribute is common in other African cultures including the Xhosa. Ntshinga (2009) argues that words have different meanings outside the contexts of oral performance. She also states that, “context and performer are of vital importance in giving a given song extra meaning because the singer brings in extra linguistic features that inflect new meanings to the songs”.

6.4.7. Symbolism

Symbolism is used in two songs.. It is presumed that the symbols used are those familiar to the audience and are able to communicate the intended message effectively. As such the symbols used in this song are those familiar to the community. In the first song, *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* (Mukubwa 2007), the word “rain” in the song is used symbolically. In fact a literal translation of this song would not make sense, for example, the phrases “*kachia efula Balunda*” (she went to

rain among the Balunda) and “*Areka efula, yayako, akipa khane emubone*” (she set a trap for rain, my brother; she hit that which had seen her). The first phrase is found in the sung text while the second is in both the sung text and *silao-sikeleko*. Rain here actually refers to lightning as used in witchcraft. The *Balunda* clan are known to be rainmakers and believe in witchcraft. So contextually, this lady Kulukulu had been seen by those who perform the same rituals of rain making; her husband’s family.

The second song is *Ewuyo Ino* (Mukubwa 2007). A pot of milk in this song is an example of symbolism. It is used to represent witchcraft paraphernalia, as it was actually a pot full of snakes. Those who practice witchcraft are known to tame snakes which they use in their various activities. Witches hide their character and do not accept that they are witches, instead their ways are known by their conduct in relation to snakes. The snakes are well taken care of; they are fed, dressed, washed and even allowed to bask in the morning sun. Such snakes are mostly kept and transported in large earthen pots. In the story, the snakes responded to an old man’s call. This implies that they were tamed snakes. Part of the *silao-sikeleko* is as follows (see Example 6.14):

Example 6.14: Extract of *silao-sikeleko* in the song *Ewuyo Ino*.

Lubukusu text

Oli omusoreri wekhisia oli kola asi,
lifundo nilio omusakhulu aboile
liafunukha.
Oli kimiremu kiepe enje. Eh!
Basoreri oli Batima chimbilo.
Kamakuwa ako si, basoreri. Eh! Eh! Eh!
Wase chichupa chyatikha mubaa, bindu
Babaanikhile chingubo bakikuyu batimile
bali bakukula musoko batima. Eh!
Omusakhulu ema ali, “Ah papa
mwambakala sibakala”. Eh!
Ema oli alanga chindemu chiakalukha
mushati wase. Babandu belukhe
Ekolongolo musoko bawelekho sio. Eh!
Kamakuwa ako sina. Eh!

English text

One young man lowered the pot from the
carrier, as the pot reached down, the knot
tied by the old man became loose.
Large snakes came out. Eh!
The boys took off running very fast.
Those are the issues my brothers. Eh! Eh!
Bottles got broken in the bar, things spilled,
All those who had laid their clothes for sale,
the Kikuyu ran screaming at the market. Eh!
The old man stood saying, “Ah my father,
you have hung me out to dry”. Eh!
He stood and called back his snakes that
went into his shirt. The market place was
empty as people had run away. Ee!
Those are the issues, Ee!

Another song that mentions snakes in the community is discussed by Masasabi (2002: 33-34), as follows,

Solo: You mourn snakes instead of mourning people
 Chorus: You mourn snakes instead of mourning people
 Recitative:
 I went and found my grandmother crying. My grandmother crying, I asked the children,
 “Why is grandmother crying?” They said, “she is crying, our Carol is dead”.
 Where is Carol? She is in a container there. I stopped crying and looked. So Carol was a snake... Carol was adorned in jewels. I tell you she was fat... from which clan was Carol?

It is also evident from this example that snakes are kept in containers and are tamed. Whereas it is acceptable among the Bukusu to tame dogs, it is not acceptable to tame snakes. That is why it is kept a secret. In the second example above, the performer chides those who mourn snakes.

6.4.8. Simile

A simile according to the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* is “a word or phrase that compares something to something else, using the words *like* or *as*” (Wehmeier 2001: 1104). Two songs make use of similes. One song is *Nekoye* (Manyali 2000) which has *Akenda auchikha nga wanikhile engubo khulusieng’enge, mani mwo twa* (She walks flapping like a piece of cloth that is hanging on a wire line without any strength; this flapping is as a result of wind) as part of *silao-sikeleko*. Indeed the word “like” is used to compare Nekoye’s walking style with a piece of cloth. This description is used to emphasize Nekoye’s sluggish movements as she moved without any strength within her body, thus she was so weak.

The second is *Sellah* (Lubao 2007). The sung text opens up as a simile. This simile is *Baluya khusimane nge Mwambu ne Sellah* (The Baluhya, let us love one another like Mwambu and Sellah). The love that the Baluhyas should have is likened to that of Mwambu and Sellah who are the forefathers of the Bukusu community. Their relationship is believed to have been exemplary, worth being emulating by members of the community. This is why the song urges the Abaluhya to love one another.

6.4.9. Riddle

There are two songs with riddles. The use of a riddle appears in this song *Nekoye* (Manyali 2000) namely *Omundu okhutabusya nende okhwakila, Nanu okhila okundi?* (One who accomplishes a given task, and one who weeds, who is better than the other?) The soloist does not merely commence by relating the story; instead, he poses a riddle and asks a question that requires an answer in the form of *silao-sikeleko*. The members of the group are then engaged in a discussion about the given riddle. Some members of the performing group prefer to have that question posed to some other people whom they feel are in a better position to answer that question that seems difficult. This kind of *silao-sikeleko* allows the soloist to involve other members of the performing group in the discussion. This makes it more interesting for the audience as they hear a conversation using multiple voices rather than a monologue. In effect there is variation as the story is told by a number of people, sometimes in a chorus instead of having a few people. Finally the soloist explains the riddle saying “one who completes is better than one who weeds” and he uses a story to put the riddle in context (see Chapter Four).

There is a riddle at the beginning of the second song, *Endakano* (Lubao 2007). A question is posed and an answer is given although it is not fully substantiated. It is as follows (see Example 6.15):

Example 6.15: Extract of the song *Endakano*.

Lubukusu text

Khukhwama khale, endebe ye bikele bitaru
onyala wesayirakho omwana wesikhana?
Ah tawe, khukhwama khale
musimachamacha, omwana wesikoko
kekhala khulisielo kapa kumuliango
emukongo mala bamusayilakho.

English text

From time immemorial, can you allow a girl to sit
on a three legged stool?
Oh no, from time immemorial, a young child sits on
a skin with the back facing the door way, on which
she is inaugurated as praises are offered for her.

Among the Bukusu, a three-legged stool is used by men. Women are supposed to sit on the ground or on a skin with their legs stretched out in front of them. Since a stool elevates the one who is seated on it, it is a sign of authority and it places men above the women. Whenever a

there is a ceremony that involves a woman, even if she is at the centre of that ritual, she cannot sit on a stool.

6.4.10. Idiomatic Expression

An idiomatic expression is used in the song *Nekoye* that is, *Nara sifuba ebweni* (I had placed my chest forward). This expression is given as part of *silao-sikeleko*. It actually means “I was proud”. The narrator uses this expression to affirm his state immediately after he married *Nekoye*. There is also an idiomatic expression in the song, *Ewuyo Ino* which is “*wambakala sibakala*” (You have hung me out to dry). Contextually, it means to expose publicly. It appears in the *silao-sikeleko* section and not in the sung text.

6.4.11. Allegory

Eswa (Mukubwa 2007), has a story in which the sung text and *silao-sikeleko* are entirely allegorical. On the surface it sounds like a very interesting story with its origins in folktales and fables about the characters and relationships of animals from long ago. From this angle, the white ant and the bat were animals disowned by the other animals. Initially the bat and the Rat were good friends as they even have some resemblance in body structure, but the rat eventually disowned the bat. According to the song, the bat was given a cow to look after but unfortunately then bat lost the cow. Therefore the bat was held responsible for that and subsequently shunned. Another reason given is that the bat is neither an animal nor a bird. The birds disowned the bat and the animals also disowned the bat. The white ant is one animal that is loved by many. Wherever it goes it is eaten; underground by the mole, above the ground by human beings, and in the air by the birds. The two animals, the bat and the white ant, are not safe wherever they go. Allegorically the birds have a similar quality; they can fly while the animals in this story move on the ground or underground. These characters distinguish them. Depending on the context it is used in, the qualities can be different viewpoints on an issue or socioeconomic status. It serves to warn the members of the community about wanting to belong to two opposing sides of an issue as it is very dangerous.

In the song *Eswa*, the performer composer tells the story using the third person. There is an idiomatic expression in this song, namely, “*mwikulu mulilo, asi mulilo*” (In heaven fire, down fire). Contextually the narrator uses the term “fire” to give a picture of severe events that made both heaven and on the ground unbearable. The words “heaven” or “up” is used interchangeably by speakers. The word “heaven” actually means the air above the ground where God resides, while “down” refers to the ground. When the performer uses the words “up”, he substantiates this by adding that it is a place that belongs to God. This expression is seen in both the sung text and the *silao-sikeleko*. It occurs as follows,

Example 6.16: Extract of the song *Eswa*

Lubukusu text

Solo: Chingila chilingo baye, chingano chilingo baye. Makuwa kaliyo ng’ali. Eswa yalila, eswa yalila.

Chorus: Eswa yalilaa, namenya e asi mwiloba, namenya e asi mwiloba, namenya ne walunabe. Walunabe kakhaire khanine mungaki wa wele, Walunabe kakhaire khanine angaki wa wele, yayako. Engenda ndila, yayako, engenda ndila.

Solo: Chingila chilingo baye, chingano Chilingo baye. Eswa yalilanga, eswa yalilaa. Bali e asi mulilo. Eswa yalilaa ng’ali mwikulu mulilo. Ah!

English text

Solo: The ways are there and the stories are there. Truly there are issues, the white ant cried, the white ant cried.

Chorus: The white ant cried, I stay down in the soil, I stay down in the soil, and I stay with the mole. It is impossible to live with the mole so let me climb up to God, It is impossible to live with the mole so let me climb up to God, my brother. I walk crying my brother, I walk crying.

Solo: The ways are there, and stories are there. The white ant cried, the white ant cried, that down here there is fire. The white ant cried even in heaven fire. Ah!

Another illustration of this teaching is told in a narrative within the community. Once there was famine in the land where animals lived. As a result a good number of them died due to lack of food. So, all animals gathered in order to come up with a solution. They agreed to divide themselves into two groups; one made up of all animals that walk on the ground and under the ground and the other made up of all birds. The birds were to go fetch water from a faraway land and water their land, and the animals were to cultivate the land for food. This arrangement was to have them grow some food crops which they could share and therefore survive. As the birds

went to look for water, the bat was resting on a tree telling the other birds that he was going to assist the animals in cultivating, so the birds left the bat alone. The bat went to watch the animals for a while that were busy working from morning to evening. When asked why he was not assisting them he answered that he was assisting the birds fetch water. Time came for the harvest and all animals and birds came together to divide their food. At this point it was discovered that the Bat was neither with birds nor with the animals at the time of working. He therefore did not partake of the food harvested because he was shunned by all. Such a tale serves to inculcate discipline among members of the community and shows the importance of togetherness in every social activity, as each member of the community has a specific role to play in the society. The bat would have worked on one side and been accepted but was chased away for not belonging on either side.

6.5. WORDS DEPICTING RELATIONSHIPS

Litungu music reveals the use of words that indicate how people are related, such as “mother”, “father”, “brother”, “my child” or “our child”, “child of my father” and the like. It is a common practice among the Bukusu to always address other members of the community using those words whether one is a biological relative or not. Relationships, however distant, are recognised and acknowledged. For instance, one’s father’s brothers and male cousins are considered his/her father while their wives are his/her mothers; one’s grandfather’s brothers and cousins are one’s grandfathers as well while one’s grandfather’s sisters are considered grandmothers. Similarly, anyone who is the age mate of one’s father within the clan is referred to as “father” if male and “mother” if female; if this person is an age mate then he or she is a brother or a sister respectively. De Wolf (1977: 59) explains this kind of relationship stating,

Kin of the same generation are all ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’ and are only differentiated according to sex. Kin of alternate generations are also only differentiated according to sex, but this differentiation may be omitted in the case of children. There are ‘grandfathers’, ‘grandmothers’, ‘grandsons’, ‘granddaughters’ and ‘grandchildren’... Kin of one’s mother of her own generation are ‘mothers’ and ‘mother’s brothers’. All kin of one’s spouse are in-laws.

This kind of relationship extends to members of the community from other clans. It comes to play in everyday conversations where sentences may begin with a word depicting one's relationship to another, such as "mother", and end with it. Sometimes the words are interspersed within the sentence, acting as a cliché. The apparent "overuse" of such words in sentences sometimes seems to make them redundant in terms of syntax as the very sentence would make sense without them, yet culturally they depict a tie of unity among the members and are also seen as a sign of respect between people. When I call my father's brother "father", he in turn calls me "mother", and if I were a man he would call me "father". Likewise my grandfather calls me "grandmother" instead of "grandchild". Culturally, it is respectful to address one another using the above words, and it is common practice among the Bukusu. In their music, the Bukusu reveal this practice in various ways. The first example is from the song *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* (Elima 2007) (see Example 6.16):

Example 6.16: Extract from the song *Kulukulu wa Bwabi*

Lubukusu text

Solo: Aii! Makhuwa kola, chio obolele wabayo, yayako wakhaba baliwanina. Mwana bali senja, yayako kamwata khumatunda. Kamwata khumatunda yayako noli noweyama. Kachia bali esikimu yayako, akipa khane emubone. Wayaa emoni yatuma yayako, makhuwa nekaba kola.

English text

Solo: Aii! News about the issue reached. Go tell those who were there, my brother, even if you have increased. The child said, "am not going", my brother, and threw the fruits. He threw the fruits, my brother, so that you can confess. He went to the settlement scheme, my brother. She hit that which had seen her and got her eyes burnt brother, when the news had reached.

The text has instances of repetition of the words "my brother". It is used in the middle of phrases and acts like a refrain that punctuates the end of every first phrase. The narrator here directly addresses people who are his age mates, hence the use of "brother".

Another example is from a dialogue section of *silao-sikeleko* which is "*Mwana Waswa, khuborere lilala wase. Asante Papa*" (Child Waswa, tell us something my dear. Thank you father). A conversation takes place between two people who vary in age. One is older than the other, thus the older one calls the younger one "child". In response the younger one addresses the older one as "father". These two people may not necessarily be biological relatives but exhibit

respect for one another in this way. Two more examples are “*Khuchie bweni basakhulu naumia khusibala khuno*” (Let us proceed old men, I have suffered on this earth) and “*Martin, loma mwana wefwe*” (Martin, speak, our child).

6.6 CONCLUSION

The importance of verbal texts in African musics cannot be under estimated. Knight (1984: 5) points out in his discussion of the vocal aspects of Mandika Kora music that, “it is this part [verbal communication] that holds more interest for the African listener, despite the complexity and appeal of the instrumental part”. Such an important aspect of African music has been the focus of scholarly arguments. As such this chapter sought to establish the rationale of having both song texts and *Silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music.

There are several themes in *Litungu* music which are further elaborated in *Silao-sikeleko*. This means that the sung text and *Silao-sikeleko* have a symbiotic relationship. This chapter also revealed that the number of times *Silao-sikeleko* appears in a piece of music varies greatly depending on the soloists’ wishes and also the band group. Some groups perform *Silao-sikeleko* more than others. The Lugulu Bumusika Band, for example has a greater length of *Silao-sikeleko* compared to the other groups. The difference in contexts of performance affects the amount of *silao-sikeleko* in every rendition of the same song. This is similar to the performance of Kudeketera. Berliner (1976: 456) notes that “given the spontaneous nature of the Kudeketera...the song texts differ greatly from one performance to another”.

A number of language devices are used in Bukusu *Litungu* music. The first one is organization of the music in the style of both prose and poetry. *Silao-sikeleko* unfolds in the form of prose as various stories are narrated. These stories are narrated in a way that allows them to coincide with the phrases in the underlying instrumental accompaniment. The flow of words is not regular; at times the words are narrated at a fast tempo while in some cases they unfold slowly with pauses in between words so that they are synchronized with the accompaniment. On the other hand the sung text is in most cases poetic in rendition. It is rhythmical and repetitive, an “organized form of communication whereby words are skillfully and wittily put together in manners that only few

words may cleverly be used to express a body of ideas” (Idamoyibo 2006: 6-3). All the songs selected for this study exhibit the use of both prose and poetry.

Second, the narrator in the *Litungu* music uses the first, second and third persons, and often shifts from one position to the other in the *silao-sikeleko* sections of all songs apart from the songs Eswa and Mayi. These songs make use of the third person throughout. The positions taken can be attributed to the nature of the information relayed. The narrator uses the first person in cases where the group members and songs are introduced and where he includes himself in the stories being narrated. In some cases he excludes himself and takes a position of talking about events as if viewing them from a distance. The stories are not only told by one person but by several people. This is common especially in cases where the soloist invites other members of a group to speak. As such we have both a limited point of view, where only one person speaks and a broader point of view where there are several characters (Booth et al 2005: 12).

Third, proverbs and sayings are predominantly found in the *silao-sikeleko* of songs, with a few in the sung text. The use of ellipsis is a common feature in both sung text and *silao-sikeleko* in *Litungu* music. Neologism is predominantly found in *silao-sikeleko* rather than in sung text. Imagery, symbolism, simile, riddles, idiom and allegory are characteristic features that also find expression in *Litungu* music. They may not appear in all the songs but at least every song may have one or more usages of these language devices. All the language devices that are evident in *Litungu* music are common in other African communities as discussed in the scholarly works of Avorgbedor 2001; Berliner 1976; Idamoyibo 2006 among others. Scheub (1985: 2) also states that, “the major oral genres-the riddle and lyric poem; the proverb; and the tale, heroic poetry, and epic-are characterized by a metaphorical process, the product of pattern and image: and, being prescriptive rather than descriptive, they resolve themselves into models for human and cultural behavior, falling into a cyclical, not linear, mode”. These oral genres are prevalent in oral traditions.

Silao-sikeleko and the sung texts fall into two categories, factual- those based on facts within the community and fiction- those formulated out of the performer composer’s imagination. The factual category encompasses songs that relate to the community’s history such as *Ewuyo Ino*,

personal experiences such as *Nekoye*, and philosophy within the community such as *Basakwa*. The fiction category is made up of highly imaginative ideas based on some reality. An example here is the song *Eswa*. The use of both fiction and facts ensures the record and storage of the community's useful historical information in an oral tradition. In the following Chapter, I focus on how sung text and *silao-sikeleko* are created and improvised.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PERFORMANCE COMPOSITION IN BUKUSU *LITUNGU* MUSIC

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Improvisation is a common feature of African musics and attention to it contributes in the understanding of the compositional process. *Silao-sikeleko* as an element of musical composition is improvised alongside other musical elements that have received more scholarly attention. This Chapter sets out to discuss the prescribed requirements for improvisation in the Bukusu community and to explain how *silao-sikeleko* is used in the process of improvisation. The Chapter commences with a definition and discussion of improvisation and performance composition according to certain scholars on African musics and then applies these theoretical ideas to Bukusu *Litungu* music.

According to Kongo and Robinson (2003: 95), “to improvise music means to compose as it is being performed”. Similarly, “[i]mprovising is a form of musicing in which one or more people spontaneously and simultaneously (1) [c]ompose, (2) [i]nterpret and (3) [p]erform a musical work” (Alperson, quoted in Elliot 1995: 169)³¹. Nzewi elucidates that, “Africans practice improvisation as well as performance composition” (Nzewi 1997: 67). Along similar lines, Nzewi further explains that,

Performance composition is a humanistic and contextual theory of thematic development. It is an authoritatively African concept of spontaneous composition that is sensitive to the contingencies of a contextual performance. Human as well as functional imperatives differentiate it from improvisation... Improvisation can be encountered in indigenous music as a feature of performance composition when the creative aspiration is neither conducting any event activities nor interacting with the emotion and behaviour of an audience (2009: 38).

On one hand, the scholars above, Kongo and Robinson, and Alperson, agree that improvisation is the act of spontaneously composing or creating music. Nzewi on the other hand, makes a distinction between improvisation and performance composition but highlights that improvisation is an attribute of performance composition. The difference between improvisation

³¹Elliot (1995: 169) quotes Phillip Alperson. The term “musicing” here has the same meaning as the term musicking defined by Christopher Small. (1995 [O]).

and performance composition is in the music's interaction with the context. All the above definitions have one thing in common, that improvisation means composition at the moment of performance. For purposes of this study Nzewi's definition of performance composition is preferred. I believe that when music is performed in different contexts, it is also performance composition on condition that this performance is not pre-rehearsed. Nzewi's definition is appropriate to this study as it encompasses improvisation. It "is a mark of context-sensitive creativity" (Ibid.) which in *Litungu* music varies thus affecting the *silao-sikeleko*. The different renditions of certain songs such as *Mayi Muro*, *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* and *Ewuyo Ino*, by different bands is an example of what Nzewi terms performance composition. Thus, this chapter interprets improvisation as an attribute of contextual composition during performance, thus performance composition. The spontaneous words in the form of *silao-sikeleko* are dictated partly by the venue and the kind of audience.

The organization of everyday activities allowed the presence of musical activities³². These activities took place at every stage of a person's life, from childhood to adulthood, involving children's game songs, work songs, war songs and entertainment songs, among others. Before improvisation takes place, a song must exist as a composition. At every stage musical learning took place as the community member participated in music making. The culturally-prescribed folksongs for every occasion form the basic compositional units upon which improvisation takes place. Some of these songs have become very common and are performed regularly; they include *Mayi Muro*, *Kulukulu wa Bwabi*, and *Ewuyo Ino*.

These songs are orally transmitted, providing opportunities for the performance composition to take place on a regular basis. Improvisation in *Litungu* music is based upon a cultural construct. The Bukusu community has an orally-conceived framework that guides the performance and development of music. Therefore a musician must base his improvisational prowess on a culture system. Elliot (1995: 162) for example states that "one learns to compose by being inducted into culture-based and practice-centered ways of musical thinking." A musician performs and composes music based on what he already knows. Auh and Walker (2002: 17) agree with Elliot

³² I use the past tense to refer to the traditional social structure but the present society has some performances of traditional music.

and add that “creativity can only function and be recognized within a particular knowledge system”. In other words the performer must have been exposed to a certain musical genre. This gives a musician the ability to judge what is good and suitable in a given context in which he understands the performance ethos. A knowledge system in this case, the Bukusu musical culture, shapes the musician’s notion of beauty, form and creativity. The culture also shapes a musician’s values and aesthetic response to the *Litungu* music. Harrison (1985: 49) confirms this point of view and states that “a person’s culture shapes the notion he has of beauty, of the form and mode of the creative act. His culture moulds his values--social, aesthetic and philosophical--upon which he bases his response to the artistic object.” The creation process becomes a matter of selecting from materials that are culturally acceptable musically. This is what Toynbee (2003: 110) refers to as “a pool of coded voices that are shared within a given musical community”.

7.2 PREREQUISITES FOR THE IMPROVISATIONAL PROCESS

Improvisation is part and parcel of the performance of *Litungu* music. This is because Bukusu folk melodies are short; therefore improvisation helps to elongate them. They also serve as a way of identifying a performance composer’s artistry. The length of improvisation is subjective, and has several prerequisites: exposure to *Litungu* music, mastery of the Bukusu language, knowledge of events in the community, the presence of an audience and its maturity, inter-group and intra-group interactions, and knowledge of the instrumental genre. These requirements are drawn from my interpretations of the discussions held with the respondents on how they began musical performance and what guides them in the process of *khulaa-khukeleka*. Following are examples of two interviews;

First is an interview with Eman Wanjala of the Sinani Group Band that was carried out in Bungoma town (5th February 2007). The interview was conducted in Kiswahili and I have translated to English.

Researcher: When did you start performing *Litungu* music?

Eman Wanjala: I have performed for about twelve years now

Researcher: How did you start learning?

Eman Wanjala; I used to hear my father and uncle playing, and then I would try and imitate him while he was away. My father came to learn that I used to steal

his *Litungu* to practice, so he constructed a *Litungu* for me and started teaching me.

Researcher: What kind of songs did you start performing? Were they your father's songs or your own compositions?

Eman Wanjala: I started singing traditional songs which my father taught me. These are songs that are sung by the Bukusu people, such as the song "*Wachonge baluya ba*" (our ancestors, our Luhya) which talks about our ancestors. With time I started composing my own.

Researcher: Can you tell me some of the themes of your songs and where you got the themes from?

Eman Wanjala: I talk about issues in society, commenting on peoples' behaviour and how they relate to one another.

Researcher: What behaviour are you referring to?

Eman Wanjala: For example, if one is a thief I will mock him in song so that he does not repeat this. We even sing about those who are not circumcised or afraid of circumcision.

Researcher: How do you get information about such behaviour, for example that someone stole?

Eman Wanjala: Of course we get to hear members of the community discussing. Sometimes we quietly overhear conversations, while at other times we interject with more questions to verify what we have heard...

The second is an interview with Jackson Kisika of the Jackson Kisika Band carried out in Misango (6th February 2007). This interview was conducted in both English and Lubukusu.

Researcher: I have heard you perform various songs. Do you talk in the process of your performances like I have heard other groups do?

Shitubi: Yani munyala mwalaa, mulaa-anga? (In other words do you use speech-melody praises in your song?)

Jackson Kisika: Oh yes, we do. We normally talk in our songs. We did not do it today because some of our band members have not yet arrived. (Kisika then addressed one of his sons). "Wangwelo! Alfred ali engo?" (Wangwelo! Is Alfred at home?) His son responded, "Eh, amakhuba emukunda akhakecha" (Yes, he has been at his farm, he is coming). Kisika continued to address us. As I was saying we are not all here.

Researcher: Does that mean that not every member can talk or praise?

Jackson Kisika: Each member of the band has a role to play. Alfred for example is very articulate when he talks, he follows the rhythm as he talks. I can also do it but, am the band commander. (At this point Kisika laughs) I am the man in charge, mine is to direct.

7.2.1 Prolonged Exposure to Music

The first requirement for the improvisation process is prolonged exposure to the music through listening, imitation or participation. This enables one to master various concepts including inherent rhythms, musical phrases and instrumental cues. Culturally, *Litungu* playing is a preserve of those who are interested in the instrument from a lineage of *Litungu* players. It is performed by male members of the community. Some fathers did not encourage their children to play the instrument until they saw an interest and talent in the young boy who wanted to play the instrument. Not all performers of the *Litungu* have fathers who play the *Litungu*. This means that they have to learn from another member of the family who is a renowned performer just as in the case of Sylvester Mukubwa and Samuel Elima. Learning in this case was through apprenticeship. At present, the instrument can be performed by women. Tom Kukubo (interview, February 2007) explained that in the present society there are some girls who are learning how to play the *Litungu*. The girls are secondary school students who are instructed by a male teacher. However, this study did not come across any female *Litungu* players.

All the interviewees in this study talked about their constant exposure to Bukusu *Litungu* performances. Some like Jackson Kisika started playing the instrument as early as age five without his father's knowledge and consent³³. He was interested in the music and began listening to his father's performances and imitating them. One day his father came home earlier than usual and heard some music from the house. On enquiry he found out that his son was playing the music. Instead of the father quarrelling as Kisika had anticipated, his father encouraged him and taught him. He was seventy-six years old at the time of my interview, and had played for seventy-one years. Kisika taught his three sons how to play the *Litungu* and all of them are members of his band. However, only two of his sons (Alfred Magende and Wanyonyi Wangwelo) are active members.

Samuel Elima of the Lugulu Bumusika Band acquired the technique of playing *Litungu* from his uncle and not his father. His uncle noticed his interest and went to live with Samuel who accompanied his uncle in every musical performance possible. Musicians then learn the cultural

³³ In most cases, the Bukusu fathers valued their *Litungu* so much that they did not easily allow their children to touch it lest they spoiled the instrument.

aesthetic and philosophical basis of *Litungu* music from their mentors by observation and imitation. The young musicians grow up in a knowledge system that ensures progressive induction into the acceptable norms. They are taught how to play the instrument as well as how to sing in different contexts. In the process of training, the young musicians are given an opportunity to play the other instruments that accompany the *Litungu*. This takes place when the mentor for example plays the *chimbengele* while the trainee plays the *Litungu* or vice versa. The *Isiriri* is also introduced to the trainee. This is why all performers of the *Litungu* are able to play the other accompanying instruments and keep exchanging instruments from one song to the other.

Although the performers can play almost all the instruments with ease, it was noted that certain performers had mastered some instruments more than others. In the Kwane Band, Sylvester Mukubwa played the *Litungu* throughout, leaving the playing of *Isiriri* to Caleb Wangila and that of the *Chimbengele* to Isaiah Simiyu (see Plate 8).



Plate 8. Kwane Band, Sylvester Mukubwa on the *Litungu* and Caleb Wangila on the *Isiriri*. Photograph by the author, 3 May 2007 with permission from Sylvester Mukubwa.

They never at any point exchanged instruments. This means that they were comfortable and proficient in the instruments they played. Similarly, in Kisika's band each member played one instrument, with Kisika himself playing the *Litungu* while his sons played the other two instruments. However, in the Sinani Group Band, Emman Wanjala aka Uncle Murembo played the *Isiriri*, the *Litungu*, and the *Chisasi*. The Lugulu Bumusika Band had Martin Wanyama playing the improvised drum and James Maloba playing the *Isiriri* throughout their performances while Samuel Elima, Alex Wafula and Isaac Wafula played the *Litungu* and *Chimbengele* in

alteration. One cannot be a master of all the instruments but one can play one instrument more proficiently than the others in specific songs, depending on what the groups deems appropriate in a given song. It is this aspect that justifies what instrument each musician plays in a given song. The skill of every individual is judged by the group members, and they provide approval and disapproval of one another's performance techniques.

The *Litungu* playing technique varies, depending on the individual approach and playing style of the musician's mentor. While one group of performers use the left hand to play the drone (this refers to the two notes played repeatedly on the *Litungu*), another group uses the right hand, irrespective of whether a musician is left-handed or right-handed. It is worth noting here that the *Litungu* traditional mode of performance allows one to use the right hand to articulate the drone as explained earlier. The Kabras, who are another sub-tribe of the Abaluhya and the neighbours of the Bukusu, use the left hand to play their *Litungu*. Intermarriages between the two communities and their cordial relationship have influenced the playing techniques of some musicians. Whichever hand articulates the repetitive notes, in most cases the tonic and dominant, the other hand plays a melodic figure, either independently or in liaison with the hand executing the drone. In the latter case some notes of the melody are incorporated by the hand playing the drone. Ultimately, the musical phrase performed by both hands repeatedly is the ostinato.

Despite the fact that the ostinato is a musical phrase with both melody and rhythm, performing musicians emphasize diverse aspects of the phrase depending on what they have been listening to. Some musicians are inclined to performing ostinati that are melo-rhythmic. These are able to accompany various songs within the Bukusu musical culture.³⁴ This melo-rhythmic aspect arises from the performance of the drone as a reiteration of the *chimbengele* rhythm. An example is in the song *Eswa* as performed by the Kwane band. The *Litungu* plays an independent part from the vocal melody (see Figure 7.1). Others play ostinati that are specific to the song; for instance, the ostinato in the song *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* as played by the Lugulu Bumusika Band. Such ostinati when executed imply the performance of a specific song. The more one plays and listens to musical performances by his mentors and other *Litungu* players, the better placed one is in

³⁴ The word melo-rhythmic refers to ostinati that have both distinct rhythmic and melodic aspects (Nzewi 1974: 74).

performance-composition. Thus prolonged exposure to a certain playing technique of *Litungu* music through training and transmission is a prerequisite allowing the execution of improvisation.

Figure 7.1. An excerpt from the song *Eswa* by the Kwane Band

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a Voice line (top) and a Litungu line (bottom). The key signature is one flat (Bb) and the time signature is 12/8. The lyrics are written below the notes.

System 1:

- Voice:** Wa-lu-na-be ka - kha-i le, khe-ni-ne khu-nga - ki wa
- Litungu:** (Instrumental accompaniment)

System 2:

- Voice:** we - le, ya - ya-ko nge - ndandi - la, ya - ya-ko
- Litungu:** (Instrumental accompaniment)

System 3:

- Voice:** nge - nda ndi - la.
- Litungu:** (Instrumental accompaniment)

7.2.2 Knowledge and Mastery of Lubukusu

Music is itself poetic and a language of communication. In order for a musician to *khulaa-khukeleka*, he or she must have a sound knowledge of the language in use; the proverbs, sayings and other means of expression, so that his choice of words is correct and effective in communicating whatever is intended using as few words as possible. For instance, Alex Wafula of the Lugulu Bumusika Band performed *silao-sikeleko* on many occasions in various songs during the recording and interview process. On further inquiry Alex Wafula (May 2007) emphasized the importance of a thorough knowledge of the language used.

Alex Wafula attributes his linguistic prowess to time spent with the older people, such as his fathers and uncles, listening to their conversations and asking questions, where necessary. He did not always receive answers in response to his many questions, instead he was met with a riddle, proverb or saying. Wafula went on to explain that the older men use many riddles, sayings and proverbs which are heavily laden with meaning. His interaction with the older members of the society enabled him to know which saying would be appropriate in a given context. Among the Bukusu, each day presents an opportunity for members to learn more vocabulary from each other as long as there is some form of socialization to accompany this activity. This makes language learning a continuous process that enhances one's language manipulative skills. The clever use of words is an attribute hailed in other African communities such as the Shona. Berliner (1976: 460) explains that, "expert singers are known for their ability to express things indirectly, 'to be clever with words'". In conjunction with this, a performance composer ought to have manipulative skills of oral texts to suit various musical contexts. A good musician must be able to compose text to suit a different context by using familiar tunes. This is exhibited in the different texts used in the performance of the song *Ewuyo Ino* by the Kwane Band and the Sinani Group Band. To showcase their dexterity, the Kwane Band performed a song in my praise to a new Kiswahili text but to an existing melody. This was preceded by an interview that was carried out in Kiswahili language during fieldwork (3rd May 2007), but has been translated here into English as,

Researcher: Do you normally compose songs?

Sylvester Mukubwa: Yes.

Researcher: What is the procedure of your compositions?
 Sylvester Mukubwa: Sometimes a melody comes to me in a dream. I just wake up and play the melody.
 Researcher: Is the melody accompanied by text or do you compose your text later?
 Sylvester Mukubwa: The melody has some text which forms the theme, then I compose more words to elongate it but on the same theme.
 Researcher: Can you perform a song without prior rehearsal?
 Sylvester Mukubwa: Yes, Let me show you.

At this point Mukubwa led his band in singing a song in my praise, in the Kiswahili language (see Example 7.1).

Example 7.1: An excerpt of the improvised song by Kwane Band,

Kiswahili Text

English Text

Solo: Mama Nancy ni mama Yule muungwana.	Solo: Mother Nancy is a gentle mother.
Chorus: Mama Nancy ni mama Yule muungwana.	Chorus: Mother Nancy is a gentle mother.
Solo: Kazi yake, anapenda maendeleo. Ah!	Solo: Her work, she likes development. Ah!
Chorus: Kazi yake, anapenda maendeleo. Ah!	Chorus: Her work, she likes development. Ah!
Solo: Ukitaka kujua uende kule Maseno.	Solo: If you want to know, go to Maseno.
Chorus: Ukitaka kujua uende kule Maseno.	Chorus: If you want to know, go to Maseno.
Solo: Ukitaka kujua ufike eh kule Chwele.	Solo: If you want to know, reach Chwele. ³⁵
Chorus: Ukitaka kujua ufike eh kule Chwele.	Chorus: If you want to know, reach Chwele.
Solo: Kule Chwele uliza <i>Bakiabi</i> .	Solo: At Chwele, ask the <i>Bakiabi</i> .
Chorus: Kule Chwele uliza <i>Bakiabi</i> .	Chorus: At Chwele, ask the <i>Bakiabi</i> . ³⁶

Mukubwa’s ability to compose new text to familiar music is a common phenomenon in African musics. This fact is explained by Nzewi (2009: 38) when he states that, “the indigenous performance composer is a context sensitive as well as aesthetically sensitive creative personality who composes a fresh human experience of a familiar musical framework on every performance occasion”. This means that the composer draws from the environment to provide new texts to an existing melody.

³⁵ Chwele is a small town near the researcher’s home village.

³⁶ *Bakiabi* are people from the *Kiabi* clan of the Bukusu, where the researcher comes from.

Children are born with the capability to acquire any language, thus children born within the Bukusu culture acquire words through listening and imitation. The young children listen to their mothers' voices and to those around them who take care of them, including older siblings. Here learning is through lullabies. Similarly, Dargie (1996: 32) explains that the process of becoming a Xhosa musician began when a child was in its mother's womb, feeling the musical sound from a mother's body. This moves to a time when a child is carried on its mother's back. A Xhosa mother would teach the child how to sing when the child cries. As children grow they interact with the broader society and their peers through a socialization process that embraces the use of game songs. Dargie (Ibid.) also states that, "in the villages one sees groups of children singing together for play... infants can already feel and perform complex additive and cross-rhythm patterns". During evenings, after supper, the young children had opportunities to listen to folktales and narratives which were told to them by older community members. This traditional organization is similar to that of the Gikuyu community in Kenya. Jomo Kenyatta (1978: 104) explains this as follows: "children are given mental exercises through amusing riddles and puzzles which are told only in the evenings after meals or while food is being cooked." At every level of socialization there are always older peers who impart certain values and traditions. In the process, their language vocabulary expands. At present the *Litungu* performers use both Kiswahili and Lubukusu languages to communicate their messages. The philosophical and aesthetic principles learnt by the musicians convert them into knowledgeable, critical, competent performance composers and assessors of Bukusu *Litungu* music.

7.2.3. Knowledge of Cultural Environment and Events

Since musicians are social interpreters, they are supposed to be familiar with various activities in society. There are various cultural functions and everyday activities that act as a springboard for musical and textual themes. During the group discussion with members of the Lugulu Bumusika Band, Martin Wanyama (3rd May 2007) emphasized the role of musicians in the society as they aid the community in understanding and deciphering everyday events. He gave an example of the song *Mayi Muro* (a stepmother) in which different performers are called upon to *khulaa-khukeleka*. Each performer is free to give his view on the subject. For one to comment or *khulaa-khukeleka* in music on the issue of a stepmother, he must know the lifestyle of a family with one.

Otherwise his performance will reflect that which is not true and thus he will be shunned by the very society on which he is attempting to comment. As discussed in Chapter One, polygamy among the Bukusu is culturally acceptable, hence a stepmother is respected in the family. But through experience some members of the community have different opinions on this and relayed their feelings through song that a stepmother is not a mother. This viewpoint is never discussed openly other than in song. A performer composer must therefore have his ear to the ground and attend as many social functions in the community as possible in order to retrieve information from and maintain social currency among other members of the community.

7.2.4. Presence and Maturity of Audience

The presence and maturity of an audience is the fourth factor affecting the improvisation process. The study notes that performances with a relatively inactive audience, give rise to shorter musical items in terms of duration. A relatively inactive audience here refers to the research team consisting of the two research assistants and I, together with a few observers at the venue as the interviewees performed. In comparison, the Namatete Band performed the song *Lukendo lwo Mulala* on 7th February 2007, on an afternoon when students were going home from school. Their performance not only attracted the school children but also other members of the community who were passing near the performance venue. As a result this performance was long owing to the fact that the audience joined in singing and dancing. The response of the audience to and their involvement in the performance motivated the musicians to continue singing and dancing as they added more texts to their performance, which in turn excited the audience. Extra-musical factors influence the musical process and form, which is a cultural progression. These factors have to be taken into consideration.

Related to the presence of an audience, is maturity of the audience. Cultural context would definitely prescribe the participants in any event. For instance, it is rare to find children at a beer party or bar. This in turn allows the performers to use more proverbs and imageries since they assume the audience is mature enough to decipher the implied meanings of both sung text and *silao-sikeleko*. In case a song was to be performed in a different context for entertainment purposes where the young are present, the performers would be forced to expound on the

sayings. In the process the performers give examples from everyday life in order to communicate their message effectively. So the leader, who normally calls upon other members of the performing group to talk, has to be aware of his environment and audience. As a result, context of an audience being present also influences the length of improvisation.

7.2.5. Intra-Group and Inter-Group Interaction

When musicians play together as a group, they interact with one another throughout their performance and learn alternative ways of improvisation from one another. This is the intra-group interaction. *Litungu* musicians are capable of playing different instruments within the ensemble. This was quite common among the members of the Namatete Band and the Lugulu Bumusika Band. As the music unfolded, a member playing the *Isiriri* for example put down his instrument and took the *Litungu* from another performer while the *Chimbengele* player continued playing. The *Isiriri* player now playing the *Litungu* played in a style he felt was right and then handed the *Litungu* back to whoever was originally playing. Subsequently, he picked up his *Isiriri* and proceeded with his part (see Video clip 4 on VCD). If the *Litungu* player was not able to play according to what was expected, then he exchanged instruments with the *Isiriri* player. As the exchange and learning process went on, the other performers continued with the performance as though nothing unusual had happened.

The *Litungu* player played more improvised passages as the *Litungu* is versatile and able to play a melody and rhythmic passages with some harmony. As such it is the player of the *Litungu* that led the improvisation process. This was cued by a nod of the head or a direct look at the *Isiriri* player. Also, Jackson Kisika played the *Litungu* while seated and stood up at the climax. His standing up was a cue that he was beginning improvisation at the climax. It is worth noting that the *Litungu* player must always stand or sit next to the *Isiriri* player and ensure that the open *Isiriri* string tuning is the same as that of the lowest sounding string on the *Litungu*. Sylvester Mukubwa (3rd May 2007) insisted that the *Isiriri* player must be on the right-hand side of the *Litungu* player with the resonator facing him so that the *Isiriri* can “speak” to him. While some performing groups (the Kwane Band and the Lugulu Bumusika Band) adhere to this, others (the Jackson Kisika Band, the Sinani Group Band and the Namatete Band) had the *Isiriri* player on

the left-hand side of the *Litungu* player. Whichever way, they were next to each other (see Video clips 6, 7, 8 and 9 on the VCD). Musicians listen to other performing groups and imitate some of their performance ideas in their own repertoire. This is what I refer to as the inter-group interaction. When the five prerequisites have been met then one can easily be able to improvise or extemporize during a performance.

7.2.6. Knowledge of Instrumental Genre

The performance composer is supposed to portray an expertise and artistry required of him through constant musicking. Nzewi (2003: 203) explains that

[g]eneral musicianship implies knowledge of the basic principles of composition and idiomatic expressions. Such knowledge is acquired intuitively and further developed through voluntary participation or in rehearsal with respect to specialized music types. General musicianship requires that a person understands, and can express in action or verbally as need be, basic factors of general musical arts knowledge that characterize instrumental ensembles. The basic competence that qualifies one for general musicianship is predicted on experiential knowledge of the fundamental principles of instrumental ensemble music practice.

Together with knowing the requirements of a given culture, one needs knowledge of the instrumental genre to be able to participate in music-making. In this case a musician must be familiar with the Bukusu *Litungu* ensemble. A performance composer must know the instruments that make up the ensemble and the role of each instrument in that ensemble. Likewise, the performer composer must understand the place of *silao-sikeleko* in the music and know when to execute it. Performance composition of *silao-sikeleko* takes place intentionally in order to suit specific contexts and functions in the society. Blacking (1981: 13) explains that “[m]usic-making must always be regarded as intentional action ... Art does not consist of products, but of the processes by which people make sense of certain kinds of activity and experiences”. The improvisation process is done by selecting from what the Bukusu musical culture appreciates aesthetically.

7.3 THE CONSTANT AND VARIED FEATURES OF LITUNGU MUSIC

The creation of a musical piece is conceived within a musical tradition. This is why Chernoff (1985: 3) states that “most African artists... orient themselves more towards creating within the continuity of their traditions”. There are constant characteristic features of traditional music upon which performance composers create. At the same time, the musicians’ individual creativity results in the varying features of their music. Among the Bukusu are certain songs which are performed by virtually every musical group. These songs, namely, *Kulukulu wa Bwabi*, *Ewuyo Ino* and *Mayi muro*, are entrenched in their cultural knowledge systems. I will use them as examples of performance compositions, with an aim of identifying what is similar and what is different in their renditions.

The first song is *Ewuyo Ino* as performed by the Kwane Band (Mukubwa 3rd May 2007), the Lugulu Bumusika Band (Elima 3rd May 2007) and the Sinani Group Band (Emman Wanjala 5th February 2007) (see Video clips 5 and 6 on VCD). Having the same song title and based on the community’s migration history, the three groups make use of the same text, which is “*Ewuyo Ino papa bakonela khungila, Ewuyo Ino bamayi balilila khungila*” (this migration our forefathers slept on the way, this migration our mothers wept on the way). In all renditions, the *Isiriri* plays the melody that also acts as an ostinato and a basis of further improvisation. It is this melody that is doubled by the voice and performed in theme and variation form where the melodic line is the same but sung to different texts. The two *Chimbengeles* produce a continuous quaver rhythm with an accent on the first beat of each bar on which variation takes place. The thematic melody is not exactly the same. The transcriptions of the melody performed by each band are provided below (see Figures 7.2 and 7.3 respectively.)

Figure 7.2. *Ewuyo Ino* theme by the Kwane Band



E - wu - yo i - no e - ba - so-re-ri ba-li - la, E-wu - yo i - no pa - pa ba - ko-ne-la chi-ngi - la.

Figure 7.3. *Ewuyo Ino* vocal theme by the Lugulu Bumusika Band and Sinani Group Band

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Solo' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Response'. Both staves are in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 9/8 and 12/8 time signature. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 125. The lyrics are: 'E - wu - yo i - no ba - pa - pa ba - ko - ne - la chi - ngi - la.' The Solo staff begins with a melodic phrase, while the Response staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with some melodic fragments.

The previous example (Figure 7.2) is performed as a solo and imitated by the chorus. Then the second phrase is performed three times by both the soloist and the chorus. The latter example (Figure 7.3) is in solo-response form. The two groups have basically the same rhythm but the pitch is different in the first phrase. In this phrase the first bar is similar in melodic contour for both renditions, though a third apart. The second bar exhibits difference in melodic contour. The answering phrase is actually a variation of the first phrase, but since the soloist is also the *Litungu* player in the Lugulu Bumusika Band, he sings the melody at a major third above the *Isiriri*. This is performed three times. As the melody is sung the *Litungu* does not have the complete melody in Kwane Band's rendition and the Sinani Group Band's rendition. Instead it has fragments of it, with rhythmic emphasis on the repetitive dominant and tonic as the rhythmic motif called *ekhupilo*. The resultant effect of the *ekhupilo* against the melody creates some harmony since the rhythmic motif also exhibits melodic characteristics (see Figure 7.4).

Even though the Sinani Group Band and the Lugulu Bumusika Band have a similar rendition of the thematic melody, the Lugulu Bumusika Band introduces new melodies while the Sinani Group Band sticks to the thematic melody throughout their rendition. The Sinani Group Band varies the thematic melody with speech-melody. The Kwane Band and the Lugulu Bumusika Band have new melodies which appear at different times in the course of performance depending on the soloist. The new melodies contain new texts and are related in theme to the original melodies. The Kwane Band begins with the thematic melody and then moves on to a new melody (see Figure 7.5).

Figure 7.4. Relationship between the vocal melody and the *ekhupilo* as performed by Kwane Band

Voice ♩=125
E - wu - yo i - no e - ba - so-re-ri ba-li - la. E - wu - yo i - no pa - pa ba - ko-ne-la chi-ngi - la.

Litungu

Figure 7.5. New vocal melody introduced by Kwane Band in the song *Ewuyo Ino*

Solo
Eh mu-mu-mu-cha-li - ja, Eh mu-lia - ndo la

Chorus
Ba - u - ya, eh ba-u - ya.

This melody allows for solo-response unlike their treatment of the thematic melody. It makes use of compound triple time instead of the alternation between quadruple and triple time as executed in the thematic melody. It provides a basis for their improvised *silao-sikeleko*. The *silao-sikeleko* is based on a migration story that is more recent than that told of the Bukusu's original migration story as discussed earlier (see Chapter One). In contrast, the Lugulu Bumusika Band introduces two new melodies before performing the main melody. However, the instrumental accompaniment suggests this particular song. The first melody is (see Figure 7.6):

Figure 7.6. Lugulu Bumusika Band's first new melody in the song *Ewuyo Ino*

Voice
Bo - na-kho ba - ma-yi ba-li - la, bo - na-kho ba - pa-pa ba-li - la.



It is performed as a solo section with instrumental accompaniment maintaining the time and key of the thematic melody. The second one is in solo-response (see Figure 7.7).

Figure 7.7. The Lugulu Bumusika Band’s second new melody in the song *Ewuyo Ino*



In this melody the soloist sings pitches that are not steady as he glides between the notes, and almost sounds like a speech-melody. The words used in the two new melodies are found in the *silao-sikeleko*. For example the statement “*Bonakho Chemuku walila ali niyo nese njole emaeni*” (Look Chemuku cried, when I will reach Maeni), is part of the *silao-sikeleko* in the Lugulu Bumusika Band’s rendition. This text is not found in the Kwane Band’s rendition. Similarly, what is *khulaa-khukeleka* in the Kwane Band’s rendition is not found in Lugulu Bumusika Band’s rendition.

The second song for discussion is entitled *Mayi muro*. Its theme is based on the text, “*Mayi muro Sali mayi, kanderera bukhalance*” (A stepmother is not a mother, she has brought me pain), and it is performed to a melody by the Kisika Band (see Figure 7.8 and Video clip 7 on VCD).

Figure 7.8. *Mayi Muro* by the Kisika Band

Ma - yi mu-ro ni-ye ma - yi, Ka-khu-sia ni-ye ma - yi,
 ka - khe - ba ni - ye ma - yi, ka - so - mia ni - ye ma - yi. etc.

The rendition by the Kwane Band has the vocal melody at the top staff while the second melody is performed by the *Litungu* and *Isiriri* (see Figure 7.9 and Video clip 8 on VCD). It is evident from this example that the vocal melody is a duplicate of the accompaniment that is performed concurrently with the vocal melody. Where there is a rest in the vocal melody, the instruments perform an interlude. The Lugulu Bumusika Band has a similar relationship between the instruments and the vocal melody but their vocal melody is slightly different (see Figure 7.10 and Video clip 9 on VCD).

Figure 7.9. Excerpt of the song *Mayi Muro* showing the relationship between the vocal melody and the instrumental part as performed by Kwane Band

Ma - yi mu-ro sa - li ma - yi, Ma - yi mu-ro sa - li ma - yi.

Figure 7.10. Vocal melody of the song *Mayi Muro* as performed by Lugulu Bumusika Band

Ma - yi mu-ro sa - li ma - yi, Ma - yi mu-ro sa - li ma - yi. Ka - nde-re-ra bu-kha-la - nge,



The Kisika Band has a totally different organization from the others. The music is performed solo with the text stating that a stepmother is also a mother. The melody is then varied every time the soloist performs to different text. The soloist moves to speech-melody accompanied by a syncopated *Litungu* accompaniment. The Kwane Band and the Lugulu Bumusika Band use a similar melody but the Kwane Band’s rendition is performed by solo voice with some instrumental passages that act like a solo to the responding voice. The Lugulu Bumusika Band performs the song as a solo vocal piece that unfolds continuously with instrumentation that simply supports the vocal melody. Here the *Isiriri* performs the melody while the *Litungu* performs an ostinato passage. The melody is varied to suit the text by the soloist. The Kwane Band adds some new melodic material (see Figure 7.11). This phrase is sung an octave higher than the other phrases and the same text is repeated to the thematic melody.

Figure 7.11. The Kwane Band’s new material to the song *Mayi Muro*



An explicit difference in the three renditions is their choice of text. While the melodic structure may be similar to some extent, the sung text and *silao-sikeleko* are not. Here are some extracts of the sung text the different performing groups use at the beginning of this song (see Example 7.2).

Example 7.2a: Text of the song *Mayi Muro* as performed by the Kwane Band

Solo: Ayii, mbuka busa chilimunda Makhuwa ako kali menya	Solo: Ayii, I just wonder in the stomach. ³⁷ Those issues will stay
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³⁷ Among the Bukusu, the stomach is a place where the deepest and sincerest feelings are thought to be located. The stomach here is used in the same way the heart is used as a locale for feelings and emotions. In the statement, “I just wonder in the stomach”, Mukubwa is emphasizing where he feels the emotion of wondering.

mbuka busa chilimunda
Mayi muro sali mayi.

I just wonder in the stomach
A stepmother is not a mother.

Example 7.2b: Text of the song *Mayi muro* as performed by the Jackson Kisika Band

Solo: Mayi muro niye mayi
Kakhusia niye mayi

Kakheba niye mayi
Kasomia niye mayi
Kakhabila omukhasi.

Solo: A stepmother is a mother
She brought me up she is the
mother
She circumcised me she is the mother
She educated me she is the mother
She got me a wife.

Example 7.2c: Text of the song *Mayi Muro* as performed by the Lugulu Bumusika Band

Solo: Mayi muro Sali mayi
Kanderera bukhange
Papa muro niye papa
Anjunguchila kamakumba.

Solo: A stepmother is not a mother
She brought me hardships
A stepfather is not a father
He threw bones at me.

The three versions of sung text imply the existence of different versions of *silao-sikeleko*. In terms of *silao-sikeleko*, the instrumental ostinato performance guides its execution. The beginning of each *silao-sikeleko* phrase coincides with the point at which the song text begins. For example, in the Kwane Band's rendition, the song text begins after an instrumental lead section (see Figure 7.9). It is at this very point in the instrumental ostinato that the *silao-sikeleko* begins. The first two *silao-sikeleko* phrases are each *khulaa-khukeleka* against one cycle of the ostinato but the third is *khulaa-khukeleka* against two phrases as it is longer. The *silao-sikeleko* phrases are as follows (Example 7.3):

Example 7.3: Excerpt of the song *Mayi Muro* by the Kwane Band

Kang'ali mayi muro Sali mayi,	Truly a stepmother is not a mother
Kanderera bukhange	She has brought me pain
Namakhucha namurerera likoloba mayi ali,	I went and brought for her yesterday when mother
“so cha wanderera bibusi ebyo”.	said, “Why don't you go and bring me those goats”.

The Lugulu Bumusika Band's version of the song has a slowly unfolding *silao-sikeleko* with some cycles having two or three words. This is done by different performers within the group who are called upon to talk.

In the third song, *Kulukulu wa Bwabi*, two performing groups use a similar melodic structure. The roles played by the *Isiriri* and the *Litungu* are the same, that is, the *Isiriri* plays the melody while the *Litungu* plays fragments of the melody with the repeated soh-doh ostinato. At the beginning of the music the Kwane Band begins the performance by using the *Litungu* (see Figure 7.12 and Video clip 10 on VCD). The Lugulu Bumusika Band's instrumental introduction starts also by using the *Litungu* (see Figure 7.13 and Video clip 11 on VCD). It's rendition has a repetitive figure derived from the rhythmic motif articulated by the *Chimbengele*; it is used to introduce the performance. This group begins with *silao-sikeleko* over several cycles of the ostinato before singing commences. With the same thematic melody (see Figure 7.14) the two performing groups Kwane Band and the Lugulu Bumusika Band have totally different presentational forms and slightly different texts.

Figure 7.12. Opening excerpt of the song *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* as performed by Kwane Band

The musical score for the opening excerpt of *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* is presented in two systems. The first system features three staves: a vocal line (Voice) in treble clef with a tempo marking of quarter note = 120, and two instrumental parts, *Isiriri* (melody) and *Litungu* (ostinato), both in bass clef. The second system continues the instrumental parts for *Isiriri* and *Litungu*. The time signature is 12/8 throughout.

Solo

Ku - lu-ku-lu wa-bwa - bi ya - ya - ko, Ku - lu-ku-lu wa-bwa - bi.

Chorus

Ku - lu-ku-lu wa bwa - bi ya - ya-ko, Ku - lu-ku-lu wa bwa - bi

Figure 7.13. Opening excerpt of the song *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band

Voice ♩=120

Isiriri

Litungu

Figure 7.14. Thematic melody of the song *Kulukulu wa Bwabi*

One group (the Kwane Band) has the thematic melody sung as a solo and then repeated by a chorus. Whatever else is sung by the soloist is repeated by the chorus to the same melody that is varied as follows, (see Figure 7.15):

Figure 7.15. Thematic variant of the song *Kulukulu* by the Kwane Band

The other group (the Lugulu Bumusika Band) performs the melody by a soloist throughout to the following text,

Kulukulu wa Bwabi emayiko,
 Kaba mukhana muala,
 kachia efula Bulunda.
 E yayako wayaa emoni yatuma bona.

Kulukulu of Bwabi my mother.
 There was a muala³⁸ girl
 who went to the Balunda clan,
 My brother, and got her eyes.

³⁸ Baala is a clan among the Bukusu; a person from this clan is called “muala”.

The Kwane band uses the text,

Kulukulu wa Bwabi yayako,
Kulukulu wa Bwabi,
Kaba mukhana Muala yayako,
kacha efula bulunda,
Kacha efula bulunda yayako,

Kulukulu of Bwabi my brother,
Kulukulu of Bwabi,
There was a Muala girl my brother,
who went to the rain among the *Balunda*³⁹
She went to the rain among the *Balunda* my brother,

The *silao-sikeleko* also differs in content and length. Gray (1995: 146) discusses the song texts of Ugandan music and states that “the solo texts contain freely improvised utterances. However the length of the performances was constrained.” The soloist’s wish to request for more of his group members to *khulaa-khukeleka* together with the context of performance affects the length of a musical performance.

All the performances are a collective effort as each performer has a creative role; the innovative prowess of a performer influences another performer’s skill during the performance composition process. As a result the group comes up with their own “performance signature”, yet the performers cannot explain how they arrive at it. Wa Mukuna (1997: 243) also addresses this mystery of composition stating that, “social authorship also implies a social semiotics in that creation in Africa... is sustained by a musician’s ability to explain ‘why’ and the inability to comment on the ‘how’ he or she composes”. This attests to the kind of responses received from the interviewees when asked to explain how they compose their music. The responses were varied and unquantifiable, for instance, “*iko tu kwa damu*” (it is in the blood) (Kisika 200), “*nikishika hii litungu vidole vinasonga tu*” (when I hold this *Litungu* my fingers just move) (Mukubwa 2007) and “*inakuja tu*” (it just comes) (Elima 2007). An improviser “cannot sing his own composition twice” since what is composed is not written down or recorded (Kavyu 1977: 30).

However, there is something that guides what is extemporized. This is the musical pulse or timeline. Nzewi (2003: 205) argues that “[w]hen the pulse of the musical arts is established, creative imagination and exploration, particularly during improvisation and extemporization, are liberated. In the African musical arts and ensembles, pulse coordinates the peculiarities,

³⁹ Balunda is also clan among the Bukusu.

structures and qualities of distinctive but relating parts, and when secure, attention focuses on critical aspects of interpolation such as phrasing in music or dance themes and structures”. This pulse guides the highly syncopated rhythms executed by the *Litungu* player and the *chimbengele* especially towards the climax. Kisika’s performances attest to this. Apart from the establishment of pulse and phrases, the *Litungu* performers master the song texts and melodies which are transmitted through oral tradition. The melodies form a basis for variation and improvisation especially by the *Isiriri* and *Litungu* while the *chimbengele* and *Litungu* use the pulse and rhythmic structure as a basis for improvisation. Song texts guide the *silao-sikeleko*; and the song texts’ could unfold slowly with one or two words to an ostinato or variation. In case of the *silao-sikeleko* the verbal phrases overlap the cycles.

7.4 THE CREATIVE PROCESSES

Musical performance composition is a creative process which “in African music is culturally defined, inspired by a variety of cultural manifestations and practices peculiar to an ethnic group” (Wa Mukuna 1997: 240). It is difficult to establish a standard compositional process that all the performers of *Litungu* music use in their performances. This is because each individual has his own procedure as will be discussed in this section, thus there are various creative processes in *Litungu* music. However, there is a beginning point for creativity which is repetition. The creative process begins when a musician begins learning how to play the *Litungu*. Through learning he is able to conceptualize the appropriate sounds for *Litungu* music. This learning process varies in length from one person to another depending on who is the tutor and how frequently one practices and listens to this music.

The practices involve repetition of musical ideas, and as Kofie (1994: 63) notes “almost all methods of African musical composition, to this day, consist of repetitions”. Repetition is a compositional process. After a musician has learned how to play he begins by repeating what he has heard before adding his own ingenuity. The importance of repetition in music has been philosophized, justified and emphasized by a number of scholars. For instance, Uzoigwe (1996: 20) discusses Ukom songs in Nigeria, and postulates that “repetition of musical phrases is one of the most important compositional feature[s]... it is the phrasal idea or group of ideas with the

greatest number of occurrences that usually constitutes the main theme”. Indeed Figure 7.14 shows the main theme which is repeated in one form or the other by two performing groups as mentioned earlier. Rothgeb (1983: 39) and Ockelford (1991: 130) explain the importance of repetition from a general music perspective; stating that repetition applies to every type of music in the world. They argue that repetition is central to music’s formal and thematic construction, as it satisfies “the universal requirement of association only through ‘the likeness of itself’-through self-repetition” (Rothgeb 1983: 39). Since *Litungu* music is “a temporal art”, this self repetition allows the mind to grasp and retain the musical ideas that have been stated, a vital function in oral cultures of which the Bukusu musical culture is one (Arnold 1983: 699). This means that repetition affects the overall shape or form of the music, emphasizing the themes and phrase lengths. But the so-called repetition is not an exact repetition as some variations occur.

Once a performer is conversant with the thematic structures, he is able to move to the next stage, which is creating variations that are his contributions and additions. Such variations have made other scholars prefer the term “cyclic” as opposed to repetition. Wa Mukuna (1997: 242) refers to the recycled timeline as being a same-but-different pattern. Nzewi (1991: 102) on the other hand refers to the same-but-different pattern as variations on a theme. The two explanations also apply to *Litungu* musical composition. Nzewi maintains that:

if ‘x’ is taken as the index of composing variations... of a given fundamental theme used in the compositional development of such a fundamental, x^1 , x^2 , x^3 , x^4 , x^5 ...represent an infinite range of selections of variational indices on any given theme. Each component, as an exponent of x, is structurally quantifiable, and could be derived from a computation of rhythmic elements or patterns of a theme, as well as from tonal variations, of any given pitch or tone spectrum (1991: 102-103).

Nzewi’s explanation reveals the presence of what are called elements of variation which are the exponents of x. Ways of varying material include rhythm, pitch and timbre. *Litungu* music with *khulaa-khukeleka* sections incorporates other components as exponents of x, which are *silao-sikeleko*, song texts and texture. A variation upon a theme can be the basis for further improvisation. For instance a varied melodic phrase performed by the instrument in this case an *Isiriri*, as a pure instrumental part, can be restated with the vocal part above it as a solo or chorus. This is evident in the different renditions of *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* by the two performing groups,

thus varying the texture. Figure 7.12 for example, has a *Litungu* introduction (the first cycle) followed by the same melody played by both the *Isiriri* and the *Litungu* an octave apart as the first variant or second cycle. The next variant has the *Isiriri* changing a few notes while the *Litungu* continues to play what it had played previously. The *Isiriri* variation acts as a cue for the vocal part to commence. The fourth cycle is similar to the second but has the vocal part and is therefore a varied texture. An instrumental variation performed together with the sung text can be performed with different sets of the *silao-sikeleko*. Figure 7.13 is an example of this. An instrumental section by the *Isiriri* and *Litungu* is followed by another with *silao-sikeleko*; each subsequent cycle has different words as *silao-sikeleko*. Next is a cycle with the song text against an instrumental ostinato. Likewise, a musical phrase can also have a varied set of words as sung text.

Similarly, modifying the text of a solo part is a form of spontaneous variation or creative addition (Nketia 2002: 159). The soloist must ensure that the new texts are appropriately fitted. All these changes achieved at the discretion of the soloist whose role it is to lead and call on various performers within the group to *khulaa-khukeleka*. Therefore, performance composition is attained by variation in *silao-sikeleko*, rhythm, instrumental roles, melodic intervals, choice of instruments and pitches while the thematic melodies and their song texts are easily identifiable.

Khulaa-khukeleka is an art and is perfected through practice just like the playing of various musical instruments. *Silao-sikeleko* is derived from a composer's reaction to and with the environment. Likewise, he uses his life experiences and categorizes the information according to themes for use in song. This is similar to Erlmann's (1989:33) argument that, "life stories are probably among the richest indices of a musician's creativity, as they permit both a diachronic and synchronous perspective on a musician's creative work". As a soloist the *omukeleki* is expected to know when to *khulaa-khukeleka* in relation to the ongoing instrumental music. This is similar to what Tyler Bickford (2007: 467) states, that "singers/speakers must fit their utterances into expressive frameworks that may be developed on the spot but that are nonetheless 'formal' in that they constrain those utterances by making reference to word order, prosody, segmented quality and other linguistic constituents". In the course of action some of the chosen words are repeated; this is a common trend in *Litungu* music. For instance the words *chicha*,

chicha (in the song *Eswa* by the Kwane Band); *ng'ali, ng'ali* (in the song *Nekoye* by the Nabukambisi Jazz Band) and *Ta! Ta! Ta!* (in the song *Ewuyo Ino* by the Kwane Band) are found in the *khulaa-khukeleka* sections of the song. The choice and length of each word uttered is determined by the composer (Gray 1995: 150). These words not only serve to emphasize certain aspects of the songs but allow the *silao-sikeleko* to fit within the underlying instrumental musical phrases. Entire phrases can be repeated too. Choice of texts must communicate the intended messages, one word for instance “rain” may have a variety of meanings depending on how it is used. In the song *Kulukulu wa Bwabi*, this word has a deeper meaning. This is because meanings of chosen texts are deciphered by those who understand the language.

Whereas there are compositions derived from pre-existing melodies, there are also those new musical compositions within the Bukusu community. The new compositions are created by specific performers. Sylvester Mukubwa (interview, 3rd May 2007) of the Kwane Band explained that he sleeps with his *Litungu* next to his bed because sometimes tunes come to him in a dream. He then wakes up to play them so that he does not easily forget. Such an inspiration for musical composition is not only a preserve of *Litungu* musicians; Joseph Shabalala of Ladysmith Black Mambazo also gets his compositional inspiration through dreams (Ballantine 1996: 25). In the cases of Mukubwa and Shabalala, the dreams do not provide finished musical works but simple ideas that the composers build upon. In one case for Shabalala, the choir in his dream gave him a melody and harmony without text (Ballantine 2000: 236). He had to create his own text for the melody. In mukubwa's case the melody comes to him complete with words. These kinds of melodies are in *Litungu* style. The following day he can then add more text to it that agrees thematically with what he has.

It is also worth noting that there is a group of musicians who argue that their compositional inspiration is in-born, that it is in their blood. This group of musicians include Samuel Elima of Lugulu Bumusika Band and Jackson Kisika of Kisika Band. It is not very easy to understand how this takes place, since as Elima (interview 3rd May 2007) stated, the spirits of their ancestors influence their performance compositional process. He went on to state that those who are not from a *Litungu* performance lineage, even if they were to learn the playing techniques of the instrument, cannot play as well as those who are born with *Litungu* performance spirits. This is

belief is also held among the Isukha and Idakho sub-ethnic groups of the Abaluhya, in their *Isukuti* performance. Mindoti (2005: 40) states that, “according to Ikutwa (2005), a master performer of Isukuti performance from Itumba village in Lugari districts, Isukuti player should have *Omusambwa* (special spirits), which arouse his ability to play the Isukuti...this spirits are inherited and cannot be learned”. Likewise, Ballantine (2000: 248) explains that “neither Shabalala nor the group know in advance the details of what he is going to do. The only thing of which he is certain is that he will improvise, and the ability to do so will come from an inspirational force he calls ‘the spirit’”.

Ultimately, the composed musical structure and the composed *silao-sikeleko* must agree and be meaningful, because “musical meaning starts with making musical sense and ends with effective and affective communications” (Nzewi 1997: 28). As mentioned earlier it is the soloist who assesses how effectively a message has been communicated when he calls upon skilled *bakeleki*.

Whereas some scholars (Blacking 1989: 17; Avorgbedor 2001: 19) have argued for individual creativity and against collective creativity, the creative process among the Bukusu is both individual and collective. Every individual in a performing group improvises or composes during the performance process at a given time. At one point, the Litungu player may vary a thematic material while the Isiriri player and the Chimbengele player play the fundamental material. At another point it is the Isiriri player that improvises while the others perform the fundamental material. This can also go on alongside the soloist’s *khulaa-khukeleka*. At the end of the performance, each member has contributed to the composition as a product and credit goes to the performing group. Each performing group has a “performance signature” that identifies or distinguishes it from other performing groups. By “performance signature” I am referring to the characteristic features or the unfolding order of events as executed by individual groups. For instance one group may prefer to begin a performance by using the *Isiriri* while the other by using the *Litungu*. The introductory passages are not necessarily the same in structure. One group may prefer to begin their performance by introducing themselves as a group, while another may prefer to introduce the song. The performance process features a kind of interaction among the musicians that encourages them to compose as they hear their colleagues composing. The more one can create newer variations, the greater the musician is respected by the audience and his

fellow performers. Thus “the improvisational creative process ... is an attainment in itself. It exists as a process of fulfilment during the creation and ceases to exist after its implementation” (Wa Mukuna 1997: 240).

7.5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the chapter began with a working definition of the word performance composition which encompasses improvisation. It identified several prerequisites to the improvisational process on *Litungu* music; once they are met it becomes easy for a performer to extemporize. They include exposure to *Litungu* music, mastery of the Bukusu language, knowledge of events in the community, the presence of an audience and its maturity, and inter-group and intra-group interactions.

This study identified some of the constant features of *Litungu* music together with the varied features. Of the three songs discussed in this section it is evident that the constant features are the thematic melodies with similar words and the accompanying *Chimbengele* rhythm. The altered melodic lines and the different renditions of *silao-sikeleko* are the varied features. *Silao-sikeleko* is strictly a varied feature which unfolds during the performance compositional process. Such characteristic features are similar to those of West African musics. Ekwueme (1975/6: 29) in his discussion of West African musics states that,

For example, a regular rhythmic pattern in a particular instrument occurring without change throughout the duration of the piece will be considered a *constant*. An unchanging melodic line that uses exactly the same tune and words is a constant... an occasional interjection of spoken words or other emotional expression (such as the pulsation of lips) by singers or dancers in the course of a performance, which is not a regular feature of a song, is a variable.

Litungu music and West African musics have certain elements that are constant. But *Litungu* music's *silao-sikeleko* goes beyond Ekwueme's statement of the occasional interjection of spoken words. This is because, as mentioned earlier, *silao-sikeleko* alternates with sung text and also encompasses speech-melody.

The creative processes in *Litungu* music are not static and not very easy to follow. Each performer composer has his own source of inspiration and procedure of composition. Nevertheless, all performers agree that one must know the musical genre and be able to imitate what others play. Therefore imitation is primary in the creative process. Whether one dreams of his compositions or just creates them through the aid of spirits as in born trait, the outcome is controlled by Bukusu musical aesthetics. A performer composer has to know and learn what is appropriate in a *Litungu* performance and base his performance composition on a timeline or pulse guided by the percussive component and the thematic phraseology. The next Chapter provides the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 SUMMARY

This thesis set out to explain the function of *silao-sikeleko* in Bukusu *Litungu* music and its relationship with other musical elements within the Bukusu cultural tradition. An understanding of the cultural background and role of *silao-sikeleko* in Bukusu *Litungu* music goes a long way in creating an understanding and appreciation of the compositional process of African traditional music in general and Bukusu *Litungu* music in particular. Data collection which comprised interviews with Bukusu *Litungu* performers, took place within Bungoma district, a cradle of the Bukusu sub-tribe of the larger Abaluhya community.

8.2 CONCLUSIONS

The research findings were discussed and summarised in this Chapter around the following research objectives;

1. To identify manifestations of *silao-sikeleko* in Bukusu *Litungu* music;
2. To articulate the thematic relationship between *silao-sikeleko* and other segments of the music such as sung text and the instrumental accompaniment.
3. To identify the structure and socio-cultural context of *silao-sikeleko*.
4. To assess and determine the process and basis of *silao-sikeleko* rendition in the music.

From these findings I drew conclusions and recommendations for further research.

In this study I found out that the Bukusu have no cultural name for speech and speech-melody. Where an attempt is made to give *silao-sikeleko* a name it is called “*Khulaa*”, meaning praise. However, this name is not sufficient; this is because *silao-sikeleko* falls into two categories. One category deals with praises that are offered to any member of the society whom the *omukeleki* chooses. The other category of *silao-sikeleko* encompasses themes other than praise which the community refers to as *khukeleka* meaning to advice. Thus I coined the word *silao-sikeleko* from two Bukusu words *khulaa* (to praise) and *khukeleka* (to advice). *Silao-sikeleko* is neither an

interruption nor an addition to a *Litungu* musical performance. It is part and parcel of the music and is considered a way of singing among the Bukusu. It is such an important way of singing that it constitutes about half of the total length of *Litungu* music. It continuously alternates with the sung text in *Litungu* music. In a musical performance, *silao-sikeleko* manifests itself at any point within the unfolding musical event. It can be at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of a performance, occurring as many times as the soloist deems fit. The soloist plays a crucial role in determining how many times *silao-sikeleko* is uttered, making its occurrence subjective.

The study established an existing thematic relationship between the sung text and *silao-sikeleko*. Themes of song texts are drawn from everyday issues of concern in the Bukusu community. Song text and *silao-sikeleko* contain the same messages and themes; the two complement each other in communicating various messages for the society's benefit. In some cases *silao-sikeleko* has more words and serves to elaborate the themes much more than the song texts. *Silao-sikeleko* is performed over more cycles of instrumental ostinati compared to those against which song texts are expressed. Language use in *Litungu* music reflects that which is used in daily speech within the community, namely, the use of proverbs, riddles, imagery, symbolism and sayings. Another interesting phenomenon is neologism, which is common in both music and ordinary speech; it is drawn from the English and Kiswahili languages. In such a situation words that do not exist in Lubukusu have been borrowed from the two languages and coined to fit the Lubukusu syntax, as well as morphology.

The study identified that, in the community, *silao-sikeleko* serves the following cultural functions; to introduce the performing group, relay important information about the current issues within the community, and educate community members about good conduct. It also reveals the community's beliefs and traditions and allows members of the performing group to express their sentiments on the same. In addition, it allows for the appraisal of community members by the musicians and finally, it serves to relay stories in details that cannot be fully captured in song text alone. These functions are performed in various contexts which affect *silao-sikeleko*'s length and content; they include beer parties, funerals and entertainment. The new contexts have allowed the performance composers to praise political leaders, comment on the importance of education and to praise and worship God within the context of the Christian

religion. The performance of *silao-sikeleko* in different contents attests to the musical genres viability and continuity with changing times to some extent. Context here includes the arena of performance, the kind of audience and occasion of performance. *Litungu* music has been appropriated into new socio-cultural contexts. However, the art of *khulaa-khukeleka* in *Litungu* music seems to be dwindling as new contexts emerge. As mentioned earlier the musicians perform more of *silao-sikeleko* in the traditional songs of their grandfathers. This explains why church songs performed in *Litungu* idiom hardly have *silao-sikeleko*. I believe musicians are capable of upholding the very tradition of verbalization that has played a significant role in the performance compositional process of *Litungu* music. This is because Lubukusu allows for aesthetic renditions of language using components such as proverbs, riddles, sayings and imagery among other language devices. But, *Litungu* music cannot escape the fact that within the Bukusu community, the younger generation does not use much of the above mentioned language devices like the older generation does.

This study identified the structural implications of *silao-sikeleko*. *Silao-sikeleko* as a musical element among the Bukusu plays a significant role. When the *Litungu* performers play music in various contexts, whatever is articulated as *silao-sikeleko* changes frequently in length, design and content. Like Qureshi (1987: 82) this study believes that “the approach [to her performance model] may provide a means of explaining how musical systems are used in performance on the basis of contextual meaning”. It can suffice to conclude here that among the Bukusu, the length and structure of *silao-sikeleko* is influenced by the social context of performance, performer’s skill, experience and taste. The structures of *silao-sikeleko* are threefold; dialogical structure, speech-melody and narrative structure with varying texture such as V V1 V2 V and V V1 V V2 V. Thus *silao-sikeleko* has a structure of its own. These structures reflect the Bukusu community’s artistic preference, religious, cultural traditions and beliefs. Its compositional roles also include: providing continuity of theme; unifying the music, as *silao-sikeleko* and song text have a similar instrumental accompaniment; and aiding in the clarification of song themes. The performance process is influenced by contextual exigencies together with the musical elements that constitute the musical sound. Thus in the words of Qureshi (1987: 57) I can now concur that “musical sound will vary with variations in the context of its performance”. Her notion of

musical sound encompasses elements that include pitch, rhythm, texture, language and melody, change within a situation.

In the process, *silao-sikeleko* aids in extending or elongating a musical performance that in turn affects the presentational form or structure of the resultant music, through its ability to act as a basis of improvisation. Rules governing musical performance may not be written down but are orally transmitted through beliefs and controlled through the form of taboos communicated in the form of saying and proverbs.

Litungu music unfolds in a cyclic manner against a given ostinato. This instrumental ostinato is the music background upon which song text and *silao-sikeleko* is performed. The resultant structure is a quasi-rondoic form with three basic presentations. Ekwueme (1975/6: 34) discusses West African music with specific reference to its rhythmic organization and concludes that it has a quasi-rondoic form. Hence, there is some similarity in the structural organization of West African rhythms and *Litungu* music. The quasi-rondoic structure of *Litungu* music is a reflection of the social structure at various levels. At one level, the village elder, *omukasa*, is in charge of a village. Under him is a council of elders who assist the *omukasa* in decision-making. Sections of solo response in the songs depict this kind of relationship, where the council of elders are like the chorus sections of music that respond to the *omukasa*'s leadership. The leader has the sole mandate to decide who talks in every meeting within the community. Likewise in their musical performance, the soloist decides who will verbalize and when he will do so. At this level, the community members enjoy a sense of order and unity. In the music this is represented by the sung sections depicted as "A". At another level, the loose structure gives an individual leeway to exhibit his personality through *khulaa-khukeleka*. Here a performer expresses his every emotion in regard to the song theme. This person is replaced by another person and another, and is depicted by the letters "B", "C" and so on. As a result the music reflects unity and diversity.

Another important result of this study is that the compositional process of *silao-sikeleko* is both an individual and communal activity. With communal I mean the composition incorporates input by various members of the performing group. Each member of the performing group has a chance to express his opinion and therefore contribute to the *silao-sikeleko* fabric. In as much as

every member of the performing group creates his own musical ideas and variations, during performance, the resultant musical entity is credited to the entire group. The creative process has several prerequisites; which include a mastery of Lubukusu, long exposure to *Litungu* music either through performance or listening, familiarity with cultural environment and events, an understanding of the audience's maturity and the level of inter-group and intra-group musical interaction. The creative process begins by the repetition of existing musical materials. It then moves to the variations of those existing musical ideas; and ends with the creation of new musical ideas or materials within the community's musical aesthetics.

The study discovered that *Litungu* music is basically a male musical genre. But where woman participated, they performed a subordinate role such as dancing, ululation and responding to the solo sections. Nonetheless, the present society has given women opportunities to perform the *Litungu* in the name of formal education in schools and colleges. Due to globalization, the musical genre has therefore not escaped the effects of commercialization. In an attempt to ape popular music, *Litungu* music is now performed and recorded in studios for sale bearing contemporary themes in a mixture of Bukusu and Kiswahili song texts. The younger generation enjoys performing this musical genre but as indicated, they prefer using the improvised drum. It is the performance of *silao-sikeleko* that is endangered because the youth are inhibited in language skills and the use of proverbs and sayings compared to the older folk. Moreover, the membership of each performing group is not static; some musicians can belong to several groups and/or leave one group to form another.

8.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study suggests several recommendations for further research. The identification and study of *silao-sikeleko* suggests that it is a musical element. It is possible that there are other African musical elements such as grunts and ululation that are perceived differently from the often mentioned musical elements such as rhythm, melody, harmony and dance/movement. This study thus recommends;

- a) The identification of other musical elements in African music that have not received attention. Similarly, grunts and ululations can be studied. Bukusu *Litungu* music, in relation to its culture has definitely undergone changes.
- b) A study can be made to find trends in the evolution of Bukusu *Litungu* music. This can aid in establishing how the process of verbalization and the organization of *silao-sikeleko* has changed with time. In the process a comparison can be made between the process of verbalization in traditional *Litungu* music and popular *Litungu* music. It was evident in this study that most of the performers have formed bands and commercialized their music for consumption by audiences other than the Bukusu community members.
- c) A study can be carried out to establish the effect of studio recording on the performance of *silao-sikeleko* in such contexts.
- d) Since this study was limited to Bukusu *Litungu* music, and not other African communities that may have *silao-sikeleko* as part of their music, a study based on the compositional function of *silao-sikeleko* in other African musical genres can be done. This can aid in affirming or contesting the findings in this study, especially in other Abaluhya sub-tribes.
- e) A study and textural analysis of social messages from the historical era, a comparison with modern-day communications through popular music.
- f) Comparative studies to ascertain what musical connections may have existed between Bukusu *Litungu* musicians and other neighbouring Luhya communities.
- g) Historical studies to document and provide tablature methods of “learning how to play the *Litungu*” for posterity and wider circulation.
- h) Sociological studies to assess the influence of *Litungu* music to modern-day popular music and/or other affiliated music types.
- i) Cross-cultural studies to determine if there are any similarities or differences in the lyre music from other regional communities, for example among the Kisii and Luo community.

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APPENDIX I

SONGS IN LUBUKUSU AND THEIR TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH

All lyrics were written in Lubukusu although some English and Kiswahili words appear. The lyrics of some of the songs are written here with their English translations (songs written in this section are those frequently referred to in the main discussion). In some cases direct translation was used but in other cases the sentences were rephrased in order to be meaningful in the English language. A number of words in the Bukusu language do not have English equivalents, thus necessitating the use of many words in the translation and the use of footnotes to elaborate their meanings. Below is a list of the songs with the initials of the band names. LBB stands for the Lugulu Bumusika Band, KB is the Kwane Band, NJB is the Nabukambisi Jazz Band, NB is the Namatete Band and MB is the Muvumilivu Band.

Song title

- A.1.1. *Enyanja* (LBB)
- A.1.2. *Omundu* (LBB)
- A.1.3. *Enju yo Muluya* (LBB)
- A.1.4. *Kulukulu* (LBB)
- A.1.5. *Nekoye* (NJB)
- A.1.6. *Eswa* (KB)
- A.1.7. *Ewuyo Ino* (KB)
- A.1.8. *Basakwa* (NJB)
- A.1.9. *Sellah* (LBB)
- A.1.10. *Ewuyo Ino* (LBB)
- A.1.11. *Mayi* (NB)
- A.1.12. *Yekamakhanya* (MB)
- A.1.13. *Endakano* (LBB)

A.1.1. *ENYANJA* (LBB)

ENYANJA

Speech:

Ese mbukanga sana. Eno eli Bumusika band, Lugulu.

Nekhale nende basoreri nebali bakuka, Alex Wafula khukhwama Naitiri ali Khukamba-saba. Nekhale nende Joseph nali munyange mwana wa Maloba. Nekhale nende Martin Wanyama ali khubesi. Wanyonyi mwana musekese ali khuluyengele. Kyaluka, wa John omunyange omuwaya. Khulera kumwenyao kwe enyanja.

Efwe benyanja embofu, abele wakhasoka sowambukha tawe.

Atimia mukoloni kachila engelekha kumukongo. The colonial man was chased and he went back abroad using his back.

Oli kola engelekha kapa kumukhono asi, ali Olola omuafrika abona ekalanilimo. Kalola muafrika kanyola babene.

Kacha kola Mombasa kanyola Ronald Ngala,

Kachia mubasebe kanyola Kenyatta.

Kacha mubanande kanyola Moi.

Solo: Enywe Baluya,

Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,

Solo: Enywe Baluya,

Chorus: Sobona khetenya.

Solo: Ewe Kombo,

Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,

Solo: Ewe Mudavadi,

Chorus: Sobona khetenya.

Solo: Ewe Jirongo,

Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,

Solo: Ewe Mukhisa,

Chorus: Sobona khetenya.

Solo: Ewe Mukhisa,

Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,

A LAKE

Speech:

I am so amazed. This is the Bumusika band, Lugulu.

I am seated with young boys who are my grandchildren: Alex Wafula from Naitiri who is on the seven strings; Joseph from the *Banyange* clan and son of Maloba; Martin Wanyama on the Bass;

Wanyonyi of the *Basekese* clan is on the *Luyengele*, and Kyaluka son of John from the *Banyange Bawaya* Clan.⁴⁰

We are performing a song titled “A lake”.⁴¹

We are a people of a great lake, even if you try to swim through; you cannot cross to the other side.

The colonial man was chased and he went back abroad using his back.

When he reached there, he slapped his hands on on the ground. When he looked at the African, he saw a firm person.

He went, reached Mombasa and found Ronald Ngala,

he went among the Kikuyu community and Found Kenyatta,

and he went to the Nandi and found Moi.

Solo: You the Luhya,

Chorus: See the great lake.

Solo: You the Luhya,

Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?

Solo: You, Kombo,

Chorus: See the great lake.

Solo: You, Mudavadi,

Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?

Solo: You, Jirongo,

Chorus: See the great lake.

Solo: You, Mukhisa,

Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?

Solo: You, Mukhisa,

Chorus: See the great lake.

⁴⁰ Luyengele is singular for *Chimbengele*, the wooden sticks used to strike the Siiye (a wooden box).

⁴¹ The Bukusu word used here refers to a large water body that can be a sea or an ocean.

Solo: Noah Wekesa,

Chorus: Sobona khetenya.
Solo: Newton Kulundu,
Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,
Solo: Soita Shitanda,
Chorus: Sobona khetenya.
Solo: Ewe Kimunguchi,
Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,
Solo: Ewe khamisi,
Chorus: Sobona khetenya.
Solo: Dakitari Wekesa,
Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,
Solo: Noah Wekesa,
Chorus: Sobona khetenya.
Solo: Bony Khalwale,
Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,
Solo: Moses Akaranga,
Chorus: Sobona khetenya.
Solo: Wetangula,
Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,
Solo: Wafula Wamunyinyi,
Chorus: Sobona khetenya.
Solo: Ewe Wakoli,
Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,
Solo: Enywe Baluya,
Chorus: Sobona khetenya.

Speech:

Alex mwana wefwe!
Ee! Abwenao George ngo oloma oriorio,
Ese mwene nga Waluona, mwana wa mayi
Sipora khukhwama mulukulu, kamakhuwa
niko oloma mwana wase kali kang'ali sana.
Khwatenyile khwawe.
Ah! George, sendachia lukali tawe.
Asaka chilomo khuchie.

Speech-melody:

Ooi! Kumwoyo kulila kunyi.
Ah wee! Kumwoyo kulila kunyi
Ooi! Kumwoyo kulila kunyi.
Wamalwa we Baengele,
Wamalwa we Baengele!
Kalekha bafubi, kalekhela ba Kombo.
Oli kabakhusia banja khulomana.

Solo: Noah Wekesa,

Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?
Solo: Newton Kulundu,
Chorus: See the great lake,
Solo: Soita Shitanda,
Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?
Solo: You, Kimunguchi,
Chorus: See the great lake,
Solo: You, Khamisi,
Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?
Solo: Dr. Wekesa,
Chorus: See the great lake,
Solo: Noah Wekesa.
Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?
Solo: Bony Khalwale,
Chorus: See the great lake,
Moses Akaranga,
Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?
Solo: Wetangula,
Chorus: See the great lake,
Solo: Wafula Wamunyinyi,
Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?
Solo: You, Wakoli,
Chorus: See the great lake,
Solo: You the Luhya,
Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?

Speech:

Alex our child!
Yes, on that note George, it is just as you have
spoken. I, myself being Waluona, a child of
mother Sipora from Lugulu, the issues you
have spoken about are very true.
We have shrunk and gotten finished.
Ah! George, I will not proceed for long.
Hit the tongues/sayings so that we can proceed.

Speech-melody:

Ooi! My heart is weeping for you.
Ah wee! My heart is weeping for you.
Ooi! My heart is weeping for you.
Wamalwa of the *Baengele* clan,
Wamalwa of the *Baengele* clan!
He left the throwers, he left for Kombo.
He raised them up and they started disagreeing.

Oli bakhula banja khukabukhana.

Joseph Maloba mwana we Banyange.
Owo asiliyo, achia elukulu eyo
Ooi! Wee! Wee! Kumwoyo kulira kunyi.
Njola musirisia, nyola Munyasia aliyo.
Ewe Sakwa olila, enda yo muluya khwaba
enyanja embofu.
Aba nochia engelekha, abele khuchila mundeke,
khuchila abele khuliaro, khuchila khubikele.
Enda yo muluya.

Solo: Enywe Baluya,
Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,
Solo: Enywe Baluya,
Chorus: Sobona khetenya.
Solo: Enywe Baluya,
Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,
Solo: Joseph Maloba,
Chorus: Sobona khetenya.
Solo: Bernard Waluka,
Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,
Solo: Mwana mukwangwa,
Chorus: Sobona khetenya.
Solo: Bernard,
Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu,
Solo: Mwana mukwangwa,
Chorus: Sobona khetenya.

Speech-melody:
Wee! Wee! Kumwoyo kulira kunyi.
Natima mukanduyi Wafula Wamunyinyi
khumunyola. Basilikhwo bali akhacha mungo.
Enda yo muluya khwabechanga embofu.
Abele wakhasoka, abele sowambukha.

Ewe Tembesi walila mwana wa baluya.
Ewe Wanyonyi walila, mwana musekese.
Khaba George ndila mwana mukibaindila.
Enda yomuluya khwaba esebele.
Omuluya katima kabukula kimisala,
mala kara musebele, esebele yatenya.

Solo: Endeba Baluya
Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu

When they grew up they started to disagree.

Joseph Maloba, a child of the *Banyange*,
he is still there, he went to Lugulu.
Ooi Wee! Wee! My heart is weeping for you.
I get to Sirisia and find Munyasia he is there.
You, Sakwa, you cry that the womb of the
Luhya, we were a great lake.
When we would go abroad, we would use an
aeroplane, we would use a ship or we would
go on foot, the womb of the Luhya.

Solo: You the Luhya,
Chorus: See the great lake,
Solo: You the Luhya,
Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?
Solo: You the Luhya,
Chorus: See the great lake,
Solo: Joseph Maloba,
Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?
Solo: Bernard Waluka,
Chorus: See the great lake,
Solo: Son of the *Bakwangwa*,
Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?
Solo: Bernard,
Chorus: See the great lake,
Solo: Son of the *Bakwangwa*,
Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?

Speech-melody:
Wee! Wee! My heart weeps for you.
I ran to Kanduyi to find Wafula Wamunyinyi,
he had gone home.
The womb of the Luhya was so great.
Even if you attempted to cross, you would not
get to the other side.
You Tembesi, have cried son of the Luhya.
You Wanyonyi son of the *Basekese*, have cried.
Even I, George son of the Baidila, have cried.
The womb of the Luhya, we were a well.
A Luhya ran, took logs and placed them in the
well, the well shrunk.

Solo: I ask the Luhya
Chorus: See the great lake.

Solo: Enywe Baluya
Chorus: Sobona khetenya

Solo: Enywe Baluya
Chorus: Bona enyanja embofu
Solo: Enywe Baluya
Chorus: Sobona khetenya

Speech:
Alex, mwana wefwe
Abwenao orebakho Baluya befwe.
Sakwa, mulembe muno.
Khuchie wase.
Basi sisiama sia Ford Kenya, siola babundu
bachiaka khulomana.
Soita Shitanda, sina sibi mwana muluya?

Syabechanga Ford Kenya sayi bali Ford
khusiiya.

A.1.2. OMUNDU (LBB)

OMUNDU

Speech:
Wele kakhuomokha, lakini esiku yokhufwa
sekakhuelesia tawe. Aliyo mayi Walukosi,
Krispus Shamala khukhuama chianda.
Mayi kaba nende maendeleo sana. Abele
ali nende bidii, bakhoombokha Mazthare
primary nende Lukasi. Mala abele wele
kamulanga. Babana bakhallila lukali nga
John Shiamalange, Jacob Shamala, Profesa
Lumbasi nali America bakhulekha, Nebali
Basimoko. Rebecca, Pericy, Sussy nebali
Bachile bali John Ayuya nende kansola Boas
bosi bakhulekha.

Solo: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane
afwichanga ee.
Chorus: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane
fwichanga ee.
Solo: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane
afwichanga ee.
Chorus: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane

Solo: You the Luhya
Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?

Solo: You the Luhya
Chorus: See the great lake
Solo: You the Luhya
Chorus: Why don't you see how it is shrinking?

Speech:
Alex, our child
On that note, tell our people the Luhya,
Sakwa, to stay in peace.
Let us proceed.
Therefore, this political party, Ford Kenya,
at some point people started disagreeing.
Soita Shitanda, what is wrong child of the
Luhya?
It was Ford Kenya now it is Ford.

A PERSON

Speech:
God created us but the day of death he did
not give us. There is a mother called Walukosi
and Chrispus Shamala from Chianda.
This mother was very business minded.
She was hard working and had build Mazthare
primary school and Lukusi God called her.
Children cried so much as John Shiamalange,
Jacob Shamala and Professor Lumbasi from
America left us. They were all from the
Basimoko clan. Rebecca, Pericy, Sussy who are
Bachile by clan, John Ayuya and councilor
Boas also left us.

Solo: So, a good person on this earth dies.
Chorus: So, a good person on this earth dies.

Solo: So, a good person on this earth dies.
Chorus: So, a good person on this earth dies.

afwichanga ee.

Speech-melody: Wamalwa webaengele khane
Wacha.

Chorus: Mundu mulayi khusialokhane
afwichanga ee.

Speech-melody:

Baluya babolele, baluya babolele.
Ewe mayi we! Ewe Chrispus; kang'ali
Shamala babana bewe balila. Mayi andi
wambolela. Ewe Judith Nafula mukeni we
Banyange, nge wange. Peter Wanjala alila,
Peter Wanjala alila ng'aliwe.
Judith Wafula enywe yaya, andi wambolela
Wacha khusoko wakula kamalwa kano
kamakhalange, lumicho lwe likhubi.
Ewe Martin, Martin Wanjala mwana
we Wanjala.

Solo: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane
afwichanga ee

Chorus: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane
fwichanga ee

Speech:

Martin loma mwana wefwe.
Yaa, abwenao wabola bung'ali sana wandaye.
Bandu baumiye lifwa lia mayi nali
Judith Naswa, omwiwana George omukubwaji,
Alice, Martin alala nende Anthony, nende
John mutuwa.
Senibilila Nasambu ta,
omwene ama khusoko khumakemo.
Senibilila omukhaye wange nali
Rose Nangunda khukhwama Ebisunu ta,
oundekhelanga, ne papawe nali Daniel
wabuyeka, mayi nali Junai Nangunda
khukhwama Endengelwa, bana ba papa;
Alala nende mukhwasi John Sikuku nali
omukeni wa Violet, nende Juma omukuka.
Khuchie bweni baandaye

Solo: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane

Speech-melody: Wamalwa of the Baengele clan,
so you went.

Chorus: So, a good person on this earth dies.

Speech-melody:

Tell the Luhya, tell the Luhya. You my mother!
You Chrispus; surely Shamala's two children
cried. Mother you should have told me.
You Judith Nafula, a visitor of the *Banyange*
like my own. Peter Wanjala cried,
Peter Wanjala really cried.
You Judith Wafula my sister, you should have
told me. You went to the market and bought
Dried beer⁴² and cow-peas seeds.
You Martin, Martin Wanjala son of Wanjala.

Solo: So, a good person on this earth dies.

Chorus: So, a good person on this earth dies.

Speech:

Martin, Speak our child
Yes, on that note what you said is true my
brother. Those who were affected by the death
of mother, who was Judith Naswa, are as
follows: the cousins George, Alice, Martin
together with Anthony and John the youngest.
Let me not forget Nasambu from Makemo
market.
I will not forget my wife Rose Nang'unda who
cooks for me, who is at Ebisunu, and the father
Daniel Wabuyeka, the mother who is Junai
Nang'unda from Endengelwa,
my father's children; Together with my in-law
John Sikuku who is a visitor to Violet,
and Juma who is a grandchild.
Let us proceed my brothers.

Solo: So, a good person on this earth dies.

⁴² Among the Bukusu, the traditional beer is made out of fermented maize flour. This fermented flour is sometimes dried in the sun then dried on a pan until it is in powder form, though not very fine. It is mixed with sugar as a sweetener and consumed even by children.

afwichanga ee

Chorus: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane
fwichanga ee

Speech:

Babandu balila lukali Bernard kalila
wandaye Mary, Agnes Nafula alila wandaye
Anita nali Bisemwa nende papa bachia
emakombe, bakwangwa nibo.
Agnes kalaa wase.
Akhaba Joseph Maloba alilanga
wabira kacha naalinga Wanyonyi
omusekese balanga musiebebe.

Solo: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane
afwichanga ee.

Chorus: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane
fwichanga ee.

Speech-melody: Wanjusi mukeni we Banyange,
mayi we.

Chorus: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane
afwichanga ee.

Speech:

Lomakho mwana wefwe.
Senibilila sesi Namarobe kalila sana
mulukulu bali Nyongesa kachia
emakombe. Omwana Waliana kalila sana
nail nga papa ounjibula. Senibilila papa
Lumbasi tawe.

Solo: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane
afwichanga ee.

Chorus: Mundu mulayi khusialo khane
fwichanga ee.

A.1.3. ENJU YO MULUYA (LBB)

ENJU YO MULUYA

Speech:

Ya! Basoreri khwakhemao, lundi khemubolele,
Wafula Waluona chana bali Alex,
khafwa tawe, endiyo. Khemubolele.

Chorus: So, a good person on this earth dies.

Speech:

People cried so much. Barnard mourned his
sister Mary, Agnes Nafula mourned the sister
Anita who is at Bisemwa and the father who
became spirits. They are from the clan
Bakwangwa. Agnes, sorry my dear.
Even Joseph Maloba mourned. Another
passed and went, that was Wanyonyi, from the
clan *Basekese*, which they called a kind of tree.

Solo: So, a good person on this earth dies.

Chorus: So, a good person on this earth dies.

Speech-melody: Wanjusi the visitor of the
Banyala, my mother

Chorus: So, a good person on this earth dies.

Speech:

Speak our child.
I will not forget, Namarobe wept so much at
Lugulu because Nyongesa became a spirit.
The child Waliana, who is like a father, cried
so much. I will not forget father Lumbasi.

Solo: So, a good person on this earth dies.

Chorus: So, a good person on this earth dies.

THE HOUSE OF THE LUHYA

Speech:

Yes! I am telling you we have been there. Again
let me tell you Wafula Waluona that I, Alex,
am not dead. I am here, so let me tell you.

Solo: Enju yo muluya wase,
Chorus: Enda ya Masaba wase, enju yo muluya wase, enda yo muluya wase.

Solo: Enju yo muluya wase,
Chorus: Enda ya Masaba wase, enju yo muluya wase, enda yo muluya wase.

Speech-melody:
Balebe! Lekha mubolekhe, oyuno bali Masaba omusani kaba omukhulu niye, arakho balu mubukusu, kaba omukekhe niye. Bamila ngelekha becha becha bechela Kiliwa, banina lukulu khabili bola miyanga yo.

Speech:
Babona Biyanga wase yakila Batyukhayo bali miyanga.

Speech-melody:
Becha wase khabili bola Bungoma

Speech:
Banyolao mundu bali Mungoma yakila Batyukhayo bali Bungoma, bana ba papa.

Speech-melody:
Becha bali mbilombilo khabili bola musikata, bali sikakata khabili babira chimbilo baambukha Muyeyi kumunina kwacha kwacha bola khungaki.

Speech:
Bali chindelwa chialuwa, yakila Batyukhayo bali Ndengelwa, bana ba papa.

Speech-melody:
Babira mumukhuyu bareberesia bola khungaki babona buyingo bwakwa, kamafumo kakwa, kakwa, kakwa, Batyukhayo bali Mabanga.
Balebe khulomana sina?

Solo: The Luhya house,
Chorus: The womb of Masaba, the Luhya house is the womb of Masaba

Solo: The Luhya house,
Chorus: The womb of Masaba, the Luhya house is the womb of Masaba

Speech-melody:
My goodness! Let me tell you, this was a Masaba boy. He was the eldest followed by Mubukusu who was the youngest. They came from abroad. They came and came, they came through a place called Kiliwa and climbed a hill twice, reaching a place called Miyanga.

Speech:
They saw Biyanga and it made them call the place Miyanga.

Speech-melody:
They came and passed through Bungoma.

Speech:
They found a man called Mungoma; that made them call the place Bungoma, children of my father.

Speech-melody:
They came very quickly and reached a place called Musikata. They passed there quickly crossing to Muyeyi and climbed a hill to its top.

Speech:
Here, their thigh muscles got tired and so they called the place Ndengelwa, children of my father.

Speech-melody:
They passed Mukhuyu inquiring as they went on, and reached the top there they saw bows falling, spears fell and fell, they called the place Mabanga.
My relatives, why are we quarrelling?

Solo: Enju yo muluya wase,
Chorus: Enda ya Masaba wase,
enju yo muluya wase, enda yo muluya wase.
Ah!

Speech:

Lomakho abwenao, kabili,
kataru nio baendeleo.
Alex, khendosiekho. Kamakhuwa niko
namile engo nekhwicha khukhupa chirekodi
mala mwesi mwakabonele chimoni.
Yani bubi khusibala khuno omundu wikholanga
omukristayo khukhwama luno amanye.
Bona nga nakulikhile babana. Nesilingi luno,
aba khola ndie?
Mala khusibala Wele nasima ndiyo.
Ese nendi omwana wa Donald Wafula.
Lekhana khubonane.
Orio.

Speech-melody:

Balebe bange ndila, kumwoyo kusilila.
Oli khumala na khukhesia.
E mayi we masala wange makhuwa kasiuka.

Khakhesyie Namachanja, omwana we.
Baliuli niye, nali ng'ali enda yatayi balebe ne
Ayubu.

Speech:

Lakini senibilila, khandebe Wanyonyi,
“Wanyonyi, ndebere omwana Wandebe yuno
kaba kariena?”
Ya! Alex, ese kumwoyo kunjuna sana.
Nakhakhulangila babana bakhulu, khwecha
khwekhala wase, khwachanga khukachule
khumakhuwa wase, sekhuola ta.
Mala musani kandangile
Chiola saa mbili chye silo.
Musani kakwa asi wase kekalakala,
ali ese papa kachile.
Ali papa achile emakombe.
Sekanyalikhana ta. Nalila sana.
Ata kamakhuwa ako, Muranga yesi nali
simakulu kalila sana nebasie.
Kwesa khuchie.

Solo: The Luhya house
Chorus: The womb of Masaba, the Luhya house
is the womb of Masaba.
Ah!

Speech:

On that note, say two or three words before
I continue.
Alex, let me talk. This issue that we have been
discussing through our music, you have seen
with your own eyes.
The problem on this earth, the person who
pretends to be a Christian from today should
learn. Look at the way they name my children.
When am here today, what do I do?
Therefore on this earth God willing,
I, being a son of Donald Wafula.
Let us meet.
Thank you.

Speech-melody:

My relatives am crying, my heart is mourning.
When we finish he will greet us.
Oh my mother, my friends, this issue is
astonishing.
Let me greet Namachanja a child of the *Baliuli*.
He is indeed Wafula really from a distant womb
together with Ayubu.

Speech:

But let me not forget to ask Wanyonyi.
“Wanyonyi find out for me about this child
Wandebe. How was it?”
Ya! Alex, for me, my heart aches so much.
Even if we call together all the elder children,
sit down and start discussing this issue,
we might not manage this issue.
One son called me.
At around eight in the night.
He fell on the floor and started writhing in pain,
that as for me my father is gone.
That my father has gone to the spirit world.
It is impossible. He cried a lot.
Even on the same issue, Muranga the eldest son
also cried, together with others.
Pull we go.

Solo: Enju yo muluya wase,
Chorus: Enda ya Masaba wase, enju yo muluya wase, enda yo muluya wase.

Speech:
Khayo khesiekho Alfred wa Paulo nali mukeni wa Muduya.

Speech-melody:
Wanyonyi, Wanyonyi bakumuse, enda yakasudi, masoni kako kasiuka

Solo: Enju yo muluya wase,
Chorus: Enda ya Masaba wase, enju yo muluya wase, enda yo muluya wase.

Solo: The Luhya house,
Chorus: The womb of Masaba, the Luhya house is the womb of Masaba

Speech:
Let me greet Alfred son of Paul who is the guest of Muduya.

Speech-melody:
Wanyonyi, Wanyonyi of the gathering from Sudi's womb, we are surprised at your shame.

Solo: The Luhya house,
Chorus: The womb of Masaba, the Luhya house is the womb of Masaba

A.1.4. KUKUKULU WA BWABI (LBB)

KUKUKULU WA BWABI

Speech:
Bali Kulukulu wa Bwabi wase.
Khanyola omumali yani yetyukha omusungu;
kaba omukhana mulala kaba bali omusungu.

Solo: Kulukulu wa Bwabi, e mayiko
Kaba mukhana muala, kachia efula
Bulunda.
E yayako wayaa emoni yatuma bona.

Speech:
Ali alia bia bene wase.
Ali khareka epomu khane khareka emubone

Solo: Yayako, woyi makuwa kola.
Areka efula, yayako, akipa khane emubone.

KULUKULU OF BWABI

Speech:
That *Kulukulu of Bwabi*.⁴³
I have never found a black person naming himself white; there was once a girl called a white person.

Solo: *Kulukulu of Bwabi* my mother.
There was a *muala*⁴⁴ girl who went to the rain in *Balunda* clan,
my brother, and got her eyes burnt so badly.

Speech:
She consumed what was not her own.
She thought she was setting a bomb trap but she was setting a trap for that which had seen her.

Solo: My brother the issue reached.
She set a trap for the rain, my brother, but she was hitting on that which had seen her.

⁴³ *Kulukulu* is a nick name given to the girl referred to in the story.

⁴⁴ *Baala* is a clan among the Bukusu, a person from this clan is called *muala*.

Wayaa emoni yatuma yayako makhuwa
kaba nekola bona.
Chiri chiri khulomaloma oli chobolele wabayo.
Khuloma oli khumala mayi ko, kona kolino
mubwaya, kona kolino mubwaya, yayako.

Speech:

Oli musungu sakhochanga nende
omumali tawe.
Wanyama omumali kamubola oli wetungutia
oli kholia nano ewe?
Makhuwa ako kosi bauka busa.

Solo: Wanyama makhuwa kola, Wanyama
omubukusu, waloma bali khuraka. Wabolela
bali omusungu, “bali musungu, wakhaba
noli nokenda makhuwa bali sina.
Ali ese webusuma, lekha khuelesele”.

Speech:

Ali ese wase omubukusu ndia busuma
nekamani. Pana khulia bibindu bitorotoro wase,
ako sekanyalikhana ta.
Omusungu wang’ona endeke ebirira khungaki,
ape nge nyuni epurukha.
Ali tawe asi anano sendimirao ta,
khendimire khungaki nio omumali akhanyola
ta, kangundue bukesi bwase, ee.
Abwenao Samuel obona oriena?

Solo: Aii! Makhuwa kola, chio obolele wabayo,
yayako wakhaba baliwanina.

Mwana bali, “senja”,
yayako kamwata khumatunda.
Kamwata khumatunda yayako
noli noweyama.
Kachia bali esikimu yayako,
akipa khane emubone.
Wayaa emoni yatuma yayako,
makhua nekaba kola.

Her eyes got burnt so badly. My brother,
as news of the issue reached as you see.
We are saying here that you go tell those
who were there. When we end our discussion,
my mother, sleep totally in a bosom, sleep
totally in a bosom.

Speech:

A white person once said, he does not mingle
with a black. Wanyama, the black person
replied, you are dancing as though you are about
to eat who?
All these issues they marvelled.

Solo: Wanyama, the issue reached,
Wanyama a Bukusu, you said we plant.
You told the white person that, “white person,
even though you are walking, do not take this
issue lightly. I am a person of *ugali*, let me tell
you”.⁴⁵

Speech:

I am a Bukusu, who eats *ugali* with all my
strength. I do not eat light things; that is
impossible.
The white person made aircrafts to travel in the
air, so that it can move like a bird.
He said, “No, I cannot move on the ground”.
Let it just move in the air so that the black man
cannot find me, he has discovered my intellect.
How do you find it Samuel?

Solo: Aii! News about the issue reached.
Go tell those who were there, my brother,
even if you have increased.
The child said, “Am not going”,
and threw the fruits.
He threw the fruits, my brother,
so that you can confess.
He went to the settlement scheme, my brother.
She hit that which had seen her and
got her eyes burnt so badly,
when the news had reached.

⁴⁵ Ugali is the staple food of the Bukusu. It is a product of Maize that is dried, grinded to powder form and cooked by mixing it with water.

Speech:

Abwenao niko baloma bali omusungu oyo salimo makesi ta, kekharo sa na alia.

Speech:

On that note, what was said was that the white person has no brains, he just sits and eats.

A.1.5. *NEKOYE* (NJB)

NEKOYE

Solo: Papa rekereisa, niyo oli rekeresia ng'ali,

Mayi rekeresia, niyo oli rekeresia ng'ali.

Yaya rekeresia, niyo oli rekeresia ewe.

Ulile ke Babukusu, ulile ke Babukusu.

Solo: Kukhu bakaloma khale,
Kuka bosu baliyo ng'ali.

Mayi bosu baliyo, yaya bosu baliyo ng'ali.

Efyesi khukalukha luno, khureba Babukusu,
nende ba Kinyinge ng'ali,
Rebe Banyange, nende Bamaina ng'ali,
Nende Batunda ewe, nende Basawa ng'ali.
Eluno ekolongolo mubabukusu.
Omundu okhutabusya nende okhwakila,

Chorus: Nanu okhila okundi?
Bosu basamula
Nanu okhila okundi? oreba Babukusu,
namwe babene khujibe?, aya khujibe?

Speech:

Yani Basoreri ba Nabukambisi,
babolela khuba Babukusu bali.
Okhutabusya nende Okhwakila,
alina okhila okundi?
Mbolele chilomo.
Okhuakila akhila okhutabusya basakhulu

Ah! Bwana George wabea wase, andi

NEKOYE

Solo: Father, pay attention, wherever you are surely, pay attention.

Mother pay attention, wherever you are surely, pay attention.

Brother, pay attention, wherever you are surely, pay attention.

Hear about the Bukusu, hear about the Bukusu.

Solo: Our grandmothers talked about it long ago, our grandfathers surely there.

Our mothers are also there, our brothers are surely there.

And we are coming back today, to ask the Bukusu. To truly ask Kinyinge, to ask the *Banyange* and *Bamaina* and *Batunda* and surely *Basawe*, today at *Kolongolo*, among the Bukusu.⁴⁶
One who accomplishes a task and one who weeds,

Chorus: Who of the two is better than the other?
They both rise up in the morning to work.
Who is better than the other? I inquire of the Bukusu, or we ourselves give an answer?
Or give an answer?

Speech:

Surely young boys of Nabukambisi,
am telling you, about the Bukusu.
One who weeds and one who accomplishes a task, who of the two is better?
Tell me this saying.
One who weeds is better than one who accomplishes a task, old men
Ah! Mr. George you are cheating,

⁴⁶ Banyange, Bamaina, Batunda and Basawe are circumcision age groups.

wareba bamaina.
Eh balebe Liabirakho busa. Ama
khuloma ali si?
Ali okhuakila akhila okhutabusya.

Basakhulu, nano okhuakila niye nanu
ne okhutabusya niye nanu?
Okhuakila niye omukhasi omukara,
oli omuila emukundeyo, efufula busa.
Oli akalukha engo, alia bibindu bya wayo
Wase, akhulekha nende kumutambo.
Lakini okhutabusya ali omukhasi omulayi,
kang'ona emukunda eyo wase,
kecha kang'onele mungo omwomo,
kakhwelesia emali nende bilio.

Solo: Kuka bakaloma khale,
Kukhu bosu baliyo ng'ali enywe.
Papa bosu baliyo, mayi bosu baliyo ng'ali.
Yaya bakaloma khale.
Efyesi khukulukha luno, sesi ngalukha. Aa!

Speech:
Yani basakhulu nama khuba khusibala sino
bali mbenja menye. Namakhwicha
wase namunyola omukhana mulala
bamulanga bali Nekoye Singula Nabwami.
Aba ese omwene no unyola nara sifuba
ebweni, nga nabeisye bubwami nda singulakho.
Yesingula khane yesingula bukara. Ah!

Omubukusu abolanga ali omukhasi
khumumanya omumanyila khumbako.
Yani namakhurura asibuyi wase,
oli nikha Emalakisi khukula lijembe ne
embako, ngobola engo omukhasi wange
anjete khuremula lirome wase.
Oli khuola khurume, omukhasi wange anja
khurusia. khane abele akholile kamatore wase
kamarofu, kafwanile endurwe.
Khola ndiena wase?
Oli namakhubechanga engo
namakhurusianga, khane bamakhusikhilanga
kimikati, chikeki, chinyama nende buli

you would have asked the *Bamaina*.
Eh my goodness, it passed me.
What did he say?
He said one who weeds is better than one who
accomplishes a task.
Old men who is one who weeds and who is
one who accomplishes a task?
One who weeds is a lazy wife, you take her
to the farm, and she reluctantly works.
She goes back to the house and consumes all
your things leaving you in poverty.
But one who accomplishes a task is a good wife.
She attends to the farm,
comes and attends to the home,
giving you wealth and food.

Solo: Our grandfathers talked about it,
our grandmothers are surely there.
Our fathers are there, our mothers are also
there. Our brothers talked about it long ago.
We are coming back today, I am also coming
back. Ah!

Speech:
Old men, I have been on this earth my dear,
hoping to live.
I came and found one girl called Nekoye
Singula Nabwami.
Then you would find me with my chest
forward, as I had been elected an elder.
He was proud, little did he know that he was
priding in laziness. Ah!
A Bukusu says that to know a lazy wife,
you know her through the plough.
You know I left this morning, and then I
alighted at Malakisi to buy a hoe and plough.
On coming back home, I wanted my wife to
help me plough the uncultivated land.
When we got to the land my wife started
vomiting. Little did I know that she had taken
ripe bananas and mashed them to look like a
wild fruit. What do I do my people?
She said, "I have been vomiting at home".
Yet she had been hiding bread,
cakes, meat and everything in the home.

sindu mungo. Nga omanyile omwene nakhurere khusindu basakhulu ouririra khusisyo wase. Chisilingi wase abele naboile khutai wase ngendelanga mwikoti. Lelo esutila mumukhono. Omukhasi wange uno ama khuunduya sana.

Niyo khwikhala omwene ambolela ali khuchie famili planingi. Ndi oli sina?

Oh! Khayo enjie famili planingi.

Nisio sina? Oli khupungusie babana.

Ndi aba khaira namwe khukusia?

Seli eshida tawe, niyo ali kamila kimilesi wase.

Omwene nonyola arere bitasi muungubo.

Niyo omunyola wase abele nakhaamila kamalesi akako, akenda auchikha nga wanikhile engubo khulusieng'enge, mani mwo twa. Khuchie bweni basakhulu, naumia khusibala khuno.

Solo: Ah! Bukara bunu,

Chorus: Bung'ali,

Solo: Ah! Bukara bunu,

Chorus: Khwaba ne Nekoye Khubasali.

Solo: Ah! Bukara bunu,

Chorus: Bung'ali,

Solo: Ah! Bukara bunu,

Chorus: Khwaba ne Nekoye Khubasali.

Solo: Aye! Munyanga chino,

Chorus: Bung'ali.

Solo: Aye! Munyanga chino,

Chorus: Lolakho bubeyi musialo.

Solo: Aye! Munyanga chino,

Chorus: Bung'ali.

Solo: Aye! Munyanga chino,

Chorus: Lolakho bubeyi musialo.

Emung'ali, babeyi mwesi enywe khemukosela Wele.

Emung'ali, babeyi mwesi enywe khemukosela Wele.

Enywe, babandu mwesi mukhoywa murebe basali.

Enywe, roho sina yaya, enyola kang'ali

As you know, when the owner has put you on something, old men, you feel it on what is yours. My money I used to tie in a tie and walk with it in my coat. Nowadays, I carry my money in my hands. This wife of mine has really hit me so much.

Whenever we sit, she tells me that we go for family planning. What are you saying?

Oh! Let me go for family planning.

What is that? That we reduce our children.

So does that mean we kill them or sell them?

That is not a problem, wherever she is, she swallows medicine.

When you find her she has put rags in her cloths. My wife before taking that medicine walks swaying and flapping like some cloth hanging on a line, without strength.

Let us proceed old men, I have suffered on this earth.

Solo: Ah! This laziness,

Chorus: It is true

Solo: Ah! This laziness

Chorus: We were with Nekoye at those who pray.

Solo: Ah! This laziness,

Chorus: It is true

Solo: Ah! This laziness

Chorus: We were with Nekoye at those who pray.

Solo: Aye! Nowadays,

Chorus: It is true.

Solo: Ah! Nowadays,

Chorus: See the deceit on this earth.

Solo: Aye! Nowadays,

Chorus: It is true.

Solo: Ah! Nowadays,

Chorus: See the deceit on this earth.

It is true, all you deceitful people wrong God.

It is true, all you deceitful people wrong God.

You, all people must ask those who pray.

You, what kind of spirit is this that is found only

musilo syongene?
Enywe, roho sina enyola kang'ali
babafwa bongene?
Enywe, roho sina yaya ebirania
babandu muchinju?

Speech:

Babene lelo bali khukhesia, Ee!
Khukorwa nisio sinano ta wase.
Mwana Waswa, khuborere lilala wase,
Asante Papa,
Khukhwama khale akhakho khukhwola
kumwesi kumi na nane, basakhulu,
Khwama khuba nebasali basakhulu.
Lakini kalolekhana khukhwama abwenao
khuli nende bisieno ango ano sana.
Abwenao khunyola babandu nga belanga.
Omukhasi Nekoye kacha mubandu
ngene ababo nga kolayo bali khukhecha
musibala. Khumalilikha wase, balanga
omusechawe bali kusieno.
Omusecha nga kaulila, kabona bubi lukali sana.
Kacha emalakisi eyeyo kanyola yo
omukhwasi we, bali kansola Juma.
Kabola musakhulu okhabona bubi tawe,
khubela roho sina enyolanga babandu
musilo syongene, namwe roho sina ebirania
babandu muchinju, namwe roho sina
enyolanga bafwa bongene. Bukora.
Khuchie ebweni.

Solo: Ng'ali ng'ali khureba,

Chorus: Nekoye, kobola engo yaya lekhana
nekebasali.

Solo: Ng'ali ng'ali khureba,

Chorus: Nekoye, kobola engo yaya lekhana
nekebasali.

Nekoye, basali babi babirania babandu
muchinju.

Nekoye, basali babi babirania babandu
muchinju.

Speech:

Oli khumwene wase, ese namakhumenyanga
ne omusakhulu, papa wange bali

at night?

You, what kind of spirit surely gets,
only those who are dead?

You, what kind of spirit my brother that causes
those of a household to collide?

Speech:

We ourselves greet one another, Ee!

We do not know what this is.

Waswa my child, tell us something.

Thank you father

From a long time ago old men, that is up
to the eighteenth of the month, old men.

We have been having those who pray old men.

But from that time it looks like we have many

evil spirits in this home. On that note,

we find people as they name themselves.

This wife Nekoye went to those people,

when she got there before we came to this

world. Finally, they called her husband an evil
spirit.

When the husband heard, he felt so bad.

He went to Malakisi and found his In-law
called councillor Juma, who told him not

to feel so bad,

since what kind of spirit is this that befalls

people only at night. What kind of spirit

afflicts people in their homes or what kind of

spirit afflicts those who are dead. This is crafty.

Let us continue.

Solo: Truly, truly we ask

Chorus: Nekoye go back home and leave
those who pray.

Solo: Truly, truly we ask

Chorus: Nekoye go back home and leave
those who pray.

Nekoye, those who pray are bad they cause
conflict among people of the same household.

Nekoye, those who pray are bad they cause
conflict among people of the same household.

Speech:

On my own accord, I have been living with an
old man, my father, called Tom Nyongesa.

Tom Nyongesa. Ama khufwila Kenyatta.
 Niyo ali eyeyo basali
 bakhwipamwo wase engo.
 Mulala kecha engo bali ese wang'ali.
 Mbona basimurakho chinganakani,
 ne eba omwana. Aba wandase bamuongakho
 bali Ee! Niko kano.
 Basali bakholanga kweli kang'ali?
 Ne abwenao ta! Bali basali ta!
 Oli bakhuloka, mala ali okhuloka oyoyo bali
 bapapa befwe babandi bakhuloka.
 Ata nowicha engo kumulembe mbao ta
 basakhulu.
 Ke basali khwalobile.
 Khuchie ebweni.

Solo: Ng'ali ng'ali khureba,
 Chorus: Nekoye, kobola engo yaya lekhana
 nekebasali.
 Solo: Ng'ali ng'ali khureba,
 Chorus: Nekoye, kobola engo yaya lekhana
 nekebasali.
 Nekoye, basali babi babirania babandu
 muchinju.
 Nekoye, basali babi babirania babandu
 muchinju.

A.1.6. ESWA (KB)

ESWA

Solo: Chingila chilingo baye, chingano chilingo
 baye. Makhuwa kaliyo ng'ali.
 Eswa yalila, eswa yalila.

Chorus: Eswa yalilaa, namenya e asi mwiloba,
 namenya e asi mwiloba, namenya ne walunabe.
 Walunabe kakhaire khanine mungaki wa wele.

Walunabe kakhaire khanine angaki wa wele,
 yayako.
 Engenda ndila, yayako, engenda ndila.

Solo: Chingila chilingo baye, chingano
 chilingo baye. Eswa yalilanga, eswa yalilaa.

He died at Kenyatta.
 While he was there,
 those who pray ambushed him at home.
 One of them came home saying am a true
 person. As they were occupying his mind,
 one of them stole his child. My brother followed
 him in wonder. Ee! This is it.
 Those who pray, are they really sincere?
 On that note No! Those who pray No!
 They bewitch you and say that you have been
 bewitched by some of our forefathers.
 Even when you come home there is no peace,
 old men.
 All concerning those who pray, we have refused
 Let us proceed

Solo: Truly, truly we ask
 Chorus: Nekoye go back home and leave
 those who pray.
 Solo: Truly, truly we ask
 Chorus: Nekoye go back home and leave
 those who pray.
 Nekoye, those who pray are bad they cause
 conflict among people of the same household.
 Nekoye, those who pray are bad they cause
 conflict among people of the same household.

THE WHITE ANT

Solo: The ways are there and the stories are
 there. Truly there are issues,
 the white ant cried, the white ant cried.

Chorus: The white ant cried, I stay down in the
 soil, I stay down in the soil, I stay with the mole.
 It is impossible to live with the mole so let me
 climb up to God.

It is impossible to live with the mole so let me
 climb up to God, my brother.
 I walk crying my brother, I walk crying.

Solo: The ways are there, and stories are
 there. The white ant cried, the white ant cried,

Bali e asi mulilo.
Eswa yalilaa ng'ali mwikulu mulilo. Ah!

Speech:
Eswa yalilaa sana, asi mulilo, mwikulu mulilo.
Asi namenya, walunabe wakhaya.

Ali niyo nina mungaki, enyuni yosi yakhaile.
Nono sengenda ta. Ah!

Solo: Chingano chilingo baye. Eswa lila ng'ali
mwikulu mulilo.
Eswa lila ng'ali asi mulilo.
Chingano chiliyo ng'ali makhuwa akako.
Chingano chiliyo ng'ali, eswa yalilaa. Ah!

Speech-melody:
Nemaye, ndala ndala, chisangi chakhola nga
butebusi. Ne khwaba ne wambundo ee;
khwaba nende esindu, khwaba nende nanjusi,
khwaba nende engoli waba chairman
wechisangi.
Wacha khubolela wambundo bung'aliwe.
Wacha khutila wambundo ali alilaa.
Benya bung'ali. Eswa nende wambundo balila.

Chisangi chiareba wambundo ekhafu yefwe
eli waye? Chisangi chiekana wambundo
soli esangi, chinyuni chiekana wambundo
soli nyuni. Ah!

Solo: Eswa yalilaa
Chorus: Eswa yalilaa, namenya e asi mwiloba,
namenya e asi mwiloba, namenya ne walunabe.

Walunabe kakhaire khanine mungaki wa wele,
Walunabe kakhaire khanine mungaki wa wele,
Yayako.
Engenda ndila, yayako, engenda ndila.

Speech-melody:
Oli chicha , chicha, ch yolile khane,
chisangi ng'ali chiekana wambundo.
Chinyuni chiosi chiekana wambundo.

that down here there is fire.
The white ant cried even in heaven there is fire.
Ah!

Speech:
The white ant cried so much, down here fire,
in heaven fire. Down here I stay with the
mole, who is impossible to live with.
When I climb up the birds is also impossible..
Now I do not walk. Ah!

Solo: Stories are there. The white ant really
cried, in heaven there is fire.
The white ant cried that down here there is fire.
Truly there are stories, there are issues.
Stories are truly there. The white ant cried. Ah!

Speech-melody:
In order, one by one the animals organized a
meeting. It was made up of the Bat;
there was the quail the rat and the crane,
who was the chairman of the animals.

They were going to tell Bat the truth.
They caught the Bat who really cried, they
wanted to find out the truth. The white ant
and Bat really cried.
The animals asked the Bat, where is our cow?
The animals denounced the Bat that you are
not an animal. The Birds also denounced the
Bat saying you are not a bird. Ah!

Solo: The white ant cried.
Chorus: The white ant cried, I stay down in the
soil, I stay down in the soil, I stay with the
mole.

It is impossible to live with the mole so let me
climb up to God,
It is impossible to live with the mole so let me
climb up to God, my brother.
I walk crying my brother, I walk crying.

Speech-melody:
So they came and came, on arriving,
surely the animals had denounced the Bat.
The birds also denounced the Bat.

Ng'ali, ng'ali wambundo soli enyuni.
Wambundo kalila ng'ali khusialo, bali
ese khola ndie? Wambundo kalila ng'ali ng'ali
bali ese khola ndie? Wambundo kaamua
bali ese khukhwama luno, wambundo
kaamua ne epa khumusala baye.
Senjola khungaki wa wele, khanjole,
khanjole khusisina sino, khubela khusisina
sino sikila ekhafu yatiba. Ah!
Chingano nichio.

Speech:

Wambundo kaamua bali ese khukhwama
luno, nakhapurukha nachuma endiena bana
befwe nengwa khumusala, sendi lolakho
mungaki wa wele tawe.
Khendimire sisina sino niyo nabowakho
khumusala kuno ekhafu yase yecha yatiba.
Wambundo kaamua ali ese nakhapurukha
njolanga busa musisina asi siakila ekhafu
yatiba. Ah!

Speech-melody:

Chisangi chiecha, chinyuni chiosi.
Chiecha ng'ali ng'ali chiekana wambundo.
Namuchunjusi khosi khecha khali khapa
yefwe yatiba. Namuchunjusi khaloba khali
ese ngenda ndie?
Namuchunjusi khekana khali sekha ndisia
bana ba papa.
Solo: Wambundo ali sabirira khungila ino.
Chorus: Sikila engila eno yakila ekhafu yatiba.

Speech-melody:

Esindu yecha, esindu yecha ng'ali yekana
wambundo. Esindu yecha ng'ali ng'ali
yekana wambundo.
Eswa yaamua ng'ali ese nakhapurukha,
chingano chilyo ng'ali, makhuwa niko aka.
Ekana wambundo ng'ali ng'ali wambundo
soli nyuni ewe, ekana wambundo soli sangi Ah!
Makhuwa kalingo baye.
Makhuwa niko aka baye
Chunjusi khaloba bali sekhalisia khungila,
bali niye apurukha.

Surely, surely Bat you are not a bird.
Bat cried on this earth, what do I do surely?
The Bat cried, what do I do surely?
The Bat made a decision that from today,
Bat decided and ran to a tree.

I will not reach the top where God is,
let me just reach and relax on these roots
because these roots made the cow get lost. Ah!
Those are stories.

Speech:

The Bat decided that from today, however
hard I try to fly, our children, and fall on the
trees, I will never reach heaven where God is.

Let me run on these roots so that on this tree,
I will tie my cow so that it does not get lost.
The Bat decided even if I fly,
I only reach the roots, down here where the
cow got lost. Ah!

Speech-melody:

The animals came, the birds also came.
They all denounced the Bat.
The rat also came saying that he hit ours that
got lost. The rat denounced him saying how
do I walk?
The rat denounced that he does not feed me,
children of my father.
Solo: The Bat will never pass on this road.
Chorus: Because this road caused the cow to
get lost.

Speech-melody:

The Quail came, the Quail surely came and
denounced the Bat. The Quail came surely,
surely and denounced the Bat.
The white ant decided that even if I fly,
these are stories, surely they are eventualities.
He denounced the Bat saying you are not a
bird and you are not an animal. Ah!
My goodness, there are issues at home.
My goodness, here are the issues.
The rat refused that he will not cross that road,
that he will fly.

Makhuwa niko aka, chingano chilingo baye.
Engoli khecha khaanjisia mukutano.
Khaba chairman, khekana wambundo baye.
Engoli khecha, Engoli khecha, khecha
Engoli khecha ng'ali ng'ali khekana
wambundo baye.
Engoli khecha khekana wambundo.
Ng'ali ng'ali wambundo soli nyuni.

Solo: Oli Ee! Ee!
Chorus: Balekha wambundo khumuse.
Solo: Oli Ee! Ee!
Chorus: Balekha wambundo khumuse.
Solo: Oli Ee! Ee!
Chorus: Balekha wambundo khumuse.
Solo: Oli Ee! Ee!
Chorus: Balekha wambundo khumuse.
Solo: Oli Ee! Ee!
Chorus: Balekha wambundo khumuse.

A.1.7. EWUYO INO (KB)

EWUYO INO

Solo: Ewuyo ino ebasoreri balila.
Ewuyo ino papa bakonera chingila.

Chorus: Ewuyo ino ebasoreri balila.
Ewuyo ino papa bakonera chingila.

Solo: Bakhalila, ebakonela chingila.
Bakhalila, ebakonela chingila.
Ewuyo ino papa bakonela chingila.

Speech-melody:
Basoreri balila chingila.

Solo: Ewuyo ino papa bakonela chingila.

Chorus: Ewuyo ino papa bakonela chingila.

Solo: Ewuyo ino mayi bakonela chingila.

Chorus: Ewuyo ino mayi bakonela chingila.

Solo: Ewuyo ino papa bakonela chingila.

That is the issue, stories are at home.
The crane came and kicked off the meeting.
He, the chairman denounced the Bat.
The crane came, the crane came, came.
The crane surely came and denounced the Bat.

The crane came and denounced the Bat, surely
Bat you are not a bird.

Solo: That Ee! Ee!
Chorus: They left the Bat at the gathering.
Solo: That Ee! Ee!
Chorus: They left the Bat at the gathering.
Solo: That Ee! Ee!
Chorus: They left the Bat at the gathering.
Solo: That Ee! Ee!
Chorus: They left the Bat at the gathering.
Solo: That Ee! Ee!
Chorus: They left the Bat at the gathering.

THIS MIGRATION

Solo: This migration, young boys wept.
This migration our fathers slept on the way.

Chorus: This migration, young boys wept.
This migration our fathers slept on the way.

Solo: Even if they weep, they slept on the way.
Even if they weep, they slept on the way.
This migration, our fathers slept on the way.

Speech-melody:
Young boys wept on the way.

Solo: This migration our fathers slept on the
way.

Chorus: This migration our fathers slept on the
way.

Solo: This migration our mothers slept on the
way.

Chorus: This migration our mothers wept on the
way.

Solo: This migration our fathers slept on the

Chorus: Ewuyo ino papa bakonela chingila.

Solo: Bakhilila,

Chorus: Ee.

Solo: Bakonela khungila,

Chorus: Ee.

Solo: Bakhilila,

Chorus: Ee.

Solo: Bakonela khungila,

Chorus: Ee.

Solo: Bakhilila,

Chorus: Ee.

Solo: Bakonela khungila,

Chorus: Ee.

Solo: Bakhilila,

Chorus: Ee,

Solo: basoreri balila chingila.

Chorus: Ee.

Solo: Kang'ali muchalicha.

Chorus: Bauya.

Solo: Kang'ali muchalicha.

Chorus: Bauya.

Solo: Kang'ali muchalicha.

Chorus: Bauya.

Solo: Kang'ali muchalicha.

Chorus: Bauya.

Speech:

Muchalicha omwo, bamakhwicha bauya bandu munzoia.

Basakhulu bamakhulila sana oli mwabukula kamaloba kefwe. Bakali bama khukhaya.

Khwama khuba nende omusakhulu bali Raphaeli, omulunda.

Bali ese mwakhatimania bandu mwa mala semuundusia muchalicha muno tawe.

Likhuwa liama khurura omusakhulu wakhaile ali Ta! Ta! Ta!

Sendura muchalicha muno ta Ee!

Yamakhuba oli basungu bola, oli omusakhulu kakhaile sinano?

Ama khukhaya barera egiripu yema khunju.

Omusakhulu alila ali tawe khendusie bibindu biange.

way.

Chorus: This migration our fathers slept on the way.

Solo: Even if they weep,

Chorus: Ee.

Solo: They slept on the way,

Chorus: Ee

Solo: Even if they weep,

Chorus: Ee.

Solo: They slept on the way,

Chorus: Ee

Solo: Even if they weep,

Chorus: Ee.

Solo: They slept on the way,

Chorus: Ee

Solo: Even if they weep,

Chorus: Ee,

Solo: young boys wept on the way.

Chorus: Ee.

Solo: Surely in the locality.

Chorus: They moved.

Solo: Surely in the locality.

Chorus: They moved.

Solo: Surely in the locality.

Chorus: They moved.

Solo: Surely in the locality.

Chorus: They moved.

Speech:

In that place they came and moved all the people.

Old men cried so much because of their ancestral land but many did move. Many had refused. One old man called Raphael from the clan *Balunda*.

For me even if you move all people from this place, you will not remove me.

Word came that the old man was adamant saying No! No! No!

Am not leaving this place. Ee!

The white men arrived saying why has the old man refused?

He was stubborn and they brought a bulldozer at his house. The old man cried saying no!

Let me remove my belongings.

Yamakhuba oli basuta bibindu.
Kabirusya ne babana bewe.
Egriripu yamakhusyuba enju.
Omusakhulu kalila baye. Ee!
Kamakhucha oli bola bukembe khulinda ebasi,
abele bamubole ye ekolongolo engaki.
Khuche!

Solo: Kang'ali muchalicha.
Chorus: Bauya.
Solo: Kang'ali bauya.
Chorus: Bauya.
Solo: Papa bakaloba.
Chorus: Bauya.
Solo: Kang'ali muchalicha.
Chorus: Bauya. Ee!

Speech:

Ebasi yamakhwicha bali Rodiwesi.
Omusakhulu kamakhuramo bindu byewe ne
babana bewe. Liyeye liamakhubira Misango,
ese Masika Mukubwa nalola.
Musakhulu arerekho enyungu yewe ali papa
enyungu yase eyo kamabele kase kalimo,
ekhecha yakunukha tawe. Eh!
Kondakita wabona enyungu yomusakhulu
yamiliya Eh!
Ali "enyungu ino, khakhola ndio nakitingisa".
Omusakhulu abola ali kamabele kewe kalimo
kakhachichukha tawe.
Bamakhuchia bali bola Webuye,
musakhulu kemile khale enje.
Khulola enyungu yewe kana yatikhe.
Kalola enyungu yewe endayi busa.
Liyeye liamakhuba liola Webuye bana base,
bachenja emutoka.
Kabolela webasi ali papa enyungu yase eliyo,
njakhwikhala busa nenayo.
Ali ah! ah! Enyungu khurechanga khungaki. Eh!
Chiamakhuola saa saba che kumusi,
omusakhulu kekha mukolongolo.
Khane basoreri bekhisiangaka bibindu bana
befwe, sebaamanyile enyungu yo musakhulu
esutile mabele sina tawe.
Oli omusoreri wekhisia oli kola asi,
lifundo nilio omusakhulu aboile liafunukha.

He packed his belongings together with his
children.
The bulldozer brought down his house as the
old man cried. Ee!
They came and arrived at Bukembe to wait for
a bus heading up towards Kolongolo.
Lets go!

Solo: Surely in the locality.
Chorus: They moved.
Solo: Surely they moved.
Chorus: They moved.
Solo: Our fathers refused.
Chorus: They moved.
Solo: Surely in the locality.
Chorus: They moved. Ee!

Speech:

A bus called Roadways came in which the old
man put his things and his children.
The carriage passed Misango,
I Masika Mukubwa saw.
The old man put his pot saying father this pot
of mine has milk, let it not be opened. Eh!
The bus conductor saw how beautiful the old
man's pot was.
He said, "this pot, let me not shake it".
The old man says that his milk is in it and it
should not pour.
They came and got to Webuye, the old man was
standing out of the vehicle, to check whether
his pot was broken.
He saw that his pot was just okay.
When the carriage got to Webuye, my children,
they moved to another vehicle.
He told the bus owner, father, my pot is there,
I will just sit with it.
No! No! Pots, we put on top, on the carrier. Eh!
At around one in the afternoon,
the old man alighted at Kolongolo.
The luggage handlers who were lowering things
from the carrier, were not aware of the kind of
milk the old man's pot carried.
One young man lowered the pot from the
carrier, as the pot reached down, the note tied by

Oli kimiremu kiepe enje. Eh!
 Basoreri oli batima chimbilo.
 Kamakhuwa ako si, basoreri. Eh! Eh! Eh!
 Wase chichupa chyatikha mubaa, bindu oli
 bichichukha, basoreri batima musoko chimbilo.
 Babaanikhile chingubo bakikuyu Batimile bali
 bakukula musoko. Eh!
 Omusakhulu ema ali “Ah papa
 mwambakala sibakala”. Eh!
 Ema oli alanga chindemu chiakalukha
 mushati wase.
 Babandu belukhe Ekolongolo musoko
 bawelekho sio. Eh!
 Kamakhuwa ako sina. Eh!
 Oli, “Wafula papa wambakala sibakala”. Eh!

Basakhulu bama khuamayo, babandu becha,
 chifu be bakasa, bamuila khusiamba lia
 Wanamino, mukolongolo khane akana
 kimiremu kikwa.
 Khuchie ebweni.

Solo: Kang’ali muchalicha.
 Chorus: Bauya.
 Solo: Kang’ali bauya.
 Chorus: Bauya.
 Solo: Papa bakhaloba
 Chorus: Bauya.
 Solo: Kang’ali bakhaloba.
 Chorus: Bauya.

A.1.8. BASAKWA (NJB)

BASAKWA

Speech:

Ese mwene nendi Bernard Manyali,
 omwana wa marehemu dokta Nyongesa
 khukhwama Muokape, nicha ne lulwimbo
 Iwa Basakwa, ne manyile omubukusu kaloma
 ari “omwimbi sakelekanga enungo tawe”.
 Lakini wakhaba nano orekeresia, onyolamo
 lilala likhuombokha.

the old man became loose.
 Large snakes came out. Eh!
 The boys took off running very fast.
 Those are the issues my brothers. Eh! Eh! Eh!
 Bottles got broken in the bar, things spilled,
 the young boys ran very fast at the market.
 All those who had laid their clothes for sell, the
 Kikuyu ran screaming at the market. Eh!
 The old man stood saying, “Ah my father,
 you have hung me out to dry”. Eh!
 He stood and called back his snakes, and they
 went into his shirt.
 The market place was empty as people had
 run away. Ee!
 Those were the issue, Ee!
 He said, “Wafula my father; you have hanged
 me out to dry”. Eh!
 From there the old men, the chiefs and the
 elders came and took him to Wanamino’s farm
 in Kolongolo to deal with him, in case the
 snakes fell.
 Lets go

Solo: Surely in the locality.
 Chorus: They moved.
 Solo: Surely they moved.
 Chorus: They moved.
 Solo: Our fathers refused.
 Chorus: They moved.
 Solo: Surely even if they refused.
 Chorus: They moved.

BASAKWA⁴⁷

Speech:

Me, myself being Bernard Manyali, son of
 the late Doctor Nyongesa from Muokape,
 I come with a song *Basakwa*, knowing that
 a Bukusu said a short person does not attempt
 to reach *enungo*.
 But, whoever you are listen, you may get one
 or two things that can build you up.

⁴⁷ Men who have married women from the same home call each other *Basakwa*.

Khuchie bweni basakhulu.

Solo: Papa bareba,

Chorus: Basakwa, niye nanu?

Solo: Mayi bareba,

Chorus: Elisina lia Basakwa lianja lirije?

Solo: Yaya bosu bario,

Chorus: Rekeresia, fwe babene khujibe.

Speech:

Khukhwama khale akhakho, babukusu bama khutyukhanga babana kamasina nende likila. Yani abele onyala wanyola omwana bamulanga Wekesa namwe Nekesa nga bebulwa mwekesa.

Lulwimbo luno lwa Basakwa, basakhulu, khulamanya lisina Basakwa lino lili sina. Khura rekeresianga khuli Basakwa tawe. Abwenao khulanyola mwana Anthony akhuelesekho khumanye lisina Basakwa nga lianja.

Orio musakhulu.

Lisina lino lianja liri, babao bandu babili. Bandu bano baba mungo mulala, babakhilakhila kimiandu, omuinda nende omutambi. Omutambi oli siamulia munju ali tawe, oli lekha enjie wasieange, sekhe. Abukula omukhaye wewe bachia, lakini nga bolayo abele omuinda, khulekha khuyeta omutambi, yenza khukhola khukwaso khu mulamuwe.

Lakini kila basakhulu babao simbi, bekhala mala baloma bali, "Apana! Ewe wenyile khumocha mulebe", mala bulebe buno bwakwa khwanza khulanga wasye Basakwa. Kali kario basakhulu. Khuchie ebweni.

Solo: Khusibala sino enywe,

Chorus: Abandu fyesi khukhoya khumanye.

Solo: Limenya lye musialo,

Chorus: Elianja khale, babandu bakhilana.

Solo: Ewe noli nasiyo,

Chorus: Sima wele, okhachia ostoile.

Chorus: Kamakhuwa kano kachia khuBasakwa. Chorus: this issue went to the *Basakwa*.

Let us proceed old men.

Solo: Fathers are asking you,

Chorus: *Basakwa*, who is he?

Solo: Mothers are asking,

Chorus: This name *Basakwa* how did it begin.

Solo: Brothers, in the same way.

Chorus: Listen, we ourselves will answer.

Speech:

From a long time ago, the Bukusu, have been naming their children with a reason. In fact you can find a child named Wekesa or Nekesa as they were born during the harvesting period.

This song *Basakwa*, old men, we will find out what the name *Basakwa* is.

We should not just be hearing *Basakwa*.

On that note, we will find child Anthony to explain to us, so that we know how this name *Basakwa* came about.

Thank you, old man.

This name began like this, there were two people. These people lived in the same home. They differed in wealth, a rich man and a poor man. The poor man, was disturbed in the house and he said no, let me go elsewhere and stay there. He took his wife and left, but when he got there, the rich man not assisting the poor man, wanted to provoke his in-law.

But since the old men were nearby, they sat down and said, "No! you wanted to tease your relative", so this relationship became the first to be called *Basakwa*, that is how it is, old men.

Let us go ahead.

Solo: On this earth you,

Chorus: All of us should know.

Solo: Life in this world,

Chorus: Began long ago, people differ.

Solo: You, if you have,

Chorus: Thank God, do not walk with heaviness.

Basakwa niyo olirekeresia.
Basakwa khaba nowa baya.

Chikhafu chyoo khoywa omuwai.
Basakwa, khaba nowakula.
Mikunda kyoo, khoywa okhulimilaa.
Basakwa khaba nowombokha.
Echigorofa okhoywa okhulindilaa.
Ah!

Speech:

Basakhulu kamakhuwa niko khuloma kano,
kama khwicha kekhorekha sa kimiaka ishirini
kibirire musibala sino.
Yani namakhuba ne Basakwa ama khuba
ne kimiandu kimikali sana mungo muno.
Sesi nise wamakhumulindilanga kimiandu
ekyekyo. Lakini nanya emanye Basakwa uno
nekamba buri namwe nekambucha.
Nisio wikomba ng'ali onyola wase.

Nama khuba endi ndomana nende omukhaye
wange kelukha. Aba kelukha wa Basakwa.
Ese mwene namuongakho sifuba ebweni
aendi Ah!
Nga njetanga Basakwa ekasi, aranjeta
khukobosia engo omukhaye.
Oli muongakho, Basakwa akhola ke chisoni,
kumwoyo kwanjuna.

Speech-melody:

Yayako, kumwoyo kwachuna.
Kumwoyo kuno baye, yayako,
kukwange kwachuna.
Nakalukha engo, yayako, kukwange kwachuna.
Nekhala asi, yayako, kumwoyo kwachuna.
Nenyukha asi enywe, yayako, nacha khusoko.

Enywe malakisi, yayako, nanyola kansola.
Ah!

Speech:

Ah! Omwene kansola Juma wase amenya
mubuwami. Ali “sina”, ah tawe wase
kumwoyo kunjira. Basakwa akhorere kamabi.
Omubukusu ali “khu ulilisanian ne likhese,

It is *Basakwa* who will listen.
Basakwa, even if you have been to great
heights.

Your cows require a herdsman.
Basakwa, even if you have bought,
Your land, you need one to dig for you.
Basakwa, even if you have build,
Storied houses, you need a caretaker.
Ah!

Speech:

Old men, this issue we have been talking about,
came and took place in the past twenty years on
this earth.

I had a *Basakwa* who had a lot of wealth in
this home.

I am the one who was watching over his
property or wealth. But I wanted to know
Whether this *Basakwa* had given me respect or
had given me disrespect. Whatever you wish
for, you surely get.

I had been quarrelling with my wife and she
ran away. She ran to *Basakwa's* place.
I, myself followed her with my chest forward
saying Ah!

The way I assist *Basakwa* with work, he will
assist me to bring back my wife.
I followed and *Basakwa* did a shameful thing,
my heart ached.

Speech-melody:

My brother, my heart ached.
This heart, my brother, of mine ached.

I went back home, my brother, of mine ached.
I sat down, my brother, of my heart ached.
I stood up you people, my brother, and
went to the market.

You, at Malakisi, my brother, and found
councillor. Ah!

Speech:

Ah! Himself Councillor Juma has lived in
leadership. That, “What?” oh no my heart
is killing me. *Basakwa* did me wrong.
A Bukusu says, “To agree with a sheep, things

bibindu makhuyu”. Ali bela Basakwawo.
Khuchie ebweni basakhulu.

Solo: Khusibala sino enywe,
Chorus: Abandu fwesi khukhoya khumanye.
Solo: Limenya liye musialo,
Chorus: Elianja khale, babandu bakhilana.
Solo: Ewe noli nasiyo,
Chorus: Sima wele, okhachia ostoile.
Bubi sana.

Speech:
Nono basakhulu, mbukula enafasi ino
khubolele yesi yesi olikho ne Basakwawe
khusibala sino, ewe wakhaba ne kimiandu,
wele niye okhuwechanga.
Okhamocha Basakwawo tawe.
Mumuelesye eheshima yewe. Akhatamba
siyeyo mungo. Basakwawo aba Basakwawo.

Sendibilila Sanja Pius, alala nende mulamwa
Regina ta. Oli Basakwa mbe eheshima wase.

A.1.9. SELLAH (LBB)

SELLAH

Solo: Baluya khusimane nge Mwambu
ne Sellah.
Chorus: Baluya khusimane nge Mwambu
ne Sellah.
Solo: Baluya khusimane nge Mwambu
ne Sellah.
Chorus: Baluya khusimane nge Mwambu
ne Sellah.
Solo: Akhaba khusimane nge Mwambu
ne Sellah.
Chorus: Baluya khusimane nge Mwambu
ne Sellah.

Speech-melody:
Obikha okhubikha. Khulicha wanano enda
yo muluya, khulicha wanano enda yo muluya,
khulicha wanano.
Wewase, wo mukhasi, wewasio?
Mukhasi kaba omusungu. Kecha woi kema

go wrong”. That, “forgive your *Basakwa*”.
Let us go on old men.

Solo: On this earth you,
Chorus: All of us should know.
Solo: Life in the world,
Chorus: Began long ago, people differ.
Solo: You, if you have,
Chorus: Thank God, do not walk with
heaviness. So bad.

Speech;
So old men, I take this opportunity to tell
any one who has a *Basakwa* on this earth,
if you have wealth it is God who gives.

Do not disrespect your *Basakwa*.
Give him his respect. He should not lack a
broom in his house. Your *Basakwa* is your
Basakwa.
I will not forget Sanja Pius, together with my
in-law Regina. *Basakwa*, give me my respect.

SELLAH

Solo: The Baluhya, let us love one another like
Mwambu and Sellah.
Chorus: The Baluhya, let us love one another
like Mwambu and Sellah.
Solo: The Baluhya, let us love one another like
Mwambu and Sellah.
Chorus: The Baluhya, let us love one another
like Mwambu and Sellah.
Solo: Even if we love one another like
Mwambu and Sellah.
Chorus: The Baluhya, let us love one another
like Mwambu and Sellah.

Speech-melody:
You dress he who dresses you. Where will we
go, the Baluhya womb (sung twice)
where will we go.
At my place, at a wife’s, at you friend’s?
The wife was a white. She came and stood

kari, aenja Sellah bubi.
 Babukula Sellah ng'ali, bacha nabo.
 Babukula Sellah ng'ali, bacha nabo.
 Obikha okhubikha, bana baluya, obikha
 okubikha. Elija wa Nameme,
 Elija wa Nameme ng'ali mwana mubitachi,
 okhela wekisa.
 Bana Baluya okhela wekisa.
 Ali munyanja ya Walune.
 Omusebebe onyowa wacha wakhanyola,
 Omusebebe onyowa wacha wakhanyola,
 Omusebebe onyowa wacha wakhanyola.
 Mwana muluya wacha khunyanja.
 Bana baluya kana wabanyola.
 Serikali ya sayi chino elola malako,
 mukhasi ne musecha.
 Elola malako mukhasi ne musecha.
 Obiila okhubiila. Joseph maloba, olola okhubita,
 okhoywa omuluya.
 Wanyonyi okhoywa omuluya.
 Papa mbukanga, bali omundu okhubita, bali
 omundu okhubita. Akhaba mujaluo, museve,
 baluya mbukanga. Mulwimbo lwo muluya,
 Mwambu kechilemwo, Mwambu kema kari,
 Ali chikhafu chino chye kumukhono mukhasi,
 khemuchie nacho. Chie kumukhono kumusecha,
 papa mundekhele. Chie kumukhono kumusecha,
 papa mundekhele. Khusale babandu.
 Khulicha wanano? Enda yo muluya
 khulicha wanano?
 Joseph Maloba papa ndikhola ndie?
 Edward Wafula, Edward Wafula wacha
 wabasaba andi nibo.
 Ewe Selina enda ye sichangi, mwana
 wabanyange papa mbukanga.
 Agnes, Agnes Nafula mukwangwa
 mbukanga. Mwana wabaliuli papa mbukanga.
 Edward Murunga mwana wabakwangwa
 balebe mbukanga. Edward Murunga yaya
 mbukanga. Isaac Soita mbukanga, mwana
 wabakisamo papa mbukanga mwana benyanja
 baluya mbukanga. Elija Mbanyula ekhela
 wekisa. Elija Mbanyula okhela wekisa bana
 bapapa. Elija Mbanyula.

looking for Sellah so badly.
 They took Sellah and truly went with them.
 They took Sellah and truly went with them.
 You dress he who dresses you, Baluhya
 children, you dress he who dresses you. Elija
 son of Nameme, Elija wa Nameme surely son of
 Babitachi, do not hide.
 Abaluhya children do not hide.
 He is at Walune's lake.
 Omusebebe you should first go and find him.
 Omusebebe you should first go and find him.
 Omusebebe you should first go and find him.
 A Luhya child if you go to the lake
 Baluhya children you may get them.
 The present government addresses the law.
 A wife and husband,
 It addresses the law wife and husband.
 You hate he who hates you. Joseph Maloba,
 look for one who inaugurates you⁴⁸. That should
 be a Baluhya. Wanyonyi, it should be a
 Baluhya. Father am amazed, that a person
 who inaugurates you, whether a Luo, a Kikuyu,
 the Baluhya am amazed. In a Abaluhya song,
 Mwambu came in, and stood saying that these
 cows on my left, you go with them.
 The ones on my right, father leave them for me.
 The ones on my right father leave them for me.
 Let us pray people.
 Where will we go? The Luhya womb,
 Where will we go?
 Joseph Maloba, my father what will I do?
 Edward Wafula, Edward Wafula went and
 requested.
 You Selina, womb of Sichangi child of the
Banyange father am amazed.
 Agnes, Agnes Nafula a *Mukwangwa* am
 amazed. Child of the *Baliuli*, father am amazed.
 Edward Murunga child of the *Bakwangwa*,
 my dear am amazed. Edward Murunga my
 brother am amazed. Isaac Soita am amazed.
 Child of the *Bakisamo* father am amazed,
 child of the lake, the Abauhya am amazed.
 Elija do not hide, Elija do not hide children
 of my father.

⁴⁸ The word okhubiita goes beyond inauguration and also involves praising a person.

Speech:

Alex, obona orie mwana wefwe?
Ah! abwenao mwana wa papa, abele
ndima enje enyola Mwambu, nanyola
Sande namureba andiko,
“Baluya befwe khuchia khurie?”
Alex omya wabola babukusu bakwanza
mubaluya.
Abwenao bwana George, khakhubolele.
Senda riya ta.

Solo: Baluya khusimane nge Mwambu
ne Sellah.

Chorus: Baluya khusimane nge Mwambu
ne Sellah

A.1.10. EWUYO INO (LBB)

EWUYO INO (LBB)

Speech:

Yaa! Nga basoreri bamila engelekha, mala
bachela lukando lwe chingo wase.
Mala balila bali, “Eh! Makhuwa sina aka?”

Solo: Bonakho bamayi balila.
Bonakho bapapa balila.
Bonakho nge bamila ngelekha.

Speech-melody:

Bonakho bechela ekiliwa wase.
Bali mpaka mumias wase. Banyola Mumia
wa Nabongo, makhuwa kabonekha
chingila wase. Bonakho bechela luboka,
basoreri bakenderesia nabo. Bonakho babira
chimbilo, oli osili mukimilili mubabira.

Speech:

Basani abo bali, “Tawe, khekhukonekho
ano khubone”. Bakona oli saa kumi na
moja chyola, namunyu oli auma akhire ta.
Bali omusakhulu mulala ali omukwangwa
nali bali Chemuku walila ali, “Ah!
Khwechile lukali bona esolokho yakhaile,
mumbekho kamechi ninywele”.
Batima kamechi chinyungu chitaru.

Speech:

Alex, how do you see our child?
Ah! On that note child of my father, I was to
ran and get Mwambu, I found Sande and
asked, “our Baluhya, how do we go?”

Alex you should say the first Bukusu among
the Luhya.

On that note Mr, George, I will tell you.
I will not fear.

Solo: The Baluhya let us love one another
like Mwambu and sellah.

Chorus: The Baluhya let us love one another
like Mwambu and sellah.

THIS MIGRATION

Speech:

Yaa! Just like the young boys came from a
far, they came via the home journey.
They cried, “Eh! What issues are these?”

Solo: Look our mothers cried.
Look our fathers cried.
Look as they came from a far.

Speech-melody:

They came via Kiliwa.
That, until Mumias. They found Mumia
of Nabongo. The issues were evident on the
way. Look they came via Luboka, as the
young boys walked with them. Look they
passed very fast, while you were still at Kimilili
as they passed.

Speech:

Those boys said, “No, let us sleep here and
see”. They slept until, 5 a.m when
a hyena was heard roaring so much.
One old man, from the Bakwangwa clan,
who was Chemuku cried, “Ah! See how
far we have come, I am thirsty.
Please give me some water I drink”.
They ran and fetched three pots.

Banywa kamechi kakhila. Bonakho Chemuku walila ali niyo nese njole emaeni?

Solo: Ali nese njole emaeni, ese njola,

Chorus: Ese njole emaeni.

Solo: Ese njola

Chorus: Ese njole emaeni.

Solo: Enje sabe,

Chorus: Enje sabe muba luwa.

Solo: Enje sabe,

Chorus: Enje sabe muba luwa.

Speech-melody:

Basoreri ng'ali balomaloma, Wanyama watima mbilombilo. Chemuku ng'ali walila, "ekhafu yange yebulila khungila, abanga omwana mukhana niye andi natyukha niye Nangila. Aba kamusinde niye khulomaloma, andi natyukha ndi Wangila, Eh! Balebe bange" Ewuyo ino babapa balila Eh! Ya!

Speech:

Eh! Wamaya ng'ali wakendelesia, wanyola omukosi nali Elija Wanameme, bana babapa. Ababolela ali, 'tawe, ese omusekese, ano nang'onile". Balanga sa khunywanywa liakamila khungila.

Endubilisi nayo ali liambukha sa engelekha bana babapa. Eh!

Solo: Ewuyo ino babapa balilila chingila,

Chorus: Ewuyo ino babapa balilila chingila.

Solo: Ewuyo ino basenge bakonela chingila,

Chorus: Ewuyo ino basenge bakonela chingila.

Solo: Ewuyo ino babapa balilila chingila,

Chorus: Ewuyo ino babapa balilila chingila.

Speech:

Isaac obona oriena?

Yaa abwenao basoreri khukendanga bana

They drunk a lot of water. Look Chemuku cried, when will I reach Maeni?

Solo: That, will I reach Maeni, I will reach,

Chorus: I will reach Maeni.

Solo: I will reach,

Chorus: I will reach Maeni.

Solo: I go beg,

Chorus: I go beg from those who are tired.

Solo: I go beg,

Chorus: I go beg from those who are tired.

Speech-melody:

Young boys really spoke, Wanyama ran very fast. Chemuku cried, "My cow gave birth on the way, if it were a girl, I would have named her Nangila. If it were a circumcised boy that we are talking about, I would have named him Wangila, Eh! My relatives". This migration our fathers cried eh! Ya!

Speech:

Eh! You could have walked very fast and found an elderly man called Elija Wanameme, children of my father. To tell them that, "I am a Musekese by clan. Here I have made it". They just call it a drink that ends there. This thing that crosses from a far. Children of my father. Eh!

Solo: This migration, our fathers wept on the way.

Chorus: This migration, our fathers wept on the way

Solo: This migration our aunts slept on the way,

Chorus: This migration our aunts slept on the way,

Solo: This migration, our fathers wept on the way.

Chorus: This migration, our fathers wept on the way.

Speech:

Isaac, how do you see?

Yes, on that note, young boys were walking.

befwe. Khuola Kamukuywa musungu
kema khukhuama engelekha khubona
muluya niyo khuloma bali bakendile.
Omubukusu ali kamukuywa nga khubona khuri.
Khuchie bweni bana befwe.

Speech-melody:
Endalila, nga bamila engelekha,
nga bamila engelekha. Eh!
Bakonela chingila, bakonela chingila,
basenge balila. Enda ya bene balila, ali wa
chetambe waloma. Waloma ng'ali basani.
Ese njole maeni, ese njole emaeni.

Speech:
Abwenao wase Alex obolakho.
Orio, abwenao onyola bakuka bakhale wase,
nibo nebechangakho.

A.1.11. MAYI (NB)

MAYI

Solo: Nanu khila mayi wange,
Chorus: Nanu khila mayi, nanu
khila mayi wange mbao khila mayi.

Solo: Nanu khila mayi wange,
Chorus: Nanu khila mayi, nanu
khila mayi wange mbao khila mayi.

Niye wanjibula, niye kang'ali,
wele wakhabili.
Niye dakitari kang'ali wakwanza niyo
wacha musibito. Ese namiliya akhaba
nafwara esuti khubela mayi wange.
Asinganga chingubo, khulima, khufuka,
amboile khumukongo.

Solo: Nanu khila mayi wange,
Chorus: Nanu khila mayi, nanu
khila mayi wange mbao khila mayi

Solo: Nanu khila mayi wange,
Chorus: Nanu khila mayi, nanu

When they reached Kamukuywa, a white man
stood from a broad to see these Luhya, that we
say walked.

A Bukusu says Kamukuywa as we see it.
Let us proceed our children.

Speech-melody:
I will weep as they came from a far,
as they came from a far. Eh!
They slept on the way, they slept on the way,
our aunts cried. Womb of the owners, they
cried, that of Chetambe spoke. He spoke surely
young boys. I will reach Maeni, I will reach
Maeni.

Speech:
On that note, Alex speak.
Thank you, on that note you find our grand
fathers of old, they as they came.

MOTHER

Solo: Who is better than my mother?
Chorus: Who is better than mother, who is
better than my mother, none is better than
my mother.

Solo: Who is better than my mother?
Chorus: Who is better than mother, who is
better than my mother, none is better than
my mother

She gave birth to me, she is real,
the second God.
She is truly the first doctor before going
to hospital. I have a smooth skin, even
dressed in a suit because of my mother.
She washes clothes, digs, cooks, with me
tied on her back.

Solo: Who is better than my mother?
Chorus: Who is better than mother, who is
better than my mother, none is better than
my mother.

Solo: Who is better than my mother?
Chorus: Who is better than mother, who is

khila mayi wange mbao khila mayi.

Baliyo mayi babandi bamwata bana muchoo,
niye bona kaninda.

Kekhala muchiko ese nenama silongelo
nenicha khukhwingila.

Kakusia kamamela, kakusia kamalwa niyo
ese ndi nasoma.

Speech:

Direkta bwana Misiko nali omukeni wa
mayi Diana aunga mukono. Geoffrey Khisa
khukhwama ekibabi,

Juma wa Bungoma Tourist yesi aunga
mukono, oli saliyo okhila mayi ta.

Solo: Nanu khila mayi wange,

Chorus: Nanu khila mayi, nanu
khila mayi wange mbao khila mayi

Solo: Nanu khila mayi wange,

Chorus: Nanu khila mayi, nanu
khila mayi wange mbao khila mayi

better than my mother, none is better than
my mother

There are some mothers who throw their
children, but look she took care of me.
She sits in the kitchen when I come from the
river to be circumcised.

She sold finger millet, beer so that I
could learn in school.

Speech:

Director Mr. Misiko who is a guest of mother
Diana supports. Geoffrey Khisa from Kibabai,

Juma of Bungoma Tourist also is in support
that, there is none better than mother.

Solo: Who is better than my mother?

Chorus: Who is better than mother, who is
better than my mother, none is better than
my mother.

Solo: Who is better than my mother?

Chorus: Who is better than mother, who is
better than my mother, none is better than
my mother

A.1.12. YEKAMAKHANYA (MB)

YEKAMAKHANYA

Speech:

Yaa! Basoreri ba mvumilivu band
khwarekukha. Khwekhale ano ne basoreri
nga Paulo Wanyonyi Kakai,
omwene oyo nali mwana mulichati ta.

Endi ano nende Edward Wafula.

Nekhale nende Mukai mwana mukhone,
alala nende Sifuna omwene oyo nali
mwana muemba, alala nende mayi
Nameme nali khulukalakala.

Okholoma oyu ali Robert Wangila omwana
mukhwani. Khuchie.

Solo: Enjala yekamakhanya embi yakila
bakhana bebikuliabela.

Chorus: Enjala yekamakhanya embi yakila
bakhana bebikuliabela.

Solo: Enjala yekamakhanya embi yakila

YEKAMAKHANYA

Speech:

Yes! Young boys of Mvumilivu band,
we have begun. We are seated here with Paul
Wanyonyi Kakai, he is from *Balichati*.

I am here with Edward Wafula. Am seated
with Mukai a child of the *Bakhone*,
together with Sifuna a child of the *Baemba*,
together with mother Nameme on the
ululation.

The one speaking is Robert Wangila, a child
of the *Bakhwani*. Lets go.

Solo: *Yekamakhanya* famine is bad; it made
the school going girls miserable.

Chorus: *Yekamakhanya* famine is bad; it
made the school going girls miserable.

Solo: *Yekamakhanya* famine is bad, it made

bakhana bechifisi bakusibwa.
Chorus: Enjala yekamakhanya embi yakila
bakhana bechifisi bakusibwa.

Speech-melody:
Aa enywe! basoreri ne bekanila
yekamakhanya ino yakila bakhana
bebikuli babeli. Engenda ndila, enjia yo
nachile eyo, endi nola Webuye.
Niko nabona yaba ng'ali singa nochia
baluya, chaba chimbi ewe. Chichyene
chimbi mang'ali. Mumakhanya baye,
nobira singa nochia embilo.
Engenda ndila bali wekhala ano ne kholoma.
Aa enywe! Ewe niyo wechisikhwa luno.
Engenda ndila, engenda ndilocha luno.
Nilocha waye mbulile enjala yemakhanya
balebe?

Solo: Enjala yemakhanya embi yakhula
bakhana bebikuli mumasomo.
Chorus: Enjala yemakhanya embi yakhula
bakhana bebikuli mumasomo.
Solo: Enjala yemakhanya embi yakhula
bakhana bechifisi khulami.
Chorus: Enjala yemakhanya embi yakhula
bakhana bechifisi khulami.

Speech-melody:
Aa enywe! Wanyonyi necha nono.
Necha nola mubungoma nanyola papa
mulala aliyo mala niye kambolela ali,
“Ewe Wanyonyi, ese khubolela ali noli
nekhafu emwototi, ali umbe khuwe
omukhana ali engo eyi”.
Ali nareba wasiyange Kanyistus.
Kanyistus naye wajiba.

Speech:
Kanyistus abwenao wase bola khubone.
Ora anja kamakhuwa ako.
Abwenao mbara Wanyonyi nga okhali no
omukhaye ta, kane omaye obukule.

Speech-melody:

the school fees girls be sold.
Chorus: *Yekamakhanya* famine is bad, it
made the school fees girls be sold.

Speech-melody:
Aa! You, young boys confessed that this
Yekamakhanya made the school going girls
miserable. I walk crying, I go there, I went
there, when I reached Webuye.
What I saw was really like going, the Luhya,
it was bad. It was truly bad.
In Makhanya, you pass like you are going
very fast.
I walk crying that you sit down here as you
speak. Aa you! You are the one who is buried
today. I walk crying, I walk dragging myself
today. Where do I drag myself to hear the
Yekamakhanya famine?

Solo: *Yemakhanya* famine is bad it uprooted
the school going girls from education.
Chorus: *Yemakhanya* famine is bad it
uprooted the school going girls from education.
Solo: *Yemakhanya* famine is bad it uprooted
the school fees girls from the road.
Chorus: *Yemakhanya* famine is bad it
uprooted the school fees girls from the road.

Speech-melody:
Aa you! Wanyonyi I came. I came and reached
Bungoma and found one father there and
he told me, “You Wanyonyi, I am telling you
that, if you have a young cow, give it to me,
I give you a girl who is at home”.
I asked my friend Kanyistus.
Kanyistus responded.

Speech:
Kanyistus on that note talk we see.
You will begin that issue.
On that note I think Wanyonyi since you do
not have a wife, you should just take.

Speech-melody:

Abwenao nachia endio baye.
 Kanyistus akhambolela ali chia obukule ekhafu obaye, bakhuelesye, bakhuwe.
 Nasuta omukhana nachia naye. Ali ola mungo mwefwe wekhala. Busia sibuhi naabukula enyungu ya mayi, na amua ndi chila mayi mwo kamechi baye.
 Omukhana chana balebe enyungu asutila khwibeka. Bali ekama muluchi enyungu yemile khumukongo, yakwa khusimiti lola yatikha baye. [Bula!] Bandu bauka bali basi enja ango, ako si! Ali khabili bubi.
 Necha namuyuswa engo. Namuwa kumupira, asaba mayi lileso ali, “mayi mbekho lileso, ese ndimange, ndakharekho engara esutile kamechi”.
 Khane aboamo lileso asutila kamechi kumukongo sikunda busa.
 Khaleso khakhalikha, kumupira kwa mayi kwakwa asi awo bona kwatandabukha emwalo kwa waa. Omukhana naye buri bwamukhaya [Khane wapa sibi] katima kacha kelukha achia khumaya khulami.
 Alikona khulami baye. Ata ne bulili bwongene bwamukhaya khukona.
 Kaamua khukusia kimiiba kyange, luno sakanakana efisi eyo. Lelo kaamua busa asuta kimiiba kyase khumurwe wase.
 Efisi yebolola, asuta busa neliloba. [Eh!]

Sakanakana, ndi khola ndie?
 Ng’ali ng’ali onyala bechifisi?

Solo: Enjala yekamakhanya embi eyo niyo yanyala bechifisi khulami.

Chorus: Enjala yekamakhanya embi eyo niyo yanyala bechifisi khulami.

Solo: Enjala yekamakhanya wasiyange eyo niyo yanyala bechifisi khulami.

Chorus: Enjala yekamakhanya wasiyange eyo niyo yanyala bechifisi khulami.

Speech:

On that note I went like that. Kanyistus has told me, “go take a cow and give them, they give you, they give you”.
 I carried the girl and went with her.
 When she reached our home, she sat.
 The following morning she took my mother’s pot and decided to fetch water in it.
 The girl carries the pot on her shoulders.
 At the river the pot was standing on her back, it fell on the floor and broke. [Reveal!]
 People were amazed still looking home, that is it! That twice is bad.
 I came and took her back home. I gave her a plastic container, she borrowed a *leso* saying, “mother, give me a leso, I ran, make a ring and use it to carry water”.
 She tied the leso and carried water on her back, just like that.
 The leso got torn, my mother’s water container fell down there, and the bottom got torn in pieces and got finished. The girl got so scared [So you suffered] she ran and ran and went to the road.
 She slept at the road. Even she was unable to use beddings.
 She decided to sell my sugar cane, nowadays she does not think of that school fees. Today she has decided to carry my sugar cane on the head. The school fees untied itself, she just carries with the soil. [Eh!]
 She does not think, what do I do? Truly, truly, can you manage those of school fees?

Solo: *Yekamakhanya* famine is bad it is the one that managed the school fees girls on the road.

Chorus: *Yekamakhanya* famine is bad it is the one that managed the school fees girls on the road.

Solo: *Yekamakhanya* famine my friend it is the one that managed the school fees girls on the road.

Chorus: *Yekamakhanya* famine my friend it is the one that managed the school fees girls on the road.

Speech:

Abwenao nawa mayi Nameme yesi alomekho.
Kamakuwa ako kamakali.
Kamakuwa kekamakhanya kamakali sana.
Yaba bakhana baluile bakhora bariena?
Bekosa khubandu khubabiila.
Neoyia bana bakhana.
Yaa! Chingano nicho.

Solo: Enjala yakolongolo baye niyo niyo
yamala bechifisi khulami.
Chorus: Enjala yakolongolo baye niyo niyo
yamala bechifisi khulami.

Speech-melody:
Oli wekana mbulile Wanyonyi naloma
bola mubabukusu.
Kumwoyo kunjuna mubakhana benjala.
Bakhana befisi bambumisyali niyo
bachia basuta khulami khubela khumenya
khulami baye, enju yosi yakhaya
khukhuombokha.
Nakusia ekhafu yange busa bali papa
omukhasi khane bananiange.
Ah ewe! Reuben ewe, ese Wanyonyi
ng'ali siuka. Bakhana bechifisi bano lelo
basutula kimiiba kyase khumurwe.
Reuben aukile nga ola ebungoma
akanakanakho. Anyola baakhakile kiminwa
bafwana ng'ali khoru.
Somulola ng'ali wamumala.

Solo: Enjala yekamakhanya balebe, eyo niyo
yanyala bechifisi khulami.

Chorus: Enjala yekamakhanya balebe, eyo niyo
yanyala bechifisi khulami.

Solo: Reuben akenda alila, eyo niyo yanyala
bechifisi khulami

Chorus: Enjala yekamakhanya balebe eyo niyo
yanyala bechifisi khulami.

On that note I give mother Nameme to also talk.
Those issues are many.
Issues of the *Kamakhanya* are very many.
It was just that the girls were tired, what would
they do? What scared them was the peoples'
hatred. I pride in girls.
Yes! These are stories.

Solo: The Kolongolo famine was the one that
finished the school fees girls on the road.
Chorus: The Kolongolo famine was the one that
finished the school fees girls on the road.

Speech-melody:
You did not want me to hear Wanyonyi
talking among the Bukusu.
My heart aches concerning the famine girls.
The school fees girls hurt me where they went,
they carried on the road because staying on
the road, they were unable to build a house.
I sold my cow for nothing, my father,
that a wife keeps disturbing me.
Ah you! Reuben you, I Wanyonyi am truly
in wonder. These school fees girls these
days carry my sugar cane on the head.
Reuben is amazed as he reached Bungoma
thinking. He found they had painted their
mouths, they look like a crow.
You do not see her and finish her.

Solo: Yekamakhanya famine my relatives, is
the one that managed the school fees girls on the
road.

Chorus: Yekamakhanya famine my relatives,
is the one that managed the school fees girls on
the road.

Solo: Reuben walks crying that is what
managed the school fees girls on the road.

Chorus: Reuben walks crying that is what
managed the school fees girls on the road.

A.1.13. ENDAKANO (LBB)

ENDAKANO

Speech:

Basakhulu mwekhale?

Eeh khwekhale.

Ndikho nende elomo, munyala mwandekeslesia? I have a saying, can you listen to it?

Eeh, Khukhwama khale,

endebe ye bikele bitaru onyala wesayirakho omwana wesikhana?

Ah tawe, khukhwama khale

musimachamacha, omwana wesikoko

kekhalala khulisielo kapa kumuliango

emukongo mala bamusayilakho.

Speech-melody:

Ayii! Baluya mbabolele, baluya mbabolele.

Wamalwa wa Baengele, papa kaba mulindi, papa kaba mulindi.

Iwiwi! Ese mbuka, iwiwi! Ese mbuka.

Jirongo, Jirongo mwana wa baluya alala ne Mudavadi. Muskari Kombo ng'ali, mwana we baluya ko.

Owambe lijembe, owambe lijembe ng'ali khutabusye kumuka. Masinde wa Muliro ng'ali kaba mulimi, George kaputeni ng'ali kaba mulimi, kaba mukambisi.

Enywe baluya, Wafula wa Munyinyi ng'ali mwana waba kimaiywa. Khucha khusoko ng'ali khuenja kumuka.

Owenja kumwili papa mukambisi ng'ali Joseph Maloba. Endima Jeremia ng'ali nyole Wandabwa oyo. Oyo Wandabwa oyo, mwana wa bayubu ng'ali mukeni wabanyala.

Paulo wase enywe balamu ng'ali, mwana wa baluya we, baluya nga Joseph Maloba.

Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?

Chorus: Khwenya Jirongo ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.

Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?

Chorus: Khwenya Jirongo ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.

Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?

Chorus: Khwenya Kombo ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.

Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?

A SAYING

Speech:

Old men, are you seated?

Yes we are seated.

I have a saying, can you listen to it?

Yes, From time immemorial,

can you allow a girl to sit on a three legged stool?

Oh no, from time immemorial, a young child sits on a skin with the back facing the door way, on which prayers are offered for her.

Speech-melody:

Ayii! Baluhya I tell you, Baluhya I tell you.

Wamalwa of the Baengele, father he was a leader, father he was a leader.

Iwiwi! I wonder, Iwiwi! I wonder.

Jirongo, Jirongo child of the Baluhya together with Mudavadi. Muskari Kombo truly, child of the Baluhya.

Hold the hoe, hold the hoe surely and complete the task. Masinde Muliro was truly a farmer, George Kaputeni was truly a farmer, he was from Kambisi.

You the baluhya, Wafula Munyinyi child of the Kimaiywa. We go to the Market surely to look for completion.

You look for father Joseph Maloba of from kambisi. I ran Jeremiah to truly find Wandabwa. That Wandabwa truly a child of the Bayubu and a guest of the Banyala.

Paul, you are truly well child of the Baluhya, Baluhya like Joseph Maloba.

Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?

Chorus: We are looking for Jirongo to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.

Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?

Chorus: We are looking for Jirongo to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.

Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?

Chorus: We are looking for Kombo to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.

Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?

Chorus: Khwenya Kombo ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.
Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Mudavadi ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.
Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Mudavadi ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.

Speech:
Martin loma mwana wefwe.
Orio yaya.
Abweno khubolela siama nga FORD Kenya, omundu ng'ali nga Mudavadi kabali siama sia ODM sebamuelesia enafasi ebweni ta, akalukha abukule mundu nga Muskari Kombo nende Jirongo mala Baluya bekhale alala baambane barusie omundu mulala. Aundi siama sia FORD Kenya sirama. Khuchie bweni wandaye.
Khupa, mupya Lugulu Bumusika Band Basoreri bekamani Mayi Webuye.
Sakwa! Nalikhubesi aukanga sana.
Joseph Maloba, Wakoli.

Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Jirongo ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.
Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Jirongo ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.
Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Kombo ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.
Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Kombo ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.
Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Mudavadi ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.
Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?
Chorus: Khwenya Mudavadi ambe lijembe atabusye kumuka ah.

Speech-melody:

Chorus: We are looking for Kombo to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.
Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Mudavadi to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.
Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Mudavadi to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.

Speech:
Martin speak our child.
Thank you, brother.
On that note we tell the FORD Kenya party, a person like Mudavadi if ODM party does not give him space at the front, he returns and takes a person like Muskari Kombo and Jirongo and then the Baluhya sit together in unity and have one person. May be the party FORD Kenya would be intact. Let's proceed my brother.
Play, new lugulu Bumusika Band.
Strong young boys, Mother Webuye
Sakwa! On the bass, wonders so much.
Joseph Maloba, wakoli

Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Jirongo to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.
Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Jirongo to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.
Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Kombo to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.
Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Kombo to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.
Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Mudavadi to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.
Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?
Chorus: We are looking for Mudavadi to hold the hoe and accomplish the task.

Speech-melody:

John ayuya, John ayuya noli Mathare eyo.
Solomon mashini, Museveni ayuya,
Museveni ayuya papa khaumbulile,
Museveni ayuya papa khaumbolele.
Isaka ayuya, Isaka ayuya, Kevini ayuya,
Ibrahimu ayuya papa alila bubu.
Wanyonyi mwana, Munyanganyi mwana
wabasabako. Francis Wamalwa enda ya
Wakoli ng'ali mwana musilondo.

Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?

Chorus: Khwenya Jirongo ambe lijembe
atabusye kumuka ah.

Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?

Chorus: Khwenya Kombo ambe lijembe
atabusye kumuka ah.

Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?

Chorus: Khwenya Mudavadi ambe lijembe
atabusye kumuka ah.

Solo: Baluya mwenja nano?

Chorus: Khwenya Mudavadi ambe lijembe
atabusye kumuka ah.

Speech:

Sakwa, achilia sasa, Maina, mayi wanchibula.
Beatrice, wachana na pombe bwana fanya
biashara. Mayi Nasimiyu semwibilila ta, oyo
niye omukhulu wewe
Eh! Senibilila bajirani ba mayi tawe,
alala nende Omukobolo.

John hurries, John hurries when you are at
Mathare. Solomon Machine, Museveni hurries,
Museveni hurries father listen to me.
Museveni hurries father tell me.
Isaac hurries, Isaac hurries, Kevin hurries,
Abraham hurrie father cries so much.
Wanyonyi child, Munyanganyi child of the
Basaba. Francis Wamalwa the womb of Wakoli,
truly a Musilondo.

Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?

Chorus: We are looking for Jirongo to hold the
hoe and accomplish the task.

Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?

Chorus: We are looking for Kombo to hold the
hoe and accomplish the task.

Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?

Chorus: We are looking for Mudavadi to hold
the hoe and accomplish the task.

Solo: Baluhya who are you looking for?

Chorus: We are looking for Mudavadi to hold
the hoe and accomplish the task.

Speech:

Sakwa let go now, maina, mother who bore me.
Beatrice, leave beer do some business.
I will not forget mother Nasimiyu, she is our
eldest.
Eh! I will not forget my mother's neighbours,
together with Omukobol

APPENDIX II

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

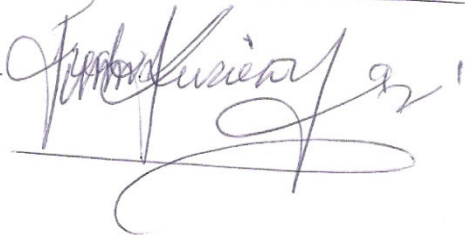
Research topic: “Verbal Text” as a process of compositional and improvisational elaboration in Bukusu *Litungu* music

Main objective: To investigate the role of “Verbal Text” in Bukusu *Litungu* music.

I Abigael Nancy Masasabi, am a student at the University of South Africa in pursuit of a Doctor of Musicology degree. In view of the above research topic, and your prowess in Bukusu *Litungu* performance, I kindly request your permission to be my research assistant during my entire field research process. Please fill in the section below if you consent to assisting me.

I, FRED WEKESA KUSIENYA of ID number 13662309 consent to being a research assistant to Abigael Nancy Masasabi as she carries out her research on the above named topic.

Signature: _____

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Fred Wekesa Kusienya', written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized and includes a large flourish at the end.

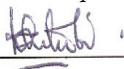
CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Research topic: “Verbal Text” as a process of compositional and improvisational elaboration in Bukusu *Litungu* music

Main objective: To investigate the role of “Verbal Text” in Bukusu *Litungu* music.

I Abigail Nancy Masasabi, am a student at the University of South Africa in pursuit of a Doctor of Musicology degree. In view of the above research topic, and your prowess in Bukusu *Litungu* performance, I kindly request your permission to be my research assistant during my entire field research process. Please fill in the section below if you consent to assisting me.

I, ISAAC SHITURI of ID number 11242782 consent to being a research assistant to Abigail Nancy Masasabi as she carries out her research on the above named topic.

Signature: 

APPENDIX III CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEWEES

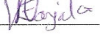


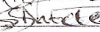


CONSENT FORM FOR THE PERFORMERS OF BUKUSU *LITUNGU* MUSIC

Research topic: 'Verbal Text' as a process of compositional and improvisational elaboration in Bukusu *Litungu* music

Main objective: To investigate the role of 'Verbal Text' in Bukusu *Litungu* music.

I, Abigael Nancy Masasabi am a student at the University of South Africa in pursuit of a Doctor of Musicology degree. In view of the above research topic, and your prowess in Bukusu *Litungu* performance, I kindly request your permission to allow me interview you, record some of your music, and take some photographs of your performances. The recordings will strictly be used for educational purposes and not commercial. Please fill in the section below if you consent to assisting me.

I consent to being interviewed, having my music recorded and my photograph taken by Abigael Nancy Masasabi as she carries out her research on the above named topic.

NAME	BAND	SIGNATURE
Eman Wanjala	Sinai Group Band	
Jackson Kisika	Kisika Band	
Wanyangi Wengwela	Jackson Kisika Band	
Alfred Magenda	Jackson Kisika Band	
Tom Kukubo	Namatoto Band	
Samuel Namatoto	Namatoto Band	
Steve Juma	Kwane Band	
Isaiah Simiyu	Kwane Band	
Sylvester Mukubwa	Kwane Band	
Samuel Elima	Lugula Bumusika Band	
Alex Wajula	" " "	
Isaac Wajula	" " "	
James Malaba	" " "	
Martin Wanyama	" " "	
George Lubaa	" " "	

APPENDIX 1V

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. For how long have you been performing Litungu music?
2. Who taught you how to play?
3. How was the learning process organized?
4. Can a song be performed without speech?
5. In what types of songs do performers use speech or do they use speech for any type of songs and why?
6. What is the function of speech in a performance?
7. Are the words a reiteration of the song text or are they totally different?
8. Can the words be spoken without an instrumental background?
9. Are the words (speech) used in a song standard? If not what is the basis of their inception?
10. What kind of language is used?
Plain or Metaphoric
11. Why choose the kind of language in (10) above?
12. Do only male performers use speech in their songs or do women and children also perform music using speech and why?
13. What themes are exhibited in the speech sections?
14. What name is given to the speech section?
15. Do you compose your own songs with speech sections in them?

APPENDIX V

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. How many soloists are there in this group?
2. Why do you speak in songs?
3. Can anybody speak?
4. If two people are to speak in a song, do they use the same words?
5. What kinds of songs require the use of speech?
6. During what occasions do you perform the traditional songs?
7. Do you have a name for the speech sections?
8. How many of you are involved in the composition process of songs?
9. What guides in the composition of songs?
10. If I asked you to compose a song now, would you do it?
11. Do you decide on the kind of songs to perform in a given function or are you told what to perform for an occasion?

APPENDIX VI
INDEX TO AUDIO CD

CD1

1. *Mayi Muro* by the Kwane Band
2. *Eswa* by the Kwane Band
3. *Ewuyo Ino* by the Kwane Band
4. *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band
5. *Lijembe* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band
6. *Endakano* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band
7. *Nekoy* by the Nabukambisi Jazz Band
8. *Basakwa* by the Muvumilivu Band
9. *Enyanja* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band

CD2

1. *Chingubo* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band
2. *Omundu* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band
3. *Enju yo Muluya* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band
4. *Mayi Muro* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band
5. *Ewuyo Ino* by the Lugulu Bumusika Band
6. *Kunikina* by the Kwane Band
7. *Kulukulu wa Bwabi* by the Kwane Band
8. *Namulobi* by the Namatete Band