Metaphor in Pop-Up Swahili Sayings: Is it a New Meaning or a New Idea?

Rose Sekile

Catholic University of Mbeya,Tanzania

ABSTRACT

This article examines metaphors in Swahili Language Pop-up Sayings. This research involves both field and library work. Primary data was collected in Mbeya region. The researcher used interviews and careful observation to gather primary data. The sample was chosen based on specific characteristics to ensure accurate data; the selection focused on speakers and experts in the Swahili language. The study was guided by specific objectives including to identify new sayings within the Swahili community, especially in the Mbeya region. To achieve this, the researcher collected various sayings used in politics, economics, society, technology, and culture. The second objective was to identify metaphors in the collected sayings, determining if they represent new meanings or ideas. The assumption was that the emergence of sayings is not new, as sayings have always existed and drive communication. This study aimed to identify metaphors using the theory of Metaphor Essays by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). Results indicate that the meanings of pop-up sayings are neither new nor represent new ideas, but are new words used in different contexts. The metaphors in these sayings result from violations of semantic meanings during their formation. This article suggests that society, regardless of age, status, or gender, should accept language changes, as resisting time and linguistic evolution is futile; ultimately, language's primary role is communication.

Keywords: Metaphor, Pop-up,Swahili Sayings, New Meaning and New Idea.

INTRODUCTION

This study was about metaphors in Pop-up Sayings in the Swahili Language. The researcher aimed to investigate the meaning of words that make up pop-up Sayings as they contradict the dictionary meaning of those words. Many Sayings emerge in society every day. Not only do new Sayings emerge, but even the original Sayings are distorted and used in new contexts.Sayings are the backbone of oral literature, which is connected to a basket containing various branches of proverbs, riddles, parables, and sayings (Mulokozi 1996). Wamitila (2003) says that Sayings are broad words that are used to express certain statements with hidden meanings. King'ei&Ndalu (2007) agree with this statement by explaining that Sayings are short words with hidden meanings that provide value to society. This meaning of King`ei,NdaluandWamitila has been broadly explained by Kipacha (2014), who explains that, "sayings can have different structural styles from short to long, from rhetorical to dialectical, formal to street languages, writing in prose to satire, techno-hoax, mixing languages, eloquency to loanwords. There are sayings with exclamatory sentences, imperatives, and explanations to questions." Sayings in general structure the actions of the relevant community and educate members of the community by directing a vision and attitude that is consistent with the ideology, environment and context of the development of that community.

Based on these explanations, we recognisethat proverbs are phrases that use images, symbols to briefly describe an object or idea in order to convey certain values or warnings. Proverbs carry a general truth and convey a message in summary. Phrases are phrases used by society in a specific way to convey a meaning that corresponds to a certain truth. Structurally, most proverbs are often metaphors, because they have the characteristic of a comparison to transfer meaning, with a symbolic device consisting of three angles, a subject, a simile and a conjunction. A metaphor is a figure of speech of comparison that does not use similes (Wamitila, 2008). The things that are compared are not directly related. For example, when we say "Life is

smoke", there is a transfer of meaning (Life is given the characteristic of smoke). Therefore, the main basis of metaphor is the transfer of meaning. Therefore, metaphor in proverbs is the transfer of meaning from the basic/dictionary meaning and transferring it to the practical meaning.

New Sayings have emerged and changed the actual forms and structure of Sayings, and even the meaning of the words in those Sayings, that is, the meaning of Sayings and the words that make up Sayings havebeen distorted. The words in Sayings carry more meaning than we knew. This is a period of new modernity in the creation of Sayings. New environments come with their challenges and give rise to their Sayings. There have been many Sayings that have emerged in various fields, including politics, economics, culture, society and technology. We are witnessing these Sayings taking hold even in academic fields. These Sayings have become formalised, in social networks, phones, media, business posters, social blogs, brochures in academic areas and even in transportation (Kipacha, 2014). It is also a period with a very rapid spread of new Sayings. Various types of Sayings are being created in line with global upheavals, ideological conflicts, and scientific and technological innovations.Many studies have been conducted on Sayings, as they write knowledge about the relevant area, the knowledge expands. In this article, we have examined how the transfer of meaning of words (metaphors) that form Sayings contradict the dictionary meaning. We ask ourselves, Are Sayings a new meaning or a new idea?

Research Theory

This study was guided by the theory of Metaphoric Sayings developed by Lakoff and Johnson (1980). These founders agree that metaphors are important in constructing human thoughts and their language in every conversation. Metaphors pair two things that may not be similar in form or structure and compare them using a characteristic found in both. Black (1993) says that metaphoric Sayings do not have a direct similarity between the concepts put into comparison, but rather they are written in terms of similarity of characteristics. Lakoff and Johnson (1999) support Black's (1993) idea by saying that metaphors create a relationship of characteristics between one concept and another. These metaphors show the relationship between a source concept (the first signified) and a target concept (the second signified). Metaphors were originally used to express the concept of A being used to refer to B. According to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphors are used in everyday language at various levels, not just A referring to B. Metaphors pair two things that may not be similar in form or structure and compare them. Thus, one thing being referred to is given a different hidden meaning due to the other thing being compared to it. These ideas of Lakoff and Johnson are what really motivated this study because the words that make up pop-up phrases have been structurally and physically dissimilar to the meanings they refer to.

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From the results of the research conducted to investigate metaphors in Sayings, respondents provided many Sayings that they use in their daily lives. In the collection of sayings we used as examples in this study, we have discovered that many Sayings have been given a broad meaning, others have had their basic meaning reduced and given hidden meanings, and others have been created from the context of use.

Emergence of New Sayings

In this collection of Sayings, it has been seen that the emergence of new Sayings is not a new thing because Sayings exist and drive communication. Many of the Sayings we collected have new forms and new structures, different from old Sayings. Dundes (1977),emphasising this point, says that the current period is creating new Sayings and Sayings. This argument is supported by Litovkina (2011), who argues that Sayings do not necessarily remain in their original forms; they change to suit new contexts and new ones are created.

When we consider Swahili Sayings, we often find that the meanings of the words in the Sayings are amplified by the meanings of the words in the dictionary. It is common for the words in many Sayings to have dictionary meanings, that is, there is a correspondence in the qualities of the source word and the word being referred to, for example,*"majiniuhai"* is a saying that shows the importance of water in human life. *"mtuni utu"* this Saying aims to emphasize that personality is what completes any human being, and so on. Many old Sayings

use common words but have arguments or special meanings that are related to qualities (Skuni, 2018). Usually, every Saying has its meaning; often, the meaning of the words in the Saying is what creates the meaning of the Saying. In this study, we have discovered that many pop-up Sayings have contradictory qualities between the source word and the word being referred to. For example, 'Give me a *ubuyu*' ubuyu meaning give me an *umbeya* (umbeya is the habit of following or listening to other people's affairs without being asked), the dictionary meaning of the word ubuyu is the nut or flour of the ubuyu. So, we see that there is no similarity whatsoever between ubuyu and umbeya. Another example is *'Sinahatanyau'*, meaning I don't even have a thousand; the dictionary meaning of the word 'nyau' is the sound of a cat, so there is no similarity between a thousand *'nyau'* and a cat's sound.

In everyday language use, there is a tendency to transfer a word and give it a conventional meaning, and that meaning is accepted in that language and forms aSaying. For example, 'chawa', 'wanakwaya', 'koloni', 'jimbo', 'mduda', 'maokoto' and so on. These words have been given a conventional meaning. When used in society to form Sayings, they are understood by users of all ages, although they are introduced by a certain group, and later used in the official language. The lexical/semantic meaning of these words does not have a meaning that is referred to in usage/pragmatics. For example, *Mary nikoloni la bosi*'Mary is the boss's colony'. A colony means a wife who is owned for a while, that is, the boss is in power at that time. The second example, *James anamilikijimbo* 'James owns the state'. *Jimbo*, 'The state' means that James has found a wife, the third example, *Bi mdashileokaundakundi la wanakwaya*'Bi mdashi today formed a group of choir-singers' Bi mdashi meaning a big lady and *wanakwaya* meaning beans, and so on. Other words that form pop-up Sayings are as follows:

Pop Up Saying	Meaning
Chawa	A bootlicker / a sycophant (someone overly eager to please others, especially for gain
Maokoto	Cash / Dough (slang for money)
Mkono	five thousand)
Masanturi	Coins
Mzuka	Morale / Hype /a strong positive vibe
Mnyamwezi	A close mate / trusted friend you can rely on
Kishua	A posh kid/someone raised in comfort and still dependent on parents
Chapoli	Extra oil packed in small tins, typically used by a bajaji (tuk-tuk) driver
Selemani	A drunkard / heavy drinker
Kiroho	A state of inner peace or having no hard feelings about something
Nipange	Try and convince someone / win someone over to your side.
Mshua	Well-off dad / a father with a strong financial footing
Ndefu	A 'thou' (slang for one thousand), often used when negotiating for more money.
Ndinga	A flashy car / fancy ride (a car meant for show or comfort
Kujipata	To make it / succeed through hustle or determination.

When you examine the meaning of these words that form pop-up phrases, they do not correspond at all to what is being referred to, which is what raises many questions in this article, because metaphorists say that words

that form phrases have a qualitative relationship. When these words are used to form phrases, listeners have to decipher the meaning in their context of use.Sometimes, multiple figurative Sayings can share the same meaning but differ in the words used to form the Saying. For example, 'ameumashuka' ('has bitten the sheet') and 'amekata moto' ('has cut the fire') both mean 'has died', yet there is no direct dictionary relationship between 'biting the sheet' or 'cutting the fire' and death. The meaning here is associative, an association that emerges metaphorically, since the words forming these Sayings bear no direct correlation with the interpreted meaning. According to Kipacha and Jilala (2021), words or phrases serve various functions, including being used metaphorically or associatively rather than in a strictly referential, dictionary-defined manner.

A second example is 'Hana malinda' ('he has no frills') and 'Ameleft' ('he has left'), which imply that a man has become homosexual, meaning he uses his body against its natural design. Ordinarily, men's clothing lacks frills – frills are more common in women's attire – so this Saying could be interpreted as 'he is wearing a skirt', since skirts have frills and are worn by females, providing a clearer indication of homosexuality. Thus, the association between being homosexual and lacking frills presents a contradiction. 'Ameleft' is a borrowed word from English – 'he has turned left'. This Saying employs a foreign language term even though it is now a contemporary slang, because even someone unfamiliar with English understands the meaning of 'ameleft'. This term is widely used on social media, especially on WhatsApp, to mean someone has left a group. Therefore, it is a familiar word to users, making it easy to associate homosexuality with leaving a group.

It has also been revealed that pop-up sayings make use of techno-slang and foreign language words in their construction. For example, when someone wants to inform another that there is new information, they may say *"ingia WhatsApp boss"*, meaning *"check WhatsApp for the latest update"*. *"Kujizima data"* refers to being excessively drunk (losing consciousness); *"ukilewausichati"* means one should not make promises while in a joyful or intoxicated state; *"Sponsa"* refers to an older man who uses money to fund romantic relationships with young girls; *"ninakuzumutumwanangu"* means *"I'm just watching you"* or *"I'm observing you"*. Our assertion is supported by Senkoro (1984), who states that the use of Sayings in literary works closely resembles that of proverbs, as Sayings depict specific contexts and inform the audience about the time relevant to the literary work in question.

In our research, we also discovered that many pop-up sayings are formed using completely new words that do not even appear in dictionaries. We, therefore align ourselves with the study conducted by Gaichu (2016), who found that the literal meaning of a word can shift and acquire a different interpretation from its original linguistic definition. Gaichu (n.d.) recognised that the meaning of a lexeme may change and that new meanings emerge from communicative conventions, cognitive rules, and the context in which the word appears. In our study, we went even further to discover that some of these new words have been coined and have enriched the Swahili vocabulary, while others that previously existed have been assigned new meanings. The results of our research are supported by conceptual metaphor theorists, who assert that the literal meaning of a word can change, giving rise to an entirely new interpretation. This phenomenon has been manifested in the words that make up pop-up Sayings. For example;

Pop UP Saying	Meaning
Kudamshi	To look attractive / To slay
Kibamia	A small penis
Wizo	In-law (female vs female)
Vishandu	Looters / Plunderers
Zesheni	To do something that causes conflict
Mzagamuano	To have sex
Kuploti	To urge / To push someone to act

Manzi	Girl / Chick (informal)
Dudu	Lottery machine
Kudanga	To sell oneself / Engage in prostitution
Misomisondo	People wearing oversized coats
Sepa	Leave / Bounce (slang for exit)
Pisi	Curvy / Attractive woman
Bifu	Beef / Conflict
Sheshe	Quarrelsome woman / Drama queen
Midosho	Second-hand clothes / Thrift fashion
Bi mdashi	Mum/Mummy (slang)
Nyashi	Big buttocks
Buruda	It's cool / All good.
Zombie	A person without principles/follower

Therefore, Muna (2017) explains that words do not convey meaning exactly as they appear in the dictionary, but instead serve as a gateway to a broader repository of knowledge regarding a certain concept. These thoughts by Muna are what we also identified in many of the Sayings that make up pop-upSayings.

Metaphor in Pop-up Sayings

Metaphorshavebeen widely used by speakers of language, often without intent or awareness of theiruse. Leech (1969) states that a metaphor arises when one thing is attributed with the qualities of another. In metaphorical usage, there is a transfer known as the "metaphor principle", where the metaphor persuades the listener or reader to view a thing, state, or character in terms of something else by using linguistic expressionsthat relate one concept to another. It is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase refers to a person or thing in a way that, under ordinary conditions, would not make literal sense.

Metaphors can be used to describe subjects that cannot be expressed directly. Literary texts often enjoy the liberty of using such metaphors to soften the impact of words that may be deemed inappropriate in public. Many societies use metaphors to conceal the shame or taboo associated with certain terms. It is commonly believed that some words are too offensive for open speech, hence the need to use metaphors to mask them with symbols or images understood by the public. Some of these metaphors are found in sayings and Sayings (Kobia, 2008). Omari (2011), supporting Kobia's assertion, argues that Sayings are formed by members of society and assessed through light-hearted and humorous language, which is evident in pop-up sayings.

In the context of this research, we found that many pop-up sayings fall under the category of conflicting metaphor, with a particular subset of metaphor (trope) grouped by Wellek and Warren (1963) to include metaphor, personification, simile, and allegory within the realm of figurative language. They are considered conflicting metaphors because many pop-up sayings are made up of words where the meaning transferred has no logical connection between the source word and the target meaning. This is supported by Black (1993), who says that a conceptual metaphor does not involve a direct resemblance between compared concepts, but rather a resemblance in properties.

For example:

Pop-up Saying	Meaning
Hana malinda	A man engaging in homosexual acts
Sponsa	A man who uses money to sustain relationships with young girls
Mshangazi	An older woman attracted too manyyounger men.
Dada poa	Young women who sell themselves for cheap
Mzagamuano	To have sex
Chura	Women with large buttocks
Kibendi	Pregnancy
Maharageya Mbeya	A person who gives in easily to seduction
Kibamia	A man with a small penis
Kudanga	Women who sell their bodies to earn a living
Ndembendembe	Large buttocks that jiggle when walking
Mchepuko	A mistress
Majimaramoja	A girl who easily gives in to advances

Indeed, when we encounter such Sayings, we can see that they are not suitable for public speech. For instance, saying *"this man is gay"* or *"he has a small penis"* is socially offensive; hence, society uses metaphors to soften the impact of these statements. Gibbs (1994) supports this by stating that most conversations are filled with metaphorical use to obscure meaning. Therefore, metaphor in pop-up sayings is not a new idea, but the words involved are used in newly metaphorical ways. This meaning transfer comes from the speaker's ability to compare different aspects of life.Another form of concealment comes through structural inversion found in figurative Sayings where contradictory phrases seem self-negating, but, within that contradiction, the reader must decode hidden meanings embedded in parallelism. Many pop-up sayings exhibit such structural inversion. For example:

Pop-up Saying	Meaning
Mpakauseme, badohujasema	To regret something before fully realising it
Ubayaubwela	Irony or hidden malice
Kimeumana	Enemies face off, showing off their pride or skills.
Jazaujazwe	Use a little money to get a big return.
Niko pale Niitembwa	An oath affirming that one has told the truth
Mwaga moto	To scold or rebuke someone sharply
Zima moto	To act at the last minute

Kupigwanakitukizito	To encounter a serious problem or be humiliated
Ameyatimba	Has messed up or made a mistake
Utajuahujui	Realising something only after negative consequences
Ganda la ndizi	Liking free things excessively
Hiiimeenda	An idea or event has been accepted/popularised.
Anaupigamwingi	Doing well or succeeding significantly

We found that traditional Sayings employed clear metaphors, but pop-up sayings tend to use implicit or elliptical metaphors. Many pop-up sayings use comparisons that have no direct relationship. This figurative style in literary texts allows language to be used freely and creatively, even when the referent and the descriptor have no direct equivalence. Conceptual metaphor theorists state that initially, metaphors meant using A to refer to B. However, according to Lakoff and Johnson (1980), metaphors are used in everyday language at various levels, not only as A referring to B. They pair two things which may not resemble each other structurally or visually but find grounds for comparison. Due to the evolution of language and its users, Sayings have been given figurative meanings that are not literal. For instance: *kuniyajehanamu*"firewood of hell" to refer to a tall person, *kulakibunzi*"eat a cob*"* to mean getting excessively drunk, *kulabuyu*"eat a calabash" meaning to keep quiet, or *kazafuvu*"tighten the skull" for someone refusing to understand something even when it's obvious. Kezilahabi (1988: 36–40) stated that a time will come when Swahili Sayings will not only serve as moral teachings and social cohesion, wrapped in figurative language but will also be at the forefront of intellectual revolution, especially in the pursuit of liberation from poverty and survival-based living. We agree with Kezilahabi's prediction because many pop-up sayings have begun to fulfil that foresight from two decades ago.

Are Pop-up Sayings New Meanings or New Ideas?

The words selected in the saying construction form the basis of the saying itself. Some selected words can create mental imagery because their meaning isn't used singularly. There is both primary and additional meaning. Overall, additional meaning gives words figurative or associative layers. Interpretation depends on inference and usage context (Kipacha, 2014). Most pop-up sayings do not follow conventional inference or context; their words carry hidden or compressed meanings. Conceptual metaphor theorists Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that often the referenced word holds hidden meaning. Wasike (2022), supporting conceptual metaphor, says such metaphors reflect a duality in lexical signs, one face represents the surface meaning, and the other, a hidden or conversational meaning.Every community has Sayings used in regular conversations. Sometimes, these Sayings transcend regional boundaries and become national. What crosses boundaries is not the meaning but different words used to refer to the same idea. Kipacha (2014) argues that many Sayings are inherited, later modified or enhanced. Some pop-up sayings do not differ entirely in theme from traditional ones; they simply adopt old foundations in new ways. For example, our research has revealed that many widely used Sayings are not new thoughts or meanings, but extensions of old Sayings using new words.

Pop-up Saying	Traditional Saying Equivalent
Mshangazi	Sugar mummy
Sponsa	Sugar Dady
Chawa	(Entourage)
Sukamkeka	(To bet)

Tumbuajipu	(Clean-up operation)
Koloni	(Side-chick)
Benteni	Serengeti boys, "a boy owned by an adult woman"
Nyau	(1000 thousand note)
Mdudu	(Pork)
Amshapopo	(Leave)
Kuniyajehanamu	(Giant woman)
Kazafuvu	(Ignore/Stay hard)
Amsha dude	(Wake the bat / take action)
Full mkoko	(All cash)
Tafutakiki	Struggle to become popular.
Kupigwanakitukizito	(Big misfortune)
Vyumavimekaza	(Tough times)
Hainambambamba	(No joke / all serious)
Hapakazitu	Working harder
Kaziiendelee	Let's continue working hard.
Kata simutupo site	(Don't call, I'm busy)
HaunabayaTajiri	(No worries, boss, innocent boss)
Mnene	(Bigwig)
Tutawakaanga	(Expose them)
Mwaga moto	(Stir up conflict
Kula buyu	(Be quiet / hold your tongue)
Gusaachiatwendekwao	Touch, pass, then push to the opponent.

Thus, in pop-up Sayings, the process of constructing Sayings is not necessarily a new thought or meaning, but the use of new words in new contexts. Onish and Murphy (1993) observed that "interpreting what a speaker means cannot rely solely on the word; it must be linked to the context." The semantic shifts in pop-up sayings result in metaphors that break traditional semantic rules in the Saying creation process, including truth, transformation, and reference.We support Kezilahabi's (1988, 1995) prediction of transformation in literary function, as figurative language becomes central in freeing thought and confronting existential hardship.

CONCLUSION

From the Sayings we have collected, it is evident that most pop-up sayings are not bound by strict saying construction rules, particularly the A-to-B mapping. The main feature of pop-up Sayings is their use of street language, generating meanings contrary to dictionary definitions. Many Sayings derive their meanings from context. We agree with Mnenuka (2012: 99) that new Sayings are preferred by youth and often reflect the realities of today's world. From our perspective, the construction of pop-up sayings involves distorting existing meanings to create entirely new interpretations. Sometimes, they create entirely new words, and those are the new ideas.

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A quick check of missing or inconsistent bibliography details I noticed:

1. Onish & Morphy, G. (1993) – Listed in text, but the reference says "Master's dissertation" without institution or full title. Needs clarification.
2. Dundes (1977) – Citation in text okay, but reference formatting inconsistent ("Who are the folk?In…" has missing space).
3. Mulokozi (1996) – Book reference missing city/publisher details.
4. Gaichu (2016) – "Unpublished Thesis" — needs institution location.
5. Kitundu & Malangwa (2020) – Journal title Kioo cha Lugha should have volume(issue) pages.
6. Onish and Murphy – In text says "Onish and Murphy" but reference says "Onish, & Morphy." Possible spelling error.