

Singing Hegemony: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Lubukusu Initiation Music Texts

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Abstract

Despite the central role of initiation music in transmitting cultural values among the Bukusu community, limited scholarly attention has been paid to how its linguistic and discursive features reproduce gendered power relations and sustain hegemonic masculine ideologies. Therefore, this study analyzes how hegemonic masculinity and gender relations are perpetuated through Lubukusu initiation music texts. It focuses on specific linguistic structures and communication strategies in ritual discourse that support male dominance. The study uses a qualitative approach to analyse 14 purposively sampled Lubukusu initiation music texts recorded during male circumcision ceremonies in Bungoma, Kenya, in 2024. Data was collected through audio recordings, interviews, and focus group discussions, then translated into English and transcribed for content analysis. Critical Discourse Analysis theory underpinned the study. Findings suggest that the language used reinforces gender stereotypes by promoting male dominance and female subordination. By situating Lubukusu initiation discourse within broader debates on language, ideology, and gender, this paper contributes to ongoing discussions in discourse studies and African sociolinguistics on the role of ritual language in shaping social identities.

Keywords

Discourse, discourse analysis, hegemonic masculinities, gender inequality, Lubukusu initiation music texts, Critical Discourse Analysis, content analysis, ritual discourse

Date of Submission: 27-09-2026

Date of Acceptance: 06-10-2026

I. Introduction

The Lubukusu initiation music texts are performed during the circumcision rites amongst the Bukusu people of Western Kenya. Rituals are a cultural or religious system of symbolic communication that consists of a series of actions, words, gestures and involving revered objects. They are performed according to a prescribed tradition of a community (Khaemba, Yieke and Ogola, 2015). The study sought to linguistically analyze the reconstruction of hegemonic masculinities in selected Lubukusu initiation music texts (ritual discourse), which are performed during the different stages of the initiation ceremony. The music texts play an important role in packaging the heritage of the Bukusu native speaker community

The focus of the current study is on how linguistic structures and/or communication strategies are used to reinforce the beliefs underlying hegemonic masculinity. Therefore, the study does not only endeavor to describe and interpret linguistic devices such as metaphors, similes, euphemism, personification, exaggeration, idiomatic expressions, proverbs, and juxtaposition, but also unravels hegemonic masculinities embedded in the selected Lubukusu initiation music texts. To address the hegemonies, the study employed the Critical Discourse Analysis theory (CDA) by Fairclough (1989)

The Bukusu circumcision is a highly revered traditional practice that marks a vital rite of passage. As Akivaga and Odaga (1982) assert, circumcision is a deeply significant ritual among practicing societies, serving as the definitive transition from youth to mature manhood. Because this ritual dictates the community's cultural norms, individuals who refuse the rite or choose medicalized hospital circumcision are socially despised and shunned for defying communal expectations.

Given the immense popularity of circumcision music texts within this patriarchal speech community, this study investigates whether these oral forms articulate hegemonic masculinity. According to Kimmel (2008), hegemony functions by encouraging societal consent to male domination, a structure that actively invites and rewards men's complicity in maintaining patriarchal power.

Generally, initiation discourse in the African setting reflects a patriarchal set-up that maintains and reinforces male dominance (Onyango, 2008). Lubukusu initiation discourse tends to create power imbalances that elevate and glorify masculinity in form and function while subjugating the female segment and disdainfully

portraying them as insignificant. Kweyu (2004) asserts that the perpetuation of hegemonic masculinities through Lubukusu ritual discourse seems to accentuate the notions of male identity and gender power relations, which cannot be openly criticized.

The paper aims to demonstrate how selected Lubukusu initiation music texts project distinct depictions of hegemonic virility and manly power across the various stages of the ritual. Ultimately, the purpose is to enlighten the Bukusu community on how specific masculinities and asymmetrical power associations are continuously perpetuated through ritual discourse during the initiation period and within broader social contexts.

II. Theoretical Framework

The primary theory underlying the present study is the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) by Fairclough (1995). It focuses on the social issue of abuse of power or authority as it is signalled, constituted, or legitimised by language use. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as outlined by Van Dijk (2009) and Wodak and Meyer (2009), provides the framework for this study. As a problem-oriented approach, CDA focuses on addressing social issues rather than advancing theory, making its findings accessible and relevant to society (Fairclough, 2001).

Fairclough (1992) argues that CDA examines how discourse reflects and reproduces power relations, inequality, and discrimination, including sexism and other forms of social injustice. In the context of this study, male initiation rituals are viewed as sites where gender inequality, domination, and social power are constructed and reinforced through music texts. These ideologies are often embedded in discourse in subtle and implicit ways.

The sociocultural framework developed by Fairclough (1992) is especially used in this study to evaluate textual expressions, including lexical and metaphorical analysis in the oral forms, notably the music texts used in Lubukusu initiation ceremonies. Since the concentrated and condensed character of the texts tends to obscure parts of their intended meanings, it makes their ideological foundations more covert and widespread. The dominant gendered social structures that disadvantage women and elevate males are often maintained via language patterns (Fairclough, 1992).

III. Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research approach to investigate the construction and representation of hegemonic masculinities in Lubukusu initiation music texts. The study was anchored in the critical research paradigm, which situates inquiry within broader concerns of social justice and seeks to interrogate sociocultural structures that reproduce inequality and power relations. According to Martens (2015), the critical paradigm focuses on examining and challenging social conditions that sustain forms of domination, including gendered power relations and constructions of masculinity. This paradigm was therefore deemed appropriate for exploring how initiation music texts contribute to the production and maintenance of hegemonic masculine identities within the Bukusu community.

The primary data comprised Lubukusu initiation music texts collected during the Bukusu male initiation ceremonies held in Bungoma County, Western Kenya, in December 2024. Purposive sampling, a widely used strategy in qualitative research, was employed to select information-rich texts relevant to the study objectives.

Fourteen music texts were purposively sampled from an initial corpus of twenty-six recorded texts based on their explicit representation of hegemonic masculinities and recurring linguistic features. Data were collected through audio recordings of ritual performances, open-ended interviews, and focus group discussions (FGDs), allowing for triangulation of perspectives and contextual interpretation of the texts. The collected data were subsequently translated, transcribed, and subjected to content and textual analysis to uncover the linguistic, discursive, and ideological mechanisms through which hegemonic masculinity is constructed and sustained in Lubukusu initiation discourse.

IV. Results and Discussion

In this section, the data is analyzed under several sub-themes of power representation, sexual objectification, and social evaluation in the manifestation of hegemonic masculinities.

4.1 Power Representation in the Lubukusu Music Texts

The Lubukusu music texts depict the reconstruction of the gendered power hierarchy whereby the male-female dichotomy is prominently reflected as engaged in a set of oppositions and disparities as in the following music texts 1 and 2

Soloist

1. Ooh mother to the boy oh!

Response

Oh! Pass by and watch *sonko* on top of a wild cat

Music text 1 is performed to invite a boy's (*sonko*) family to come see their boy making out and having sex with a girl (*Nanjusi*). The noun *nanjusi* (wild cat) is a structural metaphor that has been typically used to describe a girl who resembles a wild cat. An animal is employed as a notion in the source domain of the metaphor. Thus,

the music text depicts women in Bukusu speech community as "wild cats" who ought to be kept away from other people, notably men.

Soloist

Response

Hoho

Hoho ho an energetic, single man on termites

Music Text 2 constructs a gendered hierarchy through metaphorical representation, where *sumba* (an energetic and capable man) symbolizes masculine vigor, while *kamabuli* (termites) is used metaphorically to represent women. By likening women to termites—small, vulnerable creatures that emerge at night and are easily consumed—the text portrays them as passive and subordinate. In contrast, men are described as *sumba* and *sonko*, terms associated with strength, status, and social desirability. These contrasting images reinforce hegemonic masculinity by elevating male power and agency while positioning women as objects of male pursuit and domination. Consistent with Connell's (1995) notion of hegemonic masculinity and Butler's (1990) concept of gender performativity, the language of the text actively constructs and legitimizes an idealized form of masculine identity.

The imagery also suggests that men should hunt down women for sex since women are plentiful like termites. The assertion is supported by Fairclough (1992), who argues that the dominant gendered social structures that disadvantage women and elevate males are often maintained through language patterns such as metaphors and similes.

Linguistic studies show that animal metaphors for women in different cultures often link them to being overly sexual, hard to control, or submissive, which then justifies controlling or suppressing them (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). Such language choices are a way to have control women's bodies and sexual behavior, showing a societal worry about uncontrolled female sexuality and strengthening the idea that men need to regulate it

A Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) reveals how the linguistic choices contribute to establishing and maintaining dominant norms within the Bukusu, reflecting core tenets of CDA articulated by Fairclough (1995) and Van Dijk (2009). Accordingly, the images (*sonko* and *sumba*) do not just describe; they prescribe what is considered a desirable male identity within the Bukusu speech community. They constitute an ideal, subtly pressing men to conform to these specific archetypes of wealth, vigor, and youthful demeanor if they wish to gain social recognition and status, thereby demonstrating how discourse actively constitutes social realities and identities (Wodak, 2001).

Soloist

Response

You move slowly since a huge duck penetrated your private parts

Music Text 3 employs the metaphor *oku-pata* (a huge duck) to represent male sexual organs, drawing on culturally valued attributes associated with ducks and their eggs, such as size, nourishment, and desirability. The augmentative prefix *oku-* further emphasizes strength, power, and prominence, symbolically elevating male sexuality. This metaphorical construction portrays male sexual organs as objects of value and admiration, thereby reinforcing notions of male power, dominance, and hegemonic masculinity within the Bukusu cultural context.

Soloist

Response

A large black object

Eeh

It is full of milk

Eeh jackal

The (thighs) are covered with urine

Eeh jacka

Music Text 4 above, employs metaphor and hyperbole to construct male sexuality as powerful, desirable, and dominant. Male sexual organs are metaphorically represented as *mabele* (milk), symbolizing desirability and value, and *tinaini* (jackal), evoking fear, strength, and authority. The expression *okundu okumalimali* (a very large black object) further amplifies these attributes through repetition and the augmentative prefix *oku-*, emphasizing size, power, and influence. Through these linguistic choices, the text elevates male sexual potency and reinforces patriarchal ideologies that associate masculinity with dominance and social control, thereby sustaining gender hierarchies. This process of using language to valorize certain masculine traits and attributes is a key mechanism through which gender hierarchies are maintained (Fairclough, 1995).

The analysis demonstrates that Music Text 4 constructs female bodies through derogatory imagery, particularly by associating women's thighs with *kiminyi* (large amounts of foul-smelling urine), thereby portraying women as impure, inferior, and sexually objectified. In contrast, male sexual organs are elevated through metaphors such as *mabele* (milk), symbolizing desirability, and *tinaini* (jackal), connoting strength, fear, and authority. Similarly, the expression *okundu okumalimali* (a very large black object) employs repetition and augmentation to emphasize male power and dominance. These contrasting representations position men as powerful and socially superior while depicting women as subordinate and vulnerable. Consequently, the ritual discourse reproduces patriarchal ideologies and gender hierarchies by legitimizing male authority and devaluing femininity, illustrating the close relationship between discourse, power, and gender construction (Van Dijk, 2009).

From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, such representations contribute to the naturalization of male dominance by portraying these qualities as inherent rather than socially constructed, thereby reproducing existing gendered power relations (Van Dijk, 1998).

Music text 5 below exposes the woman's (Sainabu) behavior in the community.

Soloist

Response

Sainabu

Hoho Sainabu cannot see a penis and pass

The analysis reveals that derogatory conceptual metaphors are employed to construct female identity through images of weakness and insignificance. Terms such as *sichinji* (a jigger), *chiswa* (ants), and *sichwisi* (something that tightens) are used to describe Sainabu, associating her with small, vulnerable creatures that are easily harmed or controlled. These metaphorical representations position women as dependent, defenseless, and in need of protection, thereby reinforcing subordinate gender roles. As noted by Lakoff and Turner (1989), such portrayals reflect broader cultural tendencies to depict women as fragile beings whose value is tied to serving others. From a critical discourse perspective, these representations also contribute to the stigmatization of female sexuality that falls outside patriarchal expectations, framing it as undesirable or deviant (Foucault, 1978).

Accordingly, this punitive use of music texts aligns with what Bourdieu (1991) terms "symbolic violence," where power is exerted through cultural means, often without direct physical force, to impose meanings and legitimate existing social hierarchies. In this case, the music text functions as a disciplinary tool, shaping community perceptions and potentially reinforcing behavioral norms for women.

Soloist

chorus

If a girl has refused rape her

oh!! If a dem has refused to rape her

Scrap dem come on over here

oh! Discarded lady come here.

Music Text 6 portrays women as disposable and of diminished value through the metaphor *esikirepu* (scrap). In the Bukusu speech community, *esikirepu* refers to something or someone considered useless, rejected, or of little worth. By comparing women to scrap material, the text constructs them as objects that can be used, discarded, or exchanged for men's benefit, particularly in sexual relationships. This metaphor dehumanizes women and reinforces patriarchal ideologies that position them as subordinate and less valuable than men.

The text highlights a deeply disturbing command within the discourse "*temu nakhaile mkwekho*" (If a lady refuses, rape her)—which explicitly instructs men to use rape as a tool of power, force, and subjugation when facing female refusal. This misogynistic directive employs the metaphor *esikirepu* to foster self-hate, shame, and bodily disgust among women. Such language serves a profound ideological function; from a CDA perspective, it is not merely unfortunate phrasing but a direct command that wields language to naturalize and legitimize sexual violence (Van Dijk, 2000).

This enforcement of violence reflects broader patriarchal power dynamics that actively reproduce oppressive social hierarchies. The systemic nature of this issue is supported by Donaldson (1993:111), who notes that "Gender norms and the practices that uphold them both contribute to the existence of misogyny.... Consequently, women have been urged to take on roles that help males in traditionally patriarchal societies." Ultimately, the discourse functions as a mechanism of social action, weaponizing language to maintain male dominance and control over women.

The noun *matiaba* reinforces the contrasting hegemonic descriptions as demonstrated in music text 7 below:

Soloist

Response

This *matiaba*

Matiaba a person Kibukulei system a hippo ahee

Within Lubukusu initiation music texts, linguistic asymmetry is strategically employed to construct gendered identities. In music text 7 men are elevated through substance and animal metaphors, being associated with *Matiapa* (a big and popular soda) to signify status, *omundu* (a person) to affirm humanity, and *Kipoko* (a hippopotamus) to denote physical power. Conversely, women are systematically relegated to weak creatures and objects. This stark contrast functions as a discursive mechanism that maintains hegemonic masculinity (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), implicitly legitimizing male authority while simultaneously devaluing women. As Wodak (1997:57) observes, language reflects gender discrimination because society is fundamentally built with a bias that benefits men.

This rigid male-female opposition demonstrates a core tenet of CDA: discourse does not merely reflect pre-existing social concepts, but actively constitutes social reality (Fairclough, 1995). By using animal and object characteristics to define masculinity and femininity, the music texts shape how gender roles are understood within the Bukusu community. From a CDA perspective, this linguistic practice is a politically charged strategy that naturalizes hidden power hierarchies, ultimately contributing to the preservation of a broader patriarchal system (Fairclough, 1995).

4.2 Sexual Objectification of the Lubukusu Initiation Music Texts

In music text 8 below, the woman is portrayed as a commodity of childbearing as manifested in the figures of speech such as metaphors, and extended patterns such as internal rhyme.

Soloist

Response

Give me my woman she bears children for me

give me a woman

She is Bukusu I want her to give birth to children

give me a woman

The persona jokes that all the ladies in those particular tribes for example; Bukusu, Teso, Kalenjin, Maasai, Badocho as well as Caucasians (*Basungu*), should bear children for him. The choice of metaphors, which are coinages from the Kenyan tribes and clans of Kenya, include *mukusulemo babana* (extract children from her), *khumutasemo babana* (we add children), *khumuchanuemo babana* (comb children from her), *khumusungulemo*, (get children from her), *khumuyobolemo*, (get children from her (albeit playfully), *khumusayemo babana* (sire children with her). All the imagery portrays various women as passive participants in the important matter of reproduction. The coinages seem to present women as objects of siring children.

The aforementioned texts demonstrate an elevated version of masculinity (the capacity for procreation and the payment of dowry). Lawson (2018) is in support of this claim by noting that 'real men' in patriarchal societies use procreation and resources to occupy positions of power and money, oppress, legitimize their social relationships, and reproduce those relationships. Lawsons's (2018) assertion perfectly aligns with CDA's focus on how discourse constitutes society and culture, how power relations are discursive, and how discourse performs ideological work (Fairclough, 2003).

Thus, Lubukusu initiation texts endorse polygyny and reduce women to prospective sexual partners whose primary value resides in their capacity for childbirth. This reproductive mandate is historically and contextually situated, reflecting widespread African cultural norms where childlessness is viewed as an existential curse. As Etuk (2002:91) notes, having children is seen as a means to "extend one's life and, in some ways, achieve immortality." From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, these texts do not emerge in a vacuum but are fundamentally shaped by specific socio-historical conditions (Wodak & Meyer, 2009), using internal rhymes such as "*Omubukusu mukusulemo babana*" (she is a Bukusu, I want to grab children from her) to naturalize the restriction of women to the traditional roles of mother and servant.

The discourse links elevated masculinity to resource accumulation, physical hardening, and procreative virility. Silverman (2010) connects African male circumcision to symbolic themes of masculine virility, adult sexuality, and the hardening of boys for combat, which inherently fosters antagonism between genders. This hegemonic masculinity is economically asserted through the payment of bride price, captured in the boast "*ese nakhwa chichase*" (Myself, I paid my dowry). By leveraging financial dominance to demand offspring, the male narrator reduces the woman to a purchased commodity. Consequently, this aligns with Lawson's (2018) assertion that "real men" in patriarchal societies weaponize procreation and resources to occupy positions of power and oppress others—a clear demonstration of CDA's principle that discourse performs ideological work to reproduce unequal power relations (Fairclough, 2003).

Soloist	Response
A woman is just a woman, and remains as such	a woman
As ugly as a shoe	a woman

Additional music texts that describe men's utterances with respect to sexual objectification include music text 9. The disparaging term *omukhasi* which means "that woman", is frequently used by the narrator to refer to her rudely and scornfully. *Omukhasi* is a pejorative phrase that occasionally implies disrespect for women. There is a distinction between *omukhasi* and *omukhaye* among the Bukusu community. Both words can be used to refer to a married woman, but the latter has a more favorable meaning than the former. For instance, *omukhaye* is a polite form that denotes a woman who puts forth a lot of effort, and is therefore admired. On the contrary, *omukhasi* is used to describe a woman whose job is to just give birth and, in most cases, one who nags. As a result, *omukhasi* disparages the status of women in the Bukusu speech community. The oral artist utters that *omukhasi omukhasi busa* (a woman is just a woman).

The texts indicate that *yakhaba omukhasi esura embi* (even if she is ugly), *seli lasima abe chonjo* (it is not a must that she is pretty), *esura nge siraro omukhasi* (even if she looks like a deformed shoe, she is a woman) and *kakhaba ne siraro omukhasi* (even if she wears shoes, she is a woman). All the lines as quoted depict the hegemonic masculinities where the female gender is presented as one with less value. Therefore, when a man needs a woman for sexual satisfaction; he can choose indiscriminately as all of them are the same. The imagery of *siraro* (a shoe) presents a picture of an ugly woman who should also be exploited just like a beautiful one. Music text 8 perfectly embodies the CDA tenet that discourse analysis is interpretive and explanatory. It moves far beyond merely translating or summarizing the literal content of these lines to unpack their deeper social meanings and functions within the Bukusu community. dynamics at play (Wodak & Meyer, 2009).

Soloist	Response
Fulora?	Woyaya Fulora seumbakho khubindu?

In the Bukusu community, the noun *bibindu* (things) is frequently used to denote an act of sex. The phrase; *woyaya Flora seumba khubindu* (Flora give me things) which takes the form of a rhetorical question and is addressed to Flora, seems to convince her to follow the given instructions. Thus, the rhetorical question in music text 10 above stresses the fact that a woman should always give in to the sexual desires of men even when she has other important chores to do.

Apart from employing nouns, several Lubukusu initiation music texts describe men using possessive pronouns. In contrast, women are described using descriptive, interrogative, and quantity adjectives and pronouns as demonstrated in the music text 10. The possessive pronoun *wange* (my) alludes to men being possessive; *mbe omukhasi wange* (give me my woman) in music text 9. The music texts utilize possessive pronouns to depict a sort of ownership in which men are free to possess, and exploit women as sexual objects. Milles (2011) supports the argument by contending that asymmetries in lexical gender, masculine generics, and the systematic process, by which language gets gendered, can have an impact on social gender norms and inequities, and consequently have an impact on the socioeconomic position of women and men. Sometimes deemed androcentric, masculine generics make women invisible in numerous discourses. Therefore, possessive adjectives, such as who owns and is not owned, are used to demonstrate the patronizing attitude of men. In contrast, interrogative adjectives are used to question the character of women.

4.3 Social Evaluation from the Lubukusu Initiation Music Texts

The protagonist in music text 11 below, Chemiati, is a married man who engages in promiscuity.

Soloist

Response

Chemiati raptures children

raptures children

Within Lubukusu initiation discourse, language is strategically deployed to obscure and validate actions that would otherwise face social condemnation. In the case of the character Chemiati, his pervasive actions are sanitized through the positive framing of the verb *umbula* (to rupture), a euphemism connoting sexual penetration. This continuous act is further vivified by the onomatopoeic *Pata Pata* sound, which phonetically mimics the rhythm of the sexual act. Rather than facing censure, Chemiati is endearingly integrated into the communal fabric through the noun *omwichukhulu* (grandchild)—a term of affection traditionally used by elders to signal warmth and belonging. By framing his infidelity in the present continuous tense (*aumbulanga*), the text naturalizes his ongoing extra-marital affairs as an extended display of vitality rather than a moral failing.

From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, this linguistic celebration establishes a rigid normative ideal for male identity by directly equating sexual performance with authentic manhood. This serves as a classic mechanism through which hegemonic masculinity is discursively produced and maintained (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), positioning alternative masculinities—such as those lacking sexual assertiveness—as subordinate or devalued. Patrick's character is socially evaluated in music text

Soloist

Response

1. We are curious to know who vaccinated a sheep

Patrick

2. Let us know who vaccinated a sheep

Patrick

In another illustration, Lubukusu initiation music texts continue to utilize strategic euphemisms to mask severe social vices, such as bestiality, which the Bukusu community deeply disapproves of. In the case of Patrick—a 32-year-old unmarried herdsman unable to attract women—his engagement in an unnatural act with a sheep is linguistically sanitized. The discourse substitutes this highly condemned behavior with the phrasing *khuchanja likhese*, which literally translates to "vaccinating sheep." By deploying this technical, agricultural metaphor, the text conceals a profound social transgression under the guise of ordinary pastoral labor, downplaying the deviance while embedding the incident into the community's performative memory.

From a CDA perspective, the framing of Patrick's actions exposes how language can be weaponized to reproduce and maintain oppressive power hierarchies. Paradoxically, the discourse links aggressive, transgressive, and morally questionable acts—such as bestiality, incest, and night running—to an "elevated" sense of male identity characterized by strength, daring, and competitive dominance. This alignment is supported by Messner and Sabo (1990:203), who assert that acts of violence, strength, and immorality frequently serve as normalizing components of hierarchy and competitiveness as intrinsically male behavior. Ultimately, by discursively associating toxic practices and cruelty with masculine supremacy, the text performs ideological work to legitimize male dominance (Fairclough, 2001), a structural imbalance that CDA actively critiques by exposing how specific linguistic choices normalize harmful societal ideologies.

Soloist

Response

2. Jane

Jane who resides at the market place is barren ×2

3. She threw

she flushed a child down the toilet ×2

Lubukusu initiation texts weaponize childlessness to construct a deviant identity for women who fail patriarchal reproductive mandates. In the narrative of Jane, her murder of a child is explicitly blamed on her infertility. The discourse employs the harsh adjective *omukumba* (barren) and the idiom *khusukunamuchoo* (to casually dump into the toilet) to link childlessness with inherent heartlessness, reflected in the phrase *sisa siyambanga wasala* (Jane lacks empathy as a woman who has personally experienced the pain of childbirth, may not harm a child). From a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) perspective, attributing childlessness solely to women is a discursive act that performs profound ideological work (Fairclough, 1995; Wodak, 2001). It disproportionately burdens

women with reproductive blame while ignoring male infertility (Van Dijk, 1998). This practice is deeply rooted in patriarchal traditions that prioritize male lineage and control women's bodies.

The texts expose a stark linguistic asymmetry: men are glorified, while women face severe criticism and mockery. Jane's violent act is used to portray women as irresponsible and foolish when detached from motherhood. This framing enforces historical African socio-cultural expectations that confine female value to domestic labor and caretaking.

As Kabira and Karega (1983:23) observe, cultural norms dictate that "women are supposed to take their domestic responsibilities... seriously, especially regarding nurturing children." Mulaudzi (2013:45) adds that women are mandated to be caretakers who cook, maintain the home, and care for newborns or the ill. By vilifying Jane, the discourse functions as a disciplinary mechanism to enforce these conventional gender roles.

V. Conclusion

The findings established that Lubukusu initiation music texts are deeply rooted in Bukusu myths, taboos, and beliefs, which contribute to the legitimization and reinforcement of hegemonic masculinity.

The texts convey important social values, including perseverance, discipline, respect, responsibility, communal solidarity, and hard work, extending their function beyond the circumcision ritual itself.

Symbolism and implicit meanings are central to the texts, serving as mechanisms through which initiates are inducted into adult male roles and expectations.

Critical Discourse Analysis effectively exposed the ideological assumptions and power relations embedded in the texts, demonstrating how language constructs and sustains social realities.

The continued performance and transmission of these music texts contribute to the normalization of unequal gender relations and the persistence of hegemonic masculine ideals, despite evolving gender roles in contemporary society.

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