



**A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF STYLO-THEMATIC AND PERFORMANCE OF
KAMBA TRADITIONAL AND MODERN SECULAR SONGS**

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the aspects of stylistic features of style, thematic concerns and performative aspect in Kamba traditional and modern secular songs. The researcher unfolded roles, teachings, messages addressed by selected artists reflect the diversity of meanings rendered artistically to the Kamba society. The study hinged on the following objectives: To examine features of style employed by selected performing artists of Kamba traditional and modern secular songs. The second objective was to analyze the thematic concerns and emergent roles relayed through selected performing artists of Kamba traditional and modern secular songs. The third objective was to examine aspects of performance and highlight how diversified meanings are manifested by selected performing artists through traditional Kamba and modern secular songs. The focus of this study was based in Nguu Division, Makueni County in Kenya. This study used interviews and questionnaires as instruments for collecting data. The researcher used purposive sampling technique, to select 22 individuals from the target population. The population estimated consisted of youths, old people and Kamba musicians. Questionnaires were administered to youths who are the main audience of modern secular songs. The two selected Kamba artists, that is, Kennedy Wambua and Ben Mbatha were interviewed. The researcher used content analysis approach, as a method of interpreting the data collected from the participants. The researcher found out that both Kamba traditional political and modern secular songs have a role to perform in the contemporary Kamba society. They were said to play different roles like educating people on different issues in the community, passing message from one person to another and promoting the virtue of love in Kamba society. It was recommended that songs of other upcoming modern secular kamba musicians should be studied to see if they apply the mnemonics and also to investigate their role in kamba society. It was also recommended that other genres of Kamba traditional music should be analysed to compare their aspects of performance, linguistic strategies and role with the ones for traditional kamba political songs.

Keywords: *Features of Style, Thematic Concerns, Emergent Roles, Kamba Traditional, Modern Secular Songs*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Akamba people are one of the Bantu groups in Africa (Lindblom, 1920). The Akamba are one of the most north-easterly Bantu peoples in Africa, and one of the largest tribes in British East Africa. They are found in Makueni, Machakos and Kitui counties. Like other ethnic communities, they appreciate their culture through songs. These songs are sung in Kikamba language and are therefore referred to as Kamba songs. Kamba songs take poetic structure during composition but they are performed through singing. Bowen (2017) songs are part of Oral Literature especially poems. Okpewho (1992) in African community, music and dance often accompany poetry.

Like any other genres of Oral Literature songs have a role to play in the society. In Kenyan settings, music finds a place in all significant events, including political rallies, football matches, weddings and funerals. Kamba songs were used by the Kamba people to pass messages to the colonizers that Kamba people were tired of their colonization and therefore they were supposed to vacate the Kamba-land and go back to their homeland. For instance, during Mau Mau era Kamba people could sing war songs when chasing foreigners from Kenya. Bowen (2017) Songs are used to entertain, to reflect aesthetics and creativeness in passing across certain information in society.

Wanjala (2007) songs as the genre of oral literature continue to change as society develops a new social change. Due to dynamism in technology and society, songs continue to change thus making the society to depreciate the cultural value of the Kamba songs. Scholars should do more research on what to be done on the Kamba modern secular songs so as to appreciate and uplift the Kamba cultural value in the dynamism of the time and space. This is because Kamba music is a music which is supposed to appreciate the cultural value of the Kamba people. Kenyatta (1984) most of the traditional songs and dances propagated values that respect humanity and human dignity, respect for legitimate and humane authority, sense of community, mutual aid, collective responsibility, and respect for authentic and traditional religious values.

Traditionally, the Kenyan music comes from different places. Most nomadic people have similar use of songs and chants and specifically the Maa-speaking groups. Maa song has always had a great role, during the Maasai ceremonies (Bowen, 2017). This song is performed after a successful hunt and it consist of a profound periodic tune and together with an enormous dance, that fighters portray their power and skill by jumping upwards into the air. Many different drums were used across the country. In other tribes like among the Luhya, they came up with a typical dancing style referred to *assikuti* after the homegrown name of a drum. Its performance included pairing of male and female dancers, and convoyed by different drums, bells, long horns and whistles. On the coast side, the development of Swahili tradition gave raise to the development of a unique style of music, known as *Taarab*. Bringing together African structures with Arabic beats, Taarab developed to be a common form of music and till now it is the most preferred (Board, 2019).

During the 1970s and 80's Nairobi became a common intersection for African artists, and many of them made Kenya their home of a musicians, and many Zairean rumba bands either made Kenya their home or a regular place to stop for performance. Their great influence on Kenyan music was significant, and much of famous Kenyan music borrows its main rhythms and guitar lines from Congolese pop. Even now, Lingala and Congolese music, is extremely common in Kenya (Wanjala, 2007)

Among the different ways that Africans celebrate during specific festive events, is by singing and dancing. Song and dance have always been present in Africa since the ancient times. Some of these dances have remained to be present and others have now been forgotten. The African traditional dances are as varied as the Africans and traditions across the continent. Various

dances are usually used for diverse events; the traditional dances performed at the crowning of a king are not similar to those at the funeral of a king, a wedding ritual or after the birth of a child. African traditional dances are performed with very influential moves. Different dances demand one to have much energy and acrobatic skills. The women also have their traditional dances which they dance on weddings, birth or funeral ceremonies (Africa, 2018).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

In Kenya today, different researchers have carried out studies concerning musicians who compose and sing Kamba songs for leisure and material gain. However, the researcher saw a need to analyse the roles performed by these songs, their styles and aspect of performance in them. This is because; these features of style contain diversified meanings that represent the tradition of the Kamba people, while in the modern secular songs they reflect contemporary society. The study investigated the role of the selected songs performed by selected musicians and highlighted messages relayed to the target audience in contemporary Kamba society. The study also explored how knowledge of the different styles of Kamba songs have changed over the years and their different aspects of performance shaped and reshaped the Kamba musical genres to suit contemporary needs.

1.2 Objectives

- i. Examine features of style employed by selected performing artists of Kamba traditional and modern secular songs
- ii. Analyze the thematic concerns and emergent roles relayed through selected performing artists of Kamba traditional and modern secular songs
- iii. Assess the aspects of performance and highlight how diversified meanings are manifested by selected performing artists through traditional Kamba and modern secular songs

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Features of Style in African Songs

According to Makeba (2008), many present genres of African music, are formed through intersecting with western music. Many genres of music such as; blues, jazz and rumba, originate to some extent from musical traditions of Africa, which the African slaves took to America. Likewise, African music has also borrowed some western music elements, specifically the instruments and recording studio methods. The most significant artist in the 20th-century of South African music was Miriam Makeba, who helped in creating global spectators' attention to African music and its denotation. Zenzile Miriam Makeba was referred as the most persuasive and famous artist of Africa. After she left to U.S., she faced some problems with her passport and has to live in America. It was claimed she initiated some changes on American music, by incorporating the African elements.

Master drummer and scholar Ladzekpo (1996) confirms the "profound homogeneity" of sub-Saharan African rhythmic ideologies. African traditional music is mostly practical. The performances can be long and mostly include the involvement of the spectators. There are also various kind of work songs, songs of childbirth, wedding, hunting, political activities, music to chase away evil spirits and to show respect to the dead and ancestors. All the songs are performed within their social context and they always involve much dancing.

West African music, incorporates features of Islamic music and the non-music regions are greatly influenced by the local customs. According to Diouf, traditional Muslim West African Music integrates features the Islamic call to prayer that consist of lyrics praising God, melody, dramatic variations in musical scales, and voice intonation. Kubik notes that stringed instruments were traditionally preferred by Muslim West Africans, while drumming was customarily preferred by non-Muslim West Africans(Curiel, 2004).

Eastern African music includes the music of Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Most songs have been influenced by Arabic music and also by the music of India, Indonesia and Polynesia (Jones, 1959). In East Africa, Music brings together important elements on songs and politics in Eastern African countries and other places as well. The artists are involved in a conflict, on cultural construction and change in politics. The thematic concerns in Eastern African songs are, for aesthetic purposes, important way of finding out the way in which political and social occasions are molded and appreciated by people. The growth of East African music was due to development of towns, trade and globalization. The study of Eastern Africa traditional songs is significant in shaping the society (Njogu, 2007).

2.2 The Style and Performance of Kamba Traditional and Modern Songs

2.2.1 Use of Metaphors

In terms of style, a metaphor is a literary word which is very essential to music for it colors the music and at the same time adds local flavor to it. Zbikowski (1998) Metaphor seems to be an inescapable part of musical descriptions that aspire to more than a rehearsal of defined terms. If we take away the metaphors of movement, of space, of chords as objects, of melodies as advancing and retreating, as moving up and down nothing of music remains, but only sound. Gathumbi, (2008) metaphor is comparison aimed at creating mental images. Metaphor is an attempt to understand one thing by means of comparison to another.

2.2.2 Slow Pace and Fast Pace

The choice of music for performance is dependent on the social event. Orawa (1998) music is identified by the occasion for which it is performed. There are different dances for different occasions. King'ei (2005) modern songs are characterized by creative techniques that follow the modern style. Timmers (2002) the performance aspects themselves may, for example, be categorized as slow or fast or be found to speed up or to drag.

In Kamba society music is accompanied by an action of dancing/performance even if it is the nodding of head but the pace and the style of head nodding is determined by the type of the song and dynamics in the society. Songs and dances are really inseparably connected and the dance is always accompanied with singing. Gibson (2005) music is the interdependence between perception and action that is emphasized in ecological theory suggests that every perception experience will bear the trace of an action component. In the case of music these traces of an action component in the overtly in the foot tapping, head nodding, and body swinging that are commonly observed in even the movement constrained circumstance of the Western art music tradition.

Wakaba (2013) without the dance, the music is incomplete. Dancers as well as the audience sway their bodies and swing hands, wobble their heads, shake shoulders, walk, jump, and do all sorts of movements in rhythm to the music. Blacking(1967) in African cultures, it is assumed that all normal people have some musical ability and are therefore capable of taking part and leading musical performances. Timmers (2002) the identity of music is not a stable concept, but changes with use and practice. The pure pleasure dances seem to change with the seasons.

2.2.3 Instrumental Music

The Kamba people have different types of songs, and every song has a name. The songs sung included: *mbathi sya kivalo*; *myali* (containing comments on social issues and fights against wrong doers); lullaby songs, circumcision songs, marriage songs, songs for work, and hunts songs (*uthiani*). The circumcision songs had different names: *ngakali* (or *kakali*) and *undiu*. *Mbathi sya kivalo* were *wathi* songs that involved dances and mostly, instrumental music. These songs varied according to the steps and drums used for the dance. Some of the songs that were conveyed by instruments included *kyaa*, *ngutha*, *mbalya*, *kuli*, *mbeni*, *kilumi* and

ngulukulu. Unaccompanied songs included nzai, kithakyo, musya, kilamu, mukungo, kilui, among others (Finke,2003). Although Finke discusses on the instruments used by some of the songs, he omits the importance of these instruments during performance. Therefore, the researcher shows diversified meanings manifested through the playing of instruments during the performance of Kamba songs.

2.3 Issues, Fantasy and Timelessness as Depicted in Songs

Modern secular songs employ fantasy which is a literary word that deals with world of imagination or imaginary things. J.R.R. Tolkien explained, fantasy as synonymous with “imagination,” with “non-reality” or “unreasonableness” in the primary world, that is, contrary to the familiar world. Lewis (1979) the word fantasy is both a literary and a psychological term. Lewis argues ‘Magic’, ‘adventures’, ‘impossibilities’ and the ‘preternatural’ are inevitable to a fantasist’s imagination. Fantasy can also be seen as a genre of art that uses magic and other supernatural forms as primary element of plot, theme or setting.

Danielle (2013) in his study of Fantasy in Israeli Literature argues that fantasy literature uses poetic means to examine the limits of the possible. It is characterized by vision rich imagination and it is not detached from reality: fantasy must begin with individuals and the world around them.

The researcher adds on the argument of Danielle that fantasy is characterized by imagination but the relevance of fantasy usage is omitted. The researcher analysis kamba modern secular songs by selected kamba musicians to examine the importance of fantasy as a feature of style in the contemporary kamba society.

2.4 Common Themes Addressed in African Songs

A common theme that is evident in most of African music is its ability to be used as a tool of development and social transformation. While European songs are often viewed as a way of entertainment, most of African music is focused towards the audience. African music contains a presentation of diverse experiences that form part of permanent historical events. Yet, these songs address a promise for a good future ahead. Unfortunately; such songs tend not to present the reality of the dark side of African society. For instance, the daily violence in slums is rarely presented in the song texts. This forces the people to conform to what has been presented as a lie. Therefore, the presentation given to the audience is of a faultless society that is removed from the persuasive truths. Hence, the music becomes a tool of intimidation that is used to instruct the anticipated thought in the audience. Hence, the influence presented by music has so far been assumed by the activists in upholding a promising political state. Yet, African music has great capability to change such a tendency (Admin, 2011).

Thematically, the Kamba songs *myali* (sung during ceremonies, as a way of socializing) were strangely extensive. Major themes kept resurfacing. *Myali* adorned excellent achievements by people or sets and condemned different activities or performance, particularly in *nzeo* ("to slice off"), a subclass of *myali*. *Nzeo* assisted Kamba community punish criminals, rascals, and social non conformists (Finke, 2003).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Social Cognitive Learning Theory by Albert Bandura. As indicated by Bandura (1977), Social Cognitive Learning Theory is something we acquire via our interactions with others in a social context. In the case of a traditional artisan, he or she may learn more about the most efficient way of creating his or her melodies via contact with other artists and members of his or her own general audience. Individuals develop comparison practices on their own initiative, as a result of seeing the behaviors of others. Individuals absorb and imitate the behavior of others after seeing it in others. This is especially true if the

observational encounters are pleasant or if the rewards associated with the observed behavior are attractive. Social Cognitive Learning Theory contends that People are just incomplete results of their surroundings. Kamba traditional oral artists were shaped by the environment that surrounded them. This is because they learnt from their environment on how to compose songs and the message to pass to the audience. In modern setting the artists are partially influenced by the environment since most of them have abandoned their ancestral lands and have migrated to urban areas and therefore they sing any time they wish.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study was a subjective exploration. The focus of this study was based in Nguu Division, Makueni County in Kenya. The population estimated consisted of youths, middle aged, old people and Kamba musicians. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique, to select the 22 individuals from the target population. Questionnaires were administered to 10 youths who were the main audience of modern secular songs. While 2 Kamba artists, that is, Kennedy Wambua and Ben Mbatha were interviewed on Kamba modern secular songs and traditional Kamba music they might have learnt or heard from elders. The researcher used interview and questionnaires to collect the data on Kamba songs from the respondents. During the study, the tape recorder was used to record the songs sung in Kikamba language. The songs were then translated to English language without changing their meaning. The researcher used content analysis approach, as a method of interpreting the data collected from the participants. It is a method of analyzing data, and it mainly analyzes the content and message in a text. The content analysis approach helped the researcher in analyzing qualitative data, that was collected based from the thematic concerns of the research study.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 Features of style employed by Kamba traditional and modern secular songs

4.1.1 Metaphor

It is used by modern secular musicians to colour their work hence capturing the attention of many listeners or wider audience.

Songs that the researcher extracted data about the usage of metaphorical language were:

Song 1: Kavaluku na Nzou (Kennedy Wambua)

Kavaluku and Nzou words are metaphorically used. The literal meaning of the words ‘Kavaluku’ and ‘Nzou’ are the Hare and the Elephant.

The song was sung by Kennedy Wambua who is a popular Kamba secular musician. It was sung after there was a conflict between him and one of his musicians he inspired and later fell out of his band to start his own.

The word ‘Kavaluku’ indirectly refers to a young and upcoming musician while ‘Nzou’ refers to already an established musician.

Metaphor has been brought about through symbolism whereby the Hare (Kavaluku) which literally is a small animal represents young and upcoming musicians. On the other hand, the Elephant (Nzou) which is a big animal means already established and well-known musicians. Kennedy, therefore, sees himself as an elephant which is big in body size. He thus compares himself to an elephant since his work is well-established and popularized everywhere. He sees himself as a leader or ruler of Kamba modern secular musicians.

Uu ni usi muliku- this is a deep river.

The above words are used metaphorically to mean music industry. The musician indirectly compares a deep river with music industry which has a lot of challenges like the difficulties one encounters when crossing the river such as one can be swept away by water. He tells the upcoming musician to be very careful so as not to be challenged or defeated by the work of singing and therefore be rendered useless.

Ukenda usyoka mbaka umbikaile-if you want to come back to the other side you must plead with me.

The above line metaphorically means for the young musician to be stable or succeed in music industry he must depend on him or consult him.

Kavaluku kanenie nai- the Hare spoke badly

Its implied meaning is that the upcoming musician insulted or mocked the popular musician.

The study discovered that in the above song the artist, Kennedy Wambua, criticizes the ungrateful people in the society and therefore advises people to be appreciative once something good is done to them.

Song 2: Kasarani (Benard Mbatha)

The musician of the song who is Benard Mbatha (Kativui) has sung to show that he is not happy because of the musicians who fight (disrupt) his music work. He talks of ill things that they do to him when he is singing like ‘matumaa andu moke kwananga ndanzi yakwa; mathi makima ngali yakwa’-they send people to come and disrupt my dance; they went and stoned my vehicle.

The artist of the song entitled Kasarani uses metaphorical words as follows:

- **Angi mekaa usyaiwa syana vai kindu mesa undavya ni maleve mathei**-Others are borne children by neighboursthere is nothing they can tell me they are empty tins. Its connotative meaning is that some enemies of the musician of the above song namely, Bernard Mbatha, are useless things, that is, they do not have any importance in their families.
- **Tukomane vandu ve kiwanza vena kombaundi nene mashambiki moke mone vita sya mwana na musyai**-let us meet where there is a field with a big compound audience to come and see battle between a child and a parent. It metaphorically means that the musician wants the audience to come to the stage to witness the competition in performance between him and his mentor.
- **Kiwanza vena kombaundi nene**-a field with a big compound. The phrase means Kasarani/ Moi International Sports Centre where Bernard Mbatha wants him and his inspirational musician to go and compete to know who has better performance.
- **Vita sya mwana na musyai**-the fight between a parent and a child. It metaphorically refers to a conflict between an already established, a popular musician with an upcoming musician whom he has introduced into the music industry.
- **Kavaluku**-The Hare.Here the musician, Bernard Mbatha, refers himself to the Hare which is a small animal.Its implied meaning is a small and an upcoming musician in the music industry.
- **Nzou**-The Elephant. The musician refers to his contestant as the Elephant which is big in size. The word Elephant metaphorically means already established musician who is popular in the music industry.
- **Nindi kinyungie kitau**-the wound has now smelled. It metaphorically means that Bernard Mbathi is ready to continue with his performance despite the challenges he encounters
- **Angi mekaa usyaiwa syana ni atui na ni maleve mathei**- others are borne children by neighbours and they are empty tins. It metaphorically means that although his colleague musicians are well established in music industry they are useless because they are not important. He further says that ‘**ona aamuka me shua masyaithasw’a ni aviti na niw’o**’-even their wives are sure they are made pregnant by the passersby and it is true; The musician uses the above phrase to criticize the popular musicians who are envious of his work.

- **Otondu mwithiitwe munisimba Simon na Wambua**’-the way you have been digging me Simon and Wambua. He wants to make enemy musicians to be aware that he knows them by their names.

The researcher discovered that the artist, Benard Mbatha, uses the song ‘**Kasarani**’ to mock the society by criticizing the evil deeds executed by his fellow musicians by using the line ‘**makatumana andu moke kwananga ndazi yakwa utuku – they send people to come and destroy my dance at night**’. He is thus looking forward to see a reformed society with humanity.

The singer appreciates the features of style used in Kamba language and that is why he employs metaphors in his song ‘Kasarani’ to decorate his work, for instance, he uses the word ‘**Kavaluku-The Hare**’ which metaphorically means a small and an upcoming musician in the music industry.

During the performance of the above song, the artist leads the song at the same time strumming his guitar. Other members of his band play different roles like playing the piano and the drums. In the climax of the song, the artist dances applying different paralinguistic features like body movements, facial expressions and hand gestures. At the same time the dancers dance vigorously with ladies gyrating their buttocks while males making a bow-legged posture shaking their legs.

4.1.2 Fantasy

Fantasy as one of the figures of style has majorly been used by kamba modern secular musicians so as to move the audience from the reality to world of imagination thus breaking the monotony of the song. Some of Kamba songs that have employed fantasy are analysed below.

Song 1: Ndawa ngathayuka ingi (Benard Mbatha)

The song literally means that the musician, Bernard Mbatha, will resurrect or come back to life. The musician who is Benard Mbatha thinks he will come back to life after dying. It implies fantasy which is fictional and opposite of expectations since it is impossible for a human being to come back to life after death. Although the song uses fantasy the word ‘Ndawa’ which literally means medicine that the musician refers himself is symbolically used to mean the healer of the audience who watch and listen to his music. He means that through his music the audience worries are no more.

The study found out that the artist of the above song, Bernard Mbatha, appreciates the aesthetic value of Kamba language by using fantasy to show how he will resurrect after death. It makes the audience to think deeply as they try to unfold the meaning of his song text.

Song 2: Germany by foot (Kennedy Wambua)

The literal meaning of the above song is that the musician who is Kennedy Wambua says that he will go to Germany by foot to visit Mwende. It brings out the use of fantasy since Germany is about 1000 miles away from Kenya and therefore one cannot reach there by foot. If one wishes to go to Germany, he has to board a plane or use water travelling means like ship. He says he doesn’t have money to board either of the two. Its implied meaning is that the musician exaggerates the love he has for Mwende and that is why he says he can go to Germany by foot.

From the study of the song ‘**Germany by foot**’ by **Kennedy Wambua** the researcher discovered that the artist uses the virtue of love as Kamba thematic concern to urge kamba people to cherish love among everyone in the society.

In addition he chooses his language creatively by using images like fantasy in his work to unfold the richness of Kamba language. An example of fantasy that he uses is going to Germany by foot which is very far from Kenya.

During the performance of the above song, he acts as the soloist and at the same time dancing using different types of gestures and body movements.

4.1.3 Instrumental Music

Kamba Modern Secular songs are accompanied by instruments during performance both in recorded videos/ CDs and live performance. Some of the songs that are/were accompanied by instruments during performance are as follows,

Song 1: Miss Musembi (Kennedy Wambua)

The song is an instrumental song since the musician, that is, Kennedy Wambua together with his band use instruments as they perform. The soloist who is Kennedy Wambua uses a microphone to lead and others also use the same to back up him. As it is being sung, some of his people in the band play a piano, six drums and electronic guitars. The instruments used in this song make it melodic and thus capturing the attention of the listeners. The sounds of these instruments make the listeners amused and therefore find themselves dancing to the tune of the song.

The singer of Miss Musembi, Kennedy Wambua, exaggerates how he misses and loves the lady Miss Musembi and that is why he says he can do anything even if is rapping her so as to be with him. He also vividly describes Miss Musembi physically which makes the audience or the listeners of the song to figuratively form her image in their minds.

The researcher found that the artist of the above song was aware that songs are not composed just for leisure but they have a role to perform in the Kamba contemporary society. Therefore the above song was composed to promote the virtue of love among Kamba people.

It was also observed that the above song portrays the moral decadence in Kamba society through the use of figurative language when the singer uses metaphors like '**ni ready yu nike mathabi yu ngaekewa-I am ready to do sin I will be forgiven**'. The word 'mathambi-sin' connotatively means raping the subject, Miss Musembi.

Song 2: Wendo wa nthakame (Bernard Mbatha)

The song entitled 'Wendo wa Nthakame' by Bernard Mbatha is instrumental since it uses instruments all through. Between the verses there is use of instruments. The instruments played in the above song does not only make it melodic but also make the performance to be lively. The soloist who is Bernard Mbatha plays guitar as he leads the performance. Other band members play other instruments like beating the six drums and playing piano.

In his song, Bernard Mbatha appreciates the Kamba value of love that should be cherished towards each other. He does so by expressing the love he has towards his family, that is, wife and the children.

The singer exaggerates the love he has for his wife and family and that is why he says '**ngoloke Ilovi nimandane musyi ngone family yakwa-I will come from Nairobi and reach home to see my family**'. The vivid description that he makes on the virtue of love educates the audience on different types of love according to musician Bernard Mbatha. In his song he mentions three types of love, namely, love of blood, love of money and love of magics. He therefore vividly describes love of blood as love which is blind such that you cannot see even when foreign materials are in ones eyes. He does so by saying '**vai kindu mwithaa mwene ona ivuti syi metho**'- **there is nothing you see even when the foreign materials are in the eyes**. The musician praises the love of blind than any other type of love by saying that it cannot be compared with any other types of love-'Wendo wa nthakame withaa wi muto kuliko wa mbesa na ndumba' the love of blood is thicker than that one of the money and magic.

The singer uses metaphorical language to compare the virtue love with blindness. He thus says that 'wendo wa nthakame ni kilalinda, ndwona nathi' -love of blood is blind, it does not see. He exaggerates the love of blood through the use of wise saying whereas he says

‘Wendo wa nthakame withaa wi muito kuliko wa mbesa na ndumba’ the love of blood is thicker than that one of the money and magic. According to the musician, the love of blood surpasses any other type of love.

The researcher noticed that the artist of the above song starts by playing his guitars before the start of the song to prepare dancers on the dancing style to use in the song. Benard Mbatha, the artist plays the guitar that produces solo tune; another band member plays the bass guitar while the rest play different types of instruments like the piano and the six drums to make the song melodic and ecstatic. The instruments are played in fast speed making the pace of dance to be fast.

Song 3: Kiilu niutuma mbungeni

The song which was sung by small-scale farmers means that they are passing message to the political leaders through their leader, Kiilu, who is politically affiliated to ask them to provide them with pesticides to spray their cotton plants since they can’t afford money to buy.

Money is being used to construct classes yet they do not have fees to take their children to school. They thus say ‘**Ngamanya kusesa towisi niusesea Kenya ngimanza kasamu nzomethye twana twili-** If I know matching you know I will match in Kenya looking for something to educate two children

Mbeli nisyo syikwaka kilasi ikamina- men are the ones building classes completely- its implied meaning is that the singers of this song come from a male-dominated society. It means that everything including the management of funds and resources is for men. The men mismanage money and that is why children lack school fees and even money to buy pesticides.

The performers of the above song could dance while putting on bottle tops or shakers which were majorly known as ‘iamba’ around the shoulders, hands, waist and legs. Those shakers could produce sound when performing and thus making music lively. The researcher noticed that during the performance, the dancers wore sisal skirts that they tied around their waists to show the authentic culture of Kamba people. They followed a uniformed pattern of dancing shaking their shoulders and one leg stepping down ahead of the other.

The researcher also learned that the singers of the above song employed thematic issues when singing and thus they composed the song to criticize male chauvinism in society since in their song they complain to be oppressed by their male counterparts which has led to children lacking school fees.

4.1.4 Slow pace and fast pace

The researcher used the songs below to elucidate data on pace;

Song 1: Kuvika Malindi (Bernard Mbatha)

The dancers of the above song sung by Bernard use fast pace when performing. In the above song he apologises and explains the reasons why he has not been going to Malindi to perform for his audience whom he refers to as ‘mashabiki’, for instance, he says ‘niikye pole mbingi syimandane Malindi (I throw a lot of sorry to reach Malindi). He thus promises the people of Malindi that he will go to sing to them at Malindi.

In the above song the researcher found out that the artist, Bernard Mbatha, was the soloist and at the same time playing guitar that produced the solo tune. Other guitars played by his band members produced other rhythms. Toward the end of his performance, he started sending greetings to different people while dancing in different styles. The dancers performed in fast paces twisting different parts of their bodies with men vigorously twisting their legs and ladies shaking their buttocks to show the climax of the song.

Song 2: Fundamentals (Kennedy Wambua)

The song named ‘Fundamentals’ has been sung in four different languages, that is, Kikamba, Kiswahili, Kikuyu and English. The musician himself has translated the song into above four

namely languages so as to capture a wider audience. Although it is short, it is very rich in the language usage.

The word 'fundamentals' which the musician has used literally means a leading or primary principle. The word 'fundamentals' has been used metaphorically to symbolize ladies who support the musician in his music industry. Its implied meaning is that women are very important in his work of music. He, therefore, repeats the lines several times while interpreting to different languages to emphasize the importance of women in his work.

The song has also used equal length of lines to make the song to have smooth flow when it is being sung and to aid in creation of its musicality.

The musician has also made use of repetition as one of the features of the performance to make the song 'Fundamentals' rhythmical, enjoyable and emphasize the message in it.

During its performance, the dancers dance in fast pace while twisting the legs, gyrating their hips creating a certain rippling movement of their abdomens and doing all sorts of movements in rhythm to the music.

The artist of the above song, Kennedy Wambua, shows how sexual desire is a disease to some people in Kamba community and more so the Kamba popular musicians. In this song he performs while holding a lady whom he dances with, pointing at her and referring to her as his fundamentals. He also uses different gestures while dancing with the lady.

In addition, the artist values the aesthetic value of the Kamba language as he uses a metaphor as a figure of style. The word fundamentals is metaphorically used to show how society is greedy of sexual pleasure.

Song 3: Kivila kii kya mbunge

The literal meaning of the above song which was sung during political gatherings means that the seat of parliament is not bought by money but by good actions, the singer says '**Kithoawa na meko ti mbesa(Kikamba)** - it is bought by actions not money (Gloss). The implied meaning is to praise and campaign for political aspirants like Maundu and satirizes the political leaders who go to the parliament and fail to serve the citizens since they have money. It, therefore, means that for one to be re-elected to the parliament he should fulfil the promises he made to his people. It also means that Kamba people upheld actions more than money. **Kyonda ndathoa kivila, tyuu tyuu kiathi-** Kyonda did not buy the seat then it has gone

It means that after the politician, Kyonda was elected in the parliament he went and ignored the needs of his people thus failing to serve them.

During the singing and performance of the above song the dancers used to do it in slow pace nodding their heads and twisting their buttocks. The soloist could lead then the rest joined in their deep guttural voices by saying that the votes belong to the political figure namely Maundu.

In the above song the artist cautions the society against pride due to material wealth and praises virtues in the society by singing '**kithowa na meko ti mbesa-it is bought through actions not by money.**'

4.2 Role

Song 1: Kula sya Ukamba (Kennedy Wambua)

The above song which is sung by Kennedy Wambua was meant to pass message to Kamba people to know that they should vote in Kalonzo Musyoka as the president of Kenya. The musician therefore uses it to campaign for the aspirant, Kalonzo Musyoka. He thus says:

- **Kula situ sya Ukamba sya kivila kyu kyailu kya usumbi twinenga Kalonzo** (Kikamba)-Our votes of Ukambani for the seat of the president we shall give Kalonzo (Gloss)

It is also meant to advise the political aspirant that when he is voted in he should serve the Kamba people and not to forget them and their needs. In his song he tells him to construct the roads and to bring solution to the problem of water in Ukambani. He then says:

wavika maundu maitu usisye' (Kikamba)-if you reach there look at our needs (Gloss).

It also educates other politicians that when they are voted in they are not supposed to relax and forget their people but they should serve them faithfully by fulfilling the promises they had made to them during the campaign periods.

It brings out the issue of entertainment since some of the dancers are politicians. Its performance brings applaud from the audience.

The above song is literary appreciated since it uses figurative language like direct address. The singer addresses the political aspirant directly by telling him 'Ika nesa we Kalonzo'- do well you Kalonzo. The direct address is used to show that Kalonzo is a politician the Kamba people can easily access and present their issues to.

The singer of the above song uses metaphorical language whereby he says:

- **Kalonzo wi Kenya (Kikamba)**-Kalonzo you are Kenya(Gloss)

Its literal meaning is that Kalonzo is compared to Kenya which is a country and motherland to Kenyan people. Its implied meaning is that Kalonzo is the mother of Kamba people at large and therefore he should protect and provide for their needs as the mother does so to her children.

He also uses a phrase:

- **Mwana witu Kalonzo (Kikamba)**-sour child Kalonzo (Gloss)

The above phrase means that Kalonzo hails from the Kamba family and as a child is concerned with his/her family members so Kalonzo is expected to take into consideration the needs of Kamba people.

The above song showed that the Kamba Modern Secular musicians appreciate the aesthetic beauty of Kamba language and that is why the musician, Kennedy Wambua, uses mnemonics like use of direct language 'ika esa we Kalonzo-do well you Kalonzo' , and metaphors 'Kalonzo wi Kenya-Kalonzo you are Kenya.'

Song 2: Miraa ve undu iwetaa (Bernard Mbatha)

The above song sung by Bernard Mbatha plays a role of educating the users of miraa on different types of miraa. It also makes them aware of who consumes those miraa and specific reasons for consumption. It is also meant to advertise the business of one of the sellers of the miraa whom the singer calls Mumbakala. He thus says '**Kwa muvaite umwe witawa Mumbakala niwe namba wani yauthoosya miraa na tena nde ngulu'**(Kikamba)- from one seller by the name mumbakala (Gloss), he is in number one in selling miraa and again he is not proud.

The researcher found out that artist does not compose songs just for leisure and material gain but they play a certain role in society like socialization, education, creating awareness among others. In the above song the artist composed to educate the miraa chewers' on different types of miraa.

Song 3: Kiilu nukuthi mbunge

The above song was sung to show good deeds that have been done by a political aspirant, Kiilu, and therefore the people of Makueni should elect him to go to parliament.

The implied meaning of the above song was sung to praise the aspirant politician, kiilu, and also to pass message to the people of Makueni on what Kiilu has done like constructing roads. It was sung during political rallies to create political awareness of what Kiilu has done in Makueni.

The researcher found that the artist of the above song considered factors like the message he/she wanted to pass to a community when composing a song. The above song was therefore

meant to complement good leadership in Kamba society and also to campaign for the aspirant politician, kiilu, to be elected in the parliament.

4.3 Timelessness

Song 1: Ndisii twiamba ukulekya

The above song uses the mnemonic timelessness since it does not have specific time when it was sung and performed.

It was sung by the inhabitants of Masumba to welcome a new District Commissioner to their area. For instance they sing,

- **Kalivu Masumba muthenya wa umunthi ni wa utanu mwingi (Kikamba)**-Welcome Masumba the day of today is of a lot of joy(Gloss)

It is meant to praise the leadership of this District Commissioner and that is why the singer says

- **Kivila kya utongoi ukaumw'a ni nthuku (Kikamba)**-the seat of leadership you will be removed by great grandchildren (Gloss)

It is meant to pass the message that Kamba people upheld the virtue of love and that is why they are saying,

- **Na ndisii wiwaitu twiamba ukulekya(Kikamba)** - District Commissioner you are ours we cannot let you go (Gloss)

Although the researcher did not know the specific name of the artist who composed the above song, she, however, found out that such artist was aware that songs are not just composed and sung for granted but they had a role to play in society like passing message, creating awareness, socialization and that is why he composed the song '**Ndisii twiamba ukulekya-District Commissioner we can't let you go.**' The above song was meant to pass a specific message to the people of Masumba.

Also the researcher learnt that the singers of the above song upheld the Kamba virtue of love by expressing their love to the District Commissioner when they sing '**Na ndisii wiwaitu twiamba ukulekya-District Commissioner you are ours we cannot let you go.**' It does not only promote the value of love among the Kamba people but also encourage them to show love to each other.

Song 2: Kusuvia Muthanga Conservation of the soil

The above song entitled 'Niambata Matuni' employs the feature of timelessness since the researcher does not know the definite time when it was sung and performed. The singer also employs fantasy as a feature of style by singing '**niambata matuni (Kikamba)** - I will climb to heavens (Gloss) it is implausible to ascend to heaven since one can only go there through death.

It talks more about the conservation of environment by digging burrows to prevent soil erosion from occurring. The singers of the above song are analytical since they know the importance of the soil that it could give them food. The literal meaning of the song is to ask the chief who is a political figure to give them more wisdom to conserve their soil. It connotatively beseeches the chief to give them tools to conserve the environment since it belongs to Moi-second president of Kenya- and they are his.

During the study, it was discovered that Kamba political traditional singers employed features of style as they composed their songs to colour their work and also to appreciate the aesthetic beauty in the Kamba language. The above song uses fantasy which is a stylistic device to show the impossibility of climbing to heaven while one is still alive.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The researcher concluded that Kamba traditional political songs had the feature of orality since they were passed from one generation to the next and therefore the soloists learned these songs from older soloists in traditional Kamba setup.

It was also concluded that both Kamba traditional political and Kamba modern secular songs use different features of style to colour the work of the Kamba musicians, therefore, capturing the attention of the listeners. They also sharpened the thinking capacity of the listeners and made them to come up with the meaning and role of these features in the songs.

It was also concluded that both Kamba traditional political and Kamba modern secular songs have a role to perform in contemporary Kamba society. They play different roles like educating people on different issues in the community, passing message from one person to another and promoting the virtue of love in Kamba society.

It was also concluded that any music whether Kamba traditional or Kamba modern secular songs use pace in performance. The selection of the pace in Kamba traditional political songs depended on the nature of the song and the social event. In the Kamba modern secular songs, choice of pace depends on the strumming speed of the instruments. If the strumming is very fast, then the dancers use fast-paced movements.

It was concluded that both Kamba traditional political and Kamba modern secular songs are instrumental since they use different types of instruments during the performance. The use of instruments was said to make songs enjoyable and lively during performance. While Kamba traditional political songs used non-melodic instruments like shakers commonly known as 'iamba', Kamba modern secular songs use melodic ones like guitars.

The researcher concluded that for the meaning and role of features of style to be understood well they should be put in context.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that songs of other upcoming modern secular Kamba musicians like Alexander Kasau, and Alphonze Mbithi should be studied to see whether they apply the mnemonics and their role in the Kamba society.

Other genres of Kamba traditional music should be analysed to compare their aspects of performance, linguistic strategies and role with the ones for traditional Kamba political songs. Middle-aged people are encouraged to listen to the Kamba traditional political songs since some of them are educative and pass cultural message in the Kamba society. The old aged people should spare time to listen to the modern Kamba secular songs so as to be aware of the differences between them and the traditional Kamba songs in terms of usage of features of style, roles they play and their aspects of performance.

The research also recommend that Kamba modern secular musicians, Bernard Mbatha and Kennedy Wambua, should listen to the old aged people as they sing Kamba traditional political songs so as to modify their message to suit in the Kamba contemporary society.

Bodies that deal with music like Music Copyrite Society of Kenya (MCSK) should come up with a regulatory rule on the language to be used by the Kamba musicians when composing Secular songs since some of them use obscene language.

Seminars for musicians should be organized to discuss the issues they should address in the contemporary Kamba society through their songs. Having done that, the meaning of their thematic concerns will be rendered out artistically to the Kamba society.

The study recommends that more research should be done on the works of other upcoming Kamba secular musicians to see whether they apply the mnemonics used by the other Kamba popular musicians.

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