

## **Mitigating Climate Change Through Gikuyu Indigenous Knowledge: An Ecolinguistic Perspective**

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### **Abstract**

Scientific approaches are necessary but inadequate in climate change mitigation. The paper sought an integrative approach to reverse the impact of climate change through Kikuyu indigenous knowledge as manifested in the stories the community lives by. The rich cultural knowledge which needs to be transmitted is declining due to the effects of socioeconomic modernity. Lack of transmission of this cultural heritage, part of which is language, might lead to deterioration of the environment thus disrupting ecosystems. Speakers use language to interact with their environment, thereby preserving it. Conversely, incompetence in language leads to a decline in biodiversity. The main objective of this paper was to analyse the stories the Kikuyu community lives by from an Eco linguistic perspective. The stories analysed are ideologies, metaphors, framing, narratives, evaluation, salience and erasure. The paper used a narrative literature review methodology and analysed peer-reviewed journal articles. Part of the data was obtained from the mass media and researcher's knowledge of community's cultural knowledge. Eco linguistic and Deconstruction theoretical frameworks were used to explain the impact of the stories the community lives by and discuss how eco-destructive narratives can be reconstructed or deconstructed. It was found out that the stories the community lives by were partly responsible for the climate change crisis and the need for integrating scientific and indigenous knowledge was advocated.

**Keywords:** Biodiversity diversity, climate change, eco linguistics, indigenous knowledge, language diversity

### **Introduction**

Climate change mitigation has traditionally relied on scientific methodologies which are necessary but insufficient. Indigenous communities possess a deep understanding of local ecosystems, weather patterns, and resource management that are yet to be fully utilized in central Kenya which has rich agricultural potential but adversely affected by climate change. The main objective of this paper is to explore climate change mitigation through the stories the kikuyu community lives by. The stories are derived from everyday discourses. Sources of this discourses are community's indigenous knowledge and mass media and expressed in the community's language. This study examines the transformative role of language embedded in cultural knowledge of kikuyu community to navigating the climate crisis.

The paper has an eco-linguistic orientation and examines the intricate relationship between language and the environment. It also provides insights into how language shapes our attitudes,

behaviour, and policies towards the environment. It, therefore, fosters environmental awareness, promoting sustainable practices and addressing complex challenges climate change poses. The paper is organized into distinct sections, beginning with an introduction, followed by methodology, theoretical frameworks, literature review, discussion, and conclusion.

In terms of methodology, a narrative review method was used. The methodology holistically synthesizes literature (Rother, 2007; Turnbull et al. 2021a) allowing for an exploration of the stories the community lives by. The approach also provides a contextualized understanding and aids in integrating diverse sources to uncover patterns, trends, and gaps in the Eco linguistic landscape. The methodology provides depth and insight into the current research (Snyder, 2019).

Relevant studies were identified to comprehend the stories of the community lives by particular literature on eco linguistics, indigenous knowledge, and deconstruction theories. Reputation of peer-reviewed journals was also assessed. Databases such as Tylor and Francis, de Gruyter, International Journal of Arts, Google Scholar, and Science Direct Social Science were sought. The purpose was to review peer-reviewed journals and articles. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were stipulated to avoid bias in selection. Recent journals spanning ten years were sought unless in cases where older literature was deemed necessary. The literature reviewed was limited to eco discourse from a narrative analysis framework. Indigenous literature was reviewed through primary sources. Additionally, mainstream media commercials were investigated, and Stibbes (2021) classified the community's narratives into a typology.

Data was systematically gathered, and critical information from the sources was summarized, analysed, and synthesized to obtain findings and critical themes in the stories. Each selected study was thoroughly read to gain a cohesive understanding of the subject.

### **Theoretical Framework: Theory of Ecolinguistics and Deconstruction Theory**

Eco linguistics examines how language shapes and reflects our perception of the environment. It also promotes language that recognizes the intrinsic values of all living entities but challenges anthropocentric perspectives. Eco linguistics also explores how language constructs and reinforces societal attitudes towards nature and examines the role of language in biodiversity conservation by examining metaphors and frames and how they shape our understanding of ecological processes and sustainability. Most theories dealing with stories communities live by have a psychological orientation, and thus, there is a need for a linguistic theory that can explain climate change.

The language embedded in the community's discourse shapes their perception of the environment. For instance, Kikuyu narratives on consumerism, as expressed in proverbs such as *kinene kiuru no karonda* (large quantities are appreciated except for a wound), create a consumerism mentality that can lead to the destruction of natural resource in the pursuit of land acquisition. Some stories demean nonhuman entities in the ecosystem structure. Some animals are framed negatively in proverbs, for example, *wakahare akirumia ndarama waruhiti arumagia muka* (while the hyena was beating his wife, the hare was beating a drum). The nonhuman hyena is framed as foolish and can, therefore, be eliminated from the ecosystem.

In the Kikuyu oral tradition, even food is gendered. For example, while millet was a woman's crop, banana was a man's crop since the man was responsible for propping it. There were differential assignments to labour tasks (Musalia, 2010), which could lead to negligence of some crops, thus affecting ecosystemic balance; metaphors and frames can create attitudes on how we relate to nature. Critics of the theory argue that there is simplification and determination by attributing climate crises to linguistic construction, yet climate change challenges are multifaceted. In this study, we advocate for an integrated approach to climate change.

The deconstruction theory is associated with Derrida (1967) and relies on textual instability, binary opposition difference, and logocentric critique. The theory seeks re-evaluation of established concepts and invites a more nuanced understanding of language and interpretation. It is vital to note that the stories, which in this case are the spoken texts, are not absolute truth due to the fluidity of truth in the text. For instance, an advertisement praising commercial feed over natural feed does not convey absolute truth.

Binary opposition implies that language privileges one term over another and creates hierarchies, leading to misconception and reinforcing power imbalances. For instance, there is a binary opposition between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism in Kikuyu stories, and anthropocentrism has been praised over ecocentrism. For instance, in the famous Kikuyu proverb *igutunywo mwana niikigirio mungu* (when an animal is being snatched of its young) food is given to make it forget the pain of losing it.

The other tenet is difference. Difference, according to Derrida, refers to fluidity in meaning. Meaning is unstable as words will differ, and their meaning may be deferred. For example, the popular Kikuyu advertisement on *migunda maguta maguta* (land that is as good as oil) prospective buyers of the advertised plot may be disappointed after noting that the advertised land could be unproductive.

Finally, the concept of logo centricism implies that we cannot have speech or writing representing the truth. Derrida argues that no ultimate fixed point of reference or foundation for truth exists. In order to deconstruct the Eco destructive stories in the context of the theory, we are called upon to question assumptions, unveil hidden structures, and recognize the inherent instability of language and meaning. Logocentricism applies to eco discourse because the stories the community lives by are taken to be absolute truths; for instance, that progress is associated with flashy and posh living in the urban area neglecting rural area with calm natural surroundings.

## Literature Review

Eco linguistics deals with the relationship between language and the environment. Language affects the way we think about our environment. According to Stibbe (2015), the greatest threat to humanity is not terrorism but the deterioration of the environment due to stories that focus on unlimited economic growth, consumerism, progress, individualism, success, and human domination of nature. Stibbe questions the validity and value of these stories that emanate from newspapers, magazines, advertisements, films, nonfiction, and visual images. He invites us to search for new stories and proposes that a discourse analysis approach is necessary to search for new stories that can change our environment since we think, talk, and act according to the stories we live by.

Recently conducted studies on the stories we live by use diverse approaches, themes, and theoretical frameworks within eco linguistics. Literary texts have been analysed to explore how characters relate to their environment. Nameen and Sarhan (2021) explore *Sunset Oasis* by Baha Taha. He uses the appraisal theory to show the stance of the characters. Das and Chanda (2023) explore the healing impact of nature in Toni Marissoni's novel *Home*. The novel presents nature as benefactor and healer. Quratul et al. (2023) focus on a Stibbe typology on erasure (Stibbe, 2015). The reviewed works examine how commercial advertisements for food products has been partially or entirely erased. The advertisements analysed underpin stories of conviction, metaphor, and erasure.

The current paper focuses on the stories we live by and derive data from indigenous knowledge and mass media. Local perception and knowledge are crucial for community-based

climate change adaptation measures and the conservation of natural resources as traditional knowledge is crucial regardless of global change, cultural erosion, and transformation challenges. Chanza and Masakwa (2022) also affirm that indigenous local observation can enrich our knowledge of climate change. Considerable research in Gikuyu has revealed the devastating consequences of climate change on the local community. According to Savenije (2021), Rockstrom (2003) and Ngetich et al. (2014), rain-fed agriculture dominates the central highlands of Kenya.

Indigenous people create regional, traditional, and distinctive indigenous knowledge. This knowledge is critical for catastrophe classification, preparedness, and mitigation (Greiner, 1998; Nakagawa & Zhang, 2018). This knowledge, may, at times exceed the capacities of modern science and technology in the context of disaster response (Nakashima, 2010; Hiwasaki et al., 2014b; Dewan, 2015). The preservation of ecological information, a component of indigenous knowledge communicated through cultural expressions and oral tradition, is both necessary and economically feasible for long-term progress, particularly in locations where environmental protection is critical.

The global shift towards socioeconomic modernity has led communities to forsake their native languages and abandon traditional environmental knowledge. As a result of delocalization, communities seek guidance and the will to sustain ecosystems in their new locations. These cultures have yet to accept alternative narratives as guiding principles for their survival. The move from indigenous knowledge that is distinct and culture-specific to a universal culture characterized by consumerism, capitalism, civilization, and anthropocentric economic tendencies is responsible for the current climate quagmire.

Language plays a vital role in shaping engaging narratives essential for maintaining the stability of our social structure. We must reassess our storytelling approaches to our planet to uphold this structure. Transformative narratives can change or help create new ones. Kingsnorth and Hine (2009) examine the Dark Mountain Project and argue that it challenges the concept of civilization and presents an alternative viewpoint by denouncing human-caused Anthropocene activities by searching for new stories. Analysis of the *stories we live by* was conducted using the typology by Stibbe (2015) though not in its entirety: ideologies, framing, metaphors, evaluations, identities, beliefs, erasure, and salience were evaluated.

### **Decoding Kikuyu Environmental Ideologies**

Ideologies manifest as verbal expressions of shared beliefs within a social group. Everyday discourse among individuals reflects these beliefs, contributing to understanding the world. Language usage and ecological perspectives can illuminate individuals' ideologies regarding ecosophy; fostered through the incorporation of ecological knowledge. It impacts technical, environmental, moral, and ethical concerns and advocates for personal convictions and actions, arguing for an end to anthropocentric perspectives and promoting ecological harmony (Bernaerts et al., 2013; Naess & Devall, 2008).

Some Kikuyu proverbs reflect the community's ideologies; for example, *Kindu kiuru no kibungo* (every currency is acceptable, as long as the currency is not a button). This is an example of an unsustainable and consumerist ideology in Gikuyu culture. The preceding aphorism emphasizes the importance of each business aspect and the pursuit of profit maximization. Entrepreneurs are encouraged, aphoristically, to maximize profits to the detriment of the environment. This viewpoint is reflected in the eco-destruction story, which pits profit against nature.

Greed and materialism are embedded in these two proverbs as the first has a connotation of grabbing, and the second implies amassing as much wealth as possible: *Kuria mbere ti gukoroka* (being the first to eat does not imply greed) and *Kinene kiuru no kironda* (the only thing that is truly terrifying is a wound). These proverbs demonstrate how modern civilization's consumerist discourse hurts the environment by encouraging greed, competition, and consumerism. The proverbs reflect capitalism's destructive and unfettered national ideology, threatening to deplete environmental resources. The proverb *cia thuguri itihuragia ikumbi* (purchased goods cannot fill a granary) emphasizes that acquiring material belongings does not ensure prosperity. It suggests that natural resource management is required to achieve goals. The preservation of the environment is critical to the survival of the human race. As a result, the saying encourages diligence and efficient use of natural resources. The proverbs emphasize the value of competition and enterprise in managing land and natural resources, alluding to the negative impacts of over-exploitation, mismanagement, and depletion. Such a proverb is eco-beneficial.

According to Stibbe (2015), investigating a group's ideas necessitates analysing social agents, actors, recipients, transitive verbs, and the product. In a Gikuyu television commercial (Inooro Television, 2023), a cow is fed on commercial feed and produces large amounts of milk. The primary agent is feed, and the recipient is a cow. The underlying narrative in this commercial advertisement is that commercial feeding is preferable to natural feeding. The spread of this mindset through the media may make farmers prioritize commercial commodities more than natural feeds, resulting in ecological disruption and environmental harm as natural fodder may be neglected. Greed, consumption, and anthropocentric beliefs are all promoted by an economy that prioritizes wealth through non-natural means. The story we create and perpetuate in advertisements of artificial products is that nature can be substituted, which is an ideology opposed to environmental conservation. For instance, commercial fertilizers' preference for manure conveys a similar ideology.

### **The Power of Framing: Analysing its Impact on Ecosystems**

Framing is complex and context-dependent (Nijland et al., 2018), as language is tailored to align with diverse pre-existing beliefs of different audiences (Nisbet, 2009). We use cognitive frames to evaluate the world (Dewulf et al., 2009). The source frame is built on a plausible perceived reality separate from the target domain. Cognitive schemata, or frames, connect narratives, build cohesive accounts within temporal, historical, and geographical settings, and integrate thoughts and subjects. For instance, Hameed (2021) asserts that animals are accorded prominent or destructive roles in Quranic discourse as beings, benefactors, heavenly signs, food supply, cherished goods, battle instruments, and holy emblems. It is critical to understand how animal frameworks influence ecosystems. Animals framed negatively are less valued and can be killed, causing an ecosystem imbalance.

It is critical for frame selection to identify trigger phrases during the framing process. The framing analysis of Stibbe (2015) suggests that clusters of linguistic elements unique to a specific group be used, whereas trigger words elicit specific mental imagery. For example, according to a Kikuyu proverb, *njogu ndiremagwo ni muguongo wayo* (an elephant can carry its tusks, however heavy), trigger words are *heavy* and *powerful*. The main topics are *tusks* and *individualism*. Elephant power, not tusk weight, is the solution to this concept's quandary. The proverb is ecologically ambivalent because of its contradicting opinions, yet it emphasizes the importance of coordinated efforts to fight climate change. While promoting individualism, the proverb depicts the elephant as a docile beast with tusks but submissive to human beings. The audience is alarmed



by the elephant's might. This phrase implies that artificial activities pose a threat to climate change mitigation. Climate change is an enormous phenomenon, but like the proverbial elephant, we should tackle it efficiently and with much ability.

Another Gikuyu proverb states that *Iganagwo yari iria yakua* (A good dairy cow is only praised posthumously). Critical phrases are *praised, milk cow, and posthumously*. *Consumption* is the domain frame, and *a milk cow* is the frame of reference. The topic of *milk production* is in the spotlight. The word *commendation* could be used to describe the solution framework. The story implies that lower-ranking species should never be acknowledged. This proverb highlights potential environmental concerns. The story aphorism encourages environmentally harmful consumption, such that human beings perceive other creatures as having a lower rank and are only valued for profit.

In the proverb, *Kanyoni kabariti keninagira njoya* (the little bird that spreads its wings perishes), the trigger is *little bird, feathers, wings, and 'ruin,'* with *motion* as the contextual framework. *The inconsistency or instability of a small bird species* is the problem, moderation is recommended. According to the argument, avian species are essential to the environment and should be safeguarded for intrinsic and utilitarian reasons. Avian species are not immune to having inherent worth in terms of climate change.

Cloudiness is commonly associated with those who have disagreeable personalities in narrative literature. A person with such a personality is said to be *athititite ta itu* (He/she is so upset that they resemble a cloudy sky). This image of a cloudy sky is an unfavourable portrayal of the weather. In Kikuyu's oral narrative, a story about the community's rainbow paints the phenomena negatively. The rainbow has been anthropomorphized and given a carnivorous vibe. Following the depletion of the famed animals and human beings by the rainbow, the central character of this Kikuyu story resolves to exterminate it. The connection between precipitation and rainbows may contribute to social antipathy to this natural event.

Another well-known Kikuyu proverb states, *mburi ya rwagatha ndikiraga* (a chattering goat is never quiet). Goats considered troublesome can be sold or slaughtered. Positive frames are attached to hares and rabbits, which may contribute to climate change as animals with a positive frame can be maintained and the ones with a negative frame can be gotten rid of.

### **Unveiling Metaphoric Language used in Kikuyu Discourse Relating to Natural Resources**

By identifying shared characteristics, metaphors facilitate the comprehension, perception, and visualization of diverse entities or procedures (Thibodeau et al., 2019). Gikuyu radio stations and advertisements for *migunda maguta maguta* (plots that are as good as oil), land for sale is portrayed as valuable, replenishing and moisturizing providing a smooth and supple feeling. The choice of words increases exposure to land availability through the utilization of language. Potential buyers are persuaded to purchase land regardless of the environmental hazard that clearing bushes might cause. In media, strategic choice of words is critical (Rai, 2013; Semino 2013).

A Gikuyu cultural song called *Muthirin'gu: Gikuyu Muri Irimu* (Wakaba, 2013) (Muthirin'gu: Gikuyu people you are foolish) praises sorghum and finger millet crops that were grown by the community is metaphorically compared to wheat. *Mwere wi makumbi bururi wa Kirinyaga na mwere na Makumbi ni ngano ya agikuyu*. (sorghum and finger millet are the wheat of Kikuyu land.) Wheat was associated with the white man, and community members were dissuaded from abandoning indigenous food. *Muchugwa: Nyumba ya wambui wa maitu* (*Muchun'gwa: Wambui, my sister's house*), which is thatched with grass and cattle tails. (Wakaba, 2013) persuades community to embark on livestock farming so as to get grass and cattle tails.

A Kikuyu program is labelled metaphorically as *Gucookia Ruui Mukaro* (Restoring the river to its origin). Kikuyu's traditional culture is likened to a river that has left its source and should now be restored. Restoration implies rehabilitating or rejuvenating cultural knowledge to rescue the environment.

### Depiction of Nature in Kikuyu Narratives

*Ngai* (one who shares) bestowed the universe on Gikuyu, the progenitor of humanity. The region was distinguished by its rivers, valleys, verdant forests, and abundant fauna. Kikuyu was commanded to build his dwelling near a *Mugumo* (fig) tree, an emblematic figure representing the harmony between humanity and nature that holds significant cultural and spiritual importance to the Kikuyu community and symbolizes unity, strength, and spiritual connections. The embedded narrative is an eco-centric one indicating harmony with nature.

The harmony between Kikuyu parents was maintained until new stories of civilization, consumerism, economy, individualism, and greed invaded the existing tranquillity. Today, nature and human beings are adversaries. Eco-beneficial narratives such as the one above have been abandoned. The storytelling style influences ecological systems. Storytelling styles can resist eco-destructive discourse, and linguistically embedded indigenous knowledge can make information more memorable, enjoyable, and accessible. The art of storytelling enables us to react flexibly to the agency and dynamics of nature by establishing a connection between oneself and others (Nanson, 2021). During a storytelling session, we intertwine stories of both self and others, creating a narrative mosaic that keeps everyone hanging on to every word, thus genuinely being part of nature described in the oral narratives.

Numerous popular local radio and television programmes depict Kikuyu's rich and untainted culture, such as the *Gucokia Ruui Mukaro* (restoring the river to its origin) initiative, which advocates for ecological restoration and eco-friendly discourse. According to Kikuyu oral tradition, most ceremonial rites feature goats and sheep. The Kikuyu society is concerned with the welfare of sacred sacrificial animals.

### A Critical Evaluation of Kikuyu Nature Discourse

By analysing appraisal patterns, one can discern the narrative being constructed; for example, posh living is deemed favourable as evidenced by the lexical attributes present in a Kikuyu commercial advert endorsing land sales, for example, *ii hihi niwiriragiria gwaka mucii mwege?* (Do you desire to build a good house?). *Hena maai maingi ma borehole ni micii miega?* (The land has borehole water and is for sale with several constructions). This advertisement portrays borehole water as satisfactory and supports felling trees to make way for aesthetically pleasing structures by using phrases like *good* and *very good*. Additionally, the ambiguous expression *Wira ni Wira* (Work is work) promotes the notion that work is valuable as long as it provides an adequate income.

### Erasure of Kikuyu Environment in the Community's Lived Stories

While language can emphasize some aspects of an event, it can also diminish others (Stibbe, 2015). It is critical to scrutinize the explicit portrayal of information and that which has been concealed, omitted, or removed. The Gikuyu oral tradition, known as *Kirira* (Oral tradition), is rapidly fading. As the community's anchor, *Kirira* is an indispensable source of the stories by which the community lives.

The Gikuyu courtship and matrimonial rituals were ornate and followed the community's prescribed protocols. Upon arriving at the girl's homestead, the betrothed and accompanying

youths would solemnly consume yams and porridge. According to traditional agricultural practices, men grow yams and arrow roots. Kikuyu oral tradition vehemently opposes the substitution of money for animals in modern bride price. As a result of its monetary focus, modern bride price has resulted in the depletion of animal populations. As an additional component of bride price, a tree branch is planted to represent the bride's reservation. Neglecting local tree species establishes a link between the extinction of languages and the decline of biodiversity. In addition to plant and insect names, animal familial terms such as *ndurume* (male sheep), *mugoma* (female sheep), and goats, are being eradicated from the Kikuyu language.

### **The Role of Saliency in The Kikuyu Environmental Protection**

According to Dioum (quoted in Wilderness Workshop, 2016), our appreciation will be limited to what we know, so our conservation efforts will be focused on what we value. We must emphasize qualities through clear, prominent, and precise communication, especially regarding the environment.

A horizontal camera angle serves as an additional pragmatic method of communicating principles of equality and reverence for the environment. Smaller creatures should receive more attention in visual displays representing the Kikuyu language, as they contribute significantly to environmental sustainability. Nature is highlighted when linguistic characteristics are visualized. Due to their cognitive and physical experiences, animals should be portrayed as independent beings with psychological qualities. Alternatively, for example, one of the local television stations in Kikuyu gives saliency to Mount Kenya in a segment that serves as a prelude to the news bulletin. Another station emphasizes modern cities replete with skyscrapers. We attribute ethics to what we perceive and experience. Dioum (in the Wilderness Workshop, 2016) contends that our capacity to conserve is proportional to our love for it and that our understanding of love is limited to what we have been instructed. We should be instructed in environmental conservation by the media.

### **The Discussion**

The ideologies, framing, narration, evaluation, saliency, and erasure stories presented in this paper are some narratives the community lives by. These stories are derived from the community's discourses, cultural heritage, and the mass media. The content embedded in these stories about climate change conversation can be related to the environment and broadly classified as eco-beneficial, ambivalent, or eco-destructive. According to Stibbe (2021), the stories we live by can influence our thoughts and actions.

The stories created and perpetuated in the community are on consumerism, greed, entrepreneurship, and anthropocentric tendencies, as reviewed in the framing of the animal proverb, *kuria mbere ti gukoroka* (*Being the first one to finish does not imply greed*). A consumerism narrative can lead to amassing as much wealth as possible at the expense of natural resources, which contravenes the conservation of the environment.

An observation of the Kikuyu land indicates an area with climate devastation, yet scientific mitigation measures have been undertaken. The measure taken should be context-specific because different cultural groups are endowed with indigenous knowledge from which communities derive and create stories relating to their environment. The Kikuyu community needs to be sensitized on how the environment relates to their discourse, given the devastating effects of climate change in central Kenya, as evidenced by landslides and the decline of cultural knowledge. Scientific measures should go hand in hand with creating eco-friendly discourse to mitigate climate change



Indigenous knowledge connotes awareness of non-living entities some of which were awe-inspiring and therefore preserved because they connected the deity with human beings. Postmodernism has replaced these stories with the ones of consumerism, greed, and materialism perpetuated through media such as unwarranted sales of land and subsequent clearance of natural resources.

Eco linguistics discourse serves as a potent instrument in mitigating climate change by fostering empowerment, with the community playing a pivotal role in reversing environmental impacts. However, the practical application of this strategy is yet to take effect. Sensitization on the effects of climate change mitigation is yet to be carried out. This sensitization should be applied to all communities to reclaim the rich cultural heritage that once protected Mother Nature. For instance, stories classed as erasure in the Kikuyu categorization denote that much of Gikuyu kirira (rich oral heritage on Kikuyu customs) has been erased. The erasure of cultural heritage is prevalent in other communities.

The study's findings can help stakeholders alleviate the frustration that comes with our incapacity to handle climate change as we cannot predict the weather patterns or mitigate climate change. The stories we live by can change how we perceive and act towards our environment, and censorship on the media so that whatever is being consumed by the public contributes to climate change mitigation. A collaboration between scientists and professional Eco linguists would help alleviate climate change without scientists demeaning and disregarding the vital role played by Eco linguists perceiving indigenous knowledge as superfluous (Lesperance, 2017; Whitefield, 2015). We advocate for a collaboration between Eco linguists and scientists to solve the climate change crisis.

## Conclusion

The exploration of narratives woven into the fabric of the Kikuyu language has been discussed in this paper. It has been established that ideologies, framing, metaphorical language, evaluation of various commonplace objects, erasure of the ecosystem, and giving salience to the ecosystem are stories in which linguistic embedment and interpretation influence our perspective and utilization of the ecosystem. These stories can be eco-beneficial, ambivalent, or eco-destructive.

Although it has been asserted that narratives influence our thoughts and consequently, how we behave toward the ecosystem, the community needs to be cognizant of the benefits of these stories. Instead, a unilateral scientific approach has been advocated. This method is necessary but needs to be improved to alleviate the impact of climate change on the Kikuyu community.

An amalgamation of scientific and a re-valuation of the stories the community lives by is fundamental because one approach is inadequate to address the climate change crisis. There is a need to search for new stories from indigenous knowledge and the mass media. Climate change mitigation can only happen by having a multidimensional approach. Mass media is a powerful force for redirecting the trajectory of eco-destructive narratives.

The paper was anchored on a comprehensive narrative literature review. The methodology was used to map out the significance of the stories we live by from Stibbe's Eco linguistics perspective. Theoretical underpinnings of the study were Stibbe's Eco linguistics perspective and Derrida's deconstruction theories. The former perspective provided a framework and explained the stories in which we live by. In contrast, the former was used to demonstrate how the ingrained narratives can be deconstructed or reconstructed. We conclude by advocating for the inclusion of an Eco linguistic perspective in dealing with the climate change crisis.

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