



Eco-narratives and Bukusu Traditional Music through Time: A Linguistic Analysis

Mary K. Lonyangapuo

Moi University, Kenya

Article History

Received: 10.01.2024

Revised: 01.06.2025

Accepted: 04.06.2025

Published: 18.06.2025

Keywords

Bukusu

Change

Eco-narrative

Traditional music

How to cite:

Lonyangapuo, M. K. (2025). Eco-narratives and Bukusu Traditional Music through Time: A Linguistic Analysis. *Journal of Linguistics, Literary and Communication Studies*, 4(2), 12-23.

Copyright © 2025



Abstract

Music is a powerful tool that speaks to the environment as it fosters human-nature relations for mutual benefit; this is despite its negative effects. Taking a linguistic perspective, the study investigates the place of eco-narratives in ecological im/balance through the Bukusu traditional music, arguing that despite the changing times, this music is still relevant in ecological sustainability. Specifically, the study identifies and discusses eco-narratives that are embedded in Bukusu traditional music, and how they speak to the ecology, it examines how eco-narratives are used in the sustainability of the Bukusu traditional music and Cultural Heritage, and finally, it conceptualises the future of the Bukusu traditional music in the face of change. Primary and secondary data in the form of songs were purposively sampled, translated into English, and analysed using He's (2021) Ecological Discourse Analysis framework, and Kress' (2012) Multimodal theory. Findings from the study make explicit how, and for what purpose the Bukusu traditional music is preserved, and they predict the future of the sustainability of the Bukusu traditional music in the shifting environment.

Introduction

Music in Africa is at the core of every aspect of life, as it transcends moral, religious, social, economic, and political boundaries to encompass environmental spaces. Music speaks to every stage of life, expressing individuals' worldview and connecting with and identifying them in unique ways. Consequently, music cannot be disentwined from the African lifestyle.

Over time, African music has evolved, and as such, what is currently referred to as traditional music may not necessarily be similar to the indigenous African music of the past. This notwithstanding, African traditional music is the indigenous, pre-colonial music that was transmitted orally from generation to generation. Despite the wave of changes that have come with modernity, this music has kept to its roots, surviving into the present. To date, African traditional music is as diverse as its peoples and cultures, though with a shared sense of Africanness –encompassing its unique structure, musical instruments, performance, and varied roles—that transcends this diversity. Unlike Western music, African music and dance are interwoven uniquely to the extent that the two cannot be untangled. Consequently, in discussing African traditional music, the accompanying dance cannot be ignored.

Traditional African music plays a vital role in society, as it is an integral part of people's lives. This music is healing to the human soul, *servicing as a tool for cultural identity*, a social space for education,



reconciliation, and promoting peace, unity, and harmony. It also serves as a means of social, political, and economic change, as well as a tool for mitigation and entertainment.

Bukusu traditional music is deeply embedded in Babukusu culture and is inextricably intertwined with dance, to the extent that the two cannot be disentangled. This music is characterised by orality and the shaking of *kamabeka* 'shoulders' and is performed at all social, cultural, economic, and political ceremonies. Bukusu music and dance are accompanied by traditional instruments such as *litungu* 'lyre', *sichenje* 'jingle', *siilili* 'fiddle', *eng'oma* 'drum', and more; this also includes body movements such as handclapping, foot stamping, and shoulder shaking, which are integral to Bukusu traditional music. Different songs, bearing specific themes, are sung depending on the occasion, whether to celebrate birth, naming, circumcision, marriage, or death. The nature of the celebration determines the participants.

Whereas in precolonial African society, traditional Bukusu music was entirely native in terms of the songs sung, their performance, the content, the context of performance, instruments and instrumentation, as well as costumes, the colonial and postcolonial periods have impacted Bukusu traditional music (Lonyangapuo et al., 2023; Shitubi, 2005; Simiyu, 2011). Notwithstanding this, their significance in the Babukusu community has kept this social space alive through oral, generational transmission.

Like other daily occurrences, Bukusu traditional music speaks to the ecology. In the current work, ecology is defined as encompassing all aspects that constitute the environment, considering the interrelationships and interdependencies between nature and humans. The assumption is that there is a bidirectional relationship between humans and nature that is either enhanced or impeded through music. Eco-narratives are stories in music that speak about the environment, and so environmental music is music that tells a story/ speaks about/to nature, either positively or negatively. Taking a linguistic approach, the study analyses the role of eco-narratives in Bukusu traditional music, their contribution to environmental sustainability, and their impact on the continuity of this music genre and culture in the face of change. This approach highlights the role of language in constructing and communicating Bukusu ecological knowledge, values, and beliefs, which are embedded in their traditional music. It not only highlights the environmental challenges but also provides mitigation strategies based on their indigenous knowledge. African indigenous ecological understanding offers a new perspective to the Eurocentric expertise that has long dominated environmental discourses. The study aims to contribute to the ongoing global debate on climate change and efforts to mitigate it for the sustainability of both humans and nature.

Literature Review

Research on African traditional music abounds. Mbaegbu (2015) researched music and its role in the development of the African person, underscoring its impact on social, political, moral, and religious life. Kanu (2019) explored the role of African music and education, arguing for its reintroduction in today's education system, while Nwobu (2018) and Nzewi (2002) looked at the medicinal function of African traditional music, arguing for its health intervention power.

In their studies on Kenyan traditional music, Masasabi (2007) contends for the reclamation of the dwindling African conventional music in Kenya, while Odwar (2007) argues for its inclusion as a core subject in the Kenyan pre-primary and primary school curricula. On the other hand, Mutuku (2007) emphasises the importance of reinstating infiltrated Kamba traditional music through cultural advocacy, youth education, and government action.



Research on Bukusu traditional music has focused on the changes in this genre (Barasa, 2015; Lonyangapuo et al., 2022) and their role in the current communication dispensation, arguing for their relevance and the need to strengthen this institution (Barasa, 2010).

Studies on environmental music have adopted diverse approaches. Polansky (1994) conceives such music as portraying the relationships between human-constructed sound and the sounds of the natural world. For Schafer (1977), it is the environment in which music occurs, while for Harley (1996), it highlights the connectedness between human-constructed sounds and the natural world. Conversely, Feld (2000) views this music as reflecting the relationship between human-constructed sounds and the social, political, and economic environments. Meanwhile, Marler & Slabbekoorn (2004), Mundy (2009), and Turner & Freedman (2004), who have investigated soundscape ecology, emphasise its relevance and the necessity for its conservation. Similarly, Ingram (2010) and Pedelty (2012) underscore the importance of environmental music.

In African eco-narratives, Ogundokun (2022) has analysed five African literary texts that narrate the adverse effects of climate change, arguing for immediate intervention to promote global well-being. Likewise, Sebambo (2023) has analysed five artistic works across the African continent, which have highlighted the adverse effects of climate change, calling for intervention for community and global sustainability.

Regarding African eco-narratives and traditional music, Titus (2019) conducted a study on the role of music in the flood disasters of Ibadan, Nigeria, advocating for the utilisation of indigenous knowledge embedded in popular music as a means of intervention in the current global environmental crises.

In Kenya, attention to environmental protection and conservation is encouraged from early childhood, where the Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) is designed to empower learners to take informed and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability, and a just society for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity (Wandabi, 2019). Likewise, Waswala et al. (2023) investigated the role played by the contemporary East African Kiswahili environmental songs, arguing for their relevance in promoting environmental awareness and advocacy.

Focusing on Bukusu traditional music, Wekesa (2010) investigated the place folk songs, folktales and proverbs in the current communication dispensation, while Wandukusi, et al. (2020) looked at the place of Bukusu male circumcision song metaphors in behavioural development of the Bukusu boy child and the transmission of cultural values, underscoring their relevance. Further, Wanyama (2005) underscores the place of the Bukusu circumcision songs in marking the transition of boys from childhood to adulthood, while Wasilwa (2023) analysed the significance of context in the composition and performance of Bukusu children's play songs. Moreover, Simiyu and Orawo (2018) explored the role of the stylistic evolution of *kamabeka* in Bukusu culture, arguing for its significance.

So far, there is a scarcity in literature that focuses on Bukusu traditional Music and the environment. Yet, music is a potent tool in influencing behaviour (human-nature relations), whether for or against. Environmental ideas embedded in Bukusu traditional music are abundant, reflecting the collective Bukusu memories of their culture and the environment. These ideas are sustained through generational transmission, hence speaking into the Babukusu, and by extension, the African present, as they point into the desired futures.



Theory

Ecological Discourse Analysis (He, 2021) is an ecology-oriented analysis of discourse from a linguistic perspective. The theory is applied to analyse the effect of language use on the environment, categorising it as either eco-beneficial, eco-destructive, or eco-ambivalent. This theory seeks to enhance people's ecological awareness, improve their ecological behaviours, and promote the harmonious development of the ecosystem (Cheng, 2022). It is employed to analyse the role of language in Bukusu traditional music concerning the environment. Additionally, Kress's (2012) Multimodal theory, a social semiotic approach to communication that perceives discourse as both ideological and textual, is applied. This multi-disciplinary theory is used to analyse both linguistic and non-linguistic modes of communication (Jewitt, 2009). Based on the theory, modes such as linguistic signs, visuals, contexts, and images of music and dance are analysed in accordance with the study objectives.

Methods

The study aimed to investigate the role of environmental stories embedded in Bukusu traditional music in ecological imbalance. Taking a descriptive design, primary data were collected from 4 respondents aged between 45 and 70 years, who were purposively sampled through a gatekeeper. Their ages were suitable for the type of information required. Likewise, secondary data consisting of seven Bukusu environmental traditional songs was purposively sampled from YouTube. The units of analysis included texts and non-linguistic modes, such as dance, costume, material, and context.

Data were transcribed, translated and analysed at the level of content using He's (2021) Ecological Discourse Analysis and Kress' (2012) Multimodal theory to identify both linguistic and non-linguistic structures that speak to/and about the environment.

Results and Discussion

Eco-narratives and Bukusu Traditional Music

In the African community, song communicates people's daily lived lives. Among the Babukusu, besides being a space for entertainment, song serves as a means for the (de)construction and perpetuation of the Bukusu cultural heritage, and as a space for negotiation. This genre has evolved to address emerging issues, such as climate change and its effects, as well as the need to mitigate its impact for ecological sustainability. Ndungo (2003) agrees that song is responsive to the changes in the everyday life of the community.

Eco-narratives are stories that address environmental issues, highlighting environmental challenges and inspiring action to address them. These stories are narrated through writing, speech, song and other non-verbal cues. The study analyses eco-narratives told through Bukusu traditional music to understand their role in ecological sustainability and in perpetuating and sustaining the Bukusu collective memories related to their traditional music.

The study analyses musical narratives that discuss the ecosystem, both terrestrial and aquatic, arguing for their role in ecological sustainability. Among the Babukusu, these musical eco-narratives are themed according to the season, occasion, audience, and context. This is observed in the excerpts below:

Excerpt 1: Song- *Mbili mbili nyanja* sampled from a male respondent, DW.

Mbili mbili nyanjainja undie x2.

'water in the lake come and eat me'

Mukhana womwami efula ekwe x2

'daughter of the king so that it rains'



Mbili mbili nyanja x4

‘water in the lake’

Among the Babukusu, it is believed that there lived a rainmaker king who only caused rain after being gifted. The song in excerpt (1) was sung to him during the drought season, when he was gifted a beautiful girl, in the hope of causing rain. Gifting of the king by *Mukhana womwami* ‘a princess’ is used metaphorically to symbolise the value that Babukusu attach to rain/ water. A princess is a woman with value and with the potential to cause things to happen; hence, she is held in high regard. By using the metaphor *Mukhana womwami* ‘a princess’, the Babukusu underscore the place of water in human-nature survival, and the total societal wellbeing. The song inspires community members to appreciate and conserve water sources, recognising them as the most valuable resources for their survival.

Excerpt 2: Song- *Nasio nasio* provided by a male respondent, DW.

Nasioo nasio nasiooo x2 Nasio chama khungenge x2

‘I am coming from far, searching for pasture’

Like the preceding, the song in excerpt (2) was sung during the drought season, when pasture was scarce. The story has it that there was a brother (Mwambu) and a sister (Sela) who lived together. Daily, Mwambu travelled long distances- with his animals- in search of pasture and water. Late at night, he came home singing the song to open the door for his sister. In its literal interpretation, the song marks identity and peace (for the sister to open the door), and wellness (for the animals). Using a repetition strategy, the song not only conveys the dire environmental situation – one lacking food and water – but also describes the animals that are coming home, well-fed, satisfied, and healthy, as they had pasture and water for the day. Metaphorically, it narrates the importance of having a sustainable environment that cushions both humans and nature from such hardship, as it inspires the community to protect the environment for their well-being.

Excerpt 3: Song- *Kitumbe* provided by a female respondent, JN.

Kitumbe ngololilo enjilokhu ngoloti, Chingila changalikania ngoloti,

Babantu baela ngoloti, Babantu bawa ngoloti

‘I try going through this way/ road, but I am unsuccessful, the roads are confusing me’

‘people are dying, all people are gone (because of the disease x2)’

Among the Babukusu, there was/is a contagious disease that occurs during specific seasons, it spreads in the air and kills anybody who inhales. The community believed that it came with/ through the air. The song was sung to caution members against going outside the house to avoid infection and prevent the spread to others. Literally, the song narrates a story of a people who are unable to reach their destination because of impeding hurdles that cause death and extinction. The phrase "*Chingila changalikania*" (roads confused me) is metaphorically used to convey the challenges that community members face in the presence of infectious or polluted air. Likewise, repetition, coercion and caution strategies observed in *Babantu baela ngoloti, Babantu bawa ngoloti* ‘people are dying, people are finished- (because of the disease x2)’ underscore having clean air for human-nature survival, and the need to appreciate and protect for their wellbeing.

Excerpt 4: Song- *Nja Mumbo* provided by a male respondent, SN.

Nje nje nja mumbo x2

‘I went on a journey far away’



<i>Njeenje</i>	'I went'
<i>Khaondo nikho khwaraka</i>	'the pumpkin we planted'
<i>njeenje</i>	'I went'
<i>Khamalila baana</i>	'it killed my children'.
<i>Njeenje</i>	'I went'

This song narrates the story of a leader or parent who travels far and cautions the family not to eat the pumpkin on the farm. Unfortunately, the children disregard the warning, eat, and perish.

Literally, the song underscores the individual (owner) who plants the pumpkin as the determinant of the harvesting time to avoid wastage. This song cautions the community against environmental destruction, which results in food insecurity. The repetition strategy used in *Nje nje nja mumbo* 'I am going far' and *njeenje* 'I am going' metaphorically conveys the patience required to ensure a sustainable environment. Likewise, *Khaondo* (pumpkin) metaphorically refers to the environment that needs to be patiently tended to. *Khamalila baana* 'killed/ finished my children' is also metaphorically used to denote environmental destruction, caused by humans, that adversely affects both people and nature through food and water scarcity. The song warns the community about the dangers of ecological destruction, encouraging them to nurture it for their mutual sustainability.

Excerpt 5: Song- *Kumusangura* provided by a female respondent, MW.

Olimilanga musala si?

Which tree do you use to plough?

Ndimilanga musangura

I use *kumusangura*

Olimilanga musala si?

Which tree do you use to plough?

Ndimilanga musangura

I use *kumusangura*.

Kumusangura tree has very hard wood; hence, its products are durable. Given its durability, *kumusangura* is used to make wooden bridges and tools, such as the hoe, slasher, machete, and axe. Literally, the song educates community members about the nature and value of *kumusangura* and the need to appreciate and protect it for their benefit. Repetition and hypophora strategy is used in *Olimilanga musala si?* 'Which tree do you use to plough?' *Ndimilanga Musangura* 'I use *kumusangura*' to underscore the value of this tree in human-nature sustainability, and the need for their protection. Since *Kumusangura* takes longer to mature, the song metaphorically teaches Babukusu the virtues of patience and perseverance in the effort to achieve success, including ecological sustainability.

Excerpt 6: Song- *Kumukasa nekwichile* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1_4F8P4tffI), Wanyonyi Kakai.

Liloba selimanyile omuinda nende omumanani ta

Soil doesn't know who's rich and who's poor

Kuloba kwalia mayi



Soil ate my mother.

Efula neyitile okhakela, oli manya obisia khana ipa luweni

When it is about to rain, don't think of stopping it, it might be a thunderstorm

Literally, the song narrates death that comes to all, and the soil, where humans are buried, regardless of status. It also speaks about rain that is unstoppable when it is meant to fall. Implicitly, the singer personifies the soil by saying, *Liloba selimanyile* 'soil doesn't know' to underscore the importance and function of the soil, that it is a necessity to all humans, and it should not be interfered with. Personification of soil in *kuloba kwalia* 'soil ate', and the use of the augmentative markers *ku-*, in *kuloba*, 'soil', and *kwa-* in *kwalia* 'ate', brings out the adverse effect of soil- that it harms, just as humans do, when interfered with through human in/action. The call not to interfere with nature is yet captured in *Efula neyitile okhakela, oli manya obisia khana ipa luweni* 'when it is bound to rain, don't interfere, it might be thunderstorm'. Naturally, no one determines when it should or shouldn't rain. Implicitly, this song discourages humans' harmful interference with nature, and since nature serves them, they ought to protect it for their mutual benefit.

Excerpt 7: Song, *Mudavadi kobola* 'Mudavadi return' ([https://www.youtube.com > playlist](https://www.youtube.com/playlist)), Webuye Jua Kali Band.

Baluhya balomalomanga bali khakhendo khali munyanja

Luhya say that the magic guard is in the lake

luno luri Mudavadi echile ne khakhendo akha

today Mudavadi has come with it

langa sipika we punge...

'Call the national speaker...

...bapunge ba Western baambane

... Western MPs unite

mube ekisambo endayi

be a good example

This song calls for political unity among the Bukusu community. The singer compares the unity of Mudavadi with other Luhya leaders to *khakhendo* 'a magic guard' – that brings luck to the one in possession – which is found *munyanja* 'in the lake'. Literally, *khakhendo* being in the lake signifies that the lake is crucial as it is its habitat. The singer employs the proverb *khakhendo khali munyanjaa* 'the magic guard is in the lake' to underscore the centrality of water to life, health, and prosperity. The phrase *Mudavadi echile ne khakhendo akha* 'Mudavadi has come with the magic guard' is metaphorically used to refer to Mudavadi's advantageous political positioning as a gateway for Luhyas to ascend to power. The eco message conveyed through the song inspires the Babukusu to value, appreciate, and care for water/lake, which preserves life, without which, is the habitat of the treasured commodity that brings luck to the community. The proverb *khakhendo khali munyanjaa* 'the magic guard is in the lake' speaks about the environment, where the noun phrase *khakhendo* 'magic guard' and *munyanja* 'the lake' metaphorically refer to the lake that brings good luck, hence the need to be appreciated, treasured, and cared for. To emphasise the community's value for the environment, the singer cites Luhya wisdom *Baluhya balomalomanga* 'Luhya say that.'



The above traditional songs underscore the mutual relationship that exists between the Babukusu and nature. As noted, eco stories narrated through Bukusu traditional songs convey the community's values and appreciation for the environment, as they call for social action for their mutual benefit. Employing various linguistic strategies, the songs articulate shared cultural memories, present ongoing engagements, and envision a future for Lubukusu traditional music and the environment.

The Bukusu traditional musical instruments, costumes, and the setting of performances narrate a story of the community's relationship with nature. For instance, the *litungu* 'lyre' instrument is made from traditional trees such as *kumukhuuyu*, *kumutoto*, *kumubumbu*, and *kumurembe*, which embody cultural significance; they are central to the counselling of community members. The monitor lizard's skin is used to make the *litungu*'s resonator, the *litungu* strings are extracted from *kumubia* 'tendons', and *biyula* 'traditional women dancing costumes' are made from 'traditional' sisal fibre (Lonyangapuo et. al., 2022). The relevance of these botanical products inspires the community to protect the environment for their mutual benefit. Furthermore, most Bukusu traditional music and dance are performed in or near forests, rivers, and beautiful rocks, reflecting a recognition and appreciation of nature.

Eco-narratives and the Sustainability of Bukusu Traditional Music and Cultural Heritage

Bukusu traditional music forms an integral part of the people's lives. This music reflects their lived experiences from pre-birth, through birth, circumcision, marriage, death, life after death, herding, farming and chores, to sleep and wars, with each aspect determining the theme to be communicated.

Like other Bukusu traditional music, environmental music is fundamental not only for sustaining Bukusu traditional music but also for preserving the people's cultural heritage. From the excerpts provided, it is evident that the eco messages in the songs provoke action from the listeners. For instance, in Excerpt 7 (repeated below):

Baluhya balomalomanga bali khakhendo khali munyanja

'Luhyas say that the magic guard is in the lake.'

In this song, the singer connects fortune with the lake. This message encourages the community to actively protect and conserve all sources of water as a resource for their well-being.

The community's sociocultural life shapes environmental music. Consequently, environmental narratives reflect the community's values regarding human-nature relations, which helps sustain their cultural heritage. Bukusu traditional environmental music *fosters* a sense of belonging, cultural identity, and shared memories, reflecting the community's ecological perception. For instance, in Excerpt (1), the song *Mbili mbili nyanja* 'water from the lake' narrates the Babukusu shared values concerning water as a *treasured commodity* that all must protect. This is a cultural heritage passed down through generations.

Similarly, the song *Kitumbe* in Excerpt 3, which narrates the spread of infectious diseases through the air and cautions community members to be vigilant and remain indoors, reinforces the Babukusu's shared cultural beliefs about contagious diseases (Lonyangapuo, 2023). This cultural knowledge is transmitted across generations through song, thereby contributing not only to its sustainability but also to the sustainability of Bukusu traditional music and the environment, despite the changing contexts.



The future of Bukusu Traditional Music in the Face of Change

Urbanisation and modernisation, along with internal and external contact, education, religion, climate change, shifting political contexts, and technological advances, have all impacted Bukusu traditional music. This infiltration is evident in the lyrics, melodies, instrumentation, costumes, contexts of performance, dance styles, and themes, resulting in increased hybridity that blends the indigenous with the exotic. For instance, in excerpt 7, the singer uses code-mixing to communicate his intentions:

langa sipika we punge... bapunge ba Wesitani baambane... mube ekisambo endayi
'call the national speaker...Western MPs unite...be a good example'

The use of nativised English phrases such as *sipika* 'speaker', *epunge* 'parliament', *Wesitani* 'Western', and *ekisambo* 'example' in calling for political unity among leaders implicitly communicates the need for a combined effort in environmental sustainability. The shift in the singer's linguistic behaviour mirrors the dynamism in Bukusu traditional music over time, occasioned by the changing spaces that necessitate negotiation and reinvention for realignment.

Similarly, Bukusu traditional instruments such as *litungu*, *kumulele*, *silili*, *chimbengele*, *lulwika*, *eng'oma*, *bichenje*, and *chisasi* have incorporated Western instruments like the keyboard, guitar, and drums to align with and engage current audiences. Furthermore, dance styles have shifted from the traditional *kamabeka* 'shoulders' shaking to movements focusing on the waist, which contravenes Babukusu values. Performance contexts have also transitioned from traditional local brew settings to modern venues, such as pubs, and attractive environmental locations, including rivers, forests, and scenic rocks. These changes are reflected in the use of non-linguistic modes and other contemporary linguistic strategies, such as code-switching, mixing, meshing, slang, and translanguaging, that transcend tradition in environmental communication. The shifting strategy arises from the current audience's demands.

Despite the dynamism observed in Bukusu traditional music, a departure from pre-colonial African heritage (Lonyangapuo et. al., 2022), the presence of Bukusu traditional music in people's lived experiences has ensured its continuity through generations. The reinvention of Bukusu traditional music, as it seeks to address current social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental concerns, injects new life into this genre, enabling it to endure without compromising its core defining features. Thus, Bukusu traditional music remains relevant in communicating the community's shared cultural heritage. Having survived colonial pessimism and interference, the dynamism of music genres, and the modern technological era, its sustainability is assured. This is evident in the solid core identity features of Bukusu traditional music, which have persisted despite the genre's hybridisation, as it reinvents itself to tackle present-day societal issues. The reinvention of this genre reflects the shifting landscapes, a reality evident in the changing metaphorical focus of the narratives, which now encompass ecological concerns, among others.

Conclusion

The study aimed to explore the role of eco-narratives embedded in Bukusu traditional music within the context of ecological imbalance. The analysis has demonstrated that, despite changing times, Bukusu traditional music remains relevant to ecological sustainability. Specifically, the study highlights how Bukusu traditional songs emphasise the mutual relationship between the Babukusu and nature. This is evident in the materials used to create musical instruments, traditional costumes, and the settings of performances, which reflect the community's connection to nature. Thus, this genre has been reinvented to address emerging issues, such as climate change, its effects, and the necessity for mitigation, for the mutual benefit of all.



Linguistic strategies such as metaphor, repetition, coercion, caution, conversation, hypophora, comparison, questioning, personification, augmentation, sayings, proverbs and code shifting and mixing, as well as non-linguistic modes are used in Bukusu traditional music to communicate their shared cultural heritage, their present, and the perceived future concerning Bukusu traditional environmental music.

It is observed that environmental music is central to the sustainability of both Bukusu traditional music and their cultural heritage. Given the community's sociocultural life's role in shaping Bukusu traditional music, this genre *affords and perpetuates* a sense of belonging, cultural identity, and shared memories that transcend the ecological.

Despite the transformation observed in Bukusu traditional music, in the face of change, its presence in people's lived stories and its reinvention to fit the changing environment guarantee its future sustainability.

The current debate on climate change, combined with the fact that music has the power to influence, underscores the need for the Kenyan Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Heritage to preserve Bukusu traditional environmental music for the sake of ecological sustainability and the continuity of Bukusu traditional music and cultural heritage.

References

- Barasa, M. W. (2010). *The Role of Ethnomedia in Contemporary Communication Dynamics: A Case Study of the Bukusu Folk Media*. <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke:8080/handle/123456789/3809>.
- Barasa, M. W. (2015). *Cultural Continuity and Change: A Historical Study on Music and Dance among the Bukusu of Bungoma County, Kenya*. Unpublished PhD Thesis, Kenyatta University.
- Cheng, M. (2022). Theoretical Framework for Ecological Discourse Analysis: A Summary of New Developments of Ecological Discourse Analysis. *Journal of World Languages*, 8(1), 188-226.
- Feld, S. (2000). 'A Sweet Lullaby for World Music'. *Public Culture*, 12 (1), 145-71.
- Harley, M. (1996). *Notes on Music Ecology: As a New Research Paradigm*. Los Angeles: University of Southern California.
- He, W. (2021). "Shengtai Huayu Fenxi": Hanlide Moshi de zaifazhan ["Ecological Discourse Analysis": Further Development of the Hallidayan Model]. *Waiyu Jiaoxue [Foreign Language Education]*, 42(1), 20-27.
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m1_4F8P4tfl.
- <https://www.youtube.com/playlist>.
- Ingram, D. (2010). *The Jukebox in the Garden: Ecocriticism and American Popular Music Since 1960*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Jewitt, C. (ed.) (2009). *The Routledge Handbook of Multimodal Analysis*. London: Routledge.
- Kanu, I. A. (2019). African Folk Songs as Traditional Instruments for Education and Entertainment. *Jos Journal of Religion and Philosophy (JJRP)*, 1(1), 172- 183.
- Kress, G. (2012). "Multimodal Discourse Analysis" in Gee, J. and Handford, M. (eds) (2012) *Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (pp 35-50). London: Routledge
- Lonyangapuo, M. K., Obuchi, S. M., Nganga, S., & Onyiego, S. (2022). Reinvention of Lyre Music and Dance for Knowledge Preservation and Political Mitigation: The Case of the Bukusu of Kenya. *Mwanga wa Lugha*, 7(2), 67-84. Moi University Press.
- Lonyangapuo, M. (2023). Linguistic and Cultural Re-orientation in Addressing COVID-19 among the Bukusu of Western Kenya. *Journal of Linguistics, Literally and Communication Studies*, 2(2), 46-57.



- Masasabi, A. N. (2007). The Face of African Music in the Kenya Music Festival Foundation (KMFF). *African Musicology on-line*, 1(1), 1-13.
- Mbaegbu, C. C. (2015). The Effective Power of Music in Africa. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 5, 176-183.
- Marler, P., & Slabbekoorn, H. W. (2004). *Nature's music: the science of birdsong*. Elsevier Academic: Boston
- Mutuku, J. M. (2007). Emerging Trends in the Kamba Traditional Folk Music. *African Musicology on-line*, 1(1), 56- 65
- Mundy, R. (2009). Birdsong and the image of evolution. *Soc Anim*, 17, 206-223
- Ndungo, C. M. (2003). "Song: An Agent in Social Deconstruction of Gender". In: *Disparities in Developing Countries. Types: Challenges and the Way Forward*. Association of Third World Studies: Nairobi.
- Nwobu, S. (2018). Possibilities of Human Healing through Music: The Igbo Experience. *Research Review*, 12(3), 99.
- Nzewi, M. (2002). Backcloth to Music and Healing in Traditional African Society. *Voices: A World Forum for Music Therapy*, 2 (2).
- Odwar, H. (2007). School Music Education and the Kenyan Cultural Heritage. *African Musicology online*, 1(1), 30- 46.
- Ogundokun, S. A. (2022). Literature and Sustainable Ecosystem: An Investigation of Selected African Literary Texts. *Khazar Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 25(1), 33-44.
- Pedely, M. (2012). *Ecomusicology: Rock, Folk, and the Environment*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Polansky, L. (1994). 'Live Interactive Computer Music in HMSL 1984-1992'. *Computer Music Journal*, 18(2), 59-77.
- Schafer, M. (1977). *The Tuning of the World: Towards a Theory of Soundscape Design*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Sebambo, K. (2023). Echoes of Resilience: African Artists and Ecological Consciousness. *P54 Magazine*, <https://pavillon54.com/blog/100-echoes-of-resilience-african-artists-and-ecological-consciousness/>
- Shitubi, I. W. (2005). "External Influences on the Litungu Traditional Popular Music of the Luhya in Kenya." In *Emerging Solutions for Musical Arts Education in Africa*, A. Herbst (ed). Cape Town: African Minds.
- Simiyu, R. (2011). "Socio-Cultural Significance of Circumcision Songs within a Changing Babukusu Community of Bumula Division, South Bungoma District, Western Province." An Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Kenyatta University.
- Titus, O. S. (2019). "Ecomusicology, Indigenous Knowledge and Environmental Degradation in Ibadan, Nigeria". *African Music: Journal of the International Library of African Music*, 11(1), 72-90.
- Turner, K., & Freedman, B. (2004). Music and environmental studies. *J Environ Educ*, 36, 45-52



- Wandabi, D. (2019). *Kenya's New Curriculum Mirrors Education for Sustainable Development*. <https://koeorg.wordpress.com/2019/06/12/kenyas-new-curriculum-mirrors-education-for-sustainable-development/>.
- Wandukusi, S. et. al. (2020). Effects of Bukusu Male Circumcision Songs Metaphor on the Education of the Boy Child among the Bukusu Community (A Case Study Trans-Nzoia County, Kenya). *Int. J. Adv. Res.* 8(11), 1186-1192.
- Wanyama, M. (2005). *Form and Content of African Music: A Case Study of Bukusu Circumcision Music*. PhD. Thesis, University of Pretoria.
- Wasilwa, S. (2023). The Role of Context in the Composition and Performance of Bukusu Children's Play Songs. *IRE Journals*, 7(2), 184- 191
- Waswala, Owiti, C. D., Jepkemei, F., & Kodak, B. (2023). An Evaluation of Contemporary East African Kiswahili Environmental Songs. *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 10: 2289246. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2023.2289246>.
- Wekesa, B. M. (2010). The role of Ethnomedia in Contemporary Communication Dynamics: A Case Study of the Bukusu Folk Media. <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke:8080/handle/123456789/3809>