



## Nature of Dholuo Metonymy

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### Abstract

The emergence of metonymic expressions in Dholuo is a linguistic phenomenon experienced in native-speaking regions overtly and subtly. In their day-to-day conversations, interlocutors make use of metonymy for various linguistic goals. Even so, metonymic expressions have not been given adequate attention by analysts in applied linguistics. This paper examines the nature of Dholuo metonymy, by analysing metonymic patterns based on the 'how' question as the guiding principle. The paper focuses on the South Nyanza dialect of Dholuo, because it is considered the standard variety among other dialects. The paper is anchored on the Causal Theory of Reference advanced by Kripke (1980), to investigate how inanimate metonyms are used as reference points for inanimate objects. Data for this study comprised actual metonymies collected using focus group discussions and interviews. The data was collected in Homa Bay County where the researchers reached out to farmers, traders, sportsmen/women, musicians, and travellers. Data was analysed using critical discourse analytical procedures where Fairclough's (2003) description, explanation and interpretation approach was adopted. The findings revealed that Dholuo metonymy is referential, experiential, humorous and rhetorical in nature. That means the speaker manifests an independent intention to refer to a given object regardless of the particular interpretation of the expressions used; the metonymic concepts are grounded in people's experience and language; the speaker expresses a certain attitude towards the referent in a humorous way; the speaker uses its figurative force to flower the language. The findings of this paper would be a source of reference to scholars in linguistics and an addition to existing knowledge on metonymy, applied linguistics and African language studies.

**Keywords:** *Metonymy, Nature, Dholuo*

### Introduction

This paper discusses the nature of Dholuo Metonymy. The paper is presented in subsections: meaning of metonymy, a brief presentation of the related literature, an overview of the Dholuo language, which is the language analysed, the theory on which the paper is anchored and

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methodology. The paper also presents findings and their discussion after which a conclusion is drawn.

### **Meaning of Metonymy**

Metonymy is a figure of speech in which one word is substituted for another on the basis of some material, causal, or conceptual relations (Preminger & Brogan, 1993). Metonymy is also a 'figure of speech' that is a departure from linguistic norm, and it demands suitable training for its successful use and comprehension (Papafragou, 2000). Nunberg (1978) views metonymy as a case of 'deferred reference' in which a speaker while using a description of 'A' succeeds in referring to 'B' (Nunberg, 1978, p. 68). Metonymy is a sub-case of 'deferred reference' which is enabled by the establishment of links between objects 'for psychological, cultural, or locally pragmatic reason' (Fauconnier, 1985, p. 103).

Terms related to metonymy include synecdoche, which is a subtype of metonymy used to substitute a part for a whole, for example; *Ogwedhi ofuke ma ogolo* 'Bless the pockets that have given (money) and simile which is used to make comparison between two different entities by connecting them with words such as 'like', 'as', 'resemble', and 'than', for instance; *Pesane chwer ka koth* his money drops (pours) like rain (Mboya, 2014). This paper adopts the definition of metonymy by Preminger and Brogan (1993), who records that metonymy is a figure of speech in which one word is substituted for another on the basis of some material, causal, or conceptual relations.

Metonymy involves 'naming by association', a metonymic process of linking two concepts or persons together in such a way as to tell us more about the latter by means of what we already know about the former (Thomasson, 1994). With metonymy, it is common for people to take one well-understood aspect of something and use it to stand either for the thing as a whole or some other aspect or part of it (Wahome, 2017).

### **Related Literature**

Mboya (2014) views metonymy as a figure of speech functioning as a linguistic strategy and contrasts metonymy with other tropes like metaphor, personification, synecdoche, and simile. He further argues that metonymy functions mainly for referential purposes where one entity is used to refer to another entity, for instance in Dholuo; *Otanda namba apar gi ang'wen dhi dala kiny* 'Bed number fourteen is being discharged tomorrow' to refer to a 'patient'. Whereas metaphor functions mainly for understanding of one entity with the aid of another entity, for example, *Yesu e okumbana* 'Jesus is my shield', Mboya (2014) adds that personification is used to transfer human qualities to inanimate objects, for instance; *Kisumu orwaki* 'Kisumu welcomes you'.

Searle (1969) cites two conditions for accomplishing an act of reference, which in this case we describe as a metonymic situation. One, there must exist one and only one object to which the speaker's utterances of the expression apply. Two, the hearer must be given sufficient means to identify the object from the speaker's utterance of the expression. Catalano and Waugh (2013) studied how verbal and visual metonymy shapes public opinion about political and financial events in the United States and the European Union. They found that metonymies euphemistically focused on peripheral parts or properties avoiding mentioning specific results or those responsible. They argue that the nature of metonymy is largely unconscious, and people are not necessarily aware of the thought process brought about by the language they use. They further claim that people can be easily manipulated by metonymies and remain blissfully unaware of how they have been influenced. They perceive metonymy as asymmetrical mapping in which the target is understood from the perspective of the source. They use an example from the 'Wall Street Journal' to demonstrate the nature of metonymy and how it interacts with text: the image of Madoff's smiling face wearing a suit and tie, a metonymy for high status. They argue that the influence of metonymies in the context of



financial and political issues in the United States and the European Union is based on the nature of the metonymy used.

Studying metonymy in the Mormon language to account for the secret names among the Kpelle of West Africa, Thomasson (1994) found that names can have multiple functions, different from what they seem to be. He asserts that the Greek 'pre-historic' word *Mormo* refers to a sound made by a wild animal, a growl or a murmur and it is an example of onomatopoeia. He claims that if the place name *Mormon* has the same root as *Mormo*, it is quite appropriately used to refer to the wilderness area where Alma's young church began, a place characterised as being 'infested, by times or at seasons, by wild beasts. Names, therefore, serve the function of association: *Mormon* was associated with wild animals and even with the concept of "more good". Kripke (1980) argues that a name refers to something because there is a kind of causal relationship between the use of the name and the thing to which it refers – the thing here being 'physical' and 'historical'.

Dragana (2017) observes that in metonymy, a speaker creates a positive representation of all the in-groups and a negative of all the out-groups, in a referential manner where for instance: 'X stands for Y' where X is the vehicle and Y is the target. Hence, there is a single mapping from the vehicle to the target.

Pankhurst (1994) asserts that metonymy is primarily referential in character, relying on causality as a linking principle between the term and its referent which is in the material world. Pankhurst (1994) further argues that another shared principle in metonymic description is contiguity, essentially spatiotemporal contact, primarily in conventionalized figures such as a place for a person (e.g. The White House has refused). This kind of contiguity is context-linked (e.g. Have you done your Chomsky?) and it is not perceived as meaningful outside its specific environment. Pankhurst (1994) further suggests that in some metonymies a kind of ellipsis is used to achieve semantic effects (e.g. We'll have the Bordeaux), is easily understood by anyone who knows that Bordeaux is a kind of wine produced in a specific area and that speakers are probably in a restaurant. In a shared context, the full literal version such as 'we'll have the wine from Bordeaux' is felt to be unnecessary. Creative examples are seen in political or advertising slogans in which inference plays a considerable part (e.g. small is beautiful) and carries more attention-taking effect than a literal version of the same proposition such as 'it is desirable to plan for small-scale development.' The reader infers meaning through his knowledge of the socio-economic code. For instance, a part for the whole pattern is closely related to a container for a contained pattern based on the 'strength of contact'. This is an intuitive notion that refers to the strength of the relation between the two entities involved e.g. England cannot be physically separated from the UK, but water can be separated from the glass. For example, the statement "He loves the bottle" means he loves the content in the bottle (maybe alcohol) or the statement 'The milk tipped over', means the container with the milk tipped over. These and other patterns are the focus of this paper.

### ***Dholuo Language***

Dholuo is spoken as a native language in different parts of Africa by the Luo community of speakers, also called Joluo. It belongs to the Nilo-Saharan family of languages that has six branches. Dholuo belongs to the branch called Chan-Nile (Greenberg, 1966). In Kenya, it is widely spoken in the following Counties: Siaya, Kisumu, Homa Bay and Migori counties. Dholuo has two major regional varieties: The Trans-Yala dialect; spoken in Ugenya, Alego, Yimbo and parts of Gem and the South Nyanza dialect spoken in various parts of South Nyanza, Siaya and Kisumu. The two groups have different dialects. The dialect treated as standard Dholuo is the one spoken in South Nyanza. This is the dialect of focus in this paper. Even so, the two dialects are mutually intelligible. Just like other community languages in Africa, Dholuo has not been studied extensively. This implies that there are many aspects of Dholuo which need to be clarified through various research, 'metonymic patterns' being one of



them. This gap prompted this paper. The main goal is to determine the nature of Dholuo metonymy by identifying and describing the patterns.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on the Causal Theory of Reference advanced by Kripke (1980). The theory is about a name referring to something because there is a special kind of causal relationship between the use of the name and the thing to which it refers-the thing here being 'physical' and 'historical'. Kripke (1980) criticises the Descriptivist Theory advanced by Frege and Russell (1970) which claims that the semantic content of proper names is identical to the description associated with it by the speaker. Kripke (1980) says it is hard to find a specific description to which a given name is equivalent. The meaning of a name lies in the object it refers to and a name's referent is determined by a causal link between some sort of 'baptism/dubbing' and the utterance of the name. 'Baptism/dubbing' is a term Kripke (1980) uses to mean an act of pointing at something in its presence and giving it a name in the presence of other participants. Kripke (1980) further provides an account for which a name is attached to an object and how people who are not present during naming get acquainted and can use the name to refer to it. He uses 'baptism/dubbing' and 'reference borrowing' as tenets to explain his claims. 'Reference borrowing' is the art of obtaining the ability to refer to the object using its name from other speakers who already possess this ability.

Kripke (1980) claims that 'baptism/dubbing' is an event that fixes reference to a term. During the event, the person performing the act of baptism or dubbing referring to an object in its presence by pointing at it and giving it a name develops some sort of causal link between the reference and the object. Anyone else who was present at the baptism/dubbing event, other than the person doing the naming, is by virtue of their observing that event, able to gain linguistic abilities, to refer to the object using the reference.

The Causal Theory of Reference, whose tenets are baptism/dubbing and reference borrowing, brings out the understanding as to whether the metonymic references have causal links with their referents in the domains of shape, arbitrariness and sound. The tenets of this theory have been used in the analysis to explain how the naming process began with one person and the people around him, and how the name spread out to the wider community of Dholuo speakers. For example, *wang' dede* (eye of a grasshopper) is a metonymic reference for a camera. It is a common term with Dholuo speakers. *Wang' dede* as a baptism/dubbing was done by one person in the presence of a camera and other participants. People who were not present during the baptism/dubbing event were then using *wang' dede* for the camera through reference borrowing. Important considerations have been made to what, in a very general way, is described as 'descriptivist theory' by many scholars.

### **Methodology**

This paper adopted a descriptive research design. The descriptive research design provides answers to the questions of who, what, when, where, and how, associated with a particular research problem and obtains information concerning the current status of the phenomena to describe 'what exists' with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. The 'what' question applied to the investigation in this paper by addressing the question, what is the nature of Dholuo metonymy? This paper focuses on absolute metonymies sourced from primary data because metonymies are generative. It also focused on five human study groups. These were mourners, traders, musicians, sportsmen/women, and travellers. The paper is derived from a larger study that collected qualitative data in Homabay County, Kenya. The data were in the form of responses from interviews and focus group discussions, together with notes taken during observation.

The study used a sample size of 5 respondents from each category of the population. The population constituted mourners, sportsmen/women, travellers, musicians and traders.



Therefore, a total of 25 respondents constituted the sample. Data was collected by use of interviews and focus group discussions. For interviews, the researchers used semi-structured questions on metonymies in Dholuo and received relevant responses from the respondents. Five focus Group Discussions were conducted, each per sample group. The group discussions provided additional qualitative data for analysis. The group discussions took place in different designated venues e.g. church buildings, fish 'banda', schools, and chiefs' camps. The data were audio recorded, and additional points were put down in note form for later analysis. In data analysis, the researcher scrutinized verbal statements and texts collected to identify metonymies' explanations and interpretations. The researcher initially transcribed and translated the metonymies and other utterances from Dholuo into English. The data were then analysed using critical discourse analytical methods in this manner: the researchers classified the items according to their common characteristics e.g. shape, sound, and material considering the domains of part for whole, whole for part, and part for part. The interpretations were made based on the sociocultural context of Dholuo language and anchored on both the theory and objectives.

### **Findings and Discussions**

This section presents and discusses metonymic patterns that constitute the nature of Dholuo metonymy: A part for whole, the whole for a part and a part for a part, container for contained, contained for container, and material for object patterns.

#### ***Part of Whole Pattern***

Physical objects are typically perceived to be forming a gestalt with well-delineated boundaries and are composed of various parts. A part of an object is used as the reference point for the object. The type of relation between part and whole constellations is intuitively strongest.

Example 1: *Gamna nyaite marateng'*. - get me the black one with ears.

A speaker in an open-air market made the utterance in Example 1 above, as she was pointing at a collection of basins to pass a message. She was specific about a basin with projected handles on both sides. The handles are referred to as ears because of their positions on the basin about the position of human or other animals' ears on the head. The handles are an inalienable part of the basin. The speaker used *it* 'handles' as the metonymy to refer to the basin. So, it implied specification. The handles and the basin are contiguous. So, the contiguity relation is a link and therefore, develops a kind of causal relationship between the two entities. The handles are the salient part and are used to refer to the whole entity, the basin. Example 1 above shows that metonymies in Dholuo take a part-whole pattern.

Example 2: *Obuombe omwomo yamo* - the one with wings penetrated the wind

The proposition in Example 2 above, was made by Owino Misiani's band; a musician performing live music in Homa Bay. He recounted the experience the troupe had during their air travel from Kisumu to Mombasa to perform live music. The speaker made the proposition in a simplifying way using **obuombe** 'the one with wings' as the metonymy about aeroplanes to imply a high-status transportation system. An aeroplane is a powered heavier-than-air aircraft with fixed wings. The precise relation between the wings and the aeroplane is strong because **buombe** 'wings' cannot be separated from the aeroplane and the aeroplane still flies. The wings and the aeroplane are, therefore, contiguous.

This contiguity relation is considered a causal relationship between the two entities. In studying propositional metonymy, Warren (2006) found that part of an object can be used to mean the object. She cited an example; the wings took off to refer to the aeroplane. Therefore, wings as the salient entity are used to refer to the aeroplane.



Example 3: *Ng'ato ang'ata madwaro tado owinjore obedgo.* - Anyone who wants a roof should have one.

The statement in Example 3 below was said in a speech about a housing program for the low-income earning Kenyans. The speaker made the statement in a church on a Sabbath day referring to the verses that stress the comparison between Jesus and the wolf; that wolves have holes, but the son of man has nowhere to lay His head. He used **tado** 'roof' as a metonymic reference for the house purposefully to imply residence. A roof is an inalienable part of a house and the contiguity relation between the two entities is strong. The strong contiguity relation develops a causal relationship between the entities. The salient entity is used as the explicit element to refer to the implicit element. Therefore, the speaker used **tado** 'roof' as the salient entity to refer to the house.

Example 4: *Luong ji.* - Send out invitations.

In Example 4 above, the speaker made the utterance in a church committee meeting organising a funds drive in aid of a church building. **Luong** 'invitations' is the metonymy used to mean cards. The semantics of this metonymic utterance involves physical as well as non-physical aspects, formalized as [physical object] information. That is, what the physical object contains is the information. So, the physical object and the information are contiguous entities. The contiguity relation is considered a causal relationship between them. The salient entity is used as a reference point for the other entity.

Example 5: *Injini osewuok e wath.* - The engine has left the beach.

A traveller anticipating to catch a motor-powered boat to go to Homa Bay across the lake made the utterances in Example 5 above to communicate the information. **Injini** 'engine' is the metonymy she used to refer to a motor-powered passenger boat. The speaker implied transportation. Engine is an English word that is borrowed and used as a Dholuo word. An engine is a part of a car or other vehicle that provides the force for motion. The engine and the boat are contiguous entities. The contiguity relation between them involves alienability; that is the engine as part of the boat can be physically separated from the boat, albeit they belong to the part-whole domain. The contiguity relation is considered a causal relationship between the engine and the boat. Therefore, one entity that is considered salient is used as a metonymic reference for the other entity.

### **Whole for Part Pattern**

This metonymic relation is the reverse role constellation of part-whole metonymic relation. *Whole* is used as a metonymic reference point for the part.

Example 6: *Ndiga otuch-* My bicycle is punctured.

A *bodaboda* cyclist mending a puncture in the tube made the utterance in Example 1 above. Earlier on, *bodaboda* riders were operating on bicycles to transport their customers to their destinations. He used **ndiga** 'bicycle' as the metonymy to mean the tube; a metonymy implying depletion. **Ndiga** 'bicycle' is a vehicle that has two wheels, one behind the other, a steering handle, and a saddle seat and is propelled by the action of a rider's feet upon pedals. A tube is a hollow and cylindrical in shape object that is put in a tyre around a metal ream and contains pumped air. **Ndiga** 'bicycle' and the tube are bound contiguous entities. The contiguity relation is considered a causal relationship between **ndiga** 'bicycle' and the tube. It is similar to what Warren (2006), found in propositional metonymy; that 'bicycle' as a whole can be used to refer



to the 'tube' as a part. Therefore, **ndiga** 'bicycle' as the salient whole is used explicitly to refer to the implicit part-the tube. This shows that Dholuo metonymies form the whole-part pattern.

Example 7: *Pang ot; welo chiegni donjo.* - Arrange the house; guests are about to arrive.

A music composer made the proposition in Example 7 above. He urged his beloved one through a song to tidy up the house in readiness for the anticipated guests. Traditionally, Dholuo speakers hold the belief that a visitor must be impressed by all means. Keeping the house or an environment clean and neat is one such means. So, the speaker used the metonymy to call for personal decency. He used **ot** 'house' as a metonymy to refer to furniture: chairs, and tables. A house is a structure built or serving as an abode of human beings. Furniture is large movable item(s), usually in a room, which enhance(s) the room's characteristics, functionally or decoratively. **Ot** 'house and furniture are unbounded entities and so the contiguity relation is weak. The contiguity relation is motivated by the location in which the target is located. **Ot** 'house' is the location, and the furniture is the located. The target is easily understood when the salient, and easily coded 'whole', is used by the speaker to refer to the furniture. Though the contiguity relation between the two entities is weak, it develops a causal relationship between them. Therefore, one salient entity is used as a metonymic reference for the other entity.

Example 8: *Bende omiyi basa?* 'Are you given an envelope?'

The statement in Example 8 above was said at a funeral ceremony. A son-in-law is traditionally obliged to give out a small token to their in-laws when they go to mourn with them. The token is a way of showing unity and a feeling of bereavement in times of problem. It is usually in a monetary form and is put in an envelope. The speaker used **basa** 'envelope' to refer to money put in the envelope to imply societal virtue. **Basa** 'envelope' is a paper wrapper used to enclose small, flat items. **Basa** 'envelope' and the money are alienable contiguous entities and so the strength of contiguity is weak because money can easily be separated from the envelope. The contiguity relation forms a link between the two entities which develops a special kind of causal relationship between **basa** 'envelope' and the money. Therefore, **basa** 'envelop' as a salient entity in this context was used metonymically to refer to the other entity-money.

Example 9: *Obokeni olero chung' mar josiasa ewi.* - This newspaper clarifies the position of politicians on BBI.

The proposition in Example 9 above was made by a newspaper vendor stressing on what a radio presenter in a radio station broadcasting in Dholuo in a program; *nge nonro mar oboke* 'know the content of the newspaper' from 7:30 a.m. said. The program highlights the main items covered in the newspaper. The speaker used **oboke** 'newspaper' as a metonymy to refer to one of the inside articles covering the BBI issues. The speaker used the metonymic proposition to imply news in a simplified way. Newspaper comprises articles highlighting different issues affecting mankind. The speaker used the whole newspaper for ease of understanding that one section of it carries information worth noting, but not all the paged leaves. The newspaper and the articles are alienable contiguous entities, and the strength of contiguity is strong because the information printed on the pages overlaps to some extent. The contiguity relation is considered as the causal relationship between **oboke** 'newspaper' and one of its articles. In the context of the proposition, the speaker used **oboke** 'newspaper' as a salient whole to refer to one printed article which is a part.

Example 10: *Bairo orumo.* - Biro is over.



A fish monger in the process of recording the sales of fish, made the utterance in Example 10 above, as she tapped a biro gently on her right knee. She used **bairo** 'biro' as a metonymy to refer to the ink in the pen. The utterance communicated the need to help with another biro to complete the process of recording. **Bairo** 'biro' is a pen comprising an outer case, an inner tube, ink, and a ball-peen.

The inner tube contains the ink which is consumable because it leaves an impression on the paper. **Bairo** 'biro' as a unit whole cannot be over wholesomely. So, the speaker made it easily understandable by explicitly using the salient whole (**biro**), for the implicit target (ink). The contiguity relation, the ink as a part has with other constituents, is strong because one contains the other. This contiguity relation can be considered a causal relationship between the **bairo** 'biro' and the ink. Therefore, the speaker used **bairo** 'biro' as the salient whole to refer to the ink.

### **Part for Part Pattern**

A part-for-a-part metonymic configuration maps entities that function as parts (Mboya, 2014). A part of an object or entity is used to refer to another in a metonymic pattern.

Example 11: *Kimbo ok poti e kado.* - Kimbo does not cuddle up in the soup.

An entrepreneur operating a kiosk stalked with different brands of cooking oil made the statement in Example 11. She used **kimbo** as the metonymy to refer to the cooking oil. So, the speaker used metonymy to imply the goodness of the product. *Kimbo* is a brand name of cooking oil produced by KIMBO company. *Kimbo* cooking oil is part of a collection of other cooking oils produced by different companies giving rise to a part-whole relation.

The cooking oil is also part of objects like plants from which it is extracted. The cooking oil is part of plant and the KIMBO is also part of the collection of other cooking oil producing companies. KIMBO as the company and the cooking oil as the product are unbounded entities. The part-part relation can be considered as a causal relationship between **kimbo** and the cooking oil. The speaker used **kimbo** as the salient entity to refer to the cooking oil.

Example 12: *Go gi kiwi* - Polish with kiwi.

A customer at a shoe shiner's kiosk uttered the phrase in Example 12 below. He used **kiwi** metonymically to refer to a shoe polish manufactured by the KIWI Company. Therefore, the speaker used metonymy to imply the goodness of the polish. Shoe polish is constituted by wax and other petroleum products. There are several companies producing shoe polish e.g. NUGGET, KANGAROO, RIG and CUSSONS of which KIWI is part. The substances constituting the polish are considered as part of the polish. The substances and the producer are in the part-part relation. This relation is considered as developing a kind of causal relationship between **kiwi** and the polish. The customer used **kiwi** as the salient and easily coded part to evoke a target of lesser interest – the polish. Dholuo metonymies, therefore, illustrate part-for-part metonymic pattern.

Example 13: *Mitokani tindo mo.* - This motorcar uses fuel sparingly.

The proposition in Example 13 was made at a bus terminal among the drivers comparing different vehicles based on their fuel consumption rates. The speaker used **mitoka** 'motorcar' to mean the engine. The metonymy, therefore, implied the efficiency of the vehicle engine. Engine is a part of a car or other vehicle that provides the force for motion powered by internal combustion. The vehicle in question; the minibus, is part of a collection of other vehicles; buses, cars, and trucks. Engine as part of a car and similarly, a car as part of a collection of vehicles, have part-part relation. The part-part relation is considered as developing a special kind of





causal relationship between **mitoka** 'motorcar' and the engine. The speaker used **mitoka** 'motorcar' as the salient and easily coded part to refer to the engine as a lesser part.

### **Container for Contained Pattern**

The container is perceived as whole and the contained as part. However, the relation between the two entities is a little looser in terms of strength of contact (Peirsman & Geeraerts 2006, p.281). The container is considered a salient part of the unit. Therefore, container is used as the metonymic reference for the contained. For example:

Example 14: *Omadho okombe ariyo.* - He drank two cups.

The statement in Example 14 above was made by a waiter in a tea kiosk during breakfast. Tea and slices of bread were served to a customer. The speaker used **okombe** 'cups' as the metonymy to mean tea. The amount of tea one has taken is measured on the number of capfuls of the tea emptied. So, the metonymy implied the bill due. The cup and the tea are contiguous entities which are alienable. The tea can be separated from the cup, so the strength of the contact is rather loose. The contiguity relation between the cup and the tea develops a kind of causal relationship between the two entities where one salient entity is used metonymically to refer to the other entity. Peirsman and Geeraerts (2006) studied metonymy and using a similar example; a glass to refer to the liquor, found that container can be used to refer to the contained. Therefore, **okombe** 'cups' as the salient entity was used by the speaker to refer to tea, showing that Dholuo metonymies illustrate container for contained metonymic pattern.

Example 15: *Kel geche adek.* - Bring three wheelbarrows.

The proposition Example 15 above was uttered at a construction site by a businessperson dealing in sand. Sand is sold in different quantities depending on the amount needed. The lowest unit of measure is the wheelbarrow. The metonymy is **geche** 'wheelbarrows'. The speaker used **geche adek** 'three wheelbarrows' explicitly to refer to the implicit target; three wheelbarrows full of sand. So, the metonymy implied sufficiency. In construction sites materials are usually referred to by their containers. A wheelbarrow is a small, one-wheeled cart with handles at one end used for transporting small loads thus treated as a container. It is a common tool in construction sites. The wheelbarrow and the sand are contiguous entities because one contains the other. The contiguity relation is a link between the two entities and so it develops a kind of causal relationship between them. One salient entity is explicitly used metonymically to refer to the implicit target. The speaker used **geche** 'wheelbarrows' as the salient entity to refer to the amount of sand.

Example 16: *Ohero chupano ahinya.* - He likes the bottle a bit too much.

A seller at a kiosk selling wines and spirits made the utterance in Example 16 above. The speaker used **chupano** 'the bottle' metonymically to refer to the spirit in it. The speaker, therefore, used the metonymy as an implication of drinking. Sellers are usually aware of their regular customers' favourites. The use of the definite article in the utterance points towards a specific brand of preference. **Chupa** 'bottle' is a container, typically made of glass or plastic and having a tapered neck used primarily for holding liquids. The bottle and the content are contiguous entities because one contains the other, though the strength of contact is loose. The contiguity relation, however, creates a link between **chupa** 'bottle' as the container and the spirit as the contained. Therefore, a special kind of causal relationship is developed between the two entities. The salient entity is used explicitly to refer to the implicit entity. So, the speaker used **chupano** 'the bottle explicitly to refer to the spirit as the implicit target.

Example 17: *Dakuon nyaka yieny.* - The cooking pot has to boil.



A lady heating a pot of water for making *ugali* in a kitchen at a funeral ceremony made the statement in Example 17 above. Dholuo speakers have the tradition of preparing meals for mourners because they are treated as guests of the departed. She used **dakuon** 'cooking pot' as the metonymy to refer to water in the pot. So, the metonymic utterance implied a recipe for *ugali*. **Dakuon** 'cooking pot' is a vessel, usually earthenware used for cooking *ugali*. Culturally, in Dholuo-speaking community, different earthen-wares are designed for specific purposes; *oigla* is for cooking fish, *nyaloro* is for collecting distilled liquor, *oswaro* is for serving food and *dakuon* is for cooking *ugali*. **Dakuon** 'cooking pot' cannot boil when heated. So obviously, the speaker referred to what the pot was containing; and that was water. The cooking pot and the water are alienated entities because one can be separated from the other. The fact that one contains the other, creates a contiguity relation between the two entities. The contiguity relation gives rise to a special kind of causal relationship between **dakuon** 'cooking pot' and the boiling water. The salient and easily coded entity is used metonymically to refer to the lesser entity. Therefore, the speaker used **dakuon** 'cooking pot' as the salient entity to mean boiling water. Warren's (2006) study found that the leap from a container to its content or vice versa appears particularly short and why metonymies of this kind appear inconspicuous.

Example 18: *Pang sandugi; wadhi waba nam chumbi*. - Arrange your box for a tour at the coast.

A musician in the context of clothing, composed a love song for his lover uttered in Example 18. He used **sanduk** 'box' metonymically to refer to clothing. So, the metonymy in this context implied preparedness. **Sanduk** 'box' is a cuboid container, often with a hinged lid. **Sanduk** 'box' cannot be arranged singly unless there are a number of them which in itself is not metonymic. The metonymic part rests on the containment domain in which the box and its contents are. **Sanduk** 'box' and the clothing are contiguous, but the strength of contact is loose because the two entities are easily separable. However, the contiguity relation between them develops a special kind of causal relationship between the two entities such that the salient entity is used metonymically to refer to the other entity. Therefore, the speaker used **sanduk** 'box' as the salient and easily coded entity to mean clothing.

### **Contained for Container Pattern**

This metonymic pattern is a reverse role constellation of container for contained metonymic pattern. The contained is the metonymic reference point for the container.

Example 19: *Chak ogore piny*. - Milk tipped over.

In Example 19 above, a child reported to her mother about tipping over a packet of milk among other packets of milk the mother had put on the shelf in her milk kiosk. She used **chak** 'milk' metonymically to mean the packet containing milk. The speaker implied restoration of the entity. **Chak** 'milk' is a white liquid produced by the mammary glands of female mammals to nourish their young ones. It is also packed in containers in factories and sold to customers. The packet and milk are unbounded contiguous entities. However, the contiguity relation is a link that makes the two entities to be in the same domain of containment. So the utterance is metonymic. The contiguity relation develops a special kind of causal relationship between the packet and the milk. The salient and easily coded entity is picked as the reference point for the backgrounded entity. Therefore, **chak** 'milk' as the salient and easily coded entity is used as a metonymy to refer to the container. The example proves that Dholuo metonymies illustrate contained for container metonymic pattern. Peirsman and Geeraerts (2006) studied metonymic patterns in English used a similar example and found that what is contained can be a metonymic reference to what contains it.

Example 20: *Pii obarore but Posta*. - Water has burst near the Post Office.



A speaker, a renowned seller of piped water complained to the county office in charge of water supply about a broken water pipe near the post office. He used **pii** 'water' as the metonymy to refer to a pipe. So, the speaker used the metonymy in this context to imply restoration of the damaged pipe. A pipe is a rigid tube that transports water. The pipe and water are contiguous entities because one contains the other. One salient entity can be used to refer to the other entity. The speaker had used **pii** 'water' in the context of the office in charge of water supply, as the salient and easily coded metonymic entity to refer to the broken pipe.

The contiguity relation between water and the pipe can be used as a special kind of causal relationship between the two entities. Therefore, one entity is explicitly used to refer to the implicit entity.

Example 21: *Mesa no.3 dwaro sote ariyo.* - Table no. 3 needs two sodas.

In Example 21, a waiter in a restaurant uttered Sote 'Sodas' as the metonymy. The waiter used **sote** to mean bottles of soda. The metonymy implied the placed order. Soda is an uncountable sodium carbonate drink usually packed in glass bottles or in plastic bottles for sale. The bottle and the drink are contiguous alienated entities because one entity contains the other entity but one entity can easily be separated from the other entity. The contiguity relation between the two entities develops a kind of causal relationship between them giving rise to the use of one salient and easily coded entity as a metonymic reference for the other entity. Therefore, the waiter used **sote** 'sodas' as the salient and easily coded entity in the context of a restaurant, to refer to bottles of soda.

#### **Material for Object Pattern**

The metonymic configuration is that of unboundedness between the entities. A substance is not a part of a material entity because the object may be completely made of this substance (Peirsman & Geeraerts, 2006).

Example 22: *Nailon wang'o denda.* - Nylon has a burning effect on my body.

The statement in Example 22 above was made by a speaker selecting a fabric among other fabrics of different materials, in a tailor's shop. **Nailon** 'nylon' is the metonymy in the proposition; a metonymy implies an attitude of negativity. It is an English word that has been extensively used by Dholuo speakers and is therefore conventionalized as a Dholuo word. The speaker used it explicitly to refer to the fabric made of nylon as the material, and to express their attitude towards it. Nylon is a fabric made from polyamide whose molecules consist of alternating diamine and dicarboxylic acid monomers bonded together. An object and the material constituting that object are subdomains of the whole unit and therefore either of them can be used to refer to the other (Mboya, 2014).

This is what happens in this example where the constitution relation can be considered as the causal relationship between the material and the object. Therefore, nylon as the material can be used metonymically to refer to the fabric made of nylon.

Example 23: *Gol plastikno e Chieng.* - Move that plastic out of sunshine.

A seller of plastic containers in an open-air market made the utterance in Example 23. She used **plastik** 'plastic' to refer to a container made of plastic. She made the utterance as she was pointing at an empty water container lying in the sunshine. The speaker used the metonymy to imply safety for the entity. **Plastik** 'plastic' is the metonymy in the utterance. Plastic is a synthetic, thermoplastic solid, hydrocarbon-based polymer. The substances that define the plastic, constitute the material used in making up the object. However, the object and the substance are unbounded entities.



A substance is not really a part of a material entity, because the object may be completely made of this substance (Peirsman & Geeraerts 2006, p. 284). The constitution relation between the material and the object develops a kind of causal relationship between the two entities. So, a salient entity is used explicitly to refer to the implicit entity. Therefore, plastic as the material and as the salient entity was used to refer to the container.

Example 24: *Gilesego nyalo tore; ketgi maber.* - Those glasses may break; place them safely.

A traveller speaking to a bus conductor in the context of glassware made this utterance. **Gilese** 'glasses' is the metonymy in the utterance. *Gilese* is a plural form of *gilas*. *Gilas* is an English word 'glass' borrowed by Dholuo speakers from English and has been used as a Dholuo word after phonological and orthographical changes to fit into the Dholuo language system. The metonymic utterance implied safety for the vessels. A **gilas** 'glass' is a vessel from which one drinks. It is made of glass made by melting sand with a mixture of soda, potash and lime. It is highly fragile and therefore, the speaker was worried about the safety of the vessels. He used the metonymic expression (**gilese**) to refer to the vessels. The material used in making an object is used as the reference point for the object in the constitution domain. The constitution relation develops a special kind of causal relationship between the material and the object. The salient and easily coded entity is picked as the metonymically referring entity. Therefore, *gilese* 'glasses' as the salient and easily coded entity was used to refer to the drinking vessel.

Example 25: *Ka atalo to chuma diyo lweta.* - If I dare say, then the metal presses on my hand.

Songs are a way of expressing the feelings of the composer depending on the type of song. Example 25 was explicitly expressed in a politically motivated composition during a one-party rule in Kenya. The composer, D.O.7 Jazz Band, felt denied freedom of expression by threats of arrest and charges of incitement against the ruling government. **Chuma** 'metal' is the metonymy in the expression. The composer used *chuma* in that political context to refer to handcuff and to communicate political injustices in society. Metal is a chemical element that forms a metallic bond with other metal atoms and is generally shiny, malleable and hard. Handcuff is a metallic ring of a locking fetter for the hand or one pair. Metal as a material, constitutes the handcuff and so the two entities are in the domain of the constitution. Therefore, constitution relation can be considered as developing a kind of causal relationship between the metal and the handcuff. A salient and easily coded entity in the context is explicitly expressed metonymically to mean the implicit target. Therefore, **chuma** 'metal' was the salient entity used in that context to refer to handcuff as the implicit target.

## Conclusions

From the discussions, about the nature of Dholuo metonymy, it is established that, first, it is referential; the speaker manifests an independent intention to refer to a given object regardless of the particular interpretation of the expressions of the words. Secondly, it is experiential; the metonymic concepts are grounded in people's experience and language and make language expression concise and vivid. Thirdly, it is humorous; the speaker expresses her/his attitude towards the referent in a humorous way. Fourth, it is rhetorical; the speaker uses its figurative force to flower the language. Fifth, it is conventional; some borrowed Dholuo metonymies have been lexicalised and nativised. Finally, it is economical; the speaker economises the processing effort in identifying the referent when the literal description is longer.

About metonymic patterns, we conclude that the nature of Dholuo metonymy lies in the different patterns. In part for the whole pattern, a part of an object is used as the reference point for the object and can demonstrate a reverse constellation. The other metonymic patterns yielded by



part for whole include part for part relation, container for contained relation, and material for object relation. The findings also reveal that the causal theory of reference is applicable to the study of Dholuo metonymy. For instance, from the analysis of Dholuo Metonymy, it is understood that there is some kind of description and causal relationship between the name and the thing to which it refers.

### Recommendations

This study recommends the awareness of the Dholuo metonymic patterns; whole/part, part/whole, and part/part and thirdly, through radio stations broadcasting in Dholuo and other media outlets. Dholuo writers should make use of Dholuo metonymies in their write-ups to spice up their word use. Dholuo metonymies should also be incorporated into the school curriculum to step up language use in the socio-cultural setups. For further studies, this study suggests that a similar study should concentrate on the use of metonymies on vernacular radio stations and its implication on social harmony. For purposes of prosperity, Dholuo metonymies should be studied at universities by linguists studying African languages to publish to expand the metonymic knowledge beyond South Nyanza. This study also recommends that apart from the Causal Theory of Reference, the Descriptive Theory of Reference should be used to analyse metonymies in other African languages for functions, characteristics, and social implications.

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