

The Mission and Intentions of the Wahehe Sayings in Tanzania

Willy Migodela
Ruaha Catholic University
migodela@rucu.ac.tz

Abstract

This article examines the meanings and intentions of the Wahehe sayings in Tanzania. The primary data used in this article are sayings collected in the Wahehe community in Boma la Ng'ombe and Ng'ang'ange wards, Kilolo District, Iringa Region. Kihehe and Kiswahili were used in the interview, discussions and transcription of data. The analysis and discussion of data presented in this article were guided by Sociological theory. The results show that sayings are considered basic human actions, and they are one of the stable traditional institutions that are given a wide field in implementing, guiding and providing education about the behaviours and directions needed in a society. The themes examined are used as a source of reference for social, political and economic issues. They were used as a solid traditional link that builds a system to train, strengthen and keep society together in the foundations of culture and the whole philosophy of life from ancient times until now. This article concludes that research should be done in all branches of oral literature to determine the values and actions contained in them for the benefit of the present and future generations.

Keywords: Intentions, Sayings, Sociological Theory, Mission, Wahehe

1.0 Introduction

This article examines the meanings and intentions of Wahehe sayings in Tanzania. Phrases are oral literary compositions that are short and use images, metaphors and symbols. They are concepts that are used to describe phrases that use the language of pictures, signs and metaphors to carry meaningful content that is consistent with various language usage clauses (Bernald, 2012; Wanjala, 2013). In addition, they compare life

with events or things as well as introduce a specific environment through the relevant literary work. Sayings has been working to portray life and deal with issues concerning humans as well as the way they interact with their environment. Furthermore, they are viewed as a treasure of heritage loaded with wisdom and knowledge of the community concerned. The knowledge gained is one of the basic things that build society to be able to move on in life.

Artistically, one of the ways of expressing and implying what one thinks in the Wahehe community manifests itself in the use of various genres of oral literature, including sayings (Madumulla, 1995). Speeches are viewed as basic human actions. The convergence of society and its sayings can be confirmed historically and temporally. Every culture that is known in various societies of the world has its sayings that can be determined, examined and verified. This situation is due to the existence of a great convergence between the sayings and the real daily life of the present and ancient man. They are dominated and considered as a tool to fight the movements of daily life in the concerned society. Many sayings are best according to the tradition of the community concerned. Literature is viewed as a social tool controlled by the needs of society at the time. The Wahehe community has been fully explored as it is linked to its literature as it is evident in its sayings.

In the Wahehe community, sayings are tied to the tradition of that community as they change depending on the needs of the audience and time. Traditional sayings are one of the instruments that are given a wide field in implementing, guiding and providing training about responsibility, behaviour, philosophy, culture, education, and community development (Hassan, 2010; Wamitila, 2008). This situation helps to

build and strengthen the strong foundations of culture, economy and culture of many communities in this country.

Phrases are accompanied by stable practices and change according to the context of the society in question. This foundation makes some scholars explore literature and focus on the social, geographical and historical context in understanding its culture and history through literary works. The Wahehe community has been fully explored as having a great place that is fully connected with its literature. The analysis of sayings in this article was based more on the cultural foundations of the daily life of the community. This article examines the motives of the sayings of the Wahehe community in Tanzania.

2.0 Theoretical Construction

The data discussion was guided by Sociological theory. The Sociological theory was founded by Hippolyte Taine in the middle of the 19th century in Europe (Wafula & Njogu, 2007). One of its foundations is to consider literature as the only unit capable of reflecting science and the culture of society controlled by social structures. The theory is used to face the literature in examining how it relates to the social environment. According to Mwakanjuki (2015), an artist cannot avoid the effects of the community in his composition because his literature is a specific product of his community. Literature is an expression of a society that cannot separate the truth from the reality of life in society.

According to this theory, literature is part of the real life of society and it is about people. Literature is a perfect portrayal that does not depict life in detail and examines it from a broad perspective (Ngw'aje, 2019). By referring to the basis of this theory, the researcher engaged in the study of

social forces related to artistic forces. The analysis considered that the work of literature is controlled by the existing structures in the society based on the relationship of the members of the society in their daily activities.

The sayings of the Wahehe community were viewed as a special product of a select community based on their history, their philosophy, their traditions and customs, their economy and their politics. Artistic forces refer to the intentions contained in the sayings of the studied society. Social forces refer to the intentions that emerge in the sayings of that society. The Wahehe community was placed in its normal and real-world to conduct a detailed analysis. It has been used to examine the existing relationship between literature and society by referring to the sayings of selected societies.

3.0 Materials and Methods

Primary data were obtained in the Iringa Region, Kilolo District in Boma la Ng'ombe (Boma la Ng'ombe and Lyamke) and Ng'ang'ange (Mdeke and Ng'ang'ange) wards. The target selection method was used to find selected districts, wards and villages. In the targeted villages, the Kihehe language is used more as they do not have much interaction with the cities where the Kiswahili language is used more.

4.0 Purpose of the Sayings of the Wahehe

Purpose is the total meaning that the author invents when he writes; with the meaning recognized by the reader or listener. The purpose is part of the content that directs us to a specific target from the beginning to the end of a literary work (Samandito, 2012). It is one of the elements that build composition and create content in a literary work. Content in a

literary work includes elements of purpose, philosophy, conflict, attitude, position and message. This article has presented the various themes contained in the sayings of selected communities as discussed in the following sections.

4.1 Responsibility, Effort and Knowledge

The issue of the importance of responsibility, effort and knowledge in the Wahehe community has been explained. The discussion of the mission was based on the foundations of Sociological theory which recognizes the broad role taken by the social context in the review of literary works based on the implementation of the conditions in the society. The saying that says *'you send them to work, and they send them to the fields'* (If you send children to the fields, they will send their children) means that if you send people to work unsupervised, they will be negligent and spoil what is being done. For example, if parents and guardians leave children to weed the crops in the field alone without supervision, the crops may be damaged. Parents should be responsible and supervise any activity that takes place to avoid things from being damaged. Employees have to work hard so that production can be good (Mwangosi, 2016 & 2019). Parents have the responsibility to teach their children work and ensure that what they have taught them they have done well by monitoring and correcting them morally.

In the saying that says *'Pamilau kirapiko'* (Morning is a patch) it means that any basic activity should be done in the morning to do it effectively. This situation is because during the day there is a feeling of fatigue due to the hot sun. For example, in agricultural activities, farmers start farming in the morning and go to finish the rest in the evening. In addition, it is good to be responsible in the morning to continue to cope with the various

challenges that may arise after the morning. This saying is similar to the one that says 'work in the morning, calculations in the evening' meaning that in the morning a person has enough energy after resting at night; and its time is very short, that's why they compared it to a patch. If you are responsible in the morning, in the evening you will be left to evaluate what was done earlier.

This saying '*Pakifuku sivilii*' (The time of spring is two) means that the time of spring is short; if you plant late and plant early you will not get enough harvest in time. Failing to meet the needs of the time, children will go hungry while those who used to farm will get enough crops. The community is advised to pay attention to the time and cultivate in accordance with the rules of agriculture and breeding to ensure that they do their work in accordance with the relevant seasons. Society should be properly responsible according to the time to avoid the situation of poverty that accompanies many communities in this country (Mikofu, 2023). Everything should be done in advance to meet the needs of the community at the right time. The saying that says '*Kumiho nyalifuke kipata, amagulu ge gateng'ime hela sigipata kinu*' (The faces that sweat gets, the legs that sit get nothing) emphasizes the importance of responsibility in society. Staying without worrying can't get anyone anything (Mwakanjuki, 2015). Society should work based on the reality of their economic and geographic environment. Society should not engage in activities that are not acceptable in society. This saying is similar to the Kiswahili saying, a person who walks for nothing is not the same as a person who walks for nothing or a person who is hungry and tired when the rice is dry.

The saying that says '*Ilisiva lya mene yakwasiya si linofu*' (The milk of a borrowed goat does not change) emphasizes that what is borrowed has no lasting benefit. The community has to work hard to build the ability to own property and meet its own needs (Kitogo, 2002). A borrowed item will be taken at any time when the owner needs it, regardless of whether it is still needed by the borrower. The Wahehe community prefers this expression, meaning that if you borrow a goat or anything from anyone in the community, you should not forget yourself. The borrowed dress does not cover the hips. Citizens must work hard and be responsible enough to avoid being given aid that causes the violation of our traditions and culture. Laziness is slavery that removes the ability to trust.

4.2 Leadership, Education and Peace

Another mission found in the sayings of the Wahehe community is about the importance of good leadership. Any gathering of people must have leadership to ensure things and joint plans go well. Every community should have strong leadership that will help them push forward the wheel of development (Songoyi, 1988). Literature is a tool that fully examines society. Sayings are used as a tool to teach, correct and launch society so that it follows the principles that need to be developed and strengthened in the movement of its daily life. The saying that says '*Ilakali lya mtwa*' equal to '*Buluno gwa lyalupala*' (the wrath of a ruler is like the thunder of a lion) emphasizes that a leader who is chosen to lead his colleagues can do anything according to the authority he has. Even though he should have an unshakeable position in managing various social issues. A leader must do justice in their actions because what he says should be heard and acted upon (Khalifani, 2013). This saying emphasizes how to respect their leaders, especially in all productive matters in society.

Any society, its actions must go in line with its culture, traditions and customs, behaviour and attitudes of that society. For example, the saying ‘*One ubihile ukulamulwa ke kikufi ubihilu*’ (If you refuse to be warned what will happen to you will refuse) means that people should accept the advice given by the adults in their community. This saying is the same as the proverb that says ‘Refuse the evil one who calls you.’ Community members are reminded to pursue productive activities for the benefit of their families and communities. This saying ‘*Udadoo mnyakukwegala ene asupali, na wilolesi usupali*’ (If the father who gave birth to you is not there, even if the parent is not there?) This saying gives an image that the upbringing of a child does not depend on the presence of two parents. The whole community has the responsibility to ensure that children are raised and built based on patriotism, culture and community values (Shule, 2010). The saying gives the impression that the Wahehe community cooperates to raise children according to their culture. The child belongs to the whole society. This expression ‘*Uwuse uhalule wupefu sange uwugali*’ (Making flour is easy cook ugali) means that society should give young people a good education so that they can be independent in society.

Love is one of the most important things in any society in the world. Love brings peace and stimulates development at the family, community and nation level (Bachubila, 2023). Among the sayings that carry that mission is ‘*Iligulu lya nyasi lidodo*’ (The fly’s foot is small) which means that humans should love and help each other in times of joy and hardship. For example, when a neighbour visits, he/she eats even if it's a little. The saying means that even though there is little, they must share as part of helping each other. Another saying says ‘*Amalungulu ga vanu gategulwee kwapa mwi*’ (People’s areas should be carried together) which means that people should not destroy people's belongings and no one should say bad

things because all this destroys love and causes a situation of disruption of peace in society. The main thing is to get to know people and their behaviour to be able to live in love without conflict. The Wahehe community emphasizes brothers and the whole community to love each other and cooperate to eliminate the conflict that is not productive for the well-being and sustainability of the community.

4.3 Integrity, Loyalty and Patriotism

One of the themes found in the sayings of the Wahehe community is about the importance of honesty, integrity and patriotism. The examination of the mission focused on the broad scope of Sociological theory that looks at literature as a perfect representation of the actions contained in society. Sayings in the Wahehe community emphasize the importance of integrity and honesty in society. This saying ‘if a bird has many children’ teaches society to avoid things that can cost lives. A fearful bird is considered to be able to have many children due to its fear. The Wahehe society considers that a coward is not easy to act against the existing norms in society. Usually, an honest person often implements what is accepted by society by following the limits of the agreement (Leman et al., 2004). The saying clearly shows the importance of trust in society as a means of living in peace and stability.

Another saying ‘*Ikaye savanyanonga zolofu siyaga*’ (The houses of many litigants are lost) indicates that society and people who are accustomed to litigating at any time in their lives can be ruined. The situation is due to the lack of trust and interference in things that do not concern them, a situation that removes trust in society. This saying gives the impression that trust is an important thing in society. A person who is used to justifying vanity and being legitimate ends up ruining his life along with

his family's lack of direction. The society has to do justice to avoid blame, accusations and unnecessary discord (Ogenga, 2015). The saying '*Isaka kipulika*' (The bush hears) aims to advise the community to build trust to avoid unproductive conflicts in the community. Society should tell the truth to keep everyone free in society. This saying emphasizes that there is no secret to many people. Speaking, especially gossiping about someone can cause misunderstanding in society. Loyalty makes people live freely and worry-free in society.

The saying that says '*Nene ndimukali ifinu nagu kakuhomba*' (I am strict, my things are to be paid), emphasizes that the cure for debt is to pay. This situation shows that the Wahehe society emphasizes justice and equality and people live by the values inherited from generations since ancient times. The community forbids abusing an illegal trust. This is evident until today. In that community, crops or livestock are left outside without protection in a barn surrounded by thorns, and the doors are put on a tree, a situation that reflects safety, trust and peace in the community. This saying reflects the real situation in the Wahehe community. If a person borrows a deposit, he must pay it before he takes action according to the law. Everyone should pay to continue to help and trust each other in the community.

4.4 Savings, Patience and Prudence

Any community should be educated about the importance of savings. Keeping savings helps the community to have something that will help them when something urgent happens, especially famine, disease or disaster. The Wahehe community likes to save by storing their food in warehouses made outside the house. The breeders also store ghee oil because they know that the feed for their livestock will decrease during

the dry season. An example of a saying that reflects this situation is '*One ubite lugeendo, tengulage ikhela cha mung'asi*' (If you go somewhere, carry a gourd on the way), which emphasizes the importance of saving for yourself to avoid humiliation because problems do not knock. Any human being needs to prepare for his life because the journey is one step after another. Life is a journey full of ups and downs that are inevitable. Society has to keep savings that will help a person when he travels so that those who remain at home can continue to live well. The community should work hard to keep savings that will help to afford the activities of daily life in the community.

Wisdom and prudence in society make human beings able to cope well with the environment around them. Sayings related to wisdom and prudence in the Wahehe community say '*Ikaye sawa naisenga yinyakiteve*' (A house is like a cow with a bad leg) meaning the importance of being patient in society. Parents should live with patience because when couples meet and live together, each has its behaviours that can cause conflict. A wise decision is required before working on anything (Alan, 2016; Kabwe, 2016). This saying '*Kilutema kinyalileme ikikagula chanchaniya*' (A pregnant hawk will recognize her above) emphasizes that some words are not spoken in public but use a hidden language to protect the dignity of the society concerned. This situation helps the community to do justice and use wisdom in solving certain issues in the community. The community uses the elderly and community members, in general, to make solutions in the community with high wisdom without discrimination of any kind.

The saying that says '*Pe siuyasizi kumbele pe wi mdodo uyasa pa ugogolo*' (If you don't lose behind when you're young, you'll lose when

you're old) emphasizes that a young person can fight to change his bad life by working with effort and knowledge before he gets old. Ageing makes any human being lose many things, especially strength, knowledge and memory (Mbonde, 2002). The society should emphasize family formation based on the taboos and values of the society. The saying that says '*Uwufwimi wa vanyilambo, amanyakilumbi gakuvininila*' (Hunting by young people, crows follow them) means that young people can do anything good or bad. The wisdom of parents gives them ample opportunity to follow up on what they saw wrong and apologize to anyone who was wronged. The Wahehe community believes that doing justice avoids curses, strife and discord. In the saying, elders are likened to crows. Parents have to guide the youth for the well-being and sustainability of their society and generation.

Normally, society should live based on tolerance. A person's lack of tolerance in society is not a good thing because he can fall into a situation that was not intended. The Wahehe community has sayings that are used to educate the community so that it can be patient, especially on how to deal with things in a state of impatience as described in the saying '*Iligongoli lyamasebele lifika hela ukwakwe*' (The corn bug will only reach him). The worm moves slowly, but it will get where it is going. Anything, even if it is too difficult, one day it will be successful, especially if it is laid on solid foundations that show the best way to implement it in theory and practice.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This article has examined the aspect of intentions contained in the sayings of the Wahehe community in Tanzania. Some of them are about issues of trust, responsibility, leadership, contempt, wisdom, love, savings and

patience in society. The objectives contained in the sayings of the society are one of the strong social tools that examine the society in terms of educating and understanding the wider context of the society examined. In recommendation, the mission and intentions are viewed as a specific reference library for social issues; and a solid indigenous link that builds a system to train, strengthen and keep society together in the foundations of culture and the whole philosophy of life from ancient times until now.

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