



## Emotions on Air: Exploring Metaphorical Expression and Language Preservation in EkeGusii Community Media

Gillphine Onkware<sup>1</sup>, Helga Schröder<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Africa International University

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**KEYWORDS:** EkeGusii, Emotion Metaphors, Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Indigenous Language Preservation, Community Media, Storytelling.

**ABSTRACT:** Indigenous languages encode emotional experience through culturally grounded metaphorical systems that reflect shared histories, values, and worldviews. While previous studies on EkeGusii have examined emotion metaphors primarily in textual or elicited data, less attention has been given to their performance, circulation, and sustainability in contemporary indigenous media. This paper explores the role of community media, particularly radio, as a critical site for preserving and revitalizing EkeGusii emotional metaphors through storytelling and everyday broadcast discourse. Anchored in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which posits that abstract thought is systematically structured through embodied metaphorical mappings (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), the study also draws on recent theoretical developments highlighting CMT's relevance across linguistic contexts and pedagogical research (Chavoshan & Fernández, 2025). Informed additionally by Indigenous Language Media scholarship, the study analyses selected EkeGusii radio programs, including narrated stories, talk shows, sermons, and call-in segments, to examine how metaphors of emotion are deployed to construct meaning, negotiate social relationships, and foster communal identity. Findings reveal that EkeGusii community media function as dynamic storytelling spaces where traditional emotion metaphors, rooted in bodily experience, environment, and cultural practice, are recontextualized for contemporary audiences. Repeated broadcast use ensures these metaphors remain intelligible to older generations while becoming accessible to younger listeners, supporting intergenerational transmission of both language and cultural knowledge. The paper argues that language preservation via media extends beyond lexical retention to the maintenance of indigenous conceptual systems, particularly those governing emotional expression. By foregrounding emotion metaphors as communicative resources in EkeGusii community media, this study contributes to debates on indigenous language revitalization, storytelling, and media as alternative public spheres, demonstrating how community radio bridges oral traditions with present-day communicative practices and shapes the future of indigenous emotional expression.

**Corresponding Author**  
Gillphine Onkware

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Emotional expression in language is rarely literal; it is largely mediated through metaphorical structures that reflect how speakers conceptualise internal states (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2000). Within many African languages, including EkeGusii, these metaphors are grounded in shared cultural experiences and embodied knowledge systems, making them central to both communication and identity (Kövecses, 2005).

While earlier studies on EkeGusii have documented metaphorical expressions in elicited or literary contexts, there remains limited empirical attention to how these metaphors function in naturally occurring discourse, particularly in media spaces (Mose, 2017; Nyakoe, 2019). More importantly, existing work, including Onkware (2026), has demonstrated that EkeGusii emotion metaphors are conceptually rich but often undergo semantic compression, restructuring, or partial loss when translated into English.

What remains underexplored, however, is how these metaphors behave in contexts where they are not translated but performed. This study addresses that gap by shifting the analytical focus from translation outcomes to live discourse performance. Specifically, it examines how Ekegusii emotion metaphors circulate in community radio and asks: *What happens to metaphorical meaning when it remains within its original linguistic and cultural ecology?*

By building directly on Onkware's (2026) findings, this paper makes a twofold contribution. First, it demonstrates that community media preserve not only linguistic forms but also the underlying conceptual mappings that are often weakened in translation. Second, it shows that radio discourse provides a space where metaphorical systems are not merely retained but dynamically extended to accommodate contemporary realities. In doing so, the study reframes indigenous language preservation as the maintenance of conceptual integrity, rather than lexical survival alone. Community media, especially radio, play a crucial role in multilingual societies by sustaining indigenous languages in everyday use. In Kenya, vernacular radio stations provide platforms for culturally embedded discourse, enabling speakers to engage in meaning-making processes that reflect local perceptions (Bosire, 2008; Mbaabu, 1996).

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), which posits that abstract domains such as emotion are structured through systematic mappings from more concrete source domains (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, 2003). These mappings are cognitive in nature and reflect embodied experience (Kövecses, 2000). Emotion metaphors frequently draw on bodily experience, spatial orientation, and environmental interaction. These mappings are shaped by cultural context, meaning that different communities employ distinct metaphorical systems (Kövecses, 2005).

The study also draws on Indigenous Language Media scholarship, which highlights the central role of media in sustaining not only linguistic forms but also the cultural practices and knowledge systems embedded within them. Community radio, in particular, has consistently been shown to function as more than a communication channel; it operates as a socially situated space where language is lived, negotiated, and reproduced in everyday interaction (Alia, 2010; Githiora, 2002). In many African contexts, community radio emerged as a response to historical exclusion from dominant media systems, creating platforms where local voices, identities, and linguistic practices could be articulated on their own terms (Onyenankeya & Salawu, 2022).

More recent work further demonstrates that indigenous language media act as sites of cultural continuity, particularly in societies where oral traditions remain central. For instance, studies on radio and podcasting in Southern Africa show that indigenous-language broadcasting continues to provide speakers with agency, enabling them to construct and circulate linguistic and cultural identities within contemporary media environments (Nkoala, 2023). This continuity is not merely symbolic; it is enacted through repeated patterns of storytelling, advice-giving, and everyday interaction that sustain culturally specific ways of speaking and knowing.

At the same time, community radio functions as an alternative public sphere, especially for communities historically marginalised within national communication structures. Research across African and Latin American contexts shows that indigenous radio facilitates participatory communication, allowing listeners not only to consume content but to actively shape it through call-ins, local programming, and communal engagement (O'Donnell et al., 2024). This participatory dimension is critical because it ensures that language is not standardised or detached from lived experience but remains responsive to social realities.

Recent scholarship also points to the evolving nature of indigenous language media in the context of digital convergence. Community radio is no longer confined to analogue broadcasting; it increasingly intersects with social media and other digital platforms, extending the reach and adaptability of indigenous languages (Mathe & Motsaathebe, 2024). Importantly, even within these hybrid environments, local languages continue to serve as anchors of cultural meaning, reinforcing their relevance among younger and digitally engaged audiences.

In the Kenyan context, the incorporation of indigenous languages into media spaces has been closely tied to broader processes of democratisation and social inclusion, particularly following media liberalisation and constitutional reforms (Kanana & Kinyua, 2023). These developments have expanded the communicative domains in which indigenous languages operate, moving them beyond private or informal settings into public and institutional spheres. Within the Ekegusii-speaking region, vernacular radio stations such as Egesa FM and Minto FM exemplify this shift. These stations broadcast a wide range of content, including news, talk shows, religious programmes, and call-in segments, predominantly in Ekegusii, thereby normalising its use in public discourse.

More importantly, these stations do not simply use Ekegusii as a medium of communication; they actively shape how the language functions in contemporary contexts. Through interactive formats such as listener call-ins and community discussions, speakers draw on culturally embedded expressions, including metaphorical constructions of emotion, to engage with both local and modern concerns. In doing so, stations like Egesa FM and Minto FM contribute to the repositioning of Ekegusii as a language of public reasoning, social negotiation, and cultural continuity. This aligns with the findings that indigenous language media extend the functional range of local languages while reinforcing their cultural legitimacy (Githiora, 2002; Kanana & Kinyua, 2023).

Against this backdrop, community radio emerges not as a passive repository of language, but as an active site of linguistic and cultural production. Rather than preserving language in a fixed form, it enables continuous negotiation, reinforcement, and

adaptation of meaning in everyday interaction. Within this dynamic environment, metaphorical systems, particularly those that structure emotional expression in EkeGusii, are sustained, reworked, and transmitted across generations.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative discourse-analytic approach to examine how emotion metaphors are used in Ekegusii radio broadcasts. The choice of discourse analysis is informed by the need to understand language as it is produced and interpreted in real communicative settings, rather than as isolated or elicited forms (Fairclough, 1995; Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018). Data were purposively sampled from a range of Ekegusii radio programmes, including storytelling segments, talk shows, sermons, and listener call-ins, to capture variation across interactional contexts and speaker roles. These programme types were selected because they reflect both structured and spontaneous speech, allowing for a more comprehensive view of how metaphor operates in everyday communication.

The analysis focused on identifying metaphorical expressions related to emotional experience, categorising them according to their source domains, and examining how they function within interaction. In particular, attention was given to how speakers use metaphor to evaluate situations, manage interpersonal relationships, and position themselves within social contexts. This aligns with discourse-oriented approaches to metaphor, which emphasise its role in persuasion, stance-taking, and social alignment rather than treating it as a purely stylistic feature (Charteris-Black, 2004; Semino, 2021).

Data were transcribed from audio recordings, with the original Ekegusii utterances presented alongside English translations. Care was taken to retain key lexical items and structural features in order to preserve semantic and cultural aspects. This approach acknowledges that metaphorical meaning is often embedded in language-specific forms that may not have a direct target language in translation (Stubbs, 2001; Deignan, 2023). Where necessary, translations were supplemented with brief interpretive glosses to clarify culturally grounded meanings.

The study prioritizes naturally occurring discourse, recognising that such data provide a more ecologically valid account of language use than elicited examples or constructed texts (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018). This is particularly important for the analysis of metaphor, as recent research has shown that metaphorical meaning is often co-constructed in interaction and shaped by context, audience, and communicative purpose (Semino, 2021; Deignan, 2023).

Finally, this analysis builds on earlier work on the conceptualisation and translation of emotion metaphors in Ekegusii (Onkware, 2026), extending the focus from cross-linguistic transfer to intra-cultural use. While the earlier study demonstrated how metaphorical meaning may shift or be attenuated in translation, the present study examines how these same metaphors function when they remain within their original linguistic environment. In doing so, it provides a complementary perspective that highlights the resilience and adaptability of metaphorical systems in live discourse.

### 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This section extends earlier findings on the conceptualization and translation of Ekegusii emotion metaphors (Onkware, 2026) by examining how these metaphors function when they are not subjected to cross-linguistic transfer. The present analysis turns to how metaphorical meaning is sustained, intensified, and sometimes reconfigured in naturally occurring discourse. A key analytical claim guiding this section is that community radio preserves metaphorical density, that is, the clustering of embodied, culturally grounded expressions that tend to be reduced or simplified in translation.

The excerpts that follow show that Ekegusii speakers routinely draw on multiple, overlapping metaphorical mappings within a single stretch of talk. These layered expressions do not appear accidental; rather, they reflect a shared conceptual system that speakers access fluidly in interaction. This suggests that, within intra-cultural communication, metaphorical structures remain intact and fully functional, supported by shared knowledge and context.

In this sense, community radio provides a discursive environment in which metaphor does not need to be unpacked, explained, or approximated, as is often the case in translation. Instead, it circulates in its full form, carrying both its conceptual depth and cultural resonance. What emerges, therefore, is not simply the preservation of individual metaphors but the ongoing maintenance of the broader conceptual frameworks through which emotional experience is understood and communicated.

#### 4.1 Embodied Metaphors of Anger

The data show that anger is consistently conceptualised through embodied experiences of heat, burning, and internal intensity, reinforcing earlier findings that Ekegusii emotional meaning is grounded in somatic experience (Onkware, 2026). In radio discourse, such metaphors are not treated as figurative or marked forms; rather, they occur as part of ordinary speech, making them immediately accessible to listeners. This is evident in expressions such as:

1. *A-gwokabobe pi!*  
CL1-burn bad ADJ  
'He is burning badly.'  
(He is very angry)

Here, anger is directly mapped onto the experience of burning. The use of *gwoka* ‘burn’ combined with the intensifier *bobe* ‘badly’ produces a heightened sense of emotional intensity. In radio interaction, such expressions require no elaboration; listeners interpret them effortlessly because the bodily experience of heat serves as a shared point of reference. This reflects the broader conceptual metaphor ANGER IS HEAT, where emotional escalation is understood through increasing temperature (Kövecses, 2000). A related but more extended metaphor appears in proverbial discourse:

2. *Bo-roro im-bori bore irongo ka'botonya riiko*  
 CL14-pain NEG.PRS.CL14-is LOC ceiling NEG-drop fireplace  
 ‘There's no pain that is too high that will not come down to the fireplace.’

This expression conceptualizes emotional pain, and by extension anger or distress, as something that rises but must eventually descend and settle. The vertical movement (*ceiling* → *fireplace*) encodes both intensity and resolution, suggesting that emotional states, however overwhelming, are ultimately containable. In radio contexts, especially in sermons and advisory programmes, such metaphors function not only descriptively but also normatively, guiding listeners toward emotional regulation. A more extreme extension of the heat metaphor is seen in:

3. *Bw-oki-rie eke-nyoro eke-gima*  
 CL1-burn-PRFV CL7-village CL7-entire  
 ‘He has burnt the entire village.’

Here, anger is conceptualized as destructive fire that spreads beyond the individual to affect the wider community. Although the expression is metaphorical, it draws on concrete experiences of fire as a force that consumes and devastates. In radio narratives, such metaphors are often used to evaluate behaviour, signalling that uncontrolled anger has social consequences that extend beyond the self. The interpretability of these metaphors is closely tied to shared historical experience.

The Abagusii community has a history marked by migration into regions characterised by competition over resources and periodic conflict with neighbouring groups such as the Luo, Kalenjin, and Maasai. Livestock, particularly cattle, played a central role in economic survival and social identity, making it a frequent source of intercommunity tension (Kisii et al., 2024). Disruptions to these systems, through raids, territorial disputes, or external pressures, often generated conditions in which emotions such as anger, vigilance, and fear were closely tied to survival.

Recent research further shows that such conflicts were not isolated events but part of broader patterns of inter-ethnic competition that extended into the post-colonial period (Maranga, 2025). In response, the community developed localized defence mechanisms, including organised groups tasked with protecting people and property (Bosibori, 2021). Within this socio-historical context, metaphors of burning, pressure, and destruction take on added significance. They do not simply describe internal states; they reflect experiences of threat, escalation, and the need for control.

When these expressions are used in radio discourse, they activate this shared experiential background. Listeners are able to interpret them not only at the level of bodily sensation but also in relation to collective memory and cultural knowledge. Community radio thus provides a space in which these metaphors continue to circulate in their full conceptual form, without the reduction or simplification that often occurs in translation (Onkware, 2026).

In this sense, embodied metaphors of anger in Ekegusii are sustained through a convergence of language, history, and interaction. Radio discourse reinforces this convergence by embedding metaphorical expressions in familiar communicative practices, allowing them to remain both intelligible and socially meaningful across generations.

#### 4.2 Animal Metaphors

Animal metaphors in Ekegusii provide a rich resource for expressing emotional states such as fear, anxiety, submission, and social evaluation. These expressions are not merely descriptive; they draw on familiar patterns of animal behaviour to interpret human conduct in ways that are culturally meaningful. In radio discourse, such metaphors are frequently used in talk shows, call-in segments, and advisory programmes, where speakers rely on shared ecological knowledge to communicate complex emotional states efficiently. This is evident in examples such as:

4. *Nigo o-boete buna e-ng'ondi e-roche e-sese*  
 ASS CL14-scared like CL9-sheep CL7-seen CL7-dog  
 ‘You’re scared like a sheep that has seen a wild dog’.

In this expression, fear is conceptualised through the behaviour of a sheep encountering a predator. The image evokes vulnerability, panic, and lack of control, qualities that are culturally associated with sheep in contrast to more assertive animals. The metaphor is effective because it draws on a widely recognised ecological relationship (prey vs. predator), allowing listeners to immediately grasp the intensity and nature of the emotional state. This reflects how metaphor operates through culturally shared experiential knowledge rather than abstract description (Kövecses, 2005; Sharifian, 2017). A similar mapping appears in:

5. *Naki oko-eyana buna ege-sengi ki'oro-sana?*  
 Q CL1-breath like CL7-squirrel of- bush

‘Why are you panting like a squirrel of the forest?’

Here, anxiety or nervous agitation is expressed through comparison with a squirrel, an animal associated with rapid movement and heightened alertness. The metaphor captures not just physical behaviour (panting) but also an underlying emotional state of restlessness or unease. In radio interaction, such expressions often function as subtle forms of questioning or evaluation, allowing speakers to comment on behaviour without direct confrontation. Another example illustrates how animal metaphors encode social positioning and emotional restraint:

6. *O-ringan-iri eke-mincha buna e-sese*  
 CL1-coil-PRF CL7-tail like CL7-dog

‘He has coiled his tail like a dog.’

This metaphor draws on the behaviour of a dog tucking its tail, which is commonly associated with fear, submission, or defeat. When applied to a person, it signals a shift in social stance, suggesting withdrawal, loss of confidence, or acknowledgment of inferiority. In discourse, such expressions carry strong evaluative force, often used to comment on how individuals respond to pressure or authority.

Across these examples, a consistent pattern emerges that emotional states are understood through observable animal behaviours that are familiar within the community’s ecological environment. This supports the view that metaphorical systems are shaped by culturally embedded knowledge structures, where meaning arises from shared interaction with the physical world (Kövecses, 2005; Sharifian, 2017). For the Abagusii, whose social and economic life has historically been closely tied to farming and interaction with animals, these associations are both immediate and deeply rooted. In earlier work on the conceptualization and translation of Ekegusii metaphors, it was observed that animal metaphors often undergo modification when translated into English, typically through the use of similes or explanatory paraphrases (Onkware, 2026). While such strategies make the expressions more accessible to non-native audiences, they tend to shift the metaphor from an implicit cultural judgment to an explicit description, thereby reducing its interpretive richness.

By contrast, the present data show that within community radio, these metaphors retain their full indexical force. Speakers do not pause to explain them, nor do listeners require clarification. The meaning is carried not only by the linguistic form but also by shared cultural assumptions about animal behaviour and its social implications. This aligns with the argument that metaphor interpretation depends on culturally situated knowledge, which is readily available in intra-cultural communication contexts (Sharifian, 2017).

More broadly, the use of animal metaphors in Ekegusii radio discourse demonstrates how language, environment, and social evaluation remain closely interconnected. Even when discussing contemporary issues, speakers continue to draw on culturally grounded metaphorical systems to interpret emotional experience and human behaviour. Community radio thus provides a space where these systems remain active, allowing metaphorical meaning to circulate in its full, culturally embedded form rather than being reduced or reinterpreted, as is often the case in translation (Onkware, 2026).

#### 4.3 Metaphors of Love and Social Bonding

Metaphors of love in Ekegusii foreground unity, connection, and vulnerability, consistent with established conceptual mappings such as LOVE IS UNITY, and LOVE IS CARE/VALUED POSSESSION (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). Within community radio discourse, these metaphors are not simply aesthetic expressions of affection; they are narrativized, performed, and circulated as part of everyday moral and relational reasoning. Storytelling segments, call-in programmes, and folk narratives broadcast on stations such as Egesa FM and Minto FM provide recurring spaces where love is framed as both emotionally enriching and socially consequential.

A particularly illustrative example is a widely circulated folktale narrated in media discourse (Atambo, personal communication, September 2024), which describes a man named Ogego who fell deeply in love with a woman living across the River Gucha. Despite repeated warnings and the physical danger posed by the river, Ogego continued to cross it in pursuit of his beloved. One day, after heavy rains, the river swelled beyond its usual limits, making the crossing extremely dangerous. Driven by love, Ogego attempted the journey home but was tragically swept away and drowned. In Ekegusii radio retellings of this narrative, the moral is condensed into a metaphorical expression:

7. *O-bwachani mbwari-et-e Ogeko*  
 CL14-love CL14.PST-eat-PRFV Ogeko

‘Love ate (killed) Ogeko’.

This formulation captures a culturally grounded conceptualization of love as an overwhelming force capable of consuming rational judgment and producing fatal consequences. The verb *bwachani mbwariete* ‘love ate/killed’ encodes love not as a passive emotion but as an active agent with destructive potential. In radio storytelling contexts, such expressions function didactically: they are used to caution listeners about the risks of excessive emotional attachment while simultaneously acknowledging love’s compelling power. Within the same discourse environment, love is also expressed through metaphors of possession and value:

8. *Mary nya-boke one are*  
 Mary owner-honey mine is  
 ‘Mary is the owner of my honey’.

Here, love is conceptualized through sweetness and possession, where “honey” symbolises affection, desirability, and emotional attachment. The metaphor reflects a positive valuation of romantic love as something cherished and personally significant. In radio talk shows and music request programmes, such expressions are often used to publicly affirm affection, thereby reinforcing social norms around romantic expression. A further dimension of love metaphors appears in evaluative and relational discourse:

9. *O-buya bw'e-ng'ondi insigiti e-tarwata*  
 CL14-goodness of CL9-ewe lamb CL7-known  
 ‘The goodness of the ewe is best known by its lamb’.

This proverb, frequently cited in radio sermons and advice segments, extends love into the domain of relational evaluation. It suggests that the value of care, nurture, or affection is revealed through its outcomes, particularly in familial or generational relationships. In broadcast contexts, such expressions are used to guide moral reasoning about family responsibility, parenting, and social obligation.

Unlike anger metaphors, which often lose intensity or become flattened in translation due to their strong dependence on embodied imagery, love metaphors are more readily transferable across languages at a conceptual level. However, the data show that this apparent translatability masks important language-specific encoding strategies. In Ekegusii, degrees of relational depth are expressed through intensifiers, repetition, and narrative embedding, features that are often attenuated or standardized in translation processes (Onkware, 2026). As a result, what appears to be a universal metaphorical domain is in fact shaped by fine-grained linguistic and cultural mechanisms that structure emotional expression.

From a media perspective, community radio plays a crucial role in sustaining these metaphorical systems. By repeatedly broadcasting folk narratives, proverbs, and relational discourse in Ekegusii, stations such as Egesa FM and Minto FM provide a platform where love is not only described but actively performed and socially reinforced. In this sense, love metaphors circulate as part of a broader communicative ecology in which emotion, morality, and cultural knowledge are continuously negotiated in public space. Overall, the data demonstrate that metaphors of love in Ekegusii are not merely representations of emotion but culturally embedded narrative tools that organise social

#### 4.5 From Translation Loss to Discursive Preservation

The findings point to a broader theoretical reorientation in how metaphorical meaning in Ekegusii is understood across communicative contexts. Whereas Onkware (2025) demonstrated that translation often results in partial loss, simplification, or reconfiguration of metaphorical meaning, particularly in relation to embodied and culturally grounded expressions, the present study shows that such loss is not inevitable. Instead, it is context-dependent. In discursive environments such as community radio, metaphorical systems are not only retained but actively sustained through repetition, interaction, and shared cultural knowledge.

In this sense, radio discourse functions as a site of conceptual continuity, where culturally embedded ways of understanding emotion are continuously reproduced in public communication. Unlike translation, which necessarily requires movement between linguistic systems and therefore introduces interpretive filtering, radio operates within a shared linguistic and cultural ecology. This allows metaphorical expressions to circulate without explanation or reduction, preserving both their cognitive structure and their social force. As a result, metaphors are not merely transmitted but socially reaffirmed through everyday broadcast practices.

This observation suggests that translation and discourse should not be treated as opposing analytical categories. Rather, they represent complementary sites through which metaphorical meaning can be examined. Translation makes visible the points at which meaning becomes unstable or requires adaptation across linguistic boundaries, revealing where conceptual mismatches or interpretive adjustments occur. By contrast, discourse analysis highlights how meaning is stabilised within a community of speakers, showing the mechanisms, such as repetition, narrative embedding, and interactive uptake, through which metaphorical systems remain coherent and functional.

Bringing these perspectives together allows for a more comprehensive account of metaphorical life across contexts. It demonstrates that metaphorical systems are neither fully lost in translation nor wholly preserved in discourse; instead, they move between states of vulnerability and resilience depending on communicative conditions. Community radio, in particular, emerges as a crucial mediating space where culturally grounded conceptualisations are not only maintained but also dynamically reactivated in response to contemporary social realities.

#### 4.5 Intergenerational Transmission through Media

The repeated circulation of emotion metaphors across Ekegusii radio programmes contributes significantly to their continued relevance, recognisability, and interpretability across generations. Within broadcast environments such as talk shows, storytelling segments, sermons, and call-in interactions, metaphorical expressions are not presented as isolated linguistic artefacts; rather, they are embedded in recurring communicative routines that listeners encounter daily. This repetition ensures that metaphorical forms remain cognitively accessible, even for younger audiences who may have limited exposure to traditional face-to-face storytelling contexts.

From a media perspective, community radio operates as a shared cultural interface where different generations converge around the same linguistic resources. Younger listeners are gradually socialised into culturally grounded ways of expressing emotion through exposure to conversational narratives and evaluative discourse in Ekegusii, while older listeners encounter familiar metaphorical patterns that reaffirm cultural continuity and identity. In this way, radio does not simply transmit information; it facilitates the gradual acquisition of interpretive frameworks through which emotional meaning is understood and evaluated.

This process aligns with earlier scholarship on indigenous language media, which shows that repetition in broadcast environments plays a crucial role in language maintenance by normalising usage patterns and reinforcing shared meanings across speaker communities (Githiora, 2002; Alia, 2010). More recent studies on community broadcasting further emphasise that such repetition is not mechanical but socially meaningful, as it embeds language use within affective and cultural contexts that enhance retention and everyday uptake (O'Donnell et al., 2024; Mathe & Motsaathebe, 2024). In this sense, Ekegusii radio functions as an informal yet powerful site of language socialisation. It is within these mediated spaces that metaphorical competence is transmitted alongside linguistic knowledge, allowing listeners not only to understand the structure of Ekegusii expressions but also to internalise the cultural logics that underpin them. Metaphors of emotion, particularly those relating to anger, love, and social evaluation, thus become part of a shared interpretive repertoire that is continually renewed through broadcast interaction.

## 5. IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE PRESERVATION

The findings of this study suggest that indigenous language preservation cannot be adequately understood as the maintenance of vocabulary alone. Rather, it involves sustaining the deeper conceptual structures through which speakers organise experience, interpret emotion, and construct social meaning. Within this view, emotion metaphors emerge as a particularly important component of linguistic and cultural continuity, as they encode shared models of feeling, behaviour, and interpersonal relations that are central to everyday communication (Sharifian, 2017).

From the Ekegusii data, it becomes clear that metaphorical systems are not peripheral stylistic features but core mechanisms of meaning-making. Expressions of anger, love, fear, and social evaluation draw on embodied, ecological, and culturally grounded knowledge systems that give emotional experience its interpretive structure. When these metaphors are repeatedly used in natural discourse, they reinforce not only linguistic familiarity but also culturally specific ways of understanding the world. In this sense, preserving metaphor is equivalent to preserving a community's conceptual repertoire.

Community media play a crucial role in this process by enabling sustained, context-rich use of indigenous languages in everyday communicative settings. Unlike formal educational environments, which often prioritise standardisation and explicit instruction, radio broadcasting allows for spontaneous, dialogic, and interactionally driven language use. This includes storytelling, humour, advice-giving, moral evaluation, and emotional expression, all of which create fertile conditions for metaphorical language to remain active and meaningful (Alia, 2010; Githiora, 2002).

More recent studies further emphasize that indigenous language media function as dynamic sites of cultural reproduction, where language is continuously shaped through participation rather than formal transmission alone (O'Donnell et al., 2024; Mathe & Motsaathebe, 2024). In such contexts, metaphorical systems are not simply preserved as static linguistic artefacts; they are continuously reactivated, adapted, and recontextualised in response to contemporary social realities. This ensures that they remain intelligible and relevant to both older and younger generations.

In this respect, Ekegusii community radio demonstrates how indigenous language preservation operates most effectively when language is embedded in lived communicative practices. By sustaining everyday metaphorical usage, radio contributes to the continuity of conceptual frameworks that shape emotional understanding and social interaction. The implication, therefore, is that effective language preservation strategies must move beyond documentation and formal instruction to include the support of communicative spaces where meaning is actively produced, negotiated, and shared.

## 6. CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that Ekegusii community radio functions as a dynamic and socially embedded site for the expression, circulation, and continuity of emotion metaphors. Building on earlier work on the conceptualisation and translation of Ekegusii metaphorical systems (Onkware, 2026), the analysis has shown that metaphorical meaning is not fixed across contexts but is highly sensitive to communicative environments. While translation processes often involve reduction, paraphrase, or partial loss of metaphorical richness, particularly where culturally grounded and embodied expressions are concerned, the present findings indicate that naturally occurring discourse within community radio sustains these meanings and, in many cases, intensifies their conceptual density.

In practical terms, what emerges from the data is that metaphorical systems remain most stable when they are continuously enacted in everyday communication. Radio discourse achieves this through repetition, interaction, and narrative embedding, allowing speakers to draw on shared cultural knowledge without the need for explicit explanation. In this way, metaphor is not merely transmitted as linguistic content but is actively re-performed within a living communicative environment. This reinforces

the idea that meaning is maintained through use rather than storage, and that conceptual structures endure when they remain socially active.

The key contribution of this paper lies in its reframing of language preservation as the maintenance of conceptual systems rather than the preservation of lexical inventories. Community media, particularly radio, do not simply reproduce words or grammatical structures; they provide sustained contexts in which culturally grounded ways of thinking, feeling, and evaluating experience are continually reactivated. Within this framework, emotion metaphors are not peripheral stylistic devices but central cognitive tools through which communities interpret lived experience. As such, radio functions not only as a communication platform but also as a site of epistemic continuity, where shared ways of knowing are preserved through everyday linguistic practice.

Additionally, the study highlights the importance of integrating translation studies with discourse analysis in research on indigenous languages. Translation studies make visible the points at which metaphorical meaning is reshaped or constrained across linguistic boundaries, while discourse analysis reveals how such meanings are stabilised, sustained, and socially embedded within everyday communication.

These perspectives provide a more comprehensive account of metaphorical life, capturing both its vulnerability in cross-linguistic transfer and its resilience in intra-cultural discourse. Ultimately, this integrated approach offers a more distinct understanding of language preservation in contemporary African contexts. It suggests that safeguarding indigenous languages requires attention not only to documentation and translation but also to the communicative environments in which language continues to be lived, performed, and experienced.

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