

INCONGRUITY IN STEREOTYPE JOKES BY THE GIKUYU TOWARDS THE GIKUYU

By

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Abstract

This paper uses the Relevance Theory that is a cognitive approach to communication proposed by Sperber, D and Wilson, D (1987/1995) to study incongruity in stereotype jokes by the Gikuyu towards the Gikuyu. The aim of the present study was to establish why people have jokes about themselves and why these stereotyped jokes are appealing and laughable. This aim proves that the technique through which Gikuyu jokes are achieved is by incongruity and the audience's encyclopaedic knowledge. To collect data for the study, one of the researchers used her native competence in the language under study besides the researchers scheming the internet and using questionnaires and interview schedules. This paper's findings showed that stereotyped jokes by the Gikuyu towards the Gikuyu are meant to ridicule with an aim of educating the masses.

Key words: Gikuyu, incongruity, jokes, stereotypes.

1. 1 Introduction

A joke is something spoken, written, said or done with an intention of making people laugh. Thus a joke is a humorous act that sounds funny. Ritchie (2004:16) sees a joke as a relatively short text, which, for a given cultural group, is recognizable as having as its primary purpose, the product of an amused reaction in a hearer/reader and which is typically repeatable in a wide range of context, A joke may be formed out of a single word, a question – answer form, a whole short story or a gesture, picture or drawing but considered in a context.

Attardo (1994) classifies jokes into canned jokes (narratives) and conversational jokes. Whatever type of a joke, it must have a set-up and a punch line. This probably is the reason as to why Chiaro (1992) observes that humour is universal for each and every language has its own kind of jokes.

Many studies on and about jokes have centred on the subject of why people laugh at jokes. One of the reasons given for laughter in jokes is that of the originator of the joke having a feeling of superiority over the subject of the joke. This reason explains why jokes often rely on stereotypes. Given that this paper addresses itself to Gikuyu jokes about Gikuyu people appears to contradict this reason as to why people laugh at jokes. Thus, the current paper has the following aims;

- i) To find out why people have jokes about themselves – and in this case the Gikuyu.
- ii) To prove the fact that the technique through which Gikuyu jokes are achieved is by incongruity and the audience's encyclopaedic knowledge.

The writing of this paper arose from the realization that jokes are popular in the Kenyan media in both print and electronic versions but are mostly in the Kenyan national lingua francas of English and Kiswahili. Examples of programmes on Kenyan T.V that employ jokes are Churchill Live, Papa Shirandula, Vioja Mahakamani to name only but a few. People who participate in the jokes have become house hold names not only in Kenya but in the entire East and Central African region. Thus, one question comes to mind; What is the place of jokes in Kenyan indigenous languages? This is the essence of this paper on jokes in Gikuyu language and about the Gikuyu people.

The Gikuyu – the subject of this paper – are the most numerous and populous, the most aggressive and the most powerful economic, social and political ethnic group in Kenya (Guthrie 1967, Webb and Kembo-Sure 2000). Although a people supposed to be residing in the central counties of Kenya, the Gikuyu are found almost in every county of Kenya. Being matrilineal like the Swahili, the Gikuyu tend to be ethnically neutral except when it comes to matters purely Gikuyu. This is the essence of the current paper on jokes by the Gikuyu and about the Gikuyu. What moral lessons does one get from such jokes?

1.2 Methodology

The data for this paper was collected from the Gikuyu language by use of primary and secondary sources. The primary data was obtained from one of the researchers' native knowledge of the usage of stereotyped Gikuyu jokes. This particular researcher can speak, write and read Gikuyu language fluently. In conducting research about this paper, the researchers used qualitative research techniques due to the fact that the approach taken involved discussions and analysis for the research was not a controlled phenomenon. It was also noted that qualitative inquiry deals with data which is in form of words like this one rather than numbers and statistics.

Secondary data was obtained from the internet, SMS, emails and library materials. The internet was chosen because its information is quick and presumably easier to access than hard copy and can be updated easily. Besides, jokes on the internet can be rated and even voted for by the audience. SMS and emails on jokes are also a rich source of data used in this paper. The senders found the stereotyped jokes humorous.

The researchers schemed some websites like www.kikuyu.com, www.mchongoano.com and www.jokes.com and chose some samples. Other stereotyped jokes were obtained from SMS and emails from friends. Each joke was assigned a number.

The data collected was analysed within the framework of Relevancy Theory in order to ensure that the paper's objectives are achieved.

1.3 Theoretical Framework

Relevance is a cognitive approach to communication proposed by D. Sperber and D. Wilson (1986/95). This theory pictures communication as an inferential activity that adjusts, in parallel, the explicit content of utterances, the premises implicated and what conclusion is arrived at, and the contextual information needed to obtain them. This cognitive theory that is relevance theory centers on the importance of intention in every communicative act.

According to Yus (2008: 134), the comprehension procedure is complex. The procedure includes the explicit interpretation of the speaker's utterance, the speaker's implicated interpretation and the right amount of contextual information needed to obtain the explicit and implicit interpretation. The cognitive principle of the relevance theory helps in doing all the interpretation. This is the theory the present paper uses to analyze stereotyped jokes by the Gikuyu and towards/ about the Gikuyu.

1.4 Incongruity and Stereotypes in Gikuyu Jokes

Incongruity is usually defined as a conflict between what is expected and what actually occurs in a joke. Forabosco (2008:45) posits that incongruity is widely considered to be one of the most important concepts to the description and explanation of a joke. Incongruity is achieved through exploiting different people's traits. These are the elements found in people's personalities or characteristics which distinguish them from others. These traits are not mere summaries of behaviour but have underlying sets of motives and attitudes that dictate the behaviour. These traits may look obvious but one has to infer them from behaviour and more often than not we think we know why people have the traits they have. On the other hand, Deux and Lewis (1984:46) note that stereotypes are:

*"...Beliefs that we have about other people. The content of stereotypes can include information about appearance, likely or unlikely **behaviour**, medical and psychological conditions, mannerisms, goals, motivations, desires, assigned roles, and nearly everything else of psychological interest."*

The jokes in this section show incongruous traits and the different stereotypes in the Gikuyu jokes.

Joke No. 1 ATMs

The joke below is used to stereotype the Gikuyu people in general. The joke implicates that people from other communities in Kenya are a relatively behind in development. The Equity Bank in Kenya is said to have improved its state of the art ATMs that are programmed in Gikuyu language. The Kamba language community version is said to be released soon while the Equity Bank ATMs are said to have rejected the Luo and Luhya language version and an expert has to be brought in the country Kenya from the UK to solve the problem.

The Kikuyu Service goes like this:-

When it asks you to key in your Pin number, “Theca namba cia mbini wakorwo niuraririkana. Akorwo ni ATM kandi ya mundu uiyite na riu ni kungeci namba, io kandi nongumeria.”

(Key in your ATM pin number if you can remember it. If you have stolen somebody else’s ATM card, and now you are just guessing the pin number, I am going to swallow that ATM Card!).

On using the ATM and if you the user put the wrong code, you get this message:-

“Tiga wana, ningumeria kandi yaku”.

(Do not be childish; I am going to swallow that card of yours!).

If you key in the right pin number the transaction is thus:

“Urenda mbeca ciagana?”

(How much money do you want to withdraw?)

The options are:

“Kamubibuti? (fifty shillings only?)

Ka in Kikuyu language is diminutive while ***Ki*** is argumentative.

“Igana?” (One hundred?)

“Ngiri?” (One thousand?)

“Ona kana mbau?” (or even twenty bob?)

Ino ni bengi ya athini!Tiga thoni.....thura tu!

This is a bank for the poor! Do not shy off.....just select!

In the process if you key in more money than you have, you are told “Ikai Mundu uyu urenda atia? Tiga uici!

Andika mbeca uria ui winacio!” translated as

Stop stealing! Select the amount of money that you know you have!

And when one has no funds on the account, the ATM machine writes:

“Umuthi iitha ukuinuka maguru kana umenye kuria ukuiya mbeca. Wiriga kundimbothiti mbeca ri? Nikii? Kai uteri thoni? Inuka!

(Today, you either go home on foot or know where to steal money from. When did you last deposit money? What is it? Are you not ashamed of yourself? Go home!)

When you just want to know the balance you are told:

Mbaranici yaku ni bibiti. Rutiti nginya ndibothiti na riu ni thitima na maratathi ma Equity urahuthira! CONOKA MUNO!”

(Your balance is only fifty shillings. You have withdrawn even the deposit and now you are just misusing Equity’s electricity and papers. **SHAME ON YOU!**)

When you have withdrawn some cash and you do not require a receipt, the writing is:

“Ooo! Kumbe niwamenya ndunatigia ona ndururu! Ha! Ha! Ha!!”

(“Oh! So you knew that you have not left even a five cent.! Ha! Ha! Ha!).

The Stereotyping used here, first sees the Gikuyu people to be advanced in technology. Equity Bank ATMs can recognize the Gikuyu language transactions while languages of other other communities in Kenya have not been accepted. This is inferred from the fact that the Equity Bank was first introduced in Gikuyu land before spreading to other parts of Kenya. The options of withdrawal show that Equity Bank caters for both the poor and rich. There is incongruity when there is an option to withdraw even “mbau” (twenty shillings). The world knowledge about Equity Bank in Kenya is that currently there is no option to withdraw only twenty shillings.

As the transaction goes on, the Gikuyu people are also stereotyped and seen as thieves, “tiga uici” (stop stealing). This is when one goes to key in more money than his balance can allow. This is taken to mean that the customer is trying to get more than he/she has by trying to trick the ATM machine. The mention that “... Menya kuria ukuiya mbeba” (Know where to steal money from) creates a lot of humour by stereotyping the Gikuyu people as thieves. There are many ways of “stealing” and the ATM is advising the customer that he/she should look for a way to steal money but not from this particular ATM.

Joke No. 2 – Insha – Composition Writing in Kiswahili

The following joke is about the Gikuyu people and how they do not know Kiswahili language. A teacher marks a student’s composition and gives high marks when the “Insha” has many grammatical and spelling mistakes.

“Maji ni muhumu sana. Siku moja, babangu aliniambia nipeleke ng’ombe setu mtoni sikakunywe maji kwa sababu silikuwa simenyota sana. Tulipofika huko, ng’ombe sika-pata gatangi hakakuwa na maji, sika – ania, sika-ania, sika-ania, kinya babangu akatoka rugongo akakuja kianda. Alafu sikagaragara gatangi. Babangu akanuilisa, “Mbogo kwa nini ng’ombe sina-ania uguo?” Nikamwambia, “kwa sababu gatangi hakana maji....”

Riu ati insha iyo hari mwarimu yari njega akiheo 8/10, Lo!!

The teacher in point found the student’s composition to be very good and gave the student 8/10 marks.

The humour in the above joke is realized through stereotyping the low standard of Kiswahili language among the Kikuyu people. Kiswahili being a Bantu language is easily distorted by the Gikuyu people by putting in syllables that can make a word sound like Kiswahili. For example, “setu” (ours) is supposed to be “wetu” but in Gikuyu language it is “citu”. The following table shows the mistakes in the Insha (composition) above:

Mistakes	Gikuyu	Kiswahili	English
Setu	Citu	Wetu	Our/ Ours
Sikakunywe	Cikanyue	Wanywe	To drink
Simenyota	Ciari nyotu	Walikuwa na kiu	They were thirsty
Sikapata	Cigikora	Wakapata	They found
Gatangi	Gatangi	Tangi	Tank
Hakakuwa	Gatiari	Haikuwa	Did not have
Sika-ania	Cikiania	Wakalilia maji	They lowed
Kinya	Nginya	Mpaka	Until
Rugongo	rugongo	Sehemu ya juu	Uphill
Akakuja	Agiuka	Akaja	He came
Kianda	Kianda	Sehemu ya chini	Downhill
Sikagaragara	Cikagaragara	Wakapiringisha	They rolled down
Akaniulisa	Akinjuria	Akaniuliza	He asked
Uguo	Uguo	Hivyo	Like that

The inference drawn from the above joke is that the Gikuyu people have problems with letter “s” because it does not exist in the Gikuyu language. Instead they have “c” e.g. in the words “setu” for “citu”, “sikagaragara” for “cikagaragara” “sikakunywe”, “sikapata, and simenyota. The student seems not to get a Kiswahili word for words like “until” so he creates his own “kinya” where he has changed “ng-“ to “ki” in the Gikuyu word “nginya”. Words like “rugongo” kianda, and uguo are pure Gikuyu words that are borrowed by the student in the Kiswahili composition . The implication here is that the student is short of Kiswahili words. The incongruity is also resolved when the teacher, in this case, a native Gikuyu language speaker finds the composition to be “good” and so the student scores above average. This joke stereotypes the Kiswahili teachers and especially those who are from the Gikuyu community.

Joke No. 3 Nyeri Women

A man was overheard saying this to a driver of a public service vehicle:

Dereba hiiha! Hikanitie kuma Nyiri.

Driver, be faster. My wife is from Nyeri.

Nyeri is one of the counties in Central Kenya inhabited by the Gikuyu people.

This joke stereotypes on Nyeri women who are said to be harsh and do a lot of husband battering.

The joke has been taken from the Gikuyu community and stereotypes those who have married women from Nyeri. In the joke we are not told that the man is going to be beaten. The inference drawn is that Nyeri women beat up their husbands and thus when the commuter asks the driver to

be faster for he has married from Nyeri, the implicated conclusion then is that, any slight mistakes a man makes, he is “disciplined” by a Nyeri woman. Thus, the conclusion here is that the man does not want to be late because entering the house late calls for a beating. The Nyeri women are stereotyped as being harsh. Marrying a woman brought up in Nyeri then means a man is in trouble the rest of his married life.

Joke No. 4 A Gikuyu Man in Hospital

The joke is about a Gikuyu man called Mwangi who was involved in a car accident and taken to hospital unconsciously. When he woke up in his hospital bed, he did not know where he was. He called the nurse for an explanation on what had happened to him. This is their conversation;

Nurse: Sori muno, uma na matino wa bara na ngari yaku.

I am sorry but you were involved in a very bad car crash.

Mwangi: Mutini na ngari yakwa. Ui ngari yakwa! BMW yakwa!

BMW! Ngari yakwa ni njega?

Car crash! My BMW! My BMW; is my car alright?

Nurse: Ngari nithukire biu no tiga kumakio ningari. Wicirie uhoro wa guoko kwa umotho tondu nduri.

Sir your car was destroyed but that is the least of your worry.

You lost your left arm in the crash.

Mwangi: Ndiri na guoko kwa umotho? Ui thaa yakwa! Rolex yakwa!

I lost my left arm? Oh my Rolex watch! My Rolex! My Rolex!

Nurse: Horera! Nduri handu hega no bamiri yaku yothe ihaha gukuona.

Calm down! You are in critical condition but your family is here to see you.

The family gets in to see Mwangi.

Mwangi: Wairimu wi guku?

Wairimu are you here?

Wairimu: Ii ndi haha muthuri wakwa na ndigagutiga.

I am here my husband and I will never leave you.

Mwangi: Kamau, wi guku?

Kamau, are you here?

Kamau: Ii ndi haha baba, na ndigagutiga.

Am here father, and I will never leave you.

Mwangi: Wanjiku, wi guku?

Wanjiku, are you here?

Wanjiku: Ii ndi haha baba na ndigagutiga.

Am here father and I will never leave you.

Mwangi: Akorwo mwi haha inyuothe, nduka itigirwo nau?

So, if you are all here who is at the shop?

This is a joke used to stereotype the Gikuyu men. They are so money minded that even in a hospital bed the man thinks about “nduka itigirwo nau?” (who is at the shop?). The inference that is made from the above joke is that Mwangi is a wealthy man. This is shown by the world knowledge about who can afford a “BMW” car or a “Rolex” watch. He must be having a big shop and is so worried about the customers and the loss he might get for there being no sales for the day. The incongruity in the joke is as a result of the encyclopaedic knowledge that the hearer has about the seriousness of an accident. Mwangi does not have his left hand and instead of getting worried about the loss of the hand he is worried about a watch which he can make to replace but a hand cannot be replaced. The implicated conclusion in this stereotypical joke is that the Gikuyu men are so money minded.

Joke No. 5 A Gikuyu Man in a Well

The joke about a Gikuyu man in a well goes thus;

Muthuri umwe niaguire githima –ini kia mai. Mutumia wake niateng’erire ndukaini na akigura mukanda wa kugucia muthuriwe kuma githima-ini kiu. Riria muthuri aigure mutumia niakinya, akianirira are irimaini akiuria; “mukanda ucio waugura mbia cigana?” Mutumia agicokia akiuga: “ngiri emwe.” Muthuri akiugiriria akiuga; “Ngai! M ya Ngai Wamuthuni ukagura mukanda wa ngiri, ngiri, ngiri imwe! Wagura kwa Wandumbai? Wee, wee! Thii ukaguri kwa aciru. Naguthi ndendagia magana matatu! Hiuha! Itnakwira haha.

Translation of the above goes thus:-

A certain man fell into a well. His wife ran to the shops and bought a rope to pull the man out with. When the man heard that the wife had arrived with the rope, he shouted from the well and asked the wife; “How much did that rope cost?” The wife replied and said: “One thousand shillings” The man cried loudly from the well and said: “Oh my God! In the name of God, mother of Muthoni, let me ask, you can dare buy a rope at one thousand, one thousand, one thousand! You bought it at Wandumbai’s? Be warned! Go and buy from Waciru’s. Waciru sells the rope at three hundred shillings! Hurry up before I die here in the well!

This is another joke that stereotypes the Gikuyu men. From the context of the joke and the encyclopaedic entry of a word “githima” (a well), the conclusion is that this is a great misfortune. Falling into a well means that one might die due to drowning or suffocating. The urgency to save the man in danger is what would be called for. The man is really screaming for help. The incongruity in this joke is found in the question “Mukanda ucio waugura mbia cigana?” (How much did you buy that rope?) Instead of the man first fighting to see himself safe, he rejects the rope that is to be used to save him. The implication arrived at in this joke is that this Gikuyu man is too stingy to the grave. It is so ironical that a dying man should choose the cost of the rope to be used in saving him from the “grave”. He wants the wife to go for a cheaper rope, that is that which costs sh. 300 but not the expensive rope of Sh. 1000. The man

knows he is about to die and that is why he tells the wife; “Hiuha! Itanakuira haha” (Hurry up! Before I die here). If he does not want to die, why then can't he allow the wife to use the expensive rope which is available?

Joke No. 6 Gikuyu Women

The joke by the Gikuyu about Gikuyu women goes thus;

Andu aingi numaugiti uhoro wa atumia Agikuyu. Muthenya omwe ungikainuka, ukuri mutimia na ciana nimaure, waku ni mugikuyu. Nimoikaini na kubanga tumirigu. Mbangaga tumirigu ca ciana na indo iria mwethita nake miaka mirongo ina, akora na cio. Kwiragwo ati; “mutimia mugikuyu agutuaga na muthamaki riria wina mbecha no agaguikia na nja ta mutura riria wahara.” Mutimia umwe niagwirwo akiuga uu;” Kaba kurira ndi mathindethi thiinii gukira gutheka ndi baithikiri iguru.” Ungihe mutimia mugikuyu ndeti ya mbere aroraga thaith ya waretu, githomo haria ukinyite, mibango yaku ya matuku meguka na maundu maingi ta macio. Ukimuhe ndeti yak ere, ugikira ukimutihera nyumba urua akomborete.

Translation

Everyone has heard about Gikuyu women. If one day you return home to find an empty house and your children gone, then you are in the groove with a Gikuyu woman. They are known to be “packers”. They will pack and go with the children and the furniture even after 40 years of marriage and hard labour on a marriage. A common saying goes: “A Gikuyu woman will treat you like a king as long as you have cash, but toss you like a rotten traditional Gikuyu sausage (mutura) once you are broke”. One lady is said to have coined the following phrase: “I would rather cry inside a Mercedes Benz than laugh on a bicycle”. It is stereotyped that when a man is given a first date, a Gikuyu woman will size “him” up; wallet size, level of education, and even future ambitions. So, by the second date one will be paying house rent for the Gikuyu woman.

The Gikuyu women are portrayed as materialistic. As long as they get the material wealth, marriage does not matter to them. Their happiness is having expensive things like a Mercedes Benz. The saying is showing how materialistic the Gikuyu women are. They do not mind having miserable marriage so long as they have the “Mercedes”. Leaving in poverty but happily i.e. “laugh on a bicycle” to them is not life worth living at all. When given a date they do not look for what a man is but what he has. The “wallet” is a symbol of money. When sizing up one wallet-wise, it means that one can only succeed to date a Gikuyu woman if he has money. These women's marriages are seasonal. When a man has money, Gikuyu women stay, when there is no money they pack and leave. Therefore the implicated conclusion in this joke is that Gikuyu women are lovers of money; they do not love their husbands genuinely and they like running away from their matrimonial homes for they are materialistic.

Joke No. 7 Gikuyu Women and Hens

The following Gikuyu joke by the Gikuyu parallels Gikuyu women and hens and goes thus:-

He maundu matatu manguku nguenda mumenye umothi.

There are three things that I want you to know about hens.

1. *Wambere, nguku yahingurirwo kiroko, yambukaga, ikoima kiaga ta itagacoka ringi*
Nainyui atumia muhana ta nguku iyo. Mwahitania hanini na athuri, mumbukagam mukora micii, mugathukia indo, ta mutagacoka kuo ringi.
First, when you open for the hens in the morning, they go out flying and running away from the chicken pen as if they will never come back there again.
And you women, you are like the hens. When you quarrel over small things with your husbands, you go “flying”; you disappear after destroying some property as if you will never go back there.
2. Wakeri, nguku yarekia itumbi, igambaga tai no irenda andu othe mamenye niyarekia. Yonaga tayeka undu uteri wekwo ni nguku ingi. Na inyui atumia muhana nguku. Inyui tondu, mungiteithia mundu mumenyithagia andu itura igima tari inyui a mbere guteithania. Secondly when a hen lays an egg, it makes noise as if to let the world know it has laid an egg. It is as if it is the only one that has ever laid an egg. Likewise, you women, when you assist somebody, you go shouting in the neighbourhood so that people know that you have done some charity work.
3. Gwatuka, nguku icemaga kiaga kahora inyihitie ikaingira gukoma.
 Atumia, mwora micii, mwaria thina mucokaga gwa athuri anyu mwinyihitie ta nguku iyo.
 When it gets dark, the hen walks calmly to the chicken pen looking very humble, not making any noise and it goes to sleep.
 And you women, when you run away from your matrimonial homes, after suffering there “outside”, you humbly go back to your home, as humble as those hens.

The stereotyping here is negative at first but at the end it is positive. The context of rearing chicken is appropriate in the joke because Gikuyu people like practicing poultry keeping even if it is on small scale. The imagery here creates a perfect match between the behaviour of the women and the hens. As discussed in the previous joke, the Gikuyu women are “packers”. In this current joke they are likened to the hens that go “flying” out of the chicken pen as if they will never go back there. When the Gikuyu women leave their matrimonial home, they destroy their property as if they will never go back there to use it. So the implicated conclusion in this first part is that Gikuyu women are frequent “packers”.

Gikuyu women are said to talk so much and do so little. They like talking about how important they are after helping a person in need. The incongruity is achieved when the cry from a hen is likened to

the noise made by the Gikuyu women after assisting a needy person. They would want the whole world to know how important they are after helping the needy.

The hens are so humble when going back to the chicken pen. They do not want to be late to enter and sleep. The same hen that flew out of the chicken pen as if it will never go back there is the same one that approaches the chicken pen humbly. When a Gikuyu woman is going back to her home after being remorseful having run away and done a lot of damage in the matrimonial home, she humbles herself on her return. She treats the family members with a lot of humility. The encyclopaedic knowledge that one has on how the chicken behave helps in the interpretation of the joke throughout the imagery used. The behavior of the hen and the Gikuyu women is a perfect match.

1.5 Conclusion

This paper has discussed incongruity in the interpretation of stereotyped Gikuyu jokes by the Gikuyu themselves. Jokes have been interpreted at the explicature and implicature levels.

When a stereotyped joke by the Gikuyu can be overtly interpreted it is said to be interpreted at the explicature level. When an inference has to be made to arrive at an implicated conclusion, then the stereotyped joke is interpreted at the implicature level. At all these levels of interpretation, humour is attained through the discovery of the incongruity. It has been noted that jokes to do with stereotypes can be both at the explicature and implicature levels.

In this paper, it has come out clearly that context plays a major role in guiding an interpreter in arriving at the correct interpretation on a stereotyped joke about the Gikuyu by the Gikuyu. The reason behind this is that context spells out relevance and it is this relevance that determines the choice of the speaker's utterances to produce a humorous effect and also the hearer's choice of words that lead to the correct meaning or interpretation of the joke.

Lastly, this paper clearly points out the fact that the stereotyped jokes about the Gikuyu and by the Gikuyu have moral teachings as much as they provoke laughter and amusement.

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