

# **DISCOURSE, GENDER, AND POWER: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF RUNYANKORE-RUKIGA MARRIAGE SONGS AMONG THE BAKIGA**

By  
Emmy Rwomushana

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Levis Mugumya
2. Prof. Abasi Kiyimba

## **Abstract**

This study investigates gender relations as depicted in Runyankore-Rukiga marriage songs. It explores linguistic devices in Runyankore-Rukiga marriage songs and how they propel gender power relations. In addition, the study examines the way specific linguistic devices construct gender identity. The study further explicates how Runyankore-Rukiga marriage songs can subvert gender power relations among the Bakiga. The songs analysed in the study were recorded during give-away ceremonies. Some audio songs were obtained from music studios in Kabale Municipality. Recorded video songs from previous marriage ceremonies were also obtained from individuals. I purposively selected 36 songs that contained gendered discourses for analysis out of 56 songs collected. I applied Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as a theoretical framework and methodological approach to study the relationship between discourse, gender, and power. The study findings show that through the application of different linguistic devices, Runyankore-Rukiga marriage songs can act as a tool to perpetuate and escalate gender power relations. The study reveals that linguistic items and choices used in Runyankore-Rukiga marriage songs largely reflect the feminine gender with less power, embedded in a woman's beauty and character. The findings further show that marriage songs construct women and men differently along the binary division of positive and negative, and superior and inferior, focusing on corporeal styles. The study shows that marriage songs have got subversive power to turn against themselves in the way they construct gender and if appropriately used, they can go a long way in undermining patriarchal discourses and power. The study points to the need for the Runyankore-Rukiga marriage song composers and singers, both male and female, to work together in promoting counter-power and counter-ideologies songs, that are intended to subvert patriarchal discourses and advocate gender equality among the Bakiga.