

## Project Description

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### **“Funeral Performances in Kenya: A Contribution to Communicative Genre Analysis”**

This study examines interactions in funeral events among the Bukusu people of Western Kenya, which present an encounter between ideas, beliefs, attitudes, assumptions and interactional patterns based on Christianity on the one side, and on traditional Bukusu religion on the other side. By examining the interactional practices, the study seeks to establish whether there is mutual or one-sided influence between the two belief systems.

The study focuses on two forms which can be analysed as communicative genres: the sermon and traditional public comforter’s performance. Relying on principles from communicative genre analysis and comparative analysis the study examines the external (functional) and formal aspects which will help in drawing conclusions about hybridisation in Bukusu funeral events. The central hypothesis is that during performances the priest and the traditional public comforter use verbal and non-verbal devices to index contextual presuppositions based on cosmologies underlying Christian and traditional Bukusu understanding of death.

Therefore, the study contributes to the broad discussions on the role of communicative genres in social construction of meaning. By widening perspective and examining funeral performances in the African context, and particularly within the Bukusu community, the study innovatively responds to the question of cultural determination of communicative genres.