

Urban youth folklore genres: a literary analysis of the content and context of Mchongoano

Kimongo, David Mwangi

Abstract:

This study presents a literary analysis of the content and context of mchongoano as an urban youth genre. It analysed Mchongoano within its context of performance and its impact on Kenyan urban youth. The study engaged two theoretical models namely: Sociological and Stylistics theories. The study considered the performance of Mchongoano as relating to behaviour and experiences thus reflecting social realities. Sociological theory was used to analyse these social realities in the society as captured in the verbal duels. Stylistics theory was used to unravel the linguistic and stylistic patterns in Mchongoano. Mchongoano involves the manipulation and codification of language to pass the intended message. The study espoused fieldwork as a primary means of data collection for analysis and interpretation and it engaged participant observation, interviews and focus group discussions. Secondary data was obtained through reading secondary materials in libraries, online, published and unpublished works relating to our study. Data collected was categorized, divided into chapters and analysed using thematic content analysis method. Findings from this study reveal that the performance of Mchongoano is based on various social issues like material opulence, religion, crime, fear, insecurity and individual traits among others. The study also revealed that Mchongoano duels engage various styles such as irony, satire, symbolism, sarcasm and semantic variations. Therefore, the study concludes that Mchongoano, as an emergent urban folklore, deserves literary and critical attention since the urban youth do not engage in Mchongoano for mere entertainment but for social, intellectual and emotional satisfaction.