Chapter 1. Issues of language and gender in iweto marriage as practised by the Kamba in Kenya

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This chapter examines how, in the discourse of iweto marriage (where a childless hetero-sexual woman among the Kamba of Kenya marries another childbearing one), gendered subject positions are constructed, and how issues of power are played out. The study explores the roles and identities created via naming terms; the correlation between language use and how individuals construct their identities and accommodate (or resist) societal roles; and the social relations and identities that are thus constructed. Data on naming conventions was obtained through interviews of women who are in an iweto marriage or their close relatives. The findings show that language plays a central role in the mapping of gendered subject positions, that is, roles and identities which are reflected and constructed, sustained and resisted in the naming conventions of the iweto marriage.

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