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Research Article

A Critical Discourse Analysis on the functions of figurative language in Kenyan 2013 electoral speeches

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Abstract

This study investigated the use of figurative language (FL) in selected politicians' electoral campaign speeches in Meru County during the 2013 Kenya general elections. Figurative language is mainly social-culturally constructed and therefore it presents a major area for misinterpretation or manipulation when used in politics. The research objective was to examine the functions of FL the frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The approach was helpful in moving beyond the surface examination of texts to the deep structure relation of power and inequality as they relate to politicians' speeches in this study. Fairclough's, (1998) approach to CDA was used to help understand the linguistic items that are FL and their meanings. In addition, it was used to understand the social contexts of FL use and the different layers of messages communicated by politicians in their speeches. The researcher purposely picked twenty four speeches from the selected politicians using stratified random sampling. Half of the sample (12) 50% was male politicians' speeches and the other half (12) 50% was female politicians' speeches. Data on the speeches was collected from media houses. Thematic analysis and CDA were used to analyze the data. The results indicated that the main goal in politics is persuasion of voters to vote for a politician and also to make their opponents look bad in eyes of the voters in order to discourage voting their opponents. It was concluded that Kenyan politics is tribal since FL was used to encourage voters to vote along tribal lines.

Introduction

Figurative language (FL) comprises a large part of all languages and its understanding is important to express messages during interactions. Figurative language refers to an expression that departs from normal literal language so as to make comparison or give freshness to the interaction or make the message clear (Elena, 2005). It can also be seen as a literary device used by an author or a speaker in such a way that what is being said is different from the actual literal meanings of words. Figurative language is used in different contexts in the society (Colston and Lee, 2004). Politicians used FL in political context as they campaigned for votes during the 2013 general election in kenya. Therefore their political speeches offered useful data for Critical Discourse Analysis.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is concerned with demystifying ideologies and power through systematic examination of spoken, written and visual data (Wodak, 1997). It looks at language as a social practice and considers the context of language to be very important. Among other things, CDA as an ideology is interested in the more concealed type of each day belief which often appear masked as conceptual metaphors and analogies that draws attention of linguists. It was on this basis that this study aimed to carry out a critical discourse analysis on figurative language used by politicians. Wodak (2001) argues that politics is a power struggle that aims at executing and practicing economic, social and political ideologies. Language then becomes very vital since each political action is prepared, accompanied and influenced by language. To the politicians, language serves as conduit through which they express their ideas and so a need for a unique style or strategy like the use of figurative language.

Wodak (2001) argues that politics is a power struggle that aims at executing and practicing economic, social and political ideologies. Language then becomes very vital since each political action is prepared, accompanied and influenced by language. According to Polsky (2001), a feature of how language functions in social interaction is its influential and instrumental association with power. So the saying 'language is power' could be seen as true. Critical Discourse Analysis mostly deals with injustices, power abuse, and inequality in the society as far as language use is concerned. Language is seen as a means of enabling inequality and injustices chiefly by those in authority (Van Dijk, 1993). The strategy that a group of people acquires to make the other to do what it wants to be done is known as linguistic strategy. Politicians use both strategy and linguistic manipulation. Linguistic manipulation is the use of a language consciously in a devious means to control others (Chilton, 1998). According to Chilton, linguistic manipulation can be seen as an influential instrument of political rhetoric because the language of politicians is essentially focused on persuading people to take a political stand. According to Michira (2014) the personal pronouns 'we/us versus them' pronouns were used metaphorically by politicians. "We/us" was used to imply inclusion of the politician and the voters while "them" was used to refer to the opponents during the political campaigns. The use of we/us versus them pronouns as FL is a useful strategy for wooing voters. It was found in the Kenya 2013 general elections as politicians campaigned for political seats.

Since language serves different functions in the society, FL was used for different purposes by the politicians. According to Colston and Lee (2004) ironic utterances are thought to be rude, express impoliteness, de-emphasisewhat the politician had said and their implication is negative. They are most often used to indirectly insult.In a study by Fainsilber and Ortony (1987), who examined use of metaphor in oral descriptions of autobiographical emotional experiences and in behaviors resulting from these experinces found that metaphor was used mostly to describe personal feelings than to describe obvious actions coming from these states. They also found that figurative language was used often to convey intense emotional states than to express milder one. Thus this study sought to determine whether politicians used FL to express their emotions.

According to Atkinson (1984)politicians manipulate language on the idea of persuading people. They persuade people to take political actions or to support a political party or an individual and to turn up to vote. Language is also used to make people adopt general political or social attitudes so as to attract support for a present policy. This can be possible through use of figurative language.As politicians campaigned for votes they made political speeches with deliberate choice of words to serve different functions. This study therefore determined these functions.

Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Meru County which is located in the Eastern part of Kenya. Meru was selected because political speeches in Kenya vary from one area to another depending on political issues

affecting the country and even the region. This study used qualitative research designs to carry out a CDA on the functions of figurative language on politicians' campaign speeches. The study collected audio recorded speeches of the politicians as they campaigned during the 2013 general election from local media houses. Thus, this was considered a natural setting for the politicians as they made their speeches. Figures of speech were considered cultural symbols since they varied from culture to culture.

The fact that politicians were campaigning in natural settings, prompted them to use figures of speeches that are related to their experiences, relations and interactions with other people in the society. The study carried out a CDA in order to try to interpret the figures of speeches used by politicians as they wooed voters for votes. A politician in this study was defined as a person vying for the different political positions during the 2013 general election in Kenya. To acquire the sample size the researcher sampled twenty four speeches out of sixty five speeches from politicians campaigning in Meru County which is above 20% suggested by Gay (1992). Half of the sample (12) 50% was male politicians' speeches and the other half (12) 50% was female politicians' speeches; this was done to avoid bias on gender.

Data was collected from local media houses that broadcast in the kimeru language. The researcher only collected archived data related to electoral campaigns gathered during the 2013 general election. The researcher sought audio recorded speeches which was unedited data from the media houses made by politicians in Meru County. Data was collected from two media houses that had been in operation during 2013 general elections. Data analysis was based on Fairclough's (1989) model for CDA that consists of three inter-related processes of analysis tied to three inter-related dimensions of discourse. These included: the object of analysis (verbal texts); the processes by which the object is produced and received (speaking, reading and listening) by human subjects and the socio-historical conditions which govern these processes. Each of these dimensions required a different kind of analysis that included text analysis (description), processing analysis (interpretation), and social analysis (explanation). This approach enabled the researcher to focus on the signifiers that made up the text, the specific linguistic selections, their juxtapositions, and their sequencing. Fairclough's approach to CDA provided multiple points of analytic

entry. It does not matter which kind of analysis one begun with, as long as in the end they are all included and are shown to be mutually explanatory.

Alongside Fairclough's model for CDA, a thematic data analysis was undertaken. A thematic analysis is the most useful in capturing the complexities of meaning within a textual data set (Tesch, 1990). It is also the most commonly used method of analysis in qualitative research. Thematic analyses focus on identification and description of both implicit and explicit ideas within the data, that is, themes (Dey, 1993). Codes are then typically developed to represent the identified themes and applied or linked to raw data as summary markers for later analysis. Such analyses may or may not include the following: comparing code frequencies, identifying code co-occurrence, and graphically displaying relationships between codes within the data set (Dey, 1993). Thematic analysis process involved data transcription, familiarization, coding, categorization, identification of patterns, and interpretation of the patterns. The data was grouped in accordance to the categories of FL and their function. This allowed the researcher to identify various categories of FL and their respective functions as used by politicians during campaigns.

Results and Discussion

The findings are presented, interpreted and discussed in connection to figurative language in politicians' electoral campaign speeches. CDA tenets were used as a guide for analyses on the functions of politicians' FL use.

The Functions of Figurative Language used by Politicians

The objective of the study was to examine the functions of figurative language used by the politicians. The following were the key functions that figures of speech were found to perform: to criticize opponents, persuade the voters, to position the speakers as the best candidates, to mislead or deceive voters, to create unity between the politicians and the voters and lastly to seek support for a political party or individual. A discussion of each of these functions follows.

Figures of speech used by politicians to criticize opponents

The researcher established that one of the functions figures of speech was to criticize their opponents as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Figures of speech used by politicians to criticize opponents

Figure of speech	Type of FL	Literal meaning	Metaphorical meaning
Ukagurangaariyakuinjeruutinenke ramuntukurutu	Symbolism	If you buy your new car you cannot give to an learner driver	The youth cannot be entrusted with leadership. It also belittles the youth as inexperienced leaders.
Kijanautinamaigoatiombagututag unira	Metaphor	A youth without teeth cannot chew for us.	The youth cannot be able to bring resources to the people.
Bariabagucuagitini mono bonthe	Metaphor	Others are monos	Do not vote for people without experience in politics.
Ndaburiaaciarimwananamukurub akaririrairionuubunenkera?	Metaphor	Let me ask you parents, if a. child and a man ask for food who can you give?	Do not vote in the aged people. Give the youth a chance in politics.
Kaakuirutanaugambi	Metaphor	He is learning to speak	Youths do not have skills for leadership.
Kwina x akuremwanimurigonibwamunogo kerie	Metaphor	When x could not carry the load you rested him.	Do not vote for people that are not able to deliver.
Antuba x niatumauthuurigitarionthe	Metaphor	People from x likes creating enmity	It is discriminating one community and therefore they should be side-lined.
Muntuuthinjitegacunguranauthinji tedegwacianjogunuuumbakugaan yamabwega?	Symbolism	A person that has slaughtered a rabbit and the one that has slaughtered bulls of elephants who should share the meat?	We should not vote for poor people. We should unite with those that have large number of voters to win.
Tukaneenkerabariabareminingugi	Metaphor	We should not vote those that have been unable to work.	Do not vote those that failed us before. Do not vote those that will not help us.
Tugatigwatukaritienyombatekatwi watchmen	Simile	We will be left looking after houses like watchmen.	If vote people from other regions we will not have our own in the offices which are near us.
Ntigirikinyaukamiakarangiitigaru ka	Metaphor	Even if you paint a donkey it can not change	Bad leaders should not be voted for because they cannot change to be go
Tukunogakuugiarwirorwantongu	Symbolism	We are tired of running a race in which you keep dropping the apple and you have to keep collecting it.	People are tired of voting leaders who do not bring development.
Ukejakwithirwaukithugania ta mbiti	Simile	Do not think like a beast	We should vote people that think about us.
Ni baganaboonakathia, kathiakeemunithi.	Metaphor	How many have seen an antelope? It has marks	People with immoral behaviours should not be voted for.
Buukaringiraantubeenamunithiku ura	Metaphor	Do not vote people with marks.	People that are known to be bad leaders should not be voted for.
Bukeejakuringiraekurumbawa	Metaphor	Do not vote for women that are folks	Do not vote for women that are already known to be immoral
Bangibarina bus, bus nikurukagaobici?	Symbolism	Others have the bus, can the bus enter the office?	Do not vote politicians in the APK party(alliance party of Kenya)
Tuliendamutongeriautinarubwikin yarumwekiongo	Symbolism	We want a leader without a single white hair on the head.	Do not vote for old leaders.
Nikiguaanikiramatukirekiaregagu kinyantaka	Symbolism	He is a coward who ran away to avoid mud.	Insulting another candidate by saying he a coward.
Kinyakethiranyongugtibiobikuther ukaiinto bi bicunkunwe	symbolism	If there is nothing in the pot there is need for investigations.	If our resources are misused we need to investigate. If resources are stolen we can not keep quiet.
Bangibariugabonikondoo,tegaitik ethirwening'au.	Metaphor	Some say they are sheep check they might be hyena	Do not vote for pretenders.

According to Fairclough (1989) discourse can be used for critique and resistance in pursuit for power. The results in table 1 indicate that figures of speech were mainly used to criticize the youths who were deemed inexperienced. The main figure of speech used for this purpose was metaphor. It seems the aged people used metaphors more than young politicians for this purpose. The aged refer to those politicians that were above thirty five years old and had dominated politics of the county previously. Thus, the aged people wanted to present themselves to the electorate as best fitted candidates with the required leadership experience compared to the younger politicians. For instance, one politician said 'a youth without teeth cannot chew for us' *(kijanautinamaigoatiumbagututagunira)*. In this case, a toothless youth is used to indicate a person without experience in politics cannot benefit the society if voted for. In the context of the Meru culture young men have no authority to negotiate for power, marriage or conflict resolution. The aged politician tried to control the voters by showing the inadequacy of the opponents who they should resist in order to influence them to vote for speaker to get to political power.

The use of figures of speech to criticize opponents was not only limited to the aged politicians, but also the youths employed them to hit back at fellow opponents. A youth for this study is a person aged eighteen to thirty five years old. For instance in table 1, one youthful politician said 'We want a leader without a single grey hair on the head.' *(Tuliendamutongeriautinarubwikkinyarumwekiongo)*. Grey hair among the Meru community is associated with old age so the old politicians were being asked to retire from politics and give the youth a chance in politics. In this case, the politician was criticizing the older and experienced leaders who had previously failed the voters. He seemed to imply that the youth are tired of being called the leaders of tomorrow and there is urgency for their inclusion in leadership positions associated with power. This was therefore the time for generational transition in the politics of the county.

Figurative language was also employed by politicians to criticize the poor opponents. When a male politician said, 'A person that has slaughtered a rabbit and the one that has slaughtered bulls of elephants who should share the meat?' *(muntuuthinjitegacunguranauthinjitedegwacianjogunu uumbakugaanyamabwega?)*A person that has slaughtered an elephant has more meat to share with the community members. This figure was made in context of Imenti sub-tribe that had majority votes (sharing an elephant) against Tigania sub-tribe that had the fewer votes. This figure of speech was made by a politician vying for gubernatorial seat. Through critizing of the opponent (sharing a rabbit) the politician dominates the minds of the voters by sending a message that he is economically and politically powerful to manage the county. At the same time he calls for the discrimination of the minority opponent from political power. The speaker is conscious of the social power of the voters in influencing other voters and by calling for the unity of his tribes mates sets the two sub-tribes in opposite sides in order to divide and rule and win voters to his side. In essence the politician was trying to encourage electorate to vote along tribal lines.

Figures of speech were also used by politicians to criticize politicians with a bad track record. From table 1, a politician said, 'Even if you paint a donkey it cannot change.'*(ntigirikinyaukamiakarangiitigaruka.)* This implies that leaders with bad track record even if given a different electoral position would not be able to deliver. Bad leaders cannot be trusted with power. Thus, the politician used the figure to call for discrimination and resistance of irresponsible politicians who had failed in political power by not delivering on their campaign promises.

Another figure of speech used to criticize poor track record was when a politician said, (we are of tired of running Sodom apple race.) This was a race common among children (*tukunogakuugiarwirorwantongu.*) In the Meru community children would compete by putting a Sodom apple on the spoon and ran without dropping the Sodom apple. In case it dropped the child was supposed to collect it again, place it on the spoon and continue with the race. It was a difficult race to complete since balancing the Sodom apple on the spoon was not easy. The politician sends a message that politics is a serious exercise and not a child game. The politician controls the voters by asking them to refuse bad governance by resisting and discriminating his opponents who had bad history like corruption and mismanagement of resources by denying them political power by not voting for them.

Those that pretended to be good only to be voted for were also criticized using figures of speech, for example from table 1, a politician said, (*'bangibariugabonikondoo, tegaitikethirwenimbiting'au.)* (some say they are sheep, check they might be hyenas).

This is a biblical allusion from Mathew 7:15 that say, watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. In Meru community a sheep is known to be a very obedient while a hyena is known to be greedy and feeds on the sweat of other animals. This figure was made by politician vying for a member of county assembly seat and he was cautioning the voters to be wise with who they vote for. He is disrespecting and insulting his opponents by equating them to hyenas which refer to a person that cannot be respected as a result of not minding the welfare of the voters and so the speaker is abusing the power that he has as a political candidate.

Figures of speech were used to criticize even political parties. For instance a politician speech asked, *(bangibarina bus. Bus nikurukagaobici?)* (others are in the bus, can a bus enter the office?) Bus was a symbol of the APK party. It was a party without a presidential candidate and so it was said not have a driver. In this statement "Others" metaphorically refer to the opponents. Therefore, the politician influences the voters by calling for resistance and discrimination of a party and its members that would not be able to form the ruling government since it was of not beneficial to the voters.

Figures of speech used by politicians to persuade voters

Although the politicians used figures of speech to criticize the opponents, their main objective was to persuade the electorate to vote for them. Certain specific figures of speech were used to persuade voters to elect them as summarized in Table 2:

Table 2: Figures of Speech used by Politicians to Persuade the Voters

Figure of speech	Type of FL	Literal meaning	Metaphorical meaning
Mama niweumpanguragamethor inaniweumbejagainya	Metaphor	Mother is the one who wipes my tears and gives me heart	Mothers are very important. Mothers are always there even in difficult times
Nabwiinyayakwanibabwi	Metaphor	You are my strength	Through your votes I will be powerful. I need your votes to win.
Kanyirikainaguanimwene	Proverb	A finch is danced by other finches	My own relatives, friends, and my village members should vote for me to win. Support me all so that we can celebrate.
Ndaburiaaciarimwanana mukurubakaririrairionuu bunenkera?	Metaphor	Let me ask you parents, if a child and a man cried for food who can you give?	Vote for me since I am a youthful leader. Do not vote for old leaders.
Turinchamba	Metaphor	We are cocks	We are domineering and outstanding. The rest can not match with us. No one can compete with others. We are powerful.
Bukambikiangugi?	Metaphor	Will you take me to do work?	Vote for me.
Nkuburomba mono nandathigukanikuburomba a	Exaggeration	I have asked so much and I am worn out from asking.	Please vote for me. Begging for votes.
Ninkerenibwoonebuticok erwaninthao	Metaphor	Give me and you will not be ashamed	I am the only person capable to serve you better. Dot not vote those others that have not been able to deliver
Igitariritukaenyangiakuu ra	Metaphor	This time round we should not waste our votes	Do not vote for those that have not been able to help you. Vote for leaders that will think of you. Vote for leaders that cares for you.
Tubwiriguciigiruakiaotwi cokeriekiaru	Metaphor	We should petty ourselves and give back to our blisters	Let us vote for our own. Let us vote for people in our area so that they can bring resources to us. Voting in our own people will help us.

Yaaciaramaathayonkagia twonthe	Proverb	If you give birth to twins you breastfeed both.	Even if we are two presidential aspirants in the same region vote us both.
Tukejakunenkerabariaba reminingugi	Metaphor	We should not give to those that have been unable to work	Leaders that have failed us in the past should not be voted for. If you vote for me I will work for me.
Tarikiinyabuundikane	Metonym	Remember me on 4th	Vote for me on 4th, march 2015.
North Imentitutigirituetutumbo, nyamaigaiikathira	Symbolism	North Imenti is only left with intestines	All the prestigious positions have been taken by other regions and North Imenti people should not let the women representative seat also be taken.
Mugeniejakaagwatagwau geni,ngwateniugenitarikii nya	Proverb	A visitor is normally welcomed. welcome me on 4th	I need your votes on 4th, march 2015.
Menyerenibutikejegutaku uracienu	Metaphor	Take care you do not waste your votes	If you vote for me you will have voted the right person. Voting for others is wasting your votes.
Ni bwijidawayaruujinimbi? Rokenirukiribundingirek uura.	Symbolism	Do you know what is the medicine for water? vote for me very early.	I am capable of solving water problems for you. If you vote for me I will ensure you have water.
Kinyang'ombeikethirwa cii nyakinegutiikaagianyakie yo	Proverb	When cows are in the field none lacks its grass.	Even if the contestants are many, each will have votes.
Kagitagatenemuntukenda oragwaageragwaiiganim untuoo	Proverb	In the olden days so that person was killed, the uncle the first person to throw a stone	If I get support from my own people, I will win. My own people should be the first to vote for me so that others can follow.
Tukaariemwanawetu	Metaphor	We look after our child	Let us vote for a person from our region. Let us support our person.
Ni kaanakankia, njaunkiaicunugamugong o	Proverb	This is an orphan. An orphaned calf licks its back	Since I am all alone, vote for me.
Nkathayenuniyoiji	Symbolism	This is your voice	I am the only person who can air your grievances.
Inoragia aria iguite	Proverb	It is fertile where it has fallen	Voting for a candidate from the locality will benefit you more. If you vote for people from far they will not attend to your issues.
Unindinarubungurorwak uruguraobici, gutinaungiwinarubungur o.	Symbolism	I have the key to open the office. No one else has the key to open the office	Vote for me since I am capable of running the office competently. Candidates in other parties can not make good leaders.
Mount Kenya muciariteaanabairi.	Personification	Mount Kenya you have given birth to twins.	Even if there are two presidential aspirants from mount Kenya region do not discriminate on any.

The figures of speech were used to persuade voters through reaching out to their tribe mates. From table 2 one politician said, 'Mother is the one who wipes my tears and gives me heart.' (*Mamaniweumpanguragamethorinaniweumbejagainya*). 'Mother' in this case is used to refer to the politician's tribe. Thus, the politician is trying to persuade his tribe to vote for him just like a mother cannot disown her own child even if the child is in difficulty. The mother figure used in this FL appeals to a mothers feeling of love, care and sympathy. The politician brings the perception of a mother (tribes mate) in order to manipulate the voters with an intention of gaining an advantage over his opponents. He is calling for sympathy votes.

To illustrate further, how politicians used tribalism when persuading for votes, a female politician vying for a women representative seat said, '*Kanyirikainaguanimwene*.' (A finch is danced by other finches). This politician even goes ahead to dance with the audience. A finch is a bird that when it started dancing all the others joined in and the dance became beautiful. This implies that only a person that knows your dancing style can join you in the dance. By joining in the dance, this politician was giving an equal platform for power sharing between herself and the voters. She was also asserting that she was one of them (voters) and she is aware of the voters' power s while discriminating those that do not belong to their sub-tribe. She influences the whole sub-tribe where she belongs to support her to gain political power. This politicianimplied that she and the voters belonged together and that voters could not disappoint her. The politician also manipulates the voters to vote for her in order to give the voters economic power when she gets into political office.

While persuading the electorates to vote for them, politicians used figures of speech to boast how best fitted they were. For instance a politician said, '*Turinchamba*.' (We are cocks). Among the Meru society it is believed that among poultry there is that cock that dominates even if there were others, so it ruled the territory. It is the champion. The other politicians were being warned that the region already had its leader and that they should accept to be ruled. This politician is sending a message to his opponents that he is politically powerful. By using the pronoun 'we' in the figure of speech which is inclusive of the

voters and himself, he apportions power to the voters in order to influence the voters to discriminate his opponents and vote for him since they are already domineering and in possession of authority and therefore no votes or power left for the opponents. The figure was also used by the politician to assert himself while intimidating the opponents.

The politicians also used figures of speech to appeal to voters to vote for them since their region had no representation at all. A female politician said, '.*North Imentitutigirituetutumbo, nyamaigaiikathira*.' (North Imenti is only left with intestines meat has already been shared.) It was believed that politicians in Meru County had divided the powerful political seats according to three sub tribes in the county. The gubernatorial and the senatorial positions had been given to men to contest. This was an element of power sharing that lead to inequality. The woman politician in this figure of speech influences the voters to feel that they were discriminated by the male politicians in sharing the powerful county seats among the three sub-tribes in Meru County. She persuades the voters not to let power slip over their hands because they have the voting power to elect a women representative from Imenti sub-tribe by voting for her and ensure equality in power sharing.

Figures of speech were also used to persuade voters to be fair. For example, in table 2 one politician said, '*Kinyang'ombeikethirwa cii nyakinegutiikaagianyakieyo*.' (When cows are in the field none lacks its grass.) This FL was used in the context that there were four contestants for the gubernatorial seat in Meru County. This politician was controlling the minds of the voters that even if the competition was tight he deserved their votes to gain political power in county governance. The politicians also had balkanised the voters through us versus them in their political campaigns and so he aims at unblocking the area for his political influence.

Figures of Speech used by Politicians to Position themselves as the Best Candidates

In addition to the politicians using figures of speech to persuade electorates to vote for them, they also used figures of speech to position themselves as the best candidates as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Figures of Speech used by Politicians to Position themselves as the Best Candidates

Figure of speech	Type of FL	Literal meaning	Metaphorical meaning
	Symbolism	We want a leader without a single white hair on the head	Old politicians cannot make good leaders. Only the youth can make good leaders.
Ujunimwanauciaribwegaatinamunithi	Metaphor	This is a child born properly without any marks	Those leaders that have been mentioned adversely should not be voted for
Nkathayenuniyoiji	Symbolism	Your voice is here	I'm the only person able to speak for you. Others are not good enough.
Muthakaumuthonginiuriawijiuriangutuigambagua	Metaphor	A handsome man is the one that knows how to woo a girl	I am the right person for the job.
Kethirauriendamwariumuthongi mwankawithirwenang'ombeciaguikiakwabamwari	*no* Metaphor	If you love a girl you must have cows to take to her home	I am qualified for the job. I will be ready to go an extra mile to please you. I will pay the price for the seat.
Tugatigwatukaritienyombatekatwi watchmen	Symbolism	We will be left looking after houses like watchmen	Vote for me so that we can have our very people in the offices. Voting for far persons will not help us.
Ntigirikinyaukamiakarangiitigaruka.	Metaphor	Even if you paint a donkey it cannot change	You cannot change bad leaders. Dot vote those leaders that have failed us in the past.
Muntuwetuwa x nagairenyamaiu	Symbolism	Our person from x shared that meat	This politician is fair to all. Voting for X will ensure we get the resources.
Ujuninyakwe kana mama dot com.	Metaphor	This is your mother, dot com	I am able to adapt to the changes. I can cope with the new generation.
Niatiganenatuogianchadi	Metaphor	Let him leave those peal unready bananas	The poor can have solutions for their problems without interference for the rich.

Aritumaucoorenaantubaubarinaiintotuntuniiintobeetagukaria	Metaphor	He makes friendship with those that have because they are going to take care of things.	We will unite with those that have large number of voters so that we can win. Those from constituencies with less number of voters should not be given opportunity to lead.
Kithomogiakwanitaakiriagiakibaki	Simile	My education is like that of president kibaki.	I am qualified for the job.
Kijanautinamaigoatiombagututagunira	Symbolism	A youth without teeth cannot chew for us	I have all it takes for this position. Do not inexperienced youth
Ukagurangariyakuinjeruutinenkeramuuntukurutubaubanginikurutu	Symbolism	When you buy your new car you not give to an inexperienced driver	Do not trust the youth in leadership. I have enough experience for the seat
Tutikunogakuthikirairirobiabiura	Metaphor	We are not tired of listening to the cries of frogs	We have good policies the rest are only making noise.

According to Wodak (2001) politics is a power struggle. As politician struggled in a competition to win the county seats in Meru County they had to show they were the best candidate for the seat.

The politicians therefore, positioned themselves as the best candidates by indicating that they had not betrayed the community in anyway. For instance, in table 3 a female politician asked, '*uronakathiakeemunithi. Ujunimwanauciaribwegaatinamunithi?*' (Have you ever seen a gazelle? This is a child born properly without any marks). A gazelle is an animal that has some marks in its forehead. Minithi in kimeru refers to marks of dirt on a person. These marks imply tints of corruption or immorality. In this case the politician positioned herself as one who had not been implicated in any scandal and as such should be voted for. She was therefore a clean woman in matters of corruption and morally upright. The politician was asserting that she was morally powerful with the intention of controlling the voters to vote for her by discriminating her opponents who had been irresponsible and had abused their power in office.

The politicians also used figurative language to position themselves as the defenders of the society. In table 3, a female politician in a speech said, '*Nkathayenuniyoiji.*' (Your voice is here.) In Meru community Nkatha refers to a woman who had a strong voice and was normally chosen to lead in singing during ceremonies. This woman was also hardworking and very generous. In this instance the politician positioned herself as the advocate of the voiceless in the society. She is delivering a message that she has the political will and power to address the pertinent issues bedevilling the community compared to her opponents. She controls the voters' minds by affirming that being respectable in the society she has the knowledge and will to resist power that discriminates upon the less privileged in the society.

Figures of speech were also used by politicians to appeal to the electorate to avoid being alienated from leadership position. In this instance the politician felt that without them, their tribe will not be adequately represented. For instance in table 3 a male politician said, 'We will be left looking after houses like watchmen.' (*Tugatigwatukaritienyombatekatwi watchmen*). Meru town was chosen to be as headquarter of Meru county and therefore he felt that if voters from North Imenti constituency where the headquarter was located did not vote for a politician from the constituency they would be left looking after the offices which are already in their locality just like watchmen. In this case, the politician felt that their tribe/clan has only one alternative, her, to be represented in the leadership of the region. It was an indication that the politician was luring for the powerful positions that command authority compared to watchmen that is subordinate. Therefore the politician was influencing the electorates to discriminate his opponents to avoid them taking political power since they would not bring any economic power to the voters since the gubernatorial seat was associated with a lot of financial resources that would be devolved to the counties by the national government.

Politicians also used figures of speech to position themselves as being the best to ensure fairness in the distribution of leadership in the region. In table 3 for example, one politician said, '*Muntuwetuwa x nagairenyamaiu*.' (Our person from x shared that meat.) This statement was made by politician who was a running mate of a gubernatorial seat. The speaker being from Imenti sub tribe and the contester coming from Igembe sub tribe is said to have been fair in balancing the power sharing. In addition, in the Meru community a person was chosen to share the meat after a successful hunting was normally fair to all participants in hunting. Meat symbolise the county's resources. In this instance, the politician positions himself as the best candidate to ensure fairness in the distribution of leadership in the leadership of the region. This politician influences the voters by indicating that he has economic power and political power to serve as the county governor.

Politicians also positioned themselves as the best candidates by using figures of speech to illustrate their academic prowess. For instance from table 3.4 one candidate said, '*KithomogiakwanitakiriagiaKibaki*.' (My education is like that of president Kibaki.) The speaker here is a professional in economics just like

the retired president Kibaki. This politician illustrated that he has academic/ knowledge power than his opponents and should therefore be trusted with political power to run the economy of the county efficiently and effectively.

Other politicians used figures of speech to position themselves as candidates with experience to run the leadership of the region. For instance, one candidate asked,

'*Ukagurangariyakuinjeruutinenkeramuuntukurutubau banginikurutu*.' (When you buy your new car you cannot give to a learner driver?' In this case the politician is trying to position himself as an experienced leader and appeals to the electorate not to vote for inexperienced candidates. So, new entrants in politics have no space since they lack experience to be trusted with political power.

From table 3 a politician said, '*tutikunogakuthikirairirobiabiura*' (we are not tired of listening to the cries of frogs). This statement is derived from the kimeru proverb that say frog's noise cannot prevent cows from taking water. In this FL the politician equals the speeches of his competitors to the noise made by frogs. The politician was abusing his power as a political candidate by insulting his opponents (frogs) and sees them as competitors of no consequence to his political ambition. He controls the voters not to pay any attention to his opponents by discriminating them and refusing voting for them to political power.

Figures of speech used to make shorter version of ideas

Politicians also used figures of speech to make shorter versions of their ideas. For instance, a politician said '*Niatiganenatuogianchadi*' (Leave alone those that peal immature bananas). In Meru community the poor were the ones that got green bananas that were not yet mature for cooking. This politician was associating with the poor majority in the village who were the voters. In this case the politician could have said, 'you should not vote for people who have migrated from the villages to the towns because they do not want to be associated with the poor villagers'. He was influencing the voters by discouraging them from voting for the rich politicians that were staying in towns and cities and would only appear during election period. He was also setting the poor against the rich in the society through divide and rule to his

advantage. Thus, by using this euphemism the politician shortened his idea. Although, one can argue that the politician wanted to use the euphemism to appear also polite to the electorate rather than appearing to be insulting the voters by calling them poor. The ideas presented in the figure of speech seem to be a shorter version of what he intended to convey.

Figures of Speech used by Politicians to Mislead or Deceive Voters

A political candidate for women representative seat said, '*Gitikiamwekurunitutumbo*,' (the women representative is intestines). The politician was belittling women representative seat by comparing it to intestines even though the truth is that the seat was as prestigious as that for Member of Parliament. She intended to show that women had been discriminated in political power and that the voters with their voting power should enjoy the women representative seat constitutionally given to women by voting for her.

A male politician said, 'Take care not to throw away your votes,' (*Menyerenibutikejegutakuuracienu*). Here the politician was trying to mislead the electorate by implying that voting for other candidates was the same as misusing their vote. He meant that he was the only politician capable of benefiting the society. Voting for the politician that would forget their issues would be like wasting their votes. It should however be noted that one could argue that in this instance the politician was trying to woo the voters to vote for him.

Aiming to deceive a politician said, '*tutikunogakuthikirairirobiabiura*,' (we are not tired of listening to the cries of the frogs.) It is misleading for the politician to refer to his opponents' speeches as the frogs' noise and should not be taken seriously because the voters have the democratic right to vote whoever they wanted. Similarly his opponents had a democratic right to carry out their campaign speeches and sell their political agenda to the voters in order to gain political power. This could also be seen as an insult to the opponent.

In order to mislead a politician said, '*igitarirituliendamutongeriautinarubwikiyarumwe*.' (this time we want a leader without a single white hair on his head.) It was misleading the voters that aged politicians cannot make good leaders. Although the politician was discouraging the voters to vote for his opponents who were aged, he also wanted the youth to be given an opportunity in politics and power since the aged had their fair chance so this was the time for the youth. He was also abusing the opponent by referring to them as old and incompetent of political power.

Figures of speech used to foster unity between politicians and the voters

The study found that another function of Figures of speech was to foster unity between politicians and the voters as indicated in Table 4:

Table 4: Figures of Speech used by Politicians to Create Unity between Politicians and the Voters

Figure of speech	Type of FL	Literal meaning	Metaphorical meaning
Kagitakatenemuntukendaoragwaageragwaiiganimuntuoo	Proverb	In the olden times so that person could be killed the uncle threw the first stone.	Since I am one of you, vote for me. I am not a foreigner. I belong to you.

Tukariemwanawetu	Metaphor	Let us take care of our child	I am your child and not a stranger.
Kirondakiamwenegitinunkaa	Proverb	Your wound cannot smell	Overlook the shortcomings of your own candidate.
Nkathayenuniyoiji	Metaphor	You voice is here	I will speak for you. Since I am your own.
Nabwiinyayakwanibabwi	Metaphor	You are my strength	With you I am powerful. Unity is strength.
Tukethirwaturinamujumbekinyampakanambiaairiairintureneikamenyamujumbeariau	Symbolism	If we have an MP here even cats and rats will notice	An MP from your area will bring changes noticeable by everybody. If you vote me as your MP you will realize many changes in your lives.
Mama niweumpanguragamethorinaniweumbejagainya	Metaphor	Mother is the one who wipes my tears and gives me heart	Because mothers are caring I am backing on their on them to vote for me. I am your child women, give me your votes.

The results from table 4 show that politicians employed figures of speech to create unity between the politician and the electorate as illustrated by one politician who said, "*Kagitakatenemuntukendaoragwaageragwaiiganimuntuoo*'. (In the olden times so that person could be killed the uncle threw the first stone). In the Meru community a person that had done evil was punished by stoning. To show the gravity of the evil done an uncle was normally called to throw the first stone and others would join in the stoning exercise. In this, case the politician was appealing to his sub-tribe to support him and discriminate his opponents by denying them their votes to his advantage. It also indicates that the politician was trying to appeal to the electorate to unite in voting for him. He was calling for solidarity starting from his family, close friends and even his tribe when voting for him in order to get political power. He is controlling the voters' minds that he is the best candidate to represent the in politics.

To further illustrate the use of figure of speech to create unity, a politician in table 4 said, '*Kirondakiamwenegitinunkaa*,' (your wound cannot smell). It is generally true that a person with would cannot smell it. He /she cannot also run away from it since it was part of him/her. In this case the politician was trying to persuade the electorate to overlook his shortcoming and to give him political power since he was their own candidate (from the same tribe/clan/village).

Another politician said, '*County injerunitang'ombeithinji*.' (A new county is like a slaughtered cow). In the Meru society when a bull was slaughtered in the village, everyone would go to take a piece home and none was denied share. In this instance, the politician was advocating for a county government in which the electorate would not be discriminated in county resources.

Another function of FL found from the study was that politicians also used figures of speech to persuade voters to support their parties as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Figures of Speech used by Politicians to seek Support for a Political Partyor an Individual

Figure of speech	Type of FL	Literal meaning	Metaphorical meaning
Gutiungiwinarubunguro. Unindinarubungurorwakuruguraobici	Symbolism	No one else has the key. I have the key for opening the office.	Only a candidate in KNC party can represent you well
Bangibarina bus, bus ninkurukagaobici?	Symbolism	Others are in the bus, can the bus enter in the office?	Candidates in APK party cannot make good leaders.
Rwanorwakwanithiiri kana njaaraijiriikethanie	Symbolism	My sign is peace or two hands greeting.	Vote for me in the UDF (United Democratic Forum)

The results in table 5 show that politicians used the party symbols to persuade the electorate to support their parties. For instance, one candidate said, 'No one else has the key. I have the key for opening the office,' (*gutiungiwinarubunguro. Unindinarubungurorwakuruguraobici*). A key was the symbol of the Kenya Congress Party. A key is significant since the person with it has the ability to access the house. Those without it cannot enter the house since they are locked outside. Those with the key are politically powerful and can enjoy the benefits that come with politics especially after winning the party elections.

From table 5 another politician said, 'my sign is peace or two hands in greetings'. (*rwanorwakwanithiirikaana kana njaraijiriikethenie*). Traditionally greetings were a symbol of peace. Two hands in greetings was symbol of United Democratic Forum. The party symbol in this case was also used to send a message that unity is strength. The politician controls the voters that they should unite and create peace to achieve political authority.

Figures of Speech to express Emotions

Lastly, the study established that politicians used figures of speech to express their emotions as one of the function of FL. According to Fainsilber and Ortony (1987) figurative language was used to express intense emotional feelings. Politicians also used figures of speech to express their emotions. For instance in one politician said '*gankiretontundombagutemantaame.*' (*Let* me keep quiet because I might cause war.)In this proverb the politician had intense feeling of hatred towards the people that had denied him votes previously and therefore opted to keep quiet because if he continued to speak his speech would create conflict among the people. He sensed that his emotion of hate could deny him power.

Another politician used figure of speech to show desperation by saying, 'this is the time to get or get' (*igitariambone kana mbone*). In Meru community the hyena is believed to encourage itself as it scavenged. It meant that this was the time for not losing at all cost. In this figure of speech the politician was emphasising that it was a must to win the election at all cost. It showed that the politician was desperate to win the

election. This FL was used to express that politics is about winning power and be able to control others once in powerful political positions.

Lastly a politician used figure of speech to express hatred towards the opponents when he said, *'niatiatuumbagwitikiriaantubeenang'ombeinkaibaturit hiria.'* (we cannot allow people with few cows to herd for us.) The speaker in this case was unhappy that the opponents who had fewer votes wanted the governor's seat. The context of this FL was that his opponents also had chosen a deputy from Igembe region and that meant the leadership of the county would go to Nyambene. It was the duty of the voter not to allow the leadership and power of the county from being taken away from them by voting for the speaker.

Figure 1: provides a summary of how figures of speech were used by politicians
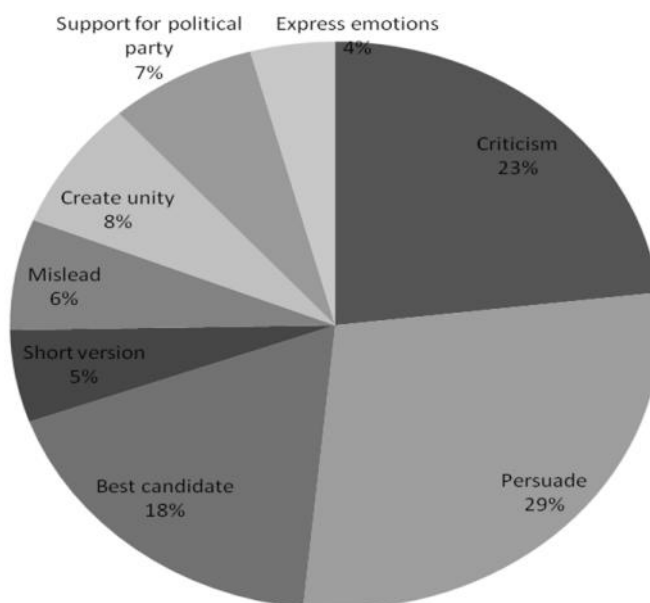

Figure 1: A summary of functions of figures of speech

Figure 1 show that figures of speech was mainly used by politicians to persuade (29%) voters to vote for them. The results also show that 23% of the politicians used figures of speech to criticise their opponents. This implies that the main goal in politics is persuasion of voters to vote for a politician and also to make their opponents look bad in eyes of the voters in order to discourage voting their opponents.

Conclusion

Based on the study findings it can be concluded that metaphors and symbolism are the most used figures of speech by politicians in their goal of persuasion. FL was used by politicians to assert power and dominate, resist their opponents, control the minds of the voters to vote in their favour, discriminate and create inequality in the society.

Secondly, figurative language was used to intimidate other opponents in the pursuit of persuading the voters. FL was also used to show tribal inclination in party politics and to encourage the voters to vote along tribal lines. Kenyan politics are ethnically dominated.

The study also concluded that FL was used by politicians to insult the opponents by referring to them as old, hyenas, toothless, beasts, frogs and donkeys.

Thirdly, figures of speech were used to encourage voters to vote for politicians that will work with integrity and transparency for the common good of the society. They were also used to call for loyalty and solidarity in voting. As evident in figures of speech, the youth had been marginalised in leadership positions so they demanded for a space in the national politics.

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