

INTERPRETATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS OF POLITICAL DISCOURSE: THE KENYAN EXPERIENCE

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of my late mother: **Magaret Odundo** who was the wind beneath my wings. My father: **Antony Oneya** whose confidence in me urged me forward. My brothers and sisters: **Carol, Nick, June, Eugene, Molly and Miller** whose love and support saw me through all odds of life. And to **Storme** who made an incredible difference in my life.

ABSTRACT

Politicians have a lot of influence on the society and many of their supporters believe in what they say. Thus, they use the communicative value of language to effectively convey their messages. The ways in which the stylistic features in political discourse constitute ambiguities that lead to multiple interpretations have not been described. These multiple interpretations may have social implications that could enhance or destroy social and political relations. The objectives of the study were to identify and describe the features in political discourse that lead to multiple interpretations. The study sought to find out the social processes that underlie the production and interpretation of politician's utterances and to establish their social implications. The study was guided by the Critical Discourse Analysis theory (CDA), which provided a framework for the analysis of the social processes that underlay utterances made by politicians. The study also borrowed some concepts of meaning from the Gricean pragmatics theory. Twenty utterances made by politicians were purposively selected from utterances made in the electronic media between January and April 2005. Then, 56 respondents to react to the utterances were selected from various categories of members of the public from Nairobi. The utterances and the respondents' reactions constituted the data, which was collected by use of tape recorders and interviews. The data collected was transcribed, translated, analyzed and interpreted using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

The study established that the stylistic features in political discourse had ambiguities that led to numerous interpretations. The utterances were also found to perform social actions such as gender discrimination and reveal struggles over power. The findings of the study will contribute to the field of Applied Linguistics. They illustrate how the cooperative principles of Gricean Pragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis principles can be used in the interpretation of political discourse. The study may benefit politicians in Kenya and civic educators because it reveals the social and political implications of politicians' utterances. Hopefully, the general members of the public of Kenya will benefit by understanding the social processes that underlie the production and interpretation of political discourse, hence avoid 'misinterpretation'.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Context: Relevant aspects of physical and social setting of an utterance that contribute to interpretation of what is said. In this study, Wodak's (1996) notion of context, which includes discourse, interlocutors, situation, institution and society is used.

Implicature: Hint, suggestion that conveys some meaning indirectly by means of language. Social implications include suggestions that convey messages regarding social and political issues that go beyond what is said and that are based on social processes.

Interpretations: The meanings assigned to a particular utterance.

Politics: A social activity that involves the exercise of power or authority in collective decision making and allocation of resources. The study was concerned with the national level of politics that focused on the government and activities of major political parties.

Political discourse: Record of verbal communication made by a politician, in other words, utterances made by politicians.

Political party: A group of officials who link up with a sizeable group of citizens to form an organization with the aim of attaining or maintaining power.

Speaker: One who produces an utterance.

Abbreviations

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

CRP: Constitutional Review Process

GP: Gricean Pragmatics

KANU: Kenya African National Union

LDP: Liberal Democratic Party

NAK: National Alliance of Kenya

NARC: National Rainbow Coalition

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

MP: Member of Parliament

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The production and interpretation of messages depends on the availability of a medium of communication. Successful communication involves the recipient's achievement of an interpretation of the speaker's intention. Nevertheless, what the recipient knows or assumes may lead to an interpretation that diverges from what was intended by its producer. More recent work in discourse analysis has shown that utterances do not simply mean one thing; there is a sense in which utterances are ambivalent and are interpreted by participants according to hypotheses and working models developed in the course of interaction (Mills 1997). This study investigated how politicians in Kenya speak indirectly by using metaphors and other stylistic devices.

From January 2002, when the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government took over power from the Kenya African National Union (KANU), Kenya has been undergoing major changes in governance. New policies have been formulated, new politicians have come to the scene, and struggles over power have been imminent. In order to gain support from the public, politicians make promises, deride and criticise their counterparts. This could probably explain why politicians in Kenya are perpetually engaged in a battle of words.

Kenya is one of the fast developing countries in East Africa. The country has eight provinces which are further divided into districts for administrative purposes. Political boundaries are marked by constituencies for MPs, municipalities for mayors and wards for councillors. The population of Kenya stands at an estimated 30million as per the 1999 census. There are 42 ethnic groups in Kenya, the largest being the Kikuyu, Luhyas and Luos. Other large tribes include the Kambas, Kalenjins, Gusiis, Mijikendas, Maasais, Pokots among others. Although each group has its roots in a specific part of the country, people who speak different languages are currently distributed all over the country. The capital city of Kenya is Nairobi.

Kenya attained its independence in 1963 and the late President Jomo Kenyatta of the Kenya African National Union party (KANU) became its first president. In 1978, Daniel Arap Moi also from KANU took over the presidency following Kenyatta's death. Politics changed rapidly in the 1980s and new political divisions emerged within KANU. A number of opposition parties were formed but their force was not felt until the repeal of section 2(A) of the Kenyan constitution that allowed for multiparty democracy. Opposition leaders and members of the public expressed openly their dissatisfaction with President's Moi's government and clamoured for a new constitution that would cut down his presidential powers. This saw the introduction of the constitutional review process (CRP) in 2000 and the then President Daniel Moi set up the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC).

Towards the 2002 general elections, some opposition parties namely the Democratic Party (DP) led by Emilio Kibaki, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) led by Charity Ngilu, and the Forum for Democracy (FORD Kenya) led by Kijana Wamalwa realised that without some kind of united front it would be impossible to oust KANU. They therefore came together and formed an alliance which they called the National Alliance of Kenya (NAK). Soon after, Raila Odinga, then a minister in Moi's government led a number of politicians out of KANU to form the Liberal Democratic Party, LDP. After much consultation, LDP joined hands with NAK to form the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). This move gave the opposition great chances of winning as the coalition brought together three of the largest ethnic groups in Kenya. This is because leaders of the parties received a lot of support from the ethnic groups they came from. LDP was generally supported by Luos, FORD Kenya by Luhyas and DP by Kikuyus. The problem with this strategy however, was that ethnicity was politicised to the extent that one belonged to a party not because of its ideals but because the leader was from his or her ethnic group. Thus, it was expected that all Luos would rally behind Raila while all Kikuyus would follow where Kibaki led and so on. These ethnic affiliations are evident in political discourse.

However, a coalition meant that the leaders of the respective parties had to give up their quest for presidency because only one presidential candidate was to be fielded by NARC. The coalition then met and drew a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that would ensure equal power sharing for all the affiliate parties of NARC. NARC won the 2002 general election and Emilio

Kibaki became Kenya's third president. KANU was declared the official opposition led by Moi's proposed successor Uhuru Kenyatta, son of the late Mzee Jomo Kenyatta.

Among the promises made by NARC during campaigns were provision of free primary education, fight against corruption, reduction of cabinet and government expenditure and delivery of a new constitution within 100 days. The constitution later became contentious because it is only after adopting it that the positions suggested in the MOU could exist. For instance, there was no provision for a Prime Minister in the current constitution. Moreover, there was widespread feeling that when NARC got to power, the members of the party from which the president came no longer saw the need to reduce presidential powers in the new constitution. This did not go down well with others especially the LDP whose leader Raila had been proposed for the position of Prime Minister. These were among the major issues that led to a deadlock in the Constitutional Review Process because every leader wanted to protect his or her own interest. Utterances made by politicians signalled the underlying power struggles.

In his inaugural speech, President Kibaki encouraged Kenyans to work hard and sacrifice in order to achieve development. On the contrary, there have been complains that politicians don't work. Instead, they use their positions to acquire property and other material possessions. While talk of corruption among top politicians in government has been increasing, the government seems to have made half-hearted efforts to root it out. Reports on corruption scandals for instance, have been left pending for too long yet it is known that the investigations have been completed. In July 2004, a British High Commissioner to Kenya, accused politicians of misusing donor aid funds. Despite the government's denial of these allegations, the World Bank suspended donor aid to Kenya and this had negative economic repercussions on the country. Apparently, the public had hoped that elimination of corruption would mean a better economy and a country with equal and more opportunities for development. The government's entertainment of corruption therefore brought a lot of disillusionment among citizens.

The contribution of the members of public to politics in Kenya cannot be taken for granted. The data in this study shows that members of public judge politicians from the utterances they make. While some members of the public are happy with the government's efforts, a large number are

disillusioned and disappointed with politicians and the government in many sectors and are not sure they would vote for them a second time. Lately, the strength of the voice of the public has been seen to limit abuse of power by some politicians. It is worth noting that public outrage can bring down politicians or even a government. For example, in the historical aspect of context in this study, it was noted that multipartyism in the late 80s was not state driven. Some politicians with support of the public forced the government to repeal section 2(A) to make multipartyism operational. It is with this background in mind that the research set to analyse the relationship between what politicians say and the social implications the public gets from these utterances.

Politicians claim that they have been misquoted even when a record of what they said exists. However, the problem is not always one of quotation but rather one of interpretation. This is because when receivers of a message follow different inferential paths, they come up with various interpretations. What is called a 'misinterpretation' is just one among the many possible interpretations derived pragmatically from the utterance.

The ways in which politicians use language display power struggles and other social relations. For instance, the sharp differences in Kenya's ruling coalition (NARC), as captured on a local television station are a sign of a deeply troubling situation. Members of Parliament are captured on camera spewing venom at each other. Mundia (2004) writes that the moment members of Parliament, who are also government ministers openly clash in public, a nation either grinds to a halt or gives way to an opposition in waiting which in the Kenya's case is in an equal mess (Daily Nation April 2, 2004). The picture portrayed is one of power hungry individuals who will stop at nothing to achieve their ends. Mwangi (2004) accuses politicians of making utterances that fuel tension and animosity between communities in Narok district in Kenya's Rift valley province, leading to land clashes which left many residents dead. This study attempts to establish the social and political relations revealed in political discourse. The social processes that contributed to establishment of social implications of the utterances depended on the interpreter's knowledge of Kenya's social and political background.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The ways in which stylistic features used in politicians' language constitute ambiguities that lead to multiple interpretations have not been described. The utterances and the multiple interpretations may have implications that reveal social and political relations. This study investigates the stylistic features in political discourse that may lead to 'misinterpretation', and describes the social processes under which the utterances are produced and interpreted.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study aimed at analysing and describing the language used by politicians in the public domain. This was guided by the following objectives:

1. To identify the stylistic features of the language used by Kenyan politicians in the media and to describe the different interpretations of these utterances.
2. To find out the social processes under which the utterances are produced and interpreted.
3. To establish the social implications of politicians' utterances to the public.

1.4 Hypotheses of the Study

1. Kenyan politicians use certain stylistic features that constitute ambiguities, which lead to multiple interpretations of their utterances.
2. There are social processes under which utterances are produced and interpreted.
3. Politicians' utterances have certain social implications to the public.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study contribute to the field of Applied Linguistics, as they illustrate how the Cooperative Principle and the Critical Discourse Analysis principles can be used in the interpretation of political discourse. The study demonstrates how utterances are usually prompted by certain socio-cultural or historical circumstances. Thus, to try and arrive at the intended meaning, the receiver of the politician's message must take some social and historical background information into consideration. The findings are also of importance to political and social scientists, as they aid in understanding the social processes that contribute to the

production and interpretation of politicians' utterances. The features used in these utterances were found to convey messages of power struggles, discrimination and other socio-political relations. The findings of the study will benefit politicians by making them aware that the receivers of their messages may choose to select those features in their language that will lead to an inference that best suits their own interests. The politicians in Kenya will also be informed about the social implications an utterance may have. Finally, the findings of this study will benefit members of the general public of Kenya because they will understand the processes that contribute to the production and interpretation of politicians' utterances.

1.6 Scope

The study was confined to the utterances made by Kenyan politicians who are Members of Parliament, reported in the electronic media. Only those utterances addressing salient issues specified by the researcher were used in the study. Those issues included succession; party propaganda; the constitutional review process; corruption; and developing issues. The electronic media used as a source of utterances was television. The language studied was drawn from politicians' utterances. The features of the language studied included lexicon and pragmatic aspects of interpretation such as context, and implicatures, which revealed the use of stylistic features like euphemism, pretentious diction, figurative language, circumlocution, evasion and sarcasm. The study restricted itself to investigating only the social and political implications of political discourse.

1.7 Limitations

The research faced various limitations. Firstly, it was not given that at any particular time the politician would talk about the issues specified by the researcher. This meant recording long stretches of discourse and later selecting utterances. Secondly, it was difficult to get respondents from different places to come together to view, listen and react to the taped utterances. The researcher divided the respondents in smaller groups and had to meet each group twice in order to get enough time for the participants to respond to all the utterances. Thirdly, politicians did not always speak in English and the researcher had to translate the utterances from Swahili or other languages. The researcher however, targeted respondents who understood Swahili so that they could translate for themselves.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, various studies carried out on pragmatics and the role of context in interpretation are reviewed. The pragmatic approach to the study of language gives context a unique central role. Grice's (1957) distinction between conventional and conversational implicatures is compared to Austin's (1962), Searle's (1969), Leech's (1983) and Thomas' (1995) proposition that working out meanings involves two main levels: the first level is the abstract meaning of the words, and the second is dependent on context. Studies on how discourse can be used to create and explain existing political and social relations are also reviewed. Critical analysis of political discourse reveals a number of social implications. Gramsci (1971), Foucault (1980) and Fairclough and Wodak (1997) see discourse as a form of social action that can be used to control, discriminate or exploit. The theoretical framework adopted by the study from the Critical Discourse Analysis and Gricean Pragmatic theory, is included in the last part of this chapter.

2.2 Studies on Pragmatics and Interpretation

Grice (1957) distinguishes conventional implicature that is conveyed regardless of context, from conversational implicature, which is dependent on the context of the utterance. Grice was particularly interested in how conversational implicatures were created when speakers blatantly failed to observe a maxim. This study seeks to establish whether politicians deliberately fail to observe a maxim by flouting, violating, infringing, suspending or opting out in order to generate implicatures.

Example 1:

The following was part of a speech made by the king of Matabeleland to Queen Victoria:

'I am but the louse on the edge of Your Majesty's blanket.'

(Thomas 1995:89)

The speaker here generates an implicature by flouting the maxim of manner (using a figure of speech). He implies that he is nothing compared to the Queen. However, it is also possible that the King could be implying that:

- i) *The Queen's bedding was verminous.*
- ii) *The Queen's personal hygiene was questionable.*

But the inclusion of context at the third level of Grice's framework for inference of implicatures allows the hearer to determine which of the possible interpretations were intended and cancels the last two implicatures. The study shows how when politicians realise that their utterances have been 'misinterpreted', they usually re-contextualize them in a way that will cancel the unintended implicatures.

Austin (1962) believed that there was more to language than the meaning of its words and phrases. He was convinced that we do not just use language to say things but to do things (perform actions). Austin (ibid) states that all utterances perform speech acts that consist of: a locutionary act (the utterance); an illocutionary act (the communicative force of an utterance e.g. persuade, request); and the perlocutionary act (the effect of the utterance on the hearer (judged from the hearer's reaction to the utterance)). In the present study, the utterances correspond to Austin's locutionary act. However, the possible illocutionary forces of the utterances are derived from Grice's conversational implicatures. The social implications of the utterances made by politicians were established through the reactions of the respondents to the utterance. Critical Discourse Analysis was used in this study because it provided a social dimension to the reactions that Austin's perlocutionary act may not cover.

Searle (1969) furthered Austin's theory of speech acts. His account of how to calculate indirect speech act is similar to Grice's method of calculating implicatures adopted in this study. However Searle's rule governed approach to the description of speech acts tries to handle pragmatics in a manner appropriate to grammar. This kind of approach was not adequate for this study because while grammar is governed by rules, pragmatics is constrained by principles such as the ones postulated by Grice (cf Thomas 1995).

Leech (1983) defines pragmatics as the study of meaning in relation to speech situations. He specifies the aspects of speech situations as: Addressers or addressees, context of an utterance, goal of an utterance, the utterance as a form of act (illocutionary act) and the utterance as a product of a verbal act (illocutionary force) (Leech 1983: 13). This study adopts a similar concept for interpretation from Wodak's (1996) concept of context (see section 2.5). In his work, Leech distinguishes sense (meaning as semantically determined) from force (meaning as pragmatically and semantically determined). The sense includes what Austin calls the locutionary act. Force, he claims, includes sense and is derived from it, his version of Austin's illocutionary act. He exemplifies this with the following statement:

I'll pay you back tomorrow.

(Leech 1983:15)

- (a) This statement semantically expresses a proposition describing a particular future act by the speaker, the locution in Austin's terms.
- (b) But "force" is arrived at by means of motivated principles such as Grice's CP (opcit). That the speaker will make sure that the action 'pay' is carried out (Quality) and Relation – that the statement has some relevance to the present speech situation.

Thus if one knows the sense of the utterance, the conversational principles that apply to it, and the contexts able to employ informal commonsense reasoning, then they will conclude that the statement is intended as a "promise". Force in this study is represented by implicatures, which are probable. The findings of the study indicate that we cannot be ultimately certain of what a politician speaker means by an utterance. The observable conditions, the utterance and the context, are determinants of what they mean by the utterance. It is the task of the audience to construct the most likely interpretation.

2.3 Context and Interpretation

In order to understand utterances in a relevant fashion, parties engaged in conversation do not approach a strip of talk as an isolated object but instead interpret whatever is being said by tying it to the context within which it occurs. For example, a bit of talk cannot be recognised as an answer in isolation. It must be seen as responsive to a particular type of prior action e.g. a

question – A key aspect of context was thus the sequence of talk within which a particular utterance is lodged (Duranti and Goodwin 1992). Omission of what is claimed to be appropriate context is treated as having distorted the sense of what has been “taken out of context”. Hymes (1962) comes up with a SPEAKING grid of components that provide a way to organise context:

- S - Setting (place and time) special temporal features.
- P - Participants speaker, listener, roles.
- E - Ends-purpose and goals expected outcomes of exchange.
- A- Act message form and context defined in terms of their illocutionary force.
- K- Key –tone manner of interaction
- I - Instrumentalities –channel e.g. verbal
- N- Norms for interaction and interpretation; specific properties attached to speaking.
- G- Genre – textual category e.g. poems.

(Hymes 1962 quoted in Schiffrin 1988: 153)

Hymes (ibid) views the role of context in interpretation as on the one hand, limiting the range of possible interpretations and on the other, as supporting the intended interpretation. Wodak (1996) also explains the role that context plays in discovering the intentions underlying a specific utterance in her CDA theory. This study bases its contextual analysis on Wodak’s five levels of context namely, discourse, interlocutors, situation, institution and society. These levels do not differ much from Hymes’ but they have a social dimension that is important for the present study.

Brown and Yule (1983) emphasise that the discourse analyst has to take into account the context in which a piece of discourse occurs. They use terms such as reference, presupposition, implicature and inference to describe the relationship between discourse participants and elements in discourse. Like Schiffrin (1988), they emphasise the importance of the context of both knowledge and situation in interpretation. Brown and Yule (ibid) come up with the principles of local interpretation and analogy. The local interpretation instructs the hearer not to construct a context any larger than he or she needs to arrive at an interpretation. On the other hand, an individual’s experience of past events will equip him or her with expectations of what are likely to be relevant aspects of context. The principal of analogy assumes that all aspects of context will remain as they were before, unless there is a notice that some aspect has changed.

The expectations from past experiences are another version of relevance according to Grice's cooperative principles and the historical aspect of context used in this study.

Thomas (1995) defines pragmatics as meaning in context. According to her, interpretation involves moving between three levels of meaning. The first level is abstract meaning concerned with what a word, phrase or sentence means. The second is the contextual or utterance meaning, which focuses on the process of interpretation from the hearer's point of view and thirdly, the force of the utterance following recognition of speakers' communicative intent. Thomas (ibid) illustrates the importance of context using the examples below:

Example 2

Members of staff from several departments were gathering for a meeting when one greeting someone he had not seen for a long time said:

"How are things, Scott!?"

(Thomas 1995:22-23)

The words in the statement above could not have been interpreted as: an invitation to dinner; or a request to feed the gold fish: or as a marriage proposal. The meaning potential of the utterance is not unlimited because of the context. In the particular context of an examination meeting, it would not have been reasonable for Scott to interpret the utterance as a request to say more about his private life (which would be appropriate in a counselling session). The hearer could choose to take it as a pure greeting, a question on how he liked his new job, an expression of anxiety about a particular student. The present study emphasises the importance of context in finding plausible interpretations to politicians' utterances. Politicians may flout maxims like the speaker above did by being obscure, but other hearers may choose to interpret them literally in the absence of relevant contextual evidence. Wodak's (1996) notion of context puts together many aspects of context to provide an interdisciplinary procedure for analysing social processes. She categorizes context into five concentric circles: the utterance, the interlocutors, the situation, the institution and the society in which the society is found. This study found that interaction of all these levels of Wodak's concepts of context contributed to giving plausible interpretations of political discourse.

2.4 Political Discourse and Social Implications

Fairclough (1992) observes that many new social problems arise which have to be analysed and Critical Discourse Analysis, hereafter CDA, offers a program for research on such socially relevant phenomena. He defines CDA as:

An analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relations of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relationships and processes to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power, and to explore how the capacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a way of securing power and hegemony.

(Fairclough 1992:135)

According to Fairclough and Wodak (1997), CDA seeks to uncover the obscure relationship between power and discourse. Power is exercised not coercively but through consent in a subtle way; what Gramsci (1971) calls hegemony. The most effective use of power is seen to occur when those with power are able to get those who have less power to interpret the world from the formers' point of view. Fairclough and Wodak (1997) distinguish three broad domains of social life that may be discursively constituted. These are:

- (i) Representations of the world,
- (ii) Relations between people
- (iii) People's social and personal identities.

The present study focuses on the numerous interpretations of political discourse and uses the principles of CDA to analyse social and political relations manifested in the language used by politicians. Critical Discourse Analysts propose the following eight principles that explain how social reality is created through discourse:

1. CDA address social problems
This principle focuses on the linguistic character of social and cultural processes such as racism, discrimination (gender)
2. Power relations are discursive.
CDA illustrates how power relations are exercised and negotiated in discourse.

3. Discourse constitutes society and culture. Every instance of language use makes its own small contribution to transforming society and culture.
4. Discourse does ideological work.
Ideologies are particular ways of representing and constructing society, which reproduce unequal power relations, dominance and exploitation. Ideologies are often false or ungrounded constructions of society e.g. gender ideologies that present women as less emotionally stable than men (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). To determine whether a particular type of discursive event does ideological work, it is not enough to analyse the texts, one needs to consider how texts are interpreted and received, and what social effects they have.
5. Discourse is historical.
Discourse is not produced without context, and cannot be understood without taking context into consideration (Duranti and Goodwin 1992). Utterances are only meaningful if we consider their use in a specific situation, if we understand the underlying rules, if we recognise the embedding in a certain culture and ideology, and most importantly, if we know what the discourse relates to in the past (Fairclough 1992:18).
6. The link between text and society is mediated.
CDA links text to society indirectly.
7. Discursive analysis is interpretative and explanatory.
Discourse can be interpreted in varying ways due to the audience and the amount of context information available. Critical reading requires a thorough investigation of context. Fairclough and Wodak (ibid) attest that interpretations are never finished or authoritative. They are dynamic and open to new texts and new information
8. Discourse is a form of social action and can be used to uncover power relations.
(Van Dijk 1993:249-283)

This study established that CDA addresses social problems. The critical analysis of politicians' utterances revealed implications of gender discrimination, ethnicity and personal identities. CDA uncovered power relations and helped to establish how the language used by politicians displayed struggles over power in politics. The study found that political and economic power

can be exercised or negotiated through discourse. The fifth principle describes discourse as historical and supports the role of historical context in interpretation of political discourse. In the present study, the historical background of Kenya helped respondents to relate what was said to the society thus demanding a thorough analysis of context. The seventh principle, which describes discourse as interpretive and explanatory justifies the existence of more than one interpretation in political discourse. The conclusion that political discourse was a form of social action was based on the eighth principle, which guided the study in establishing how what politicians say helped to shape political reality.

In their paper on "Discourse, Politics and Identity", Wodak and Benke (1998) show that discourse is a reflection of some political state of affairs and an important force which can foster and impair particular social and political changes. They analysed the discourse of Austrian national identity and the changes in its discursive configuration over a period of 40 years. Focusing on neutrality, they believed that it was the already discursively peripheral position of neutrality in the discourse of Austrian national identity that made it possible for Austria to join the European Union. This study established that political discourse reflected some political state of affairs e.g. the corruption scandals involving politicians that led to suspension of donor aid to Kenya in July 2004.

Yieke (2002) carried out a study to find out how discourse practices ensure that women are discriminated against at the workplace. Yieke (ibid) used CDA as an interpretive and theoretical framework to address issues of power, ideology, gender and discourse. The study revealed that both gender and power had an influence on the interaction patterns of men and women. Male styles of speaking were found to be significantly different from female styles. These differences were subtle features that acted as further forces to marginalize or relegate women to the rear. The findings of the present study illustrate how some utterances made by politicians display gender discrimination where women are portrayed as the weaker sex, hence not qualified to occupy some offices or to be leaders.

Foucault (1980) studied the linkage between power and knowledge and viewed discourse as a system of representation. He was concerned with the production of knowledge and meaning

through discourse. According to him, things meant something and were true only within a specific historical context. Foucault saw power as exercised through a net like organisation and claimed that power relations permeate all levels of social existence from law, politics, to the economy. The present study emphasises the importance of historical context in interpreting political discourse. The study revealed that power relations are manifested in the utterances made by politicians. Similarly, the study found that power relations were present at various levels of social existence especially politics and economy.

Ross (1975) studied the political behaviour of Nairobi residents in the postindependence period. He discussed the social forces that lead to political variation in political beliefs and behaviours in the city. One of Ross' assumptions was that there was a social basis for political involvement and attitudes towards politicians and the government. In his work, ethnicity was found to be among the main social determinants of political behaviour. Similarly, the present study revealed that ethnicity was a common implication in political discourse. The correspondence in these results can be used to conclude that both politicians and the public view politics from an ethnic perspective rather than a national one.

Heywood (1994) suggests that sloppiness in the use of language helps to protect ignorance and preserve misunderstanding. Nevertheless, he warns against using language that will hinder communication. He sets out to examine the use of some terms and concepts used in political analysis to clarify their meanings. Among the terms he discusses that are used in this study include politics, power, government and society. The definitions given by Heywood covered a wide range of meanings that suited the purposes of the study.

2.5 Studies on Political Discourse in Kenya

Oduor (2003) attempts a socio political analysis of language use in Kenya's politics. According to Oduor, language is a powerful weapon that can be manipulated by a certain group to show its satisfaction with another group or advance certain leadership styles with the intent of amassing support. Oduor (ibid) illustrates how politicians in an effort to justify their positions leave their messages hanging and the listener directionless. He describes the political terms that came into

use after the repeal of Section 2(A) of the constitution of Kenya which allowed for multi-party democracy. For instance,

Vyama vingi (multi-party) - *Ukabila* (ethnicity)

(Oduor 2003:5)

The example above indicates that many Kenyans understood that political parties were formed along ethnic lines and thought they had no other choice. Oduor's study shows that the interpretations attached to such political terms are varied and so restricted in meaning, and are used in such a way to keep those who don't understand this operation away from making a choice between multi-partyism and any other system. The present study however, sets out to establish how differently members of the public interpret the politicians' messages. The interpretations were viewed purely from the audience's point of view to find out how political discourse can mean far more than the politician may have intended.

Onyango (2003) carried out research on the motions concerning the national language (Swahili) in the Parliament of Kenya. In the parliamentary debates, it was observed that members of parliament who supported the use of Swahili used terms such as *imperial or colonial language* to refer to the English language. Nevertheless, English was found to be overwhelmingly used in debates in parliament and Swahili was used by a minority group of politicians. Onyango's study, however, differs from the present study because he focuses on the comparison between the use of Swahili and English codes by members of parliament. This study does not focus on the code used but on the style of expression in the code used by the members of parliament: whether in English, Swahili or any other language.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. The theory provides a framework for analysing context during interpretation of discourse. However, the study borrows the framework for working out conversational implicatures from Grice's (1957) theory of Gricean Pragmatics (GP). Fairclough and Wodak (1997) propose a Critical Discourse Analysis approach (CDA) to the description of the social processes that give rise to the production of a text, and of the social processes within which individuals create

meanings in their interaction with texts. The premises for CDA that make it relevant to the present study are:

- Interaction always involves power and ideologies
- Discourse is always historically situated
- Each communicative event allows numerous interpretations

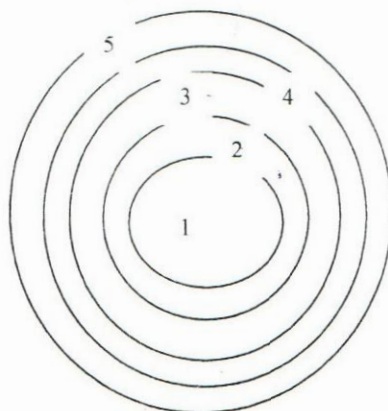
(Wodak and Ludwig, 1999:12-13)

The first premises illustrate that where there is interaction, relations of some sort exist –e.g. power relations. Secondly, discourse is seen to be connected with other communicative events which are happening at the same time or which happened before. It also follows that there can be various interpretations of a communicative event depending on the audience's perceived context and levels of information. This study focuses on social and political implications that can be uncovered in discourse as politics always involves power.

Wodak (1996) visualises context in form of concentric circles:

1. The smallest circle is the discourse unit itself, and this forms the microanalysis of the text.
2. The next circle consists of the speakers and audience: the interlocutors with their various personality features and social roles.
3. The third level involves the setting: the location in time and space and the description of the situation.
4. The fourth circle signifies the institutions in which the event took place.
5. The fifth circle could naturally expand to the society in which the institution is integrated: its function in society and its history.

(Wodak 1996:21)



The concentric circles suggested by Wodak are similar to those provided in Hymes (1962) SPEAKING grid. The present study emphasises the integration of all these levels of context for an analysis of discourse as a social practice. The principles of Critical Discourse Analysis discussed in section 2.3 explain how social implications can be established through discourse.

Grice (1957) proposes a co-operative principle, hereafter (CP), to explain how speaker meaning arises. The CP states:

Make your conversational contribution such as is required at the stage at which it occurs, by the accepted purpose or direction of the talk exchange in which you are engaged.

(Grice 1957:46)

This CP consist of 4 maxims

- Quantity: 1. Make your contribution as informative as is required (for the current purpose of the exchange).
2. Do not be more informative than is required
- Quality : Try to make your contribution one that is true.
1. Do not say what you believe to be false
2. Do not say that for which you lack evidence.
- Relation: Be relevant.
- Manner: Be perspicuous
1. Avoid obscurity of expression and ambiguity.
2. Be brief and orderly.

(Grice 1957:46)

The CP and its maxims are used in this study as a basis for the inference of implicatures - interpretations of speaker's communicative intent that go beyond the semantic meanings of what they say. One important feature of Grice's pragmatics that makes it useful to the present study is that although one part of interpretation of speaker meaning rests on the text, another important part rests on the CP and the other contexts that figure in the inference of implicatures. According to Grice, implicatures can be created through violation or flouting of maxims. The example

below, from Thomas (1995) illustrates how the study employs the concepts derived from the two theories in the interpretation of an utterance:

Throughout July 1994, a minor controversy was rumbling on in the British House of Commons. For five or six years, investors (known as 'Names') in the huge company of insurance underwriters, Lloyd's of London, had incurred massive losses and many had gone bankrupt. A number of Conservative MPs are Lloyd's named and if MPs are declared bankrupt they must resign their seat. Peter Hain (a member of the opposition Labour Party) was conducting a one-man campaign to show that these MPs had been moved (with or without their knowledge) from the most loss-making syndicates, to avoid being declared bankrupt, having to resign their seats and (Since there had been a spate of by-elections around this time and the Conservatives had lost every one) possibly precipitating a General Election. In the House of Commons Peter Hain said:

'Lord Wakeham, the Leader of the House of Lords, and other leading Conservatives in 1988 were taken off selected Lloyd's syndicates which later suffered three years of catastrophic losses.'

(Thomas 1995:60)

Thomas chooses this example because Peter Hain's speech was widely reported, and proclaims that all the political commentators agreed that what Hain had implied was that knowledgeable insiders at Lloyd's had improperly tipped off Conservative sympathizers so that Conservative MPs could switch (or be switched) to different syndicates.

Some of the interpretations following Peter Hain's speech were as follows:

- *The MP was trying to expose dubious and possible illegal practice.*
- *The MP was trying to cause trouble for the Government.*
- *The MP was trying to draw attention to himself.*
- *Conservative MPs cannot be trusted in financial matters.*

Although everyone understood what Hain was implying, different listeners inferred a variety of different things, depending on their political persuasion and background knowledge (context). The first interpretation assumes the speaker is adhering to Grice's quantity maxim: being as informative as required; and quality maxim; saying what he believes to be true (losses were incurred). Even though he does not directly say it, the implicature of 'illegal practice' arises. The third interpretation suggests that Hain's utterance was being used to establish personal identity.

The fourth interpretation questions the credibility of Conservative MPs hence it displayed struggles over power.

The use of the Gricean Pragmatics theory was motivated by the need to uncover the features that lead to speaker's intended meaning through working out the implicatures. The Critical Discourse Analysis theory is important because it provides a framework for working out the social aspects of context that the GP does not provide. CDA's notion of context includes a psychological, political, ideological and historical component hence offers an interdisciplinary procedure for this study. Describing the social processes involved in the interpretation of political discourse demanded this broad concept of context. The Critical Discourse Analysis theory is also used as an interpretative framework to analyse the social implications of political discourse.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter gives details on the methodology used in the research. It includes population under study, sampling procedures, data collection instruments and methods and the analytical techniques used.

3.2 Population

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The corpus in this study consisted of all utterances made by politicians in the Kenyan media. The population of respondents comprised all members of the general public.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Nairobi. The respondents were got from Nairobi because the city comprises a heterogeneous population of members with various socio-cultural and political orientations. Thus, the city presented great diversity in a small area. The utterances were however made by politicians from different parts of the country but recorded in the media.

3.4 Sampling Utterances

The sampling procedure used was stratified random sampling. One programme was selected from the electronic media as a source of utterances. This was the TV news broadcast, which was chosen because it features politicians in the situations in which utterances are made. The seven o'clock and nine o'clock news bulletins were adequate because they broadcast most of the current political events in the country. There are about five main television stations in Kenya namely Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), Kenya Television Network (KTN), Nation TV, Citizen TV and Family TV. The KTN was randomly selected as the media station whose news broadcasts would be used in the study. This is due to the fact that news items in the TV stations are usually similar and as far as the actual utterances produced by the politicians are concerned,

what would be on one station would be the same as what would be on the other. 45 utterances were recorded from the selected media station between January and April 2005. The researcher then selected those utterances that addressed the five issues specified in the scope of the study and categorised them into five groups. Four utterances were selected from each of the five issues specified as follows:

Table 3.1: Number of Utterances

| Issues | No. of utterances |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Party propaganda | 4 |
| Succession | 4 |
| Constitution | 4 |
| Corruption | 4 |
| Development | 4 |
| Total | 20 |

A total of 20 utterances made by politicians were selected. These categories were selected because they are salient issues in Kenya’s political organisation. The 20 utterances were representative of many utterances made by politicians because they covered a wide range of issues that affect the Kenyan public.

3.5 Sampling Respondents

The members of the public were stratified into categories according to their constituencies as shown in the table below:

Table 3.2: Total number of respondents

| Constituency | No. of respondents |
|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Dagoretti | 7 |
| Embakasi | 7 |
| Kamukunji | 7 |
| Kasarani | 7 |
| Langata | 7 |
| Makadara | 7 |
| Starehe | 7 |
| Westlands | 7 |
| Total | 56 |

7 members were selected from each of the constituencies in Nairobi to get a representation of the population. A total of 56 respondents constituted the sample. The respondents consisted of adults of 18-70 years because they are active in political activities such as voting. Constituencies were used for categorisation because the members from different constituencies are expected to be from varying political backgrounds or persuasion.

3.6 Gaining Entry

The researcher had first to obtain a research permit from the District Office in Nairobi (see appendix). This was to enable the researcher to carry out interviews without suspicions from the members of public. The researcher got the respondents from a social network established through acquaintances. The researcher identified friends who lived in the different constituencies in Nairobi and explained to them the nature of the research. The first contact was made in person. Each friend then introduced the researcher to their other friends, acquaintances and neighbours in their respective constituencies. The researcher thus obtained her sample from the population.

3.7 Data Collection

The utterances made by the politicians regarding the issues specified and the respondents' interpretations of the utterances constituted the data. Utterances made by politicians in the electronic media were video-recorded by the researcher. The respondents first viewed the video clips, and then their interpretations were collected by use of interviews.

3.7.1 Data Recording (Audio-visual)

The utterances were collected by means of audio-visual recording from the daily News broadcasts of the Kenya Television Network. The recorded work was stored on videocassettes. This recording was important as it preserved the data, which was to be used in the interviews. The researcher would transcribe and use them to analyse the features of style in the language used by politicians.

3.7.2 Audio-recording

The respondents viewed and listened to each video-recorded utterance twice. The researcher used an interview schedule to elicit interpretations of the utterances from the respondents after each viewing. The responses were recorded on audiotapes using a SONY VOR micro cassette coder. Audio recording ensured accurate and reliable storage of data.

3.8 The Focus Group Interviews

Eight focus groups were formed and each consisted of seven members from the same constituency. All the groups had both male and female members. However, in most groups, the men were more than the women. Apparently, more men were willing to participate in the research than women especially when they learnt that it was political. This probably indicates that men participate more in politics than women. Prospective participants were given the time and place of group sessions prior to the focus group interview. They were briefed on the importance of their contribution to the research.

The researcher used an interview schedule, which set the agenda for the focus group discussion. The schedule contained 10 questions, many of which were relatively unstructured so as to provide varied responses from respondents. During the group discussion, participants sat around a table in order to provide eye contact with the moderator and other members of the group. Each member had a name tag containing their first names to enable them refer to each other by name. This built greater rapport during discussions. The researcher acted as the focus group moderator, guiding the proceedings and dealing with the group dynamics such as shyness or overconfidence that constantly evolved during discussions. Each session lasted two hours and the researcher met each of the focus groups twice because all the twenty utterances could not be discussed in one session. Incentives like light meals, snacks and sometimes bus fare were given to encourage participation in the focus group interviews.

3.8.1 Limitations of Focus Group Interviews

The use of focus group interviews posed a number of limitations in this study. Firstly, some times a member of a focus group was not able to attend the discussion as agreed. This led to a few respondents being interviewed individually. Secondly, having friends in the same discussion group made other group members who are not known to them feel less confident. The researcher had to ask one of the friends to step aside in some cases. Some of the female participants became shy in groups where there were more men. As the group moderator, the researcher encouraged the shy ladies to participate by calling out their names and asking them questions. Another limitation in using the focus group interviews was the presence of self-appointed experts. These members dominated discussions and presented their opinions as facts. The researcher had thus to emphasise the importance of the views of all members in the group.

3.9 Transcription and Presentation of Data

The researcher transcribed the recorded data and presented in tables for easier analysis as shown in the sample below. The selected utterances were categorised into five groups and numbered 1-20. The various interpretations given and the social context included by respondents were entered against each utterance.

Table 3.3: Sample Transcript of Utterances

| Category | Utterances |
|-------------------|--|
| Corruption | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="365 353 1068 442">1. A thief is a thief. A thief of today is just as bad as a thief of yesterday.<li data-bbox="365 463 1130 553">2. Clay has abused us and we are telling him to explain the facts or else he should shut up.<li data-bbox="365 574 1148 719">3. No one can resist the allure of a free holiday in Mombasa with good food, good hotels and ten thousand shillings in the wallet.<li data-bbox="365 740 1079 774">4. It is like raping a woman who is already too willing. |

3.10 Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data collected was analysed through qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative approach was suitable because the study sought to uncover people's interpretations and perceptions of issues affecting them, while the quantitative approach provided statistical measures of the occurrence of the linguistic and social aspects under study. The Gricean pragmatic framework was used as a guide for the inference of implicatures and was also used in the analysis of the other features of style that made politicians' utterances ambiguous. The social processes that contribute to the production and interpretation of utterances were adopted from Wodak's (1996) notion of context (see section 2.6). Her concept was used to describe and analyse the contextual information on which the respondents based their interpretations. The integration of all the levels of context gives a comprehensive analysis of discourse as a social practice (Wodak 1996). The Critical Discourse Analysis approach and its principles were used in the explanation and interpretation of the social implications of political discourse.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of the study with regard to the objectives set. The chapter explains how the stylistic features used in the utterances constitute ambiguities that lead to multiple interpretations. The study uses Grice's notion of implicature to explain what a speaker may suggest, imply or mean. Grice's theory helps to explain how politicians can convey messages that do not bear any necessary relation to the linguistic content of their utterances. The multiple interpretations are treated as implicatures.

The findings show that multiple interpretations also arose because respondents tended to base their interpretations on different aspects of context. These aspects of context are discussed in this chapter as the social processes that underlie the production and interpretation of utterances. The interpretations are also analysed and the social implications of the utterances are established from the respondents' interpretation of the utterances. The social implications included political and social relations. Political discourse was found to not only convey political messages but also to perform certain social actions such as gender discrimination. These are discussed under the following subheadings:

- Stylistic features in utterances and ambiguity
- Social processes and interpretation
- Social implications of utterances

The utterances used as illustrations in this chapter are numbered from **Example 1-34** in the main sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4. This was done to avoid constantly referring back to previous sections to read utterances because some of the utterances were used more than once to illustrate different objectives.

4.2 Stylistic Features in Utterances

The features of style analysed were based on lexicon and pragmatic features of interpretation such as context, which played a major role in interpretation of the utterances made by politicians. It was realized that the styles varied according to the extent to which the speaker used linguistically specified devices such as lexical or pragmatic features to guide the respondents' interpretation. Lexicon related stylistic features included euphemism, pretentious diction and the use of meaningless words. Pragmatic related features of style were figurative language, analogy, allusion, circumlocution, sarcasm, irony and evasion. The Gricean Pragmatic theory helped to analyse how the observance or non-observance of maxims resulted in the use of certain stylistic features.

It was however difficult to discuss style without referring to the interpretation of an utterance. Utterance interpretation in this study, focused on the process of assigning meaning to the politicians' utterances from the respondents' point of view. Grice's (1957) theory of pragmatics was instrumental in the analysis of the interpretations of politicians' utterances because it explains how the hearer works out the meanings of what is said.

4.2.1 Ambiguity

Ambiguity occurs when more than one meaning can be assigned to a word or an utterance. Semantic rules set by linguists may state clearly which words and sentences have more than one meaning. However, the pragmatic approach adapted in this study goes beyond pure semantic analysis, and explores how words and utterances may become ambiguous depending on the context in which they are used. The study revealed that some of the stylistic features in politician's utterances constituted ambiguities that led to multiple interpretations. Kempson (1977) categorizes ambiguity into three levels: lexical, structural and contextual. According to Kempson, lexical ambiguity arises when a lexical item a speaker uses has more than one sense for example:

- a) He ran onto the field (sprinted)
- b) The ball ran onto the field (rolled)
- c) The car is running well (motion)

d) He ran the business well (managed)

(Kempson 1977: 81)

The word 'run' in the first three sentences implies a kind of motion whereas in (d) it implies an act of organization. However, when used in other contexts e.g. *He ran the race for Hampshire*; it would be difficult to tell whether this means he sprinted or took part in the race or he organized and managed the race. The lexical item 'ran' here is therefore, ambiguous because it has two possible interpretations. Ambiguity can also arise due to the syntactic structure of a phrase or sentence.

For example:

Washing machines can be tiresome.

Ambiguity in this sentence is dependent on whether 'washing' is syntactically functioning as a verb whose object is 'machines', meaning that the washing or cleaning of the machines is a tiresome exercise. Or whether 'Machines' is the subject of the sentence and 'washing' functions as a modifier, meaning the machines that are used for washing can be tiresome. There is interdependence between the syntactic structure of a sentence and its meaning. This study was however not concerned with the syntactic structure of utterances but dealt mainly with utterances and how the contexts in which they occurred made them have more than one interpretation.

The findings of the study confirm Grice's (1957) and Thomas' (1995) argument that even though one part of interpretation of the utterances lies in the conventional meaning of words, another important part lies in the contextual information available. Most of the utterances taken out of the same context are potentially ambiguous. Contextual ambiguity arises when speakers and hearers have assumptions that differ. These assumptions include aspects of context such as who speaks, to whom they speak, when and why they speak. This research found that utterances do not always mean one thing. Whereas the speaker displayed intentions that should be recognized by the respondents, what the respondents knew or assumed led to an interpretation that could have diverged from what was intended by its producer. Context in this study was taken to include all the relevant aspects of physical and social setting of an utterance, which contribute to interpretation of what is said (Wodak 1996). It was revealed that stylistic features in the

politicians' utterances ended up generating more than one implicature because their meaning depended on which context the respondents pegged the utterance.

4.2.2 Euphemism

Euphemism is the use of a pleasant term in place of one that may be considered unpleasant or taboo. Euphemism was used when a speaker wanted to avoid offending his or her hearers or shocking them with the real terms. Politicians used euphemisms when they wanted to avoid talking directly about subjects that made them uncomfortable. The following utterance was made by the MP for Embakasi constituency. He was addressing his constituents and was reacting to a report that aborted foetuses had been dumped in the area. This utterance and all subsequent were recorded from the KTN news bulletins between January 2005 and April 2005. The underlined bits are the focus of analysis and discussion.

Example 1-Utterance 7

Ati kurogota toto yote ile mlizaa usiku bila kuambia watu ... Embakasi hii tunataabu, utakuta mtu anajiita any name, kuna maheshimiwa wengine hapa ndani, kuna maPC hapa ndani, hapa madiwani ni wengi, machairman na machairlady, kila mtu hapa ni chairman ama chairlady sijui wa nini? Hapa hata mapresident wanaweza patikana. Garbage ya Nairobi yote inapelekwa wapi? Hapa Dandora. Ile ingine ni sewage, yote ya Nairobi Bwana PC iko hapa Rwai, Embakasi. Wale watu wote maskini dunia hii ya Nairobi (sitaki kuwaita takataka) wote wakipata taabu huko spring valley, wakitoka Mworoto wanapelekwa wapi? Embakasi!

Translation: Collecting all the babies you gave birth to at night without telling anyone. In this Embakasi we have a lot of problems . . . You find people calling themselves any name. There are honourables among you; there are PCs, mayors, chairmen and chairladies. Everyone here is a chairman or a chairlady of I don't know what! Here, even presidents can be found. Where is all of Nairobi's garbage dumped? Here in Dandora. The other is Nairobi's sewage- it is all here at Rwai- Embakasi. All the poorest people in Nairobi (I don't want to call them scum) when they are evicted from Spring Valley and Mworoto . . .where are they taken? Embakasi!

In the first sentence of his utterance, the speaker uses the terms *babies you gave birth to* ' to refer to *the foetuses you have conceived secretly and aborted, ...* .'

Respondents suggested that the speaker did not want to shock his constituents or offend them by openly accusing them of having carried out the abortions secretly and dumping the foetuses there. He therefore decides to use the words 'babies you gave birth to at night' which he considers pleasant or less offensive because he would still like them to vote for him. Assuming that Grice's Cooperative Principle and its maxims are being observed, the speaker flouts the maxim of manner by using an obscure expression. The respondents interpreted the utterance as follows:

- (i) The MP is accusing his constituents of having performed the abortions.
- (ii) The MP's speech is directed at people from other parts of Nairobi who might have carried out the abortions and dumped the foetuses in Embakasi.

The two interpretations indicate that the expression used by the speaker is contextually ambiguous. The respondents have two contexts in which they can place the utterance; the speaker is an MP for Embakasi addressing his constituents after foetuses are found carelessly dumped in the area. Secondly, the speaker further claims that Embakasi had been turned into a dumping ground thereby generating an implicature that he is not certain that his constituents were responsible for the abortions or whether the foetuses had been part of the garbage from all over Nairobi. The failure to observe the maxim of manner could have been necessitated by the speaker's wish to observe the maxim of quality by not saying that for which he lacked evidence. In most cases, euphemisms are created when politicians are doubtful, fearful or lack sufficient evidence of what they are saying.

4.2.3 Pretentious and Meaningless Diction

Pretentious diction is the use of certain words, usually meaningless or unnecessary, or words that are meant to persuade the hearer to understand things from the speaker's point of view. Politicians were found to use strong philosophical or political terms to convince the public that they cared about the people's welfare. Respondents accused politicians of being hypocritical while 'sweet-talking' the public to vote for them only for the politicians to forget all about the voters when they got to the top. Utterance 12 below was made by an MP who was also the LDP spokesman. He was reacting to the appointment of opposition members to the cabinet and

NARC's intention to field one candidate for the Kisauni parliamentary seat in the coast province. The seat had fallen vacant after the former MP's death.

Example 2-Utterance 12

The aggregate of NARC is clear and compelling LDP is not a partner in the Kibaki government. LDP members in the government have been invited at the pleasure of the president as individuals to serve the president personally without any reference to their parties . . . we are not going back on the Kisauni by – election . . . there is no NARC government, what is, is the illegal cabinet that President Kibaki has made of his rich friends against the workers and peasants of this nation. Kisauni will be the mother of all battles in the words of former president of Iraq, between the forces of change against the lords of the status quo.

The word *individuals* and *personally* are used to make the speaker's utterance appear impartial yet his argument is biased because he has already declared that LDP (the political party he belongs to) is not a partner in the NARC government. By using the words *aggregate*, *compelling*, *individuals* and *personally*, the speaker violates the maxim of quantity and manner. He is not brief and precise and these words don't add any meaning to his utterance. Respondents argued that although the speaker criticizes the appointments made by the president, he was partially happy that the LDP members were appointed to the cabinet. In the last sentence of his utterance, another message is passed across. Respondents used the contextual knowledge that the utterance was produced at a time when there were wrangles between two parties affiliated to NARC over who would contest the Kisauni seat. The LDP had hoped to field in their own candidate for the Kisauni seat while NAK wanted one candidate to represent both parties to increase their chances of winning. The seat had fallen vacant after the demise of the area MP. The speaker uses the words *workers and peasants* to appear as though he cares for the poor, but is merely trying to gain popularity from the public by pretending to identify with them. The study also found that politicians use words that lack meaning and words that do not contribute any meaningful information to the utterances they make. Respondents found it difficult to identify what these words meant.

In example 2 above, respondents found words like *aggregate*, *clear*, and *compelling* to be almost completely lacking in meaning in relation to the speaker's utterance. For instance, if we take *aggregate* to mean the sum total, what the speaker means by *aggregate* or the sum total of NARC

is not clear. The words *clear and compelling* are not used to refer to anything in particular. He further uses the words *lords of status quo.....* According to respondents, these foreign expressions were just decorative and the speaker used them to give an air of culture and elegance to his speech. The speaker of utterance 1 below illustrates the use of pretentious words.

Example 3-Utterance 1

His job is not like that of a comedian. He has abused us and we are telling him that he should explain the facts or else he should shut up.

Utterance 1 was produced by an MP who was then a minister of Foreign Affairs. He was reacting to allegations of corruption made by a British High commissioner to Kenya at the time.

Respondents argued that the speaker above uses the word *abused* pretentiously to create an air of innocence. The interpretations of the utterance were as follows:

- (i) The word *abuse* refers to the undiplomatic language used by the envoy.
- (ii) The envoy had insulted Kenyans.
- (iii) The word *abuse* is used pretentiously to deny the alleged corruption.

The speaker violates the maxim of quality because the implicature that there is no corruption is generated. The use of the word *abuse* makes the utterance contextually ambivalent. Those respondents who knew what the speaker was reacting to interpreted 'being abused' to mean the ambassador had used undiplomatic language. Another group of respondents claimed that the speaker meant the High Commissioner had insulted Kenyan politicians by using abusive language. However, most respondents agreed that the use of *abuse* by the speaker is pretentious because his statement was just figurative speech (metaphoric) whose meaning was clear; that there was high level of corruption in government. Respondents used their knowledge of the speaker's government as a corrupt one and interpreted his statement as pretentious.

In some cases, political terms were used inappropriately. For example, the word *Anarchist* in example 4, which was made by an opposition MP from KANU, chairperson of the Parliament Select Committee (PSC) at the time. He was reacting to another politician's suggestion that a constitutional bill be allowed to pass by a simple majority vote.

Example 4-Utterance15

Anarchists like 'him' should never be given a chance to derail this process. And I dare ask which provision of the constitution provides for a constitutional bill to be decided by a simple majority vote.

The word *anarchist* can pragmatically be used to mean lawless, disorderly or confused depending on the context in which it is used. It has no particular meaning except that which a speaker makes it to signify. So, when the speaker refers to another as an anarchist, other aspects of context are needed in order to understand what the speaker meant. Respondents based their interpretation on the fact that the politician being talked about had a history of opposing government laws. They inferred that the speaker was claiming that the politician is a spoiler who was not expected to support the political order they were trying to create through the new constitution

Orwell (1945) supports the claim that many political words have been abused and the meaning reduced to what image the speaker intends to create. Orwell, for instance, illustrates how inappropriately a word like *democracy* has been used. It is felt that when we call a country or a leader democratic, we are praising it/him/her; therefore, defenders of every king or regime claim it is democratic and they fear they might have to stop using the word if it were tied down to one particular meaning. This explains why there is no agreed definition to some political terms and attempts to make one are usually resisted from all sides (Eschholz et al 1978). According to respondents, the use of meaningless and unnecessary words is characterised by dishonesty because the politicians who use them have their own private definition, but allow their audience to think they mean something different.

4.2.4 Figurative Language

Figurative language includes the use of metaphors and similes. Politicians make use of images in their utterances to make their messages either clearer or obscure. Although the linguistic form of the utterances may suggest a meaning, the process of interpretation of the image may yield a variety of inferences. Grice (1975) suggests that implicatures arising from metaphors and similes are based on the assumption that a maxim has been flouted: usually, the maxim of manner. The

speaker uses images in his/her utterance that are meant to either clarify or deliberately obscure meaning. The examples below illustrate how metaphors and similes can convey a meaning that is not always associated to the literal meanings of the words uttered.

Example 5-Utterance 4

It is like raping a woman who is already too willing.

The MP who made this utterance was then a minister for Constitutional Affairs. The World Bank had announced that it was not going to give Kenya more aid. This also happened a few days after the High Commissioner's previous attack, which revealed that the government was not doing much to fight corruption in high offices. The speaker here has flouted the maxim of manner. The flout is evident from the inferences made by the respondents:

- (i) Too much pressure is being put on Kenya by donors yet the government is doing its best to fight corruption.
- (ii) Kenya is being abused and harassed by superpowers (donors) and they have to take it because they are helpless; they are poor and need the donor funds.
- (iii) Kenya will do anything to please donor countries.

The interpretations given by the respondents show that the speaker is not talking about any women or rape cases. For the respondent to be able to provide an interpretation of this utterance, he or she must first understand who the speaker of the utterance is and what matter he was addressing. The speaker deliberately uses the image of rape to represent an idea. It is only with adequate contextual knowledge that the image of a woman being raped could be understood by respondents to mean a country that was too helpless to take in more pressure from its donors. *Rape* was interpreted as the pressure from the donors. *The woman who was already too willing* was interpreted as the country Kenya, which was under pressure to fulfil the conditions required by the donors in order for them to receive more aid. The maxim of relation was instrumental in the interpretation of metaphors and similes because it guided in finding a relationship between the images used in the utterances and the existing reality. Assuming that the speaker was observing the maxim of relation, the respondents based their interpretation of the image on relevant contextual features. The MP for Makadara made the following utterance as he addressed

his constituents in reaction to a proposal by the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) to demolish all structures built along power lines.

Example 6-Utterance 5

Mkiwaona wao. . . . weka taili.

Translation: When you see them . . . put a tyre.

Weka taili is a metaphorical utterance in Swahili literally freely translated as *put a tyre*. The image or picture created by the utterance in the respondent's mind depends on what the phrase is usually associated with in the society in which it is used. For instance, the implicature of lynching or putting on fire was arrived at after the social context in which the utterance was produced was taken into consideration. The social context here included the fact that the speaker is an MP for Makadara telling his constituents what they should do if the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) decide to carry out proposed demolition of structures built along power lines in the area. The social context also included the assumption that the phrase *weka tyre* is usually associated with executing criminals by putting a tyre round their neck and setting them on fire. Respondents gave the following interpretations of the utterance:

- (i) Lynch the KPLC workers.
- (ii) Put up a barricade so that the KPLC workers don't get into the area.

The two interpretations were as a result of contextual ambiguity. We have discussed above that the social context allows one to associate *weka tyre* with lynching. This explains the first interpretation. Respondents who gave the second interpretation claimed that the metaphor in Swahili meant to put a barricade using burning tyres. However, most of the respondents were convinced that the speaker was inciting his constituents to lynch rather than to barricade. The reason given for this was that when pinned down by the press over the utterance, the MP had altered the statement and claimed he had said *Weka taa, gari ipite* which means 'put on the lights so that the car can pass.' This was of course untrue, as his utterance had been recorded by the media. He manipulates the fact that *tyre* in English maybe pronounced the same way as *taa* or *taya* in Swahili by some speakers, insisting that he meant *taa* (lights) and not *tyre* (wheel). Fortunately for him, it turns out that *weka taili* has another meaning of "barricade", to block the road using burning tyres, which he claims as his intended meaning and cancels the other

implicatures. Another example of figurative language was found in utterance 18 which followed after the president appointed politicians from the opposition parties to the cabinet.

Example 7-Utterance 18

The president and his close advisors had only put hyena and sheep to work together when he named his new government. By bringing in people from other political parties, President Kibaki has hammered the last nail on the coffin of NARC.

The interpretations given by respondents were:

- (i) The president has erred by appointing greedy people to work with his new government because they will destroy the coalition.
- (ii) The president is trying to buy support from the opposition.
- (iii) The president is trying to get people fairly represented.
- (iv) The MP is disappointed that he was not appointed.
- (v) The coffin suggests that NARC is dying.

The words *hyena* and *sheep* are used metaphorically. Respondents suggested that the speaker uses *Hyena* to represent the 'greedy' politicians from other (opposition) political parties. *Sheep* is used to symbolize the humble and pious from the NARC affiliated parties. *Hammered the last nail on the coffin of Narc* was interpreted on the basis of the maxim of relation. Respondents related 'hammering the last nail on the coffin of something' to taking a hand in the final destruction of that thing, in this case the coalition that led to NARC's win in the 2002 general elections.

Metaphors are used to make hearers see things in a new light (Davidson 1979:45). Just as the speaker uses his or her imagination to construct a metaphorical utterance, the respondents' interpretation of the utterance largely depended on the images that the metaphor created in their minds. Sperber and Wilson (1986) use the notion of interpretive resemblance to explain the use of metaphors. This notion claims that any object including an utterance can be used to represent any other object, which it resembles even if the two are not identical as shown in: hyenas compared to humans in utterance 18; raping compared to pressure in utterance 4 and putting a tyre compared to killing in utterance 5. The resembling items however, must have semantic and

logical properties that enable the respondents to arrive at a suitable interpretation. For instance, the hyena is a flesh-eating animal and in oral literature, it is used as a symbol of greed; hence the term *hyena* is associated with greed. *Sheep* on the other hand is grass-eating animal that is associated with humility (Akivaga and Odaga 1982: 14)

Images in metaphorical expressions are derived from the speakers' own experiences, culture, or from their physical and social environment. Thus, there is need for relevant contextual information during interpretation. The maxim of relation is also important in the production and interpretation of metaphorical utterances, because it determines just how much of this contextual information is relevant. For proper interpretation of images, the respondent must consider how the images are related in the topic being addressed.

4.2.5 Analogy

The use of analogy involves the comparison of two things that are partially similar. In the utterances, politicians drew analogies between things they considered similar in order to emphasize or illustrate their opinions and ideas. Analogies were found to contribute to multiple interpretations because contextual ambiguity led to different interpretations of the partial similarities as seen in the examples below. An MP from NAK made utterance 11 after a group of members in the coalition from LDP decided to field in an LDP candidate for the Kisauni seat. The coalition had wanted one candidate to represent it.

Example 8-Utterance 11

Ukiwa na mbuzi kama kumi na tano kuna Mburi ya rwanio, kuna mbuzi ambaye hatosheki hata ukimpatia ile chakula ya grade-anafanya to mmee..mmee.....

Translation: If you have fifteen goat, there is one Mburi ya rwanio-a goat which never gets satisfied even if you give it the best feed- he keeps bleating for more.

Mburi ya rwanio is a Kikuyu phrase which was freely translated as 'a goat which never gets satisfied'. The context revealed that some politicians here are being compared to goats. The different meanings assigned to this utterance by respondents included:

- (i) There is someone who keeps on complaining despite being appointed as a minister.
- (ii) LDP are demanding too much.
- (iii) There are some people in the coalition who are not satisfied with the position they hold.
- (iv) The government has betrayed LDP.

The study found that interpretation of the analogy depended on how much resemblance the image had on what the respondents already knew (context). The first interpretation assumes that the *mburi ya rwanio* refers to one of the LDP leaders who is dissatisfied with just being a minister. Respondents assumed that he wanted to be in a more powerful position. The second interpretation assumes that *mburi ya rwanio* represents a group in the government's coalition that seems not to get satisfied even after being given top positions in the cabinet. The dissatisfied group was assumed to be the LDP party members who keep making demands on the government.

The respondents who gave the first two interpretations used their knowledge of Kenya's political history to arrive at the implicatures. For instance, when the coalition was formed, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was drawn between NAK and LDP. According to the MOU, the LDP leader being referred to was proposed for prime minister when NARC takes over presidency and the new constitution comes to use. Therefore, it is likely that LDP is whining because NARC took over the power, but there are no signs of adopting a new constitution that provides for the existence of a Prime Minister. Other respondents however, held that the government should honour its pledges and stop exploiting others so as to succeed in their political pursuits. They agreed that when such a statement comes from a NARC member, the LDP have a right to feel betrayed.

The example above illustrates how ambiguity was found in utterances that were analogous. Like in metaphors, the maxim of manner is flouted when the speaker draws similarities between certain things to represent an idea, hence not being perspicuous. Not all Kenyans understand Kikuyu, thus, the maxim of relation required the respondent to choose contextual information that is most relevant to the interpretation of the Kikuyu phrase *mburi ya rwanio* as; the LDP

leader or other insatiable MPs. Example 9 helps to understand why *mburi ya rwanio* in utterance 11 was interpreted by some respondents as referring to one of the LDP leaders..

Example 9-Utterance 14

In a family, there are two centres of power-a man and his wife. The two live harmoniously and share responsibilities without squabbles,

This utterance was made by an MP from LDP, who was then a minister for Roads and Public Works. One of most contentious issues in the making of a new constitution was the executive. Politicians from different sides could not agree on whether Kenya should have a Prime Minister with executive powers or not. There was a general feeling that having a non-executive premiership was not going to lead to reduction of powers vested in the president. In the utterance above, the speaker compares two institutions that have partial similarity. He draws the analogy between politics and marriage to convince his listeners that it was possible to have two centres of power in government. The interpretations following the utterance were:

- (i) The speaker is advocating for reduction of the executive powers of the president.
- (ii) The speaker is advocating for two centres of power; the president and Prime Minister.
- (iii) The speaker is campaigning for premiership, he wants to share power with the President.

The respondents inferred that the speaker was advocating for the reduction of the president's powers and the introduction of an executive Prime Minister. The analogy implies that just like powers are shared but separated in a family, between husband and wife; a Prime Minister and a president can work well if powers and duties are clearly defined. Another interpretation given was that the speaker uses this analogy to draw attention to himself because he has been eyeing the premiership seat. The context of the utterance contributes to the different interpretations of the analogy. First, the utterance was made at a time when there was a heated debate on whether Kenya should adopt a presidential system, where all powers are vested on the presidency, or a parliamentary system, where the powers are checked by parliament. Although most of the MPs supported the parliamentary system, the introduction of the premier became problematic, as they could not agree on whether the Prime Minister should be executive or non-executive. Secondly, the speaker is a leader of LDP. Respondents based the third interpretation on the knowledge that

when NAK and LDP were forming the coalition, they had agreed that if they win the 2002 general elections, power would be shared equally between the two parties. The speaker who produced the utterance happens to have been the proposed prime minister from LDP, hence the inference that he was drawing attention to himself.

4.2.6 Allusion

The use of indirect references is common in politicians' utterances. Politicians make utterances that are indirectly suggestive of what they want their hearers to believe. It may be referring to another politician or group of politicians or it may be referring to some behaviour or event. The reasons why politicians use allusion are varied. Sometimes they wish to accuse or attack somebody they fear like the president or other senior ministers. At other times, politicians use indirect reference when they are not sure about how their utterances would be reacted to. Thus, they violate the maxim of manner by deliberately obscuring the meaning of utterances. Some of the indirect references result in ambiguity and vagueness that eventually contribute to multiple interpretations. In example 10 below, the speaker is an MP from the opposition commenting on the persecution of politicians from the previous regime who were involved in corruption. He claims there are politicians in the current government who are also corrupt and should therefore be prosecuted along with the rest.

Example 10-Utterance 2

'A thief is a thief. A thief of today is just as bad as a thief of yesterday.'

The word *thief* means 'a person who steals', that is, if it is assumed that maxims are being followed in a straightforward way. Contextual knowledge however, was important for the respondents to interpret what *thief* as used by the speaker in this sense referred to. The interpretations given by respondents for the utterance were:

- (i) There are corrupt leaders in the new government just like there were in the old.
- (ii) The same politicians who were in KANU changed positions to join NARC so that they continue stealing.
- (iii) The government is not genuine in the fight against corruption.

The speaker violates the maxim of manner by using the word *thief* to represent corrupt leaders in the government. He is alluding to the fact that there are corrupt leaders in government today, just as there were in the previous government. Contextual knowledge helped the respondents to infer that the speaker was indirectly suggesting that as the present government was busy persecuting the corrupt leaders of the previous government (KANU), they should also adhere to the law and prosecute those who are involved in corruption in the present government. Respondents agreed that the government was not genuine in the fight against corruption because they were persecuting corrupt former KANU leaders while MPs and ministers in the new government were stealing and getting away with it.

As the controversy over executive or non-executive premiership rocked the constitutional review process, some politicians felt that the new constitution was no longer necessary. An MP from NAK, who was then a minister for Transport and Communication said:

Example 11-Utterance 10

We needed a new constitution because we wanted one of our own.

This utterance was interpreted differently because the contextual evidence allowed for variety of inferences:

- (a) The speaker wanted a person from the opposition, 'one of our own'
- (b) He wanted a person from his tribe (tribalistic)
- (c) Kenyans didn't need a new constitution.
- (d) He wished for him and his group to write their own constitution

Ambiguity in the interpretation of the utterance arose because respondents assumed that the speaker was a member of the opposition during the previous regime. The second implicature was drawn from the fact that both the speaker and the president happened to come from the same ethnic group and spoke the same language: Kikuyu. The respondents who gave the second interpretation felt that the speaker was being tribalistic. The phrase *one of our own* was an indirect reference that was ambiguous given the two contexts: the opposition and the tribe, hence the two implicatures. In the third implicature, respondents argued that politicians were very selfish as they just use the public as a means to achieve their own ends. The speaker here

indirectly suggests that Kenyans no longer needed a new constitution because its purpose was beaten when the former government (KANU) got ousted. Most of the time, allusion was used when the speaker was talking about very sensitive issues, which may be controversial. The use of allusions gave the speaker room to deny an implicature that he may be pinned down for, and choose another, which is more acceptable.

4.2.7 Circumlocution and Evasion

Another type of speech common in politicians' utterances is circumlocution. Circumlocution is the use of many words to say things that can be said in few words. The speakers who circumlocuted engaged in the use of pretentious and meaningless words, which contribute to the ambiguity and vagueness in their utterances. Usually, circumlocution was used when the speaker was not sure of what he/she was talking about or feared how people would react to his/her utterance as in the example below.

Example 12-Utterance 20

Ikija siku hiyo, tutafikiria hiyo serikali imetufanyia kazi, irudi tu, iendeleo lakini, na tuiunge mkono sisi wote. Ati mwingine anitwa(pretending to forget name) sijui nani, anasema ati wataenda kututoa hapo. Nani anawajua hawa? Wakati watu wako na njaa wakati kama huu, watu wengine katika KANU wanataka ati tufanye uchaguzi....

Translation: When that day comes, we will consider how that government has worked for us and support its re-election. Another one called... (pretending to forget name). .whoever says they shall remove us from power. Who are they? At this time when there is drought, other people in KANU want us to hold elections.

Utterance 20 was produced by an MP from KANU speaking at a KANU meeting in Machakos after KANU had called for party elections. Machakos is a district in the dry areas of Eastern province. In the utterance above, the speaker uses so many words to imply what could have been said in very few words. The utterance was interpreted as follows:

- (i) The speaker is discouraging KANU members from going on with party elections.
- (ii) The speaker wants KANU to support the government.
- (iii) The speaker intends to defect from KANU to NAK.

(iv) The speaker is seeking recognition and favours from the government.

Contextual knowledge shared by the respondents included the fact that the speaker is a member of an opposition party KANU (previously ruling party) but wishes his party would appreciate the work done by the NARC government and support it. The speaker is disinterested in the party's organization and uses the 'njaa' as a scapegoat to avoid elections. The third implicature suggests that the speaker's stand is not firm; he may be in KANU now but is likely to shift to the currently ruling party. Other respondents inferred that given the context that other opposition MPs had been awarded ministerial positions by the president; the speaker was drawing attention to himself. He wants the president to know that even though he is in KANU (opposition), he supports the government so that next time he can be considered for a reward.

The speaker above has used too many words. He violates the maxims of quantity and manner by giving unnecessary information and not being brief. Example 1 in section 4.2.1 was also circumlocutory. The respondents inferred that the speaker meant that the constituents of Embakasi were evil; they carry out abortions secretly, and they were idlers; they call themselves chairmen and chairladies of nothing in particular. Just like Dandora was the dumping ground for garbage and sewage, it was the dumping ground for the useless and poor people who could not survive in other parts of the city. The circumlocution about people calling themselves any name; PCs, chairpersons, mayors and presidents was summed up by respondents to mean the 'scum' mentioned by the speaker in the last line of his statement.

Circumlocution is usually characterized by lack of precision. According to Kempson (1977), lack of precision can be as a result of three things. First, the speaker may have a meaning but is unable to express this meaning because of language barrier (incompetence) or fear of being victimized. Secondly, the speaker may deliberately say something else that digresses from the subject of the utterance as in example 1, talking about the people being chairman and chairladies of nothing in particular. This happens when the speaker gets carried away emotionally or gets angry and finds him or herself saying things they had not intended to say. Thirdly, a speaker may be indifferent as to whether his words mean anything or not (Kempson 1977: 65).

Respondents suggested that politicians also circumlocuted and became evasive when they were avoiding to say some things directly. Evasion is the use of a word, statement or utterance that is meant to avoid revealing the politician's real intention. The use of such evasive tactics gives them room to mean more than they say yet deny it when pinned down thus, enabling them to cancel unacceptable implicatures. There are cases where politicians are blatantly evasive. They do this to avoid responding to questions and issues fully and honestly. In such cases, no maxims are flouted but an attempt to interpret the utterances requires the inclusion of contextual knowledge that may reveal a violation of some maxim.

Example 3 in section 4.2.2 illustrates how the word 'abuse' is used pretentiously. Respondents claimed that the speaker was being evasive when he denied that the commissioner was right. In order to interpret the speakers' utterance as an evasion, the respondents must know what he was calling an 'abuse'. They must also be aware that the commissioner had criticized the politicians for their "love of Oxfam lunches and they can hardly expect us not to care when their gluttony causes them to vomit all over our shoes." If the speaker called this statement an *abuse*, it would imply that he was denying the fact that politicians were corrupt and greedy. Contextual knowledge shared by respondents about the politicians in question revealed that the politicians were indeed corrupt. We are left wondering whether the speaker was not aware of this or he was merely avoiding to speak the truth thus violating the maxim of quality. If the commissioner's metaphors are taken literally, they are likely to be misunderstood as an abuse. Respondents interpreted the metaphors as simply representing the greed with which politicians feed on borrowed funds without any moral restraint. It is possible that the speaker understood the metaphorical implication of those words but chose to ignore or avoid it. Respondents found the speaker evasive because he did not explain anything about corruption in the country as was expected in his reaction. This violation of the maxim of quantity generates the 'misleading' implicature that there was no corruption.

Evasive tactics are used by politicians to conceal their real intentions especially when they are addressing issues that are for their own benefit. They also use evasion when they want to shift blame to others and appear innocent. For instance when a speaker of utterance 10 says "Sisi ndani ya KANU hatukuleta hii njaa, hii njaa ni ya NARC", which translates to "we in KANU are

not responsible for this hunger, this hunger was brought by NARC” (See appendix 1). KANU had been in power for 40 years. What hunger could NARC have brought two years after taking over power from KANU? The speaker was found to be merely shifting blame. Politicians are also evasive when confronted with contentious issues in governance. In example 3, the speaker’s objective may have been to please donors by denying that there is corruption in government. Respondents interpreted his utterance as a cover up statement to protect his fellow politicians, who were all believed to be corrupt, him included.

4.2.8 Sarcasm and Irony

Sarcasm is the use of ironic statements usually meant to hurt somebody else’s feelings. Making ironic statements involves expressing one’s meaning by saying the direct opposite of one’s thoughts in order to be emphatic, amusing or sarcastic. Sarcastic and ironical utterances made by politicians reveal their attitudes towards other people and to their responsibilities. In the year 2005, the minister for health proposed a health bill which was meant to ensure that all Kenyans had access to proper medical care. It was some kind of an insurance health scheme where all working Kenyans would contribute a compulsory amount. Initially, there was general resistance to the idea and the minister was worried that the bill would not be passed by parliament. The minister then organised to meet with a number of MPs in a Mombasa hotel to discuss the viability of the bill. Mombasa is a luxurious island in the coast province of Kenya. Seemingly, the MPs accepted the invitation for different reasons as seen in utterance 3 said by one of the MPs who went to Mombasa.

Example 13-Utterance 3

No one can resist the allure of a free holiday in Mombasa with good food, in good hotels and ten thousand in the pocket.....

Whereas the speaker does not actually declare that they were ‘bribed’, the respondents gave contextual evidence that indicated the speaker believed he and others were being bribed.

The utterance was interpreted by respondents as follows:

- (i) The politicians went to Mombasa , not to discuss the proposed health bill, but to have fun at the expense of the taxpayer.

- (ii) The politicians received this trip as a bribe so that they could give their vote when the bill is tabled in parliament.
- (iii) MPs have no principles, they cannot be trusted and they won't vote for a bill because they understand its worth but for the sake of it.

The context in which this utterance was used allows for all the three interpretations. Most of the respondents agreed that the speaker was implying that the MPs had been 'compromised'. The first interpretation assumes the speaker observes Grice's maxims of quantity and being as informative as required and quality –saying what he believes to be true (they went to Mombasa). Even if he did not say it directly the implicature of bribery arose. The other implicature was that the MPs were wasting taxpayers' money yet they were not serious when it came to making decisions that affect the taxpayer.

The use of the word *allure* suggests that the trip was tempting. A *free holiday* suggests that there was no serious business to attend to and the bill was not the politicians' first hand agenda. The maxim of quantity is flouted and an implicature with the opposite meaning is generated; that the MPs did not need to go to Mombasa to discuss the health bill. The speakers' utterance in example 13 above does not necessarily represent his personal opinion but rather an interpretation of what the speaker believes some people might think of. The third implicature shows that the relevance of this utterance lies in what it tells us about the politicians' attitude towards issues raised in parliament. The MPs are ignorant; they would spend taxpayers' money knowing they were not going to vote for the proposed health bill. By using sarcastic and ironic remarks, politicians dissociate themselves from vices. For instance, respondents inferred that the speaker of the utterance above implied that it was not necessary to go all the way to Mombasa to be convinced to vote for the health bill. The table below illustrates a quantitative analysis of the features of style found in the selected 20 utterances:

Table 4.1: Frequency of Features of Style in Utterances

| Utterances | Features of Style | | | | | | | |
|------------------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| | Euph | Preten | Fig | Anal | Allus | Circ | sarcas | None |
| Corruption | – | 5% | 5% | – | 5% | – | 5% | – |
| Development | 5% | – | 5% | – | 5% | – | – | 5% |
| Party propaganda | – | 5% | – | 5% | 5% | 5% | – | – |
| Constitution | – | 5% | – | 5% | 5% | 5% | – | – |
| Succession | – | – | 5% | – | 5% | 5% | – | 5% |
| Totals | 5% | 15% | 15% | 10% | 25% | 15% | 5% | 10% |

Key

- Euph - Euphemism
- Preten - Pretentious and meaningless words
- Fig - Figurative Language
- Anal - Analogy
- Allus - Allusion
- Circ - Circulocution and Evasion
- Sarcas - Sarcasm and Irony
- None - No specific stylistic feature.

The utterances were organised into five categories representing contentious issues in Kenya. For example, utterances dealing with corruption issues were grouped into the category of corruption, those addressing issues of development were grouped into the category of development issues and so on. Each category had four utterances bringing the total number of utterances to 20. The analysis shows that 5 per cent of the utterances contained euphemism. This means that only one politician made an utterance using euphemism. This utterance was in the development category and is illustrated by utterance 1. 15 per cent of the utterances made use of pretentious and meaningless words. The utterances were from three categories: corruption, party propaganda and constitution. Figurative language was used in 15 per cent of the utterances and was found in three of the categories.

Analogy was found in 10 per cent of the utterances while allusion was used in 25 per cent of the utterances. Allusion was the most frequently used stylistic feature and it was found in all the five categories of utterances. Circumlocution and evasive tactics were used in 15 per cent of the utterances. 5 per cent of the utterances contained sarcasm while 5 per cent did not contain any of the stylistic features mentioned. These findings illustrate that politicians employ certain stylistic features in their speech. The most commonly used feature of style was allusion. This indicates that most politicians make indirect references when addressing various issues. The least used feature of style was sarcasm and euphemism.

The study also found that there were cases where none of the above features of style were used. In such utterances, it was assumed that Grice's cooperative principle (CP) was being observed. The assumptions about the CP and its maxims included relevant aspects of context chosen by respondents that resulted in a variety of inferences. The producer of utterance 19 below for instance, did not employ any of the stylistic features studied but the utterance still had a number of implicatures. This utterance was made at a time when politicians were claiming that there was a group of politicians who were advising the president and not allowing him room to attend to the needs of others. The MP who made the utterance, now deceased, was then a minister for Local Government.

Example 14-Utterance 19

Mkikuyu asahau kutawala Kenya tena.

Translation: A Kikuyu should forget about ruling Kenya again.

The utterance had the following interpretations:

- (i) The speaker is castigating Kikuyus and claiming they will not rule again.
- (ii) Leadership is propagated along tribal lines.
- (iii) The speaker is dissociating himself from the government.

Respondents based the implicatures they gave on their knowledge about the president being from the Kikuyu ethnic group. The speaker was believed to be a close ally of the president but was then angry with a group of Kikuyu leaders, the so-called Mount Kenya mafia, who seemed to surround the president. The speaker feels sidelined because the group was making it difficult for

him to work closely with the president. From the interpretations given by the respondents, the speaker's anger is not directed at the president. He is angered by that group of Kikuyus who think that since the president is from their ethnic group, the president is supposed to serve only them. The choice of the word *Mkikuyu* suggests that leadership is being judged along tribal lines. The speaker's utterance was found to have an underlying threat that he was going to do something to ensure that a Kikuyu is not voted in as president again. This example indicates that in the absence of definite stylistic features, contextual ambiguity is minimal and therefore interpretations are not as varied. In the three interpretations given by respondents, the idea being expressed is the same: leadership is based on ethnicity.

4.2.9 Summary

From the examples studied, we have seen how the features of style in politicians' utterances contain contextual ambiguities that result in these utterances being interpreted in varying ways. The study reveals that politicians prefer to communicate indirectly through the use of allusion and figurative language while at the same time creating vivid images that reveal their real intentions. However, politicians also use pretentious diction, circumlocution and evasion when they do not wish to reveal their real intentions. The least commonly used features were euphemism and sarcasm. This probably means that politicians rarely bother to use polite or pleasant language in their speech and maybe do so only when they fear the reactions of the people they would be talking to or talking about.

Utterances may have different meanings when used in different contexts. However, the findings in this section have shown that given the same historical, social or political background information, utterances could still mean different things. This means that for respondents to interpret the speaker's intention accurately they must know what relevant aspects of context they need to take into consideration. To solve this problem, Brown and Yule (1983) came up with the principles of local interpretation and analogy. In local interpretation, the hearer constructs a context not any longer than he/she needs in order to arrive at an interpretation. This notion assumes that the speaker observes Grice's maxim of relation, and respondents in this study appropriately applied it to interpret the features of style. The principle of analogy on the other

hand instructs the hearer to assume that all aspects of context remain as they were before. This is used where contexts or aspects of contexts keep on changing.

In the absence of relevant contextual information, utterances may not be plausibly interpreted. Yet even with relevant contextual evidence, the study reveals that varying inferences were made by the respondents. Moreover, respondents did not always share the same knowledge and assumptions and even when they did, they understood them differently. This indicates that context in a wider sense (Wodak 1989) contributes to finding plausible interpretations of politicians' utterances. In the study, context was seen to represent the social processes that influence the way utterances are produced and interpreted. As Wodak and Ludwig (1999) put it, discourse is always historical; it is connected with other communicative events, which allow numerous interpretations depending on the position of the hearer and his/her level of information. Thus according to Wodak and Ludwig, the right interpretation does not exist. Interpretations can be plausible but not true because they are laden with assumptions. In the next section, we look at how these social processes and assumptions contributed to the multiple interpretation of utterances made by politicians.

4.3 Social Processes and Interpretation

The study found that there are social processes within which utterances are produced and interpreted. In trying to decipher what an utterance means, the respondents ask themselves a number of questions such as; why is the utterance produced? Under what circumstances is it produced? To whom is it addressed? What does it refer to? What the utterance refers to (the meaning), will be determined by the knowledge of all the other aspects. In the previous section, we have seen that although context is vital in interpretation, it can also be a source of ambiguity because there can be various interpretations depending on how the context is understood by the hearers. In this section, we try to ease this problem by looking at context in terms of the social processes within which individuals create meanings in their interaction with texts as suggested by Wodak (1989) and Fairclough (1992).

The interpretations given by respondents were based on particular contexts. They first placed the utterances in a context then constructed the implicatures. Respondents who did not have some

contextual knowledge of respective utterances ended up inferring implicatures that were not plausible. This study adopted Wodak's 1996 idea of context, which views context in form of five concentric circles (See section 2.6).

These were coded as C₁ – C₅ for the purpose of this study as follows:

- C₁ - discourse
- C₂ - speakers and hearers –personality and social roles.
- C₃ - situation
- C₄ - institution in which discourse takes place
- C₅ - society in which institution is integrated; its social and historical background.

The first level C₁ consisted of the discourse. In this study, this was the utterance made by the politician. The second level of C₂ included the interlocutors; the politician who made the utterance and the hearer who interpreted the utterance. This level included information about their personalities and various social roles. The situation in which the utterance was made was also found to contribute to what the utterance referred to. The C₃ level relates the utterance to other communicative events that are happening at the same time or that happened before. For instance, a speaker could be reacting to previous discourse, an utterance made by somebody else. Discourse is situated in time and place. The meaning of an utterance could be determined by whether the utterance was produced at a public rally, meeting, press conference or at any public gathering.

The institution in the study fell under the domain of politics. Politics has long been associated with the formal institution of government and the activities that take place therein. In this study, C₄ was concerned with the national level of politics focusing on the institution of government and the activities of major political parties and pressure groups.

Various interpretations emerged as a result of the respondents taking the social and historical background of the country into consideration. Level C₅ represented the country, which in this study is the society in which the government is integrated.

The critical analysis of political discourse in this study demanded a multifaceted approach to context. CDA's notion of context provided a psychological, political, social and historical

dimension, which was instrumental in interpreting utterances made by politicians. The interpretation of utterances depended on who made the utterance; the speaker, the hearer, situation, and social or historical background. The interpretation of utterance 1 below illustrates how C₁, C₂, C₃, C₄ and C₅ contributed to interpretation.

Example 15-Utterance 1

‘His job is not like that of a comedian. He has abused us and we are telling him that he should explain the facts or else he should shut up.’

The Gricean Pragmatic (GP) analysis of this utterance showed that the maxim of quantity had been violated. According to the interpretations given, it was found that the speaker was being evasive while avoiding to appear uncooperative. He does not relay full information on whether the government is corrupt or not. The speaker violates the maxim of quality by claiming he has been ‘abused’. Even though he does not outwardly deny that the government is corrupt, the implicature of denial arises. The respondents used the contextual information suggested by the third level of Grice’s implicature calculation, which demands the inclusion of context, to arrive at this implicature. Wodak’s analysis of context became important at this stage in order to determine which aspects of context, also referred to as assumptions in this section, lead to various interpretations. For instance, some of the assumptions given for the interpretation of the speaker’s utterance as a denial were:

- (i) The speaker claims that they have been abused and this is untrue.
- (ii) Respondents assumed the fact that the speaker was a government minister and therefore he had to protect the government.
- (iii) The speaker was reacting to the commissioner’s accusations that the government ministers were corrupt.
- (iv) The MPs and ministers in Kenya are all corrupt including the speaker.

The first assumption is based on C₁, the linguistic content of the utterance, where the word ‘abuse’ is pretentiously used. However, other assumptions in the next levels help to explain why ‘abuse’ is pretentious. The second assumption represents the C₂ level of Wodak’s concentric circles; that because the speaker is a member of the government he is likely to defend it against the envoy’s allegations. The third assumption was concerned with the context of situation,

explaining why the utterance is produced. This assumption placed the utterance in time and place by giving the previous communicative event that the speaker's utterance is connected to: the British High Commissioner's accusations. This level used together with Grice's maxim of relevance helped the respondents to identify whom the pronouns *He* and *us* in utterance 1 refer to. Respondents thus used the context of situation to relate *he* to the commissioner and *us* to the ministers in the Kenya government. The fourth assumption was based on the knowledge of politics in the Kenyan society. Respondents presumed that it was known that a majority of Kenyan politicians serving in the government were corrupt and this was why they were unable to fight corruption. At the time the utterance was made, the Kenyan government was asking for more donor aid from the World Bank and these accusations threatened to foil Kenya's chances of getting funds.

Respondents who interpreted the speaker's utterance as a denial claimed that he needed to defend his government to impress the donors and the word *abused* had been used pretentiously to make the commissioner's verbal attack seem unfair. However, there are those respondents who interpreted the speaker's utterance as a genuine defence of his government. It is only through analysing the contexts used to arrive at this implicature that this interpretation can be justified.

The assumptions made by respondents included:

- (i) Agreement that we had been '*abused*'.
- (ii) Speaker is part of the Kenyan government and so has to talk positively.
- (iii) Speaker's response is justified because the commissioner's remarks were undiplomatic.
- (iv) We need to rise against neo colonialism.

The first assumption shows that the respondents, who agreed that the speaker's proposition was true, supported this with subsequent contextual information. That the speaker was a government official so it was in his best interest to protect the government with or without corruption. At the C₃ level, the respondents, who were familiar with what the commissioner had uttered, claimed that the speaker's utterance was a befitting response. Level C₄ was represented by a wider social, political and historical background. The history of Kenya as having been formerly colonized by Britain emerged. The respondents noted that Britain, through the commissioner, wanted to control the way things are done in Kenya. There was an assumption that the British are racists

and can never appreciate the efforts of Africans. The respondents felt that even if there was corruption in the government, the commissioner had no right to use metaphors that were abusive. He had overstepped his boundaries as it was not his duty to criticize and admonish political leaders in Kenya.

The following is an analysis of the interpretations given by the respondents depending on the aspects of context they assumed underlay the production of the politicians' utterances. The study revealed that utterances might have different meanings depending on which aspects of context the respondents focused on. In some instances, different meanings emerged due to a respondent's lack of some contextual information.

4.3.1 The Discourse Unit

This was coded as C_1 and it consisted of the utterance itself. The instance of discourse or text was analysed and its propositional meaning established. The utterance below was made by a Pokot MP in Kapenguria when there was a dispute over boundaries between the Pokots and Luhyas who border each other along the Kanyarkwat area in Kapenguria. The MP was later arrested and charged for inciting and creating animosity between the two ethnic groups.

Example 16-Utterance 8

You Pokots should not vacate Kanyarkwat land even if force is used, instead you should resist. Non-pokots doing business in Makutano town must leave the business to be run by the pokot community.

Grice's first level of analysing utterances was applied here. Some respondent simply assigned semantic meaning to the linguistic content of utterances. This was seen to happen when they had not heard the utterance before and therefore could not place it in a particular context. Nevertheless, in such utterances, the meaning conveyed by the proposition was similar in most of the respondents' interpretation because other aspects of context were not necessary for interpretation. The same implicature was conveyed regardless of context. The speaker implied that *Kanyarkwat* land belonged to the Pokot and he was inciting Pokots against other ethnic groups living in the same area.

When it was assumed that the CP was being observed and the maxims were followed in a straightforward way, it was possible for the respondents to come up with acceptable implicatures by considering the utterance alone. However, since discourse was viewed as utterance in context, the process of interpretation was not complete without consideration of other relevant contextual features. For instance, the interpretation of utterance 8 as an incitement was based on the respondents' knowledge of the speaker and his social roles at the C₂ level of context.

4.3.2 Discourse and the Interlocutors

These were coded as C₁ for discourse and C₂ for interlocutors. The discussion in section 4.3.1 illustrates that even though respondents could provide interpretations by considering only the utterance in some cases, it was difficult to separate a speaker from the utterance. Respondents who had knowledge about the speaker in utterance 8 that he is a Pokot MP and that the group of people he was talking to were Pokots; interpreted the utterance as an incitement to violence against the other ethnic community. They described the speaker as a tribalist who lacked a national perspective and who had a history of inciting his fellow Pokots to fight neighbouring groups. Probably, without this knowledge, one would be misled to think the MP was advising Pokots to resist the invasion of some enemy. The interpretation of utterances depending on discourse and the speaker is illustrated by utterance 12 in the example below. The speaker is an LDP spokesman. The president had appointed some LDP members to the cabinet without consulting the party leaders. At the same time, the Kisauni by-election was approaching and there was a wrangle over whether LDP could present a candidate for the seat or NARC should choose one candidate to represent the coalition.

Example 17-Utterance 12

The aggregate of NARC is clear and compelling. LDP is not a partner in the Kibaki government. LDP members in the government have been invited at the pleasure of the president as individuals to serve the president personally without any reference to their parties . . . We are not going back on the Kisauni by – election. . . there is no NARC government, what is, is the illegal cabinet that President Kibaki has made of his rich friends against the workers and peasants of this nation. Kisauni will be the mother of all battles in the words of former president of Iraq, between the forces of change against the lords of the status quo....

Respondents reacted first to the speaker, and then to the utterance. It was claimed that whatever the speaker said could not be taken seriously because he had no moral authority to advise the public. The speaker who produced this utterance had been a lawyer by profession but his licence to practise law had been withdrawn when he was found guilty of embezzling clients' money. Knowledge of the speaker makes it possible to infer what he is likely to imply (Brown and Yule 1983:38). With the knowledge that the speaker was a member of LDP, respondents inferred that he was expressing displeasure at how the government had appointed ministers. The party leaders had expected the president to consult them before making the appointments. Another implicature was that he was seeking sympathy by trying to identify with those who had not been appointed. He uses the words *workers and peasants* and *rich friends* to create a contrast between the rich politicians appointed to the cabinet and the poor ones who were not appointed. This led to the respondents' conclusion that the speaker was complaining because he knew that some of the appointees were friends to the president.

However, the implicatures did not seem to exhaust the speaker's intention and knowledge of aspects of context in different levels led to a deeper understanding of the utterance. Another utterance whose interpretation was largely based on the interlocutors is illustrated below.

Example 18-Utterance 17

Ati kuna coalition government. Mimi kama wakili wacha niwaambie hakuna kitu kama coalition government na sasa nimeamua ni kazi yangu kuona Kibaki ataendelea kukalia hiyo kiti.

Translation: Is there really a coalition government? As a lawyer, let me tell you that there is nothing like a coalition government and now I have decided its my duty to ensure that Kibaki continues to occupy that seat.

The speaker in example 18 was an MP in Nairobi's Kabete constituency and a lawyer by profession. He was reacting to increasing wrangles in the coalition in which LDP was complaining that it was not being given a fair share of the national cake. In the above example, knowledge of the speaker gave the respondents a vital clue of what he was implying. Being a lawyer by profession, he knew perfectly well the system that needed to be put in place for Kenya to claim to have a legal coalition government. Kenyans should know that there is one ruling

party, which is the president's because no constitutional system was set in forming the NARC unity. Respondents inferred that the so-called coalition was a hoax and they had been fooled into voting for the current government. Respondents thought the speaker was addressing LDP members because they were the ones who were demanding recognition from the government.

The illustrations above show that by relating what is said to who says it and to whom, a number of acceptable interpretations can be arrived at. The knowledge of the speaker's personal identity and his or her social roles were found to contribute a lot to the interpretation of their utterances. However, there were cases where given the utterance, speakers and hearers, it was still difficult to decide what was meant and the next level of contextual knowledge was required. This indicated that apart from the discourse and interlocutors, the context of situation was also vital during interpretation.

4.3.3 Discourse, Interlocutors and Situation

The study revealed that although the interaction of discourse and interlocutors (C_1 and C_2) generated interpretations, there were cases where these levels of context were not sufficient to yield a plausible interpretation. In such cases, the utterances remained ambiguous and other aspects of situational context from the C_3 level became necessary in order to disambiguate them. Utterance 5, which was said by the then Makadara MP in Nairobi in response to the KPLC's decision to demolish all structures built along power distribution lines, illustrates this.

Example 19-Utterance 5

Mkiwaona wao, weka taili.

Translation: When you see them . . . put a tyre.

The process of interpretation given depending on the level of contextual knowledge assumed by the respondents was as follows:

- C_1 : Assumption that the maxim of manner has been flouted and the resulting metaphor *weka taili* interpreted as:
- (i) Lynch them
 - (ii) Put a barricade to block the way.

- C₂:** Knowledge that the speaker is an MP addressing his constituents and also is a former boxer and ‘hooligan’ known to love physical confrontation:
- (i) He was inciting his constituents to violence.
 - (ii) He tries to gain popularity by convincing them that he is on their side.
- C₃:** Knowledge that the MP was addressing his constituents after the Kenya Power and Lighting Company announced its plan to demolish all structures built along power lines for safety purposes. C₃ generated the following implicatures:
- (i) MP was encouraging lawlessness and misleading his constituents by advising them to resist an exercise that was for their own good.
 - (ii) MP was hypocritical because instead of stressing the importance of government policy to his constituents, he wanted to gain popularity.
 - (iii) The MP was still telling them to either lynch or barricade.

At the C₁ level, the context included the discourse unit which respondents interpreted as (i) and (ii). The interpretations suggest that the words used by the speaker do not semantically represent the meaning of the utterance. If *weka taili* is interpreted by respondents as ‘lynch’, Grice’s CP can be used to explain that the maxim of manner has been flouted because the speaker deliberately fails to be perspicuous. He thus produces an ambiguous utterance that can either mean (i) or (ii). At the C₂ level, respondents used their knowledge of the speaker’s personality traits and the people he was addressing to interpret his utterance as an incitement and a way of gaining popularity.

It was noted that when an utterance was situated in time and place, at C₃, more specific implicatures were derived because the respondents assumed the knowledge of why the utterance was produced. The implicatures derived from the assumptions at C₃ level by the respondents show that the phrase *weka taili* remains ambiguous as it could still mean to lynch or barricade. Contextual aspects regarding social structures and perceptions at C₄ and C₅ level were used to disambiguate the phrase. The context of situation was also found to be important in the interpretation of sarcastic utterances such as the one in example 20 below.

Example 20-Utterance 3

No one can resist the allure of a free holiday in Mombasa with good food in good

hotels and ten thousand shillings in the pocket.

The speaker was one of the MPs who had gone to Mombasa to attend a meeting organised by the health minister to discuss a health bill that the health minister was proposing. He made this utterance when the press pressurized members to say what they had gone to do in Mombasa. The respondents' assumptions during interpretation were:

- C₁: The offer for a free luxurious holiday is irresistible.
- C₂: Knowledge of the speaker as an MP leads us to the question of why MPs were given a 'free holiday' to Mombasa.
- C₃: Knowledge that it was not a 'free holiday' but was supposed to be a meeting to discuss a health bill which was to be tabled in parliament by the health minister.

During interpretation, respondents used the contextual knowledge above to infer that:

- (i) The statement was sarcastic.
- (ii) MP's are self-centred and not serious about issues that affect the public.
- (iii) MP's have got no principals; they decided to vote because of a holiday at the Coast.

The C₁ level was represented by the utterance and the literal meaning given by respondents was that nobody was expected to turn down the offer of a free holiday. The respondents' knowledge of the second level of context at C₂ led to the interpretation that the speaker is not serious about issues affecting the public. Respondents argued that the speaker's utterance showed that he was taking the public for granted. While MPs are entrusted with the responsibility of making laws, their interest lies in their own comfort. Respondents wondered whether the speaker realized that the free holiday and pocket money was money from taxpayers who were expecting a fair ruling on the pending health bill. It is after the C₃ level that the utterance was found to be sarcastic. The MP dismisses a meeting to discuss an important health bill as a 'free holiday'. What was important for the MP was the idea of being in a luxurious hotel in Mombasa and not the health bill because he does not even mention it in his utterance. Other implicatures still emerged with addition of wider contextual knowledge found from the next levels of C₄ and C₅.

In this section, we have seen the interaction of discourse, interlocutors and situation during the process of interpretation. The findings show that utterances had various interpretations depending on who was speaking, who was being spoken to, and the circumstances under which the utterance was produced (situation). Different considerations at the different contextual levels of C₁, C₂, and C₃ contributed to different inferences by respondents. In examples 19 and 20, the context of situation justified the three interpretations of each of the utterances. However, when the next level of context was included, some of the interpretations were discounted and new inferences were made by respondents.

4.3.4 Institution and Society in which Institution is Integrated

C₄ and C₅ represented the institution in which discourse takes place and society in which the institution is integrated including its social and historical background. The study found that at these levels, most utterances that had been contextually ambiguous were disambiguated. In some cases, they were left with few implicatures because contextual information cancelled out unacceptable implicatures. In example 20 above, the fourth implicature arising with the inclusion of C₄ and C₅ was:

- The MPs had been bribed to vote for the health bill.

The institution of government is concerned with the making and implementation of laws that are binding in society and MPs in Kenya are an integral part of this institution. Respondents used the assumptions that:

- C₄:** Bills are tabled in parliament and some passed by a simple majority vote.
- C₅:** MPs in Kenya are corrupt and the Mombasa 'holiday' was the minister's way of wooing other MPs to vote for the bill when it is tabled in parliament.

In example 19 in section 4.3.3, given the information at levels C₁, C₂ and C₃, respondents interpreted the MP's utterance as follows:

- (i) The MP was encouraging lawlessness.
- (ii) The MP was hypocritical as he failed to stress the importance of government policy to his constituents.

- (iii) The MP was misleading his constituents by advising them to resist an exercise that was for their own good.
- (iv) The MP was still telling them to either lynch or barricade.

The fourth implicature shows that the metaphor *weka taili* is still ambiguous. Will his constituents lynch the people who come to do the demolition or put barricade? Respondents attempted to disambiguate this using the following assumptions:

- C₄: That the speaker is simply a politician who wants to gain political mileage by inciting. Politicians are fond of making careless utterances.
- C₅: That in Kenyan society, when the phrase *weka taili* is used, it usually means the execution of 'criminals' and it specifically means burning them using tyres. In the light of this, most respondents agreed that in the given situation the speaker meant 'lynch' and not put a barricade.

So even though the phrase *weka taili* had two interpretations, the social circumstances under which it was produced led the respondents to conclude that the speaker intended to mean 'lynch them' and not 'block their way'.

4.3.5 Summary

The knowledge of the social processes that contributed to interpretation of the politicians' utterances were found to vary from one respondent to the other. These social processes were represented by the five different levels of context as suggested by Wodak (1996). The smallest circle was the C₁ level which included an analysis of the discourse unit itself. The next circle consisted of the speakers and audience whose identity and social roles contributed to the interpretations of their utterances. The third level involved the situation of the utterance in relation to time and place. This required the respondents to establish if and how an utterance was related to other communicative events that had happened earlier. The fourth level represents the institution of politics in which the utterance was produced. The fifth level included knowledge of the Kenyan society and its political history. The findings of the study show that the interaction of

all the five levels of context was instrumental in trying to find plausible interpretations to utterances.

According to Schiffrin (1988), linguists assume that messages are created through an interaction between the propositional meaning of words (discourse) and information identified in relation to the environment in which an utterance occurs (context). In this study, context was found to limit the range of possible interpretations on the one hand while supporting intended interpretations on the other. This was seen where context seemed to justify different interpretations of the same utterance and where a wider view of the context restricted the meaning. The numerous interpretations of the utterances proved that interpretations are never always correct or exhaustive. It was possible for an utterance to have a totally different meaning from what its producer intended because of the contextual information possessed by the audience.

4.4 Social Implications of Utterances

Politics is a social activity that arises out of interaction between people. Thus, it is conducted through the medium of language. Language is usually seen as simply a medium of expression yet it can be an active force that can trigger our imagination and stir our emotions. Heywood (1994) insists that words not only reflect the reality around us, but they also shape it. Language thus helps to create the world itself. The critical approach to political discourse helps to establish how social reality is created through discourse. This approach explores how political discourse can be an active force that can have far-reaching implications on the society. CDA conceptualises discourse as a form of social practice that can be used to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signalled, constituted and legitimised by language use (Wodak and Meyer 2001). CDA is therefore important in the analysis of the social implications of utterances made by politicians that they may be unaware of (Wodak 1989).

The study explored how the discourse of politicians arose out of social relations and struggles over power and how the discourse is shaped by these aspects. To arrive at the social implications, respondents were asked what an utterance revealed about politics and politicians and whether what politicians said affected the public. The study discovered that political discourse constituted existing relations and also contributed to the formation of new alliances. The social processes

within which political discourse was produced and interpreted signalled a number of social implications. The principles of CDA were used as a basis for the establishment of the social implications of political discourse. The implications identified by the respondents are discussed under two subheadings:

- (i) Social relations
- (ii) Power relations

The findings of the study revealed that there were personal and social identities that could be established through political discourse. Respondents were able to establish the character traits of politicians by merely analysing the utterances and the contexts in which the utterances were used. The utterances were found to point at certain social relations that existed between a politician and other politicians or between the politicians and members of the public. These relations included gender, ethnicity and personal identities. Some of the utterances were found to depict gender inequality, where one gender, specifically the female was portrayed as weaker than the male. The implication of ethnicity was given by respondents who argued that some utterances portrayed the politicians as people who had ethnic affiliations and were interested in remaining in power only to protect 'their own'.

The study also found that political discourse involved the exercise of power. Respondents established unequal power relations in various utterances made by politicians. This indicated underlying power struggles within the institution of politics. The social and power relations showed how politicians' utterances revealed the kind of people they were, what values they stood for, and how their discourse helped to shape their relationship with others. Although the research had not set out to investigate the implication of disillusionment, respondents continuously gave it as an implication of some of the utterances. A section of the respondents claimed that they were frustrated and disappointed in politicians as many of them never fulfil their promises to the public. This explains why it was included as an implication of political discourse in this study.

4.4.1 Social Relations

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) distinguish three domains of social life that may be discursively constituted: Representations about the world; relations between people; and people's personal and social identities. The study revealed that it was possible to figure out the ideals of politicians from their discourse. The social issues emerging during interpretation of utterances included gender, ethnic affiliation and personal identities.

4.4.1.1 Gender

There were utterances made by politicians that expressed inequality of gender. 46 per cent of the respondents found gender implications in utterance 4 while 58 per cent found that utterance 9 revealed gender inequalities. The two utterances below illustrate discrimination against the female gender. Utterance 9 was made by an MP from LDP protesting over the appointment of a female chairlady in the NARC party.

Example 21-Utterance 9

Ikiwa tungeambiwa NARC ni ya . x x x, hatungeingia kwa MOU.

Translation: If we had been told that NARC belonged to x x x, we would not have entered the MOU.

x x x (name withheld) is a female MP who had been appointed as the NARC chairperson. Respondents deduced that the speaker meant that such an influential position was not supposed to be held by a woman. This utterance was seen as representing the opposition that a woman faces in a parliament that is male dominated. The speaker implies that he would not enter into an agreement with a woman or with a party whose leader is a woman. Other respondents agreed that the lady did not qualify to occupy the coalition chair because she was a woman. The ideology that women are weaker than men was seen to influence the respondents' interpretation because many were of the opinion that NARC was a powerful coalition that needed to be headed by a man. This shows that according to them, there are positions that are exclusively for men because they are perceived to be positions of strength and authority. These are qualities assumed to be lacking in women. Most of the female respondents, however, argued that the speaker was being unfair to women. When the female politician was appointed as the chairperson of that party, it

was because members thought she was capable just like any other man and her sex did not matter.

The speaker's reaction to the appointment portrays him as male chauvinist and represents the mostly misleading and ungrounded gender constructions of society such as; women are less emotionally stable than men (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). Utterance 4 also illustrates how discourse can present women as the weaker sex. The utterance was made after international donors withdrew aid to Kenya following allegations of corruption and misuse of funds by politicians.

Example 22-Utterance 4

It is like raping a woman who is already too willing.

Even though raping was used metaphorically and respondents could infer acceptable implicatures, the use of this image stirred a heated controversy. Respondents, especially women thought it was unfair of the MP to use the image of the woman in the most abusive sexual circumstances. The use of that image was found to be gender insensitive. Like in utterance 9, it portrays the speaker as a male who despises the female. Whatever message the speaker intended to put across, most females and even some males were offended by his speech. Rape is considered by society, a serious crime against women of all ages and status. Unfortunately, this utterance was made at a time when rape cases were on the increase and gender activists were struggling to curb the menace. It was therefore enraging to hear an MP mentioning rape so casually as if it was something normal. The speaker had been forced to give an apology to the public, as many people had felt insulted by his utterance. Some female respondents suggested that men find it hard to comprehend the pain of rape because of their male status. They blamed this on the leniency of the current laws that saw rapists getting away with mild sentences.

Surprisingly, some of the male respondents did not see any gender discrimination in the utterances. They claimed that the appointee did not qualify to be the chairperson of NARC, not because she was a woman, but because she lacked the political experience needed to run such a powerful office. Nevertheless, most respondents conceded that the use of the *raping* image was

inappropriate as it portrayed women as sexual objects and treated rape like it was a casual occurrence.

4.4.1.2 Ethnic Affiliations

The research found out that politicians relayed ethnic sentiments in their utterances. Politicians were found to tribalise issues unnecessarily to appear like they were fighting for the rights of those they were supposed to be representing. Ethnicity refers to the identification of people through the language they speak and their regions of origin. Ross (1975) discusses ethnicity as an important factor in urban politics. He postulates that ethnicity is important in understanding the differences in political beliefs and assumptions in post independent Kenya. 75 per cent of the respondents established that utterance 6 below exposed the speaker's intention and determination to defend the people who belonged to his ethnic group. In June 2005, the government gave a directive for the eviction of all illegal squatters in the Mau forest in the Rift Valley province. This was part of the implementation of the Ndung'u Report¹ aimed at reclaiming grabbed land. The speaker was a KANU MP from the Kalenjin ethnic community.

Example 23-Utterance 6

Agree to leave Mau forest for heaven.

One social implication that arose from this utterance was that the Mau evictions were not justified and the MP was inciting the squatters to resist evictions. This implication was fiercely contested by other respondents who argued that Mau forest was a vital ecological asset in Kenya that should not be destroyed through settling squatters. It was said to be an important water catchment area where twelve rivers originated.

Respondents argued that the settling of squatters in the forest had had a negative impact on agriculture and the economy. This is because the squatters were reported to have been involved in logging and destroying the forest that helped preserve water for the rivers. The speaker was seen to be inciting the people because those who were being evicted were from his ethnic group

¹ The Ndung'u report was a report drawn by the land commission investigating illegal allocation of land in Kenya. Its aim was to reclaim government and forest land that had been grabbed.

(Kalenjins). Telling them to leave Mau only for heaven is a sarcastic way of telling them not to move at all even if they are threatened with death.

Contextual information reveals that Kalenjins, who were the majority members in the formerly leading party KANU, had been allocated forestland illegally. The new NARC government was on a course to recover illegally allocated land and reclaim forestland to restore the country's natural resources. Some respondents, however, felt that the Ndung'u report which contained the recovery plan was being unfairly implemented. For instance, they claimed they had to start with Mau forest to punish the Kalenjins because they did not vote for NARC.

It was noted that the Rift valley MPs who had joined the speaker in protests against the 'unfair' treatment of the helpless evictees were all from the same ethnic background. Their ethnic affiliation made them fail to realise the necessity to safeguard the Mau forest. Moreover, it was assumed that the Kalenjin leaders had illegally sold the forest land to unsuspecting fellow Kalenjins and were now crying foul because they were no longer in power to protect their own. Another utterance that suggested ethnic affiliations is exemplified below.

Example 24-Utterance 8

You Pokots should not vacate Kanyarkwat land even if force is used, instead you should resist. Non-Pokots doing business in Makutano town must leave the business to be run by the Pokot community.

The social implication of this utterance given by 95 per cent of the respondents was that MPs lacked a national perspective. Instead of dealing with problems impartially, they are aligned along ethnic or tribal lines. The speaker above was clearly inciting his fellow Pokots to fight any forces that may come in to help solve the boundary dispute between the Luhyas and the Pokots who live in Kanyarkwat. This utterance had caused tension between the two ethnic groups. Respondents illustrated how similar utterances made in Mai Mahiu, Marsabit, Molo and Enosupukia areas had led to severe tribal and land clashes. It was revealed that what politicians say about other ethnic groups has made some groups fear or resent each other. In his study of political behaviour in Nairobi, Ross (ibid) postulated that ethnic groups were important because of their visibility and relative ease with which they can be mobilised in social and political

conflicts. When the speaker, who is an MP, incites the Pokots against the Luhyas, he is being parochial. Both groups need to coexist as they belong to one nation of which the MP is an instrumental part. The speaker of utterance 19 below was then an MP and minister in charge of Local Government. He was complaining about a certain group of politicians who seemed to have surrounded the president thus making it difficult for others to reach or be close to him.

Example 25-Utterance 19

Mkikuyu asahau kutawala Kenya tena.

Translation: A Kikuyu should forget about ruling Kenya again.

The implication of ethnicity in the above utterance was suggested by 46 per cent of the respondents. Respondents' contextual knowledge showed that the speaker made this utterance after feeling he was being sidelined by a group of politicians who were from the same ethnic background as the president. By using the term *Mkikuyu*, the speaker generalises his annoyance to all *Kikuyus*. The use of that term by an MP who was also a government minister indicates that leadership in Kenya is propagated along tribal or ethnic lines. A further illustration of ethnicity is in utterance 16. As the controversy over executive or non-executive premiership rocked the constitutional review process, some politicians felt that the new constitution was no longer necessary. An MP from NAK, who was then a minister for Transport and Communication said:

Example 26-Utterance 16

We wanted a new constitution because we wanted one of our own.

During the process of interpretation, there were conflicting views as to whether the phrase 'our own' meant the 'opposition parties' or 'his ethnic group'. Some respondents interpreted the phrase to mean one from the opposition. However, 72 per cent of the respondents argued that since they knew Kenyan politicians to be tribalistic, the speaker meant one from their ethnic group. The proposed constitution had been seen as a ploy to discredit the previous government led by Moi, the then president. However, when a person from the speaker's ethnic group became president, he felt it was no longer necessary to have a new constitution that would reduce presidential powers. It was noted that politicians who were from the same ethnic background as the current president seemingly supported the government despite the fact that they belonged to opposition parties. This kind of relationship is not new. Ross (*ibid*) observed that during

Kenyatta's reign, there was widespread allegation that Kikuyus were being favoured in all areas of development. Kenyatta was Kenya's first president and he was from the Kikuyu ethnic group. The domination of positions of power by Kikuyus led to more negative responses to government by members of other ethnic groups (Ross 1975: 60). This explains why in example 25 the speaker is bitter with Kikuyus. These utterances also revealed that political interests are defined along tribal lines (see 1.1.1). It was claimed that even the different political parties in Kenya were ethnic based. DP is said to be for Kikuyus; LDP for Luos; Ford-K for Luhyas and SDP for Kambas. The leaders of these groups come from the respective ethnic groups. The frequent occurrence of the implication of ethnicity in political discourse shows that political interests in the Kenyan society are inseparable from ethnic influence.

4.4.1.3 Personal Identities

Utterances were found to reveal the personal identities. What politicians said uncovered their personal attributes and ideals. 40 per cent of the respondents found that utterance 3 below revealed the character of the speaker and other politicians. The health minister had organised to meet with a number of MPs in a Mombasa hotel to discuss the viability of a health bill she was proposing. Mombasa is a luxurious town in the coast province of Kenya. Seemingly, the MPs accepted her invitation for different reasons as seen in utterance 3 by one of the MPs who went to Mombasa.

Example 27-Utterance 3

'No one can resist the allure of a free holiday in Mombasa with good food in good hotels and ten thousand shillings in the pocket.'

According to the respondents, this utterance revealed the speaker as a scoundrel with no moral principles. This was because he openly declared that he did not go to Mombasa to discuss the health bill proposed by the health minister. He leaves no doubt in his audience's mind that he was more interested in the luxury part of the deal. The speaker would probably vote for the health bill because he was compromised or legislatively bribed to do so. This gives the implication that while the public puts its faith on MPs to make laws that ensure social justice, the legislators are only loyal to their pockets. The MPs are regarded as insensitive in the way they misuse public funds from taxpayers' money. The utterance reveals their selfishness at the

expense of national interests. Another utterance that was found to reveal personal identity was utterance 5 illustrated below.

Example 28-Utterance 5

Mkiwaona wao. . . weka taili.

Translation: When you see them . . . put a tyre.

The MP for Makadara made this utterance as he addressed his constituents in reaction to the decision by the Kenya Power and Lighting Company (KPLC) to demolish all structures built along power lines. The utterance above depicted the speaker as a lawless and arrogant person. Respondents used the context to conclude that since the speaker was once a boxer, he preferred to solve matters through physical confrontation. It was argued that he simply wanted to please his constituents and gain political mileage by inciting them to take the law into their hands. 51 per cent of the respondents described the MP as a hypocrite who knew that the decision to demolish structures built along power lines had been backed by the government of which he is a part. The following translated utterance was made by the MP for Embakasi constituency. He was addressing his constituents and was reacting to a report that aborted fetuses had been dumped in the area.

Example 29-Utterance 7

Translation: Collecting all the kids you gave birth to at night without telling anyone. In this Embakasi we have a lot of problems . . . You find people calling themselves any name. There are honourables among you, there are PCs, mayors, chairmen and chairladies. Everyone here is a chairman or a chairlady of I don't know what! Here, even presidents can be found. Where is all of Nairobi's garbage dumped? Here in Dandora. The other is Nairobi's sewage- it is all here at Rwai-Embakasi. All the poorest people in Nairobi (I don't want to call them scum) when they are evicted from Spring Valley and Mworoto . . .where are they taken? Embakasi!

When the speaker enlists all the kinds of people to be found in his constituency, he adds the statement *sitaki kuwaita takataka* which was a Swahili statement freely translated as 'I don't want to call them scum' (see appendix 1 for Swahili utterance). This was interpreted by respondents as a sarcastic remark which actually meant he thought the Embakasi residents were a bunch of rubbish just like the garbage he was complaining is deposited at the constituency.

According to respondents, politicians only entertained the members of public when they were campaigning and searching for votes. Once they got to the top, the voters became a bother. 45 per cent of the respondents were of the opinion that politicians were for the poor when the poor had the vote. Later after elections, they are for the rich because they now have money. For most of the politicians, parliament was a moneymaking venture, and they entered into politics because they wanted to get rich. This led to the conclusion that politicians were selfish, hypocritical and exploitative.

4.4.2 Power Relations

Wodak (1989) illustrates how power relations can be exercised or negotiated in discourse. In her CDA approach, discourse is seen as a form of social action which uncovers obscure relations of power. Politics is about power and the practice of politics is often portrayed as little more than the exercise of power. Several definitions of power have been attempted, but one major aspect of power common to all the definitions is the ability to influence the behaviour of others, based upon the capacity to reward or punish. Heywood (1994) categorises Lukes' (1974) dimensions of power into three faces:

- The ability to influence the making of decisions.
- The capacity to shape the political agenda and thus prevent decisions from being made.
- The ability to control peoples' thoughts by manipulating their needs and preferences.

(Heywood 1994:79-80)

The three faces mentioned by Lukes help to define power in a way that includes all manifestations of power by drawing attention to how power is exercised in the real world.

When an MP is in a position to influence decision-making, he is considered to be a powerful politician. Another politician may exercise his powers by preventing decisions he was not able to influence from being made e.g. like refusing to vote where a majority of votes is required to pass a bill. In the process of trying to achieve these levels of dominance, power struggles abound.

An MP from NAK made the translated utterance in example 30 below after a group of LDP members in the coalition decided to field in their own candidate for the Kisauni parliamentary seat. The coalition had intended to present one candidate.

Example 30-Utterance 11

Translation: If you have fifteen goat, there is one *Mburi ya rwanio*-a goat which never gets satisfied even if you give it the best feed- he keeps bleating for more.

Struggles over power was one of the major implications of this utterance. The interpretations given by respondents revealed that the speaker was complaining about LDP members in the NARC coalition, who are not satisfied with the offices they had been given to hold. The implication is that those dissatisfied members are power hungry. They were grumbling because they wanted positions from where they would influence the making of decisions and they would be as powerful as their political counterparts. 68 per cent of the respondents attested that NAK and LDP are engaged in perpetual power struggles because there were no solid tenets on which the coalition was formed. When they were forming the coalition, the two parties had agreed on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would see the parties share power equally. The MOU was however put aside when NARC took over and this was one of the issues that continued to trouble the coalition.

The NAK faction was accused of discarding the document after its top candidate got to power. This has led to dissatisfaction among LDP members and such utterances have created animosity between NAK and LDP members of parliament. In March 2004, members opposed to a weakened presidency during the CRP walked out of the National Constitutional Conference (NCC). They were protesting the rejection of a report that proposed a system in which the Prime Minister had some authority but the president retained most of the powers. The utterance below was made by the minister in charge of Constitutional Affairs who was among those who walked out.

Example 31-Utterance 13

Some underground forces have sabotaged the consensus and we cannot write a new constitution which divides. We have to work together.

Respondents complained that the government's withdrawal at that time had raised questions on their commitment to deliver a new constitution. The impasse over the constitutional review was attributed to the work of two rival groups of MPs. The warring sides in government, NAK and LDP, had not been able to agree on issues regarding devolution of power in the new constitution.

Respondents suggested that LDP, which the speaker terms as the underground forces could not influence the decision to have an executive premiership. Ironically, one of the LDP leaders seemed to enjoy massive support from the NCC and the Kenyan public at the time.

LDP resorted to aligning themselves with KANU which was an opposition party. They then proposed the 65 per cent support in the house for any changes to the *Bomas* draft of the constitution. The Bomas draft was the original draft of the reviewed constitution drawn by delegates at Bomas of Kenya. It got its name from the venue where the delegates were meeting. This was a political gimmick, as they knew this percentage was unattainable in parliament. LDP and KANU knew that with such a situation, the review process would stall and this would give the two parties a chance to shape the political agenda by preventing decisions from being made. 89 per cent of the respondents explained that this is what the speaker meant when he said ‘some underground forces are sabotaging the consensus’.

Respondents felt that the struggles over the constitution had been brought about by resistance to two centres of power in the country. From assumptions given by the respondents, LDP members wanted a constitution that would ensure that the excessive powers vested on the presidency are trimmed. The NAK faction was accused of mutilating the previous draft to avoid the introduction of an executive Prime Minister. Each group was determined to influence the outcome of this exercise for its own interest while hiding behind national interest.

According to respondents, politicians were using the constitution as a bait to exercise their powers. 11 per cent of the respondents felt that the politicians’ squabbles over the constitution were unnecessary, as it was not a priority in Kenya. Moreover, the current constitution had served to sustain the country. Respondents expressed fear that with such a political atmosphere, the implementation of a new constitution would not only take long, but it was also likely to fuel conflicts that may lead to political instability that would eventually ruin the economy. Struggles over power in the proposed constitution were also evident in utterance 14.

Example 32-Utterance 14

In a family, there are two centres of power, a man and his wife. The two live harmoniously and share responsibilities without squabbles.

This utterance was made by an MP from LDP, who was then a minister for Roads and Public Works. One of most contentious issues in the making of the new constitution was the executive. Politicians from different sides could not agree on whether Kenya should have a Prime Minister with executive powers or not. This utterance was found to convey the real bone of contention between the two major parties that make up the coalition: the quest for power. 70 per cent of the respondents uncovered implications of power relations and struggles in the utterance. Respondents believed that the clamour for the provision of an executive prime minister's post in the new constitution had divided the ruling coalition. Contextual knowledge showed that NAK and LDP were equal partners as it was their union that led to winning in the last election. The parties had then drawn an MOU that had stipulated a 50-50 power sharing agreement. Since the presidential candidate who won was from NAK, the LDP party had hoped to secure the premiership once the constitutional review process was over. This did not turn out as expected because the government later rejected the idea of executive premiership. The LDP faction felt cheated.

However, 25 per cent of the respondents suggested that the speaker of the above utterance was drawing attention to himself. He was advocating for two centres of power because being a top LDP official, he had been proposed for the position of Prime Minister and he was now bitter. Other respondents said he had a right to complain because he was one of the foremost proponents of constitutional reform. The speaker was seen to be a powerful politician because of his capacity to move crowds with his philosophical speeches. Respondents labelled him as an assertive and scheming politician who used his charismatic power to achieve political favour. It was also argued that the speaker hides behind the facade of the *Bomas* draft when all he is interested in is the acquisition of power.

With the unequal power relations uncovered in the discourse of the NARC politicians, respondents predicted that in the next general election, the individual parties were likely to contest alone. The implication of power struggle in the utterances was seen to determine the trend of political alliances in future, hence shaping social and political relations. Issues of economy were also found to reveal struggles over power. Respondents suggested that there was a close link between politics and the economy because MPs and ministers are politicians who play

a key role in making decisions that affect the country. The next example illustrates the relationship between political power and economic power.

Example 33-Utterance 4

It's like raping a woman who is already too willing.

Despite the gender controversy generated by the speaker's figurative language, this utterance was also found to signal unequal power relations between Kenya and its donors. 30 per cent of the respondents related the image of rape to power struggles. Rape was described by respondents as a violent crime that is accomplished by the use of force. Respondents argued that rape was misunderstood and mistaken for sex, yet it had nothing to do with sex. It was all about power and violence. The male who is the rapist, exercises his power by use of force over the female who is the victim on the receiving end. This implied that the one who rapes (in this case, a man) is perceived to be physically stronger than the one being raped (woman). The donors, who assist Kenya with funds, are seen to be strong forces that exercise their power over the country through their ability to influence the making of decisions. For example, respondents argued that the government's decision to retrench public servants was a condition they were forced to fulfil if they were to get more aid from donors. Respondents also attributed the establishment of bodies like the 'Department of Ethics and Governance' and 'Transparency International' to the donors' influence. These were conditions given for Kenya to prove that it was fighting corruption.

The woman who is already too willing was viewed as Kenya, which seems weak and helpless in the hands of the rapist who is the superpower. The victim is not offering any resistance because it is at the mercy of the rapist. The country had made several adjustments to fulfil the donors' conditions but the donors were not satisfied. While some respondents saw this as a form of neo-colonialism, others thought it was right for the donors to control the country especially when it came to economy issues. Respondents were certain that the economy of the country had been run down by corrupt politicians who preached an economic crisis, while they squandered public funds in political games.

The economic implication of the utterance above illustrates the relationship between political power and the economy. Heywood (1994) postulates that politics is linked to the distribution and

the use of power, wealth and resources in the course of social existence. While human needs and desires are infinite, the resources to satisfy them are scarce. He defines politics as the activity through which the allocation of these resources takes place. Heywood's idea on scarcity of resources predicts that people will conflict or scramble for the scarce resources. Those who are powerful will of course determine how to distribute the resources. This concurs with Heywood's conclusion that political power is shown by the ability to achieve a desired outcome through whatever means (Heywood 1994:23).

In example 27, we see how politicians use their political position to influence decision-making both in parliament and outside. The implication of corruption was evident from the utterance. Respondents argued that even though the health minister may have had good intentions in proposing the bill, she engaged in legislative corruption when she spent huge sums of money to entertain MPs into voting for the bill. From what the speaker says, it is obvious that the health minister managed to convince them to vote for the bill not by appealing to their intellect but to their stomachs. What was important was that the minister exercised her powers over other ministers by compromising and influencing them to vote for her bill. The utterance also reveals that the MP was bragging about their power to influence decision-making in parliament. This proves that since individuals are self-centred, the possession of political power will be corrupting in itself; encouraging those in power to exploit their position for personal gain at the expense of others.

4.4.3 Disillusionment

Other social implications that emerged were revealed in the way respondents viewed politicians. There was general disillusionment with politicians and the government. The public was not satisfied with the progress the government had made in meeting their demands. This was partially attributed to the overly optimistic promises politicians made while searching for votes like getting a new constitution within one hundred days, creating many job opportunities and treating all people equally. The public was cynical about politicians and held them in low esteem because politicians are perceived to be power-seeking hypocrites who pursue personal ambition in the pretext of public service. Respondents complained that politicians like to wash their dirty

linen in public by making unreasonable and abusive utterances in public. Feelings of disillusionment are illustrated by the respondents opinions on utterance 2 below.

Example 34-Utterance 2

A thief is thief. A thief of today is just as bad as a thief of yesterday.

The utterance was produced by a MP from KANU who felt it was unfair to prosecute politicians who had amassed wealth in the former KANU regime. The interpretations given for this utterance revealed that the word ‘thief’ was used to refer to corrupt politicians. The KANU regime was criticized for engaging in many corrupt deals that cost the country lots of money. In view of this, the NARC government declared zero tolerance on corruption to help stabilise the country’s economy. It is from this contextual knowledge that respondents inferred that the ‘thief of today’ implied that there was still widespread corruption even in the current NARC government and the speaker was wondering why they were not also being prosecuted. Respondents claimed that they were disillusioned because they had voted for NARC with great hopes for positive change but it seemed like a dream that would never come true. The table below shows the main social implications found in the utterances in each category.

Table 4.2: Social implications of utterances

| Utterances | Implications | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------|-----|--------------------|-----|-------------------|-----|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----|
| | Gender | | Ethnic affiliation | | Personal Identity | | Power relations | | Disillusionment | |
| Corruption | 1 | 5% | – | – | 1 | 5% | 1 | 5% | 1 | 5% |
| Development | – | – | 2 | 10% | 1 | 5% | – | – | 1 | 5% |
| Propaganda | 1 | 5% | – | – | 1 | 5% | 1 | 5% | 1 | 5% |
| Constitution | – | – | 1 | 5% | – | – | 3 | 15% | – | – |
| Succession | – | – | 2 | 10% | 1 | 5% | 1 | 5% | – | – |
| Total | 2 | 10% | 5 | 25% | 4 | 20% | 6 | 30% | 3 | 15% |

The quantitative analysis of the social implication of politicians’ utterances indicates that there is a relationship between discourse and society. As shown in table 4.2, 30 per cent of the utterances uncovered relations of power within political realms. Respondents showed how the utterances were shaped by power struggles in the Kenyan society. Implications that centred on the

politicians' personality and social identities were also found in the utterances. The implications constituted 20 per cent of the utterances. Respondents established gender inequality in 10 per cent of the utterances while ethnic affiliations were exposed by 25 per cent of the politicians' utterances. The emerging implication of disillusionment was established as respondents reacted to 15 per cent of utterances. The findings illustrate how what is said is shaped by existing social and power relations and how utterances also help to shape relations. The findings are in a dialectical relationship with Fairclough and Wodak's (1997) idea that utterances can reveal subtle social issues and relationships. The high percentage of the implications of personal identity (20 per cent), ethnic affiliations (25 per cent) and power relations (30 per cent) are an indication that politicians use language to discriminate, exploit and control.

Heywood (ibid) suggests that language is so often wielded by professional politicians who have the incentive to manipulate and confuse. Politicians are known to use language not only as a means of communication but also as a political weapon that is sharpened to convey political intent. Heywood exemplifies how lately, feminists and civil rights movements have been trying to purge language of racist and sexist implications. The feminists view language as reflecting and shaping power structures in society and discriminating in favour of dominant groups. As a result, the idea of political correctness emerged to develop a bias free terminology that would enable political argument to be non-discriminatory. It was however argued that political correctness impoverished the descriptive power of language and introduced a form of censorship by denying expression to 'incorrect' views. This view is supported by Orwell (1945) who emphasises that language is an instrument of expression and not for concealing thought (Orwell 1945:157). The study also found that it was possible to judge the implications of utterances because most politicians did not pay attention to what was correct or not correct in their speech.

4.4.4 Summary

The findings of this study confirm that a critical analysis of political discourse reveals social implications that may not be obvious in utterances. The social implications derived from the utterances studied include gender bias, personal identities, ethnic affiliations, power struggles and disillusionment. The results show that politics in Kenya is shaped along ethnic lines. It is also evident that power relations are a central part of Kenyan politics and that this power is

exercised and negotiated through discourse. However, the low occurrence of gender implications, especially those portraying women as the weaker sex, could be seen as an indication that gender disparity in politics is diminishing.

4.5 Conclusion on the Chapter

The findings of the research revealed that the features of style used by politicians constituted ambiguity that led to multiple interpretations of their utterances. Politicians employed some styles deliberately to obscure meaning due to fear or doubt. The multiple interpretations of the utterances that arose out of contextual ambiguity were justified and others disambiguated by the social processes discussed in section 4.3. The social processes included various levels of contextual knowledge assumed by respondents during interpretation. These social processes also contributed to the establishment of the social implications of political discourse.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the research and draws conclusions from the findings on the basis of the research objectives and hypothesis. The problems encountered during the research are highlighted and recommendations for further research suggested.

5.2 Summary

The main aim of the study was to identify stylistic features in utterances produced by politicians and find out if these utterances contained ambiguities that led to multiple interpretations. The study set out to determine the role of context, in the wider sense of social processes, in interpretation and to establish the social implications of political discourse. The hypotheses of the study were that politicians use certain stylistic features in their speech. The features of style were assumed to constitute ambiguities that lead to multiple interpretations. Ambiguity arose due to the varying social processes assumed to underlie the production and interpretation of the utterances. The third assumption was that political discourse has social implications to the public.

The language used by politicians was analysed by the researcher to determine the type and frequency of stylistic features used in the utterances. The various interpretations of the utterances were also analysed to find out the contribution of social processes to the interpretation of the styles. Analysis of the social processes helped to establish the social implications of politicians' utterances. The results of the study were that politicians' discourse contained special features of style which were found to constitute ambiguities that led to the utterances being interpreted in varying ways. The study established that the ambiguity and multiple interpretations were brought about by the social processes on which the respondents decided to base their inferences. Political discourse was found to have various social implications.

5.3 Conclusions

This section includes observations and conclusions drawn from the research findings based on the objectives and hypotheses set.

5.3.1 Style and Ambiguity in Political Discourse

The study found that politicians use several stylistic devices in their discourse. The features of style identified included euphemism, pretentious diction, and the use of figurative language, analogy, allusion, circumlocution, sarcasm and evasion. Grice's pragmatic theory helped to explain why politicians used some of the styles by showing how they violated or flouted maxims. In cases where no style was detected, it was assumed that the CP and its maxims were being followed in a straightforward way.

The study found that politicians use the stylistic features for many reasons. According to the respondents, euphemism, pretentious diction and circumlocution were generally used when the politician wanted to avoid offending other politicians or members of public. Most utterances with these styles were those that dwelt on development and social issues, e.g. utterance 7 (see appendix 1). Evasion and sarcasm were used when politicians wanted to conceal their real intentions or when they wanted to detach themselves from blame on the vices committed by their institution. Evasion was found in utterances dealing with sensitive issues like corruption in the government.

Metaphors, similes, analogy and allusion were used to create vivid images of what utterances represented. However, the use of these styles was meant to make the utterance remain vague and ambiguous for legal reasons and to allow a wide range of interpretations. Some politicians used such images deliberately to avoid being pinned down if the utterance turns out to have other implicatures that may be offending. In this way, the politicians got away with many inciting and derogatory utterances made in public. A good example is illustrated by utterance 5 where respondents demonstrated how when the speaker was asked by the press to explain why he was inciting the public to lynch the KPLC workers, he cleverly disowned the metaphor *weka tyre* and claimed he had said *weka taa gari ipite* which means 'put the lights on for the vehicle to pass'.

Unfortunately, the press had recorded him live and changing the utterance did not help. Eventually, the politician had to get another possible meaning of the metaphor, 'to put a barricade' and this is what he used to defend himself.

The study therefore concluded that the use of stylistic features led to contextual ambiguity, which resulted in multiple interpretations. The most common feature of style used in the utterances was allusion while the least used styles were euphemism and sarcasm. The study also concluded that although politicians preferred to speak indirectly through allusions, they did not do this by using terms that sounded polite or those that had opposite meanings. They opted to use images that would clearly display their intentions.

5.3.2 Social Processes and Multiple Interpretations

The multiple interpretations were found to arise due to the social processes assumed by the respondents. The researcher described and analysed the social processes following CDA's five levels of context suggested by Wodak (1996). The levels included the discourse unit, the interlocutors, the situation, the institution where the utterance takes place and the society in which the institution is integrated. Grice's cooperative principle and its maxims were applied together with CDA's notion of context to determine the plausibility of the respondents' interpretations. The study found that all the five levels played a key role in interpretation of political discourse hence the conclusion that there are actually no 'misinterpretations'. All the different interpretations of an utterance were validated by the social processes taken into consideration. Moreover, the respondents' interpretations indicate that people choose different levels of contextual information depending on their political persuasion and social backgrounds. This conclusion supports the claim by Fairclough and Wodak (1997) that in discourse, the right interpretation does not really exist. Interpretations are plausible depending on the contexts constructed by the speakers and their audiences. The findings act as a warning to politicians and members of public against constructing contexts that are too narrow or too large when interpreting political discourse.

5.3.3 Social Implications of Political Discourse

The principles of CDA together with the social processes guided the research in the establishment of the social implications of political discourse. The social implications suggested by the respondents included gender inequality, ethnic affiliations, personal identities and struggles over power. Personal identities and power struggles were the most frequent implications in the utterances. 20 per cent of the utterances had implications of personal identities. 25 per cent uncovered ethnic affiliations while 30 per cent revealed struggles over power. From these results, the study concluded that politicians were selfish and were only interested in the possession of power. The study concluded that power corrupts, because once they were in positions of power, the politicians used their power to discriminate, control others and to safeguard their own selfish interests. Political power was exercised through manipulated consent and not by use of force.

Another conclusion drawn from the social implications was that members of the public are influenced by what the politicians say. Discussions with the respondents revealed how politicians' utterances had sparked off ethnic clashes and enmity between ethnic groups in parts of the country. Some respondents claimed they liked or disliked a politician because of something they had said in public. In fact, some politicians had lost favour from the public to the extent that people promised not to vote for them in the next election. Similarly, the power struggles displayed by the warring sides of the ruling party NARC warned of a future break-up of the so called coalition.

The study concluded that political discourse addresses social problems and does ideological work. For instance, the unequal gender relations exposed by the utterances which presented the female as the weaker sex. Political discourse is interpretive and explanatory because interpretations depend on a thorough analysis of context. It is also historical as the historical background of Kenya was important during interpretation of politicians' utterances. This helped to link what was said to the society. The study concluded that political discourse is a form of social action that explains and shapes relationships between politicians and uncovers existing power relations. The implications of disillusionment led to the conclusion that politicians make many promises to the public when they are campaigning for votes with no intention of honouring

them. It is suggested that when politicians clashed or disagreed they should not wash their dirty linen in public.

5.4 Problems in Research

One of the major problems faced by the research was suspicion by members of public. Many respondents thought the researcher was seeking their views on behalf of other politicians. This problem was eased by obtaining a permission letter from the local public authorities in the area and using acquaintances to be introduced to the respondents. Another problem came up during interpretation. The utterances produced in Swahili had to be translated to English. However, respondents preferred to respond to the Swahili utterances in Swahili and this gave the researcher the difficult task of translating both the utterance and the interpretations into English in the report. There were cases where politicians used their mother tongue. Free translation was done for the utterances that were not made in English. Problems related to the focus group interviews posed a great challenge to the research. The presence of acquaintances in the same group made other members feel less confident. Other group members wanted to dominate discussions to the extent of disregarding other people's contributions. The researcher acted as the group moderator and applied skills of group dynamics to strike a balance that ensured full participation of all members. During analysis, the researcher could not take the utterances one by one and discuss all their dimensions of style, interpretation, context and implications at once because these dimensions fell under different objectives of the study. It therefore became necessary for the researcher to use many of the utterances more than once to illustrate different objectives.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

From the observations and conclusions made, the following suggestions are recommended for further research.

1. Research should be carried out on utterances produced by a wider range of politicians e.g. councillors, mayors, ministers to find out if they will have the same implications.
2. Since this research was based purely on the public's point of view, a research should be done where the politicians will be interviewed to find out the intended meaning and if the assumptions are different or the same.

3. Finally, research should be carried out on the role of mass media in political socialisation. This is motivated by the fact many of the respondents in the research based their assumptions on what they had heard from the television, radio, or print media.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

UTTERANCES

All the utterances below were recorded from the KTN news broadcasts between January and April 2005.

Corruption

1. His job is not like that of a comedian. He has abused us and we are telling him that he should explain the facts or else he should shut up”.
2. A thief is a thief. A thief of today is just as bad as a thief of yesterday.
3. No one can resist the allure of a free holiday in Mombasa with good food, in good hotels and ten thousand shillings in the pocket!
4. It is like raping a woman who is already too willing.

Development in Constituencies

5. “Mkiwaona waoweka taili.”
6. ‘Agree to leave Mau forest for heaven.’
7. Ati kurogota toto yote ile mlizaa usiku bila kuambia watu hii Embakasi tuko na taabu sana. . kila mtu hapa ni chairman ama chairlady sijui ya nini, hapa hata mapresident wanaweza patikana, Garbage ya Nairobi yote inapelekwa wapi? Hapa Dandora; ile ingine ni sewage, yote ya Nairobi Bwana PC iko hapa Rwai-Embakasi. Wale watu yote maskini dunia hii ya Nairobi (sitaki kuwaita takataka) wote wakipata taabu huko Spring valley, wakitolewa Mworoto wanapelekwa wapi? Embakasi!
8. You pokots should not vacate Kanyarwat land even if force is used, instead you should resist. Non-pokots doing business in Makutano town must leave the business to be run by the pokot community.

Party Propaganda

9. Ikiwa tungeambiwa Narc ni ya Ngilu hatungeingia kwa MOU.
10. Sisi ndani ya KANU hatukuleta hii njaa, hii njaa ni ya NARC.
11. Ukiwa na mbuzi kama kumi na watano, kuna ‘mbori ya rwanio’ kuna mbuzi mmoja ambaye hatosheki hata ukimptia ile chakula ya grade. Anafanya tu mmeee mmeee. . .
12. “The aggregate of NARC is clear and compelling LDP is not a partner in the Kibaki government LDP members in the government have been invited at the pleasure of the president as individuals to serve the president personally without any reference to their parties. It can now be said without any fear or contradiction that there is no NARC government what is, is the illegal cabinet President Kibaki has made of his rich friends against the workers and peasants of this nation, Kisauni will be the mother of all battles in the words of the former president of Iraq between the forces of change against the lords of the status quo.

Constitution

13. Some underground forces have sabotaged the consensus and we cannot write a new constitution, which divides, we have to work together.
14. 'In a family, there are two centers of power-a man and his wife. The two live harmoniously and share responsibilities without squabbles.'
15. Anarchists like Koigi should never be given a chance to derail this process. And I dare ask which provision of the constitution provides for a constitutional bill to be decided by a simple majority vote.
16. We wanted a new constitution because we wanted one of our own.

Succession and Power

17. "Ati kuna coalition government. Mimi nikiwa wakili wacha niwaambie hakuna kitu kama coalition government na sasa nimeamua ni kazi yangu kuona Kibaki ataendelea kukalia hiyo kiti.
18. "The President and his close advisers had only put hyena and sheep to work together when he named his new government." By bringing in people from other political parties. President Kibaki has hammered the last nail on the coffin of NARC."
19. Mkikuyu asahau kutawala Kenya tena.
20. "Ikija siku hiyo, tutafikiria hiyo serikali imetufanyia kazi, irudi tu iendelee lakini, na tuiunge mkono sisi wote. . .Ati mwingine anaitwa Kilo... Kilo... Kilonzo sijui nani anasema ati wataenda kututoa hapo. Nani anawajua hawa? Wakati watu wako na njaa wakati kama huu watu wengine katika KANU wanataka ati tufanye uchaguzi. . ."

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

These tapes contain utterances made by Kenyan politicians in the media. You will view and listen carefully to each of the utterances on these tapes and then answer the following questions:

- a) Has any of you heard the utterance before?
- b) Can you identify the:
 - (i) Speaker
 - (ii) Audience
 - (iii) Occasion
- c) What do you think the speaker means by the utterances? Give reasons.
- d) Is it possible that the utterance could mean something different from the interpretations given in above? Why?
Is it likely that these utterances may be misinterpreted by other people? What in your opinion contributes to this misinterpretation?
- e) Does this utterance portray the speaker as belonging to a certain social or political group? Does the utterance suggest anything about speaker's political status in relation to other politicians?
- f) Is it possible to know the political state of the country from the utterance? Give an example.
- g) What do you think prompted the speaker to make these utterances?
- h) What are your opinions on how Kenyan politicians talk?
- i) Do you think what politicians say in public affects the public in general? Please illustrate.
- j) Have you ever supported or condemned a politician because of what he/she said? Give reasons.
- k) Do you think politicians can promote unity or conflict by saying some things?

Personal details of Respondents

Name [optional]:

Age:

Gender:

Nationality:

Occupation:

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