

**THE PERSUASIVE DEVICES IN WILLIAM RUTO'S POLITICAL SPEECHES**

**A RELEVANCE THEORETIC APPROACH**

**BY**

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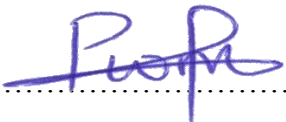
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## DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented for examination in any other university.

Sign..........

Date..... 16/11/2020 .....

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This project has been submitted for examination with our approval as the candidate's supervisors.

Sign..........

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Sign..........

Date..... 16/11/2020 .....

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## **DEDICATION**

To my Lord Jesus Christ for His overwhelming, never-ending love, grace and protection.

I would not have done this without Him.

To my loving Parents for laying the foundation of my education and having confidence in me. Your constant advice and support has brought me this far.

To my husband, David and daughter, Lyanne for your prayers, support, love and care. You have walked with me throughout this journey. You two are God's greatest gifts to me.

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## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to explore the general effects and effectiveness of humour and rhetorical questions as persuasive strategies in selected speeches of William Ruto. The study focused on the identification and interpretation of the persuasive devices in William Ruto's political speeches of the 2017 campaign period for the General Elections as well as after the handshake in 2018. This study argues that William Ruto is skillful in the way he uses language which enables him to persuade his audience to follow and vote for Uhuru Kenyatta of the Jubilee coalition and at the same time dissuades them from voting for their opponents in the NASA coalition. The persuasive devices studied were humour and rhetorical questions using Relevance Theory as discussed by Clark (2013). The humorous categories identified from Ruto's utterances were classified under irony, humorous metaphors and metonymy and further analyzed using the basic tenets of Relevance theory i.e. cognitive effects, processing effort, the cognitive and communicative principles as well as the relevance theoretic procedure to explain how the audience arrive at the correct interpretation. The cost-benefit formula was in use to show how hearers maximize relevance by creating as many assumptions using the least effort to attain optimal relevance and also showing when to stop when the most accessible interpretation has been reached. The study also identified rhetorical questions in William Ruto's speeches using the concept of mutual manifestness. The findings were that Ruto does not use them to seek for information from his audience but to make strong statements which in most cases were meant to mock, ridicule and criticize their opponents in the NASA coalition. These rhetorical devices were sampled from a total of ten speeches downloaded from YouTube. The incongruity concept, which explains humour as emanating from a violation of the normal order of things, was also applied in identifying how humorous effects are obtained from these categories. The ideas communicated by Ruto through his utterances were seen to disagree with his audience's expectations in relation to the political campaigns and Kenya's politics in general, thus resulting in humour. The study revealed that Ruto is able to criticize and ridicule his opponents using humour and rhetorical questions, hence portraying them as incompetent and unreliable. Consequently, he succeeds in dissuading people from voting for them. He also uses these devices to create a trustworthy image of himself and Uhuru Kenyatta and to minimize the distance between him and the audience, thus creating rapport and succeeds in persuading them to follow and vote for them.

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the Study**

This study is about humour and rhetorical questions as persuasive devices in William Ruto's political speeches using a Relevance-Theoretic Approach.

The study begins with a background to William Ruto. Kenya's Deputy President, William Samoei Ruto, is a self-made politician who ascended to the peak in a short time to become debatably the most formidable politician in the country today (Mkawale, 2017). His industry and influence was witnessed in his ability to rally the Rift Valley voting bloc behind President Uhuru Kenyatta to win the 2013 and 2017 General Elections. This earned William Ruto the tag 'king maker' (Muhula & Ndegwa, 2014; Mutua, 2018). He is said to have peddled groundnuts in the streets of Eldoret as a survival tactic for close to 30 years. Therefore, rising to the pinnacle of Kenyan politics from such a humble background is worth noting.

The backdrop to the 2013 General Election played a key role in catapulting William Ruto to the influential political position he holds in Kenya in 2020. The 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013 elections were Kenya's first under the new constitution which was inaugurated in August 2010 (Lynch & Rozej, 2013). They were more complex than previous elections in Kenya. As at January 2013, polls conducted by IPSOS Synovate stated that 46% of voters would vote for then Prime Minister, Raila Odinga who was running for the presidency on a Coalition for Reform and Democracy (CORD) ticket while 43% said they would support Uhuru Kenyatta of the Jubilee Alliance in the elections. Lynch & Rozej (2013) observe that it was at that time that Uhuru Kenyatta and his running mate, the leading Kalenjin politician William Ruto, had been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for their supposed role in orchestrating post-election violence in 2007-08 which left over 1000 Kenyans dead and almost 700,000 displaced.

Amidst all this uncertainty, and despite the opinion poll results that constantly placed Raila and CORD on the top, William Ruto was able to exploit his persuasive skills to rally and mobilize the Rift valley voting bloc behind Uhuru Kenyatta making him win in the 2013

General Elections and later get reelected in the 2017 General Elections. This study will therefore show how Ruto exploited the strategic use of language, more specifically humour and rhetorical questions to achieve his political end.

Ruto is arguably the most discussed politician in Kenya especially in the President Uhuru Kenyatta succession discourse. He has faced resistance and malice from his political rivals and political friends. Msafi (2016) has described Ruto as aggressive, with unparalleled charisma and cracks the most laughable jokes, is a people's person, hustler, religious, eloquent, courageous, brilliant and has mastery of statistical information and is a mobilizer per excellence. It is from this background that I developed interest in studying the rhetoric devices William Ruto uses in a bid to try and show that it is through the expertise in language use as a persuasive strategy that he has managed to remain relevant and unshakable in Kenyan politics.

Some studies have been done on Kenyan political speeches but none has been done on humour and rhetorical questions and also none of them has focused on William Ruto. These include Wanjala (2014) who studies irony in selected Kenyan political utterances. In her study, she affirms that politicians make ironical utterances with an aim to criticize bad leadership and also to attack opponents, humiliate them so as to succeed in getting approval from the audience. Habwe (1999) wrote on discourse analysis of Swahili political speeches. In his study, he points out that politics relates directly with people and also makes use of an intricate language that politicians rely on for persuasion. Jonyo (2012) studies politics of identity and ideology. His study shows how politicians use language to appeal to their audience's emotions as a tactic in defining in groups and out groups in social discourses. Michira (2013) studies the language of politics, a critical discourse analysis of the 2013 presidential campaign discourse where he analyzes hidden meaning in the 2013 presidential campaigns. Nyaga (2013) has also examined code switching in political speeches. The current study, however, focuses on humour and rhetorical questions in political speeches. Another related but divergent study is one which has analyzed rhetorical devices and forms of oral literature in the speeches of Raila Odinga, (Omollo, 2017).

What follows is a background to humour. The study of humour has attracted the attention of scholars from different fields of research like psychology, philosophy, linguistics, sociology and literature. The *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* defines humour as attributes that make something hilarious or comical, or being able to laugh at things that are hilarious. Curco (1997:10) says philosophy has always drawn distinctions between the notions of amusement and laughter where laughter is seen as a bodily phenomenon and amusement a mental state. Undoubtedly, they do not occur together all the time as laughter is not necessarily caused by amusement and consequently, not all amusement leads to laughter. Modern philosophers use the term 'humour' as a blanket term for all the categories and genres of the funny and view amusement as appertaining to humour.

Curco (1997:13) talks about superiority theory in philosophy which states that a humorous experience arises from feelings of supremacy over other people or even ourselves at a former time. People talk about a laughable thing to mean that it appears stupid or amusing since it is evidently not successful, has poor quality or foolish.

According to Release Theories (Spencer, 1911), humour is seen as resulting from the release of excess psychic energy. Issues addressed here are physical and biological in nature. Spencer (1911) as quoted by Curco (1997:21) argues that our emotions take the physical form of nervous energy. This energy at all times tends to result in muscular movement when it reaches certain levels. When nervous energy increases in our bodies, it is released through muscular motion. This response of movement is not limited to emotions associated with laughter.

Curco (1997:11-12) incongruity theories argue that humour is the result of a perception or a thought that clashes with what is expected. What this means is that an unexpected imbalance between what one expects and what one sees evokes laughter. Bain (1865) as quoted by Curco (1997:28) affirms that there are many incongruities that may generate anything but a laugh. The theory views humour in a more cognitive sense and sees amusement as an intellectual reaction to something not expected.

Humour has also been studied by linguists who usually differentiate between humour founded on features outside of language like cultural suppositions, politics, visual stimuli etc., and humour that depends on the skillful use of language (Attardo, 2017b:1). The latter is the focus of linguists as their studies focus on the structure of language which is viewed as a code which may be used to elicit a humorous effect. They portray how phonological, morphological and syntactic types are manipulated to result in ambiguities which are used in various forms like questions and answers to create riddles.

To conclude this section, a background to rhetorical questions will be done. Rhetorical questions according to the *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* is defined as questions posed just to state something and not to get an answer or to bring about an effect. In addition to this, various scholars define rhetorical questions as those questions that do not expect an answer. Abioye (2011:290) quotes Han (2002:202) who opines that a rhetorical question has the answer within itself. Abioye (2007:8) observes how rhetorical questions are resourceful when he says that they command, admonish, make a request or plea, condemn, criticize etc.

Rhetorical questions are seen as figures of speech posed with no expectation of an answer and that they have a persuasive effect and not an authentic call for information with an implication that the answer is too obvious. The questions, however, motivate the listener to think carefully about the implicated answer to the question. Abioye (2011:291) states that the intention of this figure of speech is to affirm or refute a point implicitly and not to look for a response and may therefore be used to suggest an idea tacitly that would be rejected or challenged by an audience if asserted straightforwardly. Baldick (2004) as quoted by Abioye (2011:291) sees rhetorical questions as a manner of formulating uncertain statements but putting them together in form of question. He observes that this happens often in political debates openly making a claim or statement, though still being able to make a point.

Abioye (2011:291) quotes Quirk et al (1985:804) who state that in terms of structure, the rhetorical question is the same as any other question. This is to say that the syntactical form of the rhetorical question is not different from other interrogatives. The only difference is

the fact that a rhetorical question in terms of meaning is a claim or a statement in which the addresser is prepared to give the answer to the addressee, or none of them knows what the answer is or both already know the answer.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Chilton (2004) opines that politics is anything and any place where human social interactions and relationships affect how social goods like money, power, status or anything that is valuable in society ought to be distributed. For instance, which party should lead the government before the next general elections. It is further seen as a struggle to maintain power for those who are currently in office with those who strive to resist it.

Chilton (2004) argues that language is the general ability of human beings in all societies to engage in communication, whereas politics means who gets what, when and where or in other words, 'the art of governance'. He continues to say that politics is about power: making decisions, controlling resources, influencing other people's values and their behaviour. The language used in politics is described as political discourse or political rhetoric. Whatever the case, political discourse and language work together where according to Fetzer (2013) language is a means of communication in both micro and macro-politics.

Michira (2013) says that politics is essentially about power and authority, how to obtain and appropriate it, how to make decisions and control resources and even manipulate those who are governed. According to him, these objectives depend so much on language for them to be achieved and this therefore means that language is power.

Speakers and more so politicians use language that is persuasive to convince their listener(s) to agree with their standpoints, share their values and adopt their way of thinking. In fact, it is the skill in using rhetoric as they try to convince their audience that makes most politicians successful. Typically, the political process is all about persuasion and negotiation (Gass & Seiter, 2010:33). Persuasion is an effort to influence a person's beliefs, attitudes, intentions, motivations or behaviour. Some of the most commonly used persuasive strategies include appeals, attacks, inclusive and exclusive language, humour,

rhetorical questions, irony, metaphors, formal and colloquial language, evidence such as statistics and research findings etc.

Although studies have been conducted on political rhetoric, there is still much that can be done especially on Kenyan political speeches. Wanjala (2014) examined irony in selected Kenyan political utterances and further looked at the effects politicians achieve with irony, guided by the communicative principle and the cognitive principle of Relevance Theory. Her study focuses on verbal irony as a figure of speech and does not examine or attempt an analysis of rhetorical questions and humour. The study also samples speeches from different politicians, both prominent and upcoming, during the 2012/2013 campaign rallies.

This study intends to investigate the use of rhetorical questions and humour and their effect on persuasion in selected speeches of Dr. William Ruto, the Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya, to establish how they assist him to achieve his political goals in persuading his audience to rally behind him. The study will employ the communicative and cognitive principles of Relevance Theory by Wilson & Sperber (2002).

### **1.3 Research Questions**

- i. What type of humorous categories does William Ruto use in his speeches?
- ii. How do the rhetorical questions in William Ruto's speeches evoke humour?
- iii. How does the use of rhetorical questions and humour in Ruto's speeches evoke persuasion?

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

#### **General objective**

The study explores the general effect and effectiveness of humour and rhetorical questions as persuasive strategies in selected speeches of William Ruto.

#### **1.4.1 Specific Objectives**

- i. To examine the humorous expressions in Ruto's speeches.
- ii. To identify rhetorical questions in Ruto's selected speeches.
- iii. To assess how humorous expressions and rhetorical questions evoke persuasion.

### **1.5 Justification**

Relevance theory claims that the expectations of relevance brought about by an utterance are predictable and precisely fixed to guide the listener towards the speaker's meaning. Utterances create expectations of optimal relevance. When politicians take to the podium to speak, their utterances create in their audience expectations of relevance. The politicians, just like other speakers, have at their disposal a wide range of linguistic and paralinguistic communication resources.

The expectation is that the findings from this study will provide valuable information and insights into the search for relevance and meaning in communication. The research will also add to the repertoire of academic knowledge available on the uses of figurative speech to convey meaning.

This study is also important as it will add to the linguistic and pragmatic knowledge of understanding humour and rhetorical questions. It will also help to distinguish between questions that are rhetorical and those that are not and explain how people arrive at relevance of humorous expressions. The study will be beneficial to other researchers interested in political discourse, to upcoming politicians as it will shed more light on how they can use language to win people over to themselves and also to the public as it will help people to look through persuasive techniques used by politicians.

### **1.6 Scope and Limitation**

The suggested study will be a study of the use of humour and rhetorical questions in William Ruto's 2017 campaign speeches and those that he made following the 2018 'handshake' between opposition leader Raila Odinga and President Uhuru Kenyatta. The study will specifically look into exploring the general effects and effectiveness of humour and rhetorical questions as persuasive strategies in the selected speeches of William Ruto. There are many other speeches that Ruto made before coming together with Uhuru Kenyatta to form the Jubilee coalition, but they were not chosen for this study since they were not as rich in humour and rhetorical questions as those he made while campaigning for Uhuru Kenyatta's election and reelection to presidency and after the handshake. There are other devices used for persuasion like repetition, metaphors, metonymy, biblical

citations, irony etc., but this study restricts itself to humour and rhetorical questions since they are predominantly used by Ruto in his political speeches.

### **1.7 Definition of Terms**

**Cognitive effects:** adjustments to the way an individual represents the world.

**Handshake:** a symbol for the reconciliation between two rival national leaders i.e. Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga by putting their political differences aside to serve Kenyans.

**Implicature:** an implied meaning that is not expressed directly.

**Explicature:** what is explicitly or clearly expressed in an utterance.

**Processing effort:** the mental effort involved in processing a stimulus.

**Humour:** the quality of being amusing, comical or funny.

**Rhetorical question:** a question posed only for dramatic or persuasive effect and does not expect an answer.

### **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

Relevance Theory has become a major area of study within semantics and pragmatics. Sperber and Wilson (1985/86) are the proponents of Relevance Theory which they developed from conversational implicatures theory of Grice (1975). Based on what is said by Wilson and Sperber, relevance theory begins from a thorough description of relevance and the role it plays in cognition. This is to say that to realize relevance, the cognitive process that includes processing effort and cognitive effects is instrumental in understanding communication between the speaker and hearer in communication. I will however discuss the theory as talked about by Clark (2013).

The objective of the theory according to Clark is to show and elaborate how humans perceive the world and understand each other. It is a theory of both cognition (aims at partly telling how we think and comprehend the world) and communication (ways in which we express thought and fathom one another). One of the major objectives of Relevance Theory is explaining ways in which we get meaning from other people's utterances. This is to say



that the theory explains how we comprehend meanings that are not openly communicated, how we figure out which propositions communicators are openly communicating and also why some of the times we misapprehend each other. Relevance Theory proposes that addressees assume that the communicator has an interpretation in mind that gives good reason for the spending of effort involved in arriving at it, i.e. which provides adequate cognitive rewards for it to be worth applying the mental effort engaged in reaching it

Clark (2013:79) says Relevance Theory is based on law-like generalizations about cognition and about communication. Cognition is about thinking. Processes such as remembering, planning, evaluating etc. are perceived as cognitive processes. The cognitive generalization entails how human minds are so organized that they look or recognize significant components of our environment. Generally, in cognition, we are watching out for relevant information i.e. information from which important effects arise. We can therefore surmise that our cognitive system is advanced to the extent that we become aware of what is relevant to us. The communicative generalization is about the expectations created by communicative acts. In communication, we surmise that communicators try to form their communicative acts in such a way that it is easier for us to perceive how they intend their behaviour to be relevant.

The cognition claim is that human beings' minds are organized such that they are inclined to 'maximize' relevance i.e. using very little effort to obtain a large number of cognitive effects. The communication claim on the other hand is that expectations of ideal relevance are created by demonstrative communication acts. This is to say that they will at least be relevant enough to provide an acceptable explanation for the effort used in processing them and they will also be the most relevant ones consistent with the communicators' capabilities and fore choice. Relevance theory sees ostensive-inferential communication as the communication which results in expectations of optimal relevance. It involves generating an ostensive act by the communicator i.e. one that demonstrates that he is intending to communicate something and on the part of the audience, it implies making conclusions about the communicator's intentions. An ostensive act shows the audience something and also attracts their attention. Relevance theory constitutes two principles of relevance which comprise generalizations concerning communication and cognition:

### **1.8.1 The Cognitive Principle of Relevance**

This entails a statement with regard to human cognition in general. According to Wilson & Sperber (2012:103) Human cognition is focused on maximizing relevance. This simply means that our minds have a tendency of assigning our mental focus and resources of processing in ways that result in large numbers of positive cognitive effects using the least processing effort.

### **1.8.2 The Communicative Principle of Relevance**

Sperber & Wilson (1995:263) the communicative principle is grounded in the cognitive principle and explains how we make inferences about communicative intentions. This tenet states that each utterance expresses a belief of its own ideal relevance. Wilson & Sperber (2012:38) point out that: Each deed of ostensive stimulus creates a belief that it is perfectly relevant. The stimulus is sufficiently relevant in a way that it is deserving of the addressee's effort to process it and it is the most relevant one consistent with the preferences and abilities of the communicator. Relevance can be explained with the balance between cognitive effects and processing effort.

### **1.8.3 Effects**

Clark (2013:100) opines that in defining relevance completely, human beings require to have knowledge of things that may be considered relevant and to indicate what effects make them relevant. According to him, the kind of things considered to be relevant are the ones that can yield effects. Among these are thoughts, interpretations, utterances and memories. Sperber and Wilson in the book *Relevance* discuss about contextual effects which they later replace in their second edition in 1995 with the term cognitive effects.

According to Clark (2013:100) Cognitive effects are contextual effects within a cognitive system. Thus, a new statement will be relevant in a given context if it yields contextual effects and that if it results in more contextual effects it will be considered more relevant. The moment an individual makes conclusions on the basis of existing or new assumptions, these are cognitive effects. A new assumption is relevant to an individual if it results in cognitive effects and that it is more relevant for the individual at that particular time if it results in more cognitive effects.

Cognitive effects do not just involve new conclusions made from a reasonable connection between existing and new assumptions but also include situations where new information strengthens an existing assumption when stronger evidence in support of it is provided and also situations where new information contradicts and results to the elimination of one or more existing assumptions.

Sperber and Wilson (1995) now refer to these cognitive processes as positive cognitive effects since there is likelihood for a stimulus to change an individual's beliefs which are instinctively not relevant for instance if they result to false conclusions. The debate is not whether the initial assumption is false but whether it results to a more or less accurate representation of the world. In this case therefore, relevance theory now defines relevance based on positive cognitive effects which include conclusions that are true, appropriate strengthening or modification of assumptions that are already in existence and in a more general sense, any effect that impart in a positive manner to the realization of cognitive functions or objectives. Therefore, with this notion of 'positive cognitive effects', Relevance theory asserts that a stimuli or other phenomenon is relevant if it results in positive cognitive effects and that it is more relevant when it has more positive cognitive effects.

#### **1.8.4 Effort**

The definition of relevance is not only given in terms of cognitive effects. Sperber and Wilson note that, other things held constant, when one expends more mental effort in processing a stimulus or phenomenon, including accessing contextual assumptions and obtaining positive cognitive effects, that stimulus or phenomenon will be less relevant. We can therefore conclude that an assumption is relevant to an individual when little effort is needed to obtain positive cognitive effects.

The conclusion made here therefore is that, a phenomenon is more relevant when it has more positive cognitive effects and less relevant when more effort is involved in obtaining those effects.

The relevance theoretic orientation can be summarized in the relevance theoretic comprehension procedure (Clark, 2013:119):

- a) Follow a path of least effort in obtaining cognitive effects: test interpretive hypotheses (e.g. disambiguation, reference resolution, implicatures etc.) in order of accessibility
- b) Stop when your expectations of relevance are satisfied in the interpretation

This procedure is essential in this study in the identification and interpretation of humorous expressions and rhetorical questions. In general, the theory will be useful for this study since it proposes significant elaboration on how hearers infer meanings for figurative language use.

## **1.9 Literature Review**

A review of the literature connected to the topic of study is provided here. This will include literature on Relevance Theory, literature on political discourse and literature on humour and rhetorical questions.

### **1.9.1 Literature Review on Relevance Theory**

According to Sperber & Wilson (1995), Defining relevance and two principles of relevance are the foundation of Relevance Theory. There is the cognitive principle which states that human cognition focuses on the maximization of relevance, and a communicative principle that points out that utterances raise expectations of optimal relevance. Relevance theory tries to make sense of one of the principal claims by Grice that most communication by humans has a very important characteristic which is expressing and recognizing intentions (Grice, 1989).

Relevance Theory begins from an explanation of relevance which means that to achieve relevance, the cognitive process in which cognitive effects and processing effort are crucial in comprehending how human beings interpret utterances. The main claim of Relevance Theory is that an utterance creates expectations of relevance which are predictable and sufficiently accurate to guide the listener towards the meaning intended by the speaker. In line with the theory, utterances create expectations of relevance for the reason that searching for relevance is a fundamental characteristic of human cognition and not for the reason that speakers are required to comply with maxims and a co-operative principle. The

fundamental cognitive concept of relevance and the cognitive principle of relevance provide the basics for the relevance theoretic approach to pragmatics.

Clark (2013) observes that, to understand relevance, one should know the things that can have a degree of relevance and the effects that make those things relevant and this means therefore that the things that are relevant are those that have effects. This theory will be used as it proposes significant explanations on how hearers infer meanings for figurative language.

### **1.9.2 Literature on Political Discourse**

Several scholars have studied Kenyan political speeches and these will be highlighted here. Wanjala (2014) studies irony in selected Kenyan political utterances. In her study, she affirms that politicians make ironical utterances with an aim to criticize bad leadership and also to attack opponents, humiliate them so as to succeed in getting approval from the audience. Wanjala's study is to a great extent relevant to the present study as it helps in analyzing the implicit meaning in political utterances and further shows how the language influences the audience.

Habwe (1999) wrote on Discourse Analysis of Swahili political speeches. In his study, he points out that politics relates directly with people and also makes use of an intricate language that politicians rely on for persuasion. This study will be beneficial for the current research as it gives insight on how to analyze pragmatic meaning with a focus on metaphors, rhetorical questions, humour among other things using an eclectic approach. This study however will use Relevance Theory to analyze humour and rhetorical questions in Ruto's speeches. Jonyo (2012) studies politics of identity and ideology. His study will assist in comprehending political language as he shows how politicians use language to appeal to their audience's emotions as a tactic in defining in groups and out groups in social discourses.

Michira (2013) studies the language of politics, a critical discourse analysis of the 2013 presidential campaign discourse where he analyzes hidden meaning in the 2013 presidential campaigns. His study will help in showing how politicians use language not only to communicate their policies and ideologies but also to influence the voters. Nyaga

(2013) looks at code switching in political speeches while this study focuses on humour and rhetorical questions in political speeches. Omollo (2017) studies rhetorical devices and forms of oral literature in the speeches of Raila Odinga.

### **1.9.3 Literature on Humour**

Humour has not been a significant topic in philosophy but laughter, amusement and humour have been of great concern to thinkers since ancient Greek where they have always tried to differentiate between humour, amusement and laughter. Attardo (2017a) states that cognitive linguistics has in many ways tried to unravel real problems in the study of humour. For instance, it has been noted several times that making metaphors literal can be humorous and that several studies have been carried out on metaphors and humour though none has explained why some metaphors are humorous while some are not. He however notes that a cognitive approach would be best suited to deal with such kind of a problem. This is significant as this study uses Relevance theory, which by nature is cognitive, in analyzing of humour.

Yus (2016:12) uses the relevance-theoretic approach in interpreting humorous discourses. According to him, all the claims in this theory about how utterances are interpreted are also applicable in the interpretation of humorous discourses. Referring to the cognitive principle of relevance that human cognition is geared to maximizing relevance and the communicative principle of relevance which states that every utterance portrays a presumption of its eventual relevance, he says that in the case of humour, when an individual tells a joke, the hearers expect that it will be relevant and this makes listening to the joke deserving of mental effort and the attention involved. This is significant for this study as it will help show how William Ruto's use of humour enables him to draw masses to himself. He continues to say that when a joke is told, it raises expectations on the processes the hearer will go through and the kind of contextual information he is likely to access so as to comprehend the joke and interpret it appropriately. This is significant as this study attempts to explain what is required to understand the speaker's humorous intentions and the mental processes that form the foundation of the comprehension of humorous discourse. Yus applies relevance theory which is a cognitive pragmatic theory

of human communication to different types of humorous discourses like humorous ironies, cartoons, jokes, stand-up comedy among others.

There has always been a debate on how a pragmatic theory should account for humorous effects where some authors suggest that it should be able to make predictions on the utterances or texts that are likely to be humorous and give reasons. Others like Curco hold divergent views. Curco (1997:3) argues that humour is not an attribute of texts but of the kind of information in the mind which hearers are directed to harbor as they are processing and the ways in which this information is influenced. He says that texts are only indirectly humorous and therefore there should be no much concentration on their structure. According to him, what needs to be understood are the processes in the mind of the listener as he interprets utterances in order to derive humorous effects. This argument is appropriate for this study as it concentrates on the mental gains obtained in interpreting utterances and the mental effort involved to determine whether utterances are humorous or not. The theory used in this study suggests an inviolable criterion which selects among possible interpretations, and picks the one resulting in the best balance between positive cognitive effects and the mental effort entailed in its processing.

Cursino (2014:557) merges the concept of bisociation as suggested by Koestler (1964) with the cognitive and communicative principles of relevance by Sperber & Wilson (1986/1995) to explain the mechanism of humour. In the bisociation theory, contextual assumptions produced from the first part of the text are incompatible with assumptions obtained by conclusion from the final utterance. Both clash and combine resulting to a paradox, which is a form of incongruity, and this according to him is the foundation of humorous texts. This is important in this study since the notion of incongruity is evident in the major approaches to the philosophy, psychology, linguistics and pragmatics of humour. In philosophy, humour is seen as one among many other possible subsequent results of the cognition of what is incongruous while in psychology, tests have tried to estimate the relation between degrees of incongruity or cognitive dissonance and perceptions of funniness. In linguistics and pragmatics, there is reference to semantic distance, bisociation, alienation, opposition, violation and incongruity. All these approaches point out that humour is about deviation and surprise or rather, something not expected. The

generally approved view is in fact that incongruity is equivalent to deviation and that deviation yields surprise, and that suitable surprises yield humour. Curco (1997:198) suggests that at the centre of the process that yields humorous interpretations is a specific interaction between the perception and manipulation of the incongruous and the search for relevance. This will contribute a lot to this study in looking at how some of the utterances that are termed humorous clash with the audience's expectation who in turn expand extra effort in order to get the most relevant interpretation that is humorous.

#### **1.9.4 Literature on Rhetorical Questions**

Athanasidou (1991) as quoted by Spago (2016:1) classifies questions into four types based on the intentions of speakers and also their function in communication. These include; questions that seek information, rhetorical questions, questions asked in examinations and indirect questions. He defines examination questions as questions asked so as to interrogate and assess the addressee's understanding and indirect requests as those meant to ask addressees to do something. On the other hand, information-seeking questions request for information while rhetorical questions provide information rather than seeking for information.

Ilie (1994:128) gives three classifications of questions on the basis of the response they evoke. These are; answer-eliciting, action-eliciting and mental-response eliciting questions in which rhetorical questions are placed in the third group. He defines rhetorical questions as questions used as a challenging statement to express the commitment of the addresser to its implicit answer so as to influence the addressee's mental recognition of its acceptance and obvious nature. In other words, rhetorical questions are different from those questions that elicit an answer because their intention is not to get a verbalized answer but to persuade the addressee to accept the seemingly obvious answer suggested by the addresser. They are perceived as questions communicating something persuasive that will be remembered by the addressee rather than to be answered. They have a persuasive effect and due to this, they are used commonly in various language setups like marketing, politics, journalism and the like.



Spago (2016:2) points out to the fact that one striking feature of rhetorical questions is that apart from evoking an answer, they accomplish something else. This is important for this study as it aims at analyzing rhetorical questions used by Ruto in his political speeches and show what effects they have on the audience. Ilie (1994) also mentions ordinary functions of rhetorical questions like defending one's opinion, influencing and altering other people's opinions, being sarcastic or ironical, making one's message memorable, etc. they are therefore powerful when used in political speeches. This will contribute to this study in helping to show the reason as to why Ruto uses rhetorical questions quite often in his political speeches and the effects he achieves by doing so. Ilie (1994) continues to state that rhetorical questions do not have a specific form and therefore what distinguishes them from non-rhetorical questions are pragmatic concerns. They are used in a special way rather than being a special category of questions. This is significant as this study does not focus on the structure of the questions but employs relevance theory, which is a pragmatic approach, to the analysis of rhetorical questions.

## **1.10 Research Methodology**

In this section, the research methodology is discussed. This includes data collection and data analysis.

### **1.10.1 Data Collection**

Through purposive sampling, the study will collect speeches from William Ruto's 2017 campaign rallies and also some after the 'handshake' so as to identify rhetorical questions and humour. They are purposive because speeches that are full of humour and rhetorical questions will be selected. These speeches will be downloaded from YouTube where they are readily available. Ten such speeches in English and Kiswahili from both the 2017 campaign rallies of the Jubilee party and those following the coming together of President Kenyatta and opposition chief Raila Odinga through the handshake will be collected and analyzed under the tenets of relevance theory. The study will use seven speeches from the 2017 campaign rallies and three after the handshake as they were found to be rich in humour and rhetorical questions.

### **1.10.2 Data Analysis**

The study will employ a qualitative research design with no explicit numerical data and tables. The downloaded speeches from YouTube, both in English and Kiswahili, will be listened to repeatedly to identify the humorous expressions and rhetorical questions. After identifying the relevant speeches, the identified data will be transcribed to analyze the categories of humour and rhetorical questions using the cognitive and communicative principles of Relevance Theory by Wilson & Sperber (2002) together with the concepts of cognitive effects and processing effort. Humorous effects will then be identified using the concept of incongruity. Finally, the study will show the relation of these categories to persuasion using the concept of cognitive effects, processing effort and the relevance theoretic comprehension procedure.

### **1.11 Conclusion**

This chapter lays the groundwork for the subsequent chapters. It gives a summary of what the study is all about which is the persuasive devices used by William Ruto in his political speeches in an attempt to explore the general effect and effectiveness of humour and rhetorical questions as persuasive strategies in his speeches. The chapter contains a background to the study giving diverse approaches on humour and rhetorical questions by different scholars like philosophers, psychologists, linguists and finally the relevance theoretic approach which this study will concentrate on. The chapter also identifies the statement of the problem, research questions, objectives, justification or rationale, scope and limitation, literature review, theoretical framework which has been discussed in details including the basic tenets of the theory that are relevant to the study. In the end, the chapter shows how data will be collected and analyzed using Relevance theory to establish the interpretation and effect of humour and rhetorical questions used by William Ruto.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **GENERAL INFORMATION AND CLASSIFICATION OF HUMOUR**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The primary goal of this chapter will be the identification and classification of humorous expressions in William Ruto's political speeches, which was one of the objectives of this study. General information on humour will also be given and more specifically, on how humour is classified where different categories of humour will be discussed to see how humorous expressions in William Ruto's speeches can be classified under them. Data from the ten speeches collected from YouTube will be presented and key concepts of Relevance Theory will be used to investigate how the audience arrive at the correct meaning of the humour in the speeches. I will first give the general information on humour in section 2.2, then proceed to the classification of humour in section 2.3 and finally present the different categories of humour which will be discussed under irony in section 2.3.1, humorous metaphors in section 2.3.2 and metonymy in section 2.3.3 where I will use the concept of incongruity to show how the humorous effects come about.

#### **2.2 General information on Humour**

Humour is an intrinsic characteristic of human beings that does not conform to just a single view or a unitary analysis, because it entails an entire array of social communicative and psychological elements of human behaviour. Humour is significant in the society and is common in many areas of people's daily activities. It also comes in different forms in accordance with the culture.

Martin (2006: 4) as quoted by Yus (2016:37) states that in spite of humour being innate, cultural norms and learning play a crucial role in determining how it is used in social interaction and the topics deemed suitable for it. Also, the intricacy of human language and creativity allows humans to generate humour in infinite variant forms.

Straus (2014:6) says that the incongruity theory explains why people react to humour with laughter or rather why people find certain things funny and also what makes a situation itself humorous. According to the theory, people find situations that violate the usual order of things humorous. This normal order of things is in accordance with their personal

mindsets and perspective of what the normal order of things is. So, when we experience something that is incongruous with what we perceive as conventional, we get amused. Incongruity is therefore a mismatch between an understanding of how things ought to be like and an experience that contradicts this understanding. Morreall (2011) as quoted by Straus (2014:8) describes incongruity as what happens when things or events people understand contradict their natural expectations and mental patterns. In other words, humour comes about when expectations are interrupted and broken and there is lack of concord or compatibility. Incongruity works because it crosses the boundaries of ordinary understanding in any human language for the reason that the words do not 'fit together' or agree in any way. For instance, if someone asks 'what did William Ruto use to call his wife before he became the Deputy President of Kenya?' Immediately, the listener of this joke starts to think of all possible answers to this question with the exception of the most obvious one. Then the person telling the joke shouts 'Rachael' and leaves the listener surprised, although what he shouts is the most obvious answer, since they were expecting a different answer. Expectation is what incongruous humour depends on. When information comes to the human brain, it is put into groups and the brain tries to make sense when analyzing the situation. When the process of making sense gets challenged, humour sets in and leads to laughter.

In Relevance Theory, humour is seen as a communicative act where a speaker or writer codes a public representation i.e. a short utterance like a joke, a longer humorous narrative, a stand-up monologue, a newspaper cartoon, an advertisement etc. with the aim of producing humorous effects in the audience. For these effects to be obtained, the audience has to have access to certain contextual information without which these effects would be difficult or impossible to obtain. There is also the prediction and manipulation of the inferential strategies when interpreting the coded input. These are the same strategies humans engage in the interpretation of non-humorous inputs as they do not own different cognitive abilities for processing different kinds of stimuli since as earlier mentioned, the cognitive ability is inborn. (Piskorska 2009) as quoted by Yus (2016:38) however states that, in humour interpretation, notions like the hearer's assumption that the result on an interpretation is very likely to be non-informative and irrelevant for humour's sake may determine how these inferential strategies are performed and also play a part in the balance

of cognitive effects and processing effort concerning the humorous quality of the coded input.

Shared knowledge between the speaker and hearer is crucial for humour and communication in general. The humorous effects will only be obtained if both have access to implicit information shared by both the speaker and audience. In a humorous utterance by a speaker therefore, only an audience with access to this shared knowledge will be able to decode the message and get the humour. This shared knowledge is the background information needed to deduce implicature in the utterance. This information can be propositional knowledge such as an item of popular culture, or can be any of a variety of other personal features such as personal traits, cognitive styles, attitudes towards certain people or practices, adherence to values or norms or a negative opinion towards any of those (Flamson & Byrant 2013: 53-54).

### **2.3 Classification of Humour**

This section will look into the classification of humour. Several scholars have tried to classify humour using different approaches. This study will adopt one of the classifications and use it to classify humorous expressions in William Ruto's speeches.

According to Bali et al (2018:1) classification of humour is a very demanding task since even theorists have never come to an agreement as to what precisely humour is. Attardo et.al (1994) as quoted by Bali et al (2018:1) also points out that consensus about the categorization of humour is yet to be realized since the sense of humour varies from one person to another and therefore giving its types deems hard. Since there are endless possible types of humour, they lack one commonly approved classification of humour, therefore it may be classified according to various purposes. This study will adopt the classification based on major characteristics reflected across all types of humour as proposed by Bali et al (2018:3). They proposed that the most important thing when classifying humour is to look at the reasons people laugh or the factors that motivate them to laugh on an utterance. Their proposed classification is drawn from Attardo and Raskin's script semantic theory of humour (SSTH).

Raskin (2012) as quoted by Bali et al (2018:2) brings to light the concept of semantic scripts. Every concept expressed by a word that is in the mind of the native speaker of a language is related to a semantic script through some cognitive structure to all the surrounding pieces of information. After that, he suggests two conditions that must be met to produce humour. That the text is congruous entirely or partly with the two different semantic scripts. And secondly that the two scripts which are congruous with the text overlap completely or to some degree. Humour is produced when a trigger at the end of the utterance that is the punchline makes the hearers to suddenly swap their understanding from the more obvious or primary script to the secondary opposing script. Bali et al suggest three major features evident across all types of jokes. These are mode, which basically means the mode of deliverance; theme, which entails the feeling or emotion conveyed through the language and subject matter of the joke; and topic, which is about the central element of the joke. The categories discussed in this chapter fall under mode or what the authors referred to as the delivery of the humorous expressions or the way in which the humorous expressions are put across to the respective audience. The other two categories i.e. theme which covers dark jokes, gross jokes, adult or sexual jokes and topic which covers jokes on animals, fat, food, marriage, money etc. were not found relevant for this study. So, the only category I used was mode which covers irony, metaphors, hyperbole, puns etc.

The following are the different classification categories also called mode of deliverance. This can be, though not always, decided upon by the speaker of the humorous act. It can therefore be either conscious or spontaneous.

### **2.3.1 Irony**

The traditional definition of irony is communicating the opposite of what is explicitly communicated. Burgers et al. (2011:190) as quoted by Yus (2016:212) define irony as an utterance with a literal evaluation that is implicitly contrary to its intended evaluation. According to Relevance Theory, the speaker's dissociative attitude and the need for an echo are the features that define irony. The echo could be towards some represented thought like opinion, remark, common rule, expectation etc. and must be ascribed to a real person, people in general or the speaker in a different scenario. According to Piskorska

(2014:661) as quoted by Yus (2016:214) the basic characteristics of irony are holding up a similarity in content to an utterance or thought ascribed to a person or persons and exploiting the likeness so as to convey a dissociative attitude to this utterance or thought that ended up to be ridiculous, insufficient or incongruous with how things are in reality. This therefore brings to light that the basic point of irony is not to communicate the opposite of what is explicitly communicated but to communicate the speaker's underlying dissociative attitude and the target of this attitude referred to as the echo. Without these two concepts, an utterance would be interpreted literally and not ironically. They also help the speaker to bring in new constituents in communication which would be impossible to communicate through a direct straightforward utterance. Irony is beneficial to a speaker as it helps them communicate a negative attitude efficaciously without being labelled abusive or scornful. It also enables the hearer to save face since unfavourable judgement is perceived to be moderate than direct criticism which is seen as face-threatening. Finally, irony allows the speaker to deny being judgmental thus saving his own face. Interpretation of irony, and this will include verbal irony, is obtained through implicatures which are recovered by recognizing the utterance as echoic, identifying the source of the echoed opinion and finally by recognizing the speaker's dissociative attitude towards the echoed opinion. The dissociative attitude involves a disapproval or rejection, criticism etc. of a thought or utterance.

Most cases of irony according to Roberts and Kreuz (1994) as quoted by Yus (2016:241) have a humorous intention. Dynel (2014:543) quoted by Yus (2016:241) also states that some types of irony generate humorous effects.

Here are examples of Ruto's ironical utterances:

1) Sasa huyu Joshua tunaambiwa ndio Joshua hapa ya kupeleka watu Canaan na ametangaza Bungoma ati ile Canaan yeye anafikiria ni Canaan ya chang'aa na busaa.

*Now this Joshua we are being told of that he will take people to Canaan yet he has announced here in Bungoma that the Canaan he is thinking of is that of chang'aa and busaa.*

During the campaign rally in Western Kenya at Ndalau, Bungoma, Deputy President William Ruto accused the opposition, the super alliance NASA, of promising Kenyans and more so the people of Bungoma of unachievable and unimportant things like legalizing the local illicit brews, 'chang'aa' and 'busaa' and insisted that the Jubilee government, given another chance, would make sure that Kenyans would access free primary and secondary education. At an earlier date, the NASA coalition led by their presidential candidate Raila Odinga had taken their campaigns to Bungoma and Raila had promised the residents of Bungoma that he would legalize chang'aa and busaa if elected president.

In this example, Ruto communicates a dissociative attitude towards Raila's previous remark that he was Joshua and would take people to Canaan. This meant that he was like Joshua the leader who would deliver them from Jubilee's oppressive rule and take them to Canaan. In the bible, Canaan is the Promised Land that God promised his chosen people, the Israelites, after their four hundred years of slavery in Egypt and Joshua was his chosen servant who would lead them to possess the land. The land according to the bible flowed with milk and honey, which are a sign of development, prosperity and productivity. So now Raila said he is the leader that would lead Kenyans to development, prosperity and productivity. These are the assumptions or expectations in the minds of the listeners whenever Canaan and Joshua are mentioned. Ruto however changes the idea of the Promised Land by the mention of chang'aa and busaa which are local illicit brews in Bungoma. The characteristics of Canaan are not milk and honey, as promised by Raila, but Chang'aa and Busaa. Chang'aa and busaa, however stand for alcohol and the abuse of alcohol would slow down development in the country if people are led into drinking. The different understandings of 'milk' and 'honey' therefore as the strong implicature clashes with the listeners' expectations and assumptions of Canaan when Chang'aa and Busaa are mentioned hence making it humorous. The weak implicature is that Raila is not a reliable leader therefore the people should not follow or elect him.

Here is another example:

2. Kisii alitushinda na kura kidogo, Maraga akasema wacha turudie ndio tumshinde Bwana Kitendawili hapa Kisii kwa sababu tayari tumemshinda Kenya mzima.



*In Kisii he defeated us with few votes, then Maraga said we repeat the election so that we can defeat Mr.Riddle here in Kisii since we already defeated him nationally.*

During the Jubilee campaign rally in Nyamira County, Ruto talks about the repeat poll after the Supreme Court declined to uphold the win by Jubilee in the first round with the reason that there were some irregularities and illegalities.

Ruto in this example disapproves the Supreme Court ruling and says that they had won over Mr. Riddle who is Raila Odinga of the NASA coalition in the entire country apart from Kisii County and therefore just needed to defeat him in Kisii only so as to be declared the winners. The background information the listeners have is that Kisii County is a stronghold of the NASA coalition and therefore understand that definitely NASA had garnered more votes here than the jubilee coalition. They are also aware that the registered voters in Kisii County were 546,580 out of a grand total of 11,611,423 and of course not all of them voted for NASA. Jubilee too got some votes in this county. The expectations in the listener's mind is that one county alone could not have made the Jubilee coalition lose the election. This is to say that even if the jubilee coalition did not get a single vote in Kisii County, which was not the case, they would still have been declared the winners but they were not. The listeners are also aware that the Supreme Court ruling was that there would be a repeat poll to determine the winners of the presidential election since the first one had irregularities and illegalities.

The strong implicature is that Jubilee had cheated in the elections by stealing votes and Ruto's utterance is therefore a contradiction to what the audience already know since it was not possible to lose the elections because of just one county and in this case, Kisii which did not even have a significant number of voters as compared to the strongholds of jubilee hence making his utterance ironical. It is also ironical since Ruto expresses a dissociative attitude towards the Supreme Court's ruling that there were irregularities and illegalities in the elections and therefore the win by Jubilee could not be upheld. It is therefore ridiculous that the Jubilee coalition could have won over the NASA coalition in the entire country apart from Kisii and that the repeat poll was to enable them win the

election in Kisii only since in the entire nation Jubilee had already won. This incongruity to the expectation of the hearers brings about the humour.

Look at the next example:

3. Nilikuwa naskia jana yule muungwana akisema ati yeye atapunguza rent. Sasa nyumba si yako, wewe hujajenga, mwenye kujenga amejenga na pesa zake, wewe utaenda kupunguza rent namna gani?

*I heard that gentleman saying yesterday that he will reduce rent. Now, the house is not yours, you did not build it, the owner built it using his own money, how will you reduce the rent?*

During the endorsement of Uhuru Kenyatta in the Jubilee party at Bomas of Kenya on 6th May 2017, Ruto criticizes their opponents NASA coalition that they had formed a high table where power was to be shared among the five principles but Jubilee believed in giving a chance to people of all walks of life and that is why they had hustlers, shoe shiners, cooks and the likes in that auditorium to represent every Kenyan. On the other hand, he says that their opponents believed in power sharing among the elite. He also stated that NASA was focused on problems while they in the Jubilee coalition were focused on solutions.

The irony in this utterance is brought out by first identifying an utterance that had earlier been made by Raila promising the people of Kenya reduction in rent once he was elected president. Ruto in this case expresses his ridiculing attitude towards Raila's promise by telling the people that Raila was not the landlord and had not built any of those houses hence reducing rent on houses he had not build was impossible and another empty and unachievable promise. The listeners in this case understand that rent is payment made by a tenant every month to a landlord so as to occupy a property and that majority of Kenyans are tenants and this issue happens to be one of their greatest challenge. They are also aware that only landlords can revise the rent since they build the houses with their hard-earned money and some through loans. And that in most cases if not all, they revise it upwards. It's unusual for a landlord to reduce rent for his tenants, most increase it. So Raila's promise as echoed by Ruto clashes with the listener's knowledge of the housing sector in Kenya

hence making it humorous since he is not a landlord and even if he was elected president, he would still have no authority over the landlords to make them reduce rent for Kenyans. So, the listeners will perceive this as another empty and unachievable promise. The implicature is that Raila is lying and therefore is not concerned with the welfare of the people. Voting him in would therefore not benefit them in any way.

Consider another example:

4. Nataka nimwambie Bwana kitendawili awache kuzunguka na fitina, awache kumangamanga. Ati anasema ya kwamba watoto wa Kenya hawatafanya mtihani.... Kwa sababu yeye hajafanya mtihani wa shule ya msingi na hajafanya mtihani ya shule ya upili ndio hajui maana ya mtihani ile watoto wetu watafanya mwisho wa mwaka huu. Na kama sisemi ukweli, nataka Bw.kitendawili atuonyeshe certificate yake ya primary school na certificate yake ya secondary school, ndio tujue kweli anajua uchungu wa kusoma primary na secondary school.

*I want to tell Mr. Riddle to stop roaming about with malice saying that the children of Kenya will not sit for their exam...because he never sat for primary or secondary school exam that is why he does not know the importance of the exams our children are doing at the end of this year. And if I am not telling the truth, I want him to show us his primary and secondary school certificates so that we know that he understands the pain of going through primary and secondary school education.*

During the Jubilee campaign rally at Uhuru Park on 9th September 2017, Ruto makes fun of Raila's educational background and says that he doesn't have certificates for primary and secondary school that's why he didn't find it hard to declare that national exams would not be done since he didn't know the pain of waiting for an exam for eight or four years.

In this example, there is a general belief in Kenya that Raila is an engineer, hence educated but Ruto disapproves this belief by mocking Raila and telling the people that he is not educated hence not fit to become president. Also, worth noting is the fact that for one to be a presidential candidate in Kenya, one needs to be educated at least up to university level and have a bachelor's degree. The expectations the listeners have is that Raila Odinga is educated and having come this far with the campaigns, it means that he had been cleared

by the IEBC (Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission) and given a go ahead to contest. Without the academic qualifications, he would not have been cleared. Ruto's accusation therefore clashes with the people's contextual knowledge about Raila making the utterance humorous.

Another example to illustrate this:

5. ... *Mheshimiwa Rais, kwa ile ruhusa na amri umenipatia ambayo ulisema juzi yenye mimi nafanya kila weekend huko mashinani, vitongojini, vijijini, ata na huko kwenye vichocho, nataka nikupatie ripoti. Kwamba vile ulinituma.....*

*...Your Excellency the president, with the permission and orders you've given me which you said the other day I'm doing every weekend in the villages and backstreets, I want to give you a report. That the way you sent me...*

During the burial of the mother of the National Assembly speaker, Justin Muturi on 2nd June 2018, Ruto consoles the bereaved family and states that that was not a day for politics but goes ahead to brief the president on the development in Embu County especially in road construction.

In this example, Ruto refers to president Uhuru's earlier comment about him engaging in 2022 politics in which he castigated him for starting to campaign so early even before they had delivered the promises they made to Kenyans. Ruto cleverly and sarcastically uses the same words the president had used in castigating him to brief him about the work going on and the roads already constructed in Embu under his supervision to distance himself from the claims that all he was doing was campaign for his 2022 presidential bid. The listeners have background information of how president Uhuru Kenyatta had at an earlier date spoken harshly about Ruto and angrily complained that he was going to the villages and backstreets every weekend to campaign for his 2022 bid. By using the words villages and backstreets, he was communicating that Ruto was doing this secretly and without approval from him. According to him, it was way too early to engage in 2022 politics and he publicly hinted that he did not approve of what Ruto was doing. When Ruto uses the same words, Uhuru used to condemn him, the audience expect that he was going to retaliate and maybe

clear himself of the allegations but he instead uses it craftly as a way to brief the president of what was happening in matters of road construction in Embu County. The irony is brought out by first identifying a remark that was earlier made by Uhuru Kenyatta to reprimand Ruto, and Ruto using this same remark to express a sarcastic attitude towards the reproof. The audience had not anticipated this move hence making it humorous. Also, the fact that he says it's the president who had ordered and given him the permission to go to the villages and backstreets to do so.

See another example:

6. Mheshimiwa Prime Minister mimi nakushukuru sana kwa sababu ulikubali kuungana na rais.... Na pia umetusaidia kwa sababu sisi wengine tulioenda Sunday school tulisomeshwa huko kuhusu safari ya Canaan... hatukuambiwa kulikuwa na mamba, lakini sasa tumejua kumbe kulikuwa na mamba!

*Your Excellency former prime minister, I want to thank you for agreeing to partner with the president... And you have also helped us because some of us who attended Sunday school were taught about the journey to Canaan but we were not told there were crocodiles. But now we know so there were crocodiles!*

On Mashujaa Day at Bukhungu stadium Kakamega on 20th October 2018, Ruto assures the President, Uhuru Kenyatta, and former Prime Minister Raila Odinga that he supports them in their efforts to bring Kenyans together through the handshake to avoid divisive politics based on ethnicity.

After Uhuru Kenyatta was elected president and William Ruto his deputy in the 2017 elections, Raila Odinga became the leader of opposition after losing. But later on, in 2018 he shook hands with the president as a sign that they had come together to unite Kenyans. Raila still continues with his narrative of Canaan but in this case, he adds that the river Nile was infested with crocodiles, referring indirectly to Ruto and his supporters who seemed not supportive of the handshake. Raila had stated that he was still the Joshua who would take people to Canaan but had realized that there were crocodiles that were preventing him and President Uhuru Kenyatta from accomplishing this mission. The knowledge the

listeners have of the Israelites' journey to Canaan according to the bible is that they came across the Red Sea and on looking back, the Egyptian armies pursued them and they were afraid. Moses who was their leader then was instructed by God to stretch out his staff over the sea and on doing so, the waters of the sea divided and dry ground appeared which the Israelites walked on to cross to the other side. There is no mention in the bible of crocodiles in the Red Sea. The only threat the Israelites had were the Egyptian armies that were pursuing them but God delivered them by drowning them all when they tried to use the same dry ground in the middle of the Red Sea that the Israelites had used. So, when Ruto says that Raila would make a good Sunday school teacher, this clashes with the listeners' idea and expectations of what a good Sunday school teacher would be like. According to them, a good Sunday school teacher would be conversant with the bible so as not to misguide the children about the biblical stories. This clash brings about the humorous effects and Ruto uses the utterance to mock Raila for his remarks that he and his supporters were crocodiles, hence a threat to the handshake.

### **2.3.2 Humorous Metaphors**

Dynel (2009:29) states that metaphors express similarity between the semantic vehicle i.e. the source, and the semantic tenor i.e. the target. The source and the target exhibit shared attributes which lay the ground for comparison in the metaphor. Metaphor is a comparison of two concepts that are seemingly unrelated. What makes metaphors humorous is their dynamic nature and element of surprise. As a result, humorous metaphors yield incongruity at the level of the hearer's lexicon. The incongruity between the topic and the vehicle and their features is where humour lies. Metaphors involve conceptual adjustment in their interpretation. In this case, the hearer usually does not deduce the original meaning of words as they appear in the dictionary but adjust it to satisfy the expectation of relevance and the following interpretation is an ad hoc concept. On certain occasions, the concept deduced is broader than the one encoded while in other occasions it is narrower. Therefore, humorous metaphors require conceptual adjustment as the hearers' search for relevance.

See the following example:

7. Ati ameenda kwa wabeberu kutoshtaki ati kwa sababu tumemkataza nusu mkate. Sisi tunamwambia Bwana Kitendawili maneno ya nusu mkate asahau...

*He has gone to the colonizers to tell on us because we have refused him half a loaf of bread.  
We want to tell Mr. Riddle to forget about half a loaf.*

During the Jubilee campaign rally at Nyahururu, Ruto criticizes Raila for going to London and saying that there was a big crisis in Kenya which required their intervention.

The hearers in this example are expected to adjust the encoded concept *half a loaf of bread* and select an ad hoc concept comprising only those attributes of a loaf stored in their minds as encyclopedic features attached to loaves of bread that are relevant in this context. The encyclopedic entries of bread in the minds of the listeners are bread is food, provides nutrition, satisfaction and sustainability. The listeners figure out that Ruto does not use the word bread in this sense and retrieves background information about what happened back in 2007-2008 when Raila refused to concede after former president Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner of the presidential elections and through mediation talks, the coalition government was formed and Raila Odinga was made Prime Minister. They therefore arrive at the conclusion that bread here is used to refer to the government. The encyclopedic entries for government are that it provides leadership, resources, sustainability, security etc. So the government is like bread as it sustains the people through the provisions mentioned. Half a loaf stands for sharing of power and responsibility. The humorous effect comes in the unusual comparison between bread and government as bread is for eating. Also, in the comparison between power sharing or rather coalition government with half a loaf of bread. The source and the target do not fit making it humorous. The weak implicature is that half a loaf is a sign of poverty and insufficiency hence it will not work.

Look at another example:

8.... na mimi nataka niwaambie ndugu zangu sisi tuko tayari na shukrani. Kuna tofauti mkubwa kati ya Uhuru Kenyatta na Bwana Kitendawili. Uhuru Kenyatta anajenga reli, anajenga barabara, anasambaza stima, anahakikisha ya kwamba wamama wanajifungua

bure... Bwana Kitendawili upande ule mwingine kazi yake ni kitendawili. Mpira huyu, mpira yule. Mtego nasa huyu nasa yule. Sarakasi tibiim uchawi tialala...

*I want to tell you my brothers that we are ready and grateful. There is a big difference between Uhuru Kenyatta and Mr. Riddle. Uhuru Kenyatta is constructing the railway, he is constructing roads, distributing electricity, ensuring that women deliver without being charged... Mr. Riddle on the other side his work is just riddles. Pass the ball to this one and to that one. Trap to capture this one and capture that one. Gymnastics tibiim and witchcraft tialala..*

When Ruto refers to Raila as Mr. Riddle, he does so because Raila is known for using riddles in his speeches. It is a unique style associated with him. The name therefore is a kind of metonymy. When Ruto says that Raila is just interested in riddles, witchcraft, football, traps and gymnastics, he communicates a strong implicature that Raila is not serious about his presidential duties as compared to Uhuru Kenyatta who is engaged in infrastructural development. The weak implicature is that Raila is secretive and mysterious and therefore cannot be trusted with the presidency. The humour comes in the contrast between the two where one is portrayed as very serious and focused while the other basically plays. It is against the listeners' expectations that someone who is vying for the highest office is just engaged in play and has no developmental agenda for the country. The humour also lies in the encyclopedic entries of riddle which are puzzle, mystery, problem, misleading, misguiding, not easy to unravel, hidden meaning etc. The hearer will search through these encyclopedic entries combined with the background information about Raila's political journey and pick a conclusion like Raila is mysterious and deceptive just like a riddle is and hence not fit to be elected president.

Another example to illustrate this:

9. Wale wenzetu walikuwa kwenye ukumbi huu wiki mbili zilizopita. They told us that they believe power is for the sharing by the elite. That is why they erected a high table of five gentlemen.



*Our opponents were in this auditorium two weeks ago. They told us that they believe power is for the sharing by the elite. That is why they have erected a high table of five gentlemen....*

During the endorsement of Uhuru Kenyatta in Jubilee party on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2017 at Bomas of Kenya, Ruto in his speech talks about how their opponents focused on the problem while Jubilee party focused on solutions.

When Ruto says the five gentlemen had erected a high table, the word high table triggers encyclopedic entries like an elevated table in the dining room, a table used by fellows and their guests, a reserved table, a sign of prestige, etc. The hearers pick the most relevant ad hoc concept based on the context and which requires less processing effort. The context here is the campaign period and the hearers are aware that different contestants have come together and formed coalitions through which they campaign. Ruto and Uhuru Kenyatta are in the jubilee coalition while Raila Odinga is in the NASA coalition together with Kalonzo Musyoka, Moses Wetangula, Musalia Mudavadi and Isaac Ruto. The hearers immediately pick this background information and understand that the high table refers to NASA which has five co-principals. The NASA coalition is presented by Ruto as one that is not inclusive since the common citizen would not reach the five gentlemen who are co-principals and who according to him believe in power sharing among the elite while the jubilee coalition is portrayed as one that accommodates Kenyans from all walks of life. The expectations of the hearers would be that those vying for the presidency should not be so far from the common citizens but try to come down to their level so as to win their votes thus making the idea of high table as presented by Ruto humorous.

Consider another example:

10. *Hawa wangwana tuliwashinda bana... siku ile tuliwanyoa, safari hii tutawanyoa bila maji.*

*We defeated these gentlemen... we shaved them on that day, this time round we will shave them without water.*

This expression was said during the jubilee campaign rally at Uhuru Park on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2017. NASA had just lost to Jubilee during the first round of elections which were not

upheld by the Supreme Court. Ruto openly declares that they had won the elections in the first round but since the Supreme Court had ruled for a repeat election, they had come back to the people of Kisii to ask for votes so as to win in the repeat poll.

Shave here is not used in its usual dictionary meaning. The encyclopedic entries available include to cut hair, make bald, to cut finely, to defeat, to beat, to reduce in size. The word 'shave' is used in the interpretive sense where it represents defeat or beat which it resembles in content. One who shaves i.e. a barber is perceived to have power, authority, advantage and superiority over the victim just in the same way as one who beats or defeats another in an election or any other contest. The hearer searches through these encyclopedic entries combined with the background information they have about the first round of the presidential elections where Jubilee had more votes than NASA but there were charges of irregularities hence the Supreme court did not uphold the win, and picks the one that yields a high number of cognitive effects with the least effort which would be to reduce in size or to defeat. Ruto therefore meant that they had shaven the gentlemen hence defeated them in the elections in the first round and would do it even mercilessly in the repeat poll. The unusual comparison between shave and defeat brings out the humorous effects.

### **2.3.3 Metonymy**

Preminger and Brogan (1993) as quoted by Papafragou (1996:169) state that metonymy as defined in classical rhetoric is the use of one word in place of another based on some causal, material or conceptual association. It is a rhetorical device in which a strong association of a thing is used to represent it. Metonymy uses contiguity or closeness and it is the usually notable connection between two things that matters. For example, crown to represent king or queen and white house to refer to the president. According to Rebollar (2015:191) metonymy is an association process between connected items within the same cognitive domain or meaning transfer between properties. It involves substituting the name of a thing with its quality or with something closely related. Jiang (2013) as quoted by Rebollar (2015:195) says that metonymy in Relevance theory involves a transfer of reference or the use of an existing expression to refer to something new. Nunberg (1978, 1979) as quoted by Papafragou (1996:171) treats metonymy as a case of delayed reference where a speaker refers to something using the characteristics of another.

Papafragou (1996:158) points out that in Relevance Theory, the interpretation of metonymy entails the identification of the ad hoc concept. Metonymy is understood by first identifying what is denoted by the ad hoc concept. The speaker's choice of a metonymy is done in a way that makes it easy for the hearer to arrive at the referent intended by the speaker through some pertinent relationship. The hearer takes the most accessible referent triggered by the metonymy and which produces enough contextual effects as the one intended by the speaker.

Look at the following example:

11. Mimi nataka nimuulize Bwana Kitendali kutoka Uhuru Park...

*I want to ask Mr. Riddle from Uhuru Park...*

Ruto makes this utterance during Jubilee's rally at Uhuru Park Nairobi. The audience understanding of riddle in this utterance will not be puzzle, brain-teaser, mystery or conundrum although this is part of their encyclopedic knowledge of riddle. They will therefore use these concepts with their associated encyclopedic knowledge to interpret the utterance and once the audience's expectations of relevance are met, processing stops. The hearer of this utterance reasons that the speaker must have considered 'riddle' to be the most relevant bit of encyclopedic information about the individual he is referring to that could be used to identify him. The hearer therefore looks for someone with a highly relevant connection to riddles. The most accessible such relation is that of 'riddle performer'. The hearer will then think of who would be relevant to identify as riddle performer in this context. Through background information about Kenyan politicians, they arrive at Raila Odinga who is well known for using riddles in his speeches. Ruto has therefore chosen the most economical way to refer to Raila Odinga. He uses one of Raila's speech making styles, riddle, to make reference to him and refers to Raila as Mr. Riddle because of his extensive use of riddles in his speeches. If Ruto had used the full descriptive phrase 'person who uses riddles', it would have been easier to comprehend but it would not bring out the humorous effect. Humour is also brought out by the fact that Ruto indirectly communicates his mocking attitude towards Raila.

See another example:

12. So I want to tell my friends on the other side, kama walikuwa na matatizo na mahustlers, sasa macooks wameingia, na mawatchmen wako hapa, na mashoeshiners wamefika.

*So I want to tell my friends on the other side, if they had issues with hustlers, cooks have come in now, watchmen too are here, and shoe shiners have arrived.*

This utterance was made when Ruto delivered his speech at Bomas of Kenya during the endorsement of Uhuru Kenyatta in Jubilee party. The hearer's encyclopedic knowledge of cooks, watchmen, shoe shiners includes people who prepare food for a living, guards and people who make shoes and other footwear shiny for a fee respectively. The hearer however derives enough contextual information to satisfy his relevance. These terms are therefore understood to fall into a broader category of peasants which is a shared attribute among the three. Ruto uses this to show that in the Jubilee coalition, they have given equal leadership opportunities to people of all walks of life while their opponents advocate for power sharing among the elite only. The metonymy is seen in how Ruto refers to himself as a 'hustler' which is an informal term used in Kenya to mean one who is not wealthy and puts a lot of effort into his work. Whenever Kenyans hear the word 'hustler', they associate it with Ruto. His followers are actually called the 'hustlers nation'. The hearers of this utterance will therefore not be looking for one who is a peasant or hustler in real life, but one who refers to himself as so, and this leads them to Ruto. In this example he adds that other than him who is a hustler, the jubilee coalition has accommodated other lowly people like cooks, watchmen and shoe shiners. The hearers will not search for the literal meaning of these words but will associate them with peasants and hustlers using the background information that he identifies himself with the lowly people and also from his previous utterance in the same speech that Jubilee had accommodated people, not because of their social status but because they were promising leaders. This however contradicts what the hearer already knows, that he is one of the affluent people in the country with vast property hence making it humorous. The humorous effects are also obtained from the mention of cooks, watchmen and gardeners since the hearers are aware that most, if not all of the candidates in jubilee, are wealthy and not people struggling to make ends meet.

Consider yet another example:

13. Mimi nataka niwaeleze, hatushangai ya kwamba wao hawawezi kuamini ya kwamba kazi hiyo inaweza kufanyika kwa sababu wakati wao mwingi walipoteza waking'ang'ania carpet...

*I want to tell you that we are not surprised that they can't believe that that work can be done because they lost most of their time scrambling for the carpet.*

In his speech delivered during Jubilee's Naivasha rally, Ruto enumerates the projects that the Jubilee government had already undertaken and completed in their first term and compares this performance with Raila Odinga's tenure as prime minister in the coalition government in which he states that Raila did absolutely nothing to bring development to this country. He says that Raila used most of his time to scramble for the carpet. The use of the word carpet shows that it's the most relevant bit of encyclopedic information about the object or thing that could be used to identify it. The hearer therefore searches for what has a highly relevant connection to carpet. The most accessible one is the red carpet used by presidents as is usually a symbol of power and leadership. Using background information of how Raila Odinga was in a coalition government with Mwai Kibaki, the hearer arrives at the referent to be power and leadership. This therefore means that all he did when in the coalition government was compete for power with Mwai Kibaki and had nothing to show in terms of development. Humour comes about by the unusual association between power and leadership with the carpet. And also, the thought of him scrambling to walk on the red carpet when one takes the literal meaning.

Another example to illustrate this:

14. Nimeona wanaume wameshikana hapo kama tingatinga. Nimeona ile boat race naona wanaume kweli wamesukuma ogusuma kabisa. Bila ogusuma mi sioni hiyo kazi ikiendelea hiyo...Nimesalimiana na jamaa mwingine hapo, amenishika mkono, karibu ikuwe kama ile ya Mutua...

*I have seen men holding each other like tractors. I have seen the boat race and seen that men have really eaten ugali. Without ugali, I don't see that work going on. I have shaken hands with another guy there, he held my hand, it almost became like that case with Mutua.*

Ruto makes this utterance as he laughs off claims by Machakos Governor Alfred Mutua that he threatened him when the two met at statehouse during the handover of the building bridges initiative report to president Uhuru Kenyatta and says that all he did was give him a firm handshake. He made this utterance when he attended a cultural festival in Budalangi, Busia county where he made a jibe over the allegations by comparing his handshake with Mutua to those with residents who had stronger hands which he said could have posed a bigger threat to Governor Mutua. In order to access the intended interpretation of the metonymic use of ugali, the hearer uses background information together with the linguistic meaning of ugali. The background information the hearer has is that ugali is a great delicacy in western Kenya and it's believed that it's the only thing those people regard as proper food. The encyclopedic entries of ugali are that it's made out of maize flour, it's a staple food in Kenya especially western Kenya, it's a carbohydrate therefore an energy giving food. This information guides the hearer to the meaning that ugali here stands for all the foods that give energy to the body and that is why Ruto says that the men in the boat race must have continuously fed on ugali since their hands were very strong. It doesn't necessarily mean that they had specifically eaten ugali, but that they were well fed. So ugali here stands for strength, muscle, energy etc. The humour comes out by how he uses this metonymy to ridicule Alfred Mutua for his allegations that he had given him a firm handshake and threatened him hence going to report him to the police. He mockingly says that if Mutua shook hands with these men, he would report them to Hague!

## **2.4 Conclusion**

In this chapter, I examined humorous expressions in William Ruto's political speeches using a relevance theoretic approach and categorized them into various types as proposed by Bali et al (2018). The categories discussed are irony, metaphors and metonymy. I also looked at how humorous effects are achieved through these categories using the concept of incongruity which explains that humour comes about when people's expectations are contradicted. It was evident that Ruto used these categories as a strategy to discredit and disparage his opponents, specifically Raila Odinga so as to gain political mileage by influencing the voters and other kinds of audience in his political journey.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RHETORICAL QUESTIONS IN WILLIAM RUTO'S SPEECHES

#### 3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on identifying rhetorical questions in William Ruto's speeches using Relevance theory. It is important to note that there are two major types of questions in language: the information-seeking questions and the rhetorical questions. Most scholars who have defined rhetorical questions concur that they are strong statements presented in question form and which do not require an answer. These researchers include Cuddon (1977), Shipley (1955), Baldick (2008), Hudson (1975), Schmidt (1977), Taiwo (2008) among others as quoted by Yang (2017:12-13). Rhetorical questions at face value seem like they are seeking for information but at a deeper level, that information which is usually intended by the speaker is provided. This means that on the surface, they seemingly have an information gap but at a deeper level they have information which is retrieved through context.

The study in this chapter will also analyze how humorous effects are brought forth from the rhetorical questions using the concept of incongruity. Section 3.2 looks at identification and interpretation of rhetorical questions as well as the humorous effects drawn from these rhetorical questions while section 3.3 is the conclusion.

#### 3.2 Interpretation of Rhetorical Questions and its Humorous Effects

In this section, we will look at how rhetorical questions are identified and interpreted using Relevance theory. What happens in the case of rhetorical questions is that the speaker asks question A, he wants the hearer to hear A but because of context C, he wants the hearer to deduce B. Wilson and Sperber (2004:608) as quoted by Yang (2017:105) point out that to identify a rhetorical question, the linguistic pointers and contexts of the question are interpreted by putting to use the concepts of mutual manifestness and contextual implicature. When a rhetorical question is posed, the hearers activate the context and if they can identify an implied proposition by combining the linguistic form of the question and its context then they judge it as a rhetorical question. In relevance theoretic terms, after studying the context, if there is an implicature mutually manifest to both the speaker and



the hearer and no answer is expected, the question is taken to be a rhetorical one. If no implicature is recovered, then it's not a rhetorical question. The first step is converting the question into a declarative form based on the mutual cognitive environment. Then check if the declarative form is an assumption mutually manifest to the speaker and hearer with no expectations of an answer. Mutual manifestness is the underlying factor for determining whether the question is rhetorical or not. Beyond identifying the rhetorical question, the hearer also needs to understand the intention of the speaker. This intention is usually communicated by an implicature and is usually beyond what the declarative form communicates. Different processes like reference resolution, disambiguation and semantic enrichment are involved in the comprehension of rhetorical questions. Using context and encyclopedic knowledge, the hearer draws the implied conclusion and deduces the speaker's intended message.

Look at the following example:

15. Huyu Joshua ni Joshua ya kweli ama Joshua ya bandia? Hii canaan yake ni Canaan ya kweli ama Canaan ya bandia?

*Is this Joshua real or fake? Is his Canaan real or fake?*

This question was posed by Ruto at Ndalu, Bungoma in Western Kenya after he told the audience that Raila who referred to himself as Joshua who would take them to Canaan had promised them a Canaan of Busaa and Chang'aa which are local illicit brews. Raila had at an earlier date promised the people of Bungoma that he would legalize the brews once elected president.

This example turned into a declarative proposition will be:

This Joshua is fake. His Canaan is fake.

In the preceding utterance, Ruto expresses his criticizing attitude towards Raila's promise of legalizing the local brews and this assists him in making his implicature mutually manifest to the audience. It becomes evident to both the speaker i.e. Ruto and his audience that Joshua who in this case refers to Raila is fake and that the Canaan he is promising

people is also fake. Since this fact is mutually manifest to both the speaker i.e. Ruto and his audience, then it is taken as a rhetorical question expressing Ruto's criticism and attack on Raila, the Jubilee's opponent and it is also meant to make the audience dislike and lose confidence in him. Both Ruto and his audience from the background information of the bible and in the context of presidential campaigns in Kenya know that the Canaan promised in the bible flowed with milk and honey and this was what the Israelites would feed on. Therefore, the promise of legalizing Busaa and Chang'aa by Raila was contrary to the biblical Canaan. The audience can also deduce that beer would make the people unproductive and was not helpful to them in any way. Ruto implies that if Raila was elected president, there will be slow or no development in Kenya, because a candidate who promises the legalization of alcohol cannot have development in his mind. But if they elected Uhuru Kenyatta his running mate, Kenya would become prosperous. The strong implicature drawn is that Canaan is fake because it is alcohol related and not honey or milk related and so even Joshua is fake. From this, we get the humorous effects since the idea of alcohol is against the expectations of the background knowledge of the audience. The weak implicatures would be that Raila is not a good choice for president and should therefore not be elected.

See another example:

16. Mimi nakuuliza wewe, kama hawa vijana tutawapatia chang'aa na busaa nchi hii itabadilika kweli?

*I want to ask you, if we give chang'aa and busaa to these youth, will there be transformation in this country really?*

This example is also taken from the same speech as the first one and also proceeds from Ruto's attack on Raila's promise of legalizing the local illicit brews, chang'aa and busaa, to the residents of Bungoma. It qualifies as a rhetorical question because it's mutually manifest to both Ruto who is the speaker and the hearers that if the youth are given chang'aa and busaa, there will be no transformation in Kenya. They both know that drunkenness slows development. It is also rhetorical because no information is being sought. Ruto is actually making an assertion that if alcohol was given to the youth, there

would be no transformation in the country. It's just general knowledge as everyone would deduce that. Using the context of the political campaigns where the Jubilee coalition has big developmental agendas for the country like construction of roads, railway, hospitals etc. and also knowledge about how alcohol can slow development by making those who partake in it unproductive, they can conclude that Uhuru Kenyatta, the Jubilee candidate would make a better president than Raila Odinga who would just lead the country into stagnation.

Humour in this example is derived from the point of disagreement between Chang'aa and Busaa and transformation. The audience's expectations are that for transformation and development to take place in any country, the leaders have to lay down strategies like infrastructural development, improvement of education, health, employment opportunities etc. The thought of supplying alcohol to the youth as a strategy is ridiculous and does not agree with their expectations thus evoking humour.

Consider another example:

17. Sasa mimi nauliza nyinyi, mtashindwa kuamua kati ya Uhuru Kenyatta na Bwana Kitendawili? Ni wazi ama si wazi? Mko tayari jameni? Mko tayari?

*Now I want to ask you people, will you fail to decide between Uhuru Kenyatta and Mr. Riddle? Is it or is it not clear? Are you ready? Are you ready?*

This was posed at Nyahururu when Jubilee was campaigning for the second round of the elections. Ruto asks this question immediately after juxtaposing Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga based on their promises and past achievements. He says that Uhuru Kenyatta is constructing the railway, roads, ensuring that all households have electricity, providing free maternity services to women, providing free secondary education, doing away with examination fees etc. while Mr. Riddle (Raila) on the other hand was just engaging in performance of riddles, football commentaries, traps, gymnastics and witchcraft. From this co-text which Ruto uses to make mutually manifest his implicature to the audience, it becomes clear that choosing between Uhuru and Raila would not pose a challenge to the audience since they could clearly see who was a better option. The sharp contrast between

Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga is used by Ruto to make his communicative intention obvious. Encyclopedic knowledge about good governance such as infrastructural development, treating people with equality, creation of employment etc. helps the audience to conclude that it would be better to vote for a leader who had a vision and was concerned with infrastructural development and other aspects of human life than one who was just engaged in inconsequential things like riddles, football, traps, gymnastics and witchcraft. The hearers will therefore conclude that Uhuru was the president they needed and Ruto's intended assumption that they should vote for Uhuru since he would bring transformation and development is inferred.

The humour in this example is obtained from Ruto's criticism on Raila's overusing of riddles in his speeches hence referring to him as Mr. Riddle. It is evident in most of Ruto's speeches especially when he is attacking Raila, that he chooses few of the stylistic devices that Raila uses too often and capitalizes on them to degrade the image of Raila and ignores anything else that he says or does. These include his use of riddles, metaphors of football and trap etc. In this example, he chooses the riddle and refers to Raila as Mr. Riddle. What Ruto is doing is that he is criticizing Raila for overusing this mechanism and this makes the audience laugh most likely because some of them may have already thought about it and made the observation that Raila overdoes it.

Another example to illustrate this:

18. Ambulance imefika haijafika? Imefika haijafika?

*Has the ambulance arrived or not? Has it or has it not arrived?*

Ruto posed this question to the people of Nyamira County during one of the campaign rallies. He addresses Uhuru Kenyatta telling him that the people had asked him for an ambulance which he reported to him and immediately after the direct address to Uhuru, he poses this question. From background information that counties were receiving such donations, the audience can conclude that an ambulance had been delivered to Nyamira. This fact becomes mutually manifest to Ruto and the hearers. Ruto is therefore not seeking information about this but confirming. So, the question has the information it seems to be

seeking. The implicature obtained will be that the Jubilee coalition is the best option as they keep their promises. There is absolutely nothing humorous in this example and it was solely used as an illustration for Ruto's use of rhetorical questions. It is also a pointer that rhetorical questions need not be humorous.

Look at another example:

19. Mi nataka niwaulize, huyu muungwana ameongea hapa ndio mlimchagua awe rais wa jamhuri ya Kenya? Tarehe nane mwezi wa nane mliamua hamkuamua? Mlisema ni yule mzee wa kumangamanga kortini ama mlisema ni Uhuru Kenyatta? Mlisema ni watu wa mtego ama mlisema ni watu wa Jubilee?

*I want to ask you, is this gentleman who has spoken here the one you elected president of the republic of Kenya? On 8<sup>th</sup> of August did you or did you not decide? You said it's that man who loiters in the courts or you said it's Uhuru Kenyatta? Did you decide on the people of traps or did you decide on Jubilee?*

Ruto posed this during Jubilee's rally at Uhuru Park Nairobi. The audience using background information and context of the general elections that had taken place on 8<sup>th</sup> of August 2017 know that these questions are not seeking for information but on the contrary are providing the information they seem to be seeking. Ruto knows that the hearers are aware of the outcome of the elections where Uhuru Kenyatta had more votes than Raila but the Supreme Court had refused to uphold the elections on the basis of irregularities and illegalities. Another implicature that can be derived is that regardless of the ruling on irregularities and illegalities, the people could not have voted for the man who believed in traps and was hopping from one court to another to challenge Jubilee's win. The conclusion they make would therefore be that Jubilee had won in the first round because they were incomparable to their opponents NASA, in terms of the promises they had made to the people and the developmental strategies they had for the country. Jubilee under the leadership of Uhuru appeared as having very serious strategies to take the country to another level of economic freedom while NASA, led by Raila was just seen to be engaging in small talk and play, and this is what Ruto intended to communicate.

The humorous effects come about through exaggeration. The picture Ruto paints of Raila is distorted, almost portraying him as a clown, but the humorous effect is still there since it finds some agreement in the minds of some people. Placing Uhuru and Raila side by side where the latter is seen as only engaging in a game of ensnaring his opponents in traps and moving from one court to another to challenge Jubilee's win is an exaggeration that makes people laugh.

Let's consider another example:

20. Hawa wangwana tuliwashinda bana.. Hatukuwashinda tuliwashinda bana? Si hawa watu tuliwanyoa?

*We defeated these gentlemen.. Did we or did we not defeat them? Didn't we shave these people?*

This was also at Uhuru Park and was also in reference to Jubilee's win in the first round. With the first statement, Ruto makes clear what he wants to communicate mutually manifest to the audience. Still using the same background information and context of the general elections on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017, the audience can conclude that the Jubilee coalition had won over the NASA coalition. Humour is seen in the use of the word shave which is a metaphor. The encyclopedic entries for shave include: to cut hair, make bald, to cut finely, to reduce in size and weight, etc. where 'to reduce in size' will be picked. In the elections context it means that Jubilee reduced NASA to losers. There is incongruity that brings about the humour because 'shave' does not fit in the context of elections. The whole idea of shaving is an unusual way of talking about losing or beating someone in an election.

Another example for illustration:

21. Unajua yule mjamaa mwingine mlisikia alilalamika juzi ati nilimsalimia. Ati nilimfanya nini? Sasa kama angesalimiana na huyu jamaa amesukuma boat hapa?... sijui kama tunaelewana? Eeh? Ati nimemsalimia tu hivi, ati ooh huyu mtu ameenda akakimbia kunishtaki kwa polisi. Kama angesalimiana na yule mtu amekuwa akikoroga boat hapa, si angekimbia Hague?

*You know that other guy as you heard complained the other day that I greeted him. What did I do to him? What if he shook hands with this guy pushing boats here? I don't know if we are together? Eeh? I just shook hands with him and he ran to report me to the police. What if he shakes the hand of that person who has been boat riding here, will he not run to Hague?*

This was during a cultural festival in Budalangi where Ruto made fun of Alfred Mutua who had earlier complained of Ruto's firm handshake when the two met at statehouse. Mutua had told the media and reported to the police that Ruto had pressed his hand hard and looked directly into his eyes threatening him. The fact that Ruto shook hands with Mutua is mutually manifest to him and his audience. The rhetorical questions 'what if he shook hands with this guy pushing boats here?' and 'what if he shakes the hand of that person who has been boat riding here, will he not run to Hague?' serve to express Ruto's mockery on Alfred Mutua that he had blown the incidence out of proportion. They are rhetorical questions because Ruto is not seeking for any information but uses them to make an assertion that Mutua will run to Hague if any of those boat riders shook his hand. From background information, the people know that the men whose work is to push and navigate boats the better part of their lives have rough and strong hands. So the conclusion they will make which is also the one that Ruto intended to communicate is that, Ruto's hands are not as rough and strong as those of the men who rowed the boats. And if Mutua had reported Ruto to the police because of a handshake, he would result to Hague, which is an international and higher court if any of those men shook hands with him. Another derived implicature would be that Mutua's response was an overreaction that was unexpected and uncalled-for.

Humour in this example is derived from Ruto ridiculing Mutua and portraying him as weak. The thought of Mutua going to Hague because of a handshake is ridiculous as it is contrary to the hearer's knowledge of Hague as an international Criminal Court where serious crimes like murder, atrocity, genocide and other charges against humanity are handled. It would be absurd if anyone filed a case against another on the basis of a firm handshake. This would therefore mean that Mutua would be accusing the boat rider of killing him and the thought elicits laughter.

Look at another example:

22. Na mimi nataka nimwambie kwa sababu naskia yeye ni mtoto wa chief. Ati baba yake ni chief. Sasa anatudharau sisi kwa sababu baba zetu ata hawajafika ile mzee ya mitaa... Kama anatudharau hivyo na yeye tu ni mtoto wa chief, kama angekuwa Uhuru Kenyatta mtoto wa rais? Si huyo jamaa angetukojolea? Eeh?

*And I want to tell him because I hear he is a son of a chief. That his father is a chief. Now he despises us because our fathers are not even village elders. If he is despising us that way and he is only the son of a chief, what if he were Uhuru Kenyatta the son of a president? Wouldn't that guy have peed on us?*

This was at Bomas of Kenya during the endorsement of Uhuru Kenyatta in Jubilee party. Ruto was referring to Musalia Mudavadi whose father, Moses Mudavadi, was a minister for local government during former and late President Moi's tenure. Ruto says that Mudavadi had insulted him saying that hustlers are thieves. The audience already know that Ruto refers to himself as hustler to identify with the common man. What is mutually manifest is that Mudavadi's father was a government official, Uhuru Kenyatta is the son of the first president of Kenya, Musalia will never take the place of Uhuru and that Ruto is from a very humble background and his father is not known anywhere in Kenyan politics. Ruto uses the rhetorical question to taunt Musalia for his remark that hustlers were thieves. So the implicature derived is Musalia felt important and despised them yet his father was a mere minister therefore if he were Uhuru Kenyatta the son of a president, he would have done worse like peeing on them. Further implicatures that can be derived would be that those in the opposing coalition placed themselves on a pedestal where the common man could not reach them, therefore they could not make good leaders as they would not be in touch with issues that affected the citizens. On the other hand, Uhuru is seen as a people's person. Even though his father was the first president, he doesn't rub it on people's faces therefore can be perceived as humble and therefore suitable for the presidency.

Humour is obtained first from Ruto referring to Mudavadi as 'the son of a chief' yet the audience know that the father was not a chief but a minister. Chief is lower in rank than minister so it could be seen as a way of Ruto being sarcastic and belittling Mudavadi. Also



in the figurative use of pee where Ruto means that if Mudavadi was the son of a president, leave alone chief, he would have done worse than despise them. It is also against the hearers' expectations that someone lower in position would look down upon those in a higher position. In this case, Ruto insinuates that Mudavadi, who at that time held no significant leadership position, despised them who were in the Jubilee coalition yet the audience know that Ruto at the moment is the deputy president of Kenya and though he referred to himself as hustler, he was very wealthy. This makes the entire utterance humorous.

Consider another example:

23. Kwa sababu tunataka tuwaambie hii kenya ni yetu sisi sote. Na watado? Ama? Tunaelewana?

*Because we want to tell them that this Kenya belongs to all of us. And what will they do? Or? Are we together?*

This too was at Bomas of Kenya. Ruto poses this question after saying that Jubilee coalition had accommodated people from different backgrounds while NASA coalition did not. Ruto actually says that the NASA coalition was only for the elite. This is the background information the hearers have. The statement that precedes the question 'that Kenya belonged to everyone' enables Ruto to communicate the implicature that there is absolutely nothing their opponents would do about Jubilee coalition giving a chance to people from different social statuses. The audience can deduce that since Jubilee believed in uniting Kenyans from all walks of life, they would have an upper hand in the elections and the NASA coalition would be left helpless. Humour is obtained from the unusual use of sheng in the phrase 'watado?' to mean 'what will they do?' by William Ruto. The use of such language is not common with people of his age and stature as it is perceived to be the language of the youth. It is therefore against the expectations of the audience that Ruto would use sheng for communication and when he does, it makes them laugh.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

In this chapter, rhetorical questions in William Ruto's speeches were discussed. Using the concept of mutual manifestness, the study established how the hearers identify rhetorical questions and how they proceed in the interpretation and comprehension of the rhetorical questions using context and encyclopedic knowledge. Rhetorical questions as seen in the chapter are used to help Ruto express his attitudes of mockery and criticism towards his opponents, especially those in the NASA coalition like Raila Odinga who was NASA's presidential candidate and their main opponent. He also used them as a strategy to influence the audience and drum up support for Uhuru Kenyatta by questioning the suitability of their opponents for the highest office in the land.

The chapter also looked into how humour is obtained from the rhetorical questions In William Ruto's speeches. It was evident from the data analysis that majority, if not all, of the rhetorical questions used by Ruto were humorous.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **HOW HUMOROUS EXPRESSIONS AND RHETORICAL QUESTIONS IN WILLIAM RUTO’S SPEECHES EVOKE PERSUASION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous two chapters concentrated on the rhetorical devices used by William Ruto in his speeches, namely humour which was categorized into irony, metaphors and metonymy, and also rhetorical questions. This chapter will assess how these devices evoke persuasion.

O’Keefe (1990) as quoted by Lyttle (2001: 207) defines persuasion as a fruitful deliberate effort to control another person’s thinking or attitude by means of communication. Language is the main tool through which speakers more so politicians sway their audience. According to Jowett & O’Donnell (2012: 32) as quoted by Al-Ameedi and Khudhier (2015:78), persuasion is an ongoing and interactive process where the addresser tries to manipulate the addressee to change his stance, behaviour and beliefs. Yelenevskaya (2013) as quoted by Semenovskaya & Gornostaeva (2018:590) states, the audience of political discourse is satisfied with ‘infortainment’ and seem not to be happy with just plain information. Modern day politicians therefore depend on various strategies to win over supporters and remain relevant. As Partington (2007) cited by Neshkovska & Trajkova (2018: 59) puts it, politicians who are not fluent in their language appear incompetent while those who are skillful in their language use can greatly influence their followers.

Section 4.2 will look at persuasion in irony, section 4.3 will focus on persuasion in metaphors and metonymies, section 4.4 will address persuasion in rhetorical questions and lastly section 4.5 will be the conclusion.

#### **4.2 Persuasion in Irony**

Irony is used by politicians in a purposeful manner to make their speeches persuasive. According to Neshkovska & Trajkova (2018: 59) the pragmatic functions of irony are directly related to its persuasiveness. These functions include: to evoke humour, express mild ridicule and express harsh criticism and this is what makes irony persuasive. A political speech laced with ironical utterances meant to make fun of, ridicule or criticize one’s rival is more convincing. Kreuz et al (1991:161) as quoted by Neshkovska &

Trajkova (2018:63) opines that what makes ironical utterances in political speeches more persuasive is the fact that the hearers can easily commit them to memory and keep them in their memory longer than simple direct utterances. Mills (1997) as quoted by Neshkovska & Trajkova (2018:64) concurs with this and adds that irony helps in creating images in the minds of the audience. We are therefore going to use the pragmatic functions of irony to show how ironic utterances in Ruto's speeches evoke persuasion.

### **Use of Irony to Evoke Humour**

Humour is a very effective way in which people express their personality. For politicians, they need to carefully decide how they portray themselves as there are numerous ways of expressing personality but not all of them may persuade an audience. Humour enables a speaker to ease tension and also display personality. It is therefore crucial for the speaker to be aware how he desires to be perceived. To display personality to the audience, one needs to associate with them and make an impression of his or her individuality (Cockcroft & Cockcroft 1992:9). Humour can be a means of exhibiting the speaker as an easy or relaxed person or can be used to point out the blatant irony in a situation. It can also be used to convey the speaker's 'warmth of thought' as Walter Nash (Cockcroft & Cockcroft 1992:23) expresses it. Laughter is usually shared among friends, therefore by laughing with the audience, the speaker may reduce the distance between him and them and this is a good platform for persuasion.

Look at this example:

24. Mheshimiwa Prime Minister mimi nakushukuru sana kwa sababu ulikubali kuungana na rais.... Na pia umetusaidia kwa sababu sisi wengine tulioenda Sunday school tulisomeshwa huko kuhusu safari ya Canaan... hatukuambiwa kulikuwa na mamba, lakini sasa tumejua kumbe kulikuwa na mamba!

*Your Excellency former prime minister, I want to thank you for agreeing to partner with the president... And you have also helped us because some of us who attended Sunday school were taught about the journey to Canaan but we were not told there were crocodiles. But now we know so there were crocodiles!*

As earlier seen, the ironical effect is created by first identifying the utterance as echoic, then identifying the source of the echoed opinion and finally by recognizing the speaker's dissociative attitude towards the echoed opinion. This statement is therefore ironical since Ruto communicates a dissociative attitude towards Raila's earlier remark about there being crocodiles in the journey to Canaan. He rejects this thought since nothing like that is mentioned in the Bible. In this example, Ruto makes fun of Raila who after the handshake still insisted that he was still on the journey to Canaan although he had realized that there were crocodiles on the way who were not happy with the handshake and wanted to thwart the plans he and President Uhuru Kenyatta had for bringing people together. By crocodiles he meant the likes of Ruto and his supporters who seemed not to quite welcome the idea of Uhuru coming together with Raila Odinga for purposes of peace in the country. Ruto makes the audience laugh when he says that they didn't learn about crocodiles in Sunday school and thanks Raila for letting them know that there were indeed crocodiles that the Israelites encountered on their journey to Canaan. He goes ahead and says that Raila would make a very good Sunday school teacher as he would teach that bit and this leaves the audience, including Raila himself, in stitches. His ability to make his audience laugh brings him closer to them and whatever he says seems to resonate well with them. As earlier mentioned, if the distance between the speaker and audience is narrowed, persuasion occurs.

### **Use of Irony to Express Mild Ridicule**

Mild ridicule occurs when a politician reprimands his or her rival because of less significant violations in deeds or in speaking. These violations may not have any serious consequences but the politician still goes ahead to openly criticize them so as to stop them from recurring in the future.

See the following example:

25) Sasa huyu Joshua tunaambiwa ndio Joshua hapa ya kupeleka watu Canaan na ametangaza Bungoma ati ile Canaan yeye anafikiria ni Canaan ya chang'aa na busaa.

*Now this Joshua we are being told of that he will take people to Canaan yet he has announced here at Bungoma that the Canaan he is thinking of is of chang'aa and busaa.*

Here, Ruto makes reference to Raila's promise of legalizing chang'aa and busaa to the people of Bungoma. He ridicules Raila's plan and by so doing implies that if Raila is elected president, he will bring the country's economy crumbling down since alcohol would render the people useless. He uses irony to show how irrational Raila's earlier proposal was, knowing very well that no parent would want their children taking alcohol. There is also a mismatch between the people's expectations i.e. improved infrastructure, employment opportunities etc. and what Raila promises to deliver i.e. legalization of alcohol. Ruto uses this against him to turn the people away from voting him in and to earn himself and Uhuru Kenyatta some political mileage. By criticizing Raila implicitly, Ruto might succeed in persuading the people not to follow or vote for him. It is the pragmatic function of irony of expressing mild ridicule that brings about persuasion.

### **Use of Irony to Express Harsh Criticism**

Politicians may also use irony to express disapproval of a rival's actions or speech in a rough way and in so doing, taunt their image and save theirs.

Consider the following example:

26. Nataka nimwambie Bw.kitendawili awache kuzunguka na fitina, awache kumangamanga. Ati anasema ya kwamba watoto wa Kenya hawatafanya mtihani.... Kwa sababu yeye hajafanya mtihani wa shule ya msingi na hajafanya mtihani ya shule ya upili ndio hajui maana ya mtihani ile watoto wetu watafanya mwisho wa mwaka huu. Na kama sisemi ukweli, nataka Bw.kitendawili atuonyeshe certificate yake ya primary school na certificate yake ya secondary school, ndio tujue kweli anajua uchungu wa kusoma primary na secondary school.

*I want to tell Mr. Riddle to stop roaming about with malice saying that the children of Kenya will not sit for their exam...because he never sat for primary or secondary school exam that is why he does not know the importance of the exams our children are doing at end of this year. And if I am not telling the truth, I want him to show us his primary and secondary school certificates so that we know that he understands the pain of going through primary and secondary school education.*

Ruto in this example wants to ruin the reputation of Raila by portraying him as untrustworthy when he criticizes him for proposing that the national exams be pushed by two weeks to conduct the repeat elections. Raila was against the proposed date and said there was no harm if the exams were postponed and that the candidates would not die if they did not sit the exams at the stipulated time. Ruto goes ahead and shows the audience that the reason Raila did not find it hard to say this was because he himself had not sat for such exams and therefore did not know their significance. Ruto uses Raila's statement strongly against him to convince the voters not to vote him as he did not have their interests at heart. He invalidates him before the voters and portrays him as selfish and hence not suitable to be elected president. As earlier mentioned, this harsh criticism as a pragmatic function of irony brings about persuasion.

#### **4.3 Persuasion in Metaphors and Metonymy**

Whatever is discussed in this section will apply for both metaphors and metonymy as their interpretation was basically done in the same way as was seen in chapter two. I.e. by drawing the encyclopedic entries from the minds of the listeners.

Charteris-Black (2011:28) as quoted by Bozic (2017:65) opines that the main reason politicians use metaphors is to paint their view of issues to do with politics by abolishing other points of view. Consequently, politicians attack the ideas of their rivals and use metaphors to portray a positive image of themselves and present a negative image of their political rivals. This argument is in line with the idea of the enhancement of communicator's credibility as proposed by Bowers & Osborn (1966), McCroskey & Combs (1969), and Reinsch (1971), as cited in Dillard (2002: 414). This view assumes that those speakers who use metaphors are judged as believable and convincing than those who use literal language. This makes their audience to have a positive attitude towards their message consequently supporting it, and this results in greater persuasion. The reason for being judged as highly credible as Aristotle in his poetics (1952: 255) states is that the greatest thing in life is to be an expert in metaphor which he says cannot be learnt from others and is also an indication of extraordinary mental capacity. According to this view, the assumption is that metaphors are a form of superior language not used by common people but by the likes of poets and writers. Hence those who use them are seen as highly

inventive and are judged positively. This follows therefore that they are able to change people's standpoints and behaviour since they are highly rated. In the process, these people employ metaphors to taint the image of their opponents dissuading people from following or voting for them.

Mio et al (2005) as quoted by Bozic (2017:65) state that politicians who use many metaphors were seen to be more charming and pull masses to themselves. Metaphors make a speech more memorable than a speech delivered in literal language. Interpretation of metaphors as seen in Relevance theory requires more processing effort than literal messages. It then follows that the more processing effort expended in interpreting a message, the better it manifests in the memory. This higher credibility judgement may also occur due to the capacity of the metaphor to draw similarities between entities that were not known to the hearers before. This new revelation delights the hearers who as a result are appreciative to the speaker who makes this new comparison and this improves their judgment of the speaker as believable and convincing. The assumption in this view is that the use of metaphors makes a speaker be judged as credible and this view holds that the heightened judgement of the communicator evokes persuasion.

See the following example:

27... na mimi nataka niwaambie ndugu zangu sisi tuko tayari na shukrani. Kuna tofauti mkubwa kati ya Uhuru Kenyatta na Bwana Kitendawili. Uhuru Kenyatta anajenga reli, anajenga barabara, anasambaza stima, anahakikisha ya kwamba wamama wanajifungua bure... Bwana Kitendawili upande ule mwingine kazi yake ni kitendawili. Mpira huyu, mpira yule. Mtego nasa huyu nasa yule. Sarakasi tibiim uchawi tialala..

*I want to tell you my brothers that we are ready and grateful. There is a big difference between Uhuru Kenyatta and Mr. Riddle. Uhuru Kenyatta is constructing the railway, he is constructing roads, distributing electricity, ensuring that women deliver without being charged... Mr. Riddle on the other side his work is just riddles. Pass the ball to this one and to that one. Trap to capture this one and capture that one. Gymnastics tibiim and witchcraft tialala..*



In this example, Ruto creates and stresses an obvious contrast between their development plan as Jubilee and their opponent's seeming lack of anything tangible. He portrays Raila as a joker who has nothing serious planned for the people of Kenya while Uhuru Kenyatta has everything well planned and rolled out. By doing so, he shows that Raila is inefficient and the voters should therefore not vote in his favour but vote for Uhuru who is development minded. The hearers will also rate him highly for his ability to make reference to riddle, ball and trap to refer to Raila's lack of seriousness. In the process of people judging him positively because of his ability to use metaphors, we see that the metaphors he uses in this example help him to paint a very bad image of Raila and this in some way would dissuade people from voting for him. Ruto's cognitive capacity to create metaphors as mentioned before is linked to credibility and by the audience perceiving him as credible, they have a positive attitude towards his message, consequently supporting it and this results in greater persuasion.

Consider another example:

28. Ati ameenda kwa wabeberu kutushtaki ati kwa sababu tumemkataza nusu mkate. Sisi tunamwambia Bwana Kitendawili maneno ya nusu mkate asahau...

*He has gone to the colonizers to tell on us because we have refused him half a loaf of bread. We want to tell Mr. Riddle to forget about half a loaf.*

Here, the new comparison between bread and government, half a loaf and coalition government is what evokes persuasion as this comparison was previously not known to the audience. It therefore becomes a source of interest to them, gratifies them and as a result, they are grateful to Ruto for this insight and judges him as credible. What follows is that they believe in him and in his message. It is clear from this that his use of metaphors brings forth persuasion.

Another thing that makes metaphors in political discourse persuasive is as Mio (1997) quoted by Bozic (2017:65) puts it: that many political issues are intricate and abstract for people to comprehend them and metaphors assist in understanding abstract elements using more concrete ones. So a politician who uses metaphors is perceived as one who

understands complicated issues and besides that, they can find a solution for them. He is seen as one who has mental capacity to break abstract ideas to concrete ones therefore offering solutions. And someone who offers solutions is perceived as credible. According to Brukholder & Henry (2009) as quoted by Bozic (2017:65) a politician who uses metaphors displays his capability to think rationally by making complex issues appear simple and basic and this in return is persuasive.

See the following example:

29. Wale wenzetu walikuwa kwenye ukumbi huu wiki mbili zilizopita. They told us that they believe power is for the sharing by the elite. That is why they erected a high table of five gentlemen.

*Our opponents were in this auditorium two weeks ago. They told us that they believe power is for the sharing by the elite. That is why they have erected a high table of five gentlemen.*

Here Ruto uses the metaphor of high table to paint a clear picture to the audience about the NASA coalition and what they stand for. He portrays their selfishness and self-centeredness which is glaringly revealed in their coalition which is made up of five co-principals. On the other hand, he emphasizes Jubilee's selflessness when he states later on in the speech that they had welcomed people from all walks of life because they believed that social status should not hinder anyone from becoming a leader. In this example, Ruto shows his audience that he and his colleagues in the Jubilee coalition have the solution for equality by allowing those of the low class to join them unlike their opponents in NASA who had formed a coalition of five co-principals showing that they believed in power sharing among the elite. By using the 'high table' metaphor, he makes the hearers understand of the abstract concept of power sharing and in the same time offers a solution to this complicated issue. This in a way makes the masses drawn to him and the jubilee coalition as they seem to come down to the level of the common citizens unlike their adversaries who through their coalition had alienated themselves from the people.

Bozic (2017:65) states that politicians select metaphors and metonymies depending on the context and audience. This is because metaphors and metonymies may have various likely interpretations and the audience may ascribe their individual meanings which may be positive or negative. Dillard (2002:415) states that to interpret and understand metaphors and metonymies, more cognitive resources are required than when dealing with literal statements. This means that a big chunk of the cognitive resources of a hearer are utilized when they come across a metaphorical persuasive message since the process of understanding a metaphor produces a large number of association. This results to a small number of resources being left to invalidate or turn away the subject matter of the message or the speaker of that message. This leads to the listener agreeing with and supporting the message more which in turn means that they agree with and support the speaker. What this means in relevance theoretical terms is that, the audience expend more processing effort to interpret and understand metaphors and metonymies which are implicatures. Once they reach a conclusion, they are not likely to invest more processing effort to reach another conclusion that will discredit the message. Jaffe (1988) as quoted by Dillard (2002:415) proposes that to derive meaning from metaphors, a detailed explanation is required and this enhances memory which results in proper understanding and this leads to persuasion. As mentioned earlier, the more processing effort invested in getting the meaning of an utterance, the better it manifests in the memory and this results in proper understanding which in turn leads to persuasion.

Consider the following examples:

30. Mimi nataka niwaeleze, hatushangai ya kwamba wao hawawezi kuamini ya kwamba kazi hiyo inaweza kufanyika kwa sababu wakati wao mwingi walipoteza waking'ang'ania carpet...

*I want to tell you that we are not surprised that they can't believe that that work can be done because they lost most of their time scrambling for the carpet.*

31. Hawa wangwana tuliwashinda bana... siku ile tuliwanyoa, safari hii tutawanyoa bila maji.

*We defeated these gentlemen... we shaved them on that day, this time round we will shave them without water.*

32. Ati ameenda kwa wabeberu kutushtaki ati kwa sababu tumemkataza nusu mkate. Sisi tunamwambia Bwana Kitendawili maneno ya nusu mkate asahau...

*He has gone to the colonizers to tell on us because we have refused him half a loaf of bread. We want to tell Mr. Riddle to forget about half a loaf.*

The above examples of metonymy and metaphors draw their persuasiveness from their associative power. The listeners try to get the meaning by associating carpet with leadership and power, half a loaf with coalition government, shave with defeat. This makes Ruto's speeches memorable to his audience, arouses an emotional response and influences how they perceive him. They think highly of him for being able to make such associations and in turn agree with most of the things he says. The hearers also use a greater number of cognitive resources to interpret and understand the metaphors and metonymy and once they reach a conclusion, they are not likely to spend more resources to discredit the message. This according to the explanation given above makes them agree with and support the message and this results to them agreeing with and supporting Ruto who is the source of these messages.

Stimulated elaboration is another explanation for persuasion in metaphors. According to Ortony (1979, 1993) as cited in Dillard (2002: 416), for one to draw the meaning of a metaphorical message he or she needs to build a ground from the shared features of target and base and develop in detail the subject matter of the message and this results in numerous thoughts which lead to greater persuasion. This does not happen with literal messages. According to the dual-process approach to persuasion proposed by (Chaiken et al., Petty & Cacioppo 1986) as quoted in Dillard (2002: 417), metaphors make the listeners more interested in a message than literal language hence they are highly motivated to process the message. This motivation pushes them to maximally elaborate the message and as a result, persuasion takes place.

From the examples already given e.g. half a loaf, ball, trap, riddles, crocodiles etc., drawing the encyclopedic entries for these things is crucial for the hearers to understand the message. This results in a number of thoughts which leads to greater persuasion. The assumption is that there is an automatic agreement in the process of interpreting metaphors and metonymy. After the more complicated processing effort to understand a metaphor or metonymy, the audience is not likely to invest more processing effort to discredit the message and will therefore stick to the first interpretation they arrive at which is also the one intended by the speaker. The listeners' interest in the message is more and as they elaborate it, persuasion occurs.

The superior organization view (Read et al. 1990) as quoted in Dillard (2002: 417) is also another explanation for persuasion in metaphors. This view proposes that metaphors help to arrange a message better than literal language. This is because metaphors draw attention to and emphasize a message hence increasing the persuasive power of metaphors. As listeners get drawn to the message and its meaning, they get attached to the source of the message and this is how persuasion occurs. The reason why they get attached to the source of the message goes back to the notion of credibility discussed earlier.

See the example below:

33. So I want to tell my friends on the other side, kama walikuwa na matatizo na mahustlers, sasa macooks wameingia, na mawatchmen wako hapa, na mashoeshiners wamefika.

*So I want to tell my friends on the other side, if they had issues with hustlers, cooks have come in now, watchmen too are here, and shoe shiners have arrived.*

This example of metonymy helps Ruto to structure and organize his message better for a greater effect. The mention of cooks, watchmen, shoe shiners attracts the attention of the audience and emphasizes the message he wants to put across; that they in the jubilee government believed in an inclusive kind of government where everyone had equal chances in leadership unlike their adversaries who believed in power sharing among those in high positions. The audience get attracted to this message because they can identify with the common people i.e. cooks, watchmen and shoe shiners. They also get attached to the

speaker (Ruto) as he refers to himself as hustler which the audience easily identifies with and also because they perceive him as credible due to his ability to use metonymy. Through all this, persuasion takes place. The listeners get drawn to Ruto and his message as these are some of the issues they want to be addressed.

#### **4.4 Persuasion in Rhetorical Questions**

Rhetorical questions function primarily as persuasive strategies used by politicians and other speakers. They are used to capture the attention of the audience and involve them in the communicative activity. Stenbakken (2007: 79) says that rhetorical questions when posed give the audience's brain work to do. They are able to not just listen to and agree with the speaker, but to also take part in the discussion as they create a feeling that the speaker is consulting or discussing with the audience. Speakers use them to stress a point they want to pass across and make their speeches lively hence breaking the monotony.

Zillman (1972) as quoted by Petty et al. (1981:433) studied the effects of rhetorical questions on persuasion and came up with an operant conditioning interpretation in which they proved that good arguments by a speaker enable them to influence the hearers to surrender to or agree with whatever they are saying. According to them, rhetorical questions when used with weak arguments would lead to disagreements and this would be displeasing for the speaker. Therefore the use of rhetorical questions is a sign that the speaker's statements are powerful and from this the conclusion will be that the use of rhetorical questions by itself strengthens the assumptions in the minds of the audience and that makes them persuasive.

Look at this example:

34. Mimi nakuuliza wewe, kama hawa vijana tutawapatia chang'aa na busaa nchi hii itabadilika kweli?

*I want to ask you, if we give chang'aa and busaa to these youth, will there be transformation in this country really?*

In this example, Ruto first states how Raila was claiming to be Joshua and would take Kenyans to Canaan yet he had promised them a Canaan of Chang'aa and Busaa (local illicit brews) which he had promised to legalize once elected president. He even asks whether this Joshua and his Canaan are real or fake. These are evidently very strong arguments since he knows the audience will definitely agree with him that alcohol will not bring transformation in the country but will instead slow development since a drunk nation is not an active nation. By posing this rhetorical question, the audience agree with him since Ruto's arguments are forceful because they strengthen the assumptions the audience is already holding and this means that they are persuaded.

Consider another example:

35. Sasa mimi nauliza nyinyi, mtashindwa kuamua kati ya Uhuru Kenyatta na Bwana Kitendawili? Ni wazi ama si wazi? Mko tayari jameni? Mko tayari?

*Now I want to ask you people, will you fail to decide between Uhuru Kenyatta and Mr. Riddle? Is it or is it not clear? Are you ready? Are you ready?*

In this example, Ruto first presents Jubilee's agenda in making things better for Kenyans. He places Uhuru side by side with Raila Odinga, says how Uhuru was constructing roads, providing free maternity care for women, connecting electricity for many households, abolishing examination fees for candidates sitting national exams at primary and secondary level, etc. On the other hand he says that Raila's work was performing riddles for people, football gimmicks and ensnaring his opponents in a game of traps. Through this juxtaposition, Ruto presents a very powerful argument on who was a better candidate between Uhuru and Raila. The audience can clearly see that Uhuru would take this country to another economic level and better their lives while Raila has nothing to offer. So when Ruto poses this rhetorical question, it succeeds in persuading the audience who will agree with his already strong arguments and consequently with him since he is the source of the message.

The other study on the effects of rhetorical questions on persuasion is a cognitive response view (Petty et al. 1981: 433) which gives a different explanation from Zillman's. According to this view, rhetorical questions are only efficient when the hearers have not committed themselves to thinking about the message. So in this case, rhetorical questions will heighten message elaboration and consequently improve persuasion. On the other hand, rhetorical questions will not be efficient if the message already makes the audience think. In this case the use of rhetorical questions will not improve elaboration beyond what the audience have already decided, but will instead disrupt the thought process hence no effect on persuasion.

See an example:

36. Na mimi nataka nimwambie kwa sababu naskia yeye ni mtoto wa chief. Ati baba yake ni chief. Sasa anatudharau sisi kwa sababu baba zetu ata hawajafika ile mzee ya mitaa... Kama anatudharau hivyo na yeye tu ni mtoto wa chief, kama angekuwa Uhuru Kenyatta mtoto wa rais? Si huyo jamaa angetukojolea? Eeh?

*And I want to tell him because I hear he is a son of a chief. That his father is a chief. Now he despises us because our fathers are not even village elders. If he is despising us that way and he is only the son of a chief, what if he were Uhuru Kenyatta the son of a president? Wouldn't that guy have peed on us?*

The information Ruto gives before posing the rhetorical question i.e. when he talks about Mudavadi being the son of a chief and that he was despising them because their fathers held no significant position, may not at first have any relevance to the audience therefore they will not give it much thought. But when he poses the rhetorical questions asking if Mudavadi was despising them like that yet he was just a chief's son, what if he were Uhuru Kenyatta the son of a president? Would he not pee on them? These questions will enhance elaboration of the message that the audience had not given much thought before hence evoking persuasion. They will now start thinking about Mudavadi's pride and disdainful attitude because of just being a chief's son against Uhuru's humility and down-to-earth attitude despite being a president's son, and conclude that since Uhuru Kenyatta never boasted about being a president's son then he is the right person to vote for as he would treat people with respect. But Mudavadi, who in this case represents the NASA coalition,



is contemptuous and would therefore treat people with a lot of scorn if the NASA coalition was given a chance in leadership. By asking these questions, Ruto makes the audience agree with him and gives them the opportunity to follow his reasoning and understand why it was important for them to vote for Uhuru Kenyatta of Jubilee coalition and not for Raila Odinga of NASA coalition where Mudavadi was a co-principal.

Consider another example:

37. Unajua yule mjamaa mwingine mlisikia alilalamika juzi ati nilimsalimia. Ati nilimfanya nini? Sasa kama angesalimiana na huyu jamaa amesukuma boat hapa?... sijui kama tunaelewana? Eeh? Ati nimemsalimia tu hivi, ati ooh huyu mtu ameenda akakimbia kunishtaki kwa polisi. Kama angesalimiana na yule mtu amekuwa akikoroga boat hapa, si angekimbia Hague?

*You know that other guy as you heard complained the other day that I greeted him. What did I do to him? What if he shook hands with this guy pushing boats here? I don't know if we are together? Eeh? I just shook hands with him and he ran to report me to the police. What if he shakes the hand of that person who has been boat riding here, will he not run to Hague?*

Here, when Ruto says 'You know that other guy as you heard complained the other day that I greeted him' the audience may not give this statement much thought. But when he asks, 'What if he shook hands with this guy pushing boats here? Will he not run to Hague?' These rhetorical questions will trigger the audience to elaborate the message hence evoke persuasion. They will start thinking of how ridiculous it was for Mutua, the Governor of Machakos County, to report Ruto to the police because of a mere handshake and agree with Ruto that if he had reacted like so, the perception being that Ruto's hands are not rough, he would then report to Hague if any of those guys pushing boats there shook hands with him. It is these rhetorical questions that motivate them to process the message and come to the conclusion that Mutua was weak and petty or maybe he was just out to taint Ruto's reputation. By agreeing with Ruto and his message, the audience are already persuaded.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter analyzed the persuasive effects of humour and rhetorical questions in William Ruto's political speeches. The categories for persuasion used to measure the persuasive effects were: minimizing the distance between the speaker and the audience and building of trust. From the data analysis, it was established that the use of irony, metaphors, metonymy and rhetorical questions by William Ruto in his speeches had a persuasive effect on the audience. He used them as a strategy to build rapport with the audience, to influence the voters, to construct a negative image of his opponents and create a trustworthy and credible image of himself and Uhuru Kenyatta, with an intention of persuading the audience and also as a way of ridiculing his rivals.

The use of these rhetorical devices made his messages resonate well with his audience since as discussed earlier in chapter two and three, these devices evoke humour and as seen in this chapter, humour reduces the distance between the speaker and the audience hence serving as an effective ploy in persuasion.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter gives a summary of the research findings of this study, a summary of the conclusions obtained from the study of persuasive devices in William Ruto's political speeches and in addition, recommendations for further studies and research in Kenyan political discourse.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Findings**

This study applied Relevance Theory as elucidated by Clark (2013) to analyze and interpret humorous expressions and rhetorical questions in the political speeches of William Ruto, the incumbent Deputy President of the republic of Kenya. The study analyzed ten such speeches with the intention of identifying and classifying the humorous expressions, analyzing the rhetorical questions and establishing how these rhetorical devices evoke humour. The study also tried to find out how the humorous expressions and rhetorical questions are interpreted and understood by the audience and also how they evoke persuasion.

The study established that humour can be classified according to the major characteristics reflected across all types of humour as proposed by Bali et al (2018). In this classification, three major features evident across all types of jokes were suggested, namely: mode, theme and topic. This study however categorized humour under mode only since the other two categories were not found relevant for this study. In this category, humorous expressions from the collected data were classified into irony, humorous metaphors and metonymy.

On irony interpretation, it was first established that irony goes beyond communicating the opposite of what is implicitly communicated but it communicates the speaker's dissociative attitude and the source on which this attitude is built is referred to as the echo. In this regard, the study established that Ruto uses irony in his speeches to express attitudes such as ridiculing, mocking and disapproving towards their opponents and their actions in the NASA coalition, especially towards Raila Odinga. Ruto criticizes and ridicules their opponents' earlier comments, standpoints and promises during the campaign period to

discredit them and portray them as unreliable and their promises as impossible and unachievable. He also disapproves beliefs held by the people of Kenya like the belief that Raila was educated hence portraying him as unsuitable for presidency. In the interpretation of metaphors and metonymy, the study established that the context which is shared by both the speaker i.e. Ruto and his audience plays a crucial role in arriving at the correct interpretation. The hearers make reference to the political campaigns and Kenya's political background and pick the encyclopedic entry that generates a high number of cognitive effects with the least effort. Without this knowledge of the campaigns and the politics of the country, it would be impossible to arrive at the correct interpretation of the metaphors and metonymies used by Ruto. The data analyzed also revealed that Ruto uses rhetorical questions not to look for information from his audience but to make assertions. Whatever he communicates through the rhetorical questions is mutually manifest to him and his audience and he therefore uses these questions to strengthen the assumptions that he expects the hearers to share with him. Such assumptions are that Raila is not fit for presidency, his promises are unachievable and impractical etc. The audience just need to activate these assumptions and find them strengthened through the rhetorical questions. Through this way, Ruto mocks, criticizes and attacks their opponents, more so Raila Odinga, so as to make the audience lose confidence in him.

The study also elaborated how humorous effects are obtained from these rhetorical devices used by Ruto using the concept of incongruity which explains what makes a situation humorous and the reasons people react to such situations with laughter. It was established that incongruity is a mismatch between how things ought to be like and an experience that contradicts this understanding. This concept was used to identify humorous effects in irony, metaphors, metonymy and rhetorical questions in Ruto's speeches. Through the use of irony, metaphors, metonymy and rhetorical questions, Ruto communicates ideas that contradict the listeners expectations, assumptions and contextual knowledge and this becomes the source of laughter. As the hearers attempt to make sense of his utterances using the background knowledge of the campaigns and the political field in general, the process of making sense gets challenged, humour sets in and leads to laughter. The humorous effects come about also because of the shared knowledge between Ruto and his audience and without which it would be impossible to derive the humorous effects. This

includes knowledge about the political campaigns and the politics of the country in general. In addition to this, the study also revealed that humour in metaphors and metonymy is also derived from the unusual comparisons in which the source and target do not fit. For instance, comparing government with a loaf of bread, coalition government with half a loaf of bread and power with carpet. In rhetorical questions, humorous effects were also derived from exaggeration where Ruto was seen to only focus on Raila's use of riddles and football commentaries, almost portraying him as a clown, and ignores everything else he talks about that seems serious.

The data also revealed that these rhetorical devices were used for persuasion purposes whereby Ruto used them to attack and ridicule their opponents to dissuade people from following or voting for them. He presents a negative image of their opponents in the NASA coalition hence invalidating them before the voters and portraying them as untrustworthy, selfish and unsuitable to be elected, and saves his image and that of Uhuru Kenyatta of the Jubilee coalition. Categories for persuasion as suggested by Walter Nash in (Cockcroft & Cockcroft 1992), (Bowers & Osborn 1966, McCroskey & Combs 1969, Reinsch 1971), Mio (1997) among others, were used to measure the persuasive effect in these rhetorical devices used by Ruto. These categories include, building trust and minimizing the distance between the speaker and the audience. It was found out that Ruto indeed minimized the distance between him and his audience through the use of irony and rhetorical questions which enabled him to ease the tension, resulting in the audience perceiving him as an easy and relaxed person with whom they could identify and easily relate with. It was also found out that Ruto built trust through the use of metaphors and metonymy, which enabled him to create a positive and credible image of himself and Uhuru Kenyatta and succeeded in persuading his audience to support him and the Jubilee coalition. .

### **5.3 Suggestions for Further Research**

This study looked at humour and rhetorical questions as persuasive strategies in William Ruto's speeches. A study could be conducted on other rhetorical devices used by Ruto for the purposes of persuasion such as biblical citations, proverbs, allusion, anecdotes, repetition etc.

Secondly, this study used Relevance Theory to analyze humour and rhetorical questions in William Ruto's speeches. Other research can be conducted using other theories like conceptual metaphor theory, politeness theory, speech acts theory among others.

Finally, a research could also be conducted on rhetorical devices as well as non-verbal communication used by other prominent politicians in Kenya as it was observed from the existing literature that not much has been done in this area.

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