

**IRONY IN SELECTED KENYAN POLITICAL UTTERANCES:**

**A RELEVANCE THEORETIC APPROACH**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

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

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

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## **DEDICATION**

TO GOD ALMIGHTY: For his immeasurable love care and protection

To my loving mum

Your prayers and encouragement kept me going. Thank you for being a source of inspiration in my life. May God richly bless you.

To my late dad

For being a pillar in my life and laying a strong foundation for life which propelled me to further my studies. You were a source of inspiration and your warm fatherly advice will always be remembered.

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## ABSTRACT

The study looked at the interpretation of irony in selected Kenyan political utterances of 2012/2013 during the campaign period for the General Elections. The interpretation of irony was tested using the echoic interpretive approach as grounded in Relevance Theory by Wilson & Sperber (1986/95). The ironical utterances were sampled from a total of fifty utterances as the sample size out of which a total of twenty six ironical utterances were selected and analysed for the echo. These utterances were taken from print media and others were downloaded. The politicians being strategists in the way they use language contributed greatly to this study. The aim of the study was to also find out some of the echoes that politicians in verbal irony. As noted earlier echoic interpretation involves metarepresentation of an utterance or thought of another speaker. The interpretive aspect involves a speaker expressing an attributed thought or utterance to another speaker but most importantly expressing a range of dissociative attitudes towards those utterances or thoughts. The study also set out to analyse interpretation verbal irony using the basic tenets of Relevance theory which involve cognition, communication, comprehension cognitive effects and processing efforts in the interpretation of utterances inclusive of ironical utterances. The study showed that all these aspects had one main aim of maximizing relevance using cost-benefit formula which aims at creating as many assumptions using less effort to attain optimal relevance and also shows when to stop when the most accessible interpretation has been arrived at. From the findings in Kenyan political utterances, the attitude expressed involve a range of dissociative attitude ranging from mocking, ridiculing, scornful and disapproval all basing on the attributed utterance thought or even assumptions. The echoes identified from ironical utterances varied from those manifested in long time memory such as echoes of stereotype, societal norms and expectations while those manifested in short time memory include echoes of previous contexts and assumptions. The study found out that politicians have various intentions when using verbal irony such as a strategy to manipulate, influencing and coercing the voters to vote for them at the expense of their opponents. From the study verbal irony goes beyond stating the opposite of what is said but it is majorly based on the attitudes expressed in the utterance that are mainly dissociative in political utterances. Lastly the five chapters gave detailed accounts into solving the statement of the problem of interpretation of political ironical utterances within the Relevance theory and most importantly for ironical utterances to be understood as ironical a certain context had to be created that is identifiable with both the hearer and the speaker in order for the hearer to make inferences about the speakers intended meaning until optimal relevance is achieved.

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## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

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

This study focused on the analysis of irony in selected Kenyan political utterances. This chapter presents the following concepts; background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives, rationale, scope and limitations, theoretical framework, literature review and research methodology.

There are some studies which have been studied on Kenyan political speeches and language in general but they have not focused on irony. Mang'eni (2008) focused on interpretation of concepts of majimbo and change during the 2007 General Elections. Habwe (1999) studies Discourse Analysis of Swahili political speeches. Michira (2013) studies the language of politics basing on a Critical Discourse Analysis of 2013 Kenya presidential campaign. Nyoteyo (2011) studies Discourse Analysis of political commentaries. Jonyo (2012) studies politics of identity and ideology. Most of the studies which have been carried out on Kenyan political speeches are based on Discourse Analysis. None of these studies on political has touched on irony in Kenyan political speeches. This study looked at effects of irony in selected Kenyan political utterances using the Relevance Theory.

Verbal irony is an interesting feature that is employed in communication within various fields. Irony has attracted attention from various scholars and even in the way of interpretation, it has been approached differently. This gave the study an opportunity to explore other ways of how irony is understood.

Utsumi (2000:1778) affirms this statement and says that irony has attracted the interest of linguistics, philosophers, psychologists and rhetoricians. His approach modifies the relevance theory approach within a single principle of relevance. For him verbal irony presupposes a proper situational setting described in ironic environment that consists of the speaker's expectation and the incongruity between expectation and the reality as well as the speaker's attitude towards this incongruity.

An earlier approach to irony according to Wilson and Sperber (2012:123) is the classical or rhetoric approach which analyses verbal irony as a trope that is an utterance with a figurative meaning that departs from its literal meaning. According to Wilson and Sperber

rhetoric figures of speech in which irony is an example were seen as ornaments added on to a text which made it more pleasant and convincing without altering its content. This ornamental effect is achieved by tropes by the replacement of a dull literal expression of the authors thought by more figurative expressions.

Leech (1983:15) approach on the term rhetoric is very traditional referring to the study of the effective use of language. He points out that although rhetoric has been understood in particular historical traditions as the art of using language skillfully for persuasion, literary expression or for public speaking, he says his view about rhetoric is the focus it places on goal oriented speech situation which the speaker uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of the hearer. He also looks at irony as a politeness strategy which combines the art of attack with an apparent innocence as a form of self defense

From the Grice's approach on verbal irony Clark (2013:283) says that the Gricean approach resembles the classical approach that ironical utterances are viewed as when a speaker says the opposite of what he or she means more so views irony as a violation of the maxim of truthfulness (Do not say what you believe to be false).

According to Wilson and Sperber (2012:128) verbal irony is a form of echoic interpretation which is a subtype of attributive. The speaker implicitly attributes a thought or an utterance to someone else other than the speaker or the speaker at one time and more importantly conveying a dissociative attitude towards the thought or utterance .For Wilson and Sperber an ironic utterance is cognitively endowed since it involves the second degree of interpretation of someone's thought ,opinion or utterance. This approach points out two accounts of irony that is the echoic account and the pretence account. This study will use the echoic approach.

Carston (2002:159) says ironical utterances are analyzed as cases of echoic interpretive use where an echoic utterance is one which tacitly attributes to a thought or an utterance to someone else and also expressing an attitude to that thought or utterance

Clark (2013:17) says that utterances are used not only to communicate information about the world but that when we speak we express our own beliefs, opinions and attitude. This is also supported by other scholars in order to bring an understanding about what is always interpreted in communication.

Carston (2002:43) says people cannot help attributing beliefs desires and intentions to others with quite specific content. She notes that this is an ability that is in our cognitive system for interpreting the behavior of our fellow human beings.

Booth (1974:33) states that ironic construction depends on an appeal to assumptions often unstated that ironists and hearers say.

Habwe (1999:45) quotes Searle (1975:59) and says not all cases of meaning are simple in hints, insinuations, irony and metaphor. The speaker's utterance meaning come as part in various ways in which a speaker utters a sentence that means what he says but also means something else. This means that there is more to what a literal utterance means.

The echoic account has two features the interpretive and descriptive use of language. Clark (2013:281) says the interpretive use of language is the use of an utterance or a thought to represent another thought or an utterance that has resemblance in content and that these two propositions share logical and contextual implications. This is a higher order metarepresentational ability. The descriptive use of language is the use of a thought or an utterance to represent an actual state of affairs. Basing on the available literature therefore this study will base its investigation of irony in selected Kenyan political utterances on the idea that irony reflects the interpretation of a speaker's thought or utterance.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Verbal irony is a phenomenon that is widely used in various social settings. Despite its pervasiveness, its relationship with politics has not been investigated. According to Wilson and Sperber (2012:128) verbal irony is a form of echoic interpretation of someone's thought, utterance, expectation or cultural norm in which the speaker dissociates her from the echoed opinion with accompanying ridicule or scorn.

This interpretation works in such a way that the hearer should recognize that the speaker is not thinking directly about the state of affairs but someone else's thought or utterance. Verbal irony is therefore interpretive in use and not descriptive. Such approaches given to irony mark the bases of this study. The study therefore sought to unravel how people understand and interpret irony in selected Kenyan political utterances and further what effects politicians achieve with irony. The study uses the echoic approach grounded in Relevance Theory by (Sperber & Wilson 1986/95).

With these considerations in mind the study was guided by the following questions

1. What are the echoes that politicians use for irony in selected Kenyan political utterances?
2. What is the attitude towards the echoes that constitute an irony in selected Kenyan political utterances?
3. What are the effects that politicians want to achieve with ironic expressions?

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. To identify the echo that constitutes irony in selected Kenyan political utterances.
2. To investigate the attitude that politicians express towards an echo in political utterances
3. To analyze what effects politicians achieve with ironical political utterances

### **1.4 Rationale and significance**

Verbal irony in communication is commonly used to mean the opposite of the literal meaning and many people have understood irony in this manner. However, the study uses a different perspective of the echoic interpretive approach to contribute to the idea that irony goes beyond just stating the opposite of the said.

This study is important as it will add to the linguistic knowledge of understanding how irony is interpreted in political utterances. It will also help in drawing a clear distinction between ironic and non-ironic utterances; this will also go a long way in helping the scholars who may have an interest in understanding why irony is used by politicians and what effects Kenyan politicians achieve by using ironical expressions.

Significance for the study is that it gives a general outline on how people understand the implicit language employed by politicians in the course of using irony and further give an insight on how hearers arrive at relevance of an ironic utterance since sentence meaning most of the time underdetermines the implied meaning in political utterances. The study will also contribute to social interaction among the interlocutors since irony involves the aspect of sharing of cognitive environment of people and cultures.

This study will also add to the existing knowledge on the nature of political language in Kenya and also will benefit the electorates who will be keen on detecting the strategies that politicians use to influence their opinions in the wrong way.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitations**

The study looked at the interpretation of irony as a figure of speech. There are other examples which include metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy but the study will confine itself to the interpretation of irony in selected Kenyan political utterances during the 2012/2013 campaign in Kenya. During data collection a total of fifty utterances were collected as constituting the research data after which twenty six utterances were selected for the final research.

The twenty six utterances were deemed fit for the study because of comprising a relatively representative scope since it comprised of the veterans in Kenyan politics as well as the upcoming politician inclusive of both male and female gender, young and the old. The study used twenty six utterances collected from print media and downloads from you tube. The other figures of speech such as symbolism, proverbs, idiomatic expression and metaphor would be dealt with passively in bringing out their relationship with verbal irony.

There have been various approaches to verbal irony Wilson and Sperber (2012:123-124) the classical approach, and the Grice approach but the study will limit itself to the relevance theoretical approach which involves the echoic interpretive approach. This study limited itself to the echo account and more specifically the interpretive use of language. The study also looked at the basic tenets of relevance theory cognitive, processing effort, cognitive effects, communication principle, inference, and relevance all incorporated in Relevance Theory since interpretation of irony involves a second order mind-reading ability.

### **1.6 Theoretical Framework**

This section discusses the theoretical framework of the study using the Relevance theory in the interpretation of verbal irony in selected Kenyan political utterances. The theory as founded by Sperber & Wilson (1986/95) which was developed from Grice theory of conversational implicatures of Grice (1975) is grounded in the cognitive approach to communication. The theory is used because it offers meaningful explanation of how hearers infer meanings for figurative language use.

According to Wilson & Sperber (2012:6) relevance theory starts from a detailed account of relevance and its role in cognition. This means that for relevance to be achieved the

cognitive process which involves cognitive effects and processing effort play a big role in understanding communication between the speaker and the hearer in communication.

According to Carston (2002:44) relevance is an input to cognitive process and it gives a cognitive understanding of human interpretations of utterances. This principle is supported by Gutt (2000:31) he says the central claim of Relevance Theory is that human communication crucially creates an expectation of optimal relevance that is an expectation on the part of the hearer that his attempt at interpretation will yield adequate contextual effects at minimal processing effort.

Clark (2013:100) states that in understanding of relevance, what needs to be known are what kind of things can have a degree of relevance and what kind of effects make those things relevant and that the things that can be relevant are those that have effects. They include utterances thoughts memories and interpretations.

Relevance Theory is based on few simple assumptions .They are summarized as follows (Wilson lecture notes, PLIN 2002:2007-08)

- 1) Every utterance has various possible interpretations all compatible with the information that is linguistically transmitted.
- 2) Not all these interpretations can be accessed by the hearer at the same time
- 3) Hearers possess a single general criterion for evaluating interpretations which can either be rejected or accepted as assumptions about the speaker's meaning
- 4) This criterion is powerful enough to exclude all but the hearer is entitled to assume that a single interpretation that satisfies the criterion is the relevant one.

The theory has a central claim that expectations of relevance raised by an utterance are precise enough and predictable enough to guide the hearer towards the speaker's meaning. The theory looks at communication as an ostensive inferential tool which has the informative and communicative intentions. The speaker has the intention to inform the hearer of some information and at the same time the hearer is expected to recognize this informative intention. The ostensive inferential process highlights the intention that is explicitly manifested, the implicated premises, the conclusions arrived at and the background knowledge of the hearer to understand the intentional and informative message of the speaker. This will be important in the interpretation of irony.

The study was therefore guided by the following basic tenets of Relevance Theory: the cognitive principle and communicative principle.

### **1.6.1 Cognitive Principle of Relevance**

This cognitive principle according to (Wilson and Sperber 2012: 103) states that:

Human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance.

This principle is the central assumption about human cognition which brings out a strong relationship between cognitive effects and processing effort and both the hearer and the speaker work on this principle.

This also means that the human system of perception, memory and inference has a deductive device that plays a major role in spontaneous inference. Since there is too much information available for people to attend to and much more that the mind can process, thus the human mind is organized in such a way that it identifies and takes note of important aspects in the environment and the mind simply picks and processes information that is maximally relevant.

The maximization of relevance in this case means that an input that is an utterance, inference or perception becomes maximally relevant if it gives rise to more positive cognitive effects while at the same time using less effort in processing the inputs. Relevance is not only centered on external stimuli such as sights, sounds and utterances but even internal representations such as memories, thoughts and conclusions of inferences.

According to the Relevance theory once an utterance is made it raises expectation of relevance since the search for relevance is a basic human feature of human cognition which both the speaker and the hearer aim at. This is beneficial in irony since in the interpretation of irony an utterance will be relevant to an individual when there is a connection with the background information available in form of world knowledge, belief systems and socio-cultural knowledge in order to yield conclusions that are the most valuable at that particular time. For Wilson & Sperber it is not always that human succeed in maximization of relevance but it is that sufficient tendency they have of picking out what is most relevant at that point in time.

### **1.6.2 The Communicative Principle**

Wilson and Sperber (2012:38) states that:

Every act of ostensive stimulus creates a presumption of its own optimal relevance.

This principle highlights how people make inferences about communicative intentions. This principle contributes greatly in understanding of how utterances are interpreted. The principle basically means that a speaker makes his intentions clear that he wants to communicate information that is as relevant as possible to the hearer. This is because, once an utterance is made, it creates an expectation of being relevant and it should capture the hearer's attention in order for it to fulfill the role of being maximally relevant.

The optimal procedure is important in the research since it points out the practical procedure in the performance of the above mentioned tasks and this means that in the construction of an assumption about the speaker's meaning, the hearer should take the linguistically encoded sentence meaning, follow a path of least effort and enrich it at the explicit level and complement it at the implicit level until the resulting interpretation meets his expectation of relevance. This is captured in the relevance –theoretic procedure which states that:

The relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure Clark (2013:119)

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

All these procedures help to show how a hearer using the relevance-theoretic comprehension procedure can disambiguate, assign reference assemble appropriate context and derive implicatures as part of the whole process of constructing an interpretation that satisfies his expectation of relevance.

This provides strong bases of interpreting an ironic utterance which will satisfy a person's expectation of relevance once the ironic utterance is understood. Thus the subtasks are summed up as explicatures, implicated premises and implicated conclusions. In this communication principal, verbal comprehension starts with the recovery of a linguistically encoded meaning that must be enriched in various ways to yield a fully fledged speakers meaning.

In the interpretation of an utterance there may be ambiguities, reference assignments, ellipses and other underdeterminances of explicit content to deal with, there could be



implicatures to identify, illocutionary indeterminacies to resolve metaphors and ironies to interpret. This is key in the interpretation of ironical utterances since the many assumptions will be derived which will be enriched at all those levels in order to get relevance of utterances. This was achieved through cognitive effects and processing effort

### **1.6.3 Cognitive Effects**

According to Clark (2013: 100) cognitive effects are contextual effects within a cognitive system. This basically refers to the worthwhile changes in the individual's cognitive system in the representation of the world including the improvements in her representation of the world that is produced by processing an input in a context.

For relevance to be achieved people need to know the kinds of effects that make utterances, thoughts, memories and inferences relevant.

The cognitive effect focuses on the activation of the mind and it involves deriving conclusions based on new or existing assumptions. It shows various ways in which people's knowledge can be fruitfully revised as a result of processing new input, strengthened, or lead to abandonment of the available assumptions.

The more an input in this case an utterance, a thought, an opinion or a belief yields positive cognitive effects the more the input becomes relevant thus fulfilling cognitive goals. For the cognitive effects to be derived there should be some mental efforts required. The processing effort will be explained below.

### **1.6.4 Processing effort**

Moreno (2007:30) as quoted by Karimi (2003:10) states that processing effort is the effort of perception, memory, inference required to represent an input, access contextual information and derive positive cognitive effort by a number of factors such as legibility, syntactic complexity, audibility familiarity with particular constructions, the accessibility of contextual assumptions and the effort of imaginations needed in constructing a context. Relevance depends on cognitive effects and processing efforts to recover the cognitive effects Clark (2013: 104)

This tenet will contribute immensely to the interpretation of irony in relation to the claim that human mind naturally aims at relevance by working on a cost-benefit basis in interpretation of an utterance.

### **1.6.5 Context**

Context is another important aspect in the interpretation of ironical utterances. Schroeder (2005:8) asserts that context is like the encyclopedic entry about the world. It contains the values and norms of a society, the personal beliefs system, and the cultural norms i.e. all the knowledge that communicators have stored in their minds at the time they enter the conversations.

Gutt (2000:26) states that the context of an utterance is the set of premises used in interpreting an utterance he further notes that it is a psychological concept, a subject of the hearer assumptions about the world.

Marmaridou (2000:30) says that context can be idealized if conceived as a set of assumptions about the world, which are viewed as mental representations that a hearer has in order understand an utterance in this sense ,context does not correspond to any actual state of the world; it is not a signifier of social structures that affect communication in general and specifically the understanding and production of utterances rather it is subjected into a logical-psychological construct, a set of premises used in interpreting an utterance. This clearly means that context is not taken to be physical but that which is stored in the mind against which utterances are understood.

Wilson (1994:41) as quoted by Moneva (1998:213) defines context as follows:

Context is not simply the preceding linguistic text or the environment in which the utterance takes place, but a set of assumptions brought to bear in arriving at the intended interpretation. These may be drawn from preceding text or from observation of the speaker and what is going on in the immediate environment, but they may also be drawn from cultural, scientific knowledge, common- sense assumptions and more generally any item of shared information that the hearer has access to at the time.

### **1.7 Literature Review**

This section looked at the various literatures in relation to the topic of study. This section was divided into three parts. The first part looked at literature review on political language; the second section was based on literature review on irony then lastly literature based on the relevance theory.

### **1.7.1 Literature on political language**

Political language has received attention from various scholars who have looked at its uniqueness in relation to how it is used by politicians across the world. This makes it an interesting feature to be looked at critically. The following studies will be highlighted

Habwe (1999) researched on the implicatures of Swahili political speeches. He says political language is implied and that political speakers are strategists who convey the information in certain ways. In his study he focuses on metaphor and rhetoric questions. However he does not look at irony. This study looks at irony in selected political utterances and not the Grice approach of violation of maxim of truthfulness.

Gumbo (2009) studies analysis of text linguist of political speeches focusing on Obama speeches. This study looks at verbal irony in Kenyan political speeches using the echoic approach

Jonyo (2012) studies the analysis of political language in Kenya narrowing on politics of identity and ideology. He further points out that politicians use emotive language as a stylistic strategy in creating binary oppositions that defines in groups and out groups in social discourses. The study helps in understanding political language.

Habwe (2010) studies dialogue in Kenyan Swahili political speeches .He says that political speech making is a time to calculate, strategize, influence, coerce, promise or even revise government positions and adds that a lot of tact and strategy is needed for this purpose. This will benefit the study by providing background information on understanding political language.

Michira (2013:1) studies analysis of language of politics using discourse critical analysis to analyze concealed meanings and ideologies in 2013 presidential campaign. He says that language is a powerful tool that politicians use not only to communicate their policies and ideological positions but also create certain perceptions in influencing the voters. The study will benefit since this will provide the bases of analyzing the implicit meaning in political utterances and further how the language influences the electorates.

Mang'eni (2008) studies analysis of political language in Kenya narrowing on two concepts that is majimbo and change. The study will provide an understanding on Kenyan political language.

Al-Faki (2013:181-182) studies analysis of political speeches from a linguistic perspective he states that making speeches is a vital part of politicians role in announcing policy and persuading people to agree with it. He further identifies common features in political speeches such as rhetoric, propaganda and contrastive pairs. This will be useful to this study in a great way by bringing out the features of political language.

Malande & Masiolo (2013:6) studies idioms and terms that advance political agenda in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. They assert that competition on the political arena is often spiced by effective mobilization tools central to which is language. This study will benefit this study by providing knowledge on Kenyan political language and also help in highlighting what relation is there between irony and idioms which the study looks at as well.

Nyaga (2013) studies code switching in Kenyan political speeches language while this study focuses on verbal irony in political speeches using the echoic interpretive approach grounded in Relevance Theory.

### **1.7.2 Literature on Irony**

According to Wilson & Sperber(2012:125 irony consist in echoing a thought e.g. a belief, an intention, a norm based expectation that is attributed to an individual a group or to people in general and expressing a mocking attitude skeptical or critical attitude to this proposition. They further state that what irony essentially communicates is neither the proposition literally expressed nor the opposite of that proposition but an attitude to this proposition and to those who might hold or have held it. This literature review is important since it marks the basis of understanding how irony is interpreted and what attitudes are expressed when using ironical utterances.

Clark (2013:281)looks at three accounts of irony namely Grice traditional approach, echoic approach and pretence .This will be useful in giving a background to the study and further shed more light on echoic approach which is a relevance theoretic account that this study is based on. He further states that Wilson and Sperber suggest that verbal irony involves a subcategory of interpretive which they term echoic.

Sperber & Wilson (1986:239) state that an utterance is echoic if it is intended to be understood as implicitly attributing a thought or an utterance with a similar content to

someone else or to the speaker at a different time and also as implicitly conveying the speaker's attitude to that utterance or thought

This study is beneficial to this study because the basis of the study is echoic approach in analyzing verbal irony. It will give understanding of the term echoic which will go a long way in the analysis of the ironic political utterances which are believed to be echoic.

Utsumi (2000:1778) writes on distinguishing ironic utterances from non-irony. He states that verbal irony is a language –related phenomenon but it cannot be discussed outside of a situation The writer points out that an ironic environment is key in determining whether an utterance is ironic or not.

Bryant and Fox Tree (2002:99) write on recognition of verbal irony in spontaneous speech. They point out that contextual information is used when inferring ironic intent in spontaneous speech. The study will be useful to the current one since in the analysis of verbal irony as used in political language context is required recognizing and interpreting the ironic utterance.

Yus (2000:353) looks at the role of context in processing of irony. He further states it is assumed that in every conversational situation in which the speaker intends to convey an ironic interpretation there is one contextual source whose information is usually very accessible than other contextual sources. This was useful to the study in the sense that context is an important factor in interpreting utterances and hence verbal irony and also gave the understanding of how ironical utterances are understood within various contexts in relation to understanding the speaker's meaning.

Wyatt (2014:154) gives a summary of echoic view he states that hearers understand irony when they correctly infer that the speaker is thinking about someone else's thought or her own past thoughts presenting them as an object of ridicule. The study will benefit the current study in understanding the attitude expressed by ironical utterances and further understand how inferences are done in utterances.

Blakemore (1992:167) looks at features of irony and also highlights key issues in the interpretation of irony he supports the idea that irony is not just a thought that the speaker has expressed but rather which the speaker attributes to someone else. This provides an insight in understanding what echoing entails.

Carston (2002:159) states that ironical utterances are analyzed as cases of echoic interpretive use she adds that an echoic utterance tacitly attributes to a thought or utterance to someone else who also tacitly expresses an attitude to that thought utterance. This will be useful to this study in analyzing the echoic approach to irony.

Leech (1983:15) he states that rhetoric has been understood as the art of using language skillfully for persuasion, or for literary expression or for public speaking .he adds that the speaker therefore uses language in order to produce a particular effect in the mind of the hearer .This will specifically help the study in giving an insight to the background of the study which is irony and the roles it plays in conversations.

Kenya Gender-Audit (2013) election gives the background knowledge about the state of women in politics .This was beneficial to the study in finding out the various attitudes that women express in Kenyan politics and more so contributed in the understanding of echoes of stereotype that are expressed towards women who join politics.

### **1.7.3 Literature review on Relevance Theory**

Carston (2002:45) posits that perceptual system have evolved in a way that they generally respond automatically to stimuli. This helped the study in analyzing cognitive process in human understanding. She also talks of relevance of information and how it connects with existing representation of the world so as to affect certain improvement on it. This will contribute on how relevant information is achieved.

Wilson & Sperber (2004:604-628) looks at the basic tenets of Relevance Theory was beneficial to the study since these are the key aspects that the study focuses on in the understanding of how cognition works which is a vital feature that needs to be understood in relation to a hearer making inferences about the speaker's utterances or thoughts.

Gutt (2000:31) point at the central claim of Relevance Theory which is human communication critically creates an expectation of optimal relevance. He adds on to say that an act of communication has to modify some previously held assumptions in order to be found rewarding. This provided the basis of understanding the cognitive effects in communication.

Noh (2000:62) emphasize on the outline of Relevance theory that information derived from any source be it perception inference and communication may be relevant when it interacts with some context. This explanation will be useful to the current study on the use of context in the interpretation of verbal irony

Yule (2010: 130) explains that language is analyzed in a context. He defines context as a mental representation of those aspects of what is physically out there that we use in arriving at an interpretation. He points out that our understanding of much of what we read or hear is tied to this processing of aspects of the physical context, particularly time and space. In which we encounter linguistic expressions. This will be useful to this study since he gives an insight on the key role that context plays in interpretation of an utterance.

The study looks at interpretation of ironic utterances. Yule adds that the aspect of inference which is the additional information used by the listener to create a connection between what is said and what is meant. This will be useful to the study because ironical utterances also involves the connection between an utterance that is explicitly expressed but has an implied meaning

Clark (2013) gives the key concepts such pragmatic cognitive approach to communication, cognitive effects, and inferential process. This study will benefit greatly from the way theory is explained here, since the interpretation of irony depends greatly on the cognitive approach. It also provides a comprehensive approach of echoic which is useful to the study.

Wilson and Sperber (2012:86-87) writes about rhetoric and relevance. They give the origin of rhetoric language which will be useful on the understanding of background of the study in this case irony. They also highlight the approach to human communication as it is grounded in general view of cognition. This study will benefit a lot from the information since the whole aspect of interpreting irony the whole is based on cognitive approach. They also point out that human information processing requires some mental effort and has some cognitive effect. This gave an insight on the study since ironic interpretation will involve deriving cognitive effects and processing effort in deriving relevance.

According to Moreno (2007:30) as quoted by Karimi (2013:25) Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1986/95) is grounded on the assumption that our minds have evolved in the direction of increasing efficiency and are now set up so that they tend to automatically maximize relevance. This will contribute to the study by highlighting how relevance is achieved in utterances.

Schroeder (2005:8) Context is like the encyclopedic about the world and that it contains values and norms of a society the personal belief system and the cultural norms i.e. all the knowledge that the communicators have stored in their minds at the time they enter the conversation.

In relevance these set of contextual assumption are generally not fixed prior to the conversation they are constructed as part of the interpretation process .This will provide a strong ground in analyzing ironical utterances basing on the context, which is key to the study and which have to be constructed in the process of interpretation.

## **1.8 Research Methodology**

This section looked at research methodology. This includes description of data collection and data analysis

### **1.8.1 Data collection**

The study used the qualitative method because it more flexible to discuss the utterances. The data was collected from mainly the secondary source that is use of print media and internet downloads which were keenly listened to in order to identify ironical utterances that had irony for the study. The study used secondary source as a means of collecting data because the information was easily accessible for verification purposes. The data collected ranged from 2012/2013 campaign period since this was believed the most appropriate time when politicians are likely to use ironical utterances to advance their political gain. The data collected comprised of the young and old, women and male politicians. The study used a sample size of fifty utterances out of which a total of twenty six utterances were keenly selected that were ironical.

### **1.8.2 Data analysis**

The data was critically analyzed using the echoic approach to identify the echo in the utterances. The data was then categorized into various echoes, after that the data was also



analyzed to identify the attitude and finally the effects that politicians achieve in using irony in the political utterances.

The data was interpreted and described by determining how hearers understand and interpret the speaker's explicit meaning, the implicit meaning and the cognitive environment in finding the relevance in utterances. The analysis of the data was subjected to a relevance theory.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter gives the bearing of the study. The background of irony as one of the figures of speech used in communication citing various approaches taken by various scholars on irony such as the classical rhetoricians, Gricean approach and the Relevance Theoretical approach which the study will focus on. The statement of the problem had also been identified. The study sought to find out how irony is interpreted and what attitude and effects do politicians gain in the use of irony in the political language.

The study also focused on research questions and objectives that propelled the research of the information on irony.

The study highlighted the rationale of the study. The study gave the scope and limitation under which the study was carried out, the theoretical framework which marked the bases of the study was elaborated together with the basic tenets of the theory which were relevant to the whole study. The analyses of contributions made by other scholars to the study was identified and noted the various ways on how the study benefited.

Lastly the study clearly showed how the data was collected and analyzed within the framework of relevance theory to determine the interpretation, attitude and the effect of politicians using irony in the political language.

## **CHAPTER TWO: NATURE OF POLITICAL LANGUAGE AND FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter sets to examine the nature of political language and show the various strategies that politicians employ in order to pass their intended message to the audience. The strategies involve the figures of speech such as metaphors, symbolism, idiomatic expressions and proverbs. Michira (2013:12) states that political campaigns in Kenya are unique and interesting. He cites that political rallies have become theatres that actors use to entertain and seduce the voters. This is done with the use of the rhetoric techniques such as proverbs; metaphor and storytelling

This chapter is structured into three sections as follows. The first section deals with general information on the language of politics, the second section of the chapter focuses on the various figures of speech that politicians incorporate in their speech. These include metaphor, idiomatic expressions symbolism and proverbs. The last section deals with a detailed discussion on irony and the chapter finalizes with the relationship between irony and figures of speech mentioned above.

### **2.2 General Information on Language of Politics**

This section highlights the figurative language that politicians incorporate in the political utterances as they communicate to their audience.

The language used in the political arena has unique features that differentiate it from other ways in which language is used. Michira (2013:1) asserts that:

Politics is essentially concerned with power and authority, how to obtain it and appropriate it, how to make decisions and control resources and even manipulate those who are governed. These objectives are achieved with their heavy reliance on language which holds the notion that language is power.

Since the nature of political language involves strategizing in order to achieve a target, he claims that it is not what the politicians say that will get warm reception from the audience but how they say it is what will help them win their supporters.

Habwe (2010:165) also argues that political scenarios are encompassed with the aspect of the most powerful and mighty, he adds that political speech making is a time to calculate,

strategize, influence, coerce, promise or even revise and declare party or government positions. This clearly gives the impression that politics is all about competition and therefore, it requires that a lot of strategizing has to be employed through the use of language if an individual wants to triumph. Politicians will richly use language because they believe that language has the power to influence the thought of the audience implicitly since the audience will make assumptions about the information that is not clearly stated especially in the cases of figurative language.

Habwe (2010:166) notes that strategies like metaphors use, narratives, similes, hyperbolic usage symbolism, humour and dialogue are extensively used by politicians to achieve various goals. This clearly shows that the issue of how language is used by politicians contributes a great deal on how to pass the message to the audience in ways that will draw their attention and this gives political language unique approaches. Political language is not just different from other forms of language use by chance, but there are various roles that are targeted in the use of the language in order to achieve certain goals.

According to Al-Faki (2014:182) the skills of speaking persuasively are far more important than a personally held belief. This therefore makes it possible for politicians to have innovative ways of delivering their message to the audience and not necessarily caring about the truthfulness of the whole issue under discussion.

### **2.3 Figurative Language**

This section highlights the figurative language that politicians incorporate in the political utterances as they communicate to their audience.

Myers and Simmis (1985) as quoted by Koech (2013:33) defines figurative language as the creative manipulation of the syntax, semantics structure effects or associations of norm language used in a vivid expression and innovative ideas.

Wales (1989: 176) asserts that figurative language embraces all kinds of features which are semantically or grammatically marked or unusual in some ways. These points out that figurative language does not just use plain language but the manipulative aspect is used which fits the audience expectations. This is a common feature in the language of politics. Figurative language has the aesthetic effects mainly because of the way it allows the hearers to have varied assumptions of the utterances made and by so doing the politicians achieves their goal one being to manipulate the thoughts of the electorates.

Through the manipulation of the language, various cognitive effects may be drawn by the audience basing on the information they have the assumptions may either be eliminated, may lead to other new assumptions or even strengthen the already existing ones

Marmaridou (2000: 256) points out that the figurative language comprehension has to do with understanding contexts which provides access to appropriate conceptual information. This will contribute to the understanding of ironical comprehension and at the same show how people get the intended meaning in political utterances. The understanding of figurative language therefore points to the fact that when used in communication they carry a meaning that goes beyond what the utterance means thus communicating implicitly.

The following are some of the figurative language that the study will focus on with an intention of creating a clear difference with irony which will be dealt with at length since it is the focus of the study.

### **2.3.1 Metaphor**

Metaphor is one of the figurative languages used in daily use of language.

Wilson & Sperber (2012:16) states that metaphors and other tropes are cases where the meaning conveyed by use of a word goes beyond the linguistically encoded since the simply means that metaphor communicates an implicated meaning.

Metaphors in relevance –theoretical account works on activation of encyclopaedic entries and works on weak implicatures. Clark (2013:267) states that in relevance theoretical approach metaphors exploit the possibility of producing an utterance which is less than the literal interpretation of the thought it represents. He further asserts, the key thing is that we do not begin assuming that the proposition expressed is a literal interpretation of the thought it represents but simply go ahead and begin to derive enough implications to satisfy our expectations of relevance.

For example during the campaigns for General elections in Kenya Martha Karua one of the presidential candidates was referred to as the “iron lady”. In this example the hearer does not wonder whether Karua is literally an iron but will derive implications that are relevant such as:

- a. Karua is strong
- b. Karua is unbendable
- c. Karua is durable

This simply means that the metaphoric language used compares the qualities of iron to Karua as being unbendable, durable, and strong. This being a presidential campaign and as a woman in the political field, nothing will stop her from contesting and even winning the race. This metaphor brings out the implicit meaning of Karua's personality by using a strategy of clear choice of words. In this case as long as the hearer can arrive at the intended implication then communication will be successful.

Marmaridou (2000: 256) views metaphor as a basic cognitive mechanism of the human mind allowing cross-domain mappings. In this case metaphor is given a Cognitive Semantic approach.

Cuddon (1979: 391) as quoted by Koech (2013:34) states that metaphor is a figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another and he further adds that in metaphor the meaning is always implicit.

Leech (1965) says that metaphor envisages two more things not normally thought of as being connected with each other, are brought together and fused in the imagination of the other. The understanding of the metaphor as a figurative language depends on the context and it works on implicatures. The politicians mainly employ this figurative language for aesthetic effect.

### **2.3.3 Idiomatic expressions**

Idioms are part of the creative language that politicians employ to embellish language and achieve their targets within a competitive scenario. Idiomatic expressions have been defined differently by various scholars. According to the Oxford Advanced Learners English Dictionary, (2010: 744), an idiom is a group of words whose meaning is different from the meanings of the individual words.

Olali (2014:5) states that an idiom is an expression that means something other than the literal meanings expressed. This means that idiomatic expressions when used in political language do not just carry direct meaning, the meaning is implicit. He further adds that idiomatic expressions use words which are unique to a particular language. It is the natural way of speaking by the native speakers of the language. This means that idiomatic expressions are best understood if both the participants have a mutual understanding about the expression since it has a sense that is unique to itself and does not agree with the logical sense of its structural form.

The understanding of an idiomatic expression according to Olali (2014:6) is that it should be based on the speaker's familiarity with the expression, the understanding of the context and at the same time it should have been used before their objectives. Since the meaning of the idiomatic expression cannot be predicted, the context will play a key role in its understanding. The expressions are always in a fixed order having a particular meaning that is different from the meaning of each word understood on its own.

For example:

When the ODM party leader Raila amid wrangles in his party during the choosing of the delegates remarks the following:

1) ODM is alive and kicking

In this example he uses the idiomatic expression to implicate an ironical utterance. This idiomatic expression in literal terms means that the Orange Democratic Movement is healthy and all is well in the party. From a logical point of view it is clear that meanings of the word 'kicking and alive are not compatible with the individuals meaning of words.

William (1977: 32) as quoted by Karimi (2013); gives the following characteristics of Idioms:

- a) **Conventionality:** Idioms are conventionalized. Their meaning or use cannot be predicted. On the basis of knowledge of the independent convention that determines the use of their constituents when they appear in isolation from one another.
- b) **Inflexibility:** Idioms typically appear only in limited number of syntactic frames of constructions unlike freely composed expressions e.g. alive and kicking cannot be living and kicking.
- c) **Figuration:** Idioms typically involve metaphors (take the bull by its horns), metonymies (lend a hand) hyperbole (not worth a paper it is printed on) and other words of figuration

From the above characteristics on idiomatic expressions therefore means that idiomatic expressions are not just plain words. Their formation is constructed in such a way that they cannot be altered, they contain figurative language and that the meaning is not predictable thus making it peculiar in language of politics.

Moreno (2007:312) notes that decoding the utterance containing the idiom triggers automatically in the hearer's mind both a presumption of optimal relevance and the theoretical comprehension procedure which will guide the hearer in bridging the gap between what is linguistically encoded and what is communicated both explicitly and implicitly.

Fromkin et al (2011:152) states that idioms must be entered in to the lexicon or mental dictionary as single items with their meanings specified and speakers must learn the special restrictions on their use in sentences

### **2.3.4 Symbolism**

The language of politics employs the use of symbols to bring out their implicit message non-verbally. Robert (1994: 419) states that a symbol is any object or action that means more than itself. He affirms that the meaning brought out of any symbol, which can be inform of a gesture or an action is controlled by its context.

For example:

During the Sabasaba rally on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014:

The three cord principles who are Raila, Wetang'ula and Kalonzo used the symbol of dress code to communicate to the audience that they are united to bring change in Kenya. They put on white shirts with a flag of Kenya to symbolise peace and at the same time unity for the citizens. The politicians use the symbols to pass their message to the electorates since symbols carry a strong message. In this case the symbols have been used to communicate to the people of Kenya that their intention is to unite all Kenyans despite their tribes or class. Look at another example of symbolism.

On the same sabasaba day, the three principles of CORD had on caps written on R.A.O. These are the initials meaning Raila Amollo Odinga. This symbol was used to communicate that Raila was the party leader and probably he was communicating to the others that he is still the head of the party and he should be esteemed above others. The caps were also symbolising that Raila was affirming his party positions to the supporters and even to his counterparts in the coalition.

Nyachae (2013:16) states that politicians often use symbols to pass the message to the audience in Kenya. He cites the following during the 2013 elections one of the party

coalitions picked on the name Jubilee which had its symbolism from the biblical perspective. To the alliance, the name implied a sense of continuity and stability. This could also mean that by voting in Jubilee it will symbolise that there would be prosperity in the country since all that had been taken away will be recovered hence giving Kenyans hope in future. The last figure of speech is proverbs

According to Kitsao (1975:129) as quoted by Koech (2013:36) symbolism is a device that stands for representation. It is the use of a sign whether visual or verbal which stands for something else within a speech community.

### **2.3.5 Proverbs**

Politicians use proverbs with the intention of invoking the audience's mind to think beyond the said utterance. Sperber & Wilson (1996: 70) assert that proverbs are short utterances that people quote with purpose of addressing some aspects of human nature, life behaviour and experiments. They give further explanations that proverbs are public representatives widely distributed in human populations; they are also culturally distributed and are likely to become cultural. This has been adopted by politicians such that it has been culturally accepted for them to use proverbs whenever addressing their audience in Kenya. Proverbs therefore in their verbal form are brief pithy witty and indirect. Proverbs can also be used to accomplish rhetorical goals such as express deference or even mock the listener.

For example in political utterances politicians use the proverb to criticize the opponents

Like during the 2012 campaigns Raila says:

#### **2. Barking dogs seldom bite**

This proverb incorporates the metaphorical language to mean that the dogs have qualities such as fierce, in this case the opponents are just making noise but there is nothing that they can do. Raila uses this proverb to criticize his opponents who are moving all over the country campaigning and yet to Raila they are just making noise and have no effect on persuading Kenyans to vote for them.



### **2.3.6 Irony**

This section gives a detailed discussion of irony as the topic of study.

Verbal irony is one of the tropes that involve the substitution of a figurative meaning of the literal meaning and it is ordinarily looked at as a trope that means the opposite of the literal meaning, however, these general approach has been given various approaches by the various scholars to expand on the idea that irony goes beyond the just saying the opposite of the literal meaning.

### **2.3.7 Definition of Irony**

This section highlights the various definitions of irony. First of all irony was looked at in terms of rhetoric in the traditional approach. According to Wilson & Sperber (2012:84) in classical rhetoric figures were seen as ornaments added to a text that made it more pleasant without changing its content. This basically means that figures of speech were used for aesthetic purposes in texts. This effect was achieved by the replacement of a dull literal expression by more appealing figurative expression

Grice (1975:53) defines irony by firmly remaining in the classical rhetoric tradition he states that the speaker of an ironic utterance blatantly violates the maxim of truthfulness i.e. one should not say what is believed to be false

Clark (2013:283) says when a speaker utters an utterance and the hearer realises that what is being communicated is the opposite of what is said, this will seem to confirm that the speaker has violated the first quality maxims. For example:

A teacher makes the following remarks to a disobedient student

3) She listens to instructions

The irony is developed as follows:

3) What is said: she listens to instructions.

3) What is implicated: she does not listen to instructions.

In relation to Grice approach the teacher is saying what is false thus violating the maxim of quality by not stating that the student is disobedient because she does not follow instructions.

This view of looking at irony as the opposite of what the sentence uttered literally means is also supported by Blakemore (1992:164-165). According to her traditionally irony is

analysed in terms of meaning the opposite of what the sentence uttered literally means this according to him fails to capture the indeterminacy of ironic utterances.

Bryant and Fox Tree (2002:100) states that verbal irony is classically defined as the use of words to convey a meaning, that is something other than and especially the opposite of the literal meaning of the words.

Utsumi (2000:1778) asserts that verbal Irony is an intelligent, witty figure of speech found in many language activities. He adds on to say that irony has attracted the interest of linguists, philosophers, psychologists, and even rhetoricians as noted earlier, This shows that irony has not been confined just to a particular area which gives it diverse definitions and interpretations.

Katthoff (2003:1388) defines irony as a trope, a figure of speech which is a type of allegory in which the opposite is expressed. He adds that according to Lapp (1992: 22) the speaker states the opposite of what he means and at the same time communicates that the stated message is not the one intended.

Lapp summarizes it as follows:

- a) What is said is the opposite of what is meant.
- b) One says something other than what one thinks.

Katthoff (2003:1390-1392)says that for Sperber & Wilson (1981) irony is used with the intention of expressing an additional comment .He adds on to say that the special achievement of irony is its ability to signal a contrast in evaluation

To summarise, irony can be defined as follows that in the interpretation of an ironical utterance there is the underlying factor of inappropriateness between what is implied and the reality of the matter. This also means that within that context there is an attitude that is expressed in a negative way by the speaker. The key aspect of context is also emphasized in this case since it is needed for the understanding of the ironical utterance and the implicit meaning communicated by the speaker.

## **2.4 Features of verbal irony**

This section examines the features of verbal irony.

### **2.4.1 Echoic interpretation**

Wilson & Sperber (2012:128) define echoic use as a subtype of attributive use in which the speaker's primary intention is not to provide information about the content of an attributed thought but to convey her own attitude or reaction to that thought. This can be explained to mean that in echoing the issue of truthfulness does not matter but what is key is the speaker's feelings about the claims made. As noted earlier Carston (2002) harbours the same sentiments that echoic utterances are tacitly attributive and the attitude expressed towards that thought or utterance is also tacit meaning it is implied.

Sperber and Wilson (1981: 309-310) argue that echoes can be of different types. Some are immediate echoes, others delayed, and some have their source in actual utterances others in thoughts or opinions. Some have real source, others an imagined one; some are traceable back to a particular individual whereas others have a vaguer origin.

### **2.4.2 Attitude**

The verbal irony analysed as echoic typically has to be accompanied with an attitude of scorn or ridicule. Wilson & Sperber (2012:127) adds that Grice suggests that irony involves the expression of a hostile or derogatory judgement or a feeling such as indignation or contempt. These points to the fact that an ironical utterance always expresses a particular attitude and this can also be attributed in political utterances.

Wilson and Sperber (1992:60) argue that verbal irony involves the expression of an attitude of disapproval. In this case the speaker echoes a thought she attributes to someone else while dissociating herself from the utterance while at the same time showing ridicule and scorn. The speaker therefore has the intention of communicating his own feelings towards a thought or an utterance that she does not agree with but at the same time relates it to someone else other than herself.

Wilson and Sperber (2012:94) affirm that the ironical attitude is implicitly rather than explicitly conveyed as a result the hearer who recognizes and shares that ironical attitude will feel that the speaker and the hearer stand above the victims of irony. This clearly means that neither the speaker nor the hearer takes responsibility of the utterance; instead the speaker only wants to inform the hearer about the dissociative attitude to the thought.

Wyatt (2014:135) there is an overall agreement that the attitude typically expressed with irony are of a derogatory kind ranging from teasing, mocking, ridiculing, criticising to

outright contempt and scorn. This expresses the underlying factor about ironical attitude to be negatively expressed in most cases

## **2.5 Recognition of irony**

In the recognition of verbal irony some scholars have given various approaches to identifying an ironical utterance. Bryant (2012:673) states that the way we speak can give a revelation about what we intend to communicate. Sometimes the words used do not directly relate to the message put across. This is a common feature in political utterances in that in most cases there is more that is communicated from the utterances uttered.

He says that verbal irony is a commonly studied form of indirect speech in which a speaker produces an explicit evaluative utterance that implicates an unstated, opposing evaluation. He claims that in the production and understanding of ironic language the ability to recognize the mental states in others is required. Verbal Irony is one emergent, strategic possibility given the Interface between people's ability to infer mental states and use language.

Bryant (2012:674) asserts figurative language devices such as verbal irony can be quite powerful tools of communication. Since the sentences are produced in such a way that will allow the audience to derive certain unstated meanings and how the sentences are put is often economical because of relying on other people's inferential abilities. This makes a contribution to the fact that inference is important in understanding someone else's thoughts beliefs or utterances.

Carston (2002:43) also note that interpretations of utterances and other ostensive behaviour requires inferential process involving premises of several metarepresentation levels which hearers perform with ease. This can be attributed to verbal irony in political speeches as well.

Burgers, Milken and Schellens (2011) as quoted by Bryant (2012:675) view the recognition of irony as that which involves an expressed evaluative utterance that implies an opposing evaluative appraisal which does not necessarily need to be the opposite of the stated meaning. To them the distinction of verbal irony therefore appears to be the manifestation of scalar evaluative gap between what is said and what is meant and that this gap will be recognized by inferring the mental state and thoughts of the speaker. This

simply means that the speaker's attitude will be understood by making inferences basing on the shared knowledge between the interlocutors.

Pinker, Nowak and Lee (2008) as quoted by Bryant (2012:676) talks of an important aspect of recognizing verbal irony as Metarepresentation which allows for the transmission of individual shared knowledge without it becoming common knowledge. They affirm that speakers using verbal irony imply intentions with deniability.

Bryant and Fox (2002:100) asserts that verbal irony should contain features that assist listeners in reaching correct interpretations, particularly in contexts with reduced available information from the experiment carried out by Bryant he affirms that people often find most instances of irony to be sarcastic .This should be done with the intention of minimizing potential costs and maximize relevance. Since verbal irony does not require any specialty in its interpretation the principle of cost benefit should be applied.

Wilson and Sperber (1986) as quoted in (Bryant and fox 2002:110)

According to echoic interpretation, speakers give two concepts when using verbal irony. They are either echoing explicitly or implicitly a proposition attributed to another proposition and expressing an attitude, they add on to say that the variety of propositions echoed and attitudes expressed can enlisted one by one. It is pointed out that the recognition of both echo and attitude are required to make an utterance relevant and that the recognition can be achieved through the use of local and global prosodic features. This means that the tone can be used in the recognition of the verbal irony. This has been mentioned although the study does not focus on prosodic cues.

Utsumi (2000:1783) states that in order for an utterance to be ironic the speaker must deliver it in the situation surrounded by the ironic environment and he gives the summary of ironic environment as follows:

- a) The speaker has a certain expectation.
- b) The speaker's expectation fails (is incongruous with reality) at the time of the utterance.
- c) The speaker has a negative emotional attitude (disappointment, anger, criticism, envy) towards the incongruity between what is expected and what actually is the case.

According to Sperber and Wilson (1986:309-310) in the echoic interpretation irony echoes not only the speakers' expectation but also other sources such as other person's utterances, opinions, or even general norms. This justifies the aspect of echo in utterances made by politicians while communicating ironic utterances. The echoic interpretation of irony as asserted by Sperber and Wilson (1995:240) give three conditions for recognizing irony when a speaker utters an ironic expression.

- a) The hearer should recognize the utterance as echoic.
- b) The hearer should identify the source of the opinion echoed
- c) The hearer should recognize the speakers attitude to the opinion echoed is one of rejection

The sources of the opinion can include what people have said before, norms and values of the society, implicated thoughts, stereotype, and politics of a country, hopes and aspiration of the society.

Carston (2002:43) also affirms the fact that people can't help attributing, beliefs, desires and intentions with quite specific content to others. This is seemed to be built in to our cognitive system for interpreting the behaviour of others. This adds to knowledge that the study uses cognitive approach in understanding other people's intentions in communication.

Gibbs & O'Brein (1991:526) as quoted by (Hussein 2009:801) points out that ironic utterance are essentially about the speaker's attitude. They add on that irony is understood not when non literal proposition is accomplished for a literal one but when the listener is reminded echoically of some familiar proposition and of the speakers attitude towards it. They hold the view that echoic interpretation which is the point of research in this study departs from a traditional analysis of literally saying one thing and figuratively meaning the opposite. Irony should not just be limited to saying the opposite of an utterance.

## **2.6 Functions of irony**

According to Sperber & Wilson (2012:84) in classical rhetoric, irony as one of the figures of speech, was seen as ornaments added onto a text, which makes it more pleasant and hence more convincing, without however altering its content, and this is achieved by the

replacement of literal utterance which was termed as dull by a more attractive figurative expression.

Bryant (2012:675) asserts that verbal irony can be quite powerful communicative tools. He affirms that the speakers attempt to fulfill particular communicative goals by using indirect language such as verbal irony. This basically contributes to the idea that when politicians make utterances that are ironical, they use the language figuratively with the aim of achieving various communicative effects. He affirms that scholars have suggested many functions for irony in discourse which includes:

- a) Attempts to be humorous
- b) Creation of solidarity.
- c) Appear clever
- d) Increase memorability
- e) Save face
- f) Being polite
- g) Alter the valence of an attack or praise.

As stated earlier about the language of politics which is characterised by the aspect of strategising creativity and competition the main essence of politicians making ironical utterances can be characterised by attitude of ridiculing or scorn most probably about poor leadership, stereotyping individuals especially women owing to the fact that a higher percentage of political positions in Kenya are held by men the politicians can also use political utterances in order to conceal truth so that they evade taking responsibilities about the inflammatory statements they make. They use the ironical language to strike the opponent, demean the opponent may be basing on his or her educational background and even defame one's personality. All this is done with the intention of achieving approval from the audience.

## **2.7 Irony and other figures of speech**

### **2.7.1 Irony and Metaphor**

According to Sperber & Wilson (2012:119) metaphor viewed among other tropes such as hyperbole, metonymy, and synecdoche) are expressions that are creative exploitations of language use.

Cuddon (1979:391) as quoted by Koech (2013:34) states that metaphor is a figure of speech in which one thing is explained in terms of another.

For example Raila says as quoted in the Standard newspaper of 8/12/2012, during the ODM's delegates meeting uses metaphor.

5. My plan is that Kenya becomes – The African “Simba” (the African lion).

Since metaphor as a figurative language is not meant to be understood literally but the word or phrase makes a comparison, what the speaker therefore means is that from the above example Kenya is viewed in terms of comparison between the lion and Kenya as a country basing it on encyclopaedic entries of what people understand a lion is such as (brevity, powerfulness aggressiveness, and fame). Irony and metaphor are related with the fact that the meaning of utterances is implicitly conveyed.

As much as they have been analysed using a similar approach of violation of the maxim of truthfulness by Grice the difference according to Wilson & Sperber (2012:141) is that irony does not communicate a figurative meaning but a speaker's attitude about an attributed thought and it also brings out the contrast of ideas while metaphor brings out the idea of comparison and it works on weak implicatures to derive the meaning which is never the case with irony.

Metaphorical expressions can also be used in ironical expressions

For example:

2) Barking dogs seldom bite.

This example is repeated in this case to highlight how a proverb can be incorporated in ironical utterances

Barking dogs seldom bite

In this example Raila uses the metaphor of a dog to refer to his opponents in the campaigns. One will create implications such being fierce, walking aimlessly; His intention in this example is to express a ridiculing attitude to his opponents who think they the campaigns they are making will make them winners. To him whatever they say is just noise which the electorates will not take serious.

### **2.7.2 Irony and idiomatic expression**

Pel and Gaynor (1984:95) based on the various definitions that idiomatic expressions convey meaning which is often incompatible with or even contrary to the individual



meanings of words which compose it; the meaning of an idiomatic expression cannot be predicted. For example an English example “Hit the road” which means to leave has nothing to do with the meaning of the words in isolation which is not the case in irony even if an ironical statement is used using an idiomatic expression, the concern will shift to the attitude expressed and not the words used.

The ironical utterances may involve the idiomatic expressions which will communicate an implicit meaning. The combinations mean that, in both irony and idioms a combination of the context, stimulus and cognitive effects in understanding the implied meaning is needed. Karimi (2013:28) says that idioms add spice to the language which is also the function of irony.

### **2.7.3 Irony and Symbolism**

Robert (1994:419) as quoted by Koech (2013:35) a symbol can refer to any object or an action that communicates something beyond the real object; action or gesture. This too is understood implicitly but should be controlled by its context.

Symbolism always stands for a representation or simply being viewed in terms of another one. A symbol can be represented ironically when there is no correlation between what the symbol stands for and the implied meaning. For example during the General election one of the coalition referred to themselves as jubilee which has many representations from the biblical perspective such as a year of freeing the captives returning all that had been taken. Although the party used this ideology to advance their interests to the electorates, the counterparts in CORD coalition dismissed them as people who will not deliver anything to Kenyans expressing a ridiculing attitude towards the team in the Jubilee and the whole meaning of Jubilee.

### **2.7.4 Proverbs and irony**

According to Sperber & Wilson (1996:70) proverbs are short utterance that people quote with the purpose of addressing some aspects of human nature and life behaviour.

Marriana & Vogelzang 1996:2 states that a proverb is an anonymous piece of verbal art used rhetorically to highlight an argument relating to human behaviour and its recognisability is soften combined with linguistic delight involved in manipulating figurative speech. They add that proverbs are unsystematic, they may contradict each other and their purpose is not primarily to give a moral instruction but rather support an

argument by referring to what is tacitly assumed to be commonly accepted knowledge. This basically means to say that both proverbs and irony may communicate implicit meaning proverbs can therefore be used in expression of ironical utterances provided the context yields positive cognitive effects that will lead to maximization of relevance by the hearer's

## **2.8 Conclusion**

In this chapter I examined the nature of political language which politicians greatly employ in the use of figurative language such as metaphor, symbolism, idiomatic expression and proverbs in passing the message to the audience with the intention of achieving various objectives such as ridiculing and showing attitude of disapproval to their opponents. I also looked at the figures of speech and their relation with irony as the subject of study. Politicians make ironical statements with the incorporation of other figures of speech such as symbolism, metaphor, idiomatic expression and proverbs.

## **CHAPTER THREE: ECHOES IN POLITICAL UTTERANCES**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the focus is on identifying the echoes in the course of using irony in selected Kenyan political utterances. The understanding of the term echo in this context goes beyond the original understanding of repeating what someone has said. According to Wilson and Sperber (2012:125) irony consists in echoing a thought e.g. a belief, an intention, norm or expectations attributed to an individual or to people in general. The three concepts to be discussed in this chapter are echoes of stereotype, expectations and norms.

This chapter will also analyse what attitudes are expressed in the above echoes and try to argue out what effects are achieved when Kenyan politicians make utterances that have the above mentioned echoes. This paper is structured as follows the first section looks at echoes of stereotype, the second part focuses on echoes of expectation of society then the last part looks at echoes of norms and the conclusion

### **3.2 Types of Echoes**

Noh (2000:96) states that according to the analysis of irony as echoic use, it can cover ironies involving attribution of unspoken thoughts, assumptions, implications, norm or hopes. Although for Wilson and Sperber (2012:101) the mental state of others cannot be simply perceived or decoded but must be inferred from their behaviour together with background information. This can be argued to be a normal practice in most political utterances since, the politicians and their supporters most of the time have many assumptions that are shared and even the background information on how campaigns are done and how the voting process is carried out thus it gives room for inferring quite a number of things from both parties. The main objective in this chapter therefore is to find out the echo that politicians use in their ironical utterances, the attitudes expressed and the effects arrived at with these expressions.

#### **3.2.1. Echoes of Stereotypes**

Kenyan politics tends to be stereotypical in nature because people hold certain beliefs, expectations and knowledge towards a particular social group, individual and in most cases it is held with a negative perception. Michira (2013:2) argues that Kenyan politics is inherently ethnic in nature and those political parties and campaigns are organized

along ethnic lines. This could be observed during the 2013 campaigns .The two main Coalitions; Jubilee and CORD are believed to be ethnically dominated by either Kalenjins or Kikuyu for Jubilee and Luo, Kamba and Luhya for CORD. Consider the example below:

- 1) Our opponents are saying that I do not have solutions for the land problem. They have not even mentioned me anywhere that I grabbed land.

Uhuru makes the above utterances at Ukunda show ground during a political rally attributing the utterance to his opponents who claim that Uhuru cannot solve land problems because he could be among the people who have grabbed land. In this example Uhuru echoes a stereotype held against his family about land grabbing owing to the fact that his father was the first president of Kenya. Many people hold the assumptions that most probably his father took a lot of land from the colonialists.

Uhuru echoes the opponents utterance which is stereotypical, he basically want to draw the attention of the audience to the point that the utterance is worthy paying attention to because of its inappropriateness and more so the way it is being entertained by his opponents. Uhuru is tacitly expressing a ridiculing attitude towards the opponents claims that he has grabbed land, since the issue of land is still a sensitive issue among majority of Kenyans politicians use it as a tool in order to quickly win support from the voters.

In the example it would therefore be argued that the ironical utterance has been used by Uhuru to communicate to his supporters that the issue of land is a mere allegation and he wants the people of Ukunda to do away with the assumptions they hold against him about land grabbing He (Uhuru) probably wants to be perceived as a “clean” man in order coerce the electorate to support him win the elections from Kenyans who have the assumptions that he has grabbed land. Uhuru will manage to have the electorates revise the assumption they hold against his family on the issues of land and will even abandon it in the end since he could have made his intentions already known to his supporters.

Since political language is full of strategizing and influencing Habwe (2010:165) Uhuru most probably uses the utterances as a way of distancing himself from the implied thoughts of land grabbing and at the same time influencing the crowd in to supporting his candidature.

Consider another example:

- 2) They have accused me of many things including saying I have stolen land I asked him during the debate to mention a piece of land I have stolen and he did not know what to say.

In this example Uhuru tells his supporters about the accusations being laid against him by his opponent (Raila) on the issue of land. He makes the utterance while referring to the presidential debate held live on Kenyan Televisions one of its kinds in 2013 Kenyan campaigns. He echoes a stereotype about his personality that he has stolen land. A claim made by his strong competitor Raila, one of the presidential candidates at this time. Uhuru expresses a mocking attitude directly to the claim that he has stolen land. The mocking attitude comes out strongly since he even tells his supporters that when Raila was openly asked to show evidence of his allegations he had nothing to say. This punch line will automatically give Uhuru a great political mileage over his other opponents since the allegations of land cannot be proved.

The use of this ironic statement by Uhuru would also be argued to have a great impact on the beliefs of the majority of the Kenyans about land hence the intention of clearing the doubts of the electorates who might have been thinking that Uhuru has stolen land will be achieved and they will give Uhuru more support. According to Habwe (1999:18) political speakers assume a considerable amount of information which they and the audience share. This leads to many implied expressions.

From the example, it could be argued that both the speaker (Uhuru) and his supporters will draw assumptions such as the opponents are liars, malicious and are always out to defame the name of their competitors which is a very strong campaigning strategy because most probably the electorates will be swayed supporting Uhuru knowing that the issue of land is only being used to paint him as a land grabber when there is no evidence. This can also be supported by the idea that many Kenyan voters are easily swayed thus politicians take advantage of this weakness to win support.

Consider another example:

- 3) You ask an old Kamba woman about something that happened in the past they won't remember it by the year. They will instead talk of which famine.

In this example Kalembe Ndile made this utterance during the ODM rally when Kalonzo was also vying for the position of the party leader. This utterances implicitly echoes a

stereotype about the people of Ukambani who are always affected by famine due to lack of enough rain Ndile expresses a ridiculing attitude towards Kalonzo who has been in leadership as a vice president for a long time yet the Kamba are still crying of hunger. He ridicules his poor leadership skills for he has not delivered services to the Kamba people; he implicitly dismisses him as a candidate implying that even as a president he will still not deliver.

According to Wyatt (2014: 153) hearers will understand irony when they correctly infer that the speaker is thinking about someone else's thought or utterance or his/her own past thoughts presenting them as object of ridiculing because they manifestly fall short of expectations. In this example it would be argued that Ndile is expressing his own past thoughts while echoing a stereotype about his Kamba people but most importantly with the intention of ridiculing Kalonzo's aspirations of remaining in politics yet he cannot deliver thus falls short of fulfilling the expectations attached to the high office of a president.

This utterance can have a negative impact on Kalonzo's political life since many people will lose confidence in his leadership skills thus may end up not supporting him. The majority of the Kamba people take Kalonzo as their political "king" thus Kalembe could be using this strategy in order to cause the electorates to change their mind and view Kalonzo as an aspirant who cannot deliver anymore and therefore he is not worthy to be taken as a "king" among the Kamba people. In this example the Kamba people already have background knowledge about how they have suffered so Kalembe intends to strengthen the peoples doubt about the leadership of Kalonzo thus managing to sway people not to vote for him.

Look at the next example:

- 4) I read about William Ole Ntimama when I was in primary school, I danced for Henry Kosgey when I was in school yet this team wants to tell us they do not represent the past.

In this example Ruto creates the implication that the three politicians mentioned in the utterance are old. He attributes the utterance to the three politicians who give an impression that they do not represent the past even though they are old. Ruto echoes a stereotype of age and at the same time communicating a dissociative attitude of being

sarcastic to the attributed thought that the three politicians are too old to run because they represent the past and will not be open for change and progress.

In this case since Stereotypes are manifested in the mind of the electorates since majority share the same assumptions about old age and leadership they will require less effort in processing in retrieving this belief from their memory. Ruto will have just added an assumption which will strengthen the assumptions people have about old age. By strengthening his electorates assumptions Ruto will manage to hold the audience attention hence achieving his goals of manipulating the people's. He will also capitalize on the already existing stereotype of age in the minds of the electorates to communicate his intentions with ease.

According to Ruto he could be implying that the old generation cannot offer good leadership skills and therefore their time in politics is over and now it is the time for the young generation to take over. In the 2013 campaigns age was a very crucial factor and was greatly used as a campaign tool in wooing the electorates. According to Michira (2013:6) the Jubilee team praised itself for presenting a team of young leaders; he adds that the goal was to paint the old guard as lacking fresh ideas to propel the country forward. The humour is brought out in the way Ruto describes their old age that he used to dance for them while in school. This clearly shows how old they are when their age is compared to that of Ruto.

Ruto ridicules the three politicians, though in a humorous way but he is probably communicating to the electorates implicitly that the three politicians have probably run short of ideas and they cannot offer quality and admirable leadership skills. This can be argued to have greatly created a change in the countries voting pattern since many people could be excited to vote in young leaders who would be assumed to be more energetic, vibrant and full of ideas.

In this case, Ruto satirizes and stereotypes the aspect of age because many Kenyans have the assumptions that old people have now run short of innovative ways of governance. Since majority of the Kenyans hold this assumption, it can be argued that Ruto makes such utterance with an intention that the electorates should also strengthen their already existing assumptions about old age and support Ruto who is still young and would therefore be believed to have quite a number of innovative ideas to change the Kenyan leadership. In this way the electorates can be persuaded to vote for Ruto and his Jubilee

team who even referred to themselves as ‘digital’ standing for most current or latest and their opponents as ‘analogue’ to mean old or outdated.

Consider the example below which is based on gender stereotype:

- 5 One of the opponents was saying I should be humiliated. He had offered to pay 10,000 to any youth who pulled my skirt.

In this example Joyce Laboso echoes a stereotype of gender during her campaigns. She also communicates a dissociative attitude of ridicule towards the opponents who basically want to imply that as a woman she is not supposed to compete with men in positions of power she communicates her frustrations and the humiliation about the youths being paid to pull her skirt this is indeed demeaning to a woman. The pulling of the skirt in this case can mean exposing her private life to the public an act she does agree with. She definitely does not approve of such a shameful act to women and she most importantly ridicules her opponents whom she thinks do not respect women.

Majority of the women in Kenya share the background knowledge on how women are discriminated against. The pulling of the skirt will draw many assumptions from her supporters such as being raped or exposing one’s nakedness. The hearers will maximize their relevance of understanding the irony in Laboso’s utterance by understanding the dissociative attitude of ridicule that she expresses to such demeaning utterances against women in the end they will share the same sentiments with Laboso since no woman will take such insults.

According to the Kenya Gender audit report of 2013 Elections (2013:59) women candidates were subject to threats and intimidation, underhanded actions by opponents and smear campaigns. This probably points to an argument that since time immemorial the female gender has been stereotyped in so many ways including leadership with the assumptions that leadership is an all men affair.

Laboso expresses a ridiculing attitude towards the utterance that is attributed to her opponents to show her disapproval of the act. The candidate would be argued to be communicating to her supporters that women have faced so much discrimination and intimidation but for her, she will still be strong and will fight on. This probably will have a great impact on the electorates especially on her women supporters to stand with her because of wanting to protect their own gender from male intimidation thus gaining more votes.



According to the gender audit report (2013:63) it was noted that the propaganda used against women was largely gender-based as it generally echoed gender or cultural stereotypes. This discrimination against women cuts across all spheres of life thus it is always not easy for women to be considered in politics or if they are chosen it is for the affirmative rule. For example currently in Kenya we have women in political positions like women representative but none was voted in as a governor or a senator from the 47 counties all were men. This could majorly contribute to this being caused by stereotyping of women as people who have no leadership qualities or as lesser beings.

Another example can illustrate this fact, see below:

- 6) All men were fighting me. They spread propaganda that I was pregnant I aborted. They said that I am a very old woman. There were those women who said they cannot vote for a woman.

In this example Emaase who is vying as an MP in Teso South echoes a cultural stereotype. She expresses a dissociative attitude of mockery that is attributed to the utterances from the opponents who claimed that she was pregnant and aborted. She ridicules this utterance because it implicitly communicates that she does not support family values. This obviously aims at defaming her personality and would even cause her to pull out of the race since even some women do not want to support her. She also ridicules her opponents who would want to make her feel dejected. She would probably want to convince the electorates that it is just propaganda and they should continue supporting her. Once her supporters note that it is propaganda they would support her even more. Emaase uses the word propaganda because she knows that the electorates have assumptions about the nature of Kenyan politics as being 'dirty' and always full of malice. She strategically uses it in order to correct an impression that many people have held against her which is a very sensitive issue of family values among the Kenyans. Through this she makes her intention clear of what she wants to communicate to the electorates by creating cognitive effects in the mind of the electorates who will correct the mistaken impression about her personality thus achieving relevance by letting the hearer learn of her ridiculing attitude towards the utterance.

Consider another example in this regard:

- 7) People in my clan, other clans and other candidates kept saying, what are you women looking for Your place is not in politics, go and stay with your family, you don't respect men You are a Muslim you are not supposed to be in politics.

In this example Rukia a candidate for county women representative in Wajir echoes a gender stereotype that women are not supposed to participate in politics and more so Muslim because it will be seen as disrespecting the male. Rukia implicitly expresses a ridiculing attitude towards the people who believe that women have no room in leadership. This is both a cultural and gender stereotype to the women and she probably wants to disapprove what her opponents are saying because she is vying for a woman representative.

Since Kenya has a relatively higher representation of men in political positions Rukia would be argued to communicate that nothing will stop her from fighting for what she believes she has a right and this probably will coerce other women and other voters into supporting her since she is not intimidated by anything. This will create a positive perception by other voters who would probably view her as a strong woman who wants to battle it out in a male dominated context. With the background knowledge that people have about the representation of women in politics and Muslim religion the electorates will connect with the available information about Rukia using less effort to understand her ironical utterance as being echoic and expressing a ridiculing attitude since their assumptions will be strengthened and this will in turn be an advantage to Rukia for having managed to communicate her intentions thus getting support.

Another example of stereotype can be illustrated as follows:

- 8 One of the propaganda that they said about me was that after I finished nominations I removed my blouse and threw it. I then held my breasts and said that men in my constituencies will suckle my breasts for the next five years while they are standing.

In this example Alice Wahome a candidate for National assembly for Kandara expresses a ridiculing and scornful attitude that she attributes to her opponents most probably men for demeaning women. She expresses these attitudes by echoing a stereotype against the women in politics. Alice already calls this as a propaganda meaning she does not approve of what was said. She says that the opponents told her that after nomination she will remove her blouse this paints her as a very immoral woman who has no respect. They also claim that she will let men suck her breasts while standing this can mean that men will be intimidated by her leadership skills that they will not have a say in anything since they will be treated like children which means disrespecting them for the next five years of her leadership.

In this example Alice shows that men do not respect women and people should not follow whatever they say since it is all lies. Politically she will manage to woo many supporters probably women who will also feel intimidated by the discrimination and the insults leveled against them. She will manage to influence even those who were not supporting her just to prove a point that she cannot be intimidated and that she will fight for the political ambitions up to the end.

### **3.3 Echoes of expectations of society**

Politicians usually play on the expectations of their supporters in order to achieve political support since they know well that even their supporters hold expectations certain expectations from them.

Consider the following example:

- 9) There are people who are spreading rumours that I have just taken a rest from political activities after signing a pre-election bid. I am there and I am not going back. I do not fear to go for nominations with anybody because if Kenyans want you they will pick you.

In this example Uhuru echoes an expectation that he attributes to a particular group most probably his opponents. According to him these are rumours that he will not run for presidency. He is probably well aware that opponents think he will step down for Mudavadi another possible candidate at the time. He makes the utterance with a ridiculing attitude to the opponents who are spreading the rumours. Basing on the shared background knowledge with Uhuru's supporters, he knows that his supporters have expectations already that Uhuru will vie for presidency so he can utter the above iron.

The intention of Uhuru is to come in out strongly in order to clear the suspicion among his supporters that he will not run for president. He knows that such a claim can really make a quick shift by the electorates to support someone else thus affecting his political ambitions. He does this to bring back supporters confidence in him. He knows that once his supporter's assumptions confirm the suspicion by creating other contextual implications such as he is not a strong leader or he cannot be counted on then. He therefore implicitly communicating that stepping out of the race is something he cannot do and this in return would therefore give his supporters enough reasons to continue supporting him, knowing that he is also ready to face the challenge of leadership more so

as a president. Hence he would manage to coerce the electorates to continue supporting him.

This can also be argued to achieve the effect of assurance since electorates in Kenya have assumptions of their preferred candidates changing their political ambitions by stepping aside for others in the race. This becomes a strong strategy to assure the supporters that he is still in the race for the presidential bid.

The following example can also be considered:

10 I hear some people are working on an agreement that will make me the running mate to someone. That is not so I will be naming my running mate soon”.

In this example Kalonzo makes the utterance attributing it to people who people are associating him with ODM. He echoes an expectation that is already in the mind of his supporters that he is also vying for presidency. This would be argued that Kalonzo wants to dissociate himself from the information which implies that he has fallen out of the race and his interest is to communicate a dissociative attitude by ridiculing his opponents who imagine that he (Kalonzo) cannot sustain presidential aspirations. In this example it could be argued that by him ridiculing the utterance his intention would be to communicate to his supporters that whoever doubts that he is not strong enough to sustain a presidential bid is wrong.

He wishes to give his supporters the insurance that they should not be manipulated by what is implicitly termed as a scheme to ruin his political ambitions rather to be assured that he has the capability of fighting it out on his own and not necessarily joining a coalition. Politicians like to seek identity and Kalonzo could be intending his supporters to identify him as a strong and independent leader who does not require other coalitions to be relevant in a political circle.

Kalonzo must prove to his supporters in such a strong way because many Kenyans refer to him as ‘water melon’ meaning one who is unpredictable, a pretender just like the metaphorical meaning of this type of fruit that is green on the outside but inside it has a different colour. Since he knows that Kenyans will build many assumptions as mentioned he need to be tactical in approaching this issue by first echoing an utterance the expressing a ridiculing attitude about it.

By this he wants to assure his supporters that he is still strong in the race for the top seat. As noted earlier, Kenyan voting pattern is ethnic so definitely his tribesmen will eliminate the assumption of him stepping aside for others to even support him more because their expectations have not been betrayed.

Consider another example:

- 11) Wanasema eti sisi na Mheshimiwa Ruto kila siku nasikia matusi oh sijui Uhuru uko na kesi, wee Ruto sijui uko na kesi.

They say that we and honorable Ruto, every day I hear insults oh I don't know Uhuru has a case; You Ruto I don't know has a case.

This is an example that Uhuru echoes an expectation that Kenyans have against them (Ruto & Uhuru) of not being suitable of vying any political positions since they have cases they are facing against humanity in ICC. He implicitly utters the utterance with an emotive attitude of anger and ridicule, towards the opponents and even some Kenyans who holds the view that people with criminal cases are not fit to be leaders.

Uhuru would be argued to ridicule this utterance because he probably knows that such utterances would really ruin his personality and therefore to a larger extend make him loose majority of the supporters since he knows that Kenyans hold the assumption that anybody who is assumed to be tainted especially with criminal cases does not have any opportunity of becoming a leader in whichever capacity. Thus in the cognitive environment of Kenyans such assumptions are already made manifest thus Uhuru becomes wise in countering and weakening the assumptions on integrity of leaders like Uhuru and Ruto who have criminal cases to answer.

In this example it would also be argued that Uhuru has the intention demystifying the belief that a criminal cannot vie for leadership and he also wants to tell his supporters that this is only a scheme to defame him and Ruto who are presidential candidate but most importantly he wants to assure his supporters that whatever the opponents say does not hold water and should not be used against them to be denied votes. He probably aims at manipulating the supporters to belief that they are not criminals hence in the end the assumptions Kenyans have about them will be eliminated. His supports will get the relevance of the utterance since Uhuru is expressing a dissociative attitude towards the utterance.

See another example:

- 12 Many of you did not believe that we will win these elections because it was said choices have consequences and that if you vote for Uhuru and Ruto there would be consequences.

Ruto makes this utterance after they have been announced as winners of the presidential seat together with Uhuru who was the flag bearer of Jubilee.

In this example Ruto who was the running mate to Uhuru was also facing a criminal case at the ICC. He makes the utterance that is attributed to his opponents but more importantly Ruto communicates a dissociative attitude of ridicule towards the echoed expectation by majority of Kenyans that since they were alleged to be criminals that has not prevented them from being voted in. Since many Kenyans had the assumptions that Ruto and Uhuru are having criminal case so most probably they will not be voted in by the electorates.

Wilson and Sperber (2012:125) views irony as that which essentially communicates neither the proposition literally expressed nor the opposite of that proposition but an attitude to this propositions and to those who might hold or have held it.

In this example Ruto expresses the attitude of ridicule to the opponents who (International community) thought that Kenyans will not vote them in because of the case. This would be argued to have an effect of Ruto using the utterance to disapprove all those opponents who doubted their probability of being elected. Their supporters would probably rejoice with Uhuru and Ruto after learning that they are still loved by some Kenyans and people are ready to stand with them. This gives them a political mileage over their opponents since they have proved to the Kenyans and the International community that nothing would have stopped them from fulfilling their political ambitions

### **3.4 Echoes of norms**

This section looks at echoes that are based on norms of the society. Every society has norms which its people identify which could be social or cultural .According to Wilson and Sperber (2012:8) the most common use of irony is to point out that situations, events or performances do not live up to some norm-based concepts.

In the political arena utterances that reflect norms can also be observed. Norms will be taken to mean all the beneficial qualities of rules that a society abides by and that which is

readily accepted by the people. Yus (2002:2) cultural norms are widely represented in human minds and are always available for ironical echoing.

Look at the following example:

- 13) Those with grabbed land will never resolve land injustices. Hyenas cannot take care of the sheep. You cannot put your herd of cattle under the care of a lion.

In this example Raila echoes a norm that is mutually manifest to the people of Kenya who know how sensitive the issue of land is. In his utterances Raila alludes to the thoughts he holds for his opponents being land grabbers. This norm is not just held by Raila alone but even Kenyans because of the assumptions that Kenyans have about Uhuru that his family own land which they might have grabbed.

Raila would be argued to evoke a ridiculing attitude towards the issue of land grabbing which is a violation of a norm that people should not take what does not belong to them. Raila lash out at his opponents whom he claims have grabbed land yet they want to be in power. He echoes the norm since he has assumption that someone with grabbed land does not fit to be a leader and cannot deliver justice in relation to land issues. He expresses the attitude in a more assertive way by using metaphors of a hyena which can mean greedy, this he attributes to his opponent whom he terms as greedy and that they cannot take care of Kenyan properties being referred to as sheep.

The Kenyans probably have the same shared knowledge about land grabbing which to them is not acceptable. Raila would be argued to have mentioned the issue of land as his tool of campaign in order to gain massive political support from all Kenyans by strengthening the assumptions that Kenyans already have about Uhuru and land issues. This strategy attributed to the land issue, is very sensitive and almost every Kenyan is affected by it. He strategically uses land with the intention of wooing even those who do not support him to change their mind and back him with the assumption that land problems will no longer be an issue again.

Below follows another example reflecting norms of the society:

- 14) I want to say it is wrong to bribe voters. Please make a wise decision even after taking the money. It is therefore for Kenyans to decide whether they can trust a hyena to keep watch of their goats.

In this example although Karua has the assumptions about leaders being ready to bribe voters and the voters also being ready to be bribed, she echoes the norm of avoiding bribes which is not an acceptable practice among the Kenyans,

Karua is also argued to most implicitly communicate a criticising attitude that is attributed to both the Kenyan leaders and the voters. She is probably implying that she is different from the rest of the leaders who give bribes and probably wants the voters to understand her utterance that she does not give bribes and she upholds the norm of honesty. She also communicates a mocking attitude because according to her, the opponents are hyenas who are greedy and ready to destroy the goats (Kenyan voters).

Karua implicitly communicates to the electorates the disadvantages of corruption which will in turn cause them more harm because if they elect corrupt leaders then the future of the country is doomed. This will have an effect on the mind of the voters who will understand that taking bribes will cost them so many things including getting respectable and trusted leaders. Another effect in the minds of her supporters who would probably have an assumption that Karua will turn out to be the most honest person who will not misuse the public funds through corruption. Karua would also be argued to be presenting herself to the voters as a leader who is different from the opponents because she is not corrupt, and since she is a woman in the sphere of politics she wants the audience to really support and even know that being a woman she can be entrusted with people's properties which she will not squander and destroy like other leaders. This will give her a political advantage to survive in a male dominated field of politics.

Consider another example.

15) All the blessing and good intentions of our ODM manifesto lay as they do today brimming over in our basket, ready to be delivered to people but sadly it was not to be. We were denied our victory and denied our opportunity to make a real difference to this country,

In this example Raila who was a presidential candidate in 2007 makes the claims that the opponents had denied him victory with his supporters. In the year 2013 he was still a presidential candidate and he makes the utterance while attributing to himself at another time and at the same time echoing a norm implicitly that people should not be denied their victory because it is not the right thing to do and that rigging of election is not a good practice at all.



Raila also communicates a dissociative attitude of disapproval that his opponents did not win the elections in 2007 but it was him who won. It can be argued that he makes this utterance with an intention of informing his supporters that he was just denied victory and at the same time he wants to paint his opponents as people who have no integrity and do not deserve to be leaders. He tactfully uses the metaphor of a basket to inform his supporters that ODM did not just make empty promises but they had carried goodies such as infrastructure, improved health services and implementation of the constitution among other things that many Kenyans were waiting for. This will have a strong influence on his supporters who will be wooed to vote for him this time because they will believe that he is still the people's choice and will want to give him another chance. To Raila his political ambitions for the top seat will not be wavered at all in fact he will now go in the race with confidence of winning with a landslide.

Here is another example of echoing a norm:

16) Sasa wanasema eti watatekeleza katiba? Katiba ambayo wewe mwenyewe ulipinga utatekelezaje?

Now they are saying that they will implement the constitution. The constitution that you yourself objected to how you will implement it.

In this example Raila makes this utterance while attributing to his opponents in the Jubilee coalition whom Kenyans know that they did not support the new constitution. Raila is echoing a norm of honesty which is expected among the leaders. He (Raila) expresses an attitude of ridicule to the utterance he attributes to the Jubilee coalition who never voted for the new constitution and yet they claim they will implement it, pointing out the dishonest attitude of his opponents.

Raila would be argued to be a strategist because probably he assumes the majority of the Kenyans who voted for the new constitution would never want to entrust it to someone who did not support it. By making these implications Raila wants to capitalize on the background knowledge that is manifest to the electorates about the people who opposed the new constitution which will in turn strengthen their assumptions and in turn have an effect on the electorates voting pattern in this context voting for Raila. He is communicating to his voters a strong message about the opponents who never supported the new constitution. Raila aims at giving further cognitive effects

This would probably make him come out to be someone who is more reliable and whom Kenyans can bank on to implement the constitution unlike his supporters who voted NO. Since he supported the constitution, the voters will unanimously pledge their support to him and in the long run he would probably have an added advantage over his rivals which is always the main agenda in the game of politics.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter analysed the echoes that are used in Kenyan political utterances. The echoes looked at are echoes of stereotype, expectations, norms and what effects are achieved when such utterances are used by politicians.

The data revealed that politicians echo stereotypes, norms and expectations held by the Kenyan society and that these echoes are attributive in nature since they are not about the state of affairs but about another thought that the speaker associates with some other source or to herself or himself at some other different time. More so the echoes have similarities of content with the echoes. The data also established that politicians aim at communicating a dissociative attitude to show their rejection of a tacitly implied thought. The attitude expressed was from the dissociative range such as ridiculing, criticising, mocking and disapproval. The data also revealed an incident of an ironical utterance that involves humour of how Ruto describes the likes of Ntimama and Kosgey who he claims he read about them in school and even danced for them just to prove that they are so old for Kenyan leadership though the main intention was to ridicule.

From the data analyses it was established that the use of the political utterances that are ironical were not basically for aesthetic effect but more generally as a strategy of showing dissatisfaction with the opponent candidates by what was claimed, it was also used as a strategy of manipulating the voters, influencing, and coercing. At another level the utterances were used to defame people's personality and question their integrity. The study also brought out the stigma those women candidates go through during their campaigns. This can also be said about the political life in Kenya that is always full of conflicts, disrespect and even insults to the opponents.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: ECHOES AND COMPOSITION OF IRONY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter focused on three types of echoes that Kenyan politicians often use. They included echoes of stereotype basing on age tribe and gender, the echoes of expectations and lastly echoes of Kenyan based norms that were based on thoughts and assumption from the long term memory. This is connected to this chapter as follows.

This chapter analyses others forms of the echoes that constitute irony in political utterance. This chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section, the analyses are based on echoes of previous discourse and thoughts while in the second section, the focus is on the compositions of ironical utterances.

### **4.2 Echoes based on thoughts and assumptions from short time memory**

According to Yus (1998:393) Sperber and Wilson (1981) states that speakers of ironic utterances usually detach themselves from what they are saying by means of an echoing connection to a previously utterance, facts, and norms of behaviour shared by interlocutors or factual information by the whole community. This clearly points out that echoing in ironical utterances is a key aspect because through the echo the attitude is expressed which contributes to the relevance of the utterance.

Consider the following example:

17 I am not Uhuru's running mate because I have declared that I will be running for presidency. This issue of becoming anyone's running mate does not arise.

In this example Eugene Wamalwa during the TNA launch at KICC makes the utterance while echoing a previous established contextual assumption that he claims some people had mistaken him to be Uhuru's running mate. He (Wamalwa) expresses a critical attitude towards the previous utterances that he attributes to the opponents who had drawn assumptions about the way he was given the first priority to speak during the TNA launch, therefore peoples assumptions were strengthened about him becoming Uhuru's running mate in the elections. He also shows his disapproval about the claims of being a running mate.

By dissociating himself from the claim Wamalwa could be communicating a very strong political message to both his supporters and the opponents that he has also matured

politically and would not want to be identified through other people when he can defend himself. He also wants to clear the suspicion held by his supporters and boost the confidence of his supporters in him that he is in the race to compete with other candidates. The supporters who would have already been disappointed will get the urge to even support him fully hence revising their assumptions about his candidature by processing the information with the least effort since they are after getting truthful conclusions hence relevance thus they might not be easily manipulated to change their mind into supporting other candidates.

Consider another of echoing that is manifested in short time memory because it has been mentioned through a previous context:

18 Wengine wanasema, wengine wanasema eti sisi tunasema nakutenda, eti sema nakutenda tunajua yale matendo.

Some are saying, some are saying that for us we say and do it, that we say and do it. We know those deeds.

In this example Raila echoes a previous context that he attributes to his opponents in the Jubilee coalition who kept on saying “kusema na kutenda” meaning saying and doing. This was the slogan used by the Jubilee people as the party slogan that was led by Uhuru and Ruto. The assumptions that can be drawn from the slogan is that the Jubilee team was marketing itself as an honest team, will be true to their promises in the manifesto: security, economy, women empowerment etc. These assumptions were drawn in the minds of Kenyans that Jubilee team can be relied on basing on the Jubilee manifesto: Transforming Kenya.

Raila is echoing the previous discourse with the intention of expressing a ridiculing and mocking attitude towards the slogan and the assumptions that comes with its meaning to the Kenyans that Jubilee will indeed bring transformations in various sectors.

As Raila ridicules his opponent he is at the same time communicating implicitly that their deeds always have a sinister motive and that their slogan cannot be used to blind his followers whom he claims knows their ill intentions to the people of Kenya. In this example since Raila is not approving of the slogan ‘kusema na kutenda’ his interpretation of ill intentions could be alluded to issues of land grabbing which has been a thorn issue in the campaigns as the Jubilee team has been accused of grabbing land an assumptions that is well built in mind of Kenyans. At the back of his mind (Raila)as he ridicules this

slogan his intention is to manipulate the Kenyans in a abandoning the earlier misguided according to Raila the assumptions about the goodness that is associated with the slogan as believed by the Jubilee team.

In this example Raila aims at manipulating the electorates who should also understand that the URP slogan is ill intended and has nothing to do with what Kenyans could be expecting in terms of good governance as per the Jubilee manifesto. Raila has chosen to ridicule the slogan because slogans are easily remembered and their meaning is always in people's mind. So he wants to demystify the slogan in the electorates mind to influence the electorates to have a negative perception that the Jubilee team will never keep to their promises and that whatever they mean is not good to the Kenyans thus he might manage to change some voters to back him since the ODM slogan is all about reforms which majority of Kenyans assumable need.

In this case Raila gets the opportunity to sell his policies to the people, the reforms by the ODM manifesto means implementation of the constitution, devolution of infrastructure reforming judicial systems land reforms etc. This will alter the thinking of his supporters who are really yearning for change of leadership to believe that CORD is ready to bring those changes because they will do it.

Raila was relating ill issues practiced by the Jubilee team like land grabbing and corruption as he claims and implying that the Jubilee team will still grab land from Kenyans thus will be seen as a contradiction of their manifesto. Raila is now addressing this slogan that is now manifested in the mind of the people which will create new assumptions about the Jubilee team as being people who are up to no good as far as governance is concerned, hence their support might shift in support of Raila who wants to communicate that he is not like the opponents because his team (CORD) will be true to their promises to the Kenyans.

Here is another example:

19 Wengine wanajiita eti mahustlers, eti mahustler ya nini?

Some call themselves mahustler, mahustler for what?

During the 2012\2013 Campaigns Ruto used to refer to himself as a "hustler" a slang word which means someone who always struggles to earn a living. He (Ruto) used this

expression to probably convince the electorates that he is just like other Kenyans and he probably does not come from a rich background and he is one of them.

Raila echoes this previous discourse attributing it to Ruto with an emotive attitude probably a mocking attitude to implicitly communicate to his supporters that Ruto cannot lie to be like other Kenyans from poor background yet he is from a different class of rich people. Raila disapproves of Ruto's claim and he says that Ruto is not a "hustler" as he claims. He wants to alert the people that Ruto is blinding the people with this slogan

Raila actually mocks Ruto and his claim that he is a hustler by reminding the people that Ruto has been so close to Moi that who was once a Kenyan president. The people will create the assumption that since he was close to Moi also means being close to money. This will clearly mean that Ruto is not a hustler as he claims but he is rich. Since Ruto was campaigning he wanted to contradict the assumption held by Kenyans who see him (Ruto) as a rich person.

Therefore Raila wants to gain political mileage by showing that he understands his opponents and they (Ruto) cannot lie to Kenyans that they are also from poor background and still struggle to meet their basic needs, when in real sense they are rich. This kind of irony will probably contribute a lot to weakening the support of Ruto and the electorates will shift their attention in to supporting Raila who will be viewed the as the only "honest" man in the political circle and view Ruto as a liar and a leader who cannot be trusted.

In this scenario the assumption is Raila wants to technically evade the truth that even though he comes from a rich family, (an assumption held by Kenyans and may be who still think that rich people should not lead) he is not a liar like Ruto yet with the background knowledge that Kenyans have a bout most political leaders is that they are cunning and liar. Raila has technically managed to make an ironical utterance, activated appropriate set of contextual assumptions about Ruto and coerced the electorates in making the intended conclusions such as Ruto is not poor thus leading to maximization of relevance to both Raila and the hearer's by expression of a ridiculing attitude to the attributed utterance.

See another example:

20 wanaangalia mambo eti ooh wewe ni mrefu kiasi gani, wee mfupi kiasi gani, mnono kiasi gani? Umri yako ni ngapi hii nitakataka yote.

They look for thing like ooh how tall are you? How short are you? You are fat to what extend? How old are you? All these are rubbish.

In this example Raila echoes a previous context that he attributes to his opponents (Jubilee) who were so fascinated by the issue of age and used it as a campaign tool against their opponents who were relatively old. Raila expresses a ridiculing attitude although in a humorous way. The humour is brought out as he expects leaders to talk about serious issues that affect Kenyans and not look at someone's age or physical appearance as a requirement to be voted for. The humour is also communicating that Kenyans should laugh at their silly claims and in turn view the Jubilee team as having people who are not serious and are so much immature in their approach to serious issues like leadership of a country.

This could be a manipulative strategy by Raila to his supporters to view him depending on what he wants to do for Kenyans and not consider age and physical appearance which he terms as not important in leadership since he knows the issue of age affects him. In the long run he will still be relevant in the political battle because his supporters will still rally behind him despite his age they will be coerced to view his age as an advantage because he will be full of wisdom that is needed to steer the country to greater reforms as per their ODM manifesto.

Raila had to bring in humour as he ridicules this utterance because Kenyans as mentioned earlier have stereotypes in their cognitive environment which could easily lead to other cognitive effects such as old people lack ideas, not innovative etc. this information will be easily retrieved from the memory of the people since it is information the people are familiar with thus may strengthen the assumptions which will work against Raila

Here is another example of previous discourse:

21 Many of you did not believe that we will win these elections because it was said choices have consequences and that if you vote for Uhuru and Ruto there would be consequences.

In this example Ruto makes the utterance after they have been declared winners in presidential race in 2013<sup>th</sup>General Elections. Ruto particularly expresses an emotive

attitude of ridicule towards the thoughts he implicitly attributes to his opponents who had said that if Uhuru and Ruto are voted in there would be serious consequences because they have cases to answer in the ICC. Ruto ridicules these sentiments and at the same time showing that they have proved their critics wrong.

In this example Ruto would be communicating to the people of Kenya that they are the most strongest and powerful young politicians who have proved their opponents wrong and that even the ICC cases could not prevent them from winning the race. The supporters and even those who doubted their being elected will have their assumptions be abandoned and will now create a new contextual implications deduced from the utterance and the context thus people will now have a different perception about the Jubilee team. Politicians will always want to leave a landmark which they could always be remembered of hence Ruto and Uhuru would have made that political landmark among the electorates.

Here is another example that can be echoes previous thoughts that are manifested in short time memory:

- 22 I am aware there are leaflets circulating indicating that voting for Mudavadi amounts to voting for Uhuru those are propaganda fuelled by some of our rivals to discredit my candidature.

In this example Mudavadi echoes previous thoughts that are attributed to his opponents who according to him are simply spreading propaganda that he is a project of Uhuru. Mudavadi echoes this thought that people can draw assumptions such as Mudavadi has no ambitions of leading the country, he is being used to sway the votes of CORD from the western region to go to Jubilee etc thus he expresses a ridiculing attitude towards the said assumptions and at the same time dissociating himself from the thoughts that he attributes to his opponents.

According to Mudavadi the assumptions were inappropriate and he had to strategize on how to hold onto his supporters owing that it was the critical time of finalizing campaigns and such utterances will have great effects on the voters by either confirming their suspicion in relation to the background information they have from the previous context, hence withdraw their support from supporting Mudavadi in order to support his opponents. He strongly rejects the allegations leveled against because he is also in the race for presidency even when others think of him as a supporter of Uhuru.



Mudavadi would be argued to be struggling to remain relevant and since he made the utterance during his final presidential campaign he knew it was a crucial moment for him to disappoint and even lose his supporters so he probably wanted to give the supporters assurance that nothing will stop him from going up to the ballot. Since the majority of the Kenyan electorates are easily swayed he had to come out and clear the suspicions and doubts among his supporters and once he manages to manipulate the voters the assumptions of him not vying for presidency will be abandoned by the electorates. Thus, the voters will find Mudavadi's ridiculing attitude relevant and satisfying.

### **4.3 Composition of ironical utterances**

This section looks at the composition of ironical utterances in political utterances. Since political utterances involve a lot of creativity and as noted earlier for the politicians to get more numbers, they rely on language and more importantly how this language is delivered is what attracts the electorates. The data will be analysed for how are composition of metaphor used in irony. In this case composition is taken to mean other features that are incorporated in ironical utterances.

#### **Metaphors in ironical utterances**

In political utterances metaphor is employed since it is part of the way politicians flower their language as a way of attracting and even entertaining their supporters.

As noted earlier metaphor is a figure of speech in which one thing is described in terms of another. Carston (2002:158) argues that when the speaker talks loosely or metaphorically there is a relation of non-identical resemblance between the two propositional forms and the proposition expressed is not explicated but it is used as an efficient means of giving the hearer access to those assumptions the speaker communicates

This means that by the speaker using metaphor the hearer gets an opportunity of making guesses about one thing in terms of another in order to draw out some correlations either in terms of behaviors or appearance. In political language in Kenya speakers employ the use of metaphor in the event of communicating ironical utterances for aesthetic and manipulative effects.

According to Wilson (2011:199) when a metaphor is used the lexical meaning of a word is merely a clue to the speaker's meaning and the concept communicated by use of a word

typically differs from the lexical meaning and that metaphor is just one of the many ways in which lexical meanings can be modified.

Metaphor in relevance theoretical approach has been derived as follows

For Wilson & Sperber (2012:101) what is special about a speaker's meaning as compared with other mental states which people usually keep to themselves is that speakers intend their audience to discover their meaning and provide evidence to that effect. This in turn raises the possibility that there might be an inferential procedure uniquely adapted to comprehension. This means that even when speakers employ metaphorical expressions in the ironical utterances their intention is for the hearers to discover that intended meaning.

For Clark (2013:269) relevance theoretical approach assumes that metaphors exploit the possibility of producing an utterance which is less than literal interpretation of the thought it represents. The propositional form of the thought represented is relatively far from the proposition expressed and the utterance may give rise to relatively wide range of relatively weak implicatures.

This clearly points to the fact that when politicians use metaphorical expressions, they definitely know that the hearer would work on the weak implicatures in relation to the background information and the context to attain relevance.

See the example below that had been mentioned in the previous chapter:

23 Those with grabbed land will never resolve land injustices. Hyenas cannot take care of the sheep. You cannot put your herd of cattle under the care of a lion.

In this example Raila expresses a ridiculing attitudes towards the thoughts that he attributes to his opponents who he claims have grabbed land and cannot therefore be trusted to solve the same land and issues. Raila presents his ironical attitudes in a creative way by employing the use of metaphorical expressions. He likens his opponents to hyenas. In this example the metaphor is developed as follows; he hearers will not first consider the hypothesis that Raila meant that his opponents are hyenas that is literally an animal. The hearers will simply derive assumptions which Raila might have intended to communicate which will make the utterance relevant at that time.

Various assumptions can be drawn basing on the encyclopaedic entry about a hyena which could either mean that hyenas are greedy, cowardly and therefore the same leaders

being likened to these attributes that they are greedy and cowardly and cannot be entrusted with people's properties and at the same time they do not have admirable leadership skills since they are cowardly. Therefore they should not be voted for.

He also points out that people cannot herds of cattle in the hands of a lion. The herd of cattle will create an assumption like that cattle needs direction and care, valuable. He actually draws resemblance between the cattle and people's resources which need to be taken care of. The lion in this case can create assumptions such as that a lion kills, is fierce or destructive. The electorates will now make these assumptions about the opponents of Raila.

These therefore means that Raila is cautioning Kenyans about the leaders who are greedy and destructive and who at the same time cannot be entrusted with anything by Kenyans notwithstanding more so the future of the country's leadership, because they are bound to destroy all that Kenyans have labored for in terms of good leadership, resources and even the constitution. In this example the creative use of metaphor will be more appealing and persuasive to the Kenyan voters thus heavily influencing them to change their mind against voting for such leaders who cannot be admired in any way.

The ironical aspect comes out from the context already created in the minds of Kenyans that greedy and destructive leaders cannot be entrusted with people's resources. From the assumptions already drawn by Kenyans about those who have been accused of grabbing land, probably the Jubilee team .The new assumptions to be drawn by the people will be that Jubilee team cannot claim to resolve issues about land when they are also among the people who perpetuate the same injustices by grabbing land implying that the Jubilee team cannot prosecute itself about land matters.

Consider another example of metaphor:

24 All the blessing and good intentions of our ODM manifesto lay as they do today brimming over in our basket, ready to be delivered to people but sadly it was not to be. We were denied our victory and denied our opportunity to make a real difference to this country.

In this example Raila echoes the norm of dishonesty attributed to his opponents in 2007 whom he claims denied him victory even after he claims to have won the elections. The electorates will create assumptions from what Raila is implicitly communicating that Kenya is not a democratic country, Kenya practices rigging of elections elements that he

does not approve of thus expresses the ironical attitude attributed to those assumptions highlighted. He uses metaphorical expressions most probably to bring out his emotions and sad feelings of being denied victory which had been given to him by the people of Kenya. And to also express his disappointment that Kenya is not a democratic country something he does not expect to happen. Raila talks of the goodness of the ODM manifesto that was brimming over in their basket.

The basket in this context will not be seen literary as a woven pieces but will derive implicatures such as the basket being seen as something that is used to carry valuable items and keeping them safe. The things inside the basket could mean all the contents of good promises that Kenyans had wanted over the years including food security, infrastructure, economic stability and land reforms among others that had already been packaged by the ODM coalition and even over flowing so that the people of Kenya can receive and enjoy, unfortunately the good things were taken away by the opponents who emptied the goodies in the basket and left Kenyans a disappointed lot since even the same opponents never delivered real changes to Kenyans.

Consider another example that had been looked at previously:

25 I want to say it is wrong to bribe voters, please make a wise decision even after taking the money. It is therefore for Kenyans to decide whether they can trust a hyena to keep watch of their goats.

In this example Karua expresses a dissociative attitude of ridicule while echoing a norm among Kenyans that has been violated of not taking bribes. She employs the use of metaphor in order to bring out the seriousness of the issue of corruption and its negative effects to the people of Kenya. Karua uses hyena in this context to mean the greedy and corrupt leaders who cannot take care of Kenyan's resources in this case goats. From this example the goats are seen as valuable things which when brought near the hyena will obviously be eaten and the owners will go at a loss.

Karua is expressing a ridiculing attitude of first to Kenyan voters whom people can create assumptions such as the voters are gullible, cheap, compromising even when it comes to serious matters like choosing leaders who take advantage of their weaknesses and end up exploiting them. An act she does not approve. She cautions Kenyans that they never learn from such mistakes of taking bribes and end up regretting.

At the same time Karua expresses a ridiculing attitude about the assumptions that can be drawn about Kenyan leaders such as greedy, corrupt, lack integrity and exploitative etc

From such assumptions Karua first echoes norms and values of the society such as integrity, being incorruptible, not being greedy being a good steward etc, She expresses her ridiculing attitude at the violation of such societal norms and values and surprisingly wonders why the Kenyan voter has to choose such type of leaders who will induce them with money and yet will come back to even destroy their resources. She is also implicitly communicating that Kenyans resources must be guarded and should not be under the care of leaders who are greedy.

Another example of metaphor can be considered below that had been looked at previously:

26 One of the propaganda that they said about me was that after I finished nominations I removed my blouse and threw it. I then held my breasts and said that men in my constituencies will suckle my breasts for the next five years while they are standing.

In this example Alice Wahome a candidate for the National assembly for Kandara expresses a ridiculing and scornful attitude that she attributes to her opponents most probably men for demeaning women and even insulting them. By the opponents referring to the removal of the blouse they indicated that Alice is an immoral woman and they also used the word breasts which have sexual connotations that can be drawn of this utterance. Many assumptions can be drawn of this utterance one of them is such as by sucking the breasts it can mean that Alice will take men as kids and would therefore not respect them for the next five years as equals. The throwing of the blouse can have a sexual connotation that women are sexual objects.

From this example people can draw assumptions such women are immoral, sex objects, dictators, disrespectful to men and therefore do not qualify to be leader's, assumptions that Kahara disregards and does not agree. In this case Kahara echoes a cultural and gender stereotype that is manifested in the mind of people of Kenya about the treatment of women in politics. She expresses a ridiculing attitude about the stereotype that she attributes to his opponents most preferably men for not respecting women who are seeking political positions by insulting and demeaning them. Her intention will be to manipulate the voters in to believing in women and abandon the discriminatory assumptions by voting for them.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has set out to analyse the echoes of previous established discourse and further looked at the composition of irony from the collected data. The data revealed the expression of ironic attitude more particularly a ridiculing and a mocking attitude when politicians echo from previous utterances and discourse. The data also established that these attitudes are more appealing to the electorate's emotions since the speaker gets an opportunity to express his deep feelings about what others have said and this makes it easier for them to manipulate the electorates to their advantage.

The study also established that the Kenyan echoes of assumptions and thoughts are manifested in the short time memory of the people which also contribute in manipulation of the electorates by activation of various assumptions that are crucial in political competition since their effects are easily achieved.

The data also established that sometimes politicians express ironical utterances with the combination of other figurative language in particular metaphorical expressions. In this case politicians want to show their creativity in their language so that they become more appealing to the electorates and more persuasive. They also use metaphorical expression for aesthetic effects. At one point they could also be using such approach to show the seriousness of the matter ridiculed of. This also gives the supporters the opportunity to develop their own assumptions about which the speaker had aimed to communicate may be aiming at communicating at that time.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this section, the study set out to give the summary of the research findings that led into conclusions and finally the recommendations for the study.

The study applied the Relevance theory focusing on the echoic interpretive approach in analysing the interpretation of verbal irony which was adequate in analysing the data since it involves the speaker echoing a thought, belief or utterance that is attributed to someone else and expressing a dissociative attitude towards the utterance.

### **5.2 Summary**

The study using the echoic interpretive approach grounded in Relevance Theory by Wilson & Sperber (1986/95) established various findings. The verbal irony from the collected data were categorised according to the echoes such as echoes of stereotype, norms, expectations, previous context and assumptions. The study also established that the echoes exhibit certain attitudes. The attitudes established include majorly a dissociative range like ridiculing, mocking, disapproving, criticising. Two instances of humour were also established in the course of using irony although the intention of the attitude expressed was still a dissociative.

The echoic interpretive approach gave various effects that politicians get when using verbal irony which include showing dissatisfaction with the opponent candidates. It was also used as a strategy of manipulating voters, influencing and coercing the electorates to vote for the politicians. At some point the echoic approach established the use of ironical utterances by politicians to attack their opponent's personality, gender stereotype, age and integrity.

At another level the data also revealed two instances where verbal irony was used for aesthetic function but only when it was incorporated with other figurative language like metaphorical expressions. In this case the attitude expressed was not just either ridiculing or mocking but more so communicating personal feelings and emotions which the hearers were made to identify with.

The data analysed also revealed that the instances of verbal irony in Kenyan political utterances go beyond just stating the opposite of the meaning but majorly reveal

dissociative attitudes. In this study therefore irony is understood from the type of attitude expressed by the speaker.

The study also established that for echoes that are categorised as echoes of previous created discourse and assumptions, belonged to the category of those echoes that are manifested in the minds of the hearers as short term memory while the other three echoes of stereotype, society norms and values and expectations are manifested in the mind of the hearers in long term memory. The interpretation of irony always depend on the context that is shared by both interlocutors in relation to cognitive effects and processing effort in order to maximize relevance which was also argued for in the study.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

In conclusion the study of interpretation of irony using the echoic approach is narrowed to the dissociative attitudes such as mocking ridiculing etc and does goes beyond the understanding of irony as simply stating the opposite of the literal meaning. That for utterances to be understood as being ironical a certain context must be created that is identifiable with both the speaker and the hearers. This context will go a long way in helping the hearer to make inferences about the speaker's intended meaning until the relevance of the input is maximized using the least effort.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

The study makes the following recommendations:

Since the study looked at verbal irony in political utterances it will be intriguing for a study to be conducted using prosodic features in identification and interpretation of ironical utterances in Kenyan politics.

The study used echoic interpretive approach of Relevance Theory; other research can be conducted using other approaches like politeness theory or pretence theory among others.

Lastly the study researched on verbal irony as a figure of speech. The study recommends a detailed research to be conducted on other figures of speech such as proverbs, metaphor, idiomatic expressions and metonymy and how they are interpreted in political utterances.



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## APPENDIX : POLITICAL UTTERANCES

1. Our opponents are saying that I do not have solutions for the land problem. They have not even mentioned me anywhere that I grabbed land.
2. They have accused me of many things including saying I have stolen land I asked him during the debate to mention a piece of land I have stolen and he did not know what to say.
3. You ask an old Kamba woman about something that happened in the past they won't remember it by the year. They will instead talk of which famine.
4. I read about William Ole Ntimama when I was in primary school, I danced for Henry Kosgey when I was in school yet this team wants to tell us they do not represent the past.
5. One of the opponents was saying I should be humiliated. He had offered to pay 10,000 to any youth who pulled my skirt.
6. All men were fighting me. They spread propaganda that I was pregnant I aborted. They said that I am a very old woman. There were those women who said they cannot vote for a woman.
7. People in my clan, other clans and other candidates kept saying, what are you women looking for Your place is not in politics, go and stay with your family, you don't respect men You are a Muslim you are not supposed to be in politics
8. One of the propaganda that they said about me was that after I finished nominations I removed my blouse and threw it. I then held my breasts and said that men in my constituencies will suckle my breasts for the next five years while they are standing.
9. There are people who are spreading rumours that I have just taken a rest from political activities after signing a pre-election bid. I am there and I am not going back. I do not fear to go for nominations with anybody because if Kenyans want you they will pick you.
10. I hear some people are working on an agreement that will make me the running mate to someone. That is not so I will be naming my running mate soon”.

11. Wanasema eti sisi na Mheshimiwa Ruto kila siku nasikia matusi oh sijui Uhuru ukonakesi, wee Ruto sijui uko nakesi.
12. They say that we and honorable Ruto, every day I hear insults oh I don't know Uhuru has a case; You Ruto I don't know has a case.
13. Many of you did not believe that we will win these elections because it was said choices have consequences and that if you vote for Uhuru and Ruto there would be consequences.
14. Those with grabbed land will never resolve land injustices. Hyenas cannot take care of the sheep. You cannot put your herd of cattle under the care of a lion
15. I want to say it is wrong to bribe voters. Please make a wise decision even after taking the money. It is therefore for Kenyans to decide whether they can trust a hyena to keep watch of their goats.
16. All the blessing and good intentions of our ODM manifesto lay as they do today brimming over in our basket, ready to be delivered to people but sadly it was not to be. We were denied our victory and denied our opportunity to make a real difference to this country,
17. Sasa wanasema eti watatekeleza katiba? Katiba ambayo wee mwenyewe ulipinga utatekelezaje?  
Now they are saying that they will implement the constitution. The constitution that you yourself objected to how you will implement it.
18. I am not Uhuru's running mate because I have declared that I will be running for presidency. This issue of becoming anyone's running mate does not arise.
19. Wengine wanasema, wengine wanasema eti sisi tuna sema nakutenda, eti sema na kutenda tunajua yale matendo.  
Some are saying, some are saying that for us we say and do it, that we say and do it. We know those deeds
20. Wengine wanajiita eti mahustlers, eti mahustler ya nini?  
Some call themselves mahustler, mahustler for what?
21. Anaaangalia mambo eti ooh wewe ni mrefu kiasi gani, wee mfupi kiasi gani, mnono kiasi gani? Umri yako ni ngapi hii ni takataka yote.

Many of you did not believe that we will win these elections because it was said choices have consequences and that if you vote for Uhuru and Ruto there would be consequences

22. I am aware there are leaflets circulating indicating that voting for Mudavadi amounts to voting for Uhuru those are propaganda fuelled by some of our rivals to discredit my candidature.
23. Those with grabbed land will never resolve land injustices. Hyenas cannot take care of the sheep. You cannot put your herd of cattle under the care of a lion.
24. All the blessing and good intentions of our ODM manifesto lay as they do today brimming over in our basket, ready to be delivered to people but sadly it was not to be. We were denied our victory and denied our opportunity to make a real difference to this country.
25. I want to say it is wrong to bribe voters, please make a wise decision even after taking the money. It is therefore for Kenyans to decide whether they can trust a hyena to keep watch of their goats.
26. One of the propaganda that they said about me was that after I finished nominations I removed my blouse and threw it. I then held my breasts and said that men in my constituencies will suckle my breasts for the next five years while they are standing.