

**TRANSLATION AS DECONSTRUCTION: THE CASE OF THE NATIONAL  
COHESION AND INTEGRATION COMMISSION ON CODED LANGUAGE**

**BY**

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## DECLARATION

I declare that this is my original work and has not been presented in any other University or College for Examination or Academic purposes.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to my husband and dear children; Edwin and Betty for their support and inspiration during my studies which enabled me to complete this project. I'll always value and esteem them.

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## ABSTRACT

The study set out to investigate translation as deconstruction with special reference to the NCIC on the use of coded language. The general claim of the study is that translation has the capacity to decode, decontextualize and demystify coded language. This can be made possible through explanatory, definitional and in paraphrase manner. This study was guided by the following objectives. To investigate translation as deconstruction for the purpose of decoding, decontextualizing and demystifying coded language. To analyze meaning in coded language, with intended meaning in literal translation. To identify the strategies used in the creation of coded language and the strategies, that can be used to deconstruct coded language and finally to discuss the challenges encountered in the process of deconstruction. The study used the theory on communicative translation where various aspects of this theory were related to the study. Literature review based on the works of translation by various theorists was exhaustively discussed. A myriad of coded words and phrases published by the NCIC were analyzed. A number of language manipulation strategies were then identified key among them including; antonymous *Wenye nchi* (Swahili for country owners) vs *wananchi* (Swahili for citizens) a pattern linked to a particular world view are instantiated in a communicated act or series of acts for example *Kapenguria 6*; use of legitimizing and delegitimizing language for example water melon: and coinage which includes joining words and numbers for example the *Ocampo 6*; code mixing lexical borrowing, for example *maombi* meetings as well as the use of acronyms and word order substitutions. Challenges faced in translation were found to include: gaining conceptual equivalence, distortion of meanings through literal translation accuracy and ambiguity. We hypothesized that translation has the capacity to deconstruct for the purpose of decoding, decontextualizing or demistifying coded language. This was confirmed and it was done through explanations, definitions and paraphrasing various coded languages. We gave our conclusion by stating that the use of coded language in Kenya is well grounded, built on a set of criteria, developed subconsciously and created from everyday happenings and events in the public discourse and propagated by the media. That behind these coded words and expressions lies meanings which are sensitive and segregating to warrant their articulation in a coded fashion while some are nationalistic carrying with them memories that create a sense of patriotism and unity. Finally we gave recommendations that this research focused on a very small area of coded language. More research is required on the use of coded language in other set ups and concerning the challenges there are many different types of translation techniques that can be applied to deconstruct coded languages.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ST	-	Source Text
TC	-	Target Culture
TT	-	Target Text
SL	-	Source Language
TL	-	Target Language
TP	-	Translation Procedures
NCIC		National Cohesion and Integration

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

**Community:** A community is a group of people who live together and subscribe to a similar culture and values, and hold same aspirations and fears.

**Cohesion:** Cohesion is the act or state of sticking together or close union. It is cohering or being in consonance with each other. Cohesion implies positive group dynamics and positive energy that is experienced within a community.

**Economic Cohesion:** Economic cohesion occurs when financial and business structures and institutions work to ensure fair and transparent distribution of resources devoid of discrimination.

**Government:** It is the agency through which the will of the state is formulated, expressed and realized. It is the institution that runs the affairs of state on behalf of the people or the citizenry.

**Nation:** A nation is a group of people sharing common land territory, resources, values, culture, aspirations, common symbols such as language, flag, national anthem and Coat of Arms, common history and government.

**Nationhood:** This is the process of creating and sustaining the oneness of a nation through social, economic or political organizations and institutions.

**National Cohesion:** National cohesion entails the constructing of an integrated citizenry with a sense of belonging amongst members of different groups and from different regions, through the regulation and reconciliation of differences as well as competing interests and demands.

**National Cohesion and Integration:** In the Kenyan context, national cohesion and integration is a process and an outcome of instilling and enabling all citizens to have a sense and a feeling that they are members of the same nation engaged in a common enterprise, facing shared challenges and opportunities. National cohesion and integration

encompasses unity, equality, freedom, democracy, absence of war, just peace, social justice and the rule of law.

**Nationalism:** It is a strong identification of a group of individuals with a political entity defined as a nation; creating a national identity. It can also include the belief that the state is of primary importance, or the belief that one's state is naturally superior to all other states. It is also used to describe a movement to establish or protect one's country.

**Nation state:** A political unit consisting of an autonomous state for example Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania inhabited predominantly by a people sharing a common culture, history and /or language.

**Political Cohesion:** Political cohesion is where structures and institutions are operating to ensure that citizen's needs are met while ensuring that political actors are in harmony with each other.

**Social Cohesion:** Social cohesion is the ongoing process of developing a community of shared values, shared challenges and equal opportunities based on a sense of hope, trust and reciprocity. It also involves the willingness of groups with diverse values and objectives to coexist, share resources, have mutual respect for each other and abide by the rules of the land. Social cohesion involves building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income so as to generally enable people to have a sense that they are engaged in a common enterprise facing shared challenges, and that they are members of the same community.

**Integration:** To integrate is to bring together. Integration is a key contributor to community cohesion. It enables citizens to relate with each harmoniously.

**Cipher-** a secret disguised way of writing

**Antonymous, Lexical choices** -This refer to a word opposite in meaning to another.

**Dichotomy** - contrast between two things that are presented as being opposed or entirely different.

**Quasi infinite** – Seemingly, apparently but not really /having a likeness to something resembling

**Bipolar** – Has to do with two repellent forces, relating two poles or extremities.  
Instantiation

**Binary** - number systems binary conceptualization- concepts expressed in number systems

**Deictic pronouns** such as us and them or phrase that point to the time place or situations in which the speaker is speaking.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Language coding has been in existence for thousands of years with the oldest and also the simplest technique Atbash a Hebraic (Cipher 600BC) which operates with a reversed alphabet. Julius Caesar also invented his own coding technique the Caesar code so that messages could not be read by enemies. Secret languages have been important means of communication. They have been used to serve the purpose of secure communication as protection against enemies and as a means for identification that establishes membership in a certain group. By means of artificially constructed linguistic barrier only selected recipients can decode the communicated content correctly. An example of such secret language is the *Rotwelsch* a German thieves *latin* whose vocabulary is derived from Hebraic roots and loans from the languages of the Sinti and in part from every day words that were given new meanings. The language protected the communication of criminal plans and at the same time used as a means of identification that established membership in a certain group. About 500 years ago, oppressed women in the Chinese province developed a secret language and writing called *Nushu* which was handed down through a sworn sisterhood. In this way they could pour out their hearts talk over problems and console each other without danger. In the present world too, in social sub cultures for instance, adolescent groups and users of internet forums one finds artificial forms of expressions that generate a sense of membership and help the user of these languages to attain recognition within their groups. Coded language has been used in places of work as a means of harassment because of ones origin or race. Politicians have also been known to use coded language for political gains .The use of coded

language for the purpose of security or for any other reasons aimed at protecting humanity is quite in order. However there are instance when secret language has been used negatively and has affected the notion of cohesion especially when used as a ground for discrimination on the basis of origin of race.

According to Susan (1998:3) the term translation has several meanings. It can refer to the general subject field, the product (the text that has been translated or the process (the act of producing the translation. The process of translating between two different languages involves the translator changing an original written text (ST) in the original verbal language (SL) in a different verbal language the (TL). This is however not without challenges that require solutions a concern this study set out to address.

Literal translation started in the United States and was only targeting European languages. However it has expanded to include other non-European Literatures. In the present world, scholars are using translation in research, teaching as well as solving social problems. (Chesterman, 1998) other than its main function of crossing the borders between languages, cultures and national literatures, translation also helps to unite linguistically divided countries with an aim of enhancing national cohesion through language (Christie and Martin 2007).

Translation is an activity that involves two languages and two cultural traditions. Toury (1978 – 200) states that the translators are permanently faced with the problem of how to treat cultural aspects present in the (ST) and of finding the most appropriate techniques of conveying those aspects in the (TL) the problems may differ depending on the cultural linguistic gap between the two or more languages concerned. Nida (1964:130) explains that every translator must check on the importance given to certain cultural aspects and to what

extent it is necessary or desirable to translate them into the TL. The aim of the (SL) will have implications for translation as well as the intended readership for both the ST and the TT.

There are various categories of translations key among them being the intra-lingual translation, the Interlingua translation and inter semiotic translation. The intralingual translation is an interpretation of the verbal sign by means of other signs of the same language. It mainly occurs when one rephrases an expression in the same language to explain or clarify something (Pettersen 2003; 3

This type of translation is very relevant to this study since a number of coded word expressions or phrases were translated through explanation within the same language for example water melon can only be translated literally being rephrased as a type of a fruit that is green from the outside while the inside is red. This however is just the literal meaning.

The Ocampo 6 can be transferred as it is to be rephrased as the six Kenyans, taken to the ICC to answer charges against humanity.

The Interlingua translation on the other hand is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language for example

- i. Onjelo used by Luos to refer to a Kalenjin athlete
- ii. Afilisti used by Kikuyus to refer to the uncircumcised
- iii. Nyoni used by Kikuyus to refers to a politician as bird
- iv. Imeet used by Maasai to refer to Kikuyus as thieves



In his description of interlingual translation, he states that translation involves substituting messages in one language into for separate code units but for the entire message in some other message

For example

Otutun la batonik used by kalenjins to refer to non Kalenjins occupying Kalenjini land can be translated with an equivalent sentence as “uproot the weed”. Thus, involves two equivalent codes. The code units for the two equivalent messages will be different because they belong to two different sign systems. The intersemiotic translation is an interpretation of verbal sign system. This particular one occurs if a written text were to be translated into a film or painting. This was not applicable in this study

Translation strategies for cultural bound terms depends on the particular text type and the importance of the cultural word in the text. When translating cultural words / expressions / phrases, Newmark proposes two opposing methods: Transference and componential analysis.

According to him, componential analysis gives local colour by keeping cultural names and concepts although he claims that the method when used for general readership. It may hinder the understanding of some aspects. For example in this study the transference of terms like Ocampo six a phrase used to the six Kenyans accused and charged of crime against humanity at the ICC may, for the purpose of maintaining clarity be transferred and translated as it is

Translation should put into consideration a number of constraints, such as the grammatical rules for the two languages. It may be difficult for a translator to render an equivalent translation with the source language (SL) and the TL. Grammatical rules may differ from one language to the other and this may pose problems in finding equivalents in the target

language. The coded expressions and phrases discussed in this study are good example especially when it comes to the structures in the SL and TL may cause changes in the manner in which the message is carried across

Example

Kalenjin Ngonai / tarit / Konnyi/

Kiswahili kujua / ndege / nyumba

Proper translation would be *acha kila ndege ajue nyumba yake*

*let every bird know its nest*

(ii) ngosamis / muryat / bakoot / nebo

Kunuka / panya / ako / kwake

*Smelling rat is in your house*

*Even if a person of your community is bad he is still yours.*

The new emphasis in translation came to regard translation as not merely a linguistic operation but rather as a process of cultural transfer (Gentzler, 2001). Translators depend not merely on the surface structure of a ‘sacred’ source text, but also focuses on the function of the translation itself within the larger context of the target culture. The shift in emphasis in debates on translation from concerns with the source text itself to issues of target text function presupposes a belief in translators as holding the power to shape or mould ‘one culture upon another’ (Robinson, 1997: vii).

In addition to recognition of the function of translation itself, recognition of other roles has arisen, for example, sociopolitical dimensions as power relationships between men and

women, between the colonized and the colonizers, and between academics and professionals (Zybatow, 2002: 57). From such a perspective translation is a process that includes linguistic elements in addition to revealing or projecting the underlying culture within the original text into the new language. Translation is considered a cognitive process of perceiving cultural alteration, that is, the difference or 'otherness' of different cultures and languages (Hu, 2003).

Translators themselves are crucial to both the source and target texts in that they are both communicators and mediators of these texts (Toury, 1985). Such a shift also eliminates or at the very least, re-focuses the nature of the formerly central issue of equivalence in translation debates since more than one translation is possible (Hu, 2003). In fact, multiple translations are now preferred as providing greater insights into the different possible meanings of language, culture, and translation.

In discussions of translation, structural linguistics and literary translation focuses are often seen as textual polarities (Bassnett, 1993). Structural linguistics is seen as concerned primarily with choices in grammatical structures such as relative clause use or verb tense choice, and with underlying theoretical cognitive language issues. Translation studies, on the other hand, is viewed as focusing its efforts on specific texts and their existence within a particular context and embedded in a larger cultural background. In other words, from the point of view of structural linguistics, language is the object of study and research; It is the instrument for conveying or transmitting larger socio-cultural and sociopolitical meanings.

The translated text in the former perspective is the 'ends' while in the latter it is the 'means to an end'. In its extreme form language 'lies beyond the text or the translation itself' (Snell-

Hornby, 2002). Such an explicit exclusion of language as an essential element of translation by Mary Snell-Hornby, a leading German translations, has led Zybatow, another leading German translationist, to ironically conclude that the self-evident truth that translation has to do with language is no longer self-evident (Zybatow, 2002: 57).

In the Kenyan political arena, coded language has been used for political gains. This has led to ethnic conflicts experienced mainly during the referendum of 2005 and electioneering period 2007/2008. This has impacted negatively on national cohesion and integration. As a result an attempt has been made by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) to translate coded language largely used during the country's 2007/2008 post-election violence to propagate hate speech carried in coded language.

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) was borne out of the realization that long lasting peace, sustainable development and harmonious coexistence among Kenyans requires deliberate normative, institutional and attitudinal processes of constructing nationhood, national cohesion and integration. The NCIC is a statutory body established under the National Cohesion and Integration Act No.12 of 2008 enacted after the 2007 post-election violence and subsequent political negotiations. NCIC is one of the Agenda 4 reform commissions, established after the signing of the National Accord and Reconciliation Agreement (NARA, 2008).

The objective and purpose for which the Commission is established is to facilitate and promote equality of opportunity, good relations, harmony and peaceful co-existence between persons of the different ethnic and racial communities of Kenya, and to advise the government on all aspects thereof. This encompasses analysis of historical injustices that

field disputes and conflicts amongst citizens of different ethnicities. The main focus is to identify the root causes and propose remedies to the government. The NCIC's principal role is to protect and promote human rights among all citizens without discrimination, thereby enhancing nationhood. NCIC became operational in September 2009 with the appointment of nine (9) Commissioners through a Gazette Notice No. 9883.

The goal of national cohesion and integration is to create a national community that renders loyalty to competing ethnic, racial, regional, class and religious communities secondary. National cohesion embraces unity of purpose in the citizenry's participation in economic, social and political processes. Language as a tool for integration and sustainable democracy" is very relevant to the present-day global concerns (Kiarie, 2004). This is evident in the fact that the world has now been reduced to a global village through the language (Amitai, 1965).

The NCIC's work is guided by its strategic plan 2010 - 2013. Each year, an annual work plan is developed through a consultative process after a rapid assessment of the environment of operation. The Commission's mandate and key results are realized through four departments guided by four committees. These departments include the Finance and Administration Department which provides administrative coordination in the prudent management of finance, human resource, procurement and physical assets of the organization, the Civic Education and Advocacy Department (CEAD) which spearheads initiatives aimed at policy influence and advocacy, public education and awareness, capacity development and outreach, Research, Policy and Planning Department which collects and synthesizes information on various issues of interest to the Commission and finally the Complaints,

Legal, and Enforcement Department whose core mandate is to receive and investigate complaints on the offences of hate speech, ethnic or racial contempt.

Prompted by the emerging facts and the realization that individuals sometimes use coded language to invoke feelings of hate towards particular Kenyan ethnic communities which, in turn, raises the possibility of recurrence of ethnic conflicts, the National Cohesion and Integration Commission conducted a nationwide study on the 'Use of Coded language by various communities in Kenya and how they are perceived by the users and target groups. Findings confirm that coded language has a more or less symbiotic relationship. Coded expressions—especially negative ones about other ethnic communities—are normally expressed in coded language while some coded expressions reflect the coded expressions held by inner communities about outer communities.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

According to Wikipedia, coded language refers to secrete language or the practice of hiding information. It is a system of manipulating words to render them incomprehensible. It is also a technique used for secure communication in the presence of third parties. This study investigates the use of translation as a tool for deconstruction of coded language with specific reference to the NCIC. Language is what defines the different communities that exist. Tribes emanate from different languages such as Kikuyu, Luo, Kalenjin among others. Language is used by different communities to bring certain aspects of conviction among the members of a community. Despite having a national language the different tribes have languages that represent a historical identity of their community which forms a large part of their identity. Sometimes this language is expressed in a coded manner. Certain coded expressions reflect the culture, of the target communities associated with the economic activities of the

communities referred to or captured the peaceful and close relationships between communities such as the reference to the Luhya by the Luos as, “Kayuochwa” translated literally as our in-laws, kap mama (in laws) used by Kalenjins when referring to Abagusii, “Va Mabwoni” or “ Jarabuon” ( the people of potato), used by Luhya and Luo in reference to the Kikuyus, Rumbwa, used by the kikuyus in reference to Kipsigis and Jabot ( those who live in the mountains used by Luos in reference to Kalenjins and many others ( The, Star, 2013) . However, there are times when coded language is used by a community to protect or defend certain qualities of the community. Sometimes this coded language takes an unacceptable form to other tribes in the sense that it has hidden meaning. It may be noted that currently, the NCIC is considering banning 25 vernacular words and phrases which it says are negative and promote emotive coded expressions when used in reference to certain communities.

It is therefore clear that coded language can be used positively or negatively and when used negatively it can affect the nation of cohesion and integration. For instance the use of coded language was found to have partly contributed to the heightening of inter-ethnic tensions which culminated in inter- ethnic violence. Some of the perceptions towards these coded languages have the potential to advance hate which in turn could fuel violence. It was confirmed that the use of coded language was widespread during the 1992, 1997 2005, and 2007 electioneering period in Kenya and partly contributing to heightening of inter-ethnic tensions which culminated in inter- ethnic violence (Nzau 2013).

There are quite a number of studies which have been carried out on the area of translation of coded language. However, not much has been done in the Kenyan context. Occasioned by the use of coded language to propagate hate messages and divide the country culminating to

2007/2008 post- election violence (Nyaundi 2012), this study investigate, efforts by the NCIC to study the coded language and translate the same for national cohesion and the need to contribute to the scanty literary translation literature in the country.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

The general objective of this study was to investigate translation as deconstruction for the purpose of decoding, decontextualizing and demystifying with specific reference to the NCIC on coded language.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives of this Study**

This study was guided by the following specific research objectives:

- i. To analyze meanings in the coded languages with intended meanings in the literal translation.
- ii. To identify strategies used in the manipulation of coded languages.
- iii. To identify strategies that can be used to deconstruct coded language.
- iv. To discuss challenges encountered in the process of deconstructing coded languages

### **1.4 Research Hypothesis**

- i. Translation has the capacity to deconstruct coded language for the purpose of decoding, decontextualizing and demystifying coded language
- ii. Coded language as used in Kenya carries a meaning and this can be translated into the target language, in this case English or Kiswahili either literally or with a deeper understanding
- iii. There are well established strategies/criteria used in the deconstruction of coded languages in Kenya.



iv. There are challenges encountered in the deconstruction of coded languages.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study set out to investigate translation as a tool for deconstruction of coded language for the purpose of decoding decontextualizing and demystifying coded language. The study was necessitated by the NCICs want to communicate and to do it optimally. It is hoped that success in passing this knowledge would lead to the following:-

- (i) Facilitation of the translation of negative coded languages among the various tribes in Kenya.
- (ii) Development of a national coded language database which would be used in implementing new laws that would prohibit the use of coded languages from different tribes. This would go a long way in promoting national cohesion and integration.
- (iii) The NCIC would use the strategies discussed in this study to deconstruct more coded language from many other tribes to effectively perform its duty of curbing hate speech

### **1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The use of coded language has been in existence for many years. This dates back even before the country got its independence. However, after independence, its use gained momentum in the country with top politicians being victims. An example is the first president Mzee Jomo Kenyatta who would occasionally use coded language to bring out some critical and personal points. However, this study limits itself to the coded language used during the referendum in 2005 and the 2007/2008 post-election violence in the country based on the NCIC report and any other related words/phrases /expressions. The study mainly focused on the use of

translation for deconstruction of coded language for decoding decontextualizing and demystifying. It also looks at the challenges encountered in the process of the deconstruction of coded languages in Kenya.

Coding of language is almost in every tribe. Working on all the ethnic groups would require a lot of time therefore this study looked at five ethnic groups. These groups included Kikuyu, Maasai, Luhya, Luo and Kalenjin. The choice was mainly due to the fact that most coding during the post elections conflicts was from the five ethnic groups selected. Moreover, being based on the secondary data, the findings may not be an actual representation of the current situation in the country. This is mainly because the data used was from earlier studies and documents on the area are always under review.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

The study focused on the theory of communicative translation by New Mark (1981) while responding to special developments in translation, New mark proposes the theory of communicative translation. His main claim is focused on the message and the receiver. He states that the aim of communication is to enable the receiver get the information. In this study, what we are looking at is the optimality of communication in the sense that by focusing on optimal communication we will be able to show how translation when applied beyond a single lexical item becomes self-explanatory. The theory puts emphasis on the importance of imparting on its receivers an effect as close enough as possible to that obtained on the original. This is well reflected in this study as explained in the examples below:

- (i) The Luhyas reference to Tachoni as babana bhekanga is translated  
The children of the guinea fowl and the meaning is communicated

- (ii) Reference to Bukusus by Luhyas as Bakitosi is translated as fools and the meaning is communicated
- (iii) The reference to Kikuyus by other communities as meno mekundu and translated as brown teeth communicates the intended meaning.
- (iv) Reference to non Kalenjins by Kalenjins as Sangari and translated as roots retains the intended meaning of the original text.

According to the theory, both the language and the content must be readily acceptable and comprehensible to the reader. The translation of coded language in this study aims at decoding, decontextualizing and demystifying coded language. For the purpose of making it acceptable and comprehensible to the readership. This is done through definitions explanations and paraphrasing of words, phrases and expressions. For example, the word *tinga* is given its proper meaning as tractor then explained according to its use in the context as Mr. Raila due to this might in the political arena. It also states that facts and ideas are more important than the language. This is well captured in the translation of coded language through definitions, paraphrasing and explanations for example.

*Madoadoa* (spots) literally translated as spots are further explained according to the context to enable the readers capture the intended meaning. In some instances, the structure is changed so as to communicate regardless of the grammar rules for instance

Football match – translated as networking of people within parties and not as a game.

The totality of the sense of the source text is understood and translated. It is not the language that is translated but the meaning so as to communicate. In the case of our study, cultural terms which are analyzed so as to communicate the intended meaning for example the

translation of the phrase “water melon” literally would render the message ambiguous because it is a fruit but from the source language it is used politically to refer to a politician. Translated literally it would render message ambiguous. The procedures involved in communicative translation include the dynamic cultural and functional equivalence.

### **Dynamic equivalence**

This one is based on the principle of equivalent effect whereby the relationship between the receptor and message should be the same as between the original receptor and the message.

This means that it should create an effect on the target text which is the same as that received by the reader of the source language text for example ‘Imeet’ {Maasa}i in reference to Kikuyus as thieves.

### **Cultural equivalence**

This is a procedure whereby a source language cultural word is translated by a target language cultural word. For example

- (1) Bakitosi (Luhya) in reference to Bukusus as fools

### **Functional Equivalence**

This one refers to the degree in which the target audience of the message in target language responds to it in the same way source language; it stresses the importance of context for communication when dealing with metaphorical meaning and with complex terms. This was evident in our study. Coded language has deep cultural meaning and before a translator, embarks on translating a text; she/he must have the knowledge of both the surface meaning and the intended meaning. For example coded word *omena* cannot just be translated as fish.

The context must be looked at the context under which it is used then get the most suitable technique to translate it.

According to New Mark (1988: 81-84) the translation procedures are used for translating word, and sentences. This justifies our choice of this theory because the translation of coded language involve, translating words such as omena, *Madengu Joamji*, *Madoadoa*. Phrases such as meno mekundu, mkate nusu and expressions such as ‘The jiggermen’ will steal votes, as they always do.

## **1.8 Literature Review**

### **1.8.1 Language and Identity Globally**

Language and identity globally is inevitably at the centre stage of identity construction in a multilingual and multidialectal contexts where language choices have to be made. The earlier approach used to look at language and identify was based on social categories such as gender race, nation among others and were used to explain an individuals identify other categories of identify other categories of identify constructions include sex, nation and race. For example in Labov’s (1972) New York study language identity was correlated with a speakers social economic class. He showed how social economic class could be used to index a speakers language. Also using a speakers phonological features one can determine their socio-economic class. As much as socially contracted categories are important in language research, recent study have found them to be inadequate because they focused little on social factors and assumed identity to be static hence scholars such as Bucholtz and Hall 2004, 2005, 2008 characterize identity as an emerging contract. They view identity as a construct that continues to emerge and is negotiated based on different situations. Bulcholtz and Hall 2005: 586

define identity as “the social positioning of self and other. In this definition, the idea of others in identity construction is acknowledged.

One way in which speakers construct identity in bilingual situations is well explained by Gumperz (1982). He shows how the “we” code and “they” code represent an individual's group identity in relation to others. According to him, the “we” code presents the speakers state as being informal familiar and proximal in terms of social distance in multilingual settings this code would be used as a local language.

The “they” code denotes unfamiliarity formal and social distance. This is what one would associate with English or French in post-colonial era where official languages and local languages are ever competing for communicative space in public domains. However this approach has been found to have shortfalls due to the intermediate varieties such as the urban ones that do not fall in either of the two categories of official or ethnic language.

As a result, researchers who use them have been forced to modify them in such a way that they can be applied to their local contexts as explained below Bailey (2002) shows that among Dominican Americans he studied in North east U.S.A the key to construction of their identity was language but that it was into a straight forward process. In times Dominicans could speak African American Vernacular English to align with African Americans and at times they spoke Dominican Spanish as a strategy to contest black / white dichotomization and also as a way of rejecting those who view them as African Americans (Jaffe (1999) has discussed how the French dominant ideology has helped create mixed ideologies.

There are Corsicans who want to identify with Corsican because of who they are but there are also young people who do not live on the Corsican Island and therefore do not identify with

French. Jeffee shows how the school influences young people to abandon their Corsican language and instead embrace French for a better career and future. Through her study, one is able to see how the dominant French ideology was used by the Corsican teacher to demonize the Corsican language. She notes that in Corsica as was the case in other French dominated colonies elsewhere, teaching the colonized people French was viewed as an important means of elevating them culturally – cultural assimilation. It is very clear in this case that the school had a very influential role in inculcating assimilatory bound. French reasoning in the minds of youth which eventually emerged in a mindset that Bokamba (2008) characterized as Ukolonia in the case of Africa.

Another recent study on language and identity is by Williams (2008) who shows Chinese Americans in California unify as an in group but also acknowledge their different identities as Cantonese and Mandarin. In this study parents temporarily identified with Mandarin Chinese not because they have positive attitudes towards it but because they realize that it is vital for their children and it has become a dominant. Chinese language is among Chinese Americans. People's prior knowledge about Mandarin is brought along to have a negative attitude about it but acknowledge that they still identify with it only for instrumental reasons.

This kind of scenario is very similar to what we have in Kenya. Kenya is both a multilingual and multiracial country. Language is what defines different communities that exist. Tribes emanate from different languages such as the Kikuyu, Luos Kalenjins, and Turkana among others. There are languages with majority speakers and are therefore considered as dominant languages for example kikuyu, Luos, Kalenjins and so forth. Others have fewer speakers and some of them are at the point of extinction as a result of strong tendency whereby the

speakers are accommodating their speeches towards the dominant languages for examples sengwer Elmolo, Okick (Ogiek) and suba, There are instances when speakers of minority languages want to emulate the language majority not because they like them but because the fact that they want to benefit in one way or another. Sometimes they do it for security reasons, if they are living among them for example a Kisii living in Kisumu may opt to speak Dholuo to hide his/her identity and vice versa. The same may happen to a Luhya or Luo in Kiambu and so forth.

The implication here is that people may interact freely physically and socially for inconvenience but negative feelings about each other. It also implies that identification of people through languages impacts negatively on cohesions and especially in situations where language identity is correlated with a speaker's socio economic class, It is such feelings that drives people to start using coded language. The Kenyan society has been divided on tribal lines right from the colonial era. To date this division has remained a major challenge to the national cohesion and integration. The many conflicts experienced in Kenya are as results of tribalism. Different communities use coded language to exclude those they regard enemies because they do not speak their Language. Kenyan youths are also known to negotiate their identity through their daily language performances.

### **1.8.2 Language and Identity in Africa**

African's multilingual situation presents an important context where language and identity should be at the forefront. Unfortunately, there are very few empirical studies that strictly focus on language and identify. These include Kamwangamalu (2007) who adopts Gumperz's (1982) approach to show how blacks in South Africa, a society in transition,



demonstrated multilayered identities of English language depicting a they code before apartheid, an ideological we code during apartheid for those who access the language to communicate with other people in South African. Kamwangamalu (2007) uses the naturalized we code to refer to the identity of those blacks in urban areas who have shifted from indigenous African languages to English.

The different characterization of English shows the dynamic nature of language identities and how participants continually construct their identity in response to the situations they face. An interesting point which Kamwangamalu (2007) shows is that in any given society, a language is assigned not one, but several identities at various times in its history. In the context of this study, Kenya is a country with its own uniqueness. The country is known for its multi-cultural nature. This is whereby there are over forty two tribes in the country and each has its unique way of communicating. Translation of language from one tribe to the other may bring out its own limitations and challenges in the sense that there are some words which when translated in another community may refer to insults. With such diversity, this study looks at translation as deconstruction. It further examines how translation can be used as a tool for demystifying, decoding and de-contextualizing coded language with this various tribes in Kenya to bring about National Cohesion.

### **1.8.3 Coded Language in Kenya**

Coded language has a more or less symbiotic relationship. Stereotypes – especially negative ones about other ethnic communities - are normally expressed in coded language while some coded expressions reflect the stereotypes held by inner communities about outer community. In all Kenyan ethnic communities, there are entrenched beliefs amongst the people about the behaviour, attributes, attitudes, abilities and weaknesses of members of other ethnic

communities. Every linguistic community in Kenya use coded expressions about other Kenyan Communities (Sarifa, 2006). Some of these are specific to particular communities while others are general –referring to all “other” Kenyan communities. Similarly, practically all ethnic communities studied have coded expressions used to refer to them by other communities in Kenya. Almost every Kenyan ethnic community has both positive and negative stereotypes about them (by other communities) and about other Kenyan communities (Kiarie, 2004).

Kenya is both a multilingual and multiracial country. However, it is difficult to state the exact number of codes, used in the country (Ogeci, 2003). According to the constitution of Kenya Review Commission (2000:95), 70 codes are used in Kenya while Webb and Kembo - sure 2000 put the figure that that is normally used in the books describing the sociolinguistic situation in Kenya. These are grammatically stated codes and are categorized in 3 distinct groups namely: Bantu, Nilotic and Cushitic languages. Examples of Bantu codes includes Kiswahili, Gikuyu, Ekegusii, Luhya, Kamba, while Nilotic codes comprise Kalenjin, Luo, Turkana, Maasai, Cushitic codes include Rendile, Somali, Borana and Gabra. In terms of numerical numbers third of Kenyans are native speakers of Bantu languages, followed by Nilotes and Cushites in that order. These are black African indigenous codes.

Kenya being a multiracial country, there are other widely used codes with Europeans and Asian descent codes. These include; English, French, Hindi and Punjabi. A large percentage of coastal residents also use Arabic through descent or the strong influence of Islamic culture. Other codes spoken include Japanese, Chinese and Korean respectively among business people from other countries who are running business enterprises in Kenya.

There exist some indigenous Kenyan codes with few native speakers which are facing extinction. They include Sengwer Elmolo, Okiek (Ogiek) and Suba. This is as a result of existence of a strong tendency whereby the speakers of the minority code, are accommodating their speeches towards the dominant neighboring codes. In most cases the neighboring code is considered of superior culture worth emulating e.g. Sengwer and Okiek speakers tend to use Nandi & Kipsigis (Kalenjin dialect, while Elmolo speaker use Samburu Suba speakers adore Dholuo.

These are more recent coded expressions associated with significant historical events especially of political nature e.g. some coded words, are associated with 2007 post-election violence in Kenya between different communities. The use of those coded languages have been perpetuated by local media especially radio and televisions where presenters and actors imitate the speeches or act out the perceived attitude, behaviour and other characteristics associated with particular ethnic community.

The different coded phrases and expressions used in different settings in the country are normally aimed at excluding and including certain groups from a conversation. This is done with various motives among which negative ones that can bring about rifts in the society which is a major challenge in the national cohesion and integration. The translation of coded language can go a long way in discouraging the habit of coding for the purpose promoting peace and national cohesion among the different ethnic groups in the country.

#### **1.8.4 Examples of Hate speech through coded expressions in Kenya**

Kenyan Communities have entrenched beliefs about behaviour, attitudes, abilities and weaknesses of members of other ethnic communities. These beliefs make them come up with coded languages which they use and direct them to other communities, some of these are specific to particular communities while other are general-referring to all other Kenyan communities (Osinde 1997)

Ethnic communities studied have coded expressions used to refer to them by other communities in Kenya. Almost every Kenyan community has both positive and negative coded language about other Kenyan communities. The positive ones reflect beliefs such as courage, generosity business acumen, loyalty to deals, success in education and recognition of some unique characteristics about the target communities.

The negative coded languages on the other hand show contempt insult and sometimes ought to right hate about the target communities.

Most of the coded languages are historical and deep rooted and have been passed on from generation to generation and it was not possible to tell when exactly the community started using/holding them for instance Eموit Loa akwara used by the Turkana in reference to the Pokot which means enemy with a spear.

However there are recent coded words /expression/ phrases associated with the 2007/2008 post-election violence in Kenya or political relationships and or afflictions between different communities. The study revealed that most of the coded words/expressions/phrases have been perpetuated by the local media mainly the television and radio through entertainment

programmes where presenters or actors imitate actions or speeches of the perceived attitudes, behaviours and other characteristics associated with particular ethnic communities in Kenya.

This study has established that coded language would not necessarily cause hate or cause people from particular ethnic communities to be violent against each other. Rather it emerged that ethnic hate and/or violence is mainly associated with malicious individuals who would want to emphasis the negative side and use coded expressions to incite particular ethnic communities against others for their own selfish reasons. The use of coded expressions in this manner can be traced to specific contexts associated with crime, political gains competition for resources and so forth. For instance one Kenyan community is referred to as “Kabila Choma” due to their perceived roles (burning houses) during post-election violence.

The study also reveals that coded expressions reflected the cultures of the target communities. For example the communities that practices circumcision and those that do not attract coded terms that reflect such practices. The Luo community is identified in this manner because it does not circumcise. Other coded terms include terms associated with the economic activities of the communities refereed to such as farming, fishing, pastoralism or business people for example the Kikuyu community is identified as being business men and women while the Maasai are identified as pastoralist.

More to that, some coded language capture peaceful and close social relationships between communities such as extent of inter marriage and whether the communities referred produce good wives or not. A good example is that of the Luhya by the Luo as “Kayuochwa” translated literally as our in-laws which is interpreted to mean those from whom the user community have married and / or those who have married from the user community. The

opposite of the examples highlighted above are those expressions that are intended to refer to communities that are regarded as enemies in one way or the other or those communities whose members should never be trusted. Such examples include coded expressions held/used by the Turkana and Pokot in reference to one another and a number of other communities.

Coded words / expressions / phrases are about neighboring communities although there are few that refer to communities that live quite far apart. For instance the Kamba have coded terms that refer to Luyahs while the Kisii have theirs about the Meru. In urban centres where there are different communities living and or working together the coded expression used reflect those of the “counties of origin”. For example Luos, Kikuyus, Kambas, Kisiis or Bukusus generally hold coded expressions similar to those held in the countries inhabited by these people. The same thing applies to counties that are cosmopolitan in nature such as Transzoia, Uasingishu and Nakuru.

Most coded expressions used by the different communities in Kenya are known to or understood by many people among the target communities. Some of these coded expressions have been passed on from generation to generation and have become an integral part of the identity of the target groups in the view of the inner communities. It was also revealed that sometimes language is coded in such a way (manner) that even members of the same linguistic community who do not share specific coded would not understand the underlying meanings and intentions.

Language coding in Kenya was wide spread in Kenya was wide spread during the 2007 election earring period in Kenya. This is what partly contributed to the interethnic tensions

that led to inter-ethnic violence. Some of these perceptions towards these coded languages have the capacity to advance hate which could possibly lead to violence in Kenya politicians used coded language during political campaign to rally support of members of their communities and other communities against target communities. The implication here is that Kenyans interact physically and socially but in terms of general deep emotional engagement, they retreat and / or feel safer in their ethnic boundaries.

### **1.9 Empirical Review**

There are indeed a number of studies which have been carried out on the area under study. For instance, a number of studies done by Cain et al., (2004) and Oakhill, Cain, & Yuill (1998) have shown that the ability of an individual to decode the words in text does not exactly paint a complete picture of one's ability to comprehend text. This is a reflection that as much as one may be in a position to decipher a given text, he/she may not be able to bring meaning from the same text through interpreting a sentence, understand the relationship between sentences, and to interpret the global meaning of a text (Oakhill, Cain, & Bryant, 2003). Successful comprehension also requires the reader to integrate individual word meanings into a coherent sentence level representation and to integrate sentences to create a global understanding. However, in the Kenyan context, the difference in ethical backgrounds poses a challenge when it comes to decoding or translating various words. The main reason is simply because various communities have different meanings for different words and thus if decoded wrongly, some may feel offended and thus disrupting unity.

In trying to demystify translation, Gutt (1991) indicated that deliberate communication depends on the interplay between the psychological context of an expression—described

broadly as an individual's store of knowledge, values and beliefs—and the processing effort required to derive contextual effects (Sperber and Wilson 1986:13–14). Despite the contribution of this study by Gutt, there are quite a number of limitations that study had over the current study. All these happen to form the backbone of the current study.

Additionally, Hatim and Mason (1987:13-17) carried out a study which uniquely analyzed translated dialogue with politeness theory, a formalization of speech acts by which a speaker maintains or threatens an addressee's want to be unhindered and the want to be approved of in certain respects. From the analysis, it was revealed that the foreign dialogue undergoes a “systematic loss” of politeness phenomena, the linguistic indicators that the characters are accommodating each other's wants. In the context of this study, using translation as tool for demystifying may bring about absolute change in the meaning and sense of feeling portrayed through the word. As such, unity and cohesion may be affected. NCIC needs to put into consideration this effect of “systematic loss” that may be incurred when translating coded language which is intended for national cohesion.

Robyns (1994) investigated on translation as an “explicit confrontation with ‘alien’ discourses”. He argued that the intrusion of alien, convention-violating elements is a potential threat” to the “common norms” that define the identity of the target 1990s community. Additionally, Robyns in his study presented taxonomy of the relationships between the translating and foreign cultures that might be embodied in the translated text: “imperialist,” “suspicious,” “trans-discursive,” and “flawed.” The flawed stance, for instance, is taken by the translating culture that turns to the foreign to supply some lack at home. In this case, it is noted that translation brings about distortion in meaning and understanding



across different cultures. As such, for effective use of translation for national cohesion, the concerned parties need to take into consideration all the foreign cultures in which a given word or term of reference is to be applied.

### **1.9.1 Findings from the Empirical review**

Success in translation depends on the amount of knowledge of the SL the translator has and the ability to process that knowledge in a way that it will have some effect in the TL when translated. The understanding of the content of the ST enables the translator make the right choice of words terms or phrases to be used in the TT. For example a term “Sangari” as used in this study is very different from its normal use of a weed and without background knowledge of the context under which it was used, the intended meaning may not be communicated. Translation is not just about transferring words but also the intended feelings from the SL to the TL, for example, if the source language intension SL is to express politeness the same effects should be felt in the in the TL. Translating goes beyond the communication of foreign meanings it encompasses a political inscription. In the case of our study ordinary words /phrases and expressions have been used in coded manner to propagate hate for political reasons, for example, the use of words like “Madoadoa” (spots) to refer to intruders in a region and specifically the non Kalenjins who have settled in Kalenjin lands. “Sangari” – (Kalenjin term for weed) was used by the politicians to refer to non Kalenjins who had made their Kalenjin region their (non Kalenjins) permanent homes. Translation of cultural aspects involves the use of techniques like omission, addition, transfer or adaptation due to lack of equivalents. Some of these techniques were applied. It is also vital that a translator use linguistic features that will not interfere in communicating meanings. The

implication here is that the structure or grammar does not carry much weight in translation and that the main focus should be the transfer of meanings.

## **1.10 Research Methodology**

This section presents the research design and methodology that was used in the study. It looks at the research design, data collection instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis.

### **1.10.1 Research Design**

This study employed an exploratory research design. This research design enables the researcher to determine the best research design, data collection method and selection of subjects to be investigated. Moreover, this research design is convenient especially in situations where primary data proves to be difficult to collect. As such, this research design was found to be effective in this study on translation as the deconstruction.

### **1.10.2 Data Collection Instruments**

Being secondary based research study, there were no primary tools that were used for collecting data such as questionnaires and interview guides. In this case, this study used data collection instruments such as the online journals, articles and text books. These instruments enabled the research to obtain adequate and relevant information pertaining to legal and institutional frameworks on internet child user protection.

### **1.10.3 Data Collection Procedure**

Upon approval and clearance by the institution on the research proposal the researcher went ahead to investigate on the area under study. To obtain information, the researcher visited various online libraries to obtain journals and text books written with regards to the area under study for review. Moreover, with the help of internet, the research was also able to retrieve more articles on the area under study.

### **1.10.4 Data Analysis**

Upon clearance of the data collection, the researcher was in a position to critically look over the available data for analysis. The main approach of analysis used was the qualitative data analysis approach. The raw materials collected were critically reviewed and the meaningful information obtained was incorporated within the study for analysis. The data was synthesized into themes based on the research objectives. They were later then presented in a narrative form.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE NATIONAL COHESION AND INTEGRATION COMMISSION

#### PERSPECTIVE

##### 2.1 Coded Language Translation Efforts by the NCIC

Communication and Language play an important role in the pursuit of national cohesion and integration. This is mainly due to the fact that language corresponds to and even implements the ability to interrelate with others. Other than being a mere utilitarian tool it is now being appreciated as constituting the realm of abilities to take the position of the other, to share a field of meaning, and to project and pursue truly humane and indeed inter-humane attitudes and goals. In this light communication and language, whether verbal or preverbal, constitute the field in which one first attains and progressively evolves one's humanity.

In the Kenyan ethnic communities, there are deep cultural beliefs amongst the people about the behaviour, attributes, attitudes, abilities and weaknesses of members of other ethnic communities. The study revealed that every linguistic community in Kenya uses coded expressions about other Kenyan Communities. Some of these are specific to particular communities while others are general—referring to all “other” Kenyan communities. From the study carried out it is clear that all ethnic communities studied have coded expressions used to refer to them by other communities in Kenya. In addition it was established that most of the coded terms are historical and deep rooted and have been passed on from generation to generation to the extent that it was not possible to identify exactly when the community started holding/using them e.g. *Emoit loa akwara*, used by the Turkana in reference to the Pokot, which means enemy with a spear. However, there are more recent coded expressions

associated with significant historical events, especially of a political nature. For example some coded words are associated with the 2007/2008 post-election violence in Kenya or “political” relationships and/or affiliations between different communities. For example, one Kenyan community is referred to by a few others as *kabila choma* due to their perceived roles (burning of houses) during the post-election violence.

The study revealed that several coded expressions reflect the cultures of the target communities. For example, the communities that practices male circumcision and those that do not, attract coded terms that reflect such identities. Many communities identify the Luo with expressions that identify them as non-circumcising. It is also common to find coded terms associated with the economic activities of the communities referred to such as; farming, fishing, pastoralism or business people. For example, most communities studied identify people from the Kikuyu community as being business men and women while some identify the Maasai as pastoralists.

The opposite of the kind of coded expressions highlighted above are those coded expressions that are intended to refer to communities that are regarded as enemies in one way or the other or those communities whose members should never be trusted. For example, these kinds of coded expressions are held/ used by the Turkana and Pokot with regard to one another and a number of other communities. The study also shows that the coded expressions are predominantly about neighboring communities. However, some of them refer to communities that live quite far apart. For example, the Kamba have coded expressions about the Luhya, while the Kisii have coded expressions about the Meru.

Furthermore, the study reveals that in the urban areas where there are different Kenyan communities living and/or working together the coded expressions used reflect those of the “counties of origin”. For example, Kenyans who speak Luo, Kisii, Kamba or Bukusu languages generally hold coded expressions similar to those held in the counties predominantly inhabited by these people. This is similar in counties that are cosmopolitan in nature (where many different ethnic communities have settled) such as Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu and Nakuru, areas hailed as hotspots to the 2007/2008 post-election inter-ethnic violence, pointing to the divisive effect coded language can have on a population.

The study further reveals that in many cases, the coded expressions held by many Kenyan communities and the coded expressions used are known to or understood by many people among the target communities. This is common among neighboring ethnic communities, in urban areas, in cosmopolitan counties or amongst people who have lived extensively amongst other ethnic communities. Generally, the study indicated that coded expressions per se (even when they are negative) would not necessarily cause hate or cause people from particular ethnic communities to be violent against the other. Indeed, it emerged that ethnic hate and/or violence is largely associated with malicious individuals who would want to emphasize the negative coded expressions and use them to incite particular ethnic communities against others for their very selfish reasons, but presented as community concerns or interests. Indeed it came out clearly from the data that the use of coded expressions in this manner can be traced to specific contexts associated with crime, competition for resources and political contests.

It was established that the use of coded language was widespread during the 2007 electioneering period in Kenya and partly contributing to major inter-ethnic tensions which led into inter-ethnic violence. Some of the perceptions towards this coded language have the potential to advance hate, which could possibly precipitate violence in Kenya. Politicians tend to use coded language during political campaigns to gain support of members of inner communities (and sometimes other communities) against target communities. The study established that the use of coded language can provoke ethnic animosity depending on the context. The respondents identified some coded language that seemed to evoke emotive and negative feelings among the target communities and such should be discouraged all the times. Data relevant to this issue was generated from elders, opinion leaders, professionals, businessmen and even politicians. The general finding is that, granted, some of the coded expressions amounted to insult; show of contempt and sometimes even hate. The participants acknowledged that naturally some of these would cause annoyance, cause ill feelings, discourage combined ventures such as in business or entrench mistrust and could discourage other forms of social interactions. For examples, the Kikuyus have been stereotyped by most communities as thieves, Luos referred in contempt as uncircumcised. These are likely to stir negative emotive feelings among the subject communities, towards the users.

This finding agrees with Harzing et al (2008) who argue that in the literature on language in international business, code switching has generally been seen as a negative phenomenon, leading to feelings of irritation, discomfort and even exclusion and suspicion (Brannen, 1994 [in Salk & Brannen, 2000], Feely & Harzing, 2008; Luring, 2008; San Antonio, 1987). They are quick to add that these feelings were certainly present amongst the study interviewees. Code-switching was discussed in 39 of the 44 interviews and was seen as negative by just

over 60% of the interviewees, whilst 44% of the interviewees considered it as mainly positive (these figures add up to more than 100% as several interviewees highlighted both positive and negative aspects). The NCIC study went on to provide examples of positive coded expressions and translations thereof, among various communities, which could enhance positive relations and national cohesion.

**Table 1: Examples of positive, integrative coded expressions and the translations**

<b>Phrase</b>	<b>User Community</b>	<b>Target community</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Observation</b>
Warriahs	Somalis and Non-Somalis	Somalis	Somali Male	This is a cultural term translated by use of gender for specification
Ghubr	Somalis and Non-Somalis	A Somali Girl	A daughter	This is a cultural term referring to a Boran girl and not Somali as indicated.  Reference to the term as Somali daughter gives different meaning. The translation should remain girl.
Walalo	Non-Somalis	Somalis	A slang term for Warriah as described above	Term has been translated with an equivalent



Wararu	Meru and Tharaka	Ladies from Somali and Borana communities	Ladies	The term has been translated with an equivalent
Iloobua	Maasai	Luo	This is a reference name for the Luo community because they are known to remove their teeth as a way of cultural rite of passage	The term is a cultural term with no equivalent so it has been paraphrased.
Kap mama	Kalenjin	Abagusii	In-Laws	The term is translated with an equivalent.
Toot	Kalenjin	Non-Kalenjin	Visitor	Is a cultural term translated with an equivalent
Vu khumatsi	Luhya	Luos	Water	Translated with an equivalent
Onjelo	Luo	Kalenjin	An athlete	A cultural term translated equivalent.

Source: NCIC, 2010

The negative coded expressions show contempt, insult and sometimes outright hate about the target communities. Most of the coded terms are historical and deep-rooted in the sense that they have been passed on from generation to generation to the extent that it was not possible to identify exactly when the community started holding/using them. In relevance to the coded

expressions that could be considered negative, four possible scenarios are identifiable from the findings:

1. Identification of a community with a “bad” practice,
2. Expression of contempt due to a trait considered immoral or childish,
3. instilling of a sense of suspicion and /or mistrust about the target community
4. Expression of deep –seated hate of the target community.

### **2.1.1 The negative, segregative, coded expressions**

This section reviews the negative coded expressions and their translations and meanings as used by different ethnic communities in Kenya.

## Kikuyu

The following are some of the coded expressions commonly used by the Kikuyu ethnic community.

**Table 2:** The Negative, Segregative, Coded Expressions Used by the Kikuyu

<b>Coded Expression</b>	<b>Target Community</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Meanings</b>	<b>Observation</b>
Nyamu cia ruguru	Other tribes	Animals from upcountry	Animals from up country	This is a cultural phrase which has been partially mistranslated. The noun Ruguru in Kikuyu means West. Nyamu is given literal translation animals. The use of the phrase is very offensive since it equalizes the target community with animals.
Rumbwa	Kalenjin	People who eat dogs according to the Agikuyu	People who eat dogs	Due to lack of an equivalent the term is paraphrased. The term is used negatively to demean probing on the meaning of the noun in Gikuyu does not yield much but there was a general feeling that the translation dogs may have been a guess by the translator or the source due to the closeness in pronunciations of the two words (Kikuyu) Rumbwa and Mbwa (Kiswahili). Though the term was used by kikuyus to demean the Kalenjins it did not mean dogs as translated. The term is untranslatable. It can only be transferred.

**Source:** NCIC, 2013

## Luo

The following are some of the coded expressions commonly used by the Luo ethnic community.

**Table 3:** The negative, segregative, coded expressions used by the Luo

<b>coded expression</b>	<b>Target Community</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Observation</b>
Ogwang	Luhya	Wild cat	It derived from the leopard aspect of having different colors hence it is believed they are those who can never be trusted	The term is translated by the use of an equivalent
Jochamji	Abagusii	Man eaters	The Abagusii are viewed as those who eat people. They believe that they exhume bodies from grave then they put bananas in the coffin to ripe and also eat the bodies.	The term is translated with an equivalent that communities intended meaning

**Source:** NCIC, 2013

## Kalenjin

The following are some of the coded expressions commonly used by the Kalenjin ethnic community.

**Table 4:** The Negative, Segregative, Coded Expressions used by Kalenjin

<b>Coded expression</b>	<b>Target community</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
Kimoriot	Kikuyu	Ambush from the forest	A person who cannot attack his enemy in open but hides and ambushes from the forest. The term does not have an equivalent so it is paraphrased.
Bunyot	Non-Kalenjin	Enemy	An enemy. It is translated with an equivalent.
‘Otutula botonik’	All –non kalenjins	uproot the weed	It may be used to mean that there are strangers who are a threat within the community hence should be eliminated. It is translated with an equivalent
Ngonai tariit konnyi	Kalenjin	Let every bird know its nest	Used in political scenario- meaning each community has their own party. It is translated with an equivalent.
'ngosamis muryat kobakoot	Kalenjin	Even if a person of your community is	That you cannot fail to support your own just because he has been

nebo'		bad he is still your own.	condemned for a wrongdoing. Translated with an equivalent
Ngetik	Luo	Uncircumcised man	Has no equivalent therefore its translated by defining

**Source: NCIC, 2013**

## Luhya

The following are some of the coded expressions commonly used by the Luhya ethnic community.

**Table 5:** The Negative, Segregative, Coded Expressions used by the Luhya

<b>Coded expression</b>	<b>Target Community</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Observation</b>
Bayobo	Sabaot	Unclear speech system	The words in their native language are not audible and organized	The term is translated by paraphrasing due to lack of an equivalent.
Bosyanju	Sabaot	People who burn houses	They have been burning houses of the Bukusus	The term is cultural bound and does not have an equivalent hence it is paraphrased
Babana bekhanganga	Tachoni	Children of the guinea fowl	They are a very proud community like the guinea fowl. They vanish in times of war or danger at a supersonic speed.	The cultural term is translated word for word although the structure is different the intended meaning is communicated.
Bakitosi	Bukusus	Fools	This is word commonly used by other Luhya communities especially the Barukanjoya to refer to the Bukusu. This is intended to mean that Bukusus are foolish	The term is translated with an equivalent and the intended meaning is communicated.
Bandu be kamafunga	Luo	People who have foreskin	Communities that do not culturally circumcise their young men	This is word for word translation that communicates the intended meaning.
Avalivandu avaseeve	Kikuyu, Embu and Meru	People who eat others		A cultural term translated with an equivalent

**Source:** NCIC, 2013

## Maasai

The following are some of the coded expressions commonly used by the Maasai ethnic community.

**Table 6:** The Negative, Segregative, Coded Expressions Used by the Maasai

<b>Coded expression</b>	<b>Target Community</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Observation</b>
Iloobua	Luo	Someone who has teeth removed	This is a reference name for the Luo community because they are known to remove their teeth as a way of circumcising.	There is no equivalent for this cultural term so the translation is through paraphrasing.
Osuji	Kikuyu	Someone who can't be trusted. A bad person	This phrase refers to persons who cannot be trusted and are mostly directed towards the kikuyu community	The term does not have an equivalent so it is paraphrased to give the intended meaning.
Medungu		Uncircumcised	The Maasai have strong traditions. Medugu refers to any person who is not circumcised.	It is translated with an equivalent It is offensive to those uncircumcised.
Iloong'u /Ollongwi	Kamba	The smelly one	Iloongu means a person who smells	Has no equivalent so it is paraphrased.
Imeet	Kikuyu	Thieves	It used to refer to Kikuyus as thieves	It is translated with an equivalent to render the intended meaning.
Longuu/kit kit	Kamba	Smelly armpits		Has no equivalent. It is translated by paraphrasing

**Source:** NCIC, 2013



## 2.2 Divisive Coded Expressions used by a Cross-Section of Kenyans during the

### 2007/2008 General Elections Period

This section reviews some coded words used by various communities to stir ethnic division in the country especially in the eve of the 2007/2008 general elections that culminated into the Post-Election Violence.

**Table 7:** Divisive coded expressions used by a cross-section of Kenyans during the 2007/2008 general elections period

<b>Coded expression</b>	<b>Target Community</b>	<b>Translation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Observation</b>
Majimbo	Kikuyu	Majimboism means federalism, a system many might think well-suited to over centralized Kenya. But to Hon. Raila Odinga’s supporters, it was a code word for something very specific.	Kikuyus with plots or businesses in non-Kikuyu areas would be forced out and sent “home.” In Central Province, Kikuyu MPs seized on the majimboist threat to foster a siege mentality. Rumors of a project to slaughter 1 million Kikuyus circulated like wildfire (Wrong, 2008).	The term Majimbo is translated literally with Federalism which if used that way distorts the intended meaning in the context of post-election conflicts. It had a different connotation.
Madoadoa used by politicians mainly in	Non-Kalenjin	Swahili for ‘spots’	Reportedly, the term was used as a code in the Rift Valley, used to refer to the non-Kalenjins,	The term is translated using an equivalent denoting deeper

the Rift Valley region			especially the Kikuyus. The term was used to mean that the former rift valley province exclusively belonged to the Kalenjins, and that any other tribe therein was invading and hence needed to be removed by force (Yieke, 2008: p18).	meaning than the ordinary spots.
Sangari used by politicians mainly in the Rift Valley rift valley	Non-Kalenjin	Kalenjin for 'weed'	' It is alleged to have been used by politicians in the Rift Valley province in the eve of the 2007/2008 general elections by politicians, saying that they would uproot the "sangari", 'shake the soil off', 'gather it together' and 'burn it', in reference to 'outsider communities. Since weeds are problematic and usually choke the healthy plants, they are usually uprooted by farmers. The soil is however useful, so all one does is shaking off the soil from the weed and then burn the weed (Yieke, 2008: p18-19).	Is translated with an equivalent but used metaphorically to pass the intended meaning.

<p>Oria used by politicians mainly Luo Nyanza region</p>	<p>Kikuyu</p>	<p>Luo for visitors</p>	<p>The politician meant all the prominent businessmen who had settled there and were not the local ethnic community. This politician is alleged to have vowed that if he won the constituency seat in the general elections, he would remove the visitors and make local ethnic community own the businesses (Yieke, 2008: p20).</p>	<p>Oria is translated freely as visitor to pass the intended meaning. It is clear that the target is the Kikuyu since the origin of the term is kikuyu (Uria) whose translation is “That one”</p>
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**Source: Wrong, 2008; Yieke, 2008: p20; Yieke, 2008: p18-19**

## EXAMPLES OF POLITICAL CODED WORDS /EXPRESSIONS /PHRASES

### Kiswahili coded/ words/ phrases/expressions

WORD EXPRESSION PHRASE	USER	TRANSLATION	OBSERVATION
Baba	Luo  This is a Kiswahili deictic pronoun insinuating that one is a master of something or well versed used politically by Luos to adore Raila other communities use it in an ironic manner	Father	Translated with an equipment but the use will depend on the context because the
Tinga	Used it to refer to himself during campaigns to show his might everyone else started referring to him Tinga	Translated literally the term would be tractor	Meaning is distorted
Vitendawili	Used by politicians to refer to Raila because of his habit of coding using proverbs	Literal translation for the would be proverbs	Render the intended meaning useless if translated literally
Tumezoea mawe tairi na Kelele ni Kawaida kwa Omena	Other communities in reference to Luo	We are used to stones tyres and noise is normal for	The intended meaning is not communicated so the best way be through explanation that the concerned group is used Luos habit of throwing stones burning tyres and making noise. Because it is normal for them.

Washenzi warudi Kwao	Luos in reference foreigners in their land	Fools let them go back to their homes	Translated with an equipment
(tribe) na nyef nyef zao waanze Kuhama	Used by politicians in the rift valley to refer to foreigners in their region	(tribe) with their nyef nyef should start leaving	Nyef nyef is untranslatable because even the meaning is not clear
Madoadoa	Ethnic groups in the rift valley in reference to foreigners in their land	Sports	If translated literally may not be clear therefore it must be explained and the definition of spot given
Wenzetu	Used by political actors to refer to members of different political parties	friends	Literal translation friends destroys the meaning because in many case it is use ironically to mean enemies
Wale wale	Borrowed from Tanzania by politicians to refer to anti change ruling party	Those those	English grammar does not follow such a structure so the term can only be defined or explained
Mkate nusu	Used by different communities to refer to claims by a certain politician's demands for power sharing	Half a loaf	Direct translation which causes ambiguity
Meno mekundu	Used by other communities to refer to Kikuyus because most of them have brown teeth	Translated literally the phrase would be red teeth	This is direct translation leading to mistranslation causing ambiguity proper translation would be brown teeth

<b>English coded/ words/ phrases/expressions</b>			
Cleanse this country of parasites and traitors	Mainly used in the Rift valley in reference to foreigners mainly Kikuyu.	Literal translation would be kuosha nchi hii Kuondoa wadudu wanyonyaji na wasaliti	The meaning does not come out clearly as intended so proper translation would be Kuondoa wanyonyaji na wasaliti Katika nchi hii
These jigger men will steal votes as they always do. This time round we will take them to Haque	O.D.M members in reference to Kikuyus	Literal translation would be hawa wanaume wenye funza wataiba kura. Mara hii tutawapeleka Haque	the intended meaning brought out clearly Proper translation Would be the Kikuyus Will steal votes again usually do. This time round we will take them to ICC.
Hustler	Used by different groups of people to refer vice president William Ruto in reference to his past life. It has now changed to refer to the disadvantaged	Struggler	Translated with a Equivalent.
Software	Used by different communities in reference to Luos	New technology	Direct translation which causes ambiguity
Chasing the wind	Used by kikuyus in reference to a politician efforts to win elections	Kukimbiza upepo	Direct translation that causes ambiguity
Gikuo kia Nugu Giakinya miti yothe ni iterethaga	Kikuyu in reference to the end of political era of certain politician	When the death of a monkey approaches ,all trees slides	Direct translation which does not give the Intended meaning. proper translation would

			be when the end of that politician's political era approaches, whatever attempts he makes to save himself fails.
Joseph Endio Misiri	Kikuyu in reference to Uhuru being taken to ICC	Joseph sold to Egypt	Meaning distorted proper translation Uhuru taken to (ICC)
Nyoni	Used by Kikuyus in reference to Raila	Bird	Direct translation
Afilisti	Used by Kikuyus in reference to the uncircumcised	The philistines	Translated with an equivalent
Misiri	Used by Kikuyus in reference to Hague	Egypt	Mistranslation

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) did in February 6th flag three key coded phrases among them thief, uncircumcised and dog as some of those used to stir negative ethnic tensions. The commission's through its vice chairperson said that the coded words were being used to create coded expressions against some of the target communities in a bid to mask direct hate speech and cause unnecessary tribal divisions. It directed that these must be avoided during the campaign period as they undermined integration, arguing that 'thief', 'uncircumcised', 'dog', 'monkey' or any animal coded phrase are terms that do not promote unity or anything positive in any way and they should not be tolerated. They also detailed a list of many other words that may hamper cohesion. The commission, which was releasing findings of a survey on coded language, noted that their use was also widespread during the 2007 electioneering period, which led to a blood bath.

## **2.3 Challenges Faced In Translation**

### **2.3.1 Gaining Conceptual Equivalence**

One of the major difficulties of any kind of research in which the language of the people under study is different from that of the write up is gaining conceptual equivalence or comparability of meaning (Sechrest et al., 1992; Temple, 1997; Deutschcer, 1998; Whyte and Brawn, 1998). Philips (1990:291) sees this in absolute terms as an ‘Unsolvable problem’ which results from the fact that almost any utterance in any language carries with it a set of assumptions, feelings and values that the speaker may or may not be aware of. From the observation of the translation of most of the coded terms, expressions and phrases it is clear that a number of them lacked equivalents and other methods like paraphrasing had to be used. Examples include: Maasai *Ilobua* - a Maasai term for a Luo; *Osuji* - A Maasai term for Kikuyu which is paraphrased as one who cannot be trusted; and Kikuyus terms *Rubwa* for Kalenjins lacks an equivalent and is paraphrased.

### **2.3.2 Distortion of Meanings through Literal Translation**

Tytlar (1997:14) describes good translation as “that whose merit of the original is so completely translated into another language as to be distinctly apprehended and as strongly felt by a native of the country to which this language belongs as it is by those who speak the language of the original works”. The style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original. This was a challenge in the case of this study in that in some instances the source text would have one coded term but in the translation the structure would change into three or four words. For instance



1. Kiswahili phrase

- i. Kazi bora whose literal translation would be a job well done has been given a rider pesa kwa wazee translated literally as money to the elderly; implies that whereas the youth may work, it is the elderly who corruptly earn the wages. A translator would have to be very careful when translating such because the meaning would depend on the context. A componential analysis technique would have to be applied in such cases.
- ii. Literal translation of 'water melon' would be tunda. The translator must consider the context. The translation of the phrase Wale wale would be those those which is grammatically wrong.

iii. The Kalejin expressions

1. Ngonai            Tarit            Konnyi  
Kujua            ndege            nyumba

Ndege anajua nyumba yake

2. Ngasamis        Muryat        bakoot        nebo  
Kunuka            panya        ako            kwako

Let every bird know its nest

Acha kila ndege ajue nyumba yake

### 2.3.3 Ambiguity

Sometimes the exact meaning in the source language is left unclear (ambiguous) on purpose, in which case translators try to keep it that way. E.g. the meaning of a word like *baba* may cause ambiguity due to the many meanings it carries like a priest a male parent and so forth. This is especially so when reporting claims, accusations and hearsay evidence in such things as police stories. For example, a person might be charged in English with "unlawful carnal knowledge", which usually means a sexual offence against a person under the age of consent. The translator should not translate that as "rape of a child" or "sodomy of a little boy" or any other specific sexual act unless that is part of the charge. It is better in this case to use a phrase similar to "a sexual offence against a young person" (Kaspar, 2003).

On those occasions where two languages do not offer direct lexical equivalence several researchers and linguists suggest that one's efforts should be directed 'towards obtaining conceptual equivalence without concern for lexical comparability' (Broadfoot and Osborn, 1993). For many researchers (Sechrest et al., 1972; Brislin et al., 1973) the process of gaining comparability of meanings is greatly facilitated by the researcher (or the translator) having not only 'a proficient understanding of a language' but also, as Frey (1970) puts it, an 'intimate' knowledge of the culture. Only then can the researcher pick up the full implications that a term carries for the people under study and make sure that the cultural connotations of a word are made explicit to the readers of the research report. A practical example in Kenya is whereby some of the community members used the words like "*Nyef nyef*" while trying to address negatively concerning other communities. The term, "*Nyef nyef*," maybe somehow ambiguous in that one may not be really sure of whom or what is being referred to. Such phrase may cause un-translatability. Some cultural terms can only be

understood in the SL and not the TL. For example a term *Agwambo* used in reference to Raila and *kamwana* used in reference to president Kenyatta can only be understood in its original context to be able communicate to the target group.

Ambiguity occurs in instances where a term/word used has more than one meaning. It may also occur in cases where a sentence is not comprehensible mostly because of the structure or the terminology(s) used. In such a case the translator must check on the context under which the term is used. If the ambiguity is as a result of the structure, the translator should ignore the form and target to communicate the meaning.

### **2.3.4 Comparability of Grammatical Forms**

A different kind of translation problem occurs when sentences in the language of data collection involve grammatical and syntactical structures that do not exist in English. Syntactical style, as Ercikan (1998:544) points out, is one of the most difficult features to carry over from one language to another. Where sentences are resistant to translation because of incompatibility between languages in terms of the structure, Bassnett-McGuire (1980:32) suggests that the sense of sentences ‘can be adequately translated into English once the rules of English structure are applied’. However, such a process, as Ervin and Bower (1952:597-598) warn us, inevitably involves ‘the introduction of pseudo-information or the loss of information’. Although obtaining grammatical and syntactical equivalence is not something that can be taken lightly, it does appear that the more important aim of researchers-translators should be to achieve conceptual equivalence. In the case of this study, translations of various coded languages have been viewed as to promote hate among various community members in the country. This is simply because some of the words when translated have ended up losing the original meaning. For example

- i. The translation of coded words like Agwambo (Luo) in reference to Raila
- ii. Kamwana (youth) in reference to president Uhuru Kenyatta
- iii. Software used in reference to Luos would render the intended meaning useless.
- iv. Tinga (tractor) in reference to Raila
- v. Baba (father) in reference to Raila
- vi. Wale wale ( those, those)
- vii. Iron Lady ( mwanamke chuma)

## CHAPTER THREE

### TRANSLATION IN THE DECONSTRUCTION OF CODED WORDS AND PHRASES

#### 3.1 Language manipulation strategies

Linguistic choices on the syntactic level of language can be covert operations, that is, operations that might go unnoticed by the listener or reader because they “lie beneath the threshold of consciousness” (Butt 2004: 270). Choices on the lexical level of language, on the other hand, tend to be more or less overt operations, in the sense that they rarely go fully unnoticed by the listener or reader since they lie above the threshold of consciousness. Both overt and covert operations, however, can be used to produce political effect, and exert the desired influence on public opinion. In the contextualization, this section presents various strategies which have been employed in language manipulation and with detailed examples.

##### 3.1.1 Antonymous Lexical Choices

Words with positive connotations will be used to describe the in-group and its qualities whereas words with negative connotations will be used to evoke the out-group and its supposed shortcomings and faults. These antonymous lexical sets are often made up of “moral value vocabulary” (Chilton 2004), words that help to establish a dichotomy between a moral *we* versus an immoral *them*. Antonyms are therefore used where one group expresses itself the extreme end opposite of the other. Indeed, language and the quasi infinite number of linguistic choices it offers political actors among the rules and components of its levels allows for the expression of differing and even opposing worldviews and values. In East African political discourse it is common to have two parties arguing at the extreme ends.

Examples:

- *Wapinzani* (Swahili for opposition) vs. *Mpinzani* (Swahili for a fellow competitor). The translation here does not pose any challenge because the two terms have equivalents in the TL
- *Wanaharakati* or *wanamageuzi* (Swahili for pro-change activists). There is a change in structure from SL to TL hence the term is paraphrased.
- *Wazalendo* (Swahili for patriots) vs *Waheshimiwa* (Swahili for elites). The first word *wazalendo* is translated with an equivalent patriots whereas the word “*Waheshimwa*” is mistranslated as elite which has a different meaning from SL *Waheshimiwa*. There is no equivalent for *Waheshimiwa* but it can be paraphrased as “respectable people”. The most appropriate Swahili word for elites is *Wasomi*.
- *Wenye nchi* (Swahili for country owners) vs *Wananchi* (Swahili for citizens) are both translated with their equivalents and the message is well communicated
- *Kazi bora* (Swahili for a job well done) vs *bora kazi* (Swahili for poor workmanship) are translated with equivalents.

### **3.1.2 Habituation**

The frequency with which linguistic choices and patterns linked to a particular worldview are instantiated in a communicative act or series of acts may lead to their habituation. They become part “general public’s collective meaning potential.” In other words, the repeated linguistic choices and discursive patterns influence the general public’s perception. They lay

a role in establishing a common view of the world and lead to shared views of social, economic and global phenomena. Examples:

***Kapenguria 6:*** Six prominent Kenyans-who included founding President Jomo Kenyatta-were jailed in 1952 at a notorious North Rift prison called Kapenguria for agitating for independence. They were considered innocent national heroes. The O'campo 6 sought to gain mileage by comparing themselves with the Kapenguria 6. Translating Kapenguria 6 with Kapenguria 6 may cause ambiguity. To avoid this componential analysis technique would be the most appropriate

***G7:*** Ordinarily a group of seven (7) industrialized countries but adopted by seven (7) Kenyan regional leaders out to derail Mr. Odinga's presidential ambitions come 2012. The G7 loaded message is that they are stronger, united in ideology and possessing numbers than lone ranger Odinga. A historical fact is that the industrialized G7 beat the Soviet Union thus domestication of a worldview. This is translated by Componential analysis.

***Pentagon:*** The term refers to ODM top decision making organ which comprises a team of five regional leaders with Odinga as captain. However, and world over, the Pentagon refers to the USA defense headquarters. Unsuspecting voters are wont to perceive ODM's Pentagon just like the invincible USA Army with the requisite technology, united, with firepower, a superpower, robust, equipped, tried and tested. Pentagon has many meaning so the translation will highly depend on the context. In this analysis, one observes that the message can be transferred in a meaningful manner.

**Hague:** A Netherlands based International Criminal Court (ICC) for genocide and crimes against humanity. Hague is generally used in Kenya to refer to any prison or a place for justice and cripple impunity. This is translated by use of componential analysis.

### **3.1.3 Use of legitimizing and delegitimizing language**

Political actors have to be doubly strategic in their language use. The use of legitimizing language is usually accompanied by the use of its counterpart, ‘delegitimizing language’, that is, language which negatively depicts the opposing worldview or approach as well as those who hold these different opinions and values.

### ***Water melon:***

Is a term that gained prominence during Kenya’s constitution referendum campaigns. Voters were expected to choose between RED (for No) and GREEN (for Yes). Politicians who played it safe (neutrals) or were ambivalent during the campaigns were coded water melons. The logic is simple in that a water melon has a green colour on the outer cover and red colour in the inside. Literal translation of the phrase water melon would render it ambiguous so it can only be explained.

### **3.1.4 Bipolar Representations**

Political actors use bipolar representations often while on campaign. The repeated instantiation of these binary conceptualizations leads to similar bipolar representations in the collective consciousness of the general public. In the end the political operators assign meanings and definition to words to not only to belittle their opponents but also to manipulate voters.



Examples:

*ODM* - This can only be borrowed to the TL since the meaning depends on the context. However when written in full as Orange Democratic Members it is translated as Wanachama wa chama cha chungwa. This way it will still communicate the intended message.

### **3.2 Other common syntactic strategies**

They concern the use of:

#### **3.2.1 Deictic pronouns-such as us and them**

*Wale wale*: This refers to a Kiswahili compound for ‘those those’. It is a code used by the opposition to refer to anti-change. Such a compound is untranslatable in English it can only be used once ‘those’ and the challenge will be the loss of intended meaning in the SL

*Wenzetu*: This is a Kiswahili possessive pronoun or adjective that stands for ‘ours’. As a political code, it is used by political actors to refer to a member of a different political party.

#### **3.2.2 Syllable, word order substitutions and slogans distortions**

*Kazi Kwa Vijana* - (Jobs for the youth) The slogan has been given a rider *Pesa Kwa Wazee* (money to the elderly). It implies that whereas the youth may work, it is the elderly who corruptly earn the wages. As translator would have to be very keen when translating such because the meaning would depend on the context. A componential analysis technique would have to applied in such cases

The name Raila has its syllables distorted to read *Aliar* - This can only be borrowed in the TL and will only be understood by the SL audience.

### **3.2.3 Idioms and idiomatic expressions**

Idioms laced with political undertones have also been used:

***Pita Kati***: this term which is Kiswahili term for ‘pass in the middle’ is associated with former Kenyan vice president, Kalonzo Musyoka. He claimed prophetically that after the hotly contested Kenyan 2007 presidential election, he would penetrate in between President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister Raila Odinga. True to his word, after signing of the National Peace and Reconciliation Accord following an inconclusive election, he was made a vice president thereby standing in between them. Literal translation for such would render the message redundant.

### **3.2.4 Coinage**

Coinage of political terms from words and numbers, code-mixing, acronyms, pet (nick) names and place names. This word formation processes have generally brought to birth new words. They are discussed in details:

### **3.2.5 Joining words and numbers**

***Ocampo 6***: This is a group of six prominent Kenyans namely: The Deputy Prime Minister Uhuru Kenyatta, Former Minister William Ruto, Radio Journalist Joshua Sang, Minister Henry Kosgey, Former police commissioner General Hussein Ali and The Head of civil service and the secretary to the Cabinet Ambassador Francis Muthaura. The six (6) have been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) as persons bearing the greatest responsibility for post-election violence that occurred in Kenya in 2008. Whenever people

use the term Ocampo 6 or simply ‘the 6’ Kenyans easily decipher the suspects. Ocampo 6 can only be transferred / borrowed in the TL but will only be understood by the SL audience.

**G7:** Ordinarily a group of seven (7) industrialized countries but adopted by seven (7) Kenyan regional leaders out to derail Mr. Odinga’s presidential ambitions come 2012. The term can only be adopted in TT. Translation componential analysis.

**M7:** Ugandan president is called Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. Now Museveni is pronounced as /*museveni*/ hence M7 (M for *mu* and 7 for *seven*)-take note of the similarity in pronunciation. This kind of distortion creates challenge in that the M7 (Museveni) can only be understood in the context of the users. Transferring or adopting M7 to the target audience would cause ambiguity.

**Kapenguria 6:** Six prominent Kenyans-who included founding President Jomo Kenyatta-were jailed in 1952 at a notorious North Rift prison called Kapenguria for agitating for independence. They were considered innocent national heroes. Componential analysis

### **3.2.6 Code-Mixing Lexical Borrowing**

**Maombi meetings:** nationwide *maombi* (Swahili for prayer) meetings were held countrywide to proclaim solidarity with the Ocampo 6. The irony is the prayer meetings-which should ordinarily show decorum-turned in to Odinga and Ocampo bashing. They took the format of real egoistic political meetings. Nowadays patrons are wont to christen similar like-minded fellows meetings as prayer meetings instead of political, social or business meetings. This brings to birth the closeness of state and politics in Kenya. Maombi is translated with a Swahili equivalent prayer meeting - although in the context the message being communicated

has irony in it so there is need to consider the context because prayer meetings are naturally taken as positive not as implicated in this case.

### **3.2.7 Acronyms and word order substitutions**

**KKK:** Kikuyu, Kamba and Kalenjin coalition. A political tag given to a group of like-minded political leaders from the Kikuyu, Kamba and Kalenjin. They were depicted as a bunch of tribalists and anti-K (read Kenya). It is difficult to translate acronyms unless you know their meanings. In this case the translator is done by giving full meaning of the words and the intended meaning explained. When translating the translator must have the background knowledge of the use of acronyms so as to communicate.

**ODM:** Corrupted to read *Odinga* Democratic Movement which is a corruption of Orange Democratic Movement. ODM is the largest party by parliamentary representation in Kenya (2008-2012). This distortion and word order substitution was advanced by rebel ODM MP's who had differed with their party leader, Hon. Raila Odinga. The translation uses componential analysis to shed light on the intended message.

### **3.2.8 Generalizations of pet (nick) names and Titles**

**Iron lady:** this is a nick name used to refer to the politician, Martha Karua for her firm and adamant positions in her arguments and contribution in parliament. Translated literal would be *Mwanamke chuma* or word for word *chuma mwanamke*.

**Tinga:** This is a nick name given to the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga for his regular utterance of the word, likening his vigor to the farm machine. Translated through

componential analysis. If it was given a literal meaning it would refer to a tractor hence not render the intended meaning.

### **3.2.9 Place Names**

*'Nenda Loliondo unywe kikombe cha babu'* loosely translated as go to Loliondo and take a sip from the grandfather's cup. Loliondo is a place in northern Tanzania that was made famous by a traditional healer. Sick people from home and abroad thronged the village to 'drink a cup of his miraculous drug.' The name Loliondo has been assimilated in to political discourse to imply 'a savior.' Parties often tease opponents to go to Loliondo for inspiration. This translated with an equivalent message although with some alterations which affect the intended meaning in the TL. The proper translation of *unywe* would be you drink and not you sip. The two terms are different.

### **3.2.10 Sexually Loaded Vocabulary**

When translating such, the translator should be careful not to communicate the political message intended and not the marriage relationships as we know them.

***Consultations and Coalition:*** The Kenyan coalition government's decisions are arrived at after proper consultations between the prime minister and the president. Time and again members of the either side of the coalition partners (ODM or PNU) have leveled accusations at each other as having acted in bad faith without proper consultation. In Kenyan street discourses marriages or relationships are *coalitions* whereas *dates or even sexual activities* are Consultations.

### **3.2.11 Colour**

Manipulation of Colour as a tool for mass mobilization and party identity *Red card* was associated with the NO referendum campaigns in Kenya. The YES campaign touted them as cheats who had already red carded and out of the game (read contest). Red was associated with violence/bloodshed and pain whereas green represented life and continuity. To a great extent a number of voters were easily swayed a side by such words. Translation of colours is done through explanation. Direct translation would cause ambiguity.

### **3.3 Translation Challenges**

Cultural bound terminologies are difficult to translate. This is due to the fact that they have major differences between the meaning in the dictionary and that portrayed in the dictionary. The translation of coded language word is even more complicated because the language has deeper meaning so using words as they appear in the normal languages may cause distortion or ambiguity. The use of dictionaries may not help and what every translator needs to do is to have the knowledge of the content so as to communicate meaning. The translation challenges encountered include lack of equivalent for example in phrases like '*Iron Lady*' '*Water Melon*', '*Ocampo 6*', However the translator was able to use techniques like the functional equivalence descriptive and transference to render the message as intended in the S.L techniques used in the formulation of coded language.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study sought to investigate translation as deconstruction for the purpose of National Cohesion and Integration decoding, decontextualizing and demystifying coded language. More specifically is sought to compare meanings in the coded languages with literal translation. It looked at the challenges used in the manipulation of coded languages and the strategies that can be used to deconstruct. Finally it established the challenges encountered in the process of deconstructing coded language. The study established that coded language can be deconstructed for the purpose of decoding, decontextualizing and demystifying it. This can be made successful, definitions, explanations or by paraphrasing.

For example

- i. Defining what the acronyms ODM, G7, Kapenguria 6 means
- ii. Explaining what the phrase iron lady or water melon stand for instead of translating literally.
- iii. Paraphrasing terms like madoadoa –instead of translating it literally as spots.

The study also established that in translation, both form and meanings are vital but the emphasis should be placed more on transferring meaning as expressing in SL. The target language form should be changed in order that the SL meaning is not distorted (1998:12) Literal translation cannot transfer the exact meaning of the intention of the SL. Various strategies can be used to translate coded language and render the intended meaning. Such strategies include the use of equivalents paraphrasing definitions explanation among others. Key challenges encountered in the process of translation include difficulties in translating cultural terminologies because of the differences in language and cultural aspects in the two

languages involved. However a translator should realize that it is not the specific items an expression contains that are supposed to be translated rather it is the meaning it conveys and its association with the context which can make it understandable or difficult to understand. Most terminologies lacked equivalent and had to be defined, explained or paraphrased.

#### **4.1 Summary of findings**

This study sought to investigate translation as deconstruction for the purpose of national cohesion and integration. More specifically is sought to: compare the meanings in the coded languages selected, with the literal translation: to identify strategies used in creating coded language and those that can be used to deconstruct coded language. The study established that: Cultural terminologies are difficult to translate because of the differences in language and cultural aspects in the two languages involved. However, a translator should realize that it is not the specific items an expression contains that is supposed to be translated; rather, it is the meaning it conveys and its association with culture context which can make it understandable or difficult to translate.

In translation, both form and meaning are vital but the emphasis should be placed on transferring meaning as expressed in the SL. The target language form should be changed in order that the SL meaning is not distorted Larson 1998:12. Literal translation cannot transfer the exact meaning of the intention of SL. various strategies can be used to translate coded language and render the intended meaning examples include: The use of equivalents paraphrasing and componential analysis are examples of possible key strategies.

Key challenges in translation include mistranslations, in which case some coded terms expressions were mistranslated for example ‘Rumbwa’ used by Kikuyus to refer to Kalenjins



and translated a 'mbwa' (Swahili for dog). Most terminologies lacked equivalents and componential analysis had to be applied otherwise literal translation would have rendered most messages ambiguous. Some coded terms/expressions were also mistranslated. There were difficulties for the translator in translating some cultural bound terms/expressions due to lack of equivalents. They had to be paraphrased or analyzed.

#### **4.2 Hypothesis Testing**

- i. We hypothesized that translation has the capacity\ to deconstruct coded language for the purpose of decoding, decontextualizing and for demystifying coded language. This has been clearly shown in the process of translating coded language. This was done through explanations paraphrasing and by defining coded words phrases and expressions
- ii. In our second hypothesis we stated that coded languages as used in Kenya carries meaning and this can be translated to the target language literally or with a deeper meaning in this case English or Kiswahili and vice versa. This was also confirmed and examples given.
- iii. The third hypothesis stated that there are well established strategies used in the construction of coded language. This was also confirmed. These strategies involve word manipulation such as code mixing, habituation, use of antonyms use of legitimizing and delegitimizing language use of bipolar representations, deictic pronouns such as "us" and "them", syllable, word order substitutions and slogans distortion, coinage, idioms and idiomatic expressions, joining words, and numbers, generalization of pet names and tittles, the use of place names, colour and the use of sexually loaded vocabularies We also hypothesized that there are strategies that can

- be used to deconstruct coded language. This was confirmed and the strategies include definitions of terms explanations and paraphrasing of expressions or phrases the use of equivalents, transference among others
- iv. The fourth hypothesis indicated that there are challenges encountered in the process of deconstructing coded languages. The challenges include:
- a) Translating cultural terms
  - b) Ambiguity in cases where literal translation is applied.
  - c) Difficulties due to the different structures in different languages ( SL) and TL

### **4.3 Conclusion**

From the study carried out and the findings arrived at, it can be concluded that the use of coded language in Kenya is well grounded, built on a set of criteria, developed subconsciously and created from every day happenings and events in the public discourse and propagated by the media as the agenda setters. Behind these coded words and expressions used by Kenyans lie meanings, some of which are sensitive and segregating to warrant their articulation in a coded fashion while some are nationalistic carrying with them land mark memories that create a sense of patriotism and unity.

To curb the use of coded language to propagate divisive and hate messages, translation is paramount. This goes a long way in creating awareness and public knowledge and discourages use of the codes to carry hidden agenda. The NCIC has on its part advocated for cessation of use of oppressive and divisive languages and has even gone further and conducted a nationwide survey to decode these words through translation. The publication of

findings elaborating the coded words and expressions and their meanings is an indication of the amount of effort the commission has put in championing for cohesion and oneness in the country.

#### **4.4 Recommendations**

This research has focused on a very small area of coded language related to national cohesion and integration. More research is required on the use of coded language in other set ups.

As with the challenges encountered, important techniques can be adopted, including: back translation, consultation and collaboration with other people during the translation process.

Back translation involves looking for equivalents through

- i. The translation of items from the source language to the target language,
- ii. Independent translation of these back into the source language
- iii. The comparison of the two versions of items in the source language until ambiguities or discrepancies in meaning are clarified or removed'.

Consultation with other people, on the other hand, involves discussions about the use and meaning of words identified as problematic with people who are bilingual or having a number of people sitting around a table jointly making decisions about the best terms to use.

Collaboration with other people can also take the form of researchers from all countries involved in a study, jointly producing the research design and instrument. Government to encourage more professional training in translation and the policy makers give guidelines on the various strategies that can be used in producing good translations.

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