

ABSTRACT

The objective of this paper was to critically analyze the political undertones and the socioeconomic allusions in the funeral speeches in Kenya with a case study of a speech delivered by Junior Odinga during the requiem mass for Fidel Odinga. This study employed Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA henceforth) by Norman Fairclough (1995), especially the assumption that texts are open to diverse interpretations. The purposefully selected corpus of the speech reveals that Fidel, as eulogized, lived in a very harsh socio-political environment, yet he hailed from an economically able family. Most importantly, the study reveals that the deceased had two phases of life contrary to popular beliefs of the political elite in Kenya. What attracted this research is the urge to explore the dynamics of funeral speeches in the Kenyan context. This study found out that funeral speeches in Kenya are carefully crafted to carry very heavy social, economic and political undertones. Furthermore, the study established that funeral speeches in Kenya overlap the eulogy boundary and spills over to other spheres of life not only of the deceased but to the elite political class. The study recommends further research in the area of the concept of face and face threatening mitigation strategies in funeral discourse. In addition, this study recommends an in depth study of the contextual forces behind eulogy speeches in Kenya.