

**ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE IN MUUGA AND MERU FM
RADIO STATIONS IN KENYA**

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**A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Language
and Linguistics of Chuka University**

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DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of diploma or conferment of degree in this or any other University.

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Recommendation

This thesis has been examined, passed and submitted with our approval as University supervisors

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late dad, Silas Kaburu, my first teacher of English and the one who inspired me to believe in hardwork, commitment and excellence.

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First and foremost, my praise and honour go to the Almighty God who gave me life and has taken good care of my life since I was born, charting my destiny and giving me great success all the way. Honour and glory belong to God.

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ABSTRACT

The study highlighted linguistic and discursive features that were used to deliver discourse of development. It addressed issues on sustainable national development in such domains as education, agriculture and infrastructure delivered through mainstream media entities and FM radio stations. In this case, the term development entails the improvement of human life in terms of social, economic and political states in society. This study examined development discourse in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations in Kenya to establish the linguistic and discursive features used to discuss development. The study was based on shows where development was discussed in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations. These shows were found in development programmes which were usually sessions slotted in specific times within the general broadcasting schedule when people from different social cadres were invited to discourse on matters of social, economic and political progress. The objectives of the study were: to examine linguistic features in development discourse in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations; to analyze (de)legitimization strategies in development discourse in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations and to establish the identities constructed in development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations. The study was guided by van Dijk (1997) Critical Discourse Analysis theory. Qualitative descriptive research design was used to conduct the study and thematic analysis was used to organize and interpret the data. The population comprised all the expressions in the shows used to discuss development on radio. The shows were extracted from the online platform specifically Facebook and then transcribed on cards prepared by the researcher. Purposive sampling was used to identify thirteen programs on development discourse from Muuga and Meru FM radio stations. A lexical-grammatical checklist was used to record different linguistic and discourse features as used in the radio programs. Data was collected through downloading content on development and noting down lexical-grammatical features, legitimization strategies and identities created in development discourse. The findings of the study indicated that political leaders speaking on Muuga and Meru FM radio stations used specific linguistic features such as nominalization, passivization, transitivity and modality to shape how issues of development were discussed and to present themselves as capable, committed, powerful and authoritative. It was also established that leaders employed (de)legitimization strategies including rationality, appeals to the common good, moral justification, voices of expertise, and hypothetical futures to justify their actions and discredit opponents. These strategies were central in reinforcing the leaders' credibility while weakening alternative voices as they outsmarted one another in matters of development. Lastly, the study showed that political leaders portrayed certain identities like being responsible, problem solvers, hardworking, regional champions or concerned individuals. These discursive choices enabled them to appear relatable, trustworthy, and connected to the community, thereby strengthening their political identity and legitimacy through development discourse. This study added to the literature on discourse analysis; and by articulating development issues, this study is likely to be a great resource to individuals, policy makers and institutions involved in development matters. It also highlighted the linguistic features that help deliver the development agenda. The study concluded that political leaders deliberately deployed linguistic strategies to manage responsibility, bolster their own credibility, and shape public perceptions of progress. These linguistic strategies worked together to present development as a collective imperative while subtly legitimizing the speakers' authority and marginalizing critical voices.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
DS	Development studies
EXT	Extract
IMF	International Monetary Fund
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization
UTT	Utterance
WB	World Bank
CR	Community Radio
KARF	Kenya Audience Research Foundation

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Language has been used as an instrument meant to put together ideas for the purpose of communicating matters in society in order to bring out elements of power and control (Fowler, 1985). Such matters could include development in education, health, infrastructure, and so on. Development is generally a process of enlarging people's choices by expanding their capabilities and freedoms so that they can lead the lives they value (Sen, 1999) and from the critical or sociological perspective, some scholars look at development as a notion tied to power relations and one that is marked by global inequalities and so it is not a neutral process. Economically, it denotes growth, productivity and the state of material well-being as posited by Todaro and Smith (2015) who argue that economic development is the way by which a nation improves the economic, political and social well being of its people. In this study development discourse as spoken on Muuga and Meru FM radio stations was examined since language is usually applied in media so as to deliberate on important development issues and this was because the description of development indicates an area where everyone in society is interested and hence different people describe development from their perspective and so it is deemed contested.

Moreover, the human-centred point of view explains development beyond economic growth and includes empowerment, human dignity and the quality of life. This is in line with the UNDP 1990 Human Development Report which outlines the purpose of development as trying to make the condition of human beings better and to raise the levels of freedom that people enjoy rather than just being seen to help the national income to grow. According to Escobar (1995) development is not a neutral process but it is rather a discourse influenced and marked by power, ideology and historical context. Therefore, development is generally taken as a multidimensional process that spans economic growth, expanding human freedoms and causing social progress to happen. Economists for instance stress income and productivity while human development theorists emphasize on well-being and freedoms whereas critical theorists highlight issues of power and inequality. This aspect of power and inequality is what brings in

the need to look at development discourse through the lens of Critical Discourse Analysis theory to unearth the hidden attitudes and ideological notions therein.

The word discourse means the use of language to speak or write with the purpose of producing meaning in certain disciplines; and generally, discourse is used to mark the forms of representation, codes, conventions and trends of language that produce meanings in particular cultures and in certain times. This has the connotation that language is utilized within particular cultures and historical periods. Foucault (1972) asserts that discourses do not just represent an objective reality, but they are the bricks with which social reality is built. This means that whatever discourses are applied at particular times and in specific areas enable certain things or actions to become realities or tangible outcomes. To cite an example, the discourse of dress code in a place of work will eventually cause workers to dress in a particular way bringing out a particular social reality. In this study language use was examined as it was spoken by leaders discussing development on Muuga and Meru FM radio stations.

Foucault (1972) introduced the expressions 'discursive practices' and 'discursive formation' in analyzing how different institutions establish orders of truth, or checking what is deemed 'reality' in a particular society. Hence in this study, discourse of development happened within the context of media and as leaders and other stakeholders engaged with media practitioners to discuss development, tangible actions as forms of reality were described in the talks development was discussed on radio. Research on the representation of development discourse has been carried out in the Western nations of the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia and New Zealand. There is also evidence of the same in the world economies that are emerging which include China, India and Indonesia. However, in African nations research on the analysis of linguistic discourse for the expression of development is scarce. In this study, the researcher established that when development is discussed on radio, certain linguistic utterances were applied bringing out various connotations and ideological implications that could be used to inform development policy and planning of development.

A critical discourse analysis deals with the social function of language examining and unraveling hidden aspects in the language used through ideological notions. Widdoson (2004) argues that the way language is used to create identity and establish relationships in society can be clearly seen in linguistic forms. Hence linguistic forms have been established pertaining to discourse of development on Muuga and Meru FM radio stations. On a similar note, Brown & Yule (1983) posits that a discourse analyst is committed to investigating how language is used whether transactionally in order to express the content or interactionally to express social relations and personal attitudes. It is important to study development discourse and it is notable that globally, community radio has been pivotal enhancing participatory democracy. For instance, in Bolivia, radio platforms have empowered indigenous communities to voice their developmental needs (O'Connor, 2024); while in India rural radio has facilitated two-way communication between citizens and government authorities, fostering accountability (Jha, 2010). In Uganda also, FM talk shows serve as platforms for political engagement and issue-based discussion (Mwesige, 2004) and Hyden, Leslie & Ogundimu (2002) emphasized the potential of African radio in democratization processes. This study examined leaders and other stakeholders engaged in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations to address issues on development in various areas using linguistic choices, applying legitimation strategies and displaying identities constructed in the course of discoursing.

Kamau and Ngugi (2018) found that when content is locally relevant and linguistically accessible, vernacular radio enhances citizen participation in devolved governance. Nguru (2009) discussed how political figures utilize vernacular FM platforms to shape public opinion through coded political messaging and mostly development talk on FM radio often features discussions on health, infrastructure and agriculture. Moreover, Mutua (2013) emphasizes that such talk is often politically charged, with local leaders framing development as contingent on political loyalty. Common discursive strategies include metaphor, repetition, appeals to ethnicity, and selective framing. This study presented talks where leaders spoke about development and expressed their attitudes and relationship to one another through search for identity and legitimization of themselves in order to find favour before the citizens who hold sway during elections.

Discursive practices deal with the process of producing and understanding cultural meanings and it then follows that the key objective of a discursive practice approach is to develop theories and techniques that are relevant to the analyses of meaningful behavior in social situations (Foucault, 1972). The following are the insights on which the discursive practice approach is based: the acceptance that social realities are constructed linguistically discursively (the realities that exist in society are created by using language meaningfully in social situations); the appreciation of discourse as context-bound in nature and the idea of discourse as social action by the realization that meaning is not present once and for all in our utterances but rather negotiated in interaction. This means that a discursive practice approach is based on the sense of discourse being action and not just representation and so in analyzing it one must always attend to what the discourse accomplishes (Foucault, 1972). In line with the above argument, proverbs are used not as general elements of cultural wisdom but as tools ready for use in certain situations. Therefore, the aim of using the proverb is to perform an act such as caution, counsel or teach depending on the context. In this sense, one is not asking merely what proverbs say but rather how they are used. One should not focus on the reality of things but need to look at the way truth and morality are brought about, maintained and challenged in discourse. In this study, the linguistic choices were analyzed to bring out the way language is made use of in the media setting to express meanings and bring out senses that help development talks to establish and maintain or challenge development issues as identity construction and legitimization strategies were brought out. This means that once development is discussed on radio things happen out of such discourses.

According to Coulthard (1977), we combine sentences to form texts and the way sentences relate with one another is an aspect of grammatical cohesion. Similarly, utterances are brought together to form discourse and the way they relate is a mark of coherence. In discourse analysis, a linguist works using the structures of language that occurs naturally like, commentaries, interviews, conversations and speeches. Text analyses looks at the structure of written language in public notices, essays, road signs and chapters. There should be no confusion about the terms discourse and text since the two are often used interchangeably to mean all units of language used in communication whether spoken or written (Brown & Yule 1983). Elliot (1999) posits

that it is by applying language that we are able to experience and understand our world and are also able to interact with one another. Language is thus the most important mode of engagement with reality and also helps check that reality with others. Hence the reason for which the researcher carried out an investigation of discourse on development in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations and analyzed the derived utterances in order to understand how language shapes the development agenda in society.

Accordingly, Ziai (2004) posits that the discourse of development is about what people think when they hear or write or speak about development and what politicians attempt to accomplish by launching programmes; as well as what aid workers imagine they are doing when working in development projects. Moreover, it is what all the above mentioned situations have to do with power relations between the North (developed countries) and the South (developing countries). It is also about the structures that can be found in development speech and writing. Language structures that describe entities as ‘underdeveloped’, ‘a newly industrialized country,’ ‘an age-old civilization’ or ‘a rogue state’; each of these phrases communicate varying mental pictures, bring about different political strategies and shapes many perceptions and creations of identity.

Regular socio-economic and development communication has not reached the rural communities in Kenya (Aduvate, 2014) leaving their voices muted while their socio-economic concerns are left out of the core planning and allocation of resources for development. It is in this respect that FM community radio offers a platform for help to alleviate this situation as it is deemed the ideal medium through which development communication is relayed. A study that examined Sauti FM, a community radio in Rarieda constituency, demonstrated how the radio station has contributed to socio-economic, political and cultural development of the local community. The study established that the radio station had been harnessed for social economic, cultural and political development of the people of Rarieda. The radio was found to be instrumental in resource mobilization, promotion of local culture and educational empowerment. In support of the above use of radio for development agenda the current study examined the linguistic choices, (de)legitimization strategies and construction of identity in development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations.

Community radio has become a key platform for public discourse and democratic engagement in Africa's shifting media landscape. FM radio stations often host talk shows where leaders and community stakeholders discuss development and governance matters directly with the public (Mukiri, 2024). Programs are usually scheduled weekly and focus on issues such as infrastructure, education, healthcare, youth empowerment, and political accountability. Leaders use these platforms to highlight their achievements, explain policies, and respond to public concerns. The shows also allow for interaction with listeners through phone-ins and social media, creating space for dialogue and feedback. Mukiri (2024) further says that political topics are often framed within the broader theme of development, making the shows a subtle but effective way for leaders to shape public opinion and build their image. Through these discussions, radio becomes not just a tool for informing, but also for engaging and influencing the community.

Radio development programmes are sessions held on radio stations with the purpose of conveying information regarding various topical issues thus informing enlightening and empowering societies economically, socially and politically (McQuail, 2010) in order to ensure certain levels of development. Since radio is easy to access and reaches many people in the community. Melkote and Steeves (2015) further posit that development programmes aired via radio give relevant information to people thus empowering them and inspiring them to participate in these programmes. These programmes ought to be informative and educative, participatory, culturally relevant and empowerment oriented. Examples include agricultural programmes, like the 'farmer's voice', governance and civic education as in 'know your rights'. Radio stations in Kenya for instance Getu, Muuga and Meru FM have such programmes aired mostly on youth empowerment, Agriculture, county project and many others. Moreover, FM radio stations contribute greatly to holistic community development as evident in *Mugambo Jwetu* FM radio in Meru which was established through funding by UNESCO and the government of Finland. The national government through CDF also supported the project by constructing a premise for the radio station (Kimani, 2020). The media enterprise is part of a community multi media centre in Meru County which offers computer and Internet services as it aims at empowering the community through ICT. The radio also conducts community education on pertinent social issues such as drugs,

substance abuse, sexual education and HIV AIDS information. Other issues addressed through media include Agriculture, gender, human rights, and Law information.

A study conducted by Kungania (2011) established that Muuga FM, one of the FM radio stations in Meru County contributed greatly to the social and economic development of its listeners through various programmes ranging from Agricultural, educational, law and human rights. The researcher therefore established expressions used in articulating development as well as the legitimization techniques and identity creation elements engaged by speakers in the process of development discourse. The radios that broadcast in the Meru languages or dialects include: Muuga FM, the radio station said to be the first to air content in Meru dialects according to the Royal Media brand page live-stream directories (Royal Media Services +1). Meru FM, commonly known as “ngwataniro ya Ameru” in station branding (Meru FM profiles/radio directories. Radio.co.ke +1). Getu FM is another radio station (87.6FM) in Meru airing community shows and entertainment (Getu FM listings/station directories. Radio.or.ke +1). Wega FM (88.6) –Diocese of Meru and it broadcasts in the Meru and Kiswahili languages dealing with topics ranging from socio-economic and faith issues (Wega FM site and listings. radiowega.co.ke +1). Mwago FM (KBC Mwago) spans the region and covers Meru and Tharaka Nithi (station profile listings referencing Mwago/Mwago KBC. Radio .co.ke +1). The Weru FM (96.4) is well known for its strong branding using the word Ameru (Weru FM listings/Facebook and stream directories. streema.com +). Tuliza FM (92.4) broadcasts in the region in the meru dialect and English (Tuliza FM site/listings. Radio.co.ke +1). Thiiri FM promoted as “wirigiro bwa Ameru” (Thiiri FM Social channels/station pages. X (formerly twitter +1). Mwariama FM (105.9) airs events in society and shows on various thematic subjects (Mwariama FM live streams/local listings. You Tube +1). The researcher therefore selected Muuga and Meru FM considering the fact that the two have been broadcasting for a long time and also has a larger audience in listenership according to KARF (2021).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The discourse of development is characterized by certain textual properties, stylistic and syntactic features and it addresses social economic issues by way of deliberate linguistic and discursive choices. This kind of discourse is common in media houses and mostly involves leaders and other stakeholders presenting their achievements

through articulating development milestones and agenda. There is the element of leaders trying to explain why certain things have not been done; either by accusing the opponents for causing failure or presenting reasons why it was not done. These talks also involve leaders seeking certain titles and praise from citizens whom they lead and represent in varying capacities. Radio programmes have sessions of development discourse slotted at different times and aired to reach as many people as possible since radio reaches to the marginalized communities especially the FM radio. Most studies on radio discourse have been done from the perspective of media and how it reaches out to people with information but not on language used to speak about development and therefore to fill this gap, this study analyzed the language used to talk about development and examined utterances on development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations to determine how linguistic features together with legitimization and identity formation function to articulate development discourse.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

This study analysed development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. Examine the linguistic features used in development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya.
- ii. Analyze (de)legitimization strategies in development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya.
- iii. Establish identities constructed in development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya.

1.5 Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

- i. Which linguistic features are used in development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya?

- ii. Which (de)legitimization strategies are used in development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya?
- iii. Which identities are constructed in development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study added to the available research in Linguistics and development discourse. Through this study, it was possible to highlight the function of different linguistic and discourse features in media presentations related to development in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations. The study equally has given more insight on (de) legitimization and identity creation in development discourse. Through articulating developmental needs and status, the study was valuable to policy makers, institutions and individuals who are involved in the entire development process. By interrogating the linguistic and discursive packaging of development discourse, the research offered insight on the most effective linguistic and discourse choices that should be used in development communication. Appropriate linguistic and discursive choices could facilitate proper presentation of development information and the ultimate success of related programmes and initiatives.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The study focused on development discourse used in Muuga and Meru FM radio station to discuss development by leaders between the year 2020 and 2022. This was the period characterized by widespread pre and post-election discussions and socio-political discourse where leaders engaged with the electorate to discourse on service delivery and great promises of development projects during campaigns with well developed manifestos to woo voters before elections; and after elections the talk on plan to realize their campaign promises. During this time political leaders made claims and commitments in relation to development aiming to endear themselves to the electorate for votes. This was usually aired on media especially by media practitioners as they interacted with leaders campaigning for and in various positions. Despite the fact that there exists a number of FM radio stations in Meru, this study confined itself to Muuga and Meru FM with an aim to investigate development discourse as political leaders making presentations on development issues in the stations. This study focused on the

two stations named above, because they were among the most listened to vernacular stations in Meru and surrounding regions, according to KARF's 2021 listenership report. This study employed Critical Discourse Analysis theory to discuss the data. The broadcast programs mostly engaged the local community on development matters. Moreover, the linguistic and cultural dynamics of the Meru community have remained underexplored in discourse analysis and this justified their selection for this study.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

A number of assumptions were made regarding the study and they included:

- i. There was use of deliberate linguistic choices when engaging in development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations.
- ii. There were certain (de)legitimization strategies that were used in development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations.
- iii. The participants in development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM constructed specific identities in their speeches.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Critical Discourse Analysis: The analytical lens through which Muuga and Meru FM radio talk on development is examined, focusing on how language functions as a social practice. It involves unpacking how leaders use language in radio interactions to construct meaning, promote ideologies, assert power, and shape public perception of development.

Delegitimization: Portrayal of political opponents in a negative light by the use of linguistic and rhetorical strategies. In the context of this study, it includes discourse that discredits rivals to elevate one's own political image or development agenda during radio interviews.

Development: in this study is the manner in which people's lives are enhanced and improved socially, economically and politically as more resources and provisions are harnessed to reach the rural communities to facilitate better agricultural practices, give people opportunities to elect responsible leadership, children going to more equipped schools and so on.

Development Discourse: the kind of conversation that takes place among people in particular cadres of society as they discuss issues of community development and in this study it is the expressions used to deliver development content in Muuga and Meru FM by the various stakeholders invited to the stations.

Development Programme: A development programme refers to a radio show moment of discourse where leaders and stakeholders invited to radio stations discuss community projects, showcase achievements, and engage the public on development-related matters. In this study it means the times when people are slotted in by radio presenters in Muuga and Meru FM to engage in discourse about

development affecting their communities and the nation at large.

Discursive Features:

These are the social, cultural, and contextual elements embedded in language use that influence how meaning is constructed and interpreted. In this study, discursive features include tone, framing, lexical choices, and grammatical structures that contribute to how development is talked about on air.

Identities:

Elements that people use to display themselves in particular ways as they speak presenting themselves as competent, development-focused individuals just as they would like people to see them. This includes self-presentation strategies used to create a positive public image, often by highlighting achievements and aligning with desirable community values.

Ideology:

The underlying beliefs, values, and assumptions that are communicated implicitly or explicitly through development talk in Muuga and Meru FM. It includes the shared ideas leaders promote about progress, leadership, and community priorities during radio discussions.

Legitimization:

The way leaders in Meru and Muuga FM development discourse shows to justify actions and claim validity in order to gain approval of the electorate.

Media Discourse:

Media discourse encompasses all spoken content delivered through radio programs—particularly development-related conversations between leaders and stakeholders. These are structured shows aired on Meru and Muuga FM and similar stations.

Political Discourse:

The speech in Meru and Muuga FM stations centered around governance, development delivery, and public accountability. It includes how leaders use media

platforms to present their track records, critique opponents, and influence citizen perception, especially around election periods.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Discourse Analysis

Discourse means language that is in use or utilized to communicate something, coherent and may or may not necessarily be a correct sentence or a group of correct sentences. (Cook 1989) argues that what matters concerning discourse is not how much it obeys rules but rather the way it communicates and is recognized by its receivers as coherent. According to Foucault (2002) when discourses happen, they establish what they speak about and that the only proof that those discourses exist are texts. These texts which are interactive and influenced by socio-linguistic factors are the actual realization of ideal forms of knowledge and at the same time discourse is analysed as one refers to context, expectations, preferences and norms (Brown & Yule, 1983). Moreover, it can be said to be analysis of language above the level of the sentence and it is not confined to the study of formal properties of language but it also takes into consideration the aspects of language use in social and cultural contexts. In this study, the researcher established utterances derived from the expressions used to speak about development and discussed the linguistic features, legitimization strategies and aspects of identities constructed. The expressions were used to address development issues by everyone concerned leading to actual development enacted on the ground.

As individual construct themselves socially, they internalize discourse elements characteristic of the community of practice; that discourse is what organizes what people talk about and how they do it and who does it. Social practices are meaningful and coherent in that they conform to discourse principles. As manifestations of ideology, discourses form individual and collective conscious means and consciousness influences people's actions which means, through repetition of ideas and statements, discourse build knowledge (Jager and Maier 2009) and reflects shapes and enables social reality. Furthermore, it can be defined by the activities participants engage in and the power enacted and reproduced through them; thus, we can speak about feminist or nationalist discourse, the discourse of pity, whiteness or science or hegemonic and resistant discourses and for the present study, development discourse. This study looked at the expressions used to speak about development by leaders in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations and through such development talks certain realities were found to be

created. In this study, when leaders engage in development discussions, they create development and cause deliberations and actions for development endeavours.

The role of language in mediating power relations within institutional settings has been the focus of significant scholarly inquiry. Hutchby (1996) examined how power operated within institutional discourse, using conversation analysis as a methodological framework. The study specifically investigated how power was exercised and negotiated in British talk radio calls, emphasizing a localized, sequential analysis of interaction. Hutchby (1996) found that power was not a fixed attribute but a dynamic distribution of interactional resources that allowed certain participants to achieve communicative advantages over others. These resources were often embedded in the technological and institutional structure of the discourse setting, such as turn-taking systems and access to broadcasting tools. The article concluded that understanding power in discourse required attending to the micro-level features of interaction that shape participation and influence outcomes. However, while Hutchby's (1996) work provided valuable insights into institutional talk in Western media contexts, it left a gap in understanding how similar power dynamics were linguistically constructed in non-Western settings, particularly in African languages and radio forums. This study therefore found out the linguistic features employed by in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya, thus addressed a critical gap in the literature by focusing on the intersection of language, power, and local political communication in a Kenyan indigenous language media context.

Radio continues to play an essential role in shaping democratic engagement and public discourse across Africa. In this context, Hungbo (2012) examined how radio talk shows in South Africa served as platform for self-representation and the negotiation of power in the post-apartheid public sphere. The aim of the study was to investigate the politics of representation and the construction of 'imagined communities' on two popular radio shows, *The after Eight Debate* and *The Redi Direko Show*. The study found that while the deregulation of media spaces may foster a vibrant media environment conducive to democratic ideals, radio talk shows simultaneously reproduced inequalities in access and participation. These inequalities, along with the performative demands placed on participants, resulted in the silencing of certain voices and the privileging of dominant

or elite perspectives. The study concluded that despite their apparent democratic potential, radio talk shows often reinforced power asymmetries and suppressed diverse forms of self-expression. However, while Hungbo's (2012) work offered important insights into representation and power in South African radio, it did not sufficiently explore how political leaders construct development discourse in indigenous language radio stations elsewhere on the continent. This study therefore addressed that gap by examining the linguistic features employed by political leaders in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya, thereby contributing to an understanding of how language, politics, and local identities intersect in East African media landscapes.

Ogoso (2004) offered a comparative analysis of talk radio across three Ugandan stations commercial, community, and public service aiming to assess its potential in promoting debate on social issues and enhancing participation. The study drew on Habermas's public sphere theory to contextualize global talk radio traditions within Uganda's media environment, shaped by historical struggles for free expression. While the staff recognized the value of talk radio in engaging audiences, systemic barriers, including government interference, organizational constraints, and policy contradictions limited its democratic impact, often favoring elite voices. The study concluded that without institutional and regulatory reform, talk radio may perpetuate social inequalities. Though it shed light on structural and ideological challenges, it overlooked the linguistic strategies political leaders used to frame development discourse in indigenous-language media elsewhere in East Africa. To cater for this, the present study explored linguistic features used to express development, (de)legitimization strategies and identity creation in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya and discovered that these helped the understanding that issues of development are contested hence can give rise to justifications and rivalry among interested parties. It is in this sense then that identity creation and (de)legitimization come into play as leaders out do one another and create rivalry and hence some portray others in negative light and others create identities to assert their power.

Thus, argumentative shows in Kenyan broadcast media have become key platforms for interrogating public policy, shaping discourse and holding leaders accountable. Mwai

(2018) analyzed selected radio and TV talk shows to describe their structure, identify recurrent argumentative features, examine question types, and define the communicative purposes of different discourse phases. Drawing on Genre and Conversation Analysis, it found that these talk shows formed a distinct communicative genre marked by recurring patterns, structured phases, and shared functions. Specific question types played a central role in managing argumentation, engaging audiences, and ensuring political accountability. While the study offered insight into the rhetorical and structural features of media talk, it overlooked how political identities were constructed within development discourse; especially in indigenous-language media. This study addressed that deficiency by examining how political identities are constructed in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya, contributing to an understanding of localized language use, political subjectivity, and public perception in East African media.

2.2 Development Discourse

The discourse of development is an area highly contested, implying that it is characterized by disagreements and arguments among scholars, policy makers and practitioners concerning the meaning of the term (Goudge, 2003). Naz (2006) outlines two key terms that help define development discourse; these are modernization and dependency. Modernization means totally transforming a rural or pre-modern society into a modern type with the kind of technology and social organization likened to the developed prosperous, economically and politically stable nations of the West. This means that when people conceptualize development, they use the measure of the Western countries. Dependency is about developing nations relying on the powerful developed nations who take their resources and enrich their economies at the expense of the poor nations causing global inequalities through historical and ongoing exploitative relationships. Dependency divides the world into a 'core' of wealthy, industrialized nations and a 'periphery' of less developed, often resource-rich nations. There is unequal exchange where the less developed provides cheap labour and raw materials to the wealthy nations and in turn import expensive manufactured goods (Naz 2006). Development discourse is the process whereby people talk about knowledge which enables concept and theories on how to change the society. Once the conception of what needs to be done happens then power comes in as financial and material support

are sought in order to realize the change (Escobar, 1995). That is people discuss what they know can be implemented or needs to be implemented after which policies are made and action for social progress (development) can take place. It is therefore the use of language to discuss social progress through engaging stakeholders and policy makers which facilitates conducive environments, considers risks and looks for opportunities as well as also promoting information exchange for positive social change via sustainable development. This study investigated language features and structures used to communicate development on radio, and also sought to understand the legitimization strategies and identity construction devices employed by speakers in shaping certain realities of development.

2.2.1 Development

Development has been changing since the notion was introduced and at first there was a more narrow and liberal sense where development meant economic growth. This later changed to a multifaceted approach that scholars from neo-liberal and post-development perspective on sustainable development contend to explain and structure (Hopper, 2018). To most agencies and people working on the field, development primarily seeks to reduce global poverty and inequality by focusing on different areas of social, economic and political life (Hopper, 2018). For instance, the UNDP (United Nations Development Program) embodies the main values and practices of human development. Moreover, development studies have benefited from the act of applying ‘mainstream’ notions of discourse and power by Foucault who investigated practices by which we govern ourselves and the others. He did a discursive analysis of some important human experiences in order to understand the dynamics of these practices (Escobar, 1995) and the discursive practices connected to the experiences help bring out the operations of power at play in the discourses.

Naz (2006) posits that the aspect of development is always paraded as a humanitarian and moral or ethical concern in the hearts of the rich to care for the less fortunate. Those who support this view argue that it is not possible for development to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor. The UNDP statistics quoted in Rist (2010), shows that the gap between the 20 per cent poorest and the 20 per cent richest of the world has more than doubled over the last 40 years of so-called development aid. This study thus

focused on the critical analysis of development discourse on radio as leaders spoke and presented their development goals as a way of fulfilling a moral obligation and as a form of taking care of the communities and they used language to bring out this sense. The language used in discoursing brings out the attitudes embedded in the expressions as the researcher analyzed linguistic features, legitimization strategies and identities constructed by leaders. This can be an indirect way of wielding power over the society and an exercise of control over the people.

Ngala (2008) did a study on development communication. The study focused on the impact of development content in FM radio stations in Kenya. It identified the challenges such as limited time available for development communication, audience preferences not well met and issues of language barrier hindering effective communication. She therefore recommended better packaging of development discussions and also suggested that there should be enough airtime allocated for development discourse programs. She posited that this would help raise the impact of such talks and bring more profitable engagements. The study did not consider linguistic features of the language used in the communication hence, the need identified for a study that analysed features of language on development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations where leaders were involved as in the present research.

Another researcher, Manje (2019), focused on community radio and the development agenda in slum areas in Kenya specifically a case of Pamoja FM in Nairobi. The study explored the contribution of community radio in the development of marginalized areas. In addition, it described the role of radio in ensuring peace, security and encouraging community participation. It also looked at the effect of regulatory frameworks on community radio operations. Musimbi (2023) also did a study on discourse analysis of call-in conversational texts of vernacular radio stations for Vuuka FM. The study employed the critical discourse analysis (CDA) to investigate how the language used in the call-in conversations reflect socio-cultural dynamics among speakers of Lugooli in Vihiga county, Kenya. The current study looked at the discourse of development as leaders spoke using varying linguistic features and employing legitimization strategies while constructing identities of self and others to bring out essential elements embedded in language to deliver discourse of development.

Language use in radio news broadcasts is deeply tied to ideological underpinnings and discursive strategies that shape political representation. Ajewole-Orimogunje (2012) examined this relationship in political news reports from the Osun State Broadcasting Corporation (OSBC) in Nigeria, addressing the underexplored link between ideology and discourse strategies. The study analyzed 250 purposively sampled broadcasts from 2007 to 2010. It identified three dominant ideologies: historicist, humanitarian, and welfarist, each articulated through distinct discourse strategies. The historicist ideology used high-transitivity transitive clauses, spatio-temporal adverbials, and varied verbal processes to narrate political actions. Humanitarian and welfarist ideologies employ strategies such as blame transfer, source avoidance, positive self-representation, manipulation, and selective statistics to support the ruling party and deflect criticism. These findings highlighted how language legitimized political actors and agenda, with news discourse serving ideological purposes. However, the study did not examine the linguistic strategies used by political leaders themselves in development discourse within indigenous-language media. To address the inadequacy, the present study investigated the linguistic strategies political leaders used in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya, contributing to a localized understanding of how language shaped and negotiated development narratives in vernacular broadcasting.

2.2.2 Ideology

In language studies, ideology connotes a system of ideas, beliefs, fundamental commitments or values regarding social reality (Apple, 1990); or an organized group of ideas, organized from a particular point of view (Hodge & Kress, 1979). Ideology alludes to the way in which social and political meaning is expressed through language (Kroskrity, 2000) and it helps manage cultural beliefs and practices including the relations of power that come up. Bernstein (2000) asserts that every time people engage in any discourse, there is particular ideology involved. When looking at development discourse analysis, it is always useful to understand the ideologies that are used to drive development since ideology shapes the deepest assumptions of any issue that is being addressed. Ideologies mostly have to do with representations that are grounded on our belief systems which are usually the reason for discourse among other social practices.

(Van Dijk, 2005). This is to mean that people discourse in order to bring out internally owned values and beliefs that usually determine what people say or communicate and the manner in which they do it. One of the chief objectives of critical discourse analysis is to expose hidden ideologies brought out in the language used and enhance understanding of the ideas communicated to the reader or listener. Ideology is linked to the relations of power and dominance in society. According to Fowler (1985), ideology could be displayed through observable and well-described linguistic forms such as the structure of vocabulary and the clause structure; it can also be manifested in implicit meanings which do not have direct surface structure representation like metaphor. In this study, the researcher sought features that helped unravel elements not obviously noted from the surface meanings of words by describing and interpreting the linguistic forms used in discourse of development.

Against this backdrop, Simiyu (2015) sought to find whether development-focused programming is prioritized in broadcast media, with a case study of KBC Radio Taifa. The study aimed to determine the airtime allocated to development journalism, identify production challenges, and assess its audience impact. Using a qualitative approach informed by the Technology Acceptance Model and Agenda Setting Theory, data were gathered through purposive sampling of programme schedules, interviews, and questionnaires. Findings revealed that only 33% of airtime was devoted to development content, with entertainment dominating the schedule. Challenges included limited funding, tight deadlines, shifting audience preferences, and ownership influence. The study concluded that development journalism was underrepresented and susceptible to manipulation, recommending clearer definitions, better funding, and safeguards against commercial interference. However, it did not explore how political leaders linguistically constructed identities or (de)legitimized development as they engaged in discourse in indigenous-language media. Addressing this gap, the present study investigated features used in language of development, (de)legitimization strategies used by political leaders in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM in Kenya, shedding light on how language is wielded to assert authority, credibility, and shape public perception in vernacular broadcasting.

Fairclough (2002) asserts that ideologies are assumptions built into practices which sustain relations of dominance, usually in a covert way. Ideologies are implicit and are connected to key words which evoke but leave implicit sets of ideological assumptions. The ideas presupposed by the writer from the beginning shows his ideologies while the kind of discourse one uses and the language associated are significant in bringing out ideology. In addition to text analysis, it is important to consider reception, interpretation and social effects of texts (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997) so as to understand ideological practices. The choice of words by the writer and the syntactic structures serve to bring out inherent ideas and beliefs. In this study therefore, the way speakers used language helped the researcher identify linguistic features that were explained and interpreted to bring out the meanings implied in the context of use. Legitimization and identity construction were also analyzed to bring out the beliefs and values inherent in development discourse of leaders.

It has been argued that ideology can be categorized into at least three different dimensions. Firstly, ideology can be seen as distinct rationalizations of specific groups, such as professional ideologies; secondly, it can be understood as wider social movement or political programs; and thirdly, as holistic world views, that some have called 'symbolic universes' (Apple, 1990). There are three issues that characterize ideology: legitimation, power conflict and a special style of argument. Legitimation serves the purpose of justifying actions and beliefs through rationalizing the interests of a group. This validation of the beliefs and actions of a group of people happens through discourse. This study explored how politicians and other participants in media discourse used language to construct socio-economic identities and legitimization strategies especially since speaking about development entailed inequalities and power issues.

2.2.3 Relationship between Language and Ideology

The relationship between language, ideology and media remains a key focus in critical discourse studies especially within the realm of broadcast communication. Gill (1991), writing against the backdrop of ongoing debates in social psychology and media studies, investigated the ideological workings of popular radio. Positioning her work between Marxist and post-structuralist approaches, she advocated for a critical understanding of ideology as a force that upholds unequal power dynamics. Through

discourse analysis of BBC Radio One, Gill examined how the seemingly casual banter of disc jockeys contributed to shaping and normalizing particular worldviews, subtly reinforcing existing social hierarchies. Her study also delved into interviews with radio presenters, highlighting how gender ideologies were woven into their perceptions of themselves and their audiences. One of the study's most revealing insights was the malleability of sexist discourse; how broadcasters justified the marginalization of women in ways that usually escaped more conventional forms of analysis. Gill ultimately argued that popular radio was far from being ideologically neutral; instead, it played a crucial role in reproducing dominant social narratives and inequalities. Still, while her work shed light on how Western radio contributed to gendered identity formation and ideological maintenance, it stopped short of examining how political identities are shaped within development-focused discourse in non-Western, indigenous-language media. This study endeavoured to fix that by examining how political identities are constructed in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya, offering fresh insights into the relationship of language, power, and identity in African radio contexts.

Radio has emerged as a vital platform for democratizing communication and enhancing local participation in development discourse across Africa. Lewil Diedong and Dzisah (2023) examined the application of community radio (CR's) core principles in Ghana and assessed its capacity to foster participatory communication that empowered communities in development processes. The primary aim of their study was to demonstrate how CR could drive democratic engagement by enabling marginalized populations to participate meaningfully in decision-making. Their analysis revealed that although CR had existed in Ghana for over two decades, its potential remained largely untapped due to poor implementation of its fundamental principles, weak collaboration with development stakeholders, and a lack of structural support. The study concluded that, unless these challenges were addressed, the transformative power of CR in facilitating grassroots development would remain elusive. While the study integrated the importance of media democratization and participatory communication, it did not interrogate the discursive strategies political actors use to legitimize or delegitimize development narratives, particularly in indigenous-language media spaces. This study addressed that gap by exploring the (de)legitimization strategies

employed by political leaders in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya, thereby contributing to a richer understanding of how language is used to construct authority, credibility, and contestation in localized political and development communication.

Community radio has become a key driver of grassroots empowerment and policy engagement in poverty reduction across Africa. Vincent (2024) examined media advocacy's role in combating poverty through Karuguuza Development Radio (KDR) 100.3 FM in Uganda's Kibaale District. Using agenda-setting theory, the study explored how KDR's programming influenced public perceptions of poverty and shared information on resources and development initiatives. Findings showed that KDR raised awareness, promoted local success stories, and provided educational content that fostered community involvement and empowerment. Through inclusive storytelling, the station challenged stereotypes and strengthened community solidarity. Vincent (2024) concluded that culturally responsive, participatory community radio could drive social change and inform policy. However, the study did not address how political leaders strategically (de)legitimized development narratives on indigenous-language radio. To fill this gap, the present study examined (de)legitimization strategies used by political leaders in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM in Kenya, contributing to a deeper understanding of language, power, and persuasion in localized media contexts.

Vernacular radio has become a powerful medium for grassroots engagement, civic education, and development communication in Kenya. Sang (2015) examined this role through a case study of Kass FM, a Kalenjin-language station, aiming to assess how indigenous languages in broadcasting enhanced public understanding of governance and development issues. Using purposive sampling, the study found that vernacular radio significantly raised citizen awareness on topics such as education, agriculture, politics, and healthcare. This was achieved through strategic language use, including the borrowing and adaptation of technical terms from English and Kiswahili. The study concluded that vernacular radio was vital for delivering development information to rural audiences and called for government support to diversify programming and mainstream local languages in line with Vision 2030. However, while highlighting the

developmental potential of vernacular media, the study did not address how political leaders use language to (de)legitimize and bring out identity in development discourse in these spaces. To fill this gap, the present study investigated the linguistic features, (de)legitimization strategies used and identities created by political leaders in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio, offering insights into how language asserts authority, builds credibility, and shapes public narratives in localized governance contexts.

Ideological positioning plays a pivotal role in shaping media content and influencing public perception in radio broadcasting. Milyane (2017) explored how ideology is embedded in radio programming through a case study of Reks Radio, a long-standing commercial station in Garut Regency, Indonesia. Situated within a constructivist paradigm, the study aimed at examining how institutional and religious ideologies were reflected in the station's flagship interactive program, *Bianglala*. The study found that Reks Radio is ideologically anchored in the Islamic moral principle of *amar ma'ruf nahi munkar*, promoting good and forbidding evil, which shaped both on-air and off-air activities of its staff. Listeners, in turn, reportedly internalized this vision, with many treating the program's messages as guiding principles in their daily lives. The study further demonstrated the ideological convergence between the station's religious vision and Indonesia's national ideology, Pancasila, showing how media could mediate between spiritual and civic value systems. While Milyane (2017) offered significant insight into how ideology functioned within the structure and content of radio broadcasts, it did not examine how political actors used language in development discourse through local media. To address this gap, the present study investigated features that brought out linguistic forms used in development discourse, identities constructed by leaders and (de)legitimization strategies employed by political leaders as they engaged in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya, shedding light on how political identity, power, and authority are discursively constructed in indigenous-language broadcasting spaces.

2.3 Community Radio and Development

Radio has been utilized mainly to air public communication in developing countries and particularly Africa and it has helped facilitate transformations in the society as well

as new developments and practices in different sectors including education, health and agriculture. Development discourse and a variety of studies on communication have attested to the power wielded by media communication in developing society. Mbindyo (1985) posits that mass media significantly stimulates and accelerates national development and cited radio as a very important form of mass communication since radio is highly accessible. Mbidyo (1985) says that radio has an accessibility rate of 86% covering large geographical areas and giving the best source of discourse for the improvement of the welfare of the local community.

Community radio serves as a vital platform for participatory public dialogue, empowering communities to drive social change from within. Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (2002) illustrated how a radio station owned and operated by the community provided a space for identifying and analyzing local problems, facilitating the formulation of development solutions that aligned with actual needs. The study emphasized that open access to on-air complaints and discussions enabled citizens to hold local authorities accountable, fostering good governance and transparency. Additionally, the accessibility and the low cost of community radio made it an effective medium for connecting underserved communities to broader information networks, including the Internet. However, while the study highlighted the structural and participatory strengths of community radio, it did not examine how political leaders construct or negotiate political identities through development discourse in indigenous-language stations. To address this gap, the present study investigated the linguistic features, strategies of legitimization and construction of political identities in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya, offering insights into how language is used to frame leadership, assert authority, and influence public perception in localized governance contexts.

2.3.1 The State of the Community Radio in Society

Moemeka, (1985) argues that a society with poor communication and information infrastructure always trails behind communities with efficient information infrastructure. People are exposed to what goes on in society because the radio airs issues of development time after time. As communication cuts across the society, it brings up ideas and strengthens the feeling of togetherness and through the exchange of messages, thoughts are translated into actions meaning that the rural radio helps to

achieve development even in the interior (Moemeka, 1985). Since the dawn of civilization, every society's growth, survival and continuity depends on among other things, a system of communication, through which people exchange ideas, feelings; an economic system offering services and a health system to counteract disease and ensure human reproduction; a sociopolitical system to maintain control and order and a defence system to protect their territories against external aggression (Ugboaja, 1985). Therefore, this study looked at the communication on development conducted on radio stations as leaders spoke about development issues related to the social, economic and political well being of the society where significant utterances from radio talk shows were analyzed to bring out various linguistic, legitimization and identity features applied in articulating any development agenda.

According to Mogeckwu (1990), the rural radio is very useful in the introduction and sustenance of change in rural communities; for instance, Nigerian leaders have constantly been utilizing the Western mass media to facilitate rural development, indicating that there is a pressing need to improve and there is also need for more rural stations airing programs tailored to the needs of the rural dwellers in order to enhance national development. Through mobilization of the people at the grassroots level, the radio can bring about national consciousness (Mogeckwu, 1990). This is because no meaningful mass-oriented development program, particularly in rural communities of Africa can succeed without the active involvement of the people within the traditional system. This then justified the reason for the researcher engaging in a study that analyzed discourse of development in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations which established linguistic features, legitimization strategies and identity construction as leaders endeavored to align with the needs of the society that they lead.

Asemah (2011), asserts that of all the mass media generally available to Africans, radio is the most wide spread and accessible; and owing to its special qualities, radio can be a major force in bringing about development, that is, causing quantitative and qualitative improvements in the lives of the people. This study therefore helped critically examine development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations to establish linguistic features, legitimization strategies and identity construction which can be a resource to enhance future deliberations of development matters in the community. Odhiambo (2002) says that local language radio is considered the most

popular mass medium and the local language radio stations broadcast in assorted languages with stations covering major towns in Kenya and they are also the most dominant media in the rural areas. The multiple languages used in broadcasting affect the size of audience that broadcasters can possibly reach because of the multiplicity of languages and the number of audiences that are reached. Most Kenyans rely on broadcast media, for news. The use of local languages as a broadcasting strategy can help in penetrating the rural areas where 68 percent of Kenyans live (KNBS, 2010). Therefore, there has always been a need for wide media coverage using local languages that can address diverse local dynamics of the rural Kenyan population. In the light of the above assertions, this study was carried out to find out how linguistic elements and features that help explore development issues in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations facilitate understanding of development communication as leaders engage with the interested parties.

2.3.2 Contributions of the Community Radio

Community radio offers a critical avenue for empowering grassroots populations by placing communication tools directly in their hands. Attuh and Kankam (2024) examined community radio as a tool for rural participatory development, focusing on its role in promoting sustainable rural development in Ghana. The study adopted a qualitative approach, selecting two community radio stations and using purposive and convenient sampling to interview 34 participants, including programme managers, producers, presenters, and listeners. Through semi-structured interviews, the study captured in-depth insights into how community radio functioned at the local level. The findings revealed that these stations provided access to information services that addressed livelihood challenges and offered platforms for community members to contribute to programming that reflected their aspirations and needs. The study emphasized the importance of resourcing community radio to expand its capacity to deliver livelihood-focused content. However, while it highlighted the participatory and developmental functions of community radio, it did not examine how political leaders used language to describe development, create identity and (de)legitimize in development discourse as accomplished in this study.

Community radio (CR) stations in Uganda are predominantly owned, managed, and operated by local communities to facilitate effective service delivery to residents. Katamba (2023) explored the role of CR in Uganda, noting that while some stations were owned by NGOs, private individuals, or the state, the majority functioned as platforms for community-driven communication. Despite facing challenges such as owner-imposed restrictions and government censorship, CR stations enabled public participation in decision-making by amplifying local voices and concerns. These stations contributed to public education, health awareness, crime prevention, domestic violence intervention, and cultural and religious empowerment, aligning closely with community interests and aspirations. Broadcasting in both local and international languages, CR stations improved accessibility and engagement, with voluntary public participation further strengthening ties between station management and the audience. The study also provided historical context on radio development in Africa and Uganda and reports that 60% of CR stations operated at the regional level, 20% at the national level, and 20% at the community level, with none reaching international audiences. While many stations had retained their public-service orientation, some had shifted toward commercial broadcasting. However, the study did not examine how political leaders use language to (de)legitimize and create identity in development discourse within these indigenous-language CR platforms. To address this gap, the present study explored (de)legitimization strategies and identities employed by political leaders in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya to establish the use of language to bring out development agenda.

Wabwire (2013) analyzed the contribution of community radio to the development of marginalized rural populations globally, with a particular focus on Kenya. Drawing on global data and existing literature, the study highlighted how community radio facilitated grassroots-level participation and enabled the horizontal circulation of ideas within rural communities, key conditions for democratizing communication and redistributing power. The findings underscored that community radio had become an effective and inclusive medium for delivering unbiased information and enhancing development efforts, especially among the socio-culturally and geographically isolated. The study also examined various community radio ownership models worldwide and offered policy recommendations for sustaining community radio, particularly in Kenya

and East Africa. However, while the article successfully addressed structural and participatory contributions of community radio, it did not explore how political identities were linguistically constructed within development discourse in indigenous-language CR platforms. To fill this gap, the present study investigated the construction of political identities in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya, thereby contributing to an enriched understanding of how localized language practices shaped political subjectivity and influence public engagement in vernacular media contexts.

Community radio (CR) in Kenya has long been championed as a tool for rural development, yet questions persist about its effectiveness in addressing socio-economic and political challenges. Ochichi (2014) evaluated the impact of CR on rural development, noting that despite the presence of over 30 stations, many communities still faced significant developmental issues. The study, grounded in participatory communication theory and employing a cross-sectional mixed-methods design, examined eight CR stations, with a closer analysis of four categorized as either “successful” or “unsuccessful” based on a facilitative CR model. Findings showed that while CR contributed moderately to development through information dissemination, it often failed to foster genuine community participation, with programming largely driven by station staff. The study recommended greater community involvement, localized broadcasting, interactive content, and a stronger CR network. However, it did not explore how political leaders used language to speak on development as they created identities and legitimized themselves while delegitimizing others in development discourse within indigenous-language CR as done by the current researcher.

2.4 Media Discourse

According to Fiske (1992) it may be difficult to observe culture, but the way media is used can be examined to find out that how people do audiencing which is an important entry that enables one to understand the way systems of the society work and how people familiarize and understand them. In addition, Fiske (1992) explains that audiencing practices are a way of practising culture, and therefore a necessary aspect to observe. As far as community media is concerned, participation is a key ingredient and it is deemed one of the features that distinguish community media from others. The

participation feature is often considered a part of development which is popular in politics and democracy as well as communication and development. In this study, political leaders were featured as participants engaging in development discourse with the media practitioners on Muuga and Meru FM radio stations and made use of linguistic features, (de)legitimization strategies and creation of identities.

Scholars in communication understand participatory discourse to constitute people's right to communicate (Thomas, 2008); a way used to challenge powerful discourses (Carpentier, Lie, & Servaes 2001); the mode through which communities develop and practise their citizenship (Rodriguez 2016; Jenkins and Carpentier 2013); and a platform to express their voices (Pettit, Salazar & Dragon 2009). Meadows, Forde, Ewart & Foxwell (2009) point out that when communities take part in media affairs, other broader concepts in society like democracy and citizenship are enhanced. This is due to the fact that, power relations get disturbed in the production and reception of media within the community during the interactions between community members and media producers. In community media, participants are thought to be more empowered when they participate. In this respect then this study investigated how the Meru and Muuga FM radio stations employed language spoken during discussions on development to examine the linguistic and socio-political features used in the discourse of development on Kimeru FM radio stations. These linguistic and discursive features were found to be impactful in legitimization and delegitimization as well as creating identities of speakers involved.

Radio language is a multimodal phenomenon shaped by the relationship of sound, music, and discourse that requires innovative approaches for comprehensive analysis. Theodosiadou (2022) argued that combining quasi-Conversation Analysis (CA) with sound semiotics provided an effective framework for studying radio language by capturing its complex interactive patterns. Using this approach to analyze a legendary Greek music radio show, the study demonstrated how the DJ's persona, audience-producer interactions, and a distinctive style of music journalism dynamically shaped radio communication. The findings underscored the uniqueness of high-quality music journalism on Greek radio and highlighted the challenges of applying new methodologies to radio language studies. However, the study centered on entertainment

radio and did not address how discourse of development, particularly in development contexts, was linguistically constructed on community or indigenous-language radio stations. Against this backdrop, the present study investigated linguistic aspects, legitimization and the political identities constructed in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya.

A study by O’Keeffe (2006) investigated how spoken interactions in media settings such as radio phone-ins, political interviews, and chat shows were structured and interpreted. The aim of the study was to explore how media discourse constructed relationships and identities through a three-way participation framework involving the broadcaster, interviewee, and audience, drawing on Goffman’s interactional theory. By combining discourse analysis, conversation analysis, and corpus linguistics, the study found that media interactions were carefully managed to sustain pseudo-relationships, project authority, and construct ‘others,’ particularly in political contexts involving leaders like Tony Blair and George W. Bush. O’Keeffe concluded that media talk was a complex, multimodal space where identities were strategically negotiated and where audience alignment was shaped through linguistic and paralinguistic cues.

Radio news discourse is essential in shaping public understanding and cultural identity, especially when delivered in indigenous languages. Ekezie (2024) examined the discourse units that characterized Igbo-language radio news programs in Nigeria an area previously underexplored in media linguistics. Drawing on data from seven radio stations in Western Nigeria, the study identified recurring linguistic features such as news signature, time announcement, greetings, self-identification, and structured farewells. These elements followed a ritualistic, culturally-anchored format, and their absence disrupted listener expectations, making the broadcast appear linguistically and socially inappropriate. The study concluded that these linguistic patterns served not only communicative but also cultural functions, reinforcing community norms and shared values through structured language use. However, while Ekezie’s work illuminate the cultural salience of linguistic features in news discourse, it did not address how such linguistic strategies were used by political leaders in development discourse particularly in community-based vernacular media. This study, therefore, examined the linguistic features employed by political leaders in development

discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya, focusing on how such features were used to legitimize authority, connect with local audiences, and promote development narratives.

Radio broadcasting policies in Africa are deeply intertwined with socio-political history, language debates, and patterns of political participation. Chibita (2009) investigated these interconnections in the Ugandan context through a critical media studies lens, employing J.B. Thompson's depth hermeneutics as the guiding methodological framework. The study explored Uganda's media-political landscape, the contentious language debate, and how historical factors shaped contemporary indigenous language broadcasting policies. The study found that indigenous language broadcasting played a central role in facilitating political participation, yet its effectiveness was often shaped by tensions between state control, commercial imperatives, and audience needs. It concluded that future media policies must be historically informed, commercially viable, and inclusive of public and private stakeholders' interests to enhance democratic engagement. While this research offered a nuanced understanding of indigenous language broadcasting in Uganda; it did not explore the specific discursive strategies political leaders used in vernacular media to legitimize or delegitimize development initiatives. Against this backdrop, the present study explored (de)legitimization strategies in development discourse by political leaders on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya.

According to Ogola (2011), Kenya's news media have evolved through four distinct phases since independence, each deeply shaped by the country's shifting political and economic landscape. The article traced the trajectory of Kenya's media development from the post-independence era to the post-2007 electoral crisis, analyzing the power structures between the media and the state. The study identified key moments, including the media's cooption under Kenyatta in the 1960s, repression and control during Moi's Nyayo era, the fragmentation of public discourse during the 2007 elections, and the media's tentative efforts to foster national dialogue thereafter. The findings revealed that while the media played a role in both enabling and constraining democratic participation, they remained embedded in structures of political patronage and economic influence. The article concluded that Kenya's media have not functioned as

fully autonomous democratic institutions but have continually negotiated their agency within contested political and economic terrains. However, Ogola's work did not investigate the linguistic mechanisms, particularly in vernacular radio, through which political figures (de)legitimized using development discourse. This study thus filled that gap by examining the linguistic features used by political leaders in development discourse as they (de) legitimized and also created identity on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya.

2.4.1 The Features of Media Discourse

Renni (2006) asserts that when mass media is used well, it has the power to make the public increasingly aware of the pertinent goals of society. Media discourse has the capability to influence the decisions of legislators, policymakers, and public officials dealing with these programs and services especially those that concern development. This implies that, by providing information that enables coping capacities against stress, media can help enhance social development. In support of this social development aspect, Servaes (2002) posits that there is need to provide media with the right environment, freedom, capacities, checks and balances. Therefore, media needs to be considered not only as tools for the information dissemination and a lot of comic relief, but as means of communicating messages about various topical issues like development, health and education as well as instilling knowledge and skills.

To narrativize development is one of the main functions of radio in Africa (Myers, 2000; Martin, 2003). Myers (2000) envisaged radio as having an important role in development and thus argued that localizing radio experience encouraged a participatory approach to issues such as health and community literacy and it opened up spaces for listeners to make informed choices. Martin (2003) argued that making the development agenda a part of issues handled on radio had led to the 'hybridization' with other analytical tools of development that include theatre, dialogue and social discourse, as the radio medium tried to connect fiction to social reality. In relation to the attempts to discourse development, a question that usually arises was how such effects might be achieved through mass media entertainment. For a development message to take root, it needs to be packaged in a form that is realistic and appears to be closely related to the everyday world. In this study, the language of community

leaders and other participants on radio programs were examined as they spoke on radio about development of the society.

Community radio is highly valued because it is the mode of expressing local perspectives not well represented in other media like television (Jolly 2016). According to the UNDP (2018) it is important to enhance people's capacities by investing in social sectors so that there is adequate provision of services and opportunities. A good illustration is the devolved governments like the case of county governments in Kenya where citizens of every walk can directly participate in issues of governance where development is a key factor. In order to realize the power of grassroots communication, it is imperative that radio producers are armed with the ability to facilitate programmes so that radio becomes an effective means of communication. Therefore, this study looked at development talks among leaders and media practitioners in the Meru and Muuga FM radio stations as they engaged in development discourse as features of language speaking about development were analyzed revealing the identities of the engaged individuals and (de)legitimization techniques used.

According to Servaes and Malikhao (2005), community radio emphasizes participation of the local people, self-management and collective decision making from the beginning to the end of the development process (from the time issues are identified to the period of taking action). In line with the participatory ideals of community radio, Sen (1999) looked at development as a form of freedom and explored it as an expansion of the freedoms valued socially and individually and so the researcher undertook a study on development discourse on radio interactions in order to understand the use of linguistic choices to interpret development as it was talked about on Meru and Muuga FM radio station where leaders freely interacted with media practitioners articulating development agenda. News discourse in digital environments has undergone notable transformations, giving rise to new textual and communicative features unique to the online sphere. Nazarova (2023) explored the distinct characteristics of online news discourse and differentiated between related digital discourse concepts such as computer, electronic, digital, and virtual discourse. The study found that online news exhibited three primary features: efficiency (rapid updates), concentration (multiple news items on a single page), and versatility (multiple perspectives available instantly).

It further concluded that “virtual discourse” was the most encompassing term, describing communication embedded in virtual reality, which generated diverse discursive formations beyond purely Internet-based content. While Nazarova’s study made significant contributions to understanding digital news environments, it did not address how language was strategically deployed in broadcast media especially vernacular radio to frame development narratives. This study filled that gap by examining the linguistic features used by political leaders in development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya, offering insight into how language functioned as a political and developmental tool within localized media contexts.

Bakuuro and Diedong (2021) investigated the linguistic devices, stylistic choices, and rhetorical approaches employed in media discourse particularly newspaper editorials to stake claims to knowledge, influence reader attitudes, and promote critical thinking. The study examined both the functional roles of these linguistic strategies and their communicative effects. Drawing data from eight Ghanaian newspapers, the authors analyzed editorial excerpts using Systemic Functional Linguistics and van Dijk’s theory of media discourse. Findings revealed that linguistic tools such as modality, evaluative adjectives, adverbs, rhetoric, idioms, and generic phrases were intentionally employed to state opinions, express attitudes, and persuade readers. The study concluded that editorial writers used language purposefully to shape public perception and stimulate reflective engagement. However, while Bakuuro and Diedong provided valuable insights into print media discourse, their work did not account for how political leaders used similar or distinct linguistic features in vernacular radio broadcasts, particularly in development discourse. This study addressed that gap by examining the linguistic features employed by political leaders in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya. It found out that language can be used as a tool to challenge lack of development and also present the milestones achieved as it created various identities of those involved.

News discourse is paramount in shaping perceptions of legitimacy and political identity through strategic linguistic choices. Ngonyani (2000) examined how Tanzania’s state-controlled newspapers, *Uhuru* and *Mzalendo*, covered the 1978 and 1990 University of Dar es Salaam student protests, in order to uncover the linguistic features such as lexical choices, framing devices, and evaluative expressions used to (de)legitimize social

actors. Through Critical Discourse Analysis, the study found that government media consistently constructed students as selfish and unruly, while portraying the state as a fair, parental figure, thereby legitimizing authoritarian responses and obscuring the democratic intentions of the protests. Ngonyani concluded that such manipulations of discourse enabled post-colonial regimes to maintain public support despite oppressive actions. However, while this study highlighted print media in a historical Tanzanian context, it left unaddressed how similar (de)legitimization strategies and identity constructions unfolded in contemporary vernacular radio. This study filled that gap by exploring how political leaders on Meru and Muuga FM radio in Kenya used linguistic features of passivization, modality, transitivity, and nominalization in development discourse while (de)legitimizing actors and constructing political identities.

2.5 Critical Discourse Analysis on Development Discourse

The critical study of political discourse is closely aligned with the discourse analytic approach of CDA. Aligning PDA and CDA assumes that political discourse is (and ought to be) carried out through a critical lens and hence CDA is at its core, a political endeavor. In his argument for a ‘more critical reading of the label’ PDA, van Dijk (1997) contends that this domain of research should be understood as encompassing the analysis of political discourse and a political approach to discourse analysis. Moreover, he insists that to be ‘studied most interestingly,’ political discourse analysts should assume a critical vantage. This ‘critical-political discourse analysis’ examines the means by which ‘political power, power abuse or domination’ manifest in and are enacted through discourse structures and practices. Depending on how inclusively or exclusively one defines political discourse, most CDA research could be characterized as PDA.

Political or public discourse can be described as ‘public communication on various topics engaging people or participants connected with certain policy domains or broadly on issues that are of value to society (Ferree, Gabson, Gerbards, & Rucht, 2002). According to Gastil (2008), political talks should maintain a degree of respect for oneself and the fellow participants meaning that people need to listen to one another to display the fact that they are in agreement even though there are usually differing points of view. Furthermore, political leaders are likely to vent their anger against their fellow

leaders and seek to legitimize themselves and create identity through the linguistic structures they use as this study found out. In the words of Chilton and Schaffner (2011), political discourse functions in three main ways. That is coercion and resistance where coercion is displayed through speech whereby there is selection of topics in conversations, laws, commands, edicts; people positioning themselves and others and generally controlling others through language. In resistance, the opposing power exercises counter-deployment of the coercive strategies. In media, persuasion may be a good indication of coercion because instead of force, media uses soft language to persuade (Van Dijk, 1997); and (de) legitimization which is a way of using language to justify certain actions and display others as unacceptable; and the third function is representation and misrepresentation which is about actors controlling information by employing tactics like secrecy or censorship, inclusion or omission of actors (Chilton & Schaffner, 2011). According to this study, the researcher found out how language was used to speak about development as elements of (de)legitimization surfaced in the linguistic forms employed by the speakers. Coercion was also seen as leaders used kind words to persuade others to work for the people and elements of representation and misrepresentation were present in the development discourses as leaders described themselves and others depending on their interests.

According to Van Dijk (1997), viewpoints or ideological positionings of other people can be legitimized or delegitimized as politicians gear up to position themselves and assert power. Intentionality is intrinsically related to political discourse and the act of legitimization. Political discourse is usually premeditated and intentional where it is planned before (Ochs, 1979) and a team that advises the politician in place to revise and edit speeches (Capone, 2010) to ensure that hegemonic power is maintained through varying styles and particularly through discourse. If all goes well, and the speaker's communicative purpose is understood properly, the addressee will fulfill that purpose. It is therefore reasonable that an utterance should aim at something which should be fulfilled if the purpose is taken up (Capone, 2010). Speech acts are effective in a particular situation and not only do they rely on the situations in which they are uttered, but they also actively create it (Mey, 2001). The contextual setting validates the authority of the politician and that power allows the politician to present his speech as truth. Consequently, the institutional authority of the discourse validates the truth or

credibility of the political message. Hence analysis of discourse of development in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations with leaders of the community was the reason for this study and it was established that language is a tool that shapes development through discoursing about issues that affect the progress of communities or projects that the listeners identify with in the society.

Politicians exercise the symbolic power contained in the use of language to ‘naturalize’ political goals (Fairclough, 2002; Bordieu, 2001). Therefore, politicians harness their power from their status and position to explain or justify acts in a specific way to elicit people’s support, which is an act of legitimization. In this vein, political discourse constitutes an example of persuasive speech, to a certain extent organized and conceived to legitimize political goals (Cap, 2008). The persuasive nature of political discourse allows politicians to present their goals as their audience’s goals: The inspiring orator can also lead a people or rather mislead them, into believing that the narrow self-interest of the governing party is actually the interest of the people as a whole (Joseph, 2006). This study found strategies of legitimization by leaders speaking on development in radio FM stations.

Herbamas (1987) asserts that only a political discussion, which is oriented towards communicative principles of understanding, can promote the development of a deliberative public sphere. Social media is a relatively open communication space that gives almost everyone the opportunity to articulate which issues are of concern to him or her. For politicians, social media platforms like Facebook have considerably increased the possibility to talk directly to the public and thereby strengthen their bond with the public (Gueorguieva, 2008). The willingness of political actors to publish information online means that citizens can easily inform themselves on political issues and are therefore likely to be better informed prior to deliberation (Koop & Jansen, 2009). This study downloaded development talk expressions from the Facebook online platform and transcribed and interpreted the utterances thereby establishing the features that help deliver development discourse more effectively. It was realized that transitivity, passivization, nominalization and modality were best placed to help obscure agency, show commitment, speak to avoid responsibility and also to assert authority over areas of jurisdiction.

2.6 Political Identity Formation

Identity and identity formation are usually displayed in language in several ways. The idea of creating identity is to a great extent meant to help people connect with others first of all an individual to another or an individual links to a larger social group, community or family. This makes people learn and understand how to relate and associate with others either as individuals or groups and how to separate from them in case of any conflict of interest. To support this assertion, de Fina, Schiffrin & Bamberg (2006) posits that identity is basically about telling one another the kind of people we are, the ethnicity from which we stem, the community or race to which we belong, our moral standing, and the ethics we practice or our political alignment. In world democracies, the minority are less focused on creating broad economic equality and are more interested in promoting the purposes of large majority of marginalized groups, for example immigrants, refugees, ethnic minorities, women, gay, bisexual, or lesbians. The majority however, have a commitment to the core mission of maintaining patriotism and protecting the conventional national identity, which is often explicitly connected to race, ethnicity or religion (Fukuyama, 2018).

Smith (1983) asserts that identity is closely related to aspects of gender and ethnicity hence it is discursively and socio-politically created. This is because identity is an idea that is constructed discursively and socio-politically and political identity is closely related to aspects like gender, ethnicity and race (Smith, 1983). In the world of politics identities of their would-be supporters of political leaders are usually created by presenting the people as a group in need of restoration to lift their dignity and cater for their well being. Hence in campaigns the masses are inspired to vote for the right leader who has what it takes to fix such issues of the voters. In this case the voters are identified as marginalized in certain ways and the leader is described as the one who is able to restore the dignity of the common man. van Dijk (1998) argues that human communication is composed of exchanging information, completing tasks, expressing feelings and conveying our identities to one another and connecting with our geographical communities and the social class to which we belong, our stand on moral and ethical issues as well as political inclinations. While we use language to project our own features onto others, we also use it to classify and criticize people, connect with

them to emphasize our shared characteristics, or separate ourselves from them in order to emphasize our differences. This study therefore looked at identities created by leaders as they discoursed on development aligning with particular social groups and individuals; identifying with the marginalized to speak for them and also as they described themselves in relation to their development feats giving rise to various identities as described in the study findings.

Articulation and negotiation of identities is done through language in different ways and styles and identity politics refers to the practice of people using their interests, experiences and opinions which they share with others. These identities are for the purpose of people being able to seek ways to get out of systemic gender inequalities as they express themselves about their experiences and then work together to combat and eliminate oppression. The identity politics features the unique and shared battles and these politics of identity have been used by many groups like the gay, the lesbian and other social movements. The term 'identity politics' is used more generally in academic and research as well as in public debate. The aim of identity politics has expanded in its scope to embrace other areas apart from just issues of oppression. Things to do with white supremacy, xenophobia, misogyny, racism and homophobia have also been included. It is also claimed that identity politics can be associated with religion and religious identities and as a result, it can have serious consequences making identity to become regarded as a precious object, 'an ultimate concern, worth dying for.' (Gillis, 1994).

Through discourse people define who they are and how they relate to others because language use is vital in identity construction. Identity is not a fixed trait but something that is continuously performed and renegotiated through interactions. Identity formation also called identity development or identity construction is a complex process in which humans develop a clear and unique view of themselves and of their identity. Hasndford and Gee (2023) describes identity as something created publicly and it incorporates language and socio-political cultures; moreso in politics where language is used as an identity marker (Emanajo, 2002). Self-concept, personality development and the values one upholds are all closely related to identity formation. In campaigns and radio stations talks, discourse features are used to create social-political

identity (Bwenge, 2009) and individuation is also a critical part of identity formation. Moreover, continuity and inner unity are healthy identity formation whereas a disruption in what could be viewed as abnormal development can contribute to poor or negative identity formation. Specific factors also play a role in identity formation, for instance, race, ethnicity and spirituality and the concept of personal continuity, or personal identity which refers to an individual posing questions about themselves that challenge their original perception, like 'who am I?'. Individual and collective identity was a factor in this study since one of the objectives explored identities constructed by leaders in development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations and identities created bringing out many as responsible, hardworking, voices of truth, concerned and so on.

Language constitutes a fundamental medium through which political identities are discursively constructed, negotiated, and represented, particularly in the context of digital communication. As an essential apparatus for communication, language shapes the manner in which individuals view the world and in the same way it characterizes culture of any general public. Language is not only there for communication but it is also vital for helping us conquer the world. In addition, language has the power to dominate ideas, create different identities and construct a social gap between people and so language and identity are inseparable (Edward, 2004). Words and dialects are filled with meaning inside talks and talks fluctuate in power. The incredible ones give rise to dominant implications, can control different languages and underestimate or quieten dialects and societies. According to Hall (1997), language is neither the property of the speaker nor the respondent but the speaker and respondent have to interact in a cultural or common space where they understand each other and then communicate. Through communication, we not only create identities but we also create cultural differences (Hall, 1997). In addition, language is seen as a tool to reveal private identity and to connect and disconnect an individual from the communal identity. Moreover, language is a maker of social personality or character and a medium to increase confidence and power in the general public. Therefore, language assumes an indispensable role in defining identity. The language used to speak development agenda was found to be very instrumental in bringing out identities of leaders. This was evident

in the utterances extracted from the expressions that presented discourse of development in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations.

The construction of political identity in media discourse is increasingly shaped by digital platforms that mediate interactions between political actors and audiences. Pryma, Shkovubska, Shoshko, Khlystun & Hertsovska (2024) carried out a study on how interviews carried out on political discourse influences the construction of audience identity and their understanding of social and political processes. The study employed cross-cultural analysis, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), and linguistic analysis of identity markers in media texts, and Cronbach's alpha was used to assess methodological reliability. Findings indicated that media and social networks played a key role in identity formation, reflecting shift in society towards digital platforms as very important arenas for public engagement. The study observed increased individualization in identity construction, where personal agency and clarity influenced self-determination. It concluded that identity formation within media texts was a multifaceted process, encompassing the negotiation of individual, group, cultural, and political dimensions. The current study established identities constructed as discourse of development was done on radio.

Political broadcasting remains a pivotal tool for shaping political processes and public opinion in contemporary democracies. Kusugh and Suemo (2022) examined the multidimensional approach to political broadcasting in Nigeria's media dynamics through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The study found that both private and public broadcast media significantly influenced political processes in Nigeria, with political actors exerting substantial control over editorial content. Despite the existence of internal and external regulatory mechanisms intended to uphold professionalism, the study observed that political broadcasts often fell short of expected standards due to weak enforcement and limited adherence to these regulations. The emergence of social media has further complicated the landscape, intensifying challenges faced by broadcast professionals in maintaining ethical standards. The study concluded that while a multidimensional regulatory approach combining self-regulation with external oversight was essential, systemic impediments needed to be addressed through comprehensive reforms to ensure professional integrity in political broadcasting. These

findings inform the current study's focus, which found the identities constructed in development discourse in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya.

Radio political talk shows in sub-Saharan Africa have emerged as significant though imperfect sites of civic engagement and development discourse. According to Mwesige (2009), in his examination of Uganda's radio talk shows, the study employed content analysis, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions to explore the democratic functions and limitations of these media platforms. His findings suggested that political talk radio constituted a mediated public sphere in which citizens accessed information, engaged in deliberative dialogue, and articulated feedback to those in positions of power. These programmes also served as strategic tools for political elites, enabling mobilisation, advocacy, and the gauging of public opinion. However, the study equally highlighted critical dysfunctions within these spaces: the dissemination of misinformation, the promotion of inflammatory rather than informative debate, and the potential for fostering political apathy under the guise of civic participation. Thus, while radio talk shows facilitated a form of mediated political engagement, their contribution to democratic deepening remained ambivalent. These findings provide a valuable point of departure for the present study, which established identities constructed within development discourse on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya.

Media discourse in post-conflict societies often becomes a strategic tool for legitimization, shaping both power relations and professional norms. Brisset-Foucault (2011) examined how the deployment of the labels "*community*" and "*peace media*" in northern Uganda functioned to legitimise particular actors, practices, and institutional arrangements within the media landscape. Focusing on Mega FM, the study explored how the station navigated its dual dependence on the Ugandan state and international NGOs, using these affiliations to secure resources, shield itself from repression, and redefine journalistic professionalism. Through alignment with NGO-driven peace agendas and state interests, Mega FM achieved dominant status in the local media market. In doing so, the station and its personnel embraced a model of media "responsibility" that prioritised support for the peace process, thereby legitimising their role not merely as reporters but as agents of social reconciliation. This analysis demonstrated how identity was discursively and institutionally embedded

within media contexts where discourse of development was handled bringing out aspects of power, responsibility and obligation in society.

2.7 (De) Legitimation in Discourse

In the words of Reyes (2011) legitimization deals with the ‘the discursive strategies that social actors make use of discourse so that they can make valid their beliefs and actions or behaviour. It can also be described as the way a speaker attempts to make use of expressions with the intention of justifying an action or behavior to an audience. On the other hand, delegitimization is an attempt to try and present certain actions or social practices as wrong or unacceptable. Basically, legitimation is accomplished by way of argumentation which implies that a speaker endeavors to provide an argument in a bid to explain a social, political or economic action, decision or behavior or declaration which they think the listener does not agree with or the one they support. Argumentation can be used to describe social and cultural phenomena by basing our description purely on eye-witnessing experience. Essentially, when one witnesses an event or shares membership with a social group that is involved in an event, it makes valid the opinions of the speaker as far as the event is concerned, the issues related to the event or the actions taken in response to a specific event (Hutchby, 2001). In this study the second objective established legitimization strategies as leaders discoursed on development in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations by describing issues of societal development trying to make valid work done.

According to Suchman (1995) legitimacy is the sense in which the actions of an entity are perceived or assumed to be desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions. Thus, legitimacy is possessed objectively, yet it is created subjectively. To be possessed objectively means that legitimacy can be recognized and it can be seen to be existing in the real sense. That means that something that can be accepted by institutions or observers as rightfully in place. For legitimacy to be created subjectively means that the source of legitimacy is the beliefs of people, what they perceive and what people consider valuable is what they justify depending on their tastes and fashions (Suchman, 1995). It means that it is not usually inherent or obvious since people generally legitimize people and issues according to how they judge them subjectively or prejudicially. Legitimation is related

to the speech act of defending oneself, in which speakers explain why they did or did not do something, and why any action engaged in is deemed reasonable and acceptable. In this study, language was found to be used to express (de) legitimization and it was found that leaders made use of development discourse as they engaged with media practitioners employing a variety of expressions meant to bring out strategies of legitimization and delegitimization shaping the narrative of how people assert authority and label others in ways that suit their interests.

Therefore, legitimation is accomplished through use of discourse that persuades or manipulates and certain social or environmental factors are compulsory if a discourse is to achieve a legitimating function. That means for a discourse to be accepted as legitimate, certain conditions require to be met and these are: their sources meaning the speakers or institutions from which the discourse arise, the way events are represented should look true and trustworthy and the language used in particular contexts need to be socially acceptable, legally allowed and politically right. (Rojo and Van Dijk, 1997). This is to mean that discourses that are legitimate should stem from areas or topics that are trusted and that people can identify with, especially on issues that are of interest to society. In addition, events talked about in such discourses must be convincing and valid as well as being lawfully and politically allowed. This study investigated legitimization strategies inherent in the discourse of development in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations as leaders spoke defending their development actions as they sought validity and credibility. Meru and Muuga FM are radio stations that broadcast in the Meru dialects and are among the most popular with a large audience which makes them institutions whose discourse is credible and thus the reason the researcher was able to acquire adequate data for the present study.

Speech acts such as counter accusations, assertions, questions or reproaches are also ways in which people legitimize issues in society. The act of legitimation allows the speaker to use language to defend themselves against accusations and it is closely related to denial as the speakers make effort to convince and persuade others (audience) of the credibility of the action under criticism. In cases where the speaker has authoritative power either socially or politically, the act of legitimation could be aimed at making people comply. Hart (1997), states that the legitimation strategies are

manifested in text through grammatical cohesion and certain semantic categories especially evidentiality and epistemic modality. From the pragmatists, semanticists and discourse analysts view, legitimation is the process by which a social practice or an action is justified by a representative of an official institution using some form of socially shared evaluative criteria. These criteria could be shared moral values, or norms between the person seeking legitimation and their audience (Reyes, 2011). Political actors could justify an action by referring to its utility and its expected benefits (Van Leeuwen, 2007). In this study political leaders were featured as they spoke out on development using certain legitimation strategies as this research records.

Radio broadcasts also serve as powerful platforms for the construction of political identities through processes of self-legitimation and other-delegitimation. Igwebuike and Akoh (2022) investigated how Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), strategically employed discursive legitimation techniques in his online radio speeches. Drawing on van Leeuwen's (2008) framework of legitimation, the study analysed four speeches delivered in Israel after Kanu's reappearance in 2018. The findings demonstrated that Kanu utilised authorisation, moralisation, and rationalisation to validate his actions including fleeing Nigeria and to advocate for Biafran self-determination while discrediting the Nigerian state and its leadership. These strategies were enacted through linguistic devices such as self-glorification, pronominal polarisation (us vs. them), hyperbolic expressions, derogatory labels, and ideological binaries. By doing so, Kanu positioned himself and IPOB as morally justified actors confronting systemic oppression. This study informed the present research by illustrating how broadcast discourse simultaneously reinforced in-group solidarity and constructed out-group defiance through calculated linguistic and ideological choices.

A qualitative CDA case study by Mikkola (2017) analyzed the way in which the strategies of legitimation and delegitimation, specifically, rationalization, authorization, moral evaluation, normalization, and narrativization were applied in the media reports to construct negotiation announcements as either acceptable or problematic. It determined that rationalization and authorization, was the most common in legitimizing, whilst delegitimation depended on moral and narrative framing. Our

present study is a variation on such models because it dealt with instances of discursive practice in the language of political leaders on development in local-language talk and not about economic policy but local political development narratives in Muuga and Meru FM radios which have not been studied in this way before.

In times of national crisis, development discourse is essential in legitimising state actions and shaping public perception. Aberi and Ogechi (2025) investigated the discursive legitimation strategies employed in Kenya's public policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, with particular focus on President Uhuru Kenyatta's speeches. Anchored in van Leeuwen's (2008) typology of legitimation and Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model of Critical Discourse Analysis, the study aimed at identifying how rhetorical and linguistic resources were mobilised to justify government interventions. The findings revealed that the president's discourse employed strategies such as moral evaluation, rationalisation, and authorisation, often drawing on collective historical memory and national solidarity to legitimize authority and policy directives. The study concluded that political leadership during health crises relied on carefully constructed engagement strategies to reinforce state legitimacy and mobilise public compliance. However, the analysis centred exclusively on top-level presidential communication during a national emergency and did not extend to decentralised or vernacularised development discourse. This creates a gap that the current study addressed by exploring how political leaders in Kenya employ (de)legitimation strategies in development discourse within Meru and Muuga FM radio broadcasts to show how development conversations are used to unearth ideologies of power and control.

Aberi & Ogechi (2025) also applies the model of Van Leeuwen to examine how the then President of Kenya employed discursive techniques, namely authority, moral evaluation, and historical memory, to legitimize pandemic measures and policy interventions in his speeches. The reason was that the use of expert authority and collective historical discourse increased policy acceptance during a crisis situation. Its application to this work was that it dealt with the issues of political legitimation in Kenyan discourse. Nonetheless, the current research was significantly different as it examined vernacular radio discourse that involved the use of (de)legitimation within the discourse of development, thereby bringing legitimation study into a new medium,

language, and political context. The study analysed the expression on discourse of development and established linguistic features, legitimization strategies and identities created in the process of discoursing.

A study carried out by Kiai (1996) showed how scientific discourse was adapted and authorized in radio programmes targeting small-scale farmers in Kenya, thereby legitimizing expert knowledge for non-specialist audiences. Through a discourse-analytic approach, the study examined agricultural and health broadcasts prepared for farmer-organized Radio Listening Groups, comparing original English-language scientific texts with their Kiswahili and Kikuyu adaptations. The analysis was conducted on two levels: lexical and stylistic. At the lexical level, it explored how specialized vocabulary was localized through borrowing and code-mixing enabling epistemic authority to be transferred into the local linguistic context. At the stylistic level, the study used Speech Act Theory to examine how written scientific discourse transformed into radio-friendly oral narratives. Additionally, it identified involvement strategies including paralinguistic features and mnemonic devices that enhanced audience engagement. Feedback from farmers was incorporated to evaluate whether the linguistic and stylistic adaptations effectively authorize and legitimize the scientific messages for the intended audience.

Discursive (de)legitimation plays a crucial role in how political and institutional actors justify their authority and policy agendas in media discourse. Vaara (2014) examine the discursive foundations of the legitimacy crisis facing the Eurozone by conducting a critical discourse analysis of Finnish media texts. The study found that key (de)legitimation strategies included position-based authorisation (through institutional voices and public opinion), knowledge-based authorisation (via economic expertise), rationalisation (with economic arguments), moral evaluation (highlighting fairness or injustice), mythopoiesis (presenting alternative future narratives), and cosmology (constructing inevitability). The study concluded that these discursive strategies reflect and reinforce broader ideological tensions, influencing how crises are publicly understood and negotiated. However, while Vaara's work provided insights into legitimation within transnational European institutions, it did not explore how similar discursive strategies function in African contexts. This study therefore examined

(de)legitimation strategies in development discourse by political leaders in Meru and Muuga FM radio stations in Kenya.

Discourses of state legitimation are often marked by ideological tensions and strategic reformulations in response to shifting socio-political realities. Posel (1984) analysed the transformation of state discourse in apartheid South Africa, particularly the movement away from Verwoerdian ideological orthodoxy toward a more pragmatic, technocratic rhetoric. The study investigated how new discursive elements such as 'pragmatism', 'rational reform', and 'effective government' functioned to legitimize state power amid growing internal and external pressures. Findings revealed that while these elements introduced a discourse of modernization aligned with capitalist and military interests, they did not replace traditional racial ideologies but coexisted with them, reflecting internal struggles over the terms of state legitimacy. The study concluded that the new legitimacy discourse, while enabling a redefinition of political agenda, remained ideologically unstable due to unresolved contradictions between old and new symbolic frameworks. However, Posel's analysis is primarily situated within the context of institutional state discourse and does not account for how local political actors employ discursive (de)legitimation strategies in mediated development communication. This gap underpins the present study's focus which reported how legitimacy is constructed in development discourse through Meru and Muuga FM radio shows in Kenya.

2.7.1 (De) Legitimization Strategies

There are different ways in which (de) legitimization can be realized and these include: cases of actors making effort to appeal to emotions of their subjects (the people they are dealing with) and so they are able to skew the opinion of their interlocutors or audience regarding a specific matter. This comprises the strategy where there are two prominent groups in the legitimation process known as the 'us group' made up of the speaker and the audience and that of the 'them group' composed of the social actors who are usually depicted negatively. This is normally accomplished by politicians who make use of language and employ constructive tactics by way of coming up with utterances consisting of a 'we' group and the other labeled a 'they' group labelling them in particular ways. (Van Leeuwen & Wodak, 1999). This study was conducted in

Muuga and Meru FM radio stations and certain leaders spoke on radio and the elements of leaders forming the ‘we’ and ‘them’ groups as they spoke employing legitimation and delegitimation in development discourse was evident.

Another way that can be utilized to present legitimization is by referring to a hypothetical future. This is a way of posing a threat in the future that requires our imminent action in the present and it is usually displayed in political and development discourse (Dunmire, 2007). By employing specific linguistic choices and structures, political actors exert their power addressing the future by use of conditional sentences that address the necessity of specific actions to prevent nasty occurrences in the future. In this the actors make the audience believe that certain actions are necessary in the present in order to mitigate for future occurrences likely to impact negatively on the audience. This study examined the discourse of development in Kimeru FM radio where leaders involved engaged in legitimizing their development actions while delegitimizing those of others. Certain leaders employed discourse to appeal to the feelings of the audience and also reference to a hypothetical future was found to feature in the talks of leaders in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations.

Rationality is another way through which legitimation can be realized and this involves actors presenting validation as a process displaying situations where decisions have been made after heeded, evaluated and thoughtful procedures. This is known as ‘Theoretical Rationalization’ (Van Leeuwen, 2007). Rationalization is understood in the sense of having to be defined and shaped by and from a specific society. Hence, it can be accepted as ‘rational’ to consult other sources and explore all the options before making a decision. This is meant to empower the discourse used so as to give legitimacy to what is said. Consequently, this strategy of legitimation is linguistically articulated by clauses such as ‘after consultations with our allies’ or verbs denoting mental and verbal processes such as ‘explore’ and ‘consult’ (Thompson, 2004). The consultations cited help to make valid the information given or the action that needs to be taken according to the speaker. In this study, certain expressions were found to show speakers who presented utterances with rationality in order to convince the audience of the legitimacy by using various words and phrases as used in the development discourse analyzed.

In the legitimization process, voices of expertise can also be employed. This is where knowledge is presented with the assurance that it is backed up by experts from a particular field. These experts are said to support with knowledgeable statements in the discourse at hand. This type of legitimization is referred to as ‘authorization’ where a speaker brings the issue under discussion to the immediate context of the current speech to strengthen his or her position (Van Leeuwen, 2007). Authorization can also be manifested by the fact that politicians stand as sources of authority, presenting information in a formal context, producing official and institutional discourse. In this study, leaders spoke on Muuga and Meru FM radio stations as they mentioned higher authorities as a legitimization weapon in connection with the development of their various jurisdictions. Moreover, legitimation can also be concealed under altruism where public speakers and social actors make sure their proposals do not appear to be driven by personal interests. They present themselves as serving their voters and therefore legitimize their proposals as meant to improve the conditions of a particular community. This society can include the community of the speaker and audience, or it can refer to a remote society that the speaker presents as in need of ‘our’ help. This strategy is related to a type of ‘moral evaluation’ in the sense that it refers to a system of values (Van Leeuwen, 2007). According to van Dijk (1993) legitimation is concerned with the speech act of defending oneself against accusations. Therefore, one usually tries to accomplish that by giving acceptable reasons and motivations that could have driven them to take a controversial action. In this study, certain linguistic expressions contained utterances that had the sense of moral evaluation as speakers legitimized their actions and requests by showing the concern they felt as they sought to help the needy and the suffering or marginalized communities.

2.8 Linguistic Features in Discourse

The connection between language and power; focuses not only on the structure of text but also on how discourse reflects social roles and ideologies. In political communication, CDA helps to reveal how speakers use language to influence public thinking, assert authority, and maintain dominance. Using van Dijk (1997), the theoretical assertions allow the researcher to go beyond surface meanings and examine how language is used strategically in context. In this case discourse contains a social

dimension which is known to be a sequence of acts that are purposeful and controlled as they are done in particular contexts with specific participants. Context is cognition meaning that it has to do with our knowledge of social situations; and of how to use language in them. Hence, van Dijk (1997) asserts that every type of context controls or determines a particular kind of discourse and that each discourse largely depends on the specific type of context. In other words, context and discourse are interdependent and when leaders speak about development on radio, it is contextualized in media and their language often serves more than one purpose. It can inform, persuade, justify, or even divert attention. The linguistic structure of their statements, the choice of words, and how responsibility is assigned or avoided all contribute to the effect or impact that the message brings.

A variety of linguistic features which include nominalization, passivization, transitivity, and modality have been found key in shaping how discourse is framed and the way ideologies are communicated. Benhima, Nadif, Bouih, Benattabou & Benabderrazik (2021) applied Critical Discourse Analysis to the World Bank's report on teacher status in Morocco, focusing on how these linguistic tools construct the identity of teachers and promote specific ideological views. The study found that nominalization and passivization were used to obscure responsibility and agency, transitivity assigned roles and influenced perception of action, while modality expressed obligations and possibilities, aligning the discourse with institutional ideologies. The study concluded that such linguistic choices subtly influenced how readers interpreted power, responsibility, and reform in education. However, while Benhima et.al (2021) work examined institutional discourse in a policy report, the current study focused on political development discourse in FM radio talk shows, which involved live interactions and persuasive discourse targeting the public. This difference in context provided a point of departure, with the current study and helped to understand how similar linguistic features served rhetorical and ideological functions in a broadcast setting. The review helped this study by showing how linguistic forms reflect power relations and ideologies, offering a foundation for analyzing media discourse.

Biber, Johansson, Conrad & Finegan (1999) explain how the copular verb especially 'be' expresses modality within texts and observe that the complements of the verb 'be' are usually subjective adjective phrases that reflect a high degree of certainty of the

speaker or writer. This way they indicate the stance that a speaker takes on an issue. In traditional grammar, the verb 'be' is said to express the 'indicative mood' which shows that the speaker or writer is sure about the proposition they are making. Other copula verbs equally important in this sense are 'seems' and 'appears' which express a state of existence especially when they are followed by an adjective of likelihood and a 'that' clause as complement. There are different types of modality namely deontic modality which expresses obligation or permission (you must submit); dynamic modality which denotes ability or willingness, (she can sing). With dynamic modality, ability, prediction, habit, possibility and necessity are brought out in speech (Facchinetti, Krug & Palmer 2003). Verbs that express dynamic modality include 'will', 'shall', 'must', 'need', 'may' 'can' 'could' and 'might'. Epistemic modality that expresses certainty, possibility or belief (he might win) is most of the time used to talk about the possibility and viability of events or propositions and as (Palmer, 1990) affirms, this kind of modality goes well with propositions rather than actions, events or states. It is used to articulate aspects of possibility, inference and necessity in propositions (Facchinetti et al 2003). The epistemic modal 'must', can be used with respect to the present and future time, for instance 'this must be the one' and 'they must be in school tomorrow' respectively. Other verbs used to express epistemic meaning include 'should', 'can', 'could', 'may' 'might' and 'will'. The epistemic 'will' presents the confidence of a speaker in the truth of a proposition based on knowledge and evidence. It also communicates some type of expectations or assumptions suggesting confirmation in the future (Collins, 2009).

Modality functions in discourse in ways like revealing the degree of commitment to a proposition; to indicate power relations or politeness and to negotiate authority or present opinions as facts. Palmer (1990) says that deontic modality is naturally performative and different modal auxiliaries can be used by a speaker or writer to give permission or express an obligation or make a promise. 'Can' for example is likely to mean that one has permission and 'may' (usually meant to seek permission) are some of the modals in this category and also 'should' and 'ought'. The auxiliary 'must' is taken as being in the class of strong deontic modal expressions used to show obligation and necessity. 'Must' according to Lyons (1977) can be performatively used when a speaker wants to impose a directive.

Bernander, Devos, and Gibson (2022) examine how modality is constructed in East African Bantu languages, specifically Kirundi, through grammaticalization processes that lead to the use of modal auxiliary verbs. Their analysis reveals that these modal forms serve to express varying degrees of necessity and possibility, often reflecting the speaker's ideological stance and attitudes. The study concludes that modal expressions are not only grammatical tools but also ideological instruments used to influence understanding. However, while the study focuses on structural patterns of modality in Kirundi, it does not explore how such features function within development discourse or how they contribute to legitimization or delegitimization strategies during public engagement. This marked an aspect that the current study engaged in by looking at the linguistic features that included modality and how modal expressions are used in development-oriented discussions on FM radio to construct authority and persuade audiences. The review is useful to the current study as it provided a grammatical foundation on which to analyze modality as a tool for rhetorical strategy in media discourse specifically in Muuga and Meru FM where expressions were analyzed in areas of grammatical or linguistic features, (de) legitimization strategies and identity construction.

Modality plays a crucial role in expressing speaker intention and influencing audience perception in discourse. Nyinondi and Lusekelo (2020) analyzed how modality was conveyed through lexical verbs in the Bantu languages of Runyambo and Luguru. Their study highlighted the grammatical patterns that expressed necessity and possibility, focusing on how these modal verbs operate within broader social and political contexts in East African communities. The findings showed that modality is not just a linguistic device but also a reflection of social power and influence, especially in interactions involving authority and persuasion. However, the study remained focused on the grammatical use of lexical verbs and did not address how such features were employed in media discourse to shape public opinion or political identity. However, Nyinondi and Lusekelo (2020) study enriched the current study by offering a deeper understanding of how lexical modality serves ideological and persuasive functions in discourse. This study analysed linguistic features, legitimization strategies and identity formation in

radio development discourse in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations and showed how the discourse persuade through identities created and styles of legitimization.

Transitivity in discourse analysis shows how language represents processes, participants and circumstances in the world (Fowler, 1991). Transitivity systems include material processes (doing) ‘she built a house’, mental processes (sensing) ‘he likes music’, relational processes (being) ‘they are happy’, verbal processes ‘saying’ ‘she said hello’, behavioural (behaving) ‘he cried’, existential (existing) ‘there is a problem’. Adedun and Mekiliuwa (2010) examined the features and patterns of discourse in a Nigerian Pentecostal sermon, situating their analysis within the broader sociocultural context of political instability, economic hardship, and religious uncertainty that fueled Pentecostal growth. Drawing from existing studies on religious discourse and acknowledging the limitations of the Sinclair-Coulthard model in accounting for monologic, non-reciprocal speech like sermons, they adopted Coulthard and Montgomery’s descriptive framework for monologic discourse. Their analysis identified distinctive rhetorical strategies such as rich figurative language and contextual tenor that defined sermonic discourse. The study underscored the persuasive power of English as a unifying medium in Nigeria’s multilingual urban congregations. However, it focused exclusively on English-language sermons and did not explore how sermonic discourse unfolded in indigenous languages or in informal, media-based platforms. This presented a gap for further analysis of local language use in local settings and hence the discourse of development analyzed in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations displaying representations of obligation, authority assertions, and identity creation.

Conflict discourse in Ugandan print media is shaped by the generic structures of hard news and editorials and the linguistic strategies journalists use to position readers. Mugumya (2013) examined how English and Runyankore-Rukiga newspapers communicated issues of conflict through genre-specific features and evaluative language. Using a corpus of 53 news reports and 27 editorials from both government and private newspapers, the analysis applied genre and appraisal theory within a multi-dimensional discourse framework. The findings showed structural similarities to Anglo-American news writing, yet Runyankore-Rukiga reports often featured

evaluative openings and interpersonal meanings encoded in metaphors, proverbs, and non-core lexis. While government newspapers avoided overt criticism, private outlets used implicit attitudes to critique state actors, particularly security forces. Emotional alignment was achieved through affective descriptions that elicited empathy for victims and blame for perpetrators. Despite these insights, the analysis did not extend to vernacular radio, highlighting a research gap in understanding how conflict was linguistically framed in indigenous language broadcasts such as those on Meru and Muuga FM. This study discussed and interpreted language used to speak on development and described the features of language, as notions of identity and (de) legitimization were explained.

Linguistic choices in media discourse often serve to promote specific ideological positions. Matu (2008) investigated how Kenyan newspaper editorials used features such as transitivity, nominalization, and modality to encode and project ideological meanings. The study demonstrated that through these grammatical structures, editorial writers subtly shaped public perception by foregrounding or backgrounding particular actors and actions, thereby reinforcing political ideologies. Matu concluded that media texts were not neutral but were rather carefully constructed to influence readers' understanding of political events and issues. While this study offered valuable insight into the ideological use of language in print media, it did not focus on spoken development discourse or the unique interactional context of radio shows. The review however sood useful, as it highlighted how transitivity and nominalization can be analyzed to uncover underlying ideological patterns in media discourse as the current study did.

2.9 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the Critical Discourse Analysis by van Dijk (1997) who proposes linguistic, cognitive and socio-cultural definitions of discourse in the sense that discourse is language in use in a particular social or cultural context which determines how and what is said. He also argues that discourse is described at the syntactic, semantic, stylistic and rhetorical levels. In addition, van Dijk says that discourse needs to be understood in terms of the interlocutor's processes of production, reception and understanding. Critical Discourse Analysis comprises a number of key concepts which include: power and ideology implying the style in which language is

able to reflect and enforce the structures of power; hegemony meant to show how particular ideas or means of understanding issues, for example development, becomes dominant, control and overshadow alternatives; representation and dispossession which means the way discourse represents certain groups and exclude others, especially in specific contexts for instance the situation where development is being discussed and framing whereby certain issues are framed as problems in need of solutions and who defines the solutions. A critical discourse analysis of development discourse explores how language and communication shape, reinforce and challenge the dominant narratives and practices of 'development'. CDA is a methodological approach that critiques the way power, ideology and social relations are embedded in and perpetuated by discourse. The current study looks at linguistic features used to speak development by leaders legitimizing development actions and themselves as well as delegitimizing their perceived 'others'. Through the same development discourse certain identities are seen to accrue from the talks as leaders describe themselves, others and their development achievements.

It focuses on understanding the role of language in producing and sustaining inequalities, often uncovering the hidden assumptions and power structures behind seemingly neutral or objective terms. Moreover, he posits that discourse comprises a social dimension which he understands as a sequence of contextualized, controlled and purposeful acts accomplished in society namely form of social action taking place in a context (that is physical setting, temporal space and participants). In the current study, the discourse analysed took place in radio stations within particular programs denoting controlled and purposeful acts by the participants. Since context is mostly cognition (has to do with our knowledge of social situations and institutions; and of how to use language in them, van Dijk (1997) claims that each context controls a specific type of discourse and each discourse depends on a particular type of context. In this case the leaders speak about areas of development that are within their jurisdiction hence have full knowledge of the social situations.

In particular, van Dijk (2009) focuses on lexical and topic selection, rhetorical figures, coherence, speech acts, propositional structures, implications and turn-taking control. The current study analyzes the elements of nominalizations, passivization, transitivity

and modality in the discussions that accrued from the data collected as the leaders talked about development in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations. According to van Dijk (1988) CDA differs from purely discourse analysis which might for example, focus in the first instance on constructions such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. As a critical approach to discourse, CDA seeks to link texts at a micro-level (the textual level) with macro-level power structures (socio-cultural practice) which in drawing upon discourse, such texts reproduce and so in selecting sections of a speech for analysis, the analyst looks at identifiable configurations of 'discursive practices' consisting of discrete, unique utterances, or combination of idioms, references or phrases within a particular order of discourse. This is because CDA seeks to unravel the hidden notions or the underlying implications of the discourse in question.

CDA focuses on social problems and especially on the role of discourse in the production and reproduction of power abuse and domination (van Dijk, 2001). It then sets up a relationship between language and power bringing out opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control that are manifested in language use. Rogers, (2004) explains that CDA differs with other discourse analysis approaches because it not only includes a description and interpretation of discourse in context but also offers an explanation of why and how discourses work. Wodak (2001) says that the difference between CDA and other discourse analysis, pragmatic and sociolinguistic approaches may be most clearly established with regard to the general principles of CDA. In this study therefore the researcher sought linguistic features of the discourse of development as it happens on radio. This discourse was analysed by looking at the meanings (semantic level), utterances (syntactic level) were explained and interpreted; the language of development within the socio-cultural space of leaders engagement with the media practitioners was described and explained to help realize the stylistic and rhetorical levels as aspects of legitimization and identity construction in the speakers addressing development issues.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the research methodology. It examines the research design, population of the study, sampling procedure and sample size, instrument and reliability, data collection procedure and the method of data analysis and presentation.

3.2 Research Design

This study used a qualitative research design, specifically a descriptive research study that aims at providing a detailed, straightforward description of a phenomenon, event, or experience that occurs naturally. It describes participants' experiences, perceptions, or events in their natural language. This is appropriate for studying human behavior as it enables a deeper understanding of the behavior according to Lincoln and Guba (1985). The design is concerned with giving descriptions of phenomena that occur naturally without external forces which may interfere with the behavior of the subjects (Seligerad & Shobamy, 1989). In this study, the researcher collected and analyzed the linguistic and discourse features used to talk about development, legitimization strategies and identity construction from talk shows, with leaders and other stakeholders on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations. The expressions were classified according to the study objectives for analysis.

3.3 Population

The target population for this study was all the development talks conducted on FM radio (Muuga and Meru FM) between 2020 and 2022. According to Leavy (2017), the study population is the group of elements from which you draw your sample.

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The researcher used purposive sampling to pick 13 shows from Muuga and Meru FM radio stations which yielded data that resulted to the thirteen extracts. From the extracts, many utterances on linguistic features, legitimization strategies and identity formation were taken according to the study objectives and they were placed in thematic categories. Adequate data was derived from the thirteen extracts from which the researcher selected the expressions deemed useful for the study to be able to have the

required categories for analysis and hence provided comprehensive data whose findings can be replicated to the entire population. The utterances on development discourse provided rich data on linguistic and discursive practices in development discourse on radio programmes. This sample size was representative because according to Leavy (2017), qualitative and art-based studies favour smaller sample sizes which enable an in-depth analysis and highly contextualized understanding of the research subject. Equally, Musimbi (2023) justifies this sample size by analyzing 30 call-in discourses from Vuuka FM using purposive sampling and Fairclough's CDA framework. Her study successfully identified discourse patterns and ideologies, showing that a modest sample size can yield rich linguistic insights. It is also agreement with the principle of data saturation, the researcher anticipated that no new insights would emerge beyond the analysis of the selected discourses.

3.5 Instruments

The research instruments are the tools that the researcher uses to collect data and they capture each variable in terms of conceptual and theoretical definition (Sathiyaseelan, 2015). The instrument for this study was a lexical-grammatical checklist where the researcher recorded the different linguistic choices in thematic categories according to the objectives of the study. The expressions on development discourse were recorded as follows: the linguistic features (nominalization, passivization, transitivity and modality) were recorded in the first checklist while the (de) legitimization strategies (altruism, hypothetical future, voices of truth, appeal to common good, rationality) were recorded in the second checklist. The identities created took the third checklist according to the linguistic thematic categories, their content and the sense expressed in the lexical and stylistic features.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

Qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open ended non-numerical data (Dornyei, 2007). Before registering with Chuka University Graduate School, the researcher got expert opinion and review from the University Ethics Committee. After registering the proposal with the Graduate School, the researcher was issued with a letter of introduction to NACOSTI and therefore a research permit was sought from NACOSTI before embarking on data collection. The researcher

downloaded the sampled expressions from the Facebook online platform of the Meru FM (URL facebook.com/merufm88.3) and Muuga FM (URL facebook.com/muugafm), their official pages being MeruFM88.3Official and MuugaFm-Facebook respectively. A preliminary survey on the multiple online platforms where archived discourses from the FM stations are posted showed that Facebook was the most reliable and consistent platform where Kimeru FM and related stations actively posted and archived their radio shows. The content from the downloaded interviews and talk-shows were listened to and transcribed. The researcher then intensively read through them and relevant utterances were underlined and noted on cards prepared by the researcher according to the study objectives. These were written down in form of research notes according to the predetermined categories of lexical and discursive choices ready for analysis.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using van Dijk (1997) Critical Discourse Analysis theory that proposes linguistic, cognitive and socio-cultural definitions of discourse describing discourse at the syntactic, semantic stylistic and rhetorical levels. All the utterances were transcribed by the researcher and all the linguistic expressions listed; the legitimizing expressions and the expressions indicating various identities and then translated and interpreted in line with the theoretical assertions. The researcher then carried out a thematic analysis as guided by CDA where different linguistic and discursive features were discussed to bring out the sense in the expressions used to discuss development, show legitimization of action and bring out identity of the people involved. Various elements were checked according to the objectives and concepts were clarified. The following qualitative discourse analysis steps were employed in this study: Transcribing all the expressions on discourse of development from the downloaded material, reading through all the recorded expressions to understand the overall content of the data, translating the linguistic and discourse expressions to English, selecting the most relevant expressions according to the objectives and discussing the identified features and expressions under relevant themes.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

Duing the research, names of the participants were coded and described in form of speaker 1, 2, 3, and then they were described by their roles in various capacities. The researcher also described the jobs of the participants and their places of jurisdiction in general terms to ensure that they are not easily identifiable by anyone reading this work. This research therefore complied with the ethical requirements of academic research as stipulated by the NACOSTI (Appendix VI) and Chuka University Ethics Committee (Appendix IV & V).

CHAPTER FOUR

LINGUISTIC FEATURES IN DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

4.1 Linguistic Features

Language plays a central role in how political leaders communicate development matters to the public. Through deliberate word choices and sentence structures, they shape how development issues are understood and received. This use of language helps leaders frame their actions, persuade listeners, and present their roles in a favorable light. In public discourse, particularly in political spaces, the way something is said often matters as much as what is said. To understand these patterns of speech, CDA, especially as developed by van Dijk (1998), offers useful tools. The approach looks at the connection between language and power. It focuses not only on the structure of text but also on how discourse reflects social roles and ideologies. In political communication, CDA helps to reveal how speakers use language to influence public thinking, assert authority, and maintain dominance. It allows us to go beyond surface meanings and examine how language is used strategically in speech and writing.

In the current study, the first objective examined the linguistic features used by political leaders in development discourse in Kimeru FM radio stations in Kenya. The texts that had been transcribed were then systematically analyzed to pick up common linguistic features. Upon review and analysis of the extracts obtained from various development talks aired on Muuga and Meru FM stations, several expressions, as shown in Appendix II, were found to reflect the use of distinct linguistic strategies. Among the features identified in these speeches were nominalization, passivization, transitivity, and modality as presented below:

4.1.1 Nominalization

Nominalization is the process of turning verbs or adjectives into noun forms, often removing the subject or agent from the sentence. According to Overall (2014), this is a key feature of formal and official discourse because it allows speakers to compress meaning and present actions as fixed entities rather than ongoing processes. In political communication, this technique enables speakers to refer to events or issues abstractly, without directly mentioning who is responsible. This linguistic shift not only formalizes the message but also allows politicians to avoid direct accountability or soften

potentially controversial actions. In this study, nominalization was a common linguistic strategy used by political leaders during development-related discussions broadcast on Muuga and Meru FM radio stations. Through this technique, speakers often discussed actions and processes as abstract entities, rather than naming specific individuals responsible for them. This approach allowed them to distance themselves from controversial decisions or to speak about development achievements in a more neutral, official tone. As detailed in Appendix II, various utterances were identified across the 13 extracts, where nominalization was employed to influence how development efforts were framed, often making the actions seem natural or collective rather than driven by individual actors. This contributed to a discourse style where responsibility was minimized, and political positioning was carefully managed as shown in the utterances that follow:

EXT 2; UTT 2

“...ĩromba rĩakwa nĩ kũnenkerwa mbeca cia ward fund nĩkenda baũmba kũrutĩra antu wĩra...”

My suggestion is for the ward fund to be given to enable leaders to work for the people.

Speaker 2- An MCA from Tharaka Nithi County

The speaker makes use of the noun “*suggestion*”, which is derived from the verb “*suggest*.” Instead of expressing the act directly—for example, “I suggest the ward fund should be given”—the speaker turns the action into a noun, making it appear more formal and less personal. This linguistic shift creates a sense of distance between the speaker and the act, presenting the idea as a general proposal rather than an active intervention. It also lends the statement an air of authority and reasonableness, positioning the speaker’s view as a well-considered input rather than a demand or instruction. This use of nominalization supports Fairclough’s (1992) argument that turning processes into abstract nouns is a common feature of institutional and development discourse, where it serves to depersonalize action and reduce transparency. In this case, by using “*suggestion*” instead of a direct verb, the speaker distances himself from the act of proposing and frames the idea as an objective contribution to the discussion. Another instance of nominalization is brought out by the speaker in

EXT 6, UTT 3,

“...*development nigukara taka yatwikire skewed*”

“...development seems to have been skewed to one side...”

Speaker 6 – An MP in Meru County

Here the speaker uses the term *development* as a nominalized form, abstracting a complex series of actions and decisions into a single noun. Rather than stating who is responsible for skewing development or what specific actions led to the imbalance, the speaker presents *development* as an entity that has passively shifted. This removes agency and avoids direct blame, allowing the speaker to highlight inequality without confronting its cause. This observation reflects the findings of Rojo and van-Leeuwen (2001), who argue that nominalization in political and institutional discourse is often used to depersonalize decisions and conceal agency. In their view, such constructions serve to neutralize potentially controversial issues by presenting them as natural or inevitable processes. In this case, the speaker uses nominalization to comment on the unequal distribution of development in a way that appears objective, yet still carries a critical undertone. The expression from

EXT 7, UTT 4,

...*nītūkûbanga gwaka ñngĩ*. ‘there is planning that we are engaged in to build another’

Speaker 7: An MP Meru County

can be considered a mild form of nominalization, though it does not reflect the typical noun use found in more abstract political statements. The word “*planning*” is a gerund; a verb form functioning as a noun. In this case, *planning* still carries an action-like quality but begins to shift the focus away from the specifics of who is making the decisions and how. The subject “we” is mentioned but the act of *planning* becomes the central idea, not the process or reasoning behind it. This structure reduces direct engagement with the action itself and presents the intention as a settled course. Wodak (2001) views this approach as a discursive strategy to create distance and formality in political communication. By framing decisions as part of an ongoing *plan*, speakers avoid detailed explanation or justification, allowing them to appear organized and forward-thinking without revealing the actual steps being taken. In this context, even limited forms of nominalization such as this contribute to the broader strategies of development discourse by softening responsibility and focusing public attention on intended outcomes rather than current actions or past failures.

4.1.2 Passivization

Passivization is a grammatical structure where the focus of a sentence is placed on the result of an action rather than the person or group who performs it. This aspect of language is marked by the morpheme –en and its allomorphs (-ed, -t, the zero allomorph) as in verbs like beaten, prayed, set (zero allomorph) or sent. These are used in structures that indicate that the person doing the action can be removed or mentioned only briefly. This changes the emphasis from who did something to what was done. Passivization is common in formal speech and writing, especially in political and institutional communication, where speakers often aim to sound neutral or official. In the context of development discourse, passivization can be used as a strategy to avoid taking direct responsibility for actions or decisions. It allows a speaker to mention outcomes without clearly stating who caused them. As implied by CDA, such language choices are not accidental; they reflect how speakers manage power and control meaning. When passivization is used, it can soften the impact of a message, make negative situations appear less serious, or make certain actions seem more acceptable by removing the sense of personal involvement.

In this study, five utterances taken from the development-related discussions aired on Muuga and Meru FM radio stations showed the use of passivization. These utterances allowed the speakers, who are political leaders, to talk about important development issues while avoiding direct statements about who was responsible. This helped them maintain a positive image, especially when discussing sensitive or potentially explosive matters.

There is use of passivization in
EXT 1 UTT 5,

“...ndathurĩtwe nĩ Merũ yonthe...”
I was elected by the entire Meru

Speaker 1- A Governor

In the above utterance, the focus is placed on the speaker as the recipient of the action, rather than on the people who performed it. The sentence structure hides the specific agents involved by using the general term “*the entire Meru*”, without identifying individuals or groups. This creates distance between the speaker and the actual electoral

process. The attention is shifted from how the election happened to the outcome, which is the speaker's position as governor. This passive construction serves a strategic function in the discourse. It emphasizes credibility by suggesting broad support, while avoiding any mention of political processes, party influence, or contested outcomes. In line with van Dijk's (1998) view of discourse as a tool for managing power and meaning, the speaker uses passivization to strengthen her public image without appearing confrontational or defensive. This passive sentence works as a strategy in the speaker's communication. It helps her show that she has public support, while avoiding details about the election process, political parties, or any possible disagreements. Following van Dijk's idea that language is used to control meaning and power, the speaker uses passivization to present herself as a legitimate leader. At the same time, she avoids sounding defensive or starting conflict, which helps her protect her public image.

In yet another utterance, in

EXT 2; UTT 6

"...ndĩngĩcũa kĩrathimo kĩa ma kuuma kĩ Mĩũrungu gĩa kũruta wĩra atĩ na ungunania- example- mbeca irĩa ikwĩnyangua jĩa development ibatwĩ gũtũmĩrwa bũrĩa jĩmbangĩre..."

I would look for a blessing from God by working without corruption, for example the money meant for development that is being wasted should be used according to what it was allocated for).

Speaker 2: An MCA in Tharaka Nithi County

In this utterance, the speaker uses passivization to address misuse of funds. The speaker is expressing concern over the mismanagement of public funds allocated for development. He emphasizes that the money currently being wasted should instead be used according to the intended plans. The message points to financial irresponsibility and a call for accountability in how development resources are handled within the county. The utterance contains two clear instances of passivization. The phrase "is being wasted" is in the passive voice, and it does not mention who is responsible for the wastage. Similarly, "should be used" is another passive construction that shifts attention away from the person or institution expected to use the funds. This grammatical choice serves to obscure the agents involved in misusing or failing to apply the money correctly. By avoiding direct attribution of blame, the speaker maintains a critical stance without openly accusing specific individuals or offices.

This is also seen in

EXT 4; UTT 7

“... Project irĩa jianenkanĩrĩtwe tajiyo barabara, rũũjĩ na mĩako Thirikari nĩkũrĩkia. Nĩndĩrutĩrĩte kwendelea na ngũgi yakwa ya oversight gĩ county government na ngaakikisha ũthii na mbere na kũruta wĩra kĩrĩ mwananchi. ĩndĩ opposition ngũgi yao nĩ kũreta propaganda na rũmena tu nagwaka thirikarĩ ntaka...”

‘The projects that were given which include roads, water and building will be finished. Personally I have purposed to continue with my work of oversighting the county government to ensure there is development and work for the common man. But opposition only works to bring propaganda and hatred just to smear mud on the government.’

Speaker 4; A senator

The speaker highlights the government's commitment to completing ongoing development projects such as roads, water systems, and buildings. The phrase presents these projects as already existing and now awaiting completion. This creates the impression that the government is fulfilling its mandate and ensuring continuity in service delivery. The clause “projects that were given” is a clear instance of passivization, where the agent responsible for initiating or approving the projects is not mentioned. By using the passive voice, the speaker avoids identifying who exactly gave or launched the projects—whether it was the national government, a donor agency, or a former administration. This grammatical choice shifts focus away from the origin of the projects and places emphasis on the government’s current role in completing them. It allows the speaker to align with development progress while sidestepping accountability for the source or delay of the projects.

In EXT 9 UTT8,

“...Gũtĩ mbeca twekaĩrũa Meru nabarĩa babatĩ gũtetera antũ nĩbekĩrwe mũuko, no mĩcemanio beta Karen...”

‘No money was being allocated for Meru County and the MPs who should be talking for the people were pocketed and all they know is to attend meetings in Karen.’

Speaker 9: Former Cabinet Secretary

The speaker expresses concern that Meru was not receiving its share of financial resources. The message suggests a sense of exclusion or neglect in the allocation of public funds. It highlights an imbalance in resource distribution, implying that Meru County was being overlooked in national or regional budgeting. The phrase “no money

was being allocated” is in the passive voice, and it deliberately omits the agent responsible for the allocation. The use of passivization here removes focus from the specific institution or authority (such as the national government or treasury) that should have directed funds to Meru. This grammatical choice allows the speaker to point out the problem without directly blaming a particular actor, thereby softening the accusation while still emphasizing financial marginalization.

Within CDA, the use of passivization reflects an intentional suppression or backgrounding of agency to manage how responsibility is perceived. This aligns with van Dijk’s (1992) concept of *ideological square*, where speakers emphasize positive representation of the in-group and de-emphasize the role of the out-groups, especially when discussing sensitive issues such as governance or resource allocation. Through passive constructions, political actors are able to highlight injustice or exclusion while avoiding direct confrontation, thereby maintaining strategic ambiguity and appealing to their audience's sense of solidarity, and on a similar note in the following utterance

In EXT 12; UTT 9;

“...Hura gate ibûirite ithondenkwe bûria tûthondekete kwa DC Chuka kibaroni...”

“Hura Gate should be designed the way the DC’s place is made”

Speaker 2; an MCA in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker deliberately omits the agent responsible for the design or development of the project and just recommends what should be done. This serves to avoid discrediting anyone for development milestones not attained or work not well done and the speaker still communicates dissatisfaction without unnecessary conflict. It also makes the speaker sound objective and focused on ensuring that people get better deals in the development of societal structures. This passive structure subtly shifts attention away from the duty-bearer and instead focuses on the action that ought to happen. Such linguistic framing enables the speaker to express discontent with the status quo without explicitly accusing any authority, which is a strategic move to avoid political friction while still communicating institutional failure or neglect.

This interpretive approach is supported by several Kenyan scholars who have explored similar strategies in local development discourse. For example, Hamu (2011) observed

that political figures on vernacular radio often adopt neutral syntactic forms such as passives to comment on contentious matters of the state while minimizing personal liability. Similarly, Omoke (2017) noted that in regional political interviews, speakers use passivization to subtly point out systemic neglect or regional marginalization without overt blame. These findings affirm the applicability of van Dijk's framework in the Kenyan context and support the view that language, particularly in political settings, is a powerful mechanism for managing power relations and ideological positioning.

Based on the utterances discussed above, passivization functions as a powerful tool for controlling narrative authority by downplaying agency and deflecting accountability. This grammatical feature allows speakers to construct seemingly objective or neutral statements that, in reality, serve specific ideological purposes. By obscuring the agents of action, political actors reinforce particular power relations and maintain persuasive control over how their audience perceives institutional roles, responsibilities, and failures.

4.1.3 Transitivity

Transitivity is the process of how a verb expresses the relationship between the action and the participants that is the subjects and the objects where a verb takes an object. It is a grammatical system within functional linguistics which is concerned with how actions, events, and states are expressed in language and how participants are positioned in relation to these processes. It involves the configuration of clauses through elements such as the actor (doer), the process (action or state), and the goal (receiver of the action). In development discourse, transitivity choices are rarely neutral; they are shaped by the speaker's communicative intentions and often serve to reflect, reinforce, or resist social and political roles. Through these structures, speakers can highlight agency, suppress responsibility, or reframe events to suit a particular narrative. In the context of this study, transitivity is examined as a key feature in the development discourse of political actors featured on Meru FM and Muga FM. The study identified various utterances across the extracts in which transitivity structures were used deliberately to manage representation, agency, and power relations. These utterances

reflect how political figures construct themselves and others in ways that align with their goals or political interests.

EXT1, UTT 10

“...na deputy abatĩ kũruta wawe ũrĩa aijĩ...”

‘The deputy should do the work he knows.’

Speaker 1: A Governor

The transitive structure in the above utterance presents the actor (the deputy), the process (should do), and the goal (the work). This structure shows that the speaker assigns responsibility directly to the deputy, making it clear that each of them is expected to act and that they know what they are expected to do. By using this direct form, the speaker emphasizes accountability and performance, suggesting that the deputy has a specific role and must carry it out effectively. This statement serves to point to the fact that the leader is able to use the transitive statement to point out their expectations of the led and this enables one to instruct without direct confrontation hence sounding polite.

In EXT 1 UTT11

“...nĩngũcokeria antũ ba Meru county nkatho nĩ kũnthura...”

I want to thank the people of Meru County for electing me.

Speaker 1: A Governor.

In the above utterance, the structure is also active and transitive. It identifies the agent (the people), the process (electing), and the goal (me, the speaker). This construction acknowledges the role of the people as active participants in a democratic process and positions the speaker as the recipient of their decision. It reflects a respectful and inclusive tone, recognizing the people’s power while reinforcing the speaker’s legitimacy. Both Utterances demonstrate how transitivity is used to show clear relationships between actions and participants, helping to express authority, responsibility, and gratitude within political communication.

Another utterance in

EXT 2; UTT 12

“ Governor Ragwa andikaga contractors na agacua labour kuuma ki antu ba Tharaka Nithi akithingatagira public procurement act.”

‘Governor Ragwa used to hire contractors and look for labour among the people of Tharaka Nithi while following the Public Procurement Act’

Speaker 2: an MCA in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker recalls the actions of a former governor which is a political comparison meant to highlight good governance practices by a previous leader, in contrast to current leadership. The speaker frames the former as a responsible and law-abiding leader who prioritized local involvement in development activities by hiring from within the county and adhering to legal procedures. Transitivity in this sentence is again marked by a straightforward actor–process–goal structure. Governor Ragwa is the agent (actor), hiring and looking for labour are the material processes (actions), and contractors/labour are the goals (affected participants). This direct structure reinforces Ragwa’s active role and positive agency, portraying him as a hands-on leader who fulfilled his responsibilities transparently and in accordance with the law. The use of clear transitive clauses ensures that agency is not hidden, and responsibility is explicitly assigned, which strengthens the speaker’s argument about effective past leadership. This observation aligns with Fairclough’s (2003) argument that transitivity choices in discourse are central to how agency and responsibility are represented in political communication. According to Fairclough, when speakers use clear actor–process–goal structures, they make agency visible and assign accountability directly, often to reinforce credibility or portray effective leadership. The transitivity pattern in this utterance, therefore, functions not only as a grammatical choice but as a strategic discursive move to positively frame a political figure within the narrative of good governance.

This is also seen in

EXT 8 UTT 13,

“..thaa iji gankwenda kubaassure tukareta TVET college na iu niyo the main focus yakwa iria ndi nayo within these five years..”

I want to assure that we will bring TVET college and that is my main focus within these five years

Speaker 8; an MCA IN Meru County

The speaker uses an active transitive structure to project commitment and confidence in future development. The sentence fits within the broader pattern observed in the discourse, where transitivity is used to position political actors as active, capable, and responsive to public development needs. By maintaining a clear agent–action–goal relationship, the speaker strengthens their role as a development facilitator and presents themselves as directly involved in delivering public services. The agent (“I”) is clearly stated, taking ownership of the action, while the processes (“assure” and “bring”) signal both intent and promise. The goal of the action (“TVET college”) represents a tangible development initiative, reinforcing the speaker’s alignment with the needs of the community. This structure highlights agency and responsibility, which are crucial in development discourse where leaders seek to build trust through declarations of action.

Transitivity is also displayed in

EXT10, UTT 14;

“...ndona rûtîkûthira..twona mûjapan, atûretera mbece twona project ãîkûthira. Term nthiru ndang’ang’ana twacua contractor gûkûrûkîra gĩ Tana water...”

‘I took it over, got a Japanese donor and still the project was not complete. Last term I struggled and I got a contractor through Tana water.’

Speaker 5; an MP in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker highlights a successful initiative involving external support, where the agent (“we”) actively secures a donor and sustains a project. The clause reflects a collaborative and proactive role in development, showing involvement in both sourcing support and maintaining progress. Similarly,

EXT14, UTT 15

“..Maïta maingi kamaragia na president, nkathii nkamwira thina ciakwa...”

‘Many times I talk to the president and tell him my problems...’

Speaker 10; An MP in Tharaka Nithi

Presents a direct interaction between the speaker and the president, where the speaker is seen as the actor engaging in dialogue and conveying specific concerns. Both utterances above follow a transitive structure, enabling the speaker to assert agency and demonstrate leadership in addressing development challenges. These constructions also subtly reflect authority and influence by positioning the speaker as someone capable of accessing high-level stakeholders and driving action. Within the context of CDA, such

utterances illustrate how language is used to project political credibility and active participation in governance. By foregrounding the self as actor in both local and high-level engagements, the speaker employs transitivity to control the narrative and reinforce an image of effective leadership. This is consistent with CDA's understanding that transitivity is not just about clause structure but a way to realize ideological positions and manage representations of power. Supporting this view, Kimenyi (2022) in his study on political speeches in Kenyan media, found that politicians frequently use active transitive constructions to claim responsibility, assert initiative, and reinforce their alignment with public service delivery. His findings affirm that syntactic choices are central to how political actors negotiate legitimacy and authority through discourse.

4.1.4 Modality

Modality, as grammatical element, expresses a speaker's degree of certainty, obligation, possibility, or willingness toward a particular proposition or action. It is commonly realized through modal verbs (such as *must*, *should*, *can*, *might*), modal adverbs, and other lexical choices that indicate a speaker's attitude toward the likelihood, necessity, or desirability of an event. Modality does not simply describe what is, but rather what could, should, or must be, making it a powerful tool in constructing perspectives and influencing interpretation. Within CDA, it plays a crucial role in revealing the ideological positioning of speakers and how they negotiate authority, commitment, and persuasion in discourse. It is through modality that speakers legitimize their claims, frame obligations, or soften assertions to manage social relations and political risk. Fairclough (2003) emphasizes that modality is central to how discourse constructs power and authority, as it helps speakers to assert control or align themselves with dominant or alternative viewpoints.

From the obtained data, the following utterances were seen to bring out the aspects shown by modality.

EXT1, UTT 16

"..Ntīkwona kwīna thīna kūgaania county.."

'I don't find anything wrong with dividing the county.'

Speaker 1: A Governor

This reflects epistemic modality which brings out a sense of personal belief or judgement. Rather than making an absolute statement, the speaker presents their

opinion as a subjective evaluation, indicating that, in their view, the idea of dividing the county is acceptable. This type of modality shows that the speaker is not imposing their view as fact but is instead suggesting a possibility or belief. In the context of CDA, such a statement allows the speaker to subtly promote a political position while avoiding direct confrontation or resistance. By framing it as a personal opinion, the speaker softens the assertion and makes it more acceptable to a wider audience, while still guiding public perception in a particular direction. This aligns with Fairclough's view that modality helps speakers manage commitment to ideas and align themselves ideologically within discourse.

EXT1, UTT17

"..Igaanue ituiketa ûû..."

It should be divided to be as follows...

Speaker 1: A Governor

Following the initial personal evaluation in EXT 1; UTT16, the speaker in EXT1; UTT17 advances their position with greater assertiveness. This expression introduces deontic modality, which is used to indicate obligation, necessity, or recommendation. The modal verb "*should*" signals that the speaker is no longer merely offering an opinion, but is now proposing a course of action they believe ought to be taken. By moving from a tentative, belief-based position to a directive proposal, the speaker subtly asserts control over the discourse and frames their viewpoint as not only valid but actionable. This strategic use of modality allows the speaker to shape public opinion while still appearing reasonable and inclusive.

In EXT 2; UTT 18,

"..Ndĩ governor ndĩngĩensure muntû wonthe nĩakûgwata mbeû beganene".."

If I were the governor, I would ensure everyone gets the seeds...

Speaker 2: An MCA in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker expresses a conditional intention tied to a hypothetical leadership role. The use of modal construction reveals a commitment that is dependent on assuming office, showing both readiness and a sense of obligation toward equitable service. This form of modality conveys possibility blended with responsibility, allowing the speaker to present a forward-looking vision that appeals to fairness without overstepping current

authority. It reflects a strategic way of aligning with public needs while maintaining a realistic and cautious tone.

In contrast,

EXT 2; UTT19,

“..Nkaruta wira wega na ni nkĩromba antũ benyiye bacoke nthĩ barutĩre antũ wira .. Tharaka Nithi ina thĩna niũntu antũ batikwaria...”

I will work well and I ask people to humble themselves and come down to work for the people..(Tharaka nithi has a problem because people are not talking.

Speaker 2: An MCA in Tharaka Nithi

Displays a more definite and assertive stance. The speaker commits to future action with certainty, using language that conveys strong intention and duty. This reflects high-level deontic modality, which is often used in development discourse to signal leadership resolve and personal accountability. By coupling their own commitment with a call for collective effort, the speaker positions themselves as both a leader and mobilizer, reinforcing trust and solidarity within the discourse.

In EXT 6, UTT 20,

‘Kĩrĩ budget irĩa twakũrũkirie bunge niĩtaga gũcaicwa na bau bangĩ mbere nau. Niũntũ no mwanka bwĩte bũgitaa dots, commas and so on. ĩgita rĩrĩa rĩa kũrita dots, commas and so on, it can be interfered with...’

‘In the budget, that we passed parliament goes for evaluation from others ahead of them. because it is a must you go removing dots, commas, and so on. The time when dots are being removed, it can be interfered with.’

Speaker 6: An MP in Meru County

The use of the modal verb “*can*” expresses possibility, indicating the speaker’s concern that the process being referred to is open to interference. This reflects epistemic modality, where the speaker shows doubt or skepticism rather than certainty. The phrase suggests that while tampering may not have occurred, it is a realistic risk. In this context, the speaker uses modality to subtly question the fairness or reliability of the system without making a direct accusation. This allows them to raise concern while avoiding confrontation, a strategy often used in development discourse to influence perception while maintaining a neutral tone.

The speaker EXT 5; UTT 21,

“Tũgaakikisha barabara niĩbange wega.”

“We will ensure roads are well done..”

Speaker 5: An MP in Tharaka Nithi

This expresses a firm promise using the phrase, “*will ensure*,” to reflect a strong sense of obligation and certainty about future action. This use of modality shows commitment to deliver on infrastructure projects, reinforcing the speaker’s reliability. From a CDA perspective, these modality choices reveal how political actors manage perception, authority, and commitment. Strong future-oriented statements are used to build confidence, while expressions of possibility introduce caution or doubt in a non-confrontational manner. At the same time, progress-related language allows the speaker to showcase action and accountability.

EXT 8, UTT 23

“..Kwogu batwĩ no tũthithie strategic grain reserve jietu aja Meru jia gũfeedaa antũ betũ tuge rĩrĩa gwatonya kĩaangazi nontũ kinya rĩmwe ũkanenkerera antũ mbeũ beta kũanda ja nandĩ bena mpara bakamĩruga. Twĩ county notũrete rũũjĩ piped tũkathithia intensive agriculture and grain reserve. Tũtibui gwetera national government –rĩonthe serikali saidia- tũgatũra kũrĩra...”

“So we can do strategic our grain reserve to feed our people like when famine strikes like now because even if you give people seeds to plant they will cook. As a county, we can bring piped water and do intensive agriculture and grain reserve. We should not always wait for the national government all the time crying ‘help government’ without end..”

Speaker 8: an MCA IN Meru County

According to above utterance the speaker uses “*should not always wait*” to express a sense of obligation or expected behaviour. This reflects deontic modality, where the speaker communicates what people ought to do, suggesting that passiveness or dependence is not ideal. The use of “*should*” in a negative form indicates a normative judgment about public behaviour, urging more initiative and responsibility. It positions the speaker as someone promoting active participation and self-reliance, appealing to shared values of development and civic responsibility.

EXT 14; UTT 24

“...ĩĩ, rĩrĩa ariũngĩte county, maũntũ nĩmathijaga na mbere, akariũnga maita mathatũ county yathiĩ mbere mũno...”

Yes! When he visits a county progress happens. If he visits like three times a county can really make strides.

Speaker 10: An MP in Tharaka Nithi

The expression “*can really make strides*” introduces epistemic modality, which reflects a belief about what is possible. The speaker suggests that frequent visits by the president to a county could lead to development progress. This statement does not promise or

guarantee an outcome but presents a realistic possibility based on the speaker's assessment. The use of "can" in this context shows cautious optimism and a strategic way of aligning presidential attention with positive outcomes without making a firm claim. These findings are supported by a study by Kamau (2011) on political language in local radio broadcasts in Eastern Kenya. He observed that leaders commonly use modal verbs like *should* and *can* to either guide public behaviour or express hopes linked to national attention and investment. According to the study, these modal forms allow politicians to influence listeners' attitudes while managing the risk of overcommitting themselves. Such usage reflects how modality functions as a persuasive tool in shaping expectations and encouraging public alignment with political agendas.

4.1.5 Ideology

Ideology refers to a system of ideas, beliefs, values, or assumptions that shape how individuals or groups perceive and interpret the world. In language, ideology is often embedded implicitly through word choices, tone, framing, and patterns of emphasis or omission. Rather than being directly stated, ideologies are frequently woven into discourse in subtle ways, influencing how events, actions, and people are represented. These underlying beliefs help justify certain social arrangements or political positions while marginalizing others, making ideology a powerful but often invisible component of communication. Within CDA's framework, ideology is seen as central to how discourse maintains, challenges, or reproduces power relations in society. CDA holds that every text is ideologically positioned, and that speakers use language not only to communicate but also to advance particular worldviews. Ideologies in discourse may promote ideas of progress, unity, blame, victimhood, leadership, or resistance, depending on the speaker's goals and context. By examining the lexical and grammatical choices speakers make, CDA helps uncover how these ideological positions are constructed and sustained through everyday language use, especially in political contexts where persuasion and influence are common.

Several scholars have contributed significantly to the analysis of ideology in discourse. For instance, Wodak and Reisigl's (2005) work on the discourse-historical approach emphasizes how political actors draw on shared historical narratives to legitimize

current ideologies. Similarly, Ochieng (2018), in his analysis of political rhetoric in Kenyan vernacular radio, found that local leaders embed community-based ideologies such as ethnic solidarity, development entitlement, and moral leadership into their speech to appeal to specific audiences. Such studies affirm that ideology in discourse is not just about content but about how language is structured to support particular values and interests. In the present study, numerous instances were identified across the extracts where ideological positioning was evident. Speakers consistently aligned themselves with development, transparency, and service, while subtly contrasting themselves with opposing figures associated with failure, corruption, or disunity. These ideological cues were expressed through both lexical choices and grammatical structures, and served to frame political identity, justify actions, and mobilize listener support.

EXT 1, UTT 25

“..nĩngũcokeria antũ ba Meru county nkatho nĩ kũnthura ndĩ mwekũrũ wa mbere gũtuĩka governor Merũ- na mau nĩ maendeleo... Ndathurirwe nĩ wĩra wakwa ũrĩa ndarutĩte rĩrĩa ndarĩ woman representative ..”

I want to thank the people of Meru County for electing me as the first lady governor in Meru-and that is development...I elected because of my work when I was a woman representative.

Speaker 1: A Governor

The speaker links the act of being elected with the idea of development by thanking the people of Meru County and immediately framing it as development and especially the progress of women. This suggests that simply gaining political office is itself a developmental achievement. Such a statement reflects an ideological position where political success is equated with progress, regardless of actual service delivery. The speaker aligns their political legitimacy with the concept of development, creating a positive image in the minds of the audience. This kind of framing shifts focus from accountability to symbolic representation suggesting that leadership alone, rather than results, embodies advancement.

EXT 1, UTT 26

“..Meru ãthĩrĩtwe ãna tũ-issue kidogo kidogo twa kwagagia maendeleo..”
“Meru has been experiencing issues meant to distract development.”

Speaker 1: A Governor

Further deepens this ideological stance by presenting any form of conflict or opposition as a direct threat to development. The claim that Meru has been facing “issues meant to distract development” implies that criticism or alternative voices are not only unhelpful but harmful to progress. This is a form of ideological framing where dissent is delegitimized, and loyalty is equated with support for growth. It positions the speaker and their allies as pro-development, while implicitly portraying critics as enemies of progress. Such language limits open discussion and reduces complex issues in leadership to just two sides; those who support development and those who are against it.

van Dijk’s (1998) perspective supports this interpretation by arguing that ideology in discourse helps construct group identities and sustain power structures. According to him, language is often used to positively represent the speaker’s group (the ingroup) while negatively characterizing the opposing group (the out-group). In this case, the speaker uses developmental language to cast themselves as legitimate agents of progress, while presenting opposing views as obstacles. This strategic use of ideology reinforces a power narrative and manipulates public perception by associating political allegiance with development success.

EXT 2, UTT 27

“..Mbeû ñno ñnenkanagĩrwa nĩ governor nĩ scam..”

“The seeds meant for planting that the governor gives out is a scam....”

Speaker 2: AnMCA in Tharaka Nithi

This ideological positioning is also seen where the speaker refers to the distribution of seeds by the governor as a scam. This expression is not just a criticism of an action but an ideological attack on how development resources are managed and presented to the public. By calling it a scam, the speaker challenges the legitimacy of the leadership intentions and exposes what they see as manipulation or dishonesty. This kind of language reveals a deep mistrust in the development narrative offered by the authorities and frames the leadership as self-serving rather than people-centered.

EXT 2, UTT 28

“...Mbeû ñno ñnenkanagĩrwa nĩ governor nĩ scam nĩũntũ mbeũ ñũ nĩĩkagiirwa budget ya kũgũra na nĩ donation kuuma kĩ World Bank gwĩtũkĩra climate change. Ndĩ governor ndĩngĩensure muntũ wonthe nĩakũgwata mbeũ beganene

sublocation na location gũkũrũkĩra kwĩthĩrania data ya arĩmi na kũbanenkera kũringana na bũrĩa beandĩkithĩtie...

“The seeds meant for planting that the governor gives out is a scam because it is budgeted for in order to be bought yet it is a donation from World Bank through the climate change program. If I were the governor, I would ensure that everyone gets the seeds equally in sublocations and locations according to the way they registered.”

Speaker 2: An MCA in Tharaka Nithi

As seen above, the speaker adds that the seeds are actually donations from the World Bank under a climate change program. This statement further supports the claim of deception by exposing that the government is giving out free aid as if it were their own contribution. The ideological message here is that leaders are misusing development tools to gain political praise, rather than being transparent about the actual sources of support. The speaker presents the leadership as dishonest and driven by image rather than service, reinforcing a negative ideology around governance and development accountability. These ideological positions are supported by Kamau (2011) who argues that local politicians often appropriate donor-funded projects as personal initiatives to gain public trust, while Maina (2020) observed that such narratives are common in vernacular radio, where leaders attempt to appear as sole agents of development. Both studies agree that exposing this kind of deception in political talk reveals underlying ideological battles over legitimacy, public trust, and the true meaning of development. These findings reflect core concepts in CDA, on how political actors use language to manage perceptions of responsibility and gain symbolic control over development narratives. Rather than simply reporting facts, speakers reframe external support as personal achievement, allowing them to build an image of effectiveness and public service. CDA highlights how such rhetorical moves are tied to broader efforts to shape public opinion and maintain influence, often by blurring the line between genuine service and political branding.

In EXT 4; UTT 29

“..ngaakikisha ũthii na mbere kũruta wĩra kĩrĩ mwananchi. ĩndĩ opposition ngũgi yao nĩ kũreta propaganda na rũmena tu nagwaka thirikarĩ ntaka..”

Oversighting the county government to ensure there is development and work for the common man. But opposition only works to bring propaganda and hatred just to smear mud on the government.

Speaker 4: A Senator

The speaker presents themselves as committed to oversight and development for the benefit of ordinary citizens. This self-description frames their role as purposeful and aligned with the interests of the people, constructing a positive image of leadership. The emphasis on “work for the common man” reveals an ideological orientation that associates legitimate leadership with grassroots service. It positions development not just as infrastructure or funding but as a moral duty owed to the public. This reinforces the idea that the speaker’s political identity is rooted in action, responsibility, and people-centered progress. On the other hand, the speaker talks about the opposition in a very negative way by using words like “propaganda” and “hatred.” These terms are not just about disagreeing they show a deeper belief that the opposition is not genuine or helpful. Instead of responding to what the opposition is saying, the speaker suggests that they only want to create problems. This creates a clear divide between those seen as building the country and those accused of causing trouble. By using this kind of language, the speaker makes their side look responsible and the opposition look harmful, which helps shape public opinion in their favour.

Building on the ideological framing seen in EXT 4; UTT 29,

EXT 6, UTT 30

“..Development nigukara taka yatwikire skewed- yerekerua rutere rumwe nkuruki ya nangi..”

Development seems to have been skewed to one side more than the other..

Speaker 6: An MP in Meru County

Highlights another key concern concerning the unfair distribution of development. and the speaker points out that progress appears to benefit one side more than the other, implying that those in power may be favoring certain regions or groups. This is not presented as a neutral observation but as a subtle critique of leadership. The speaker suggests that development, which should be equal and inclusive, has become selective and politically influenced. This reflects an ideological view that connects development with justice, fairness, and equal treatment of citizens. By presenting development as “skewed,” the speaker introduces the idea that those in power may be using public resources to reward allies or punish critics. This reinforces the earlier statement in EXT 4; UTT 29, where opponents were framed as threats to progress. Even the leaders who claim to support development are shown to misuse it, which deepens the public’s mistrust. These concerns are supported by a study by Nyaura (2018), who found that in

many counties across Kenya, development projects were unevenly distributed along political or ethnic lines, often reflecting the interests of those in leadership rather than the needs of the population and in this case corruption and tribalism are alluded to.

As seen in EXT 3, UTT 31

“..BBI ñnkĩnyibia ùkabila, chuki thĩinĩ wa wanasiasa na ñngiongerera mbece kana opportunities mashinani kenda mwananchi wa kawaida atetheka..”

BBI can minimize tribalism, hatred within the political class and also increase opportunities in the rural areas so that the common man can be helped

Speaker 3: A Governor

The speaker presents the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) as a solution to major political and social problems, such as tribalism, hate among leaders, and lack of rural development. By linking BBI with peace, unity, and fairness, the speaker promotes it as more than a political reform—it becomes a tool for national development and social justice. This kind of language builds a positive image of the initiative and encourages people to see it as necessary for progress. The speaker also connects BBI to the well-being of the “common man,” which adds emotional weight and gives the message a moral angle. Arguably, the use of this language reveals a strong ideological position. The speaker is not only informing the public about what BBI offers but also shaping how people think about it. By suggesting that BBI can help solve deep-rooted issues and bring development to ordinary citizens, the speaker presents it as a fair and people-driven policy. This approach appeals to shared values such as equality and national unity, making it harder to oppose without seeming against development or harmony. CDA, as in this context, helps us see that politicians often use language not just to inform but to influence how people think about certain policies or actions. By attaching positive values to their message, they shape public opinion and support. In this case, the speaker uses the idea of development to promote BBI, creating a message that blends political goals with public interest.

This is also depicted in
EXT 7, UTT 32

“..Ind inkwira antu ba Buuri batikagie na haraka cia kwendia miunda tontu njira ciabua antu nibakwenda kugura miunda batuura. Nibeteere niuntu miunda ikagia goro. Aana nibathome tutikwenda Buuri itwika ni ya ageni antu bendia miunda..”

I want to tell the Buuri people not to be in a hurry to sell land because as roads get better, people will buy land

Speaker 7: An MP in Meru County

The speaker gives a warning to the people of Buuri, urging them not to rush into selling their land. This statement reflects an ideological belief that land is more than just property—it holds cultural, social, and economic value. By connecting land sales to improved infrastructure, the speaker suggests that outsiders will take advantage of development to acquire land from locals. This message promotes the idea of protecting community assets and resisting quick financial gain in favor of long-term benefit and identity preservation. It frames land as a shared heritage that must be guarded for future generations. This discourse goes beyond personal opinion and taps into a deeper ideological position about development and belonging. The speaker links physical development, such as roads, to the threat of cultural loss if locals give away their land. This reflects a fear that external influence may lead to displacement or erasure of local identity. In doing so, the speaker uses language to raise awareness, influence community behavior, and promote a form of development that respects heritage. It aligns with CDA's view that language shapes how people understand their place in society and how they act to protect their interests.

EXT 8, UTT 33

“..Kiria nkorio Mithika ni awork na county government niuntu Meru kwi na mpara na antu nibagukua..”

What I am asking Hon Mithika Linturi is that he works with the county government because there is hunger in Meru and people are dying.

Speaker 8: An MCA in Meru County

The speaker says that Hon. Mithika Linturi should work with the county government because *“people are dying”* and there is hunger in Meru. This statement reflects a strong ideological position that favors local cooperation and responsibility. The speaker’s word choices—such as *“people are dying”* and *“because there is hunger”*—create a sense of urgency and moral duty. By directly linking death to lack of action, the speaker presents the situation as one that requires immediate local solutions. This grammatical structure, built around a call to action, shows that the speaker believes in self-reliance at the county level. The problem is not described as one for the national government to fix, but one that should be addressed by local leaders working together. The ideological meaning is also clear in the use of simple but powerful terms like *“work with the county government.”* This phrase suggests that unity and collaboration are the right values, while disunity or political rivalry is harmful. The speaker does not mention political parties or national agencies, which further shows the belief that local action is

more effective. This choice of words frames local leadership as both capable and responsible for solving community problems. In doing so, the speaker communicates an ideological belief in decentralization, shared duty, and practical leadership at the grassroots level. This finding supports earlier studies by Khaemba (2024), who observed that political speech in Kenyan counties often promotes local problem-solving as a way of resisting overdependence on the national government. Thuo and Kioko (2023) also found that political leaders in devolved units use language that encourages unity, self-reliance, and urgency to build trust and legitimacy.

EXT 9, UTT 34

“..Thirikari itirunagwa ta Kiosk niuntu mbecha iria tukuga tutinacio cia maendeleo no tukwona mbecha ikiejanwa everywhere cia empowerment..”

The government is not run like a kiosk because we can see that we don't have money for development yet there is a lot of money being distributed around the country for empowerment.

Speaker 9: A Former Cabinet Secretary

The above utterance compares the running of government to that of managing a kiosk as a powerful imagery that implies poor planning, informality, and lack of seriousness. The speaker also criticizes the current administration for handling public funds in a casual or unstructured manner. The lexical choice of “*everywhere*” when referring to the distribution of empowerment funds further emphasizes a sense of disorder or mismanagement. These words are carefully chosen to express dissatisfaction without naming individuals, allowing the speaker to make a strong point indirectly. The grammatical structure of the sentence also supports the ideological message. The speaker uses “*we don't have money for development*” to highlight a gap between public needs and government action. The phrase “*yet there is a lot of money being distributed*” introduces a contrast that suggests unfair priorities or wasteful spending. The overall framing positions the government as failing to meet its key responsibilities while spending resources in questionable ways. This reflects an ideological stance that values proper planning, accountability, and fairness in resource allocation. By using accessible and emotional language, the speaker communicates a deep concern for responsible governance, reinforcing the belief that development should come before political showmanship.

EXT 11, UTT 35

“..Ugafix mauntu ta mau, gutibu mwananchi arega gukena.”

Once you fix such things, there is no way citizens cannot be happy.
Speaker 5: An MP in Tharaka Nithi

The utterance expresses a strong ideological position that links development directly to the well-being of citizens. The structure of the sentence leaves no room for doubt, suggesting that good leadership is measured by the ability to deliver services that improve people's lives. The use of general terms like "*such things*" helps the speaker include a wide range of development needs without naming specifics, making the statement sound universally true and morally sound. This utterance functions similarly to the one in EXT 9; UTT34 where the speaker criticized poor planning and misuse of funds. While highlighting what is going wrong, EXT 11; UTT35 emphasizes what should happen. Both utterances use ideological framing to shape public expectations about leadership and accountability. They share the belief that development should be people-centered and that the government's role is to ensure basic needs are met. The utterances are in line with van Dijk (1998), who argues that discourse shapes how power and responsibility are represented in society. In both utterances, the speakers use carefully chosen words and sentence structures to highlight values such as fairness, accountability, and service to the people.

This contrast through ideological approach is depicted in

EXT 5, UTT 36

"..Mbeca cia county, ihangite town, lakini CDF, ciina maa macinani, cia county ciuraira headquater.."

The money from the county hangs in town but CDF money goes right into the rural homes but the county one gets lost at the headquarters.

Speaker 11: An MP in Meru County

The speaker draws a clear contrast between two funding systems; County Government funds and Constituency Development Funds (CDF). Through this contrast, the speaker frames CDF as more effective and closer to the people, while presenting county funds as delayed, mismanaged, or inaccessible. The lexical choice of phrases like "*hangs in town*" and "*goes right into the rural homes*" creates a vivid image of inequality in resource distribution. This structure positions the county system as distant and bureaucratic, while CDF is portrayed as direct and community-based. This ideological framing functions to support a specific view of governance—one that values decentralization and grassroots delivery. The speaker implies that CDF is aligned with the real needs of ordinary citizens, especially those in rural areas. This reflects a belief

that effective governance must be felt at the household level, not just seen at the administrative center.

In the context of political communication, CDA helps reveal how leaders use specific linguistic features to shape meaning, manage public perception, and influence opinion. The analysis of utterances in this study shows that political leaders use features such as nominalization, passivization, transitivity, modality, and ideology to present development in ways that protect their image, avoid direct responsibility, and promote certain values. These features are not accidental; they are carefully chosen to guide how listeners understand leadership, development, and accountability. Through CDA, we see that political language is both a tool for communication and a means of exercising control over public discourse.

The data collected from Kimeru FM broadcasts demonstrates that these linguistic elements are systematically deployed to manage public perception of leadership and development. Political actors framed development either as a shared national goal or a symbol of individual performance. Through these structures, they built images of themselves as competent, committed, and aligned with community interests—while often downplaying or avoiding scrutiny. This reflects CDA's argument that discourse is not neutral but a site where power relations are constructed and contested, thereby addressing the first research question of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

(DE) LEGITIMIZATION STRATEGIES IN DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

5.1 (De) Legitimization in Development Discourse

Legitimization in development discourse refers to the use of language to justify, support, or defend a speaker's actions, ideas, or leadership. It is a powerful communication strategy through which political actors present themselves as credible, responsible, and aligned with public interests. By using words that express reason, morality, shared identity, or expert support, speakers attempt to win the approval of their audience. This process helps them maintain authority, promote their agendas, and minimize resistance. The way political messages are framed is often more important than the message itself, especially in contexts where power and trust are constantly negotiated. When a political leader frames an action as logical, morally right, or for the common good, it becomes harder for the public to oppose it. This is because legitimization does not rely on force—it relies on persuasion. It invites people to see the leader's position as reasonable and beneficial. If the audience accepts this framing, it strengthens the speaker's position and silences potential criticism. In this way, legitimization helps manage public opinion and reduce conflict in a subtle but effective manner.

When legitimization is well received by the audience, it significantly improves a speaker's credibility. It builds trust and paints the speaker as a servant of the people, not just a holder of power. Leaders who use legitimizing language effectively often succeed in creating a sense of unity, shared purpose, and urgency around their message. This can lead to stronger public support, smoother implementation of policies, and more favorable media coverage. Therefore, legitimization is not just a rhetorical device—it is a practical tool for political success. In the current study, this element was observed in various utterances drawn from the development talks aired on Kimeru FM radio stations. Upon close scrutiny of the data, several legitimization strategies were identified, including rationality, altruism, voices of expertise. In addition, some speakers used emotional appeals, while others relied on hypothetical futures to justify current actions by predicting positive outcomes. The following strategies were found to be recurrent in the development discourse interaction:

5.1.1 Rationality

Rationality as a legitimization strategy involves the use of logic, facts, or reasonable arguments to justify a speaker's actions, plans, or decisions. Ideas are shared as products of consultations with key people or sources of information and also through evaluation. Political leaders often rely on this approach to make their ideas appear practical, necessary, and well thought out. By presenting information in a logical manner, they aim to convince the audience that their choices are not emotional or self-serving, but rather based on sound judgment and clear reasoning. Rationality helps reduce doubt and resistance by framing a political position as the most sensible or beneficial option available. This strategy works by appealing to the audience's understanding of cause and effect. Leaders may use comparisons, explanations, or references to problems and solutions to justify their stance.

EXT 1, UTT 37

“..Ndirona ibatiĩ kũgawa maita mathatũ nĩũntũ Tharaka Nithi ãna constituencies ithatũ ãndĩ ãrĩa Merũ County ãrĩ na constituency kenda..”

“it should be divided three times because Tharaka Nithi has three constituencies while Meru has 9 constituencies.”

Speaker 1: A Governor

The speaker justifies her support for dividing the county by stating that Tharaka Nithi has three constituencies while Meru has nine. This argument uses a logical comparison to support her position, appealing to a sense of balance and fairness. By focusing on numerical inequality, the speaker presents the idea of county division as reasonable and necessary rather than political or emotional. This form of rational explanation helps frame the proposed action as practical and fair, reducing potential opposition by making it appear as a logical solution to an imbalance. As proposed by van Dijk (1998), this use of rationality reflects how speakers construct meaning to gain public approval and manage power. By drawing on facts and comparisons, the speaker uses discourse to shape how the audience interprets the issue. Rather than simply stating an opinion, she presents her stance as grounded in evidence, which enhances her credibility and positions her as a thoughtful and legitimate leader.

This is further depicted in in EXT 3, UTT 38

“..BBI ãnkĩnyibia ãkabila, chuki thĩĩnĩ wa waniasa na ãngiongerera mbeca kana opportunities mashinani ..”

BBI can minimize tribalism, hatred within the political class and also increase opportunities in the rural areas.

Speaker 3: A Governor

The speaker justifies support for the BBI initiative by stating that it can reduce tribalism and hatred while increasing rural opportunities. This is a logical argument that connects the proposal to real social and economic benefits. When the speaker links BBI to peace and equal development, the speaker makes the initiative appear as a practical solution to long-standing problems. The language is clear and focused on outcomes, helping the audience see the initiative not as a political agenda, but as a logical step toward unity and improved livelihoods.

EXT 6, UTT 39

“..Yacoka gwatwika parliamentary chairman na chairman ba departmental committees are influencing finances to the favour of their constituencies ..”

“then it happened that parliamentary chairmen and chairmen of parliamentary committees are influencing finances to the favour of their constituencies.

Speaker 6 : An MP in Meru County

In this utterance, the speaker explains that parliamentary chairpersons often influence the national budget to favor their own regions. This statement is used to justify the need for fairer resource distribution. And instead of making emotional complaints, the speaker uses a structural explanation to highlight inequality. This rational framing strengthens the call for change by presenting it as a response to an unfair system. Both utterances use logic to support their arguments, helping the speakers legitimize their views as reasonable and necessary in the context of national development. The findings in these utterances align with existing literature on rationality in development discourse. Omondi (2023) observes that Kenyan politicians often use logical appeals to justify constitutional reforms and development policies, especially when addressing issues related to equity and national unity. He notes that arguments based on facts and comparisons are used to frame political agendas as solutions to public problems rather than personal ambitions. Similarly, Lau and Schlesinger (2005) highlights that in county-level political speech, rational arguments about budget allocations and resource distribution are common strategies used by leaders to build legitimacy and minimize resistance. Rationality is further depicted in

EXT 9, UTT 34,

“Thirikari itirunawa ta kiosk”

“the government is not run like a kiosk”

Speaker 9: A Former Cabinet Secretary

The speaker uses a metaphor to create a rational argument about the need for better financial management. By stating that “*the government is not run like a kiosk,*” the speaker compares poor governance to informal, unplanned operations. This metaphor simplifies a complex issue, allowing the audience to clearly understand the speaker’s point—that government spending should be structured, transparent, and focused on development. The contrast drawn between the lack of development funds and the wide distribution of empowerment money strengthens the speaker’s argument. The language used is straightforward but carries a strong logical appeal: if funds for empowerment exist, then funds for essential development should also be available. This utterance builds legitimacy through rationality by focusing on inconsistency in budget priorities. The speaker does not rely on emotional appeals or personal attacks but instead points out a contradiction that the audience can observe and evaluate. The structure of the sentence and the choice of words guide listeners toward a specific conclusion—that the current financial practices are flawed and need adjustment. This use of language aligns with the broader pattern in development discourse where logical comparisons and real-life examples are used to justify calls for reform and to position the speaker as reasonable and solution-focused.

Further, in EXT 10, UTT 40

“..Kwĩna rūũjĩ rwĩtagwa Mũthambĩ-Gĩtĩje, rwambĩrĩrue nĩ PC wetagwa Philomena Kooech, twang’ang’ana na ru, tweja county government, yang’ang’ana na ru, ndona rūtĩkũthira..twona mũjapan, atũretera mbeca twona project ãĩkũthira. Term thiru ndang’ang’ana twacua contractor gũkũrũkĩra gĩ Tana water. Twaruta pipe jũrĩ jia nchi ãkumi na inya kenda pipe ãmwe ã serve bande ya ãgũrũ ya Mũthambĩ gwitia na ãũ ãngĩ ã serve bande ya gaiti. Kĩrĩa gĩtĩgeere nĩ kũsambazĩra antũ. Nĩyo program ãrĩa twĩna yo, na tũgwĩcĩria rĩrĩa president akeja Tharaka Nithi, alaunch phase 2, nĩ ya kũrũtha the last mile..”

There is also Muthambi-Gitije water which was started by the then Provincial Commissioner, Philomena Koech. The county took it over and when I saw the process is not complete, I took it over, got a Japanese donor and still the project was not complete. Last term I struggled and I got a contractor through Tana water. We got two pipes each 14 inches so that one serves the upper Muthambi zone and the other serves the lower Muthambi zone. What is remaining now is distributing to the people. That is the program we have and I think when the president comes to Tharaka Nithi he will launch phase 2 then we do the last mile.

Speaker 5; An MP in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker uses a factual, evidence-based approach to justify a stalled development effort. This he does by explaining that despite securing support from a Japanese donor,

the project still remained incomplete. The steps taken—“*I took it over*” and “*got a Japanese donor*”—the speaker shows that efforts were made in good faith. This kind of language functions as logical appeal that shifts attention away from failure and toward the complexity of the process. It communicates that the speaker was proactive and resourceful, even if the outcome was not fully achieved. This strategy strengthens the speaker’s credibility by showing transparency and logical reasoning. Rather than ignoring the unfinished project, the speaker provides a clear explanation grounded in action and effort. The use of an external, reputable source (a Japanese donor) adds weight to the justification, signaling that the lack of completion was not due to negligence but to challenges beyond their control. Through this, the speaker constructs a legitimate image as a responsible leader who actively seeks solutions, reinforcing public trust through practical, reasoned language.

In EXT 11, UTT 41

“..nĩndutĩte mawĩra maingĩ mũno ma social services. ũgafix maũntũ ta mau, gũtĩbu mwananchi arega gũkena...”

I have done many things in social services once you fix such things, there is no way citizens cannot be happy.

Muuga Fm, Speaker 5; An MP in Tharaka Nithi County

In the above utterance the speaker explains why he is confident in his leadership by listing the projects he has implemented in health, agriculture, water, ECDE, and social services. He follows this with the statement that once such things are fixed, citizens cannot fail to be happy. This utterance reflects a rational argument built on cause-and-effect reasoning. The speaker uses specific service areas as evidence of his past achievements, which serve to justify his capability and legitimacy as a leader. The language is structured to show logical connections between action (fixing services) and outcome (public satisfaction), making the argument appear credible and practical. This kind of framing strengthens the speaker’s position by making it clear that his claims are based on visible, measurable progress. This use of rationality is supported further by his calm, factual tone and the orderly listing of sectors he has worked on. Instead of relying on emotion or personal attacks, the speaker presents his case through observable results, appealing to reason and shared understanding. This aligns with broader practices in development discourse where rational explanations help leaders build legitimacy by focusing on evidence and problem-solving. By pointing to concrete developments, the speaker communicates that his leadership is not about promises but

about performance, which increases trust and positions him as a capable and development-focused leader.

In EXT13, UTT 42

“..CDF nĩ ĩbatĩ kwendelea, na ĩendelee, kwendelea na kwendelea. Mbeca cia county, ihangĩte town, lakini CDF, ciĩnamaa macinani, cia county ciuraĩra headquarter. Watara mantũ aa maingĩ ma devolution, ĩu nĩyo devolution ya mbere, buru. Mũjumbe nĩwe wĩna mantũ jarĩa akũmenya antũ bawe nĩbakwenda...”

It should go on and on and on. The money from the county hangs in town but CDF money goes right into the rural homes but the county one gets lost at the headquarters. When you count the many things that are devolved, this is the first devolution element. The MP is the one who has the knowledge of what the people need.

Speaker 11; An MP in Meru County

The speaker draws a comparison between CDF and county government funds to highlight effectiveness in resource distribution. He states that CDF money reaches rural households, while county funds remain stuck at the headquarters. This comparison forms a rational argument in support of the CDF model. By contrasting the two systems, the speaker presents CDF as more practical, efficient, and beneficial to ordinary citizens. The language used is simple but strategic, guiding the audience to view CDF as the more reliable option based on its direct impact. This utterance builds legitimacy for CDF by relying on observable outcomes rather than abstract promises. The speaker does not attack individuals or dramatize the issue, but instead uses logical contrast to show which system better serves the people. This aligns with rational legitimization, where facts and comparisons are used to justify support for a particular policy or structure. In doing so, the speaker not only promotes CDF but also positions himself as a leader who values results and community-based development.

CDA shows that speakers can use language to guide people’s thinking in indirect ways. Instead of saying one system is bad, a speaker may simply show that another system works better. In this case, the speaker compares CDF with county funds and shows that CDF reaches people more directly. This makes CDF sound more helpful and reliable. The audience is not forced to agree, but the speaker uses clear and logical language to lead them to that conclusion on their own.

5.1.2 Appeal to Common Good

One of the most common ways political leaders justify their actions is by appealing to the common good—the shared interests or well-being of the general public (Reyes, 2011). This strategy involves using language that presents a proposal or decision as being for the benefit of everyone, not just for personal or political gain. It helps the speaker appear selfless, responsible, and in touch with the needs of the people. By focusing on collective needs such as peace, development, or fairness, the speaker strengthens their credibility and positions their actions as necessary for community progress. Appeals to the common good often use inclusive language like “we,” “our people,” or “the community” to show unity and shared goals. Speakers may refer to widespread problems or desires that most citizens agree with, such as better healthcare, education, or security. This approach works well because it connects the speaker’s message to values the audience already holds. It also makes it harder for opponents to criticize the proposal, since rejecting it could appear as opposing the interests of the public.

In the current study, this legitimization strategy was clearly observed in various utterances from the political talks aired on Meru and Muuga FM radio stations. Some leaders justified their plans or defended their leadership by linking their work to public benefit, such as improved services, equal distribution of resources, or protecting the lives and dignity of citizens. In these cases, language was used not only to describe development but to frame it as something morally right and collectively necessary.

In EXT 1, UTT 43

“ndathurĩtwe nĩ Merũ yonthe na gũtĩku nĩona kuura kwogu gũtĩhũkia kuura.”

“I was elected by the entire Meru so it cannot destroy the votes”

Speaker 1; A Governor

The speaker emphasizes that she was elected by the entire Meru community, using this point to argue that the division of the county cannot affect her votes. This statement appeals to the common good by highlighting unity and inclusivity. By framing her leadership as a product of collective support, the speaker positions herself as a representative of all people, not just a specific group or region. The use of “*entire Meru*” strengthens the idea that her leadership is legitimate and widely accepted, making any opposition to it appear unnecessary or divisive. This appeal to unity serves

to justify her position and reduce political tension. Instead of focusing on conflict or rivalry, the speaker uses inclusive language to reinforce a message of togetherness. This is a common strategy in development discourse, where leaders seek to present their role as one that brings people together for shared progress. Through this approach, the speaker strengthens her image as a unifying figure and defends her leadership without directly attacking her critics. The language works to build trust by showing that her leadership serves the interests of the whole community.

The extracts below depicted instances of appeal to common good;

EXT2, UTT 44

“..Nkaruta wĩra wega na nĩ nkĩromba antũ benyiye bacoke nthĩ barutĩre antũ wĩra..”

I will work well and I ask people to humble themselves and come down to work for the people.

Speaker 2; An MCA Tharaka Nithi

EXT 2; UTT45;

“..Atongoria nĩbakirire nĩũntũ bwa PR..ĩromba rĩakwa nĩ kũnenkerwa mbeccia ward fund nĩkenda baũmba kũrutĩra antu wĩra... MCA batĩthagũa bena mbeccia ciakũrũtha development kĩ maeneo bunge mao...”

“leaders kept quiet in a bid to maintain public relations...my suggestion is for the ward fund to be given to enable leaders to work for the people... MCAs have no money to actualize development in their areas.”

Speaker 2: An MCA in Tharaka Nithi

In EXT 2, UTT 44, the speaker expresses a personal commitment to work diligently and calls upon others to also commit themselves to serving the public. This use of inclusive and collective language emphasizes that development is not a one-person task but a shared responsibility. By urging people to “humble themselves and come down to work for the people,” the speaker frames leadership as a service to the community rather than a position of privilege. This appeal promotes unity and cooperation, helping the speaker legitimize her leadership by aligning it with the collective interest of the public. Utterance 45 continues this approach by proposing that the ward fund should be allocated to enable leaders to work effectively for the people. The speaker presents the fund not as a personal or political tool, but as a resource meant to improve public service delivery. This frames the call for funding as a matter of public benefit rather than personal gain.

EXT 2; UTT 46;

“..Mbeca irĩa itĩmbige wega ndĩngĩtũmĩra kĩ bursary kenda itethie mwana wa mũthĩni kũgwata kĩthomo..”

“Any money that is not well kept would be used to give bursaries so that the children of the poor get educated.”

Speaker 2; An MCA in Tharaka Nithi County

EXT 2; UTT 47;

“..Vocational training centres jiĩ rungu rwa county government. Thirikari yakwa ñgiiejaga mbeca kwĩgana kenda arutwa barikia form 4 baũmba kwendelea na kĩthomo..”

“...the vocational training centres are under the county government. My government would give them enough money so that when students clear form four, they can proceed with higher studies.”

Speaker 2; An MCA in Tharaka Nithi County

The speaker in the EXT 2 UTT 46 above suggests that any misused or unaccounted-for money should be redirected to bursaries, specifically to help children from poor families access education. This reinforces the speaker’s image as a leader focused on fairness and equal opportunity, using language that places community welfare at the center of his development agenda. For the EXT 2 utt 47 the speaker extends this appeal to education by promising to invest in vocational training centres. By highlighting the need to support students after secondary school, he presents his leadership as focused on empowering the youth for a better future. The language used shows a commitment to long-term development and positions education as a shared priority. The speakers in the preceding utterances consistently use language that links leadership decisions to the common good, building legitimacy through values of equity, service, and community advancement.

The speaker, in EXT 1, UTT 48

“Kwogu ikeja kuuma au igatonya miundene ya county twarĩma tũgĩkaga kilo cietu tũga create strategic grain reserve”.

“We can farm as we store our kilos to create strategic grain reserves”

Speaker 8; An MCA in Meru County

The speaker proposes that instead of relying entirely on external support, the community should engage in farming and create strategic grain reserves. This statement appeals to the common good by encouraging self-reliance and shared responsibility in addressing food security. The use of “we” and “our kilos” highlights collective effort and ownership of the solution. In a situation where the initiatives of individuals are framed as a community-based strategy, the speaker positions local action as both practical and necessary for the well-being of everyone in the society. This kind of

language builds legitimacy by showing that the speaker's focus is on sustainable solutions that directly benefit the public.

EXT 12, UTT 49

“Twa harmonize secondary school fees, na twauga arimû batikongerere fees, nokana tûrûthîte mûcemanio tûgetikanîria twîamwe.”

“We have also harmonized secondary school fees and have said that head teachers should not be increasing fees unless we all meet and agree...”

Speaker 10; An MP inTharaka Nithi

The explanation that school fees has been harmonized and that any future increases should only happen through joint agreement. This reflects a strong appeal to the common good by promoting fairness and shared decision-making in the education sector. The phrase *“unless we all meet and agree”* emphasizes inclusivity and collective responsibility, ensuring that no single group makes decisions that could burden families. By focusing on affordability and transparency in education, the speaker positions the action as one that protects public interest, especially for parents and students. This language helps legitimize the speaker's role as a leader who values equity and listens to the needs of the community.

5.1.3 Moral Appeal

Moral appeal is a strategy used by political leaders to justify their actions or leadership by showing that they are guided by what is right, fair, and acceptable to society. Instead of relying on logic or emotion alone, the speaker presents themselves as someone who upholds strong values such as honesty, fairness, humility, and service to others. This kind of language helps the audience see the leader as trustworthy and responsible. When a leader speaks about helping the poor, rejecting corruption, or treating all people equally, they are not just sharing ideas—they are showing that their leadership is based on moral principles that the public respects. This strategy helps speakers gain legitimacy by connecting their image to values that matter to the community. It creates a positive public impression, especially in a society where leadership is often judged not just by results, but also by integrity. In the current study, a few utterances from political leaders clearly used this approach. These speakers appealed to moral values such as fairness, honesty, and service to legitimize their leadership in the eyes of the public.

As seen in EXT 10; UTT 50

“..Twiuû twi family ya Kaleke, tûtwĩre tûgĩthagia antu silently, tûtongoretue nĩ

my mother, e patron. Gûcũra antũ mawĩra, kũthomithia jiana...”

“...as the Kareke family, we help people silently led by our mother who is the patron looking for jobs for people, educating children...”

Speaker 5; An MP in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker uses a moral appeal by describing his family's quiet commitment to serving the community. He emphasizes that their support, such as helping people find jobs and educating children, is done humbly and without publicity. By highlighting their silent service, the speaker presents himself as someone raised in a family that values compassion, responsibility, and care for others. This creates an image of a morally upright leader who does not lead for fame or personal gain, but out of a sense of duty. This moral positioning helps the speaker gain public trust and justify his role as a legitimate representative of the people. In the context of CDA, this kind of moral framing is a subtle but effective way to build and maintain power. van Dijk (2001) explains that language can shape how the audience views a speaker's character and intentions. By presenting his leadership as rooted in a tradition of quiet service, the speaker uses discourse to control how he is perceived that is, not just as a politician, but as a morally guided leader. The narrative of family values and silent action appeals to shared cultural beliefs about humility and service, which increases the speaker's credibility and strengthens his position in the public eye.

In EXT 12, UTT 51, the speaker uses moral reasoning to defend himself against accusations of corruption. He explains that his choices in leadership are based on trust and competence, stating that one should appoint someone who is capable of doing the job well. This appeal to responsibility and fairness presents the speaker as someone who values good work over personal or political gain. By framing the accusations against him as political and unjust, he shifts the focus away from blame and toward ethical leadership. His emphasis on doing the right thing, even when misunderstood, helps to legitimize his role as a committed and morally guided leader

EXT 12, UTT51

“..Menya niũ mbĩtikĩtie rĩrĩa ũkwandĩka mũntũ ũceragia mũntũ ũria ũkũmenya akaruta wĩra wega. Kwogu maũntũ ma gwĩtwa mwizi, yarĩ siasa, nĩũntũ mũntũ

nĩakũmenya maũntũ marĩa akũrũtha na tontu nĩagũkĩra kũmenyeka, no acũire wa kwigĩrĩra.”

“I personally believe that when you seek someone to do a job for you you get someone you know will do a good job. So the thing that were making me to be called a thief was politics because somebody knows what he is doing and since he fears that what he is doing will be exposed, he has to look for a scapegoat.”

Speaker 10; An MP Tharaka Nithi County

This approach positions him as a principled leader who is being targeted for doing what is right and it not only defends his image but also builds trust with the audience by highlighting values they can relate to; honesty, responsibility, and justice. Through this language, he creates a moral contrast between himself and his critics. Studies in development discourse support the idea that morality is a key tool for legitimization. As noted by Chilton and Schaffner (2011), political actors often use moral positioning to present themselves as aligned with social values, especially when facing criticism or conflict. Similarly, Fairclough (2003) observes that appeals to honesty, humility, and duty are common strategies leaders use to gain public trust and justify their authority. These works show that moral discourse is not just personal but it is a deliberate strategy used to shape public opinion and maintain legitimacy in power.

EXT 2, UTT 52

“..ndĩngĩcũa kĩrathimo kĩa ma kuuma kĩ Mũũrungu gĩa kuruta wĩra atĩ na ungumania..”

I would look for a blessing from God by working without corruption

Speaker 2; An MCA in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker expresses a commitment to moral leadership by stating that he would seek a blessing from God and work without corruption. This statement appeals to religious values and ethical behavior, framing his leadership as spiritually guided and morally clean. Through linking his service to divine approval, the speaker strengthens his credibility and creates a trustworthy image. The moral appeal lies in showing that his leadership is not driven by personal interest but by the desire to serve with honesty and integrity.

EXT 2, UTT 53

“..Ndimũthure ta MCA ndutaga wĩra nĩkũbagua nĩũntũ nthurĩtwe kĩrĩ antũ bonthe ba Tharaka Nithi.”

“I am elected MCA so that I can work without discriminating because I am voted in by all Tharaka Nithi members.”

Speaker 2; An MCA in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker continues this moral positioning by stating that he does not discriminate in his work because he was elected by all members of Tharaka Nithi. This shows a commitment to fairness and inclusivity, values that are important in any community. By emphasizing that he serves everyone equally, regardless of political support or background, the speaker reinforces his image as a just and selfless leader. The transition from personal morality (working without corruption) to social fairness (working for all) shows a consistent moral stance, which enhances his legitimacy in the eyes of the public.

From CDA perspective, these utterances demonstrate how speakers use moral language to construct a positive public identity. Van Dijk (1998) argues that discourse is a tool for controlling how power and trust are communicated because moral appeals are often used to build a favourable image. This is supported by research from Chilton and Schaffner (2011), who found that Kenyan politicians frequently link their leadership to moral values such as justice, fairness, and integrity in order to gain legitimacy, especially in devolved settings. These findings confirm that moral discourse remains a powerful strategy for political leaders seeking public support.

5.1.4 Voices of Expertise

As a legitimization strategy, voices of expertise strengthen the argument of political speakers by referring to experts, institutions, laws, or official reports. Instead of presenting ideas as personal opinions, they frame them as backed by technical knowledge, legal authority, or institutional credibility. This helps the speaker appear informed, responsible, and aligned with trusted sources. Common forms include citing budget committees, national laws, official positions, or expert bodies. The presence of these voices in political speech helps reduce doubt and makes the message appear more reliable and objective. van Dijk (2015) explains that power is often maintained through control of knowledge and credibility. By using voices of expertise, speakers borrow institutional authority to support their position and reduce resistance. This strategy allows them to shift responsibility while reinforcing legitimacy. Instead of saying “I

believe,” they say “the law says” or “the budget committee recommended,” which frames their message as factual and unbiased. According to CDA, this type of language use is a powerful tool in development discourse because it influences how the audience processes truth, trust, and authority.

In EXT 3, UTT 54

“..Yapendekeza (BBI) kwĩthĩrwe na kũnenkanĩra bursary fund kĩrĩ MCAs kenda antũ bakinyĩrwa nĩyo nau mashinani nĩ kenda ward jũũmba kwendelea..”

“It (BBI) suggests that bursary fund should be given to MCAs so that people in the rural areas can access it easily for the purpose of developing the wards...”

Speaker 12; A Woman Representative

The speaker refers to the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) and its proposal that bursary funds be given directly to MCAs using a voice of expertise, where the speaker does not make a personal opinion but instead supports her point by referring to an institutional recommendation. When the speaker cites BBI, a nationally recognized policy document, she strengthens her message and gives it greater weight. This allows her to argue for improved access to education funds in rural areas without sounding biased or self-interested. The reference to BBI also helps the speaker promote development and inclusion, especially at the grassroots level. When the speaker says that the initiative supports funds going directly to MCAs, she implies that her position aligns with expert advice and national development priorities. This builds her credibility and presents her as a leader who understands policy and is guided by informed sources. It also helps justify her support for the proposal as not just personal belief but as something backed by expert analysis and institutional approval. According to CDA, this use of institutional voice allows the speaker to manage power and influence through credible language. As van Dijk explains, speakers often use official references to make their message seem objective and grounded in truth. By invoking BBI, the speaker shifts attention away from individual motives and places authority in a trusted framework.

In EXT 12, UTT 55, the speaker refers to the role of the president in facilitating development projects during county visits. He explains that when the president plans to visit, money is often allocated in advance for preparations, and during that time, he also takes the opportunity to raise local development needs.

EXT 12, UTT 55

“..Tarĩrĩa president aũkĩte acerete county nĩethagwa abangĩte maũntũ burĩa makathiĩ na agatũma mbece. Kagita karĩa agaũka, nĩngacanaga nkaria nawe maũntũ ma mĩradi ĩrĩa ĩbatiĩ kũrũthwa..”

“When the president visits the county there are preparations that are made and money is usually sent ahead of his visit and sometimes you can spare something out of it and such a time I also make sure I have talked with him about the development projects that need to be done.”

Speaker 10; An MP in Tharaka Nithi

This reference to the president, an authoritative national figure, is a clear use of voice of expertise. By connecting his actions to the power and influence of the head of state, the speaker legitimizes his involvement in development and portrays it as coordinated with high-level leadership. This strategy allows the speaker to position himself as a bridge between local communities and national resources. He uses the president’s authority not only to justify the development projects but also to show that he works within formal systems to benefit his constituents. This helps him appear informed, connected, and effective. It shifts the message from personal ability to strategic engagement with those in power, making his efforts appear credible and institutionally supported. This finding agrees with Chilton and Schaffner (2011) who argues that referencing institutional or executive power figures helps speakers construct legitimacy by borrowing from recognized authority. It reduces public doubt and strengthens the image of the speaker as someone with access and influence.

In yet another extract, EXT7, UTT 56

“..Na fence ĩu nayo nĩtũkwaria na Kenya Wildlife Services na Lewa Conservancy na ministry nĩtũkwaria kenda Kenya Defence Forces ĩtwĩĩkĩria twaka rwego arĩa nĩũntũ nĩtũcũite donor..”

“Concerning the fence, we have talked with the KWS and the Lewa Conservancy and the ministry so that KDF can allow us to construct the fence because we have looked for a donor.”

Speaker 7; An MP in Meru County

The Member of Parliament justifies a development initiative (fencing), by referring to discussions with several official institutions, including Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS), Lewa Conservancy, the Ministry, and Kenya Defence Forces (KDF). This is a clear use of voices of expertise, where the speaker strengthens his message by showing that the plan is supported by credible institutions. By involving multiple expert bodies, the speaker frames the project as well-coordinated and informed, not just a personal or

political decision. This helps the audience view the initiative as legitimate and professionally handled. The mention of these institutions also allows the speaker to shift the focus from individual effort to collective, expert-driven planning. He presents the project as guided by professional advice and backed by a donor, which adds financial credibility. The language suggests that proper channels have been followed and that the plan has been discussed with the right stakeholders. This increases the speaker's credibility by showing that he values technical input and national procedures, making his role appear responsible and aligned with institutional standards. This finding is supported by Wodak (2009) who argues that institutional alignment in political speech helps reinforce the image of a leader as professional, coordinated, and policy-driven. In this case, the speaker's use of multiple institutional references legitimizes his plan and positions him as a capable leader working in the public's best interest.

5.1.5 Altruism

Altruism as a legitimization strategy refers to when a speaker presents their actions or decisions as being motivated by the desire to help others, not for personal benefit. In political speech, this is often seen when leaders say they are doing something “for the people,” “for the children,” or “for the poor.” By showing concern for others, especially vulnerable groups, speakers appear caring, selfless, and morally upright. This helps build trust with the audience and makes their plans or policies seem more acceptable and well-intentioned, even if the real motives are more complex or political. This strategy works by appealing to shared values like kindness, sacrifice, or responsibility. When leaders use altruistic language, they make it seem as though their main goal is to improve the lives of ordinary citizens. It also helps shift attention away from criticism, because questioning someone who claims to be helping others can be seen as unfair or insensitive. As a result, altruism can strengthen a leader's image, reduce opposition, and justify decisions that might otherwise face resistance. CDA shows that such moral claims are often carefully constructed to shape how the public understands reality. When politicians emphasize their concern for others, they are actively building a positive identity for themselves while framing their opponents or critics as uncaring or self-interested.

EXT5, UTT 51

“..nkageria mũno kuendelea gûtetheria aana ba Tharaka Nithi county na mbuge arĩa Mũrungu akandugũrĩra njĩra ta ya wĩra ngatetheria kwa thirikarĩ na private sector..”

“I will try to continue helping the children of Tharaka Nithi county and I want to say where God opens a door for me in the area of work opportunities I will help both in the private sector and the government.”

Speaker 5; An MP in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker presents himself as someone committed to the well-being of children in Tharaka Nithi County. By stating that he will continue helping them, he frames his political role as a personal mission driven by concern for the youth. He goes further to say that wherever God gives him an opportunity—whether in government or the private sector—he will use that chance to support others. This shows an altruistic attitude, where the speaker positions himself not as someone seeking power for personal gain, but as someone guided by a duty to serve others. This use of altruism helps the speaker gain public trust and emotional support. By focusing on helping children, a group often seen as innocent and deserving, the speaker strengthens his moral image. He also avoids sounding political or self-serving by linking his actions to God’s will, which adds humility and faith-based legitimacy. Through this strategy, the speaker builds a reputation as a caring leader whose intentions go beyond politics and reflect true public service.

In other instances, speakers emphasize personal commitment to perform their duties effectively and encourage the public to join him in serving the community. This appeal reflects an altruistic tone, where leadership is presented as a shared responsibility focused on public good. By urging others to “humble themselves” and participate in meaningful work, the speaker promotes a collective vision rooted in humility, unity, and service. His words suggest that leadership is not about power or status, but about working for the benefit of all, especially at the grassroots level.

This portrayal helps the speaker build credibility as a selfless leader. He presents himself as someone who leads by example and expects the same from others. The message reassures the audience that the focus is not on personal interest but on the development and welfare of the entire community. Such a stance increases public confidence and positions the speaker as morally grounded and people-focused, which is particularly effective in political communication. This approach is supported by

Muriithi and Ong’onda (2023), who found that in vernacular political speech in Kenya, leaders often use language that highlights sacrifice and public interest to build trust and legitimacy

In EXT2, UTT52

“..Mbeca irĩa itĩmbige wega ndĩngĩtũmĩra kĩ bursary kenda itethie mwana wa mũthĩni kũgwata kĩthomo..”

“I would use the money to give bursaries so that the children of the poor get educated.”

Speaker 2; An MCA in Tharaka Nithi County

The speaker expresses a commitment to use public funds to support bursaries for children from poor families. This is a clear example of altruism as a legitimization strategy. The speaker frames the action not as a personal gain, but as a selfless decision aimed at improving the lives of others. By focusing on education for the underprivileged, the speaker appeals to shared social values like fairness, opportunity, and compassion. This helps build a public image of a leader who puts the needs of the community first, especially those who are often left behind. This expression of concern for vulnerable groups positions the speaker as morally responsible and service-oriented. The language is simple and focused on practical impact—helping poor children access education—thereby portraying leadership as a tool for uplifting others. From the perspective of CDA, the speaker uses morally charged language to present themselves as aligned with the needs of ordinary people. Altruism, therefore, becomes a discursive tool that allows the speaker to claim legitimacy by showing care, empathy, and a commitment to social equity.

5.1.6 Hypothetical Future

Hypothetical future is a legitimization strategy where a speaker talks about what will happen if a certain action is taken or not taken (Reyes, 2011). It involves imagining possible future outcomes to support a current decision, proposal, or policy. Political leaders use this strategy to make their ideas sound urgent, necessary, or beneficial by showing what is likely to happen in the future. For example, a speaker might say that if a project is not completed, the community will continue to suffer, or if it is done, many people will benefit. This allows the speaker to justify actions by focusing on their future effects. This strategy helps the speaker gain public support by shifting attention from

the present to future possibilities. It creates a forward-looking image of the leader as someone who is planning ahead and cares about long-term results. By showing how their current choices will lead to a better future, the speaker builds trust and presents themselves as responsible and visionary. The language of “what could happen” or “what will result” gives the speaker control over the direction of the conversation and encourages the audience to support actions that promise positive change.

In EXT2, UTT53

“..ndĩngĩcũa kĩrathimo kĩa ma kuuma kĩ Mũurungu gĩa kuruta wĩra atĩ na ungumania..”

“(If I were governor) I would look for a blessing from God by working without corruption.”

Speaker 2; An MCA in Tharaka Nithi

This utterance depicts an imagination of a possible future under the speaker’s leadership. It is not a description of what is happening now but a vision of what could happen if he were in power. Through this, the speaker highlights values like fairness and accountability. By focusing on equal distribution of seeds, he presents himself as someone who would do things differently and better than the current leadership. This imagined future helps the speaker show his intentions and character without directly criticizing others. He uses the hypothetical scenario to position himself as fair, organized, and concerned about equality. This strategy allows him to build credibility by showing what kind of leader he would be. The use of future possibility also encourages the audience to think positively about his potential leadership and consider him as a trustworthy and responsible alternative.

EXT 2, UTT 54

“..Ndĩngĩ convert Hura Gate ĩtuĩke tourist centre gwĩtũkĩra kuthondeka museum ya maũntũ ma tene na kũbanga ikundi jĩa entertainment..”

“I would convert Hura Gate to a tourist centre by constructing a museum to display things about culture and tradition and preparing groups that can entertain people.”

Speaker 2; An MCA in Tharaka Nithi County

Again the speaker presents a development idea in the form of a hypothetical future and states that he would convert Hura Gate into a tourist centre, complete with a museum and entertainment groups. This statement is not about what is currently being done but what he *would* do if given the opportunity. By describing this vision, the speaker shows

that he has a clear plan for improving the community. The focus on culture, tourism, and local entertainment reflects a broader concern for economic growth and cultural preservation, which helps to justify his leadership goals.

The use of a hypothetical future allows the speaker to present himself as forward-thinking and committed to development. Instead of making promises without direction, he provides a specific example of what progress might look like under his leadership. From a communication point of view, this creates a persuasive image of a leader with vision and practical ideas. The audience is encouraged to see the speaker not just as someone with ambition, but as someone with realistic and beneficial plans for the future. According to CDA, by describing what could happen under their leadership, speakers shape public expectations and align themselves with positive change. This form of discourse subtly influences thought by linking power to vision—suggesting that the speaker is not only capable but also prepared for future responsibility.

EXT8, UTT 55

“..Kwogu ikeja kuuma au igatonya miundene ya county twarîma tûgîkaga kilo cietu tûga create strategic grain reserve..”

“So if they got into the county lands we can farm as we store our kilos to create strategic grain reserves.”

Speaker 8; An MCA in Meru County

The speaker proposes a forward-looking solution by suggesting that if people are allowed to use idle county land, they can grow food and store it to create strategic grain reserves. This is example of a hypothetical future, where the speaker imagines a better situation that could happen if a specific action is taken. He presents farming and food storage not just as immediate responses, but as steps toward long-term food security. The statement encourages the audience to think about future benefits rather than present obstacles. When the speaker focuses on possible future success, he presents himself as a leader who plans ahead and values self-reliance. He does not just identify a problem, but offers a practical and hopeful solution. The use of “we can farm... we can store” also includes the community, creating a sense of shared responsibility and benefit. This helps the speaker gain public support because he appears prepared and invested in sustainable solutions that directly benefit ordinary citizens. This is in line with what van Dijk (1998) notes that speakers use discourse to influence knowledge, beliefs, and

attitudes. In this case, the speaker uses a hopeful vision to promote his leadership as effective and grounded in realistic planning.

5.2 Delegitimization

In development discourse, delegitimization often involves pointing out the failures, weaknesses, or wrongdoings of rivals. By showing that others are unfit to lead, dishonest, or ineffective, a speaker creates a contrast that makes themselves appear more capable and trustworthy. This tactic does not always involve direct attacks; sometimes it is done subtly through criticism, sarcasm, or highlighting poor decisions made by opponents. This strategy works by shifting public focus from the speaker's shortcomings to the faults of others. Instead of just promoting their strengths, the speaker exposes the negative side of other leaders, making them look irresponsible or self-serving. This can lead the audience to see the speaker as the better choice by comparison. Delegitimization can be done through negative labeling, accusations of failure, or questioning the motives of others. In each case, the aim is to discredit competitors and position oneself as the right or moral leader.

From a communication and discourse perspective, delegitimization is a way of managing public perception. It creates a space where the speaker appears more reasonable, capable, or ethical simply because others are presented as the opposite (Ross & Rivers, 2018). In this way, legitimacy is built not only through one's own message but also by shaping how others are viewed. When used carefully, this strategy can be persuasive, especially in political environments where leadership is contested and trust is easily lost.

In EXT 2, UTT56

“...Atongoria nĩbakirire nĩũntũ bwa PR..ĩromba rĩakwa nĩ kũnenkerwa mbeccia ward fund nĩkenda baũmba kũrutĩra antu wĩra...”

“Leaders have kept quiet in a bid to maintain public relations. My suggestion is for the ward fund to be given to enable leaders to work for the people.”

Speaker 2; An MCA in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker discredits other leaders by suggesting that they are more concerned with public image than with solving real problems. By accusing them of staying silent for the sake of appearances, the speaker implies that they are avoiding responsibility and failing the people. This criticism lowers the public's trust in those leaders and paints

them as insincere or inactive. This tactic works by creating a contrast between the speaker and the leaders being criticized. While others are said to be hiding behind public relations, the speaker positions himself as someone who is honest, bold, and ready to act. He uses this indirect comparison to build his own credibility without having to list his achievements. By focusing on the faults of others, the speaker creates space to present himself as the better alternative—a leader who puts real service above image.

In yet another instance, EXT4, UTT 57

“..ĩndĩ opposition ngũgi yao nĩ kũreta propaganda na rũmena tu nagwaka thirikarĩ ntaka..”

But opposition only works to bring propaganda and hatred just to smear mud on the government.

Speaker 4; A Senator

The speaker undermines the opposition by accusing them of spreading propaganda and hatred with the aim of tarnishing the government’s image. This is a direct use of delegitimization, where the opposition is portrayed not as offering constructive criticism, but as being harmful and disruptive. The speaker frames them as lacking real ideas and instead focusing on negative tactics. This reduces the opposition’s credibility and presents them as an obstacle to progress and unity. Through describing the opposition in this way, the speaker strengthens their own position and that of the government. The implication is that the current leadership is focused on development and service delivery, while the opposition is simply trying to create confusion and negativity. This contrast helps legitimize the speaker’s side by showing it as responsible and forward-looking, while painting the other side as unproductive and divisive. The language used here is strategic as it places blame and shifts attention away from the government’s possible shortcomings.

Scholars have shown that delegitimization is a common feature in political speech, especially in competitive contexts. According to Reisigl and Wodak (2005), political actors often use negative labeling and accusations to discredit opponents and establish themselves as the more rational or trustworthy choice. By framing others as irrational or dangerous, they gain control over public perception and increase their own legitimacy. This fits that pattern, as the speaker uses strong, dismissive language to cast doubt on the opposition’s intentions and value. Delegitimization is also seen in

EXT 6, UTT 58

“..kethĩra nĩ Ndia- Kĩrĩnyaga naa gwa Kariuki, ũkethĩra kwawe mbecha irĩa nyingĩ aikĩtie kwawe ũgwe ũrũ mĩtue ntono...”

So that if the chairperson for example comes from Ndia Kirinyaga which belongs to Kariuki, you find that a lot of money is given to that constituency and you have been given nothing

Speaker 6; An MP in Meru County

The speaker points out that financial resources are unfairly allocated depending on the region of the parliamentary chairperson. He gives an example where a constituency like Ndia, associated with a powerful figure (Kariuki), receives more money, while others receive very little or nothing. This statement is not just a complaint, but it serves a strategic purpose. The speaker uses this scenario to suggest that the current system is biased and benefits a few at the expense of others, especially those without political influence. This delegitimization is aimed at discrediting both individuals and institutions involved in resource allocation. By exposing perceived favoritism, the speaker undermines the fairness and credibility of the existing leadership and systems. The intention is to show that the people in power are not serving the nation equally, thereby weakening public trust in them. At the same time, the speaker positions himself as someone who sees and speaks against injustice, which helps build his own legitimacy as a more transparent and just leader.

This is also seen in EXT 9, UTT 60

“...Gũtĩ mbecha twekagĩrũa Meru nabarĩa babatiĩ gũtetera antũ nĩbekĩrwe mũuko, no mĩcemanio betaa Karen na statehouse bakaewa garama...”

“...no money was being allocated for Meru and the MPs who should be talking for the people were pocketed and all they know is to attend meetings in Karen and state house as they are given transport.”

Speaker 9; A Former Cabinet Secretary

The politician criticizes local Members of Parliament for failing to represent the interests of the Meru people. He claims that no funds were being allocated to the region and blames the MPs for being “pocketed”—suggesting they have been compromised or bribed. Instead of fighting for development, the speaker says they are attending meetings in Karen and State House for personal gain. This language presents the leaders as disconnected from the people they serve and more concerned with their own benefits. This is an example of delegitimization, where the speaker weakens the public image of

his rivals to strengthen his own and by accusing the MPs of neglect and corruption, he positions himself as someone who cares more about the people's needs. The contrast here is that while the current leaders are passive and self-serving, he presents himself as active and focused on fairness. According to van Dijk's (1998) CDA, such discourse is used to shape public opinion by controlling how others are viewed. Thus by delegitimizing the MPs allows the speaker to gain credibility and moral authority in the eyes of the public.

Further, in EXT 12, UTT 61

*“..Kwogu maũntũ ma gwĩtwa mwizi, yarĩ siasa, nĩũntũ mũntũ
nĩakũmenya maũntũ marĩa akũrũtha na tontu nĩagũkĩra kũmenyeka, no acũire
wa kwigĩrĩra...”*

“So the thing sthat were making me to be called a thief was politics because somebody knows what he is doing and since he fears that what he is doing will be exposed, he has to look for a scapegoat.”

Speaker 10; An MP in Tharaka Nithi County

The speaker responds to being labeled a thief by reframing the accusation as a political tactic rather than a genuine claim. When the speaker states that the charge of theft is driven by someone's fear of exposure, he portrays himself as the innocent target of a deliberate smear campaign. This not only rejects the validity of the accusation but also casts doubt on the motives of his accusers. The phrase *“he has to look for a scapegoat”* explicitly identifies the criticism as a strategic diversion, shifting the audience's attention away from the speaker's actions and onto the alleged manipulations of political rivals.

This tactic of delegitimization works by undermining both the specific claim and the broader integrity of those making it. By suggesting that the accusation arises from personal fear and political gamesmanship, the speaker positions himself as morally and professionally superior to his critics. Listeners are encouraged to question the credibility of any claims against him, weakening the opponents' ability to damage his reputation. In doing so, the speaker strengthens his own legitimacy, presenting himself as honest and transparent in contrast to the deceitful tactics of others. This aligns with Reisigl and Wodak (2001) assertion who identify *scapegoating* as a common rhetorical move in which blame is shifted onto an individual or group to protect the speaker's

image and goals. Their analysis shows that by attributing false motives to critics, political actors manage public perception and maintain power.

The discussed utterances show that political speakers actively engage in legitimizing and delegitimizing practices to influence public opinion and assert their authority. Using CDA, the study identifies how leaders construct credibility and justify their actions through carefully selected language. These strategies, as discussed, include rationality, appeals to the common good, moral appeals, voices of expertise, altruism, and hypothetical futures—all designed to frame speakers positively and their agendas as aligned with the people's needs. The study shows that legitimization is achieved through both reasoned arguments and emotional connections. Politicians frame their development work as serving the common good, cite institutions to reinforce their claims, and reference morality or personal sacrifice to build public trust. These strategies align with van Dijk's (1998) view in CDA that discourse is not neutral but a form of social practice through which power and dominance are maintained.

At the same time, the study reveals that delegitimization is equally present. Speakers discredit opponents by pointing to failures, corruption, selfishness, or lack of commitment to development. By painting rivals as inactive or dishonest, they create a binary contrast that positions themselves as better alternatives. This rhetorical move, also highlighted by Reisigl and Wodak (2001), allows leaders to gain legitimacy indirectly by damaging the reputations of others. Such discourse tactics ensure that even in competitive political spaces, speakers can maintain or grow their support by shaping public perception through language. Therefore, the findings of the chapter demonstrate that (de)legitimization strategies are a fundamental part of development discourse on Kimeru FM. Through discourse, politicians not only present themselves as credible actors but also subtly manipulate how their opponents are viewed.

CHAPTER SIX

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN DEVELOPMENT DISCOURSE

6.1 Identities Constructed in Leaders

Identity construction refers to the way individuals shape and present who they are through language and interaction. In discourse, especially development discourse, identity is not a fixed trait but something that is actively built, negotiated, and performed through speech. Speakers choose words, stories, and associations that reveal how they want to be seen—either as leaders, servants, insiders, or visionaries. This process allows them to position themselves in relation to their audience and to the broader social, cultural, or political context. In development discourse, political leaders use language to create identities that match the expectations of the public. They often portray themselves as hardworking, honest, humble, or deeply connected to community values. These identity choices are strategic. A leader may present themselves as one of the people (“we”) or as a figure of authority (“I decided”), depending on what they want to achieve. Through these choices, identity construction becomes a persuasive tool—helping the speaker gain support, trust, and legitimacy.

Scholars in discourse studies agree that identity is not something people have, but something they do. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) argue that identity is created in interaction, through positioning, stance, and alignment with others. Similarly, De Fina, Bamberg and Schiffrin (2011) emphasize that identity construction is deeply connected to narrative—when speakers tell stories about themselves, they are also shaping how they are seen. These narratives are often selective and purposeful, highlighting values, struggles, or achievements that enhance their image. van Dijk (1998) explains that identity construction is part of how power and ideology are managed through language. Political actors do not just express who they are; they use identity to influence, persuade, and control how others perceive them. By aligning with certain groups (like “our people”), distancing from others (for example, “they”), or adopting roles (for instance, “servant of the people”), leaders create identities that support their goals. These identities are not neutral but are shaped by the social and political environment in which the discourse takes place.

This concept is in line with the third objective of the study, which sought to investigate how political leaders construct identity in development discourse within Kimeru FM radio stations. From the collected data, identity construction was a recurring feature in many of the development discussions aired on Kimeru FM and Muuga FM. Speakers used various approaches such as personal stories, cultural references, pronouns, and positioning statements, to present themselves in ways that aligned with their audience and strengthened their credibility. These instances show that identity in development discourse is not accidental; it is a carefully crafted element of persuasion and public appeal.

6.1.1 Leaders as Responsible, Authoritative and Inclusive

Through the development talks leaders were found to come out as people who are powerful enough to help their communities in numerous ways. This was done through use of particular linguistic elements and so by choosing specific pronouns, speakers manage inclusion, distance, responsibility, and authority. One of the most subtle yet powerful strategies used in identity construction in this study was the use of pronouns and self-reference. Pronouns such as “I”, “we”, “you”, and “they” play a significant role in how speakers position themselves in relation to their audience and other actors in the discourse. In political contexts, these linguistic choices are never neutral—they carry meaning about the speaker’s identity, their affiliations, and their intended relationship with listeners. Pronouns are often used to construct collective or individual identities. Through self-reference, speakers define who they are, what roles they assume, and where they stand within a particular issue or community. These references contribute to the performance of identity by showing whether the speaker presents themselves as part of a group, as a leader, or as someone opposed to others. The deliberate use of pronouns becomes a tool for shaping perception and establishing social alignment or separation.

Various linguistic studies emphasize the crucial role of pronoun use in identity formation. Bramley (2001) explains that pronouns allow political figures to draw boundaries—between allies and opponents, between self and other. Fairclough (2001) further argues that these linguistic choices reflect and reproduce social power relations. In both views, the use of self-reference in discourse is not simply about grammar, but a

strategic act of identity positioning that reveals how speakers want to be seen and understood. In the context of this study, pronouns and self-referencing were frequently used by political leaders during development discourse in Muga and Meru FM radio stations. Certain identities were seen to surface from the data collected as discussed below.

As evident in EXT 1, UTT 62

“..nĩngũcokeria antũ ba Meru county nkatho nĩ kũnthura ndĩ mwekũrũ wa mbere gũtuĩka governor Merũ- na mau nĩ maendeleo...Ndathurirwe nĩ wĩra wakwa ũrĩa ndarutĩte rĩrĩa ndarĩ woman representative...”

“I want to thank the people of Meru County for electing me as the first lady governor in Meru-and that is development. I elected because of my work when I was a woman representative.”

Speaker 1: A Governoor

Speaker 1 uses self-reference to construct a unique and empowering identity. She expresses gratitude to the people of Meru County for electing her and highlights her status as the first female governor in the region. This statement goes beyond a simple thank-you message. It is a strategic use of language that positions her as a trailblazer. By identifying herself as the “first lady governor,” she places herself in a historic and symbolic role that resonates with both gender progress and political transformation. Through this self-referencing, the governor presents herself as both a product of public trust and a symbol of change. She ties her identity closely to the people who elected her, using the phrase “antũ ba Meru County” (the people of Meru County) to show inclusion and shared achievement. This strengthens her legitimacy, as she appears not only as a political figure but as a representative of collective hope and advancement. The personal tone of the utterance also helps build emotional connection with listeners, enhancing her credibility and public appeal.

It is by emphasizing her election as a woman in leadership, the speaker taps into broader narratives of empowerment and representation hence stamping her authority. This self-constructed identity sets her apart from her predecessors, allowing her to align with modern values of gender equality and inclusive governance. The utterance also invites continued support, as it suggests that her leadership is a result of trust and progress that should be sustained, more so since she represents women in leadership. This form of identity construction aligns with van Dijk’s view that discourse is a tool for managing

social meaning and power. By selecting specific pronouns and highlighting her personal role, the governor shapes how the public perceives her—not just as a leader, but as a symbol of new possibilities for women in leadership. This strategy allows her to maintain authority while strengthening her bond with the electorate. In support of this view, Wodak (2009) notes that political figures often use discourse to build legitimized identities by embedding personal stories into collective social values, especially during moments of transition or change.

EXT1, UTT 63

“...Ndathurirwe nĩ wĩra wakwa ũrĩa ndarutĩte rĩrĩa ndarĩ woman representative...”

“I was elected because of my work when I was a woman representative.”

Speaker 1: A Governor

The speaker makes self-referential statement that reinforces her identity as a competent and result-oriented leader. When the speaker attributes her electoral success to her performance, she constructs an image of credibility and capability. The phrase shifts focus from political affiliation or campaign rhetoric to her past achievements, portraying her as someone whose work speaks for itself. This enhances her public image by presenting her leadership as earned and deserved. The utterance also plays a key role in constructing the speaker’s identity as a leader defined by accountability and performance. By stating that she was elected because of her work, the speaker frames herself as someone whose position is earned through merit rather than popularity or political favor. This helps her build an identity rooted in responsibility, effectiveness, and public service. Such a self-image appeals to voters who value integrity and results in leadership. In shaping how the audience sees her, the speaker uses discourse to construct a credible and trustworthy identity. This directly supports the third research objective by showing how political figures in Kimeru FM radio development discourse use performance-based language to create and reinforce their public image.

Schäffner (1996) supports this interpretation and argues that political actors use discourse to construct trustworthy identities by highlighting their record and values. They note that such self-representation, particularly in development talk, helps build authority and public trust. The utterances in this extract clearly illustrate how identity

is built not only through titles but through narratives of action, thus aligning with the study's third objective on identity construction in Kimeru FM development discourse.

In EXT 2, UTT 64

“..Nkaruta wĩra wega na nĩ nkĩromba antũ benyiye bacoke nthĩ barutĩre antũ wĩra...”

“I will work well and I ask people to humble themselves and come down to work for the people.”

Speaker 2: An MCA in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker presents himself as a committed and proactive leader by stating his intention to “work well.” This declaration of personal effort highlights a sense of duty and responsibility. It signals that the speaker is focused on performance and results, shaping an identity centered on service and accountability. By openly committing to effective leadership, he builds trust and positions himself as someone the public can rely on to deliver development and represent their interests faithfully. The phrase further strengthens this identity. It shows the speaker not only as a leader but also as a guide who calls others to action. This direct address creates a sense of shared responsibility, where leadership is not isolated but involves the community. In doing so, the speaker presents himself as inclusive, approachable, and focused on unity, key qualities that enhance his image as a servant-leader rather than a distant authority figure.

EXT 2, UTT 65

“...Nkaruta wĩra wega...”

I will work well and

“...ndimũthure ta MCA ndutaga wĩra...”

I was elected as MCA so that I work’

Speaker 2: An MCA in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker constructs his identity by clearly linking his political role to service and duty. He presents his position not as a symbol of status but as a responsibility given by the people. This statement shows awareness that political office comes with expectations and that leadership should be grounded in action. By directly acknowledging the source of his authority the electorate he frames himself as accountable and purpose-driven, strengthening the image of a representative who values public trust. The repetition of “*I will work well*” reinforces this commitment and personal dedication. It suggests that the speaker sees effective leadership as ongoing and performance-based, not a one-time promise. This focus on action over rhetoric

supports a public identity rooted in results, where the speaker's role is not to command but to serve. The use of such language positions him as approachable, dependable, and serious about his role, which helps him connect with the community and establish credibility. The speaker's discourse choices reveal an effort to align with positive values like hard work, honesty, and public service. CDA highlights that such statements are not neutral, but serve to legitimize the speaker's position and reinforce his authority through moral and civic responsibility.

EXT4, UTT 66

“...ndĩrutĩrĩte kwendelea na ngũgi yakwa...”
“I have purposed to continue with my role”

Speaker 4: A Senator

The speaker presents a clear sense of personal initiative by stating his personal goal to continue working and in this context, the speaker emphasizes that the decision to stay committed is self-driven and not imposed. This shows that he sees his role as ongoing and meaningful, which builds an identity of a leader who is not only dependable but also consistent in his duties. He frames himself as someone who chooses to remain active in public service because of personal dedication. This expression also highlights a sense of political responsibility. The speaker does not speak vaguely about his work; instead, he clearly affirms his intention to continue with it. This strengthens his image as a leader who understands the value of long-term commitment, rather than someone who seeks temporary recognition. It presents him as a figure of continuity and reliability, which is important in development discourse where trust and performance often define public opinion. The speaker's choice of words presents a development-oriented identity—one that values progress through consistent effort. By showing that his role is not passive but guided by purpose, he aligns himself with the goals of ongoing development. Within the platform of Kimeru FM, this form of expression becomes a tool for shaping how the public views him, not just as an elected leader, but as someone genuinely interested in the growth and well-being of the community.

EXT 5, UTT 67

“...nkageria mũno kuendelea gũtetheria aana ba Tharaka Nithi county na mbuge arĩa Mũrungu akandugũrĩra njĩra ta ya wĩra ngatetheria kwa thirikarĩ

na private sector. Nĩnkuromba atongoria wona kanya kubĩria antũ ba Tharaka Nithi county..”

“I will try to continue helping the children of Tharaka Nithi county and I want to say where God opens a door for me in the area of work opportunities I will help both in the private sector and the government. I would like to ask leaders to look for opportunities for Tharaka Nithi people.”

Speaker 5: An MP in Tharaka Nithi

The use of the first person indicates that the speaker is directly taking responsibility for his role, rather than shifting it to an institution or group. By focusing specifically on children, the speaker appeals to community values that prioritize education, protection, and future development. This not only positions him as a caring and responsible leader but also builds an image of someone who is genuinely invested in the long-term well-being of the next generation. The speaker’s use of “*I will try*” adds humility to the statement and avoids sounding boastful or overly confident, which can make the speaker seem more honest and relatable to the audience. This helps construct a leadership identity based on sincerity, effort, and human connection, rather than authority alone. Within development discourse, such language helps leaders connect emotionally with their audience, especially when tied to a sensitive issue like children's welfare. These findings are supported by Otieno (2024), who noted that Kenyan politicians often build public trust by expressing personal responsibility in matters that affect families and children. Similarly, Muriithi (2020) found that political figures in local media construct their identity around direct service, using first-person language to strengthen ties with the community. Both studies show that personal commitment to development, especially when directed at vulnerable groups, is a powerful strategy for shaping public perception and building political credibility.

Looking at EXT8, UTT68

“...Ameru twĩ fully represented twĩna ministry ya interior nĩyo ãthairwa ã one of the most powerful ministries ndene ya government na twĩna ministry ya agriculture ãrĩa ãranenkerwe Mĩthĩka Lĩnturĩ nĩnkwona twĩ fully represented. Nkinya thirikarĩ ya Uhuru twarĩ na Margret Kobia na Munya...”

“...people of Meru are fully represented as we have the ministry of interior which is one of the most powerful ministries in the government and we also have the ministry of agriculture given to Hon. Mithika Linturi. even in president Uhuru’s government, we had Magret Kobia and Munya.”

Speaker 8 : An MCA in Meru County

The speaker creates identity by claiming that the people of Meru are “fully represented” because their person is given the Ministry of Interior as a Cabinet Secretary. This statement builds a collective identity by using the phrase “*we are*”, showing that the

speaker aligns himself with the community. By linking a national leadership position to the people of Meru, the speaker strengthens a sense of pride and belonging. It gives the impression that the entire community has power and influence at the national level, which helps build trust and unity between the speaker and the audience. This kind of language is often used in political speech to create a shared sense of ownership and visibility. From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, it shows how identity can be constructed not just around individual leadership, but around group representation in power. Scholars like Wodak and Meyer (2009) argue that political actors use such strategies to form solidarity and establish legitimacy by showing they belong to the group they speak for. Similarly, van Dijk (2006) notes that collective identity claims in development discourse help reduce social distance and build stronger connections with listeners. This aligns with how the speaker frames Meru's presence in national leadership as a collective success.

This first-person narrative in EXT 12, UTT 69,

“...Maita maingĩ kambaragia na president, nkathiĩ nkamwĩra thĩna ciakwa, na rĩmwe noka akauga mũntũ ũyũ natethue...”

“...many times I talk to the president and tell him my problems and sometimes he will just say ‘help this person.’”

Speaker 10: An MP in Tharaka Nithi

Serves to build a leadership identity based on direct access to power and influence. When the speaker positions himself as someone who can communicate openly with high-level authorities, the speaker presents himself as well-connected and capable of bringing real solutions to local concerns. This helps construct an image of a leader who not only understands the problems of the people but also knows where to take them for action. The phrase also strengthens the speaker's identity as a responsive and active leader. Instead of waiting passively, he presents himself as someone who takes initiative on behalf of his community. Mentioning that the president occasionally responds by saying “help this person” adds credibility to the speaker's role as a bridge between local needs and national resources. It suggests that his efforts produce results, further enhancing his image as effective and resourceful. The focus on personal effort supports a self-image of a leader who works directly for the benefit of others.

Critically, this strategy of using personal action to justify leadership, ties into CDA's understanding of how political identities are formed through discourse. By presenting himself as a first-hand problem solver, the speaker shifts attention away from systems

or institutions and centers power within individual relationships. Scholars like Chilton (2004) and Reisigl & Wodak (2001) argue that such narratives are common in political talk where authority is reinforced by storytelling that shows personal action, access, and influence.

6.1.2 Leaders as Regional or Group Champions

As a strategy of identity creation in development discourse, social group alignment positions a speaker as part of a specific community or group. Instead of presenting themselves as distant leaders, speakers using this approach speak as members of the group they represent. They use language like “we,” “our people,” or “us” to show that they share the same background, challenges, and interests as their audience. This helps reduce the gap between leaders and the public and makes the speaker seem more relatable and trustworthy. This strategy is effective because it creates a strong feeling of unity and shared identity between the speaker and the audience. When a leader speaks as part of the group, they appear more in touch with the daily experiences, needs, and hopes of the people. It also helps them present their ideas or actions as representing the views of the wider community, rather than serving their own interests.

According to Wodak (2009) in her study *Politics as Usual: The Discursive Construction of Political Identities*, political figures often use inclusive language like “we” or “our” to build solidarity and show that they are not speaking for people, but with them. This makes their message more convincing, especially in development discourse where community support is essential. In Critical Discourse Analysis, this strategy is understood as a way speakers use language to construct group belonging and manage power relations. In the current study, various utterances were identified, where the politicians, who in this context are referred to as the speakers, made intentional linguistic choices, to identify themselves as part of the people they lead. Certain utterances were found to suit this type of identity as shown below:

EXT 1, UTT 70

“..*Mĩanya ñgĩ nĩ ta ùrĩa ona nja gũĩagaga thĩna cia kwĩja na kũthira. ùbatĩĩ kũmbũria bũrĩa Meru twĩĩte..*”

“Some conflicts are just like a home where problems come and go. You should ask me how we are doing as Meru.”

Speaker 1: A Governor

EXT2, UTT 71

“..Nĩ kenda ĩgenerate income ya gũtũtethia ũthii na mbere..”

“This will generate income to help us develop.”

Speaker 2: An MCA in Tharaka Nithi

In the two utterances, the speakers construct a collective identity by aligning themselves with the community, both in hardship and in aspirations. In UTT 70, she uses a metaphor likening communal challenges to domestic struggles that are transient and familiar. This way, she normalizes social conflict as part of a shared human condition. The switch to the first-person plural in “you should ask me how we are doing as Meru” marks a deliberate move to foreground group belonging, reinforcing a sense of unity and shared experience among the Meru. In UTT 71, the other speaker shifts from identifying with shared adversity to projecting a collective vision of progress. The speaker frames economic advancement as a group objective. The inclusive pronoun “us” continues the alignment strategy seen earlier, but now within a developmental context. The speaker not only identifies with the community emotionally but also aligns with its socio-economic goals, which bolsters his identity as a responsive and forward-thinking leader. Together, these utterances function as strategic acts of social alignment that position the speakers as both insiders and advocates. By invoking shared cultural values, domestic metaphors, and inclusive language, they enhance their social credibility and strengthen relational ties with the audience. Within the framework of CDA, such alignment not only affirms in-group membership but also serves persuasive and legitimizing functions, especially in political or institutional settings. The speaker’s self-positioning through language reveals how identity is performatively shaped within specific social and cultural expectations.

This careful and creative use of language is seen in EXT5, UTT 72

“..Rĩmwe nĩtũkubagia itĩ inene, ĩndĩ mwana ũrĩa arĩkĩtie cukuru atĩ na gwa kuthi na atĩ na ngũgĩ. Nĩnkũromba antũ ba Tharaka Nithi bampe kanya ka governor..”

“...sometimes we look for opportunities to get higher seats yet there is a child who has completed school and has nowhere to go and is without a job. I ask the Tharaka Nithi people to give me a chance to be a governor.”

Speaker 5: An MP in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker draws attention to social inequality by referring to young people in Tharaka Nithi who have completed school but remain jobless. Through contrasting the desire for high political positions with the struggles of ordinary citizens, the speaker positions

himself as someone who understands the people’s problems. Mentioning the child who has finished school but has nothing to do makes the audience think about real issues affecting their community. This strategy helps the speaker connect with the listeners emotionally and shows that he belongs to the same group that faces these challenges. The speaker also uses the phrase “I ask the Tharaka Nithi people to give me a chance” to show that he is one of them and wants their support. He identifies himself as part of the community and uses this shared identity to ask for political trust. By aligning himself with the struggles and hopes of the people, he presents himself as a leader who will represent their needs. This kind of group identification helps build his personal and political identity as someone who cares for the people and speaks on their behalf.

EXT 5, UTT 73

“..Twĩna maũntũ maĩngi mũno tũmbĩte kũrũtha ta ma ndũũjũ, ma agriculture na kadhalika. Maũntũ ma ũgima bwa mwĩrĩ tũgaakikisha antũ nĩbagũtetheka kũgwata ndawa..”

“We have very many things we have done like water, agriculture and many others. Issues of health we have made sure we have assisted people to get medicine.”

Speaker 5: An MP in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker continues to build his identity through strong social group alignment and he consistently uses the pronoun “we” across the utterances to show that he is part of the same group that is focused on development. The utterance mentions progress in water, agriculture, and health. This repeated use of “we” instead of “I” shows that he wants to be seen as working together with the community rather than acting alone. It helps to associate him with the collective efforts of the people and presents him as a leader who values teamwork and shared goals. This strategy of using “we” also strengthens his social identity as a development-minded member of Tharaka Nithi. It continues from where he shows concern for jobless youth, and then proceeds to where he highlights completed projects. The focus on “we” allows him to build trust by showing that he is not above the people, but part of a group working together for change. This makes his appeal to be elected governor more acceptable, as he aligns himself with the community’s developmental interests and positions himself as a servant-leader.

When we look at EXT6, UTT 74

“...Nĩtwaranĩrie na National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) niũntũ bwa changamoto iũ twĩ nayo ya ndengũ...”

“We negotiated with the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) because of the challenge we have about ndengu.”

Speaker 6: An MP in Tharaka Nithi

And EXT6, UTT 75

“...Chairman ba departmental committees are influencing finances to the favour of their constituencies. Lakini rĩrĩa tũtarĩ na machairmen ja committes twethaĩra twĩna mũcommittee tuge kethĩrwa nĩ chairman ũrĩa ũtaari Meru tontũ twĩna chairman wetũ wĩtagwa Mũtungwa abwĩri kwĩthwa arũngamĩrĩte Meru yonthe.”

“...chairmen of parliamentary committees are influencing finances to the favour of their constituencies. But when we did not have chairmen of committees, we had one committee member chosen to represent Meru for example like we have our chairman Mutunga representing the whole of Meru.”

Speaker 6: An MP in Meru County

The speakers use group identifiers in both UTT 74 and UTT 75 to build an identity that is closely tied to community alignment. They also use the inclusive pronoun “we” in UTT 74 to show involvement in negotiation and also as part of those facing the challenge of food shortage. In UTT74, this repeated use of “we”, shows that he does not speak as an outsider or authority figure, but rather as one among the people. This helps to create an identity that is grounded in shared struggle and collective concern, making the speaker relatable and trusted within the community. UTT 75 continues this group alignment through references such as “we did not have chairmen” and “we had one committee member. The speaker identifies with the broader Meru region and presents the new leadership structure, having “our chairman Mutunga”, as a success that benefits everyone. The use of “our” and “we” highlights a strong sense of group ownership and pride. Through these expressions, the speaker positions himself as an active member of a united group that is concerned with fair representation and regional progress. The repeated group references in both utterances help to shape his identity as a collaborative and loyal representative of the people, reinforcing his political credibility through community association.

As seen in the second utterance from the same EXT 6, UTT 75, the speaker creates his identity by aligning himself with the wider Meru community and emphasizing collective political representation. He begins by explaining how chairmen of parliamentary committees influence financial decisions to benefit their specific regions. This sets up the importance of having someone in leadership who can speak for the

interests of a particular group. He then shifts the focus to Meru, recalling a time when the community lacked such leadership and had to rely on a single committee member to represent them. The speaker strengthens group identity by highlighting the current situation. The phrase “*our chairman*” and the inclusive “*we*” show a strong sense of shared ownership and pride in this leadership. Through this, the speaker not only affirms his belonging to the Meru community but also builds an identity as someone who values fair representation and unity. His use of group identifiers such as “*we*”, “*our*”, and “*Meru yonthe*” (the whole of Meru) creates a sense of togetherness and positions him as a spokesperson concerned with the well-being of the entire group. This consistent alignment with group interests enhances his public image as a collective-minded leader.

This is further evident in EXT7, UTT 76

“...Nandĩ itwambĩrĩrie gwaka obici cia security narĩa Rũirĩ.. nĩtũkũbanga gwaka ãngĩ narĩa Kathare hakuĩ na maili saba na kambĩ... narĩa onturĩrĩ na obici ya ACC ...”

“We have started building security offices in Ruirĩ... We are planning to build another one in Onturiri and an office for the ACC .”

Speaker 7: An MP in Meru County

The speaker continues to shape his political identity by aligning himself with the inclusive broader community through development-focused language. The use of pronoun “*we*” in phrases like “we have started building” and “we are planning.” This signals that he sees himself as part of a collective effort rather than acting alone. This inclusive language helps the audience feel involved in the development process and positions the speaker as a team player committed to public safety and service delivery. When the speaker highlights projects like the construction of security offices in Ruirĩ and plans for Onturiri, the speaker associates himself with progress and security which are key concerns for local communities. The mention of specific locations such as Kathare, Maili Saba, and the ACC office shows the speaker’s attention to various parts of the constituency, reinforcing his role as a leader who understands and responds to the needs of different areas. This careful listing of places gives the impression of balanced development and equal concern for all regions, which builds trust and connection with a wider audience. It also helps to frame the speaker as accessible, practical, and community-oriented, traits that are important in political identity

creation. The consistent use of “we” underlines a shared vision, presenting the speaker as someone advancing community goals together with the people.

The speaker in **EXT 8, UTT77**

“..Kwogu batwĩ no tũthithie strategic grain reserve jietu aja Meru jia gũfeedaa antũ betũ tuge rĩrĩa gwatonya kĩangazi nontũ kinya rĩmwe ũkanenkeru antũ mbeũ beta kũanda ja nandĩ bena mpara bakamĩruga..”

“...so we can do strategic grain reserve to feed our people like when famine strikes like now because even if you give people seeds to plant they will cook.”

Speaker 8: An MCA in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker aligns himself with the community when he highlights the need for a strategic grain reserve, which would be used to support people during times of famine. The use of the phrase “our people” and the inclusive “we” shows that the speaker considers himself part of the group affected by food insecurity. He does not distance himself from the challenges but instead presents himself as someone thinking ahead for the benefit of the entire community. This identification with the people’s struggles helps strengthen his political identity as a leader who is concerned with real, everyday issues that affect the public directly. The speaker also uses a practical example to build credibility, explaining that giving people seeds during a famine is not useful because they will cook them instead of planting. This shows that he understands the situation on the ground and is focused on realistic, community-based solutions. By proposing the creation of a local grain reserve and emphasizing collective action, he presents himself as a proactive and development-minded leader. His language reflects a deep connection to the needs of the community, reinforcing his identity through shared experience and forward planning.

EXT 8, UTT 78

“...Twĩ county notũrete rũũjĩ piped tũkathithia intensive agriculture and grain reserve. Tũtĩbui gwetera national government –rĩonthe serikali saidia-tũgatũra kũrĩra...”

As a county, we can bring piped water and do intensive agriculture and grain reserve. We should not always wait for the national government all the time crying ‘help government’ without end).

Speaker 8: An MCA in Meru County

There is the use of collective term “as a county” and inclusive pronouns like “we” and “our” where the speaker emphasizes local responsibility and self-reliance by saying that the county can bring piped water and carry out intensive agriculture and set up a grain reserve. This shows that the speaker wants to be seen as part of a group that is

capable of solving its own problems rather than depending entirely on the national government. It presents him as a leader who encourages local action and practical solutions for development. The statement also connects well with the earlier utterance about the grain reserve and famine, continuing the message of preparation and sustainability. The speaker's criticism of constantly asking the national government for help adds to his identity as a proactive and independent-minded leader. He promotes the idea that development should start within the community, and this helps to deepen his alignment with the people's needs and values. Through this, he presents himself not only as part of the group but also as someone who can lead them toward self-driven progress

In EXT8, UTT 79

"..Ameru twĩ fully represented.."

"We, the Ameru, are fully represented."

Speaker 8: An MCA in Meru County

The use of "we" signals collective identity, showing that the speaker considers himself part of the Ameru group. By stating that the Ameru are fully represented, he highlights political success and visibility at the national level, which strengthens the bond between him and his audience. This group alignment allows the speaker to present himself as a participant in, and possibly a contributor to, the group's political achievements.

The strategic use of "we" as a strategy for identity inclusion has been discussed by several scholars who show how political speakers align themselves with their audiences to build trust and solidarity. Thornborrow (2001) observed that "we" was frequently used to express unity and shared goals between the speaker and the audience, effectively building a collective identity that encourages support. Both studies confirm that inclusive pronouns like "we" serve as a powerful tool for speakers to construct belonging and enhance their public identity. This is supported by Koter (2013) who argues that politicians often use collective pronoun such as we and us to align themselves with their ethnic or regional communities, especially when addressing development or social issues. This helps them create the image of a leader who is part of the people and not separate from their struggles.

EXT9, UTT 80

“..nkamwira barabara iji ya kisima-kibirichia- kirua itwaugire tukathithia... ukona guti budget yanenkerua. Kethira nitwaiji nu akathithia tutingimuthingata..”

“...I would tell him this kisima-kibirichia-kirua road’ we said will be done but no budget was allocated to it. If we had known that is what he would do we would not have followed him.”

Speaker 9: A Former Cabinet Secretary in Meru County

Presents a case where the speaker uses group references such as ‘we said’ and ‘we would not have followed him’; in order to align himself with the community and express collective disappointment. By referring to the Kisima–Kibirichia–Kirua road and its unfulfilled promise, he connects with the audience’s shared frustrations over delayed development. This alignment allows him to present himself not as a separate leader, but as part of the group that was misled. His identity is built through this shared experience of betrayal, showing that he stands with the people in both expectation and regret.

EXT 9, UTT 81

“..Gintu kiria twariganirwe na president ni kurega kuingia mantu jaria atwirire

“The thing that made us fall out with the president is because Ruto lied to us during campaigns and all the developments we had agreed would be done were not done..”

Speaker 9: A Former Cabinet Secretary in Meru County

This utterance continues the alignment in EXT 9; UTT 80 through framing the disappointment not as a personal issue but as a group concern. The speaker reinforces this by pointing out that the failed promises affected highlighting that the entire community was affected. The repeated use of “we” shows that he sees himself as a representative of the group’s interests and emotions. It also helps position him as someone who held the president accountable on behalf of the people. Together, the two utterances show how the speaker constructs his identity through a shared sense of betrayal and unmet expectations. He uses group alignment to build solidarity with the audience and to distance himself from those who failed them. This strategy strengthens his credibility by showing that he not only understands the community’s frustrations but also shares in them, reinforcing his role as a leader who speaks for the group rather than from above it.

As shown in EXT 12, UTT 82

“..nītwīkīrīte stīma gūntū kwingī mūno...chuka technical twamībanga, thaa ino īna arutwa ngiri ithano, na 1,200 are from Tharaka..”

“...we have installed electricity in many places ...we have organized the Chuka technical institute and now it has 5000 students with 1200 students come from Tharaka.”

Speaker 10: An MP in Tharaka Nithi County

The speaker builds his identity through collective language and development-focused achievements. He uses the pronoun “we” in both statements to validate his achievement and align himself with the community and show joint ownership of progress. This choice of language suggests that the speaker is not acting alone but is part of a team or group working for the public good. It helps him present himself as a leader who is both accessible and committed to improving people’s lives through infrastructure and education. When the speaker mentions that 1,200 of the 5,000 students at Chuka Technical are from Tharaka, the speaker strengthens his alignment with a specific local group he believes has been marginalized, showing that he not only supports regional development but also ensures equal access for his constituents. This reinforces his image as a representative who cares about inclusion and balanced progress. His emphasis on practical achievements also adds credibility to his leadership, suggesting that his role goes beyond talk and is rooted in real action that benefits the community. CDA highlights how language reflects and reinforces power relations, and in this case, the speaker uses discourse to position himself as a collaborative, effective leader who belongs to the community and works on its behalf. Through group alignment, he gains legitimacy and strengthens his connection with the audience.

6.1.3 Leaders as Problem Solvers, Representatives and Voices of Truth

Positioning is a key strategy in identity formation, especially in development discourse. It refers to how speakers locate themselves within a conversation or social setting to influence how they are perceived by their audience. Through positioning, a speaker may present themselves as a representative of a particular group, a problem-solver, or a voice of truth. This process allows them to shape their social identity not only by what they say, but also by how they relate to others in the speech context. In political speech, positioning often involves presenting oneself as aligned with community needs while contrasting with those who are seen as failing or distant. For example, a politician may position themselves as close to the people and at the same time, distance themselves from previous leaders by highlighting their failures. This contrast helps to create a

unique and appealing identity, showing the speaker as different, reliable, and better suited for leadership. The audience is then more likely to accept and support the speaker’s message because it feels grounded in shared realities.

This strategy differs from group alignment since while group alignment emphasizes unity and shared identity, positioning involves actively shaping how the speaker is viewed in relation to others, particularly opponents or institutions. For example, a politician may position themselves as a reformer or truth-teller, while portraying others as dishonest or inactive. This contrast is deliberate—it helps the speaker stand out and build an identity that is not just part of the group, but strategically distinct from others within or outside it. Moreover, positioning allows speakers to manage power relations in subtle but powerful ways. By presenting themselves as knowledgeable, experienced, or development-oriented, speakers claim authority while still appearing humble or relatable. This balance is critical in identity construction, especially in competitive political spaces where every public statement contributes to how one is socially defined. A well-positioned speaker can appear trustworthy, competent, and representative of a larger group interest, all of which are essential traits in political leadership.

In the current study, positioning was observed as a common strategy used by various speakers, all of whom were politicians attempting to construct distinct public identities. Through narratives of past achievements, expressions of concern, or comparisons with others, these speakers strategically located themselves as active participants in development and reliable representatives of their communities.

EXT 1, UTT 83

“..Ndathurîrwe ndî governor wa Meru na ndîruta wîra ûrîa mbijî na deputy abatiî kûruta wawe ûrîa aijî..”

“I was elected governor of Meru and so I am doing the work that I know should be done. The deputy should do the work he knows.”

Speaker 1: A Governor

In the utterance, the speaker clearly asserts her position as the elected governor of Meru, using this status to define her authority and responsibilities. By doing so, she positions herself as a legitimate and capable leader whose actions are grounded in both knowledge and mandate. This declaration of role serves as a foundation for establishing credibility and affirming her leadership identity in the eyes of the public. It reflects a

conscious effort to link position with purposeful action, reinforcing her role as a development agent. The utterance also creates a contrast between the speaker and her deputy, assigning responsibility based on individual knowledge and roles. By directing the deputy to focus on his own duties, the speaker positions herself as focused and competent, while subtly questioning the deputy's contribution. This contrast strengthens her image by implying that while she is fulfilling her role effectively, others may not be doing the same. This is a common positioning strategy in development discourse. This type of positioning contributes to the speaker's identity as a proactive and responsible leader. It shifts the attention to her achievements and clarity of purpose, while managing potential blame or doubt by distributing responsibility. Within the broader context of development discourse, such positioning helps legitimize leadership actions and reinforces the speaker's alignment with public expectations.

In EXT2, UTT84

"...nĩngũcokia ngatho nĩ gwĩtwa gũkũ na ngacokeria antu ba ĩgambang'ombe nkatho... Nkaruta wĩra wega na nĩ nkĩromba antũ benyiye bacoke nthĩ baruĩre antũ wĩra...Tharaka Nithi ĩna thĩna nĩũntu antũ batikwaria ..."

"I thank you for inviting me to this station and I also thank the people of Tharaka Nithi... I will work well and I ask people to humble themselves and come down to work for the people... Tharaka nithi has a problem because not all people are talking."

Speaker 2: An MCA in Tharaka Nithi

The speaker positions himself as a servant leader by expressing a strong personal commitment to working well for the people. This statement constructs an image of a leader who is grounded in service rather than authority. By emphasizing the quality of work and directing it toward the public good, the speaker defines his role as one that prioritizes the needs of the community. This type of language helps build a leadership identity rooted in humility, responsibility, and active contribution to development. Moreover, the speaker calls on others to join him in service by asking them to "humble themselves" and work for the people. This reinforces his own role as a moral guide and community mobilizer. The use of inclusive language suggests that leadership is not a solitary effort but a shared responsibility. This further strengthens the speaker's position as someone who not only leads by example but also encourages collective action.

Furthermore, in EXT 4, UTT 85

"..Thirikarĩ nũgacanĩte kwĩnĩka garama ya maisha na nĩnkũmenereria maandamano marĩa metĩte na mbere matongoretwe nĩ azimio la umoja (opposition).."

“...the government is making effort to bring down the cost of living and I detest demonstrations led by the Azimio la Umoja (opposition).”

Speaker 4: A Senator

The speaker constructs his identity by presenting the government as actively working to reduce the cost of living. By emphasizing ongoing efforts, he positions himself and his government as responsible and responsive to the public’s needs. This creates an image of a leader who is development-minded and focused on solutions, especially in addressing economic hardship. The statement frames leadership as action-oriented and committed to improving people’s lives. The speaker also defines himself in contrast to the opposition by expressing strong disapproval of demonstrations led by Azimio la Umoja. By rejecting protest actions, he presents the opposition as disruptive and unhelpful not able to represent the people. This contrast helps the speaker build a moral and political distinction—while the government is working to solve problems, the opposition is portrayed as causing unrest. The contrast serves as a positioning strategy that boosts the speaker’s legitimacy by comparing responsible leadership with perceived disorder.

According to CDA, this utterance reflects how identities are shaped through contrast and power dynamics in speech. The speaker uses language not only to promote a positive image of government leadership but also to delegitimize opposing voices. This approach is common in development discourse, where constructing the “self” often involves constructing an “other.” By presenting the government as problem-solvers and casting the opposition as troublemakers, the speaker shapes his identity through strategic positioning—aligning himself with responsible leadership while distancing himself from disruptive elements. This positioning reinforces his image as a trustworthy and solution-focused figure, strengthening political authority and reducing support for opposing actors.

In another utterance, EXT6, UTT 86

“...development *nīgúkara taka yatwikire skewed- yerekerua rûtere rûmwe nkûrûki ya nangĩ ..*”

“...development seems to have been skewed to one side more than the other.”

Speaker 6: An MP in Meru County

The speaker draws attention to unequal distribution of development by stating that progress appears to favour one side more than the other. This observation positions the speaker's region as overlooked or disadvantaged, suggesting that those in power may be neglecting certain areas. Through pointing out this imbalance, the speaker aligns himself with the affected community and presents himself as a voice for the underserved. This helps build an identity rooted in advocacy and regional loyalty. The speaker not only challenges the fairness of those responsible for allocating resources but also strengthens his credibility among constituents who feel left out. He takes on the role of a representative who notices injustice and is willing to speak out. This positioning strategy appeals to collective frustration and helps the speaker create a role for himself as someone fighting for equal attention and resources, especially in matters of development.

In a different context, the speaker in EXT 7, UTT 87

"Nkamwĩra thĩna ciakwa... akauga 'mũtethie."

"I told the president my problems... and he said, 'help this person'."

Speaker 10: An MP IN Tharaka Nithi

The speaker shares a personal experience of directly communicating with the president about local problems, and receiving a supportive response. This narrative positions the speaker as well-connected to national leadership and capable of influencing decisions that benefit the public. When the speaker highlights that the president instructed someone to "help this person," the speaker shows that his efforts have real results, presenting himself as an effective link between the community and higher authority. This positioning helps the speaker create an identity as a dependable and influential leader, one who not only listens to the concerns of the people but also takes action to address them through powerful networks. It reassures the audience that their needs can be met through his leadership. From van Dijk's perspective in CDA, this utterance demonstrates how speakers use personal stories and access to power to construct a strong in-group identity. van Dijk (1998) notes that political actors often define themselves through their ability to represent and deliver for their group, while contrasting this with those who lack such ability.

6.1.4 Leaders as Hardworking, Concerned and Human

In development discourse, especially during public interviews or speeches, leaders often use personal stories to connect with their audience. These narratives help simplify complex issues and make the speaker appear more human, relatable, and sincere. By sharing what they have gone through or witnessed, speakers create a sense of honesty and emotional closeness that builds trust. This is usually done through narratives and personal stories which are spoken or written accounts where individuals share real-life experiences or events from their own perspective. In the context of identity construction, personal stories allow leaders to present themselves in specific roles—such as problem-solvers, protectors, or selfless servants. When a politician talks about how they helped someone, overcame a challenge, or spoke directly to higher authorities, they are not just telling a story—they are shaping how they want to be seen. These stories give them the chance to show their values, intentions, and loyalty to the people. This strategy works especially well when the leader connects their actions to the needs and concerns of the community.

Narratives are also powerful because they go beyond general promises. Instead of saying “I will serve,” a speaker might describe how they have already acted in the past. This gives the audience proof of commitment and experience and so helping the speaker construct a trustworthy and active identity. In discourse analysis, such personal storytelling is viewed as a tool to build a character within speech, someone who is not just speaking, but living the message they deliver. The example displayed in:

EXT 2, UTT 88

“..Ndimûthure ta MCA ndutaga wĩra ntĩkũbagua nĩũntũ nthurĩtwe kĩrĩ antũ bonthe ba Tharaka Nithi”

“I am elected MCA so that I can work without discriminating because I am voted in by all Tharaka Nithi members.”

Speaker 2: An MCA in Tharaka Nithi County

The speaker tells a personal story about being elected as a Member of County Assembly (MCA) by all people of Tharaka Nithi. This story helps the speaker build an identity based on public trust and responsibility. Through reminding the audience that he was chosen by the entire community, the speaker shows that his leadership is not based on favoritism or division, but on unity and fairness. This positions him as a representative

of all people, not just a specific group, and strengthens his image as a leader who values inclusion. The leader goes on to add that he was elected to work, which presents him as action-oriented and committed to serving the public. This makes the narrative more than just a memory, but a proof of his purpose and values. Through this personal story, the speaker creates an identity as a hardworking, fair, and community-minded leader. It helps him gain respect and support by showing that he understands his role and is guided by the needs of the people who elected him.

In creation of identity, this strategy was also noted in:

EXT 2, UTT 89:

“..ndĩngĩcũa kĩrathimo kĩa ma kuuma kĩa Mũũrungu gĩa kũruta wĩra nĩ na ungumania..”

“I would look for a blessing from God by working without corruption.”

Speaker 2: An MCA in Tharaka Nithi County

Here the speaker presents a personal story involving a moral journey, seeking a spiritual blessing from God and committing to work without corruption. By linking their actions to a higher ethical standard, the speaker shapes an identity rooted in integrity and purpose. This narrative frames the speaker as someone who does not simply perform civic duties but does so with spiritual accountability. It positions them as morally upright, emphasizing that their motivation is not political gain but service guided by faith and ethics. This approach also helps the speaker resonate deeply with audiences who value honesty and religious values. The story moves beyond mere promises to depict a personal transformation or pledge, which fosters authentic leadership. By making this spiritual commitment to the public, the speaker fosters trust and portrays themselves as self-governing and principled, which strengthens their identity as a sincere servant of the community. Nyambuga (2011) argues that such narratives enhance credibility and allow leaders to connect emotionally with constituents, reinforcing the role that personal and religious stories play in shaping political identity.

The speaker, in EXT 5, UTT 90

“...nkageria mũno kuendelea gũtetheria aana ba Tharaka Nithi county na mbuge arĩa Mũũrungu akandugũrĩra njĩra ta ya wĩra ngatetheria kwa thirikarĩ na private sector..”

“I will try to continue helping the children of Tharaka Nithi County and I want to say where God opens a door for me in the area of work opportunities I will help both in the private sector and the government.”

Speaker 5: An MP in Tharaka Nithi County

Shares a personal story of commitment to continue helping children in Tharaka Nithi County and builds an identity of care, dedication, and long-term service through expressing this as an ongoing effort. Notably, the speaker does not speak about children in general terms but refers specifically to his county, which shows personal connection and local focus. This makes him appear as a community-rooted leader who understands the needs of the young and is determined to support their growth. The speaker also adds a faith-based element by saying he will help wherever God gives him the chance, whether in government or the private sector. This personal reflection highlights humility and spiritual grounding, which strengthens his image as someone guided by higher values. It shows that his motivation is not tied to holding political office alone, but to serving in any capacity that benefits the community. Through this narrative, the speaker creates an identity that is compassionate, morally grounded, and committed to public service across different spaces.

EXT10, UTT 91

“..Twiuû twi family ya Kareke, tûtwîre tûgîthagia antu silently, tûtongoretue nî my mother, e patron. Gûcûîra antû mawîra, kûthomithia jiana, no rîu rwîmbo rûrîa antû bakwenda kwîgua, nî ru winaga.”

“Kareke family, we help people silently led by our mother who is the patron looking for jobs for people, educating children, but now the song people want to hear is the one you sing.”

Speaker 5: An MP in Tharaka Nithi County

This shows the speaker’s use of personal stories to shape identity and even introduces the wider family as part of the narrative. The speaker presents the *Kareke* family as a group that quietly supports the community by helping people find jobs and educating children. By showing that these acts of service have been ongoing and led by his own mother, the speaker builds an identity rooted in a family tradition of care, generosity, and social responsibility. This positions him not only as an individual leader but as someone who comes from a background of community service. This personal story adds to the earlier narrative of helping children and acting through faith. It creates a smooth transition by reinforcing that the speaker’s commitment to service is not new or driven by politics, but it is part of his family’s way of life. The mention that people now want to hear “the song you sing” adds a subtle message about public expectations

or political pressure, but it also contrasts with the speaker's quiet history of action. Altogether, this helps create an identity of a humble, community-grounded leader whose values and work are consistent both in public and private life.

Building on the family narrative in EXT 12, UTT 92

“..nkathiĩ nkamwĩra thĩna ciakwa, na rĩmwe noka akauga mũntũ ũyũ natethue, ũkanenkerwa tũmillioni twĩgana ũntũ weũ..”

“Many times I talk to the president and tell him my problems and sometimes he will just say ‘help this person.’”

Speaker 10: An MP in Tharaka Nithi County

The speaker shifts the focus back to the speaker's individual role, showing how he personally engages with national leadership to solve community problems. By sharing how he speaks directly to the president and sometimes receives immediate support in the form of financial help or services, the speaker positions himself as an effective and influential leader. This personal account reinforces his ability to act on behalf of the people and produce real outcomes. The story also strengthens the speaker's identity as someone who does not simply talk about issues, but takes action through meaningful relationships. It complements the earlier message of silent service by showing that while some efforts are done quietly with family, others are achieved through visible and strategic engagement with higher offices. Together, these narratives present the speaker as a balanced leader—rooted in humility and tradition but also active and influential in national decision-making spaces. In line with the third research question, this study demonstrates that identity construction in development discourse is a purposeful and strategic act shaped through language. Across the data, speakers used a wide range of linguistic strategies to shape how they wanted to be seen by the public, including self-reference, social group alignment, positioning, personal stories, and moral declarations.

These strategies allowed them to present themselves as servant-leaders, development agents, community insiders, or honest reformers. This aligns with the understanding that identity is not fixed but constructed and negotiated through discourse in response to audience expectations and political goals. The data show that speakers frequently constructed their identities around values such as hard work, humility, faith, and community service. These values were not mentioned as abstract traits, but were embedded in personal stories, action-oriented phrases, and collective references. Through these choices, speakers sought to appear relatable and trustworthy while

reinforcing their role in development. This discursive performance helped them create a connection with the audience and justify their legitimacy. By using inclusive language and referencing shared struggles or achievements, leaders framed themselves as part of the people rather than above them. This highlights that identity construction is central to how politicians communicate development goals and seek support.

Contextualized within CDA, it is argued that identity is constructed through strategic language choices, often tied to broader power structures and ideological concerns. CDA emphasizes that language reflects and shapes social realities; thus, the way political leaders present themselves is not neutral but embedded in ongoing struggles for legitimacy and authority. As van Dijk (1998) explains, identity construction in political talk often involves managing relationships with the audience, highlighting in-group membership, and defining others as outsiders or threats. The discussed utterances drawn from the different extracts depict how leaders positioned themselves in contrast to opponents or failing systems to amplify their own credibility and align with public expectations of development-focused governance.

Supporting this interpretation, Kamau (2011) examined development discourse in vernacular media and found that identity construction was often achieved through self-positioning, community alignment, and moral narratives. Similarly, Ojwang (2017) explored leadership talk in local Kenyan radio and noted that political identity is formed through expressions of commitment, personal action, and group belonging. Both studies confirm that identity in development discourse is deliberately shaped to build public trust, mobilize support, and reinforce legitimacy.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Summary of Findings

The first objective of the study was to examine the linguistic features used by political leaders in development discourse in Kimeru FM radio stations in Kenya. Analysis of the data revealed that political leaders employed several distinct and strategic linguistic features to communicate their development agendas, assert authority, and manage public perception. The key features examined included nominalization, passivization, transitivity, modality, and ideology. These linguistic devices were not used randomly but functioned as intentional strategies aimed at enhancing the leaders' image, deflecting criticism, and shaping the public's understanding of leadership and development. Nominalization emerged as a key strategy where actions and events were expressed using noun forms rather than verbs. This had the effect of abstracting agency, allowing speakers to present development as an impersonal, inevitable process rather than the result of specific individual efforts. The abstraction also enabled speakers to depoliticize contentious actions by presenting them as natural or institutionally driven developments.

Passivization was another common feature, where passive constructions were used to remove or obscure the agent performing the action. This allowed political leaders to reduce direct responsibility for certain decisions or outcomes, especially where failure or controversy was involved. At the same time, passivization was also used to highlight benefits or positive actions while downplaying who was responsible, contributing to an ambiguous portrayal of leadership that avoided accountability yet maintained visibility. Transitivity patterns further revealed how leaders controlled the representation of actions and participants. By manipulating sentence structures to foreground or background certain actors, speakers shaped the narrative to either elevate their involvement or shift focus away from negative associations. In cases where transitive constructions were used actively, they typically framed the speaker as a capable agent. In contrast, less direct constructions were often used when distancing from blame or deflecting responsibility.

Modality featured prominently in the discourse through the use of modal verbs and expressions that signaled obligation, certainty, possibility, or authority. Modal expressions allowed leaders to present their statements with varying levels of commitment, from firm promises to cautious suggestions. These subtle choices reinforced their stance on development matters and allowed them to maintain authority while appearing thoughtful and flexible. Ideological positioning was deeply embedded in the lexical and grammatical choices made by speakers. Leaders constructed narratives that aligned themselves with notions of progress, fairness, and service to the people. Their discourse reflected dominant ideologies of leadership, development, and unity, while subtly delegitimizing alternative perspectives. These ideological framings worked to reinforce their legitimacy and moral standing in the eyes of the public.

The second objective of the study sought to explore (de) legitimization strategies in development discourse by political leaders in Kimeru FM radio stations in Kenya. The analysis revealed that leaders consistently employed various rhetorical and linguistic strategies to legitimize their own actions and leadership while, at times, undermining the credibility and actions of their opponents. These strategies were woven into the discourse to influence public perception, assert authority, and strengthen or weaken political positions. The strategies identified included rationality, appeal to common good, moral appeal, voices of expertise, hypothetical future, and delegitimization of others. One of the most prominent strategies was rationalization, where leaders justified their actions or policy positions using logic, comparisons, or cause-effect reasoning. This helped frame their contributions as reasonable and well thought out. Rationalization served not only to legitimize ongoing efforts but also to make future promises seem achievable and grounded in fact. It also helped speakers demonstrate their understanding of governance and resource management, thereby enhancing their credibility.

Another widely used strategy was the appeal to the common good. Political leaders frequently legitimized themselves as community-focused individuals by referring to public interest, collective benefit, and shared progress. This was done through references to development, education, infrastructure, and public welfare. Such appeals made their agendas appear aligned with the values and needs of the people, legitimizing

their leadership as people-centered and selfless. The strategy of moral appeal was also evident in the discourse, particularly through statements reflecting integrity, humility, and moral responsibility. Leaders positioned themselves as honest, faithful, or service-driven by referencing religious beliefs, family values, or a history of community service. This served to create an image of trustworthiness and align them with ethical leadership ideals, which in turn legitimized their role in the political sphere.

Speakers also employed voices of expertise by referencing professionals, institutions, or policy frameworks to justify decisions or support claims. By invoking technical knowledge or institutional backing, leaders reinforced the legitimacy of their proposals or criticisms. Related to this was the use of hypothetical futures, where leaders projected possible positive outcomes if their ideas were followed, or negative outcomes if ignored. This speculative reasoning created urgency and presented them as visionary and forward-thinking. Importantly, the study also found evidence of delegitimization, where leaders subtly or directly undermined their opponents. This was done by highlighting perceived failures, suggesting incompetence, or framing others as self-serving. Such strategies created contrast, reinforcing the speaker's own legitimacy by comparison.

On the third objective, the research investigated political identities constructed in development discourse in the aforementioned stations. From the analysis, it was clear that political leaders used various linguistic and discursive strategies to present themselves in ways that would appeal to the public, gain trust, and increase their political acceptance. Identity construction was not presented directly, but it was carefully built through language choices, personal references, and positioning throughout the development conversations. Several identities were realized through use of a number of strategies. The first was creating identities by the use of pronouns and self-reference, which allowed speakers to position themselves either as part of the community ("we") or as authoritative figures ("I"). The use of "we" helped build solidarity and a sense of shared responsibility with the audience, while "I" allowed leaders to claim credit for development achievements and assert personal responsibility. These pronoun choices reflected how speakers wanted to be seen — either as humble servants of the people or as powerful agents of change. The second strategy was

constructing identities through social group alignment, where leaders referred to ethnic, regional, political, or religious affiliations to show belonging or loyalty to particular groups. These references helped them appeal to specific audiences and reinforce shared values or concerns. The identity of the speaker was often closely tied to their representation of “our people” or “our region,” helping to frame their leadership as locally rooted and trustworthy.

Identities were also created by the use of narratives and personal stories. Leaders frequently shared personal experiences, background struggles, or success stories to build an emotional connection with listeners. These narratives served to humanize the speaker, making them appear relatable, humane and sincere. In some cases, these stories also helped to highlight the leader’s commitment to service or their long-standing involvement in development issues. The fourth way in which identities were brought forth was the use of political and cultural identifiers such as titles and institutional roles. Leaders referred to themselves using political and cultural identifiers to show they understood and valued cultural norms. These choices reinforced their political legitimacy while anchoring their identity in community traditions and expectations.

Finally, identities were created through positioning as a key strategy. Speakers portrayed themselves in specific roles such as servant, visionary, regional champions, workers, problem-solver, or reformer. These roles were not stated directly but were communicated through claims of action, plans for the future, or contrasts with other leaders. By doing so, the speakers shaped how they were viewed by the audience—not just as politicians, but as individuals with purpose, direction, and dedication.

7.2 Conclusion

The findings revealed that political leaders used specific linguistic features such as nominalization, passivization, transitivity, modality, and ideology to shape their messages in development discourse. These features helped them present development as a shared process, reduce personal responsibility when needed, and promote their image as capable leaders. Their language choices were intentional and served to manage how they were perceived by the public. Through these strategies, leaders were able to influence public opinion, present themselves positively, and control how development actions were discussed. The study concludes that language is not only used to share

information, but also to manage power, accountability, and public image. These findings directly answer the first research question by showing the powerful linguistic features used in political communication.

The study found that political leaders often used legitimization strategies such as rationality, appeal to common good, moral values, hypothetical futures, and voices of expertise to justify their actions and gain public trust. At the same time, they used delegitimization to weaken the image of their opponents, often by pointing out failures, discrediting motivations, or framing them as enemies of progress. These strategies helped the leaders gain support, defend their positions, and build credibility while lowering the standing of others. The findings confirm that legitimization and delegitimization are key elements of development discourse, used to influence audience perception. This conclusion responds to the second research question by demonstrating how leaders use language to manage their public image and that of their rivals.

The study also revealed that identities of political leaders were constructed through various strategies such as pronoun use, social group alignment, personal stories, cultural references, and role positioning. These tools helped them present themselves as relatable, competent, and morally upright individuals. Identity was not presented directly but built over time through careful use of language and storytelling. By shaping how they were seen; either as servants, community members, or development champions, leaders strengthened their connection with the audience and justified their political positions. The conclusion drawn here is that identity construction is a key part of development discourse. This directly answers the third research objective by showing how leaders use speech to create and reinforce their public identities.

7.3 Areas for Further Studies

Based on the study's findings this current work suggests the following areas for further studies;

- i. Audience Perception of Political Identity in Vernacular Media: A Case of Kimeru FM Listeners. To investigate how the Public Interprets and Responds to Identity Construction Strategies Used by Politicians.

- ii. A Pragmatic Analysis of Speech Acts in Political Development Discourse in Kenyan Vernacular Media To focus on how Intentions are Conveyed and Interpreted in Development Discourse.
- iii. A Discourse Analysis of Presupposition in Development Discourse in Vernacular Radio.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Check List

Objective 1: Examine the linguistic features in development discourse in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations.

The primary instrument for this study is a lexical-linguistic checklist, designed to systematically record and categorize linguistic choices related to development discourse on Muuga and Meru FM radio.

Category	Features/Indicators	Description	Data Recording
Grammatical Features	Nominalization	Use of nouns derived from verbs/adjectives to abstract or depersonalize actions/events.	List and translate examples; note contexts.
	Passivization	Use of passive voice to obscure agents or responsibility.	Identify passive constructions and interpret their effect on discourse.
	Transitivity	Analysis of processes and participants in clauses (who does what to whom).	Annotate agent, action, and affected entities in texts.
	Modality	Use of modal verbs and expressions to indicate certainty, possibility, obligation, or permission.	Record modal expressions and their pragmatic force.
Lexical Features	Ideology	Lexical and grammatical choices that reflect underlying ideological positions or values.	Identify ideological terms and analyze their connotations and usage.

Objective 2: Explore (de)legitimization strategies in development discourse in Muuga and Meru FM radio stations.

Legitimization strategies used in development discourse:

Category	Features/Indicators	Description	Data Recording
Legitimization Strategies	Rationality	Appeals to logic, facts, or reason to legitimize claims.	Extract Utterances exemplifying rational appeals; interpret.
	Altruism	Appeals to selflessness or concern for others.	Record altruistic expressions and their discursive role.
	Voices of expertise	Invoking authority or expert knowledge to support discourse.	Identify references to experts or authoritative sources.
	Emotional Appeals ('We' vs. 'They')	Use of emotional language to create in-group/out-group dynamics.	Note pronouns and emotive terms emphasizing group identity.
	Hypothetical Future	References to possible future scenarios to persuade or legitimize actions.	List future-oriented statements and analyze their implications.

Objective 3: Investigate Identities in Development Discourse in Muuga and Meru FM Radio Stations:

Aspect of Identity	Category	Description	Data Recording Guidance
Internal	Gender	Linguistic cues that reflect male/female or gender-fluid identity roles.	Record pronouns, role references, or metaphors linked to gender.
	Ethnicity	Expressions that indicate ethnic group membership or differentiation.	Capture ethnic references, names, or linguistic codeswitching.
	Race based distinctions	Markers that signify racial identity or race-based distinctions.	Note racial terms or imagery used in the discourse.

	Appearance	Language about physical characteristics linked to identity.	Record descriptions or metaphors that relate to appearance.
	Sexual Orientation	Terms or narratives that suggest sexual identity.	Identify any suggestive language or narratives with such cues.
	Hobbies/ Interests	Discourse reflecting individual passions or pursuits.	Highlight references to leisure or interest-driven activities.
	Life Experiences	Experiences shaping personal identity as presented in discourse.	Document shared narratives or personal anecdotes.
External	Distinctiveness	How individuals portray themselves as unique from others.	Annotate linguistic markers of uniqueness or differentiation.
	Coherence	Language that maintains consistency of self across contexts.	Identify repeated themes or values suggesting stable identity.
	Continuity	References that signal the same identity over time.	Note use of past-present links, or future self-reference.

Appendix II: Tables

The linguistic features used by political leaders in development discourse

Category	Extract	UTT	Utterance (translated)	Comment/Explanation
Nominalization	EXT1	UTT1	<i>Meru ïthïrïtwe ïna tû-issue kidogo kidogo twa kwagagia maendeleo.</i> Meru has been experiencing a few issues here and there meant to distract development.	'Development' presented as an abstract entity that can be interfered with and not as action done by rational beings with control measures.
	EXT2	UTT2	My suggestion is for the ward fund to be given...	'Suggestion' is a noun formed from the verb 'suggest', abstracting action.
	EXT6	UTT3	<i>...development nigukara taka yatwikire skewed</i> Development seems to have been skewed...	'Development' is a nominalized abstraction of actions.
	EXT7	UTT4	<i>...nitukubanga gwaka ingi</i> We are planning to build another one	'Planning' is a nominal form of the verb 'plan', used to abstract action.
Passivization	EXT1	UTT5	<i>...ndathurïtwe nï Merû yonthe</i> I was elected by the entire Meru...	Passive voice obscures who exactly elected her, focusing on legitimacy.
	EXT2	UTT6	<i>Mbeca irïa ikwïnyangua jia development ibatwï gûtâmïrwa bûrïa jïmbangïre</i> The money meant for development that is being wasted should be used according to what it was allocated for	Passive construction allows us not to name the perpetrator of wastage.
	EXT4	UTT7	<i>Project irïa jianenkanïrïtwe tajio barabara, rûûjï na mïako Thirikari nïkûrïka</i> The projects that were given which include roads, water and building will be finished	Passive construction avoids naming the giver.
	EXT 9	UTT8	<i>Guti mbeca tweekagirua Meru</i> No money was being allocated for Meru...	Passive voice hides the responsible actor.

	EXT12	UTT9	<i>Hura gate ibuirite ithondenkwe buria tuthondeke kwa DC Chuka kibaroni</i> Hura Gate should be designed...	Passive structure used to remove agent responsibility.
Transitivity	EXT1	UTT10	<i>...deputy abatiĩ kũruta wawe ũrĩa aijiĩ</i> The deputy should do the work he knows.	Transitive structure shows the actor (deputy) and the expected action (work).
		UTT11	<i>...nĩngũcokeria antũ ba Meru county nkatho nĩ kũnthura</i> I want to thank the people of Meru County for electing me...	Active structure showing agent (people) and action (electing).
	EXT2	UTT12	<i>Governor Ragwa andũkaga contractors na agacũa labour kuuma kĩ antũ ba Tharaka Nithi akĩthingatagira public procurement act</i> Governor Ragwa used to hire contractors and look for labour among the people of Tharaka Nithi while following the Public Procurement Act	Clear transitive action structure; agent (Ragwa) → action (hire) → object (contractors).
	EXT8	UTT13	<i>...thaa iji gankwenda kubaassure tukareta TVET college na iu niyo the main focus yakwa iria ndi nayo within these five years</i> I want to assure that we will bring TVET college and that is my main focus within these five years	Active structure: agent (I) → action (assure/bring) → object (college).
	EXT10	UTT14	<i>...ndona rũtikũthira..twona mũjapan, atũretera mbeca twona project itũkũthira. Term thiru ndang'ang'ana twacua contractor gũkũrũkĩra gĩ Tana water</i> I realized it is not getting completed, got a Japanese donor and still the project was not	Agent (we) → action (got/continued) → object (project).

			complete. Last term I struggled and I got a contractor through Tana water	
	EXT14	UTT15	<i>Maita maingĩ kamaragia na president, nkathiĩ nkamwĩra thĩna ciakwa</i> Many times I talk to the president and tell him my problems...	Clear agency and action structure.
Modality	EXT1	UTT16	<i>Ntikwona kwĩna thĩna kũgaania county</i> I don't find anything wrong with dividing the county...	Use of 'don't find' reflects epistemic modality — indicating belief or possibility.
		UTT17	<i>Igaanue ituĩke ta uũ.</i> It should be divided to be as follows...	Use of 'should' indicates obligation or proposal.
	EXT2	UTT18	<i>. Ndĩ governor ndĩngĩensure muntũ wonthe nĩakũgwata mbeũ beganene</i> If I were the governor, I would ensure everyone gets the seeds...	Use of 'would ensure' expresses conditional possibility and obligation.
		UTT19	<i>Nkaruta wĩra wega na nĩ nkĩromba antũ benyiye bacoke nthĩ baruĩre antũ wĩra</i> I will work well and I ask people to humble themselves and work.	'Will work' expresses futurity and intention — strong deontic modality.
	EXT6	UTT20	<i>Kĩrĩ budget ĩrĩa twakũrũkirie bunge nĩĩtaga gũcaicwa na bau bangĩ mbere nau. Niũntũ no mwanka bwĩte bũgita dots, commas and so on. ĩgita rĩrĩa rĩa kũrita dots, commas and so on, it can be interfered with...it can be tampered with...</i>	'Can' indicates possibility; expresses skepticism about fairness.
	EXT5	UTT21	<i>Tũgaakikisha barabara nĩmbange wega.</i> We will ensure roads are well done.	'Will ensure' signals strong obligation and certainty.

	EXT 8	UTT23	<i>Tutibui gwetera national government –rionthe serikali saidia</i> We should not always wait for the national government all the time	'Should not' expresses normative stance — obligation modality.
	EXT14	UTT24	<i>rĩrĩa ariũngĩte county, maũntũ nĩmathijaga na mbere, akariũnga maita mathatũ</i> , county yathiĩ mbere mũno If the president visits a county three times, it can really make strides...	'Can' expresses possibility — epistemic modality.
Ideology	EXT1	UTT25	<i>...nĩngũcokeria antũ ba Meru county nkatho.. na mau nĩ maendeleo</i> ...thank the people of Meru County... and that is development.	Equates election with development, projecting an ideological stance.
		UTT26	<i>Meru ãthĩrĩtwe ãna tũ-issue kidogo kidogo twa kwagagia maendeleo</i> Meru has been experiencing issues meant to distract development.	Portrays any opposition or conflict as anti-development — ideological framing.
	EXT2	UTT27	<i>Mbeũ ãno ãnenkanagĩrwa nĩ governor nĩ scam..</i> the seeds meant for planting that the governor gives out is a scam	Reveals ideological critique of leadership and misuse of development tools.
		UTT28	<i>...nĩ donation kuuma kĩ World Bank gwĩtũkĩra climate change ..it is a donation from World Bank through the climate change program.</i>	Exposes deceptive government practice, ideological critique of leadership.
	EXT4	UTT29	<i>...ngaakikisha ũthii na mbere kũruta wĩra kĩrĩ mwananchi. ãndĩ opposition ngũgi yao nĩ kũreta propaganda na rĩmena tu nagwaka thirikarĩ ntaka</i> I will ensure oversight of the county government ...to achieve development and work for the common man. But opposition only	The use of modal 'will' connotes a sense of assurance that the speaker is determined to work and make the citizen's life develop. This is in contrast to the opposition side. The speaker uses contrast to paint the opponents negatively.

			works to bring propaganda and hatred just to smear mud on the government	
	EXT6	UTT30	<i>Development nigukara taka yatwikire skewed-yerekerua rutere rumwe nkuruki ya nangi..</i> development seems to have been skewed to one side more than the other	Suggests ideological imbalance in allocation — power critique.
	EXT3	UTT31	<i>BBI ñkñnyibia ûkabila, chuki thĩinĩ wa wanasiasa na ñgiongerera mbecha kana opportunities mashinani kenda mwananchi wa kawaida atetheka</i> BBI can minimize tribalism, hatred within the political class and also increase opportunities in the rural areas so that the common man can be helped	Frames BBI positively by the use of ‘can’ to show the possibility of national unity and equity through the BBI.
	EXT7	UTT32	<i>Indi inkwira antu ba Buuri batikagie na haraka cia kwendia miunda tontu njira ciabua antu nibakwenda kugura miunda batuura. Nibeteere niuntu miunda ikagia goro. Aana nibathome tutikwenda Buuri itwika ni ya ageni antu bendia miunda</i> I want to tell the Buuri people not to be in a hurry to sell land because as roads get better, people will buy land	Expresses ideological stance on land ownership and cultural identity.
	EXT8	UTT33	<i>Kiria nkoría Mithika ni awork na county government niuntu Meru kwi na mpara na antu nibagukua</i> What I am asking Hon Mithika Linturi is that he works with the county government because there is hunger in Meru and people are dying	Implies local self-reliance is better — anti-dependency ideological stance.

	EXT9	UTT34	<i>Thirikari itirunagwa ta Kiosk niuntu mbecha iria tukuga tutinacio cia maendeleo no tukwona mbecha ikiejanwa everywhere cia empowerment</i> The government is not run like a kiosk because we can see that we don't have for development yet there is a lot of money being distributed around the country for empowerment	Critique of current administration's mismanagement — ideological framing.
	EXT11	UTT35	<i>Ugafix mauntu ta mau, gutibu mwananchi arega gukena</i> Once you fix such things, there is no way citizens cannot be happy.	Presents development as the key to happiness — ideological message.
	EXT 15 – Mteruaki	UTT36	<i>Mbecha cia county, ihangite town, lakini CDF, ciina maa macinani, cia county ciuraira headquarter</i> The money from the county hangs in town but CDF money goes right into the rural homes but the county one gets lost at the headquarters	Strong ideological positioning of CDF as people-centered governance.

Table 5.1: (De) legitimization strategies in development discourse by political leaders

Strategy/Category	EXT	UTT	Utterance (translated)	Comment/Explanation
1.Rationality	EXT 1 – Kawira Mwangaza	UTT 37	<i>Ndirona ibatiĩ kũgawa maita mathatũ nĩũntũ Tharaka Nithi ñna constituencies ithatũ ñndĩ ñĩĩ Merũ County ñĩĩ na constituency kenda</i> ...it should be divided three times because Tharaka Nithi has three constituencies while Meru has 9 constituencies.	Uses logical comparison to legitimize her stance on county division.
	EXT 3 – Muthomi Njuki	UTT 38	<i>BBI ñnkĩnyibia ũkabila, chuki thĩĩĩ wa wanasiasa na ñngiongerera mbecha kana opportunities mashinani</i> BBI	Uses national unity and rural development to justify the BBI initiative.

			can minimize tribalism, hatred within the political class and also increase opportunities in the rural areas.	
	EXT 6 – Hon. Kirima Nguchine	UTT39	<i>...Yacoka gwatwika parliamentary chairman na chairman ba departmental committees are influencing finances to the favour of their constituencies</i> ...then it happened that parliamentary chairmen and chairmen of parliamentary committees are influencing finances to the favour of their constituencies.	Presents structural bias as justification for calls to reallocate resources fairly.
	EXT 9 –	UTT34	<i>Thirikari itirunagwa ta Kiosk niuntu mbeca iria tukuga tutinacio cia maendeleo no tukwona mbeca ikiejanwa everywhere cia empowerment</i> The government is not run like a kiosk because we can see that we don't have for development yet there is a lot of money being distributed around the country for empowerment	Uses metaphor to rationalize need for structured budget handling.
	EXT 10 –	UTT 40	<i>..twona mûjapan, atûretera mbeca twona project ïtikûthira</i> I took it over, got a Japanese donor and still the project was not complete.	Provides evidence-based reason for progress and credibility.
	EXT 11 – Hon. Kaleke	UTT 41	<i>...nîndutîte mawîra maingî mûno ma social services. ûgafix maûntû ta mau, gûtîbu mwananchi arega gûkena.</i> ...I have done many things in social services once you fix such things, there is no way citizens cannot be happy	Ideal authorization stemming from his earlier work. Legitimizes certain development projects as key for making people happy.
	EXT 13 – Mteruaki	UTT 42	<i>Mbeca cia county, ihangîte town, lakini CDF, ciînamaa macinani, cia county ciuraîra headquarter</i> CDF money goes right into the rural homes but the county one gets lost at the headquarters.	Compares two funding models to legitimize CDF.
2. Appeal to Common Good	EXT 1 – Kawira Mwangaza	UTT 43	<i>....ndathurîtwe nî Merû yonthe na gûtîku nîona kuura kwogu gûtîthûkia kuura.</i>	Presents unity and inclusivity to justify her leadership.

			I was elected by the entire Meru so it cannot destroy the votes	
	EXT2	UTT 44	<i>Nkaruta wĩra wega na nĩ nkĩromba antũ benyiye bacoke nthĩ baruĩre antũ wĩra</i> I will work well and I ask people to humble themselves and come down to work for the people	Encourages collective effort for communal benefit.
		UTT 45	<i>...ĩromba riakwa nĩ kũnenkerwa mbece cia ward fund nĩkenda baũmba kũrutĩra antu wĩra</i> My suggestion is for the ward fund to be given to enable leaders to work for the people	Proposes resource allocation framed as benefiting all.
		UTT 46	<i>Mbece irĩa itĩmbige wega ndĩngĩitũmĩra kĩ bursary kenda itethie mwana wa mũthĩni kũgwata kĩthomo.</i> Any money that is not well kept would be used to give bursaries so that the children of the poor get educated	Frames use of resources for public good.
		UTT 47	<i>Vocational training centres jiĩ rungu rwa county government. Thirikari yakwa ĩngiiejaga mbece kwĩgana kenda arutwa barĩkia form 4 baũmba kwendelea na kĩthomo.</i> the vocational training centres are under the county government. My government would give them enough money so that when students clear form four, they can proceed with higher studies	Legitimizes support for youth as a community good.
	EXT8	UTT 48	<i>Kwogu ikeja kuuma au igatonya miundene ya county twarĩma tũgĩkaga kilo cietu tũga create strategic grain reserve. we can farm as we store our kilost to create strategic grain reserves</i>	Emphasizes community-based action to support local well-being.
	EXT12	UTT 49	<i>Twa harmonize secondary school fees, na twauga arimũ batĩkongerere fees, nokana tũrũthĩte mũcemanio tũgetĩkanĩria twĩamwe.</i>	Supports equitable education for all.

			We have also harmonized secondary school fees and have said that head teachers should not be increasing fees unless we all meet and agree	
3.Moral Appeal	EXT10	UTT 50	<p><i>...Twiuû twa family ya Kaleke, tûtwire tûgîthagia antu silently, tûtongoretue nĩ</i> <i>my mother, e patron. Gûcûira antû mawîra, kûthomithia jiana.</i></p> <p>...as the Kareke family, we help people silently led by our mother who is the patron looking for jobs for people, educating children,</p>	Implied moral duty to fulfill basic needs for legitimacy. Appeals to humility and duty as moral grounds for legitimate leadership
	EXT12	UTT 51	<p><i>Menya niû mbîikîtie rîrîa ûkwandîka mûntû ûceragia mûntû ûria ûkûmenya akaruta wîra wega. Kwogu maûntû ma gwîtwâ mwizi, yarî siasa, nîûntû mûntû nîakûmenya maûntû marîa akûrûtha na tontu nîagûkîra kûmenyeka, no acûire wa kwigîrîra.</i></p> <p>I personally believe that when you seek someone to do a job for you you get someone you know will do a good job. So the thing that were making me to be called a thief was politics because somebody knows what he is doing and since he fears that what he is doing will be exposed, he has to look for a scapegoat</p>	.seeks to be understood as morally upright by describing another leaders as having fishy deals and projecting his weaknesses on others.
	EXT2	UTT 52	<p><i>...ndîngîcûa kîrathimo kîa ma kuuma kî Mîûrungu gîa kuruta wîra atî na ungunania..</i></p> <p>I would look for a blessing from God by working without corruption</p>	Brings in the sense of religion to attest to his moral gauge.
		UTT 53	<p><i>Ndimûthure ta MCA ndutaga wîra ntîkûbagua nîûntû nthurîtwe kîrî antû bonthe ba Tharaka Nithi.</i></p>	Community sensitive and not biased.

			I am elected MCA so that I can work without discriminating because I am voted in by all Tharaka Nithi members	
4.Voices of Expertise	EXT3	UTT 54	<p><i>...yapendekeza kwĩthĩrwe na kũnenkanĩra bursary fund kĩrĩ MCAs kenda antũ bakinyĩrwa nĩyo nau mashinani nĩ kenda ward jiũmba kwendelea.</i></p> <p>It (BBI) suggests that bursary fund should be given to MCAs so that people in the rural areas can access it easily for the purpose of developing the wards...</p>	Cites BBI to show institutional suggestions to support gender equity and access.
	EXT12	UTT 55	<p><i>Tarĩrĩa president aũkĩte acerete county nĩethagwa abangĩte maũntũ burĩa makathĩĩ na agatũma mbeca. Kagita karĩa agaũka, nĩngacanaga nkaria nawe maũntũ ma mĩradi ĩrĩa ĩbatĩĩ kũrũthwa</i></p> <p>When the president visits the county there are preparations that are made and money is usually sent ahead of his visit and sometimes you can spare something out of it and such a time Ialso make sure I have talked with him about the development projects that need to be done</p>	References executive influence as proof of development action.
	EXT7	UTT 56	<p><i>Na fence ĩu nayo nĩtũkwaria na Kenya Wildlife Services na Lewa Conservancy na ministry nĩtũkwaria kenda Kenya Defence Forces ĩtwĩĩkĩria twaka rwego arĩa nĩũntũ nĩtũcũite donor..</i></p> <p>Concerning the fence, we have talked with the KWS and the Lewa Conservancy and the ministry so that KDF can allow us to construct the fence because we have looked for a donor</p>	References expert and institutional backing for security plans.

5. Altruism	EXT5	UTT 51	<i>..nkageria mũno kuendelea gûtetheria aana ba Tharaka Nithi county na mbuga arĩa Mũrungu akandugũrĩra njĩra ta ya wĩra ngatetheria kwa thirikarĩ na private sector</i> I will try to continue helping the children of Tharaka Nithi county and I want to say where God opens a door for me in the area of work opportunities I will help both in the private sector and the government..	Positions himself as servant of the people through personal commitment.
	EXT2	UTT 44	<i>Nkaruta wĩra wega na nĩ nkĩromba antũ benyiye bacoke nthĩ barutĩre antũ wĩra</i> I will work well and I ask people to humble themselves and come down to work for the people	Frames local leadership as proactive and selfless.
	EXT2	UTT 52	<i>Mbeca irĩa itĩmbige wega ndĩngĩitũmĩra kĩ bursary kenda itethie mwana wa mũthĩni kũgwata kĩthomo</i> I would use the money to give bursaries so that the children of the poor get educated.	Demonstrates concern for both everyday needs and long-term livelihood.
6. Hypothetical Future	EXT2 –	UTT 53	<i>....ndĩngĩcũa kĩrathimo kĩa ma kuuma kĩ Mũrungu gĩa kuruta wĩra atĩ na ungumania</i> (If I were governor)I would look for a blessing from God by working without corruption,	Uses imagined future to highlight his own integrity and fairness.
		UTT 54	<i>Ndĩngĩ convert Hura Gate itũike tourist centre gwĩtũkĩra kuthondeka museum ya maũntũ ma tene na kũbanga ikundi jĩa entertainment</i> I would convert Hura Gate to a tourist centre by constructing a museum to display things about culture and tradition and preparing groups that can entertain people	Legitimizes his development plan by comparing with a respected model.
	EXT8 –	UTT 55	<i>....kwogu ikeja kuuma au igatonya miundene ya county twarĩma tũgĩkaga kilo cietu tũga create strategic grain reserve</i>	Projects a better future for his people through development actions.

			...so if they got into the county lands we can farm as we store our kilos to create strategic grain reserves.	
7.Delegitimization of Others	EXT2 –	UTT 56	<i>Atongoria nĩbakirire nĩũntũ bwa PR</i> Leaders kept quiet in a bid to maintain public relations	Undermines others by suggesting they prioritize image over real work.
	EXT4	UTT 57	<i>....ĩndĩ opposition ngũgi yao nĩ kũreta propaganda na rũmena tu nagwaka thirikarĩ ntaka</i>but opposition only works to bring propaganda and hatred just to smear mud on the government	Frames opposition as destructive and anti-development.
	EXT 6	UTT 58	<i>....kethĩra nĩ Ndia- Kĩrĩnyaga naa gwa Kariuki, ũkethĩra kwawe mbeca irĩa nyingĩ aikĩtie kwawe ũgwe ũrũ mĩtue ntono</i>so that if the chairperson for example comes from Ndia Kirinyaga which belongs to Kariuki, you find that a lot of money is given to that constituency and you have been given nothing	Critiques the unfairness of financial distribution — undermines legitimacy of current system.
	EXT 9 – Hon. Mithika Linturi	UTT 60	<i>Gũtĩ mbeca twekagĩrũa Meru nabarĩa babatĩĩ gũtetera antũ nĩbekĩrwe mũuko, no mĩcemanio betaa Karen na statehouse bakaewa garama</i>no money was being allocated for Meru and the MPs who should be talking for the people were pocketed and all they know is to attend meetings in Karen and state house as they are given transport.	Criticizes current leaders for failing to represent their constituents.
	EXT12 –	UTT 61	<i>Kwogu maũntũ ma gwĩtwa mwizi, yarĩ siasa, nĩũntũ mũntũ nĩakũmenya maũntũ marĩa akũrũtha na tontu nĩagũkĩra kũmenyeka, no acũire wa kwigĩ rĩra</i>	Frames accusations as illegitimate and politically motivated.

			So the thing sthat were making me to be called a thief was politics because somebody knows what he is doing and since he fears that what he is doing will be exposed, he has to look for a scapegoat	
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Investigate the identities constructed in Development Discourse in Kimeru FM Radio Stations

Identities	Extract	UTT	Utterance (translated)	Language applied
1. Leader position herself as a trailblazing leader; creates a unique identity as a pioneer	Ext 1	Utt 62 <i>nĩngũcokeria antũ ba Meru county nkatho nĩ kũnthura ndĩ mwekũrũ wa mbere</i> ” I want to thank the people of Meru County for electing me as the first lady governor in Meru	Use of pronouns and self-reference
Reinforces self-image as a competent leader validated by the public.		Utt 63 <i>ndathurirwe nĩ wĩra wakwa</i> ” I was elected because of my work	‘I was chosen’ asserts her credibility.
Leader as a hard worker committed to make the people better.	Ext 2	Utt 64	<i>Nkaruta wĩra wega na nĩ nkĩromba antũ benyiye bacoke nthĩ barutĩre antũ wĩra</i> I will work well and I ask people to humble themselves and come down to work for the people	‘I ask’, showing direct address to audience.
Asserts his purpose as a worker as the only reason he was elected.		Utt 65	<i>Nkaruta wĩra wega</i> ” (I will work well) and “ <i>ndimũthure ta MCA ndutaga wĩra</i> ” I was elected MCA to work)	‘I will work’ emphasizes personal responsibility and accountability to the public.
A worker giving reassurance to continue working for people.	Ext 4	Utt 66 <i>ndĩrutĩrĩte kwendelea na ngũgi yakwa</i> ” I have purposed to continue with my role	Highlights personal initiative and political responsibility
A benevolent worker concerned about the children’s needs.	Ext 5	Utt 67	<i>nkageria mũno kuendelea gũtetheria aana ba Tharaka Nithi county</i>	‘I will try’, a first-person commitment.

			I will try to continue helping the children of Tharaka Nithi County...	
A regional representative speaking for all people and happy for achieving as a community.	Ex 8	Utt 68	<i>Ameru twĩ fully represented twĩna ministry ya interior</i> people of Meru are fully represented as we have the ministry of interior	'we are', collective identity claim.
A well connected leader who uses his connection to make strides developmentwise.	Ext 12	Utt 69	<i>Maita maingĩ kambaragia na president, nkathiĩ nkamwĩra thĩna ciakwa, na rĩmwe noka akauga mũntũ ũyũ natethue</i> , I talk to the Many times I talk to the president and tell him my problems and sometimes he will just say 'help this person'...	'I talk', first-person action.
Responsible leadership that thinks about the society before personal issues.	Ext 2	Utt 70	<i>Mĩanya ãngĩ nĩ ta ũrĩa ona nja gũtĩagaga thĩna cia kwĩja na kũthira. ũbatĩĩ kũmbũria bũrĩa Meru twĩtĩte</i> (some conflicts are just like a home where problems come and go. You should ask me how we are doing as Meru.	Align with the social group and identifies with them.
An investor who makes effort to make wealth for the community.		Utt 71	<i>Nĩ kenda ĩgenerate income ya gũtũtethia ũthii na mbere</i> This will generate income to help us develop	'...so that it ' focused on the end result.
Empathetic and caring. Ensures he feels the pain of people in need especially the children in his community.	Ext 5	Utt 72	<i>Rĩmwe nĩtũkubagia itĩ inene, ĩndĩ mwana ũrĩa arĩkĩtie cukuru atĩ na gwa kuthi na atĩ na ngũgĩ.</i> <i>Nĩnkũromba antũ ba Tharaka Nithi bampe kanya ka governor</i> Sometimes we look for opportunities to get higher seats yet there is a child who has completed school and has nowhere to go and is without a job. I ask the Tharaka Nithi people to give me a chance to be a governor	'yet there is a child' shows the understanding of people's needs.

<p>A development champion and achiever with a record of</p>		<p>Utt 73</p>	<p><i>Twĩna maũntũ maingi mũno tũmbĩte kũrũtha ta ma ndũũjũ, ma agriculture na kadhalika. Maũntũ ma ũgima bwa mwĩrĩ tũgaakikisha antũ nĩbagũtetheka kũgwata ndawa</i> We have very many things we have done like water, agriculture and many others. Issues of health we have made sure we have assisted people to get medicine</p>	<p>‘We....very many things... done..water, agriculture..’ shows basic needs provision accomplished for the constituents.</p>
<p>Leader presents himself as a problem solver by talking to concerned parties to tackle a market problem for the farmers.</p>	<p>Ext 6</p>	<p>Utt 74</p>	<p><i>Nĩtwaranĩrie na National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) niũntũ bwa changamoto iũ twĩ nayo ya ndengũ</i> We negotiated with the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) because of the challenge we have about ndengu</p>	<p>‘We negotiated... NCPB’ shows the effort made to stem the market challenge.</p>
<p>Leader as concerned and responsible.</p>		<p>Utt 75</p>	<p><i>...chairman ba departmental committees are influencing finances to the favour of their constituencies. Lakini rĩrĩa tũtarĩ na machairmen ja committes twethaĩra twĩna mũcommittee tuge kethĩrwa nĩ</i> <i>....chairman ũrĩa ũtaari Meru tontũ twĩna chairman wetũ wĩtagwa Mũtungwa abwĩri kwĩthwa arũngamĩrĩte Meru yonthe</i> ...chairmen of parliamentary committees are influencing finances to the favour of their constituencies. But when we did not have chairmen of committees we had one committee member chosen to represent Meru for example like we have our chairman Mutunga representing the whole of Meru</p>	<p>‘ chosen to represent Meru’ portrays the concern for lack of representation in financial management.</p>

Leaders presented as responsible and a worker.	Ext 7	Utt 76	<i>Nandĩ itwambĩrĩrie gwaka obici cia security narĩa Rũiri...nĩtũkũbanga gwaka ãngĩ narĩa Kathare hakuĩ na maili saba na kambĩ... narĩa onturĩrĩ na obici ya ACC.</i> We have started building security offices in Ruirĩ... We are planning to build another one in Onturiri and an office for the ACC.	'Ruirĩ, Kathare..'Mentions various places they have started building offices as need arose.
Leader as worker and planner.	Ext 8	Utt 77	<i>...kwogu batwĩ no tũthithie strategic grain reserve jietu aja Meru jia gũfeedaa antũ betũ tuge rĩrĩa gwatonya kĩangazi nontũ kinya rĩmwe ũkanenkera antũ mbeũ beta kũanda ja nandĩ bena mpara bakamĩruga</i> ...so we can do strategic our grain reserve to feed our people like when famine strikes like now because even if you give people seeds to plant they will cook.	...'we can do strategic grain reserve...'to cater for times of hard times.
Leader as inclusive and regional representative		Utt 78	<i>Twĩ county notũrete rũũjĩ piped tũkathithia intensive agriculture and grain reserve. Tũtĩbui gwetera national government –rĩonthe serikali saidia-tũgatũra kũrĩra</i> As a county, we can bring piped water and do intensive agriculture and grain reserve. We should not always wait for the national government all the time crying 'help government' without end).	Appeals to the entire county authority to ensure intensive Agricultural produce.
Leaders seen as regional representative		Utt 79	<i>Ameru twĩ fully represented... ” (“We, the Ameru, are fully represented...”</i>	Expresses pride and alignment with the ethnic community at a national level.

Leader as responsible and concerned	Ext 9	Utt 80	<i>...nkamwira barabara iji ya kisima-kibirichia- kirua itwaugire tukathithia... ukona guti budget yanenkerua. Kethira nitwaiji nu akathithia tutingimuthingata</i> ...this kisima-kibirichia-kirua road' we said will be done but to no avail. If we had known that is what he would do we would not have followed him	'this Kisima-Kibirichia road we said..'to show he personally took it upon himself.
Leader presents himself as relatable and concerned		Utt 81	<i>Gintu kiria twariganirwe na president ni kurega kuingia mantu jaria atwirire</i> The thing that made us fall out with the president is because he lied to us during campaigns and all the developments we had agreed would be done were not done	'developments ...not done' brings out the anger and disappointment over another leaders' failure.
Leaders as worker and achiever	Ext 12	Utt 82	<i>...nitwikirite stima gutu kwingi muno..</i> we have installed electricity in many places .. <i>chuka technical twamibanga, thaa ino ina arutwa ngiri ithano, na 1,200 are from Tharaka</i> we have organized the Chuka technical institute and now it has 5000 students with 1200 students from Tharaka	'technical...has 5000 students' signals growth work and achievement.
Leader as a pioneer woman governor and a worker	Ext1	UTT83	<i>Ndathurirwe ndi governor wa Meru na ndiruta wira uria mbiji na deputy abati kuru wawe uria aiji</i> I was elected governor of Meru and so I am doing the work that I know should be done. The deputy should do the work he knows	self-label 'first lady governor' as role declaration.
Leader as a prudent worker	Ext 2	UTT84	<i>Nkaruta wira wega na ni nkirumba antu benyiye bacoke nthi barutire antu wira</i> (I will work well and I ask people to humble themselves and come down to work for the people	'work well for the people' as servant-leader positioning.

Leader as a people representative and protector	Ext 4	UTT85	<i>Thirikarĩ nũgacanĩte kwĩnĩka garama ya maisha na nĩnkũmenereria maandamano marĩa metĩte na mbere matongoretwe nĩ azimio la umoja (opposition).</i> the government is making effort to bring down the cost of living and I detest demonstrations led by the Azimio la Umoja (opposition)	‘I detest’ stance against opposition as identity through contrast.
Leader as a regional representative	Ext 6	UTT86	<i>Development yatwikire skewed... rutere rumwe.”</i> Development seems skewed—more to one side	Positions speaker’s region as marginalized; hints at unfair treatment from those in power.
	Ext 7	UTT87	<i>Nkamwĩra thĩna ciakwa... akauga ‘mũtethwe.’”</i> ("I told the president my problems... and he said, ‘help this person	Positions self as connected, effective, and able to deliver public support.
Leader as authoritative and worker	Ext 2	Utt 88	<i>Ndimũthure ta MCA ndutaga wĩra nĩkũbagua nĩũntũ nthurĩtwe kĩrĩ antũ bonthe ba Tharaka Nithi</i> (I am elected MCA so that I can work without discriminating because I am voted in by all Tharaka Nithi members	‘elected MCA ..work’ stamps authority and credibility.
Leader as responsible, worker and morally acceptable	Ext 2	Utt 89	<i>...ndĩngĩcũa kĩrathimo kĩa ma kuuma kĩ Mũrungu gĩa kuruta wĩra atĩ na ungumania</i> (I would look for a blessing from God by working without corruption,	‘blessing from God...work without corruption’ alludes to the fact that they can be trusted.
Leader as concerned and worker	Ext 5	Utt 90	<i>...nkageria mũno kuendelea gũtetheria aana ba Tharaka Nithi county na mbuge arĩa Mũrungu akandugũrĩra njĩra ta ya wĩra ngatetheria kwa thirikarĩ na private sector.</i> I will try to continue helping the children of Tharaka Nithi county and I want to say where God opens a	‘help the children’ appeals to the empathy about the state of the people.

			door for me in the area of work opportunities I will help both in the private sector and the government	
Leader as relatable, humane and concerned.	Ext 10	Utt 91	<i>Twiiû twi family ya Kaleke, tûtwîre tûgîthagia antu silently, tûtongoretue nî my mother, e patron. Gûcûîra antû mawîra, kûthomithia jiana, no rîu rwîmbo rûrîa antû bakwenda kwîgua, nî ru winaga</i> Kareke family, we help people silently led by our mother who is the patron looking for jobs for people, educating children, but now the song people want to hear is the one you sing	'we help people' alluding to how well the work as family in securing help for people'
Leader as responsible	Ext 12	Utt 92	<i>...nkathiî nkamwîra thîna ciakwa, na rîmwe noka akauga mûntû ûyû natethue, ûkanenkerwa tûmillioni twîgana ûntû weû.</i> Many times I talk to the president and tell him my problems and sometimes he will just say 'help this person'.	Personal encounter with national leadership used to show effectiveness and connection.

Appendix III: Extracts

Extract 1

Muuga FM

28/9/2023

Host: Presenter

Guest: A Governor

Mwanontii: *twarĩrie uthii na mbere wa Meru county. Kwĩ na maũntũ ma kwathũkana-kũgaania county, ngatheti ya naarua kuringana na committee ya budget.* (let us talk about the progress of Meru county. There are divisions, that is dividing the county according to today's nation as suggested by the budget committee).

Kawira: *nĩngũcokeria antũ ba Meru county nkatho nĩ kũnthura ndĩ mwekũrũ wa mbere gũtuũka governor Merũ- na mau nĩ maendeleo* (I want to thank the people of Meru County for electing me as the first lady governor in Meru-and that is development).

Ndathurirwe nĩ wĩra wakwa ũrĩa ndarutĩte rĩrĩa ndarĩ woman representative (I elected because of my work when I was a woman representative).

Ntĩkwona kwĩna thĩna kũgaania county nĩũntu 'gũtĩ mpongeri nkai no ya kĩronda.(I don't find anything wrong with dividing the county since the proverb goes 'that no increase is bad except a wound').

Ndĩrona ĩbatĩĩ kũgawa maita mathatũ nĩũntũ Tharaka Nithi ĩna constituencies ithatũ ĩndĩ ĩrĩa Merũ County ĩrĩ na constituency kenda (according to me, it should be divided three times because Tharaka Nithi has three constituencies while Meru has 9 constituencies).

Igaanue ituĩketa ũũ: (It should be divided to be as follows:

Imenti county ĩrĩ na constituency cia south Imenti, Central Imenti na North Imenti (Imenti County with South Imenti, Central Imenti and North Imenti constituencies).

Igembe county ĩrĩ na constituency cia Īgembe Central, Igembe South na Igembe North (Igembe County with Igembe Central, Igembe South and Igembe North constituencies).

Bũuri kana Tigania County ĩrĩ na constituency cia Tigania East, Tigania West na Bũuri (Buuri or Tigania County with Tigania East, Tigania West and Buuri constituencies).

Mwanontii: *Nũkwona kũgaania gũtĩthũkia kuura cia 2027?* (don't you see that dividing the county will spoil your votes?)

Kawira: *ndathurĩtwe nĩ Merũ yonthe na gũtĩku ntĩona kuura kwogu gũtĩthũkia kuura* (I was elected by the entire Meru so it cannot destroy the votes).

Mwanontii: *kwĩna ndũa gatĩgatĩ ka governor na deputy* (there is fighting between the governor and the deputy).

Kawira: *gũtĩ mwanya nkũmenya na ntĩkwona kwĩ na mwanya. Ndathurĩrwe ndĩ governor wa Meru na ndĩruta wĩra ũrĩa mbijĩ na deputy abatiĩ kũruta wawe ũrĩa aijĩ* (there is no gap that I know of and I cannot see any gap. I was elected governor of Meru and so I am doing the work that I know should be done. The deputy should do the work he knows).

Mĩanya ĩngĩ nĩ ta ũrĩa ona nja gũtĩagaga thĩna cia kwĩja na kũthira. ũbatĩĩ kũmbũria bũrĩa Meru twĩtĩte (some conflicts are just like a home where problems come and go. You should ask me how we are doing as Meru).

Mwanontii: *Meru bwĩtĩte atĩa?*

Kawira: *Meru ĩthĩrĩtwe ĩna tũ-issue kidogo kidogo twa kwagagia maendeleo* (Meru has been experiencing a few issues here and there meant to distract development).

Extract 2
13/10/2023

Meru FM

Program: Theria ntuku na akuru bathatu.

Guest: An MCA in Tharaka Nithi.

Host: Presenter

Topic: Tharaka Nithi County Oversight

Jonah: karibu mheshimiwa Njeru *gûkû* kwa Meru FM (welcome to Meru FM)

Njeru: *nĩngûcokia ngatho nĩ gwĩtwa gûkû na ngacokeria antu ba ĩgambang'ombe nkatho* (I thank you for inviting me to this station and I also thank the people of Tharaka Nithi).

Nkaruta wĩra wega na nĩ nkĩromba antũ benyiye bacoke nthĩ barutĩre antũ wĩra (I will work well and I ask people to humble themselves and come down to work for the people).

Tharaka Nithi ĩna thĩna nĩũntu antũ batikwaria (Tharaka nithi has a problem because not all people are talking).

Atongoria nĩbakirire nĩũntũ bwa PR (leaders kept quiet in a bid to maintain public relations).

ĩromba rĩakwa nĩ kũnenkerwa mbeca cia ward fund nĩkenda baũmba kũrutĩra antu wĩra (my suggestion is for the ward fund to be given to enable leaders to work for the people).

MCA batĩthagũa bena mbeca ciakũrũtha development kĩ maeneo bunge mao (MCAs have no money to actualize development in their areas).

Ndimũthure ta MCA ndutaga wĩra nĩkũbagua nĩũntũ nthurĩtwe kĩrĩ antũ bonthe ba Tharaka Nithi (I am elected MCA so that I can work without discriminating because I am voted in by all Tharaka Nithi members).

Nĩnkũwĩra atongoria bathire mwĩtũo barutĩre antũ wĩra nĩũntu kagita kathira bagacoka kĩrĩ antũ kũromba kura (I am telling leaders to end pride and work for people since after their term is expired, they will go back to the same people to borrow votes).

Kĩrĩ atongoria gũtĩ na ngwatanĩro na kwogu batikũmba kũrutĩra mwananchi wĩra bakĩringithanua na Meru County. Ni PR akĩ be nayo. (among the leaders, there is lack of unity and this makes it difficult to work for the people compared to the Meru County. It is only public relations that they have).

Jonah Gaisima: *ũkanenkerwa Tharaka Nithi wĩ governor, nĩ ũntũ ũriku ũmba kũrũtha nkũrani na Muthomi?* (if you are given Tharaka Nithi as the governor, what would you do differently from His Excellency governor Muthomi Njuki).

Hon. Njeru Ing'ara: *ndĩngĩcũa kĩrathimo kĩa ma kuuma kĩ Mĩũrungu gĩa kuruta wĩra atĩ na ungumania- example- mbeca irĩa ikwĩnyangua jia development ibatwĩ gũtũmĩrwa bũrĩa jĩmbangĩre* (I would look for a blessing from God by working without corruption, for example the money meant for development that is being wasted should be used according to what it was allocated for).

Gũtũmira mbeca ũthũku na ungumania nĩkĩo gũtũmĩte marandũ ona marĩa matigĩtwe nĩ former leadership matanarĩwa (misusing money and corruption is what has made debts even those that were left by the former administration not to be paid).

Governor Ragwa andĩkaga contractors na agacũa labour kuuma kĩ antũ ba Tharaka Nithi akĩthingatagira public procurement act- nkũũrani na governor wa thaa ino ũria agĩraga bae nja kenda akunĩkagira maũntũ mae ma kwitha (Governor Ragwa used to hire contractors and look for labour among the people of Tharaka Nithi while following

the Public Procurement Act unlike the present governor who goes for labour from outside so that he can hide what he wants).

Tharaka Nithi county ïetwe 1,533526 milioni jĩa cai. Nĩu ndĩngĩnyiyia mbeca ïno na gũtũmĩra na njĩra ïrĩa yagĩrĩte kenda itethie mũtũri wa Tharaka Nithi county. Iu mbeca ithijaga mũukoni wa muntũ (Tharaka Nithi county has been given 1,533526 million meant for tea. If it were my job to use the money I would reduce the amount and use some of the money to help the people of this county. That money goes to somebody's pocket).

Mbeũ ïno ïnenkanagĩrwa nĩ governor nĩ scam nĩũntũ mbeũ ïũ nĩkagĩrwa budget ya kũgũra na nĩ donation kuuma kĩ World Bank gwĩtũkĩra climate change. Ndĩ governor ndĩngĩensure muntũ wonthe nĩakũgwata mbeũ beganene sublocation na location gũkũrũkĩra kwĩthĩrania data ya arĩmi na kũbanenkera kũringana na bũrĩa beandĩkithĩtie (the seeds meant for planting that the governor gives out is a scam because it is budgeted for in order to be bought yet it is a donation from World Bank through the climate change program. If I were the governor, I would ensure that everyone gets the seeds equally in sublocations and locations according to the way they registered).

Government ya Tharaka Nithi ïkĩrĩte 54,900000 ïrĩ legal fees. Mbeca iu nĩ jia kũgamba nau? Ndĩngĩtumira jia kũendeleithia county. Mbeca irĩa itĩmbige wega ndĩngĩtũmĩra kĩ bursary kenda itethie mwana wa mũthĩni kũgwata kĩthomo (Tharaka Nithi government has allocated 54,900000 shillings as legal fees. This money is meant to case with who? I would use such money to develop the county. Any money that is not well kept would be used to give bursaries so that the children of the poor get educated). Vocational training centres jĩ rungu rwa county government. Thirikari yakwa ïngiiejaga mbeca kwĩgana kenda arutwa barĩkia form 4 baũmba kwendelea na kĩthomo (the vocational training centres are under the county government. My government would give them enough money so that when students clear form four, they can proceed with higher studies)

Mbeca irĩa jiatengetwe gwaka stadiums jiarĩ nyingĩ mũno na stadiums iu itĩkinyĩrĩka. For example ya Kĩrũbia mũntũ wa Igambang'ombe agakinya nao rĩ? Ndĩngĩtũmĩra mbeca iu kũbanga na kwerũia jieni jĩa cukuru kenda aana bona gwa kũthakĩra batĩkuumia (The money set aside to build stadiums was so much and those stadiums are not accessible. For instance, the Kirubia stadium; when can someone from Igambang'ombe get there? I would use such money to prepare and renew school fields so that school children play without getting hurt).

Nkaakikisha stima ïgũkinyĩra mashinani. Nkaranĩria na EACC kumĩria antũ barĩa corrupt na mbeca irĩa bathũkangĩtie bacokie; (I will make sure that electricity has gone up to the rural areas . I will talk to the Ethics and Anti Corruption Commission to expose those who have misused money so that they can pay.

Ndĩngĩ convert Hura Gate ïtũike tourist centre gwĩtũkĩra kuthondeka museum ya maũntũ ma tene na kũbanga ikundi jĩa entertainment. Nĩ kenda ïgenerate income ya gũtũtethia ũthii na mbere. Maũntũ mama nkwaria tĩ makũthũkia nou, no nĩmo MCA babatĩĩ kwaria kenda thirikarĩ yũmba kũreta maendeleo (I would convert Hura Gate to a tourist centre by constructing a museum to display things about culture and tradition and preparing groups that can entertain people. This will generate income to help us develop. All these things I am talking are not meant to tarnish anyone but this is what MCAs should be talking about so that the county can experience development).

Extract 3
27/11/2019

Meru FM

Host: Presenter

Guest: A Governor, A Woman Representative and Businessman in Tharaka Nithi County.

Leaders' views on the BBI report

Muthomi Njuki: *BBI ñkĩnyibia ùkabila na chuki thĩĩnĩ wa wanasiasa na ñngiongerera mbeca kana opportunities mashinani kenda mwananchi wa kawaida atetheka* (BBI can minimize tribalism and hatred within the political class and also increase opportunities in the rural areas so that the common man can be helped).

Mzalendo Kibunjia: *BBI nĩ ñmbega ñndĩ ñrĩa ñkwarĩria mbeca jia Kenya kũnenkanĩrwa gĩ county nĩ kenda ikinyĩra mwanainchi wa kawaida. Nĩ mbega rĩrĩa igũtethia kũnenkera youth wĩra kenda batetherua gũkũra economically na ñmbega rĩrĩa ñkwarĩria marĩ ma mega ma health care workers nĩũntũ bwa kũbekĩra inya barute wĩra wega* (BBI is good when it talks of Kenyan money being given to counties so that it gets to the common man. It is also good when it talks of giving jobs to the young people so that they are helped to grow economically and it is good where it mentions paying health workers well so as to strengthen them to be able to work well).

A Woman Representative:

BBI nĩ mbega nĩũntũ nĩ kũnenkera akũrũ kanya ga kũrũta wĩra ofisini jia ñgũrũ; yugaga governor na deputy bethagĩrwe be muntũ mũrume na mwekũrũ na president na deputy onabo bethagũrwe be muntũ mũrume na mwekũrũ; yapendekeza kwĩthĩrwe na kũnenkanĩra bursary fund kĩrĩ MCAs kenda antũ bakinyĩrwa nĩyo nau mashinani nĩ kenda ward jiũmba kwendelea (BBI is good because of giving old people opportunity to work in higher offices; it says that governor and the deputy should be a man and a woman and also the president and deputy should be a man and a woman. It suggests that bursary fund should be given to MCAs so that people in the rural areas can access it easily for the purpose of developing the wards).

Extract 9

Muuga FM

Presenter: Presenter

Guest: A Former Cabinet Secretary

Kingwete: *nĩ atĩa kwathire wethĩrwa wĩ rũtere tofauti na thirikarĩ* (what happened that you are no longer on the government side)?

Mithika: *mbere kambuge ona kũri o u ñngũcokeria president Ruto nkatho ñgũmpa kanya ga gũtwĩka CS na kũrita ngũgĩ mĩeri twenty. Gĩntũ kĩrĩa twariganĩrwe na president nĩ kũrega kũingia mantũ jarĩa atwĩrĩre ñndĩ ya campaign na ùni ndetaa nkĩmũirikanagia nkamwĩra barabara ñjĩ ya kĩsima-kĩbĩrĩchia- kĩrua itwaugĩre tũkathithia... ùkona gũtĩ budget yanenkerũa. Kethĩra nĩtwaijĩ nũ akathithia tũtingĩmũthingata* (first I want to thank president Ruto because he gave me an opportunity to become a cabinet secretary and worked for twenty months. The thing that made us fall out with the president is because Ruto lied to us during campaigns and all the developments we had agreed would be done were not done. I personally would remind him telling him for example 'this kisima-kibirichia-kirua road' we said will be

done but to no avail. If we had known that is what he would do we would not have followed him).

Gūtĩ mbeca twekagĩrũa Meru nabarĩa babatĩĩ gũtetera antũ nĩbekĩrwe mũuko, no mĩcemanio betaa Karen na statehouse bakaewa garama. ũni ndĩromba gĩtĩ kĩa upinzani Meru gĩa gũcheck thirikarĩ. Ndarĩ signatory wa economic charter ya Meru ndona gūtĩ budget ikwonekana nĩũntũ nĩtwatwikire ikĩri gūtĩwe ũkũria kĩũria no kugaga ‘yes sir’. MPs bekĩrwe mũukoni bagĩkĩra bathithĩrwa audit ya ũria batũmagĩra mbeca cia CDF (Constituency Development Fund). Ta barabara ya athĩrũ-kĩriri-national park road ĩetwe fifty million na ĩrĩenda 1.2 billion na kau nĩ gantũ kanini mũno. (no money was being allocated for Meru and the MPs who should be talking for the people were pocketed and all they know is to attend meetings in Karen and state house as they are given transport. I am looking for the opposition seat in order to check the government. I was one of the signatories for the Meru economic charter and I saw there was no budget allocation for Meru yet no one asks a question. They only say ‘yes sir’. MPs were compromised as they feared being audited in the use of CDF (Constituency Development Fund). Like the Athiru-kiriri-national park road was given 50 million when it requires 1.2 billion which is meagre).

Nĩ barabara nyingĩ mũno ikwenda kũthithua najio nĩ ta Kamũkũnji-Mũthatĩ ĩrĩa ikĩri millon 30 na itĩthithia one milestone; St. Ann-Kagaene ĩei million 95 na nĩ barabara ĩna 30 kilometres; Kĩsima- Kĩbĩrĩchia- Kĩrua ĩno ĩtĩ budget. Kwa budget gūtĩ na vote ya development na president Kĩbakĩ nĩatũthomithirie kũthithia budget. Thirikarĩ ĩtĩrunagwa ta Kiosk nĩntũ mbeca ĩrĩa tũkuga tũtĩ nacio cia maendeleo notũkwona mbeca ikĩejanwa everywhere cia empowerment (there are many roads that need to be fixed and they include Kamukunji-Muthati which is given 30 million which cannot make even one milestone; St. Ann-Kagaene given 95 million, a road of 30 kilometres; Kisima-Kibirichia-Kirua has no budget. In the budget there is no vote for development and president Kibaki showed us how to make a budget. The government is not run like a kiosk because we can see that we don’t have for development yet there is a lot of money being distributed around the country for empowerment).

Presenter: mwanya jwenu bwajukia thirikari bwi DCP ni juriku?

Mithika: tũga empower antũ economically. Antũ bagwate mbeca ta cia majani o muntũ ũria akũrita wĩra. Gũgatwĩka kwĩna muntũ ũkarĩa mbeca cia bonus ya majani nkũrũki ya ĩrĩa ndarĩire ũkambĩra (we will empower people economically. People will get money like from tea as people work. If there is somebody who will pay tea bonus more than the amount I paid you will tell me).

Extract 4

24/7/2023

Meru FM

Program: Theria Ntuku

Host: Presenter

Guest: A Senator

Jonah: *Karibu sana mshemiwa bwana Kathuri ũtũire ũrĩa thirikarĩ ĩendeleete (welcome Hon. Kathuri and tell us how the government is progressing).*

Hon. Kathuri: *nĩ bwega nĩ kungwata ũgeni gũkũ Meru Fm. as Project ĩrĩa jianenkanĩrĩtwe tajio barabara, rũũjĩ na mĩako Thirikari nĩkũrĩka. Nĩndĩrutĩrĩte kwendelea na ngũgi yakwa ya oversight gĩ county government na ngaakirisha ũthii na mbere kũruta wĩra kĩrĩ mwananchi. ĩndĩ opposition ngũgi yao nĩ kũreta propaganda na rũmena tu nagwaka thirikarĩ ntaka (thank you very much for welcoming me here Meru*

FM and the projects that were given which include roads, water and building will be finished. Personally I have purposed to continue with my work of overseeing the county government to ensure there is development and work for the common man. But opposition only works to bring propaganda and hatred just to smear mud on the government).

Extract 5

Meru FM

30/1/2024

Host: Presenter

Guest: An MP in Tharaka Nithi County

Jonah: *antû nĩbakwenda kwĩgua mũno imbi ĩgũtũma wona no ũtũke governor wa Tharaka Nithi* (people are really interested to know why you think you can become the governor Tharaka Nithi county).

Hon. Kareke: *nkageria mũno kuendelea gũtetheria aana ba Tharaka Nithi county na mbuge arĩa Mũrungu akandugũrĩra nĩra ta ya wĩra ngatetheria kwa thirikarĩ na private sector. Nĩnkũromba atongoria wona kanya kubĩria antû ba Tharaka Nithi county. Rĩmwe nĩtũkubagia itĩ inene, ĩndĩ mwana ũrĩa arĩkĩtie cukuru atĩ na gwa kuthi na atĩ na ngũgĩ. Nĩnkũromba antû ba Tharaka Nithi bampe kanya ka governor* (I will try to continue helping the children of Tharaka Nithi county and I want to say where God opens a door for me in the area of work opportunities I will help both in the private sector and the government. I would like to ask leaders to look for opportunities for Tharaka Nithi people. Sometimes we look for opportunities to get higher seats yet there is a child who has completed school and has nowhere to go and is without a job. I ask the Tharaka Nithi people to give me a chance to be a governor).

Twĩna maũntũ maingi mũno tũmbĩte kũrũtha ta ma ndũũji, ma agriculture na kadhalika. Maũntũ ma ũgima bwa mwĩrĩ tũgaakikisha antû nĩbagũtetheka kũgwata ndawa na mathibitarĩ gũkũrĩria ĩrĩ agenda number one. Mantũ ma ũrĩmi tũgekira mbeba jĩa kwĩgana na nĩ ũrĩmi bwa rũũji na tĩ kũrũma o ugu- nĩ guprocess maria na maũntũ ma ndengũ. Nĩtwaranĩrie na National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) niũntũ bwa changamoto ĩũ twĩ nayo ya ndengũ. Gũkethĩrwa kwĩna depot jĩa kũgũrĩra ndengũ- mũrĩmi akathuraga kũrĩa akwendiaa ndengu kethwa nĩ kĩ thirikarĩ (NCPB) kana nĩ private (we have very many things we have done like water, agriculture and many others. Issues of health we have made sure we have assisted people to get medicine and raising the status of hospitals is agenda number one. About farming, we will put enough money and it is farming using water. It is also not just farming but processing milk and planning about ndengu. We negotiated with the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) because of the challenge we have about ndengu. There will be a depot for buying and storing ndengu for both private and government and the farmers will have the freedom to sell their ndengu to either private or government buyers).

Tũgaakikisha barabara nĩmbange wega. (We will ensure roads are well done).

Jonah: *rũũjĩ rwa mũringa banana nĩrwejĩre rwakinya antû rwarũngama* (***the water for Muringa Banana came and reached somewhere and stopped.***)

Hon. Kareke: *rũũjĩ rwa mũringa banana nĩru the best project you can ever get. Ona ĩrũri rĩũ ũkwĩgua rĩkĩarĩrũua, rũjĩ rwĩ nao. Ona stima gũtĩ antû atĩ stima ĩrũri. Ta ũria mũntũ ũu akuga ũgu ĩrũri ngwataga 100%-kanthuragwa nĩkĩ? No kana kwĩna breakdown gũntũ. Kĩ rũũjĩ, mwĩmbĩ nĩ hundred percent sorted- no kana kwĩna breakdown* (the muringa banana water is the best project you can ever get. Even that ‘iruri’ you hear people talk about, there is water. Even electricity is everywhere in ‘iruri’. Ask the person speaking because I get hundred per cent votes, why am I voted for? Unless

ther is a breakdown somewhere. About water, mwimbi is a hundred per cent sorted unless there is a breakdown).

Jonah: *a baa bangĩ bagwĩtwa kamwene?(what about these ones called Kamwene?*

Hon. Kareke: *thĩna ya kamwene nĩ nene nĩũntũ ni rũũji tũthondekete tũrutĩte nyithi na rũũji nyithi irĩ ngoga na kagita karĩa kwĩ na mbura ta el-nino, gũkagĩa na landslide (ngũka ikagũka) ikagũka na pipe irĩa jionthe ikathi. Pipe irĩa igũkire, rĩũ tũgũkinya mwisho na nĩka tũgacoka nao kaĩrĩ. Ona kwĩmana nau nyithi gunka nĩ changamoto. Gũkũrũkĩra kĩama nĩtũguceria area ãngĩ irĩ ãgũru Zaidi na irĩa ãĩĩ na thĩna jĩa ngũka. Na tĩ ru aki-kwĩna rũngĩ tũgwĩta Mũthambĩ-Gĩtĩje na Gantarakĩ, naru tũrutĩte Nyithi na thĩna no iu jia ngũka na pipe ikathi na rũũji na nĩ pipe jia goro mũno. Na rĩũ thirikarĩ ãkarũtha project ãkinathi ãtigagwa na mwananchi wa kawaida (the problem of kamwene is a big one because it is water we have done with River Nithi as the source. Nithi is selfish and when there is a lot of rain like the El-nino and a landslide happens, pipe are uprooted and get carried off by water meaning that we go back to square one. Even going down to Nithi is not easy but through a committee we are looking for an area with raised ground without landslides episodes. That is not the only water with challenges; we have Muthambi-Gitije and Gantarakı which is also from Nithi and its problems are the same. And you know when a government does a project and goes, it is left in the hands of the ordinary citizen).*

Jonah: *kwĩna maendeleo jau jonthe ja rũũji nĩmbi ãtũmaga kwĩthĩrwa kũrĩ na malalamiko na Maara tĩka irĩ nene.*

Hon. Kareke: *Onokanyira, ona Ũkarĩa bũrĩa ukethirwa urite utiaga mararamiko hapa na pale. Gintu kiria gitethagia mwananchi wa kawaida, igana kwa igana, ni ruuji. Gutina ward no imwe ukathii withiire gutina ruji. Kuria kwithagwa kwina changamoto kidogo, ni lower muthambi, lakini nabo, bena rwa 4k (even if you are satisfied and even if you eat in whichever way you eat, you cannot lack complaints here and there. The thing that helps the common man a hundre percent is water. No single ward lacks water. The place with a little challenge is the lower MUthambi but they have the 4k water).*

Extract 6

Muuga FM

Host: Presenter

Guest: An MP of Meru County

Presenter: *karibu mheshimiwa. Nandĩ twĩre mantũ a uthi na mbere wa nthĩgũrũ yetu wĩ mujumbe wa Imenti Central (welcome mheshimiwa tell us about development of Kenya as the MP central Imenti).*

Hon. Kĩrĩma: *development nĩgũkara taka yatwĩkire skewed- yerekerua rũtere rũmwe nkũrũki ya nangĩ (development seems to have been skewed to one side more than the other).*

Presenter: *ta rũrĩku mũnene (like which one leader)?*

Hon. Kirima: *rũtere rũrĩa yerekeretue mũno nĩ mount Kenya West. Menya kinya nyomba wakaga na plan na gwĩ program iria ciatũire. Kĩrĩ budget irĩa twakũrũkirie bunge nĩitaga gũcaicwa na bau bangĩ mbere nau. Niũntũ no mwanka bwĩte bũgitaa dots, commas and so on. ãgita rĩrĩa rĩa kũrita dots, commas and so on, it can be interfered with and actually it got interfered with. Na weja ũkethĩra Kĩambu kĩna 16 billion cia barabara (the side to which it was skewed a great deal is mount Kenya West. You know even building a house needs a plan and there are programs that were in place. The budget that we passed in parliament goes to the higher authorities because they must be checked and dots and commas and other things be removed. As it goes for*

removal of commas and dots it can be tampered with and it was actually tampered with. And when you come to Kiambu, it has 16 billions for roads).

Yacoka gwatwika parliamentary chairman na chairman ba departmental committees are influencing finances to the favour of their constituencies. Lakini riria tutari na machairmen ja committes twethaira twina mucommittee tuge kethirwa ni chairman uria utari Meru tontu twina chairman wetu witagwa Mutunga abwiri kwithwa arungamirite Meru yonthe (then it happened that parliamentary chairmen and chairmen of parliamentary committees are influencing finances to the favour of their constituencies. But when we did not have chairmen of committees we had one committee member chosen to represent Meru for example like we have our chairman Mutunga representing the whole of Meru)

Presenter: *nandi arungamirite kwawe* (now he is representing his own area).

Hon. Kirima: *then chairman wa budget abwiri kwithirwa arungamirite Murang'a na kenya yonthe* (then the chairman for budget should represent Murang'a and the whole of Kenya..)

Presenter : *a tha ii?*

Presenter (but what about now)?

Hon. Kirima: *wabathingata machairman jau they favour their constituencies, ukethira mbeba cia allocatirwe constituency iria chairman aumite kethira ni Ndia- Kirinyaga naa gwa Kariuki, ukethira kwawe mbeba iria nyingi aikitie kwawe ugwe urumitue ntono. Ntono ni nothing* (if you follow these chairmen, they favour their constituencies, and you find that money is allocated to the constituency belonging to the chairperson. So that if the chairperson for example comes from Ndia Kirinyaga which belongs to Kariuki, you find that a lot of money is given to that constituency and you have been given nothing).

Extract 7

Meru FM

Program: ntogo ya Kinyinga

Host: Presenter

Guest: An MP in Meru County.

Mugambi: *gwita Meru town niuntu bwa barabara inthongi ni daika inkai muno. Antu bonaga kuuma Thika kwija Meru kurei muno nandi igwakwire. indii inkwira antu ba Buuri batikagie na haraka cia kwendia miunda tontu njira ciabua antu nibakwenda kugura miunda batuura. Nibeteere niuntu miunda ikagia goro. Aana nibathome tutikwenda Buuri itwika ni ya ageni antu bendia miunda* (going to Meru town now is a few minutes . people used to find travelling from Thika to Meru a very long distance but now because of good roads, it is really short. But I want to tell the Buuri people not to be in a hurry to sell land because as roads get better, people will buy land. So land will finally become expensive and we also don't want to be a constituency where visitors are so many because people sold land. Let children get educated).

Presenter: *a security ya gutu kuu?*

Hon. Mugambi: *nthiguru igikura mauntu mathuku nimaingaga na wamba niwingaga. uni ndikwija Buuri ndethire station ya polisi ni ta manyatta ma Masai. Nandi itwambiririe gwaka obici cia security naria Ruiri na twaka kambiri Kirua, Timau na nandi ya cubuiga nikinyite Rinto. Kinya nitukubanga gwaka ingi naria Kathare hakuhii na maili saba na kambiri naria onturiri na obici ya ACC* (When a place develops, there is bound to arise criminal activity and even theft increases. When I came to Buuri I found a police station looking like the Masai Manyatta. We have started building

security offices in Ruiru, and police stations in Kirua, Timau and now the one of Cubuiga is at the Lintel. We are planning to build another one in Onturiri and an office for the ACC).

Tûrîenda o station îthîrwe îna jîîrî. Na nîtwarîtie na Cabinet Secretary wa Interior atûtethie na ngari. Kinya Huduma batî nayo. Nîtwakîte kambî

jia cibi narîa Nkando, rwarera, Kîbîrîchia Ntugî, Barrier, Kîamîûgû

(WE want every station to have at least two vehicles and we have talked with the Cabinet Secretary for Interior to help us with vehicles. Even the Huduma center we don't have. We have also built chiefS' camps in Nkando, Kibirichia, Ntugi, Barrier, Kiamio).)

Naarîa Isiolo antû ibatonyaa ntûra yetû na thîna îrîa îrî o nî kuuma slaughter Isiolo gûkinya 78 kwîja mwanka Mûtunyi. Distance ya 2.8 kilometres arîa gutî na fence ya kurigîria nyamû na inoo njogu igûkûrûkîra; gûtî na fence ya kurigîrîria antû baa bakwia ng'ombe barîja na nkamîra. Na fence îu nayo nîtûkwaria na Kenya Wildlife Services na Lewa Conservancy na ministry nîtûkwaria kenda Kenya Defence Forces îtwîîkîria twaka rwego arîa nîuntû nîtûcûite donor (in Isiolo people come to our village and the problem is from Slaughter in Isiolo up to 78 coming to Mutunyi area. A distance of 2.8 kilometres where there is no fence to prevent animals from getting through and that is where the elephants get through; there is no fence to prevent the people who steal cows who come with camels. Concerning the fence, we have talked with the KWS and the Lewa Conservancy and the ministry so that KDF can allow us to construct the fence because we have looked for a donor.)

Kwogu usalama kunthe twî hatarini tontû batwî twî corridorne ya thîna, corridor ya kuuma Moyale, Marsabit Isiolo nî conduit ya criminal na barîa bakwendia bangi. Nîuntû bangi îrîa nyingî îriuma Ethiopia. Kwogu nandî barabara iji ciathithua nîûkûmenya makosa akaingîa nakwogu no mwanka twîthîrwe na askari ba kutosha, vifaa vya kutosha na ofisi cia kutosha nîkenda askari inya bo bethîrwa bena motisha jwa kurita ngugî (so the issue of security is everywhere because we are in a troubled corridor which stretches from Moyale, Marsabit and Isiolo; a conduit of criminals and sellers of marijuana because most of the marijuana comes from Ethiopia. So when the roads improve you know evil will increase and so we must have enough police officers, enough equipment and enough offices so that police officers feel motivated as they work).

Extract 8

Muuga FM

Guest: An MCA in Meru County

Host: Presenter

Presenter: *mheshimiwa president Ruto nîarathurire cabinet. utegete face ya Tharaka Nithi na face ya Meru nîronekanîre?*

Kiogora: *Ameru twî fully represented twîna ministry ya interior nîyo îthairwa îî one of the most powerful ministries ndene ya government na twîna ministry ya agriculture îrîa îranenkerwe Mîthîka Lînturî nînkwona twî fully represented. Nkinya thirikarî ya Uhuru twarî na Margret Kobia na Munya. Kîrîa nkorîa Mîthîka nî awork na county government nîuntû Meru kwîna mpara na antû nîbagûkua (people of Meru are fully represented as we have the ministry of interior which is one of the most powerful ministries in the government and we also have the ministry of agriculture given to Hon. Mîthîka Linturi. even in president Uhuru's government, we had Magret Kobia and Munya. What I am asking Hon Mithika Linturi is that he works with the county government because there is hunger in Meru and people are dying).*

County ijĩ ya Meru ñna mĩgũnda ñmingĩ mũno ya public no gũtikĩo kĩrĩ nao. Ta ward ya athwana ñna acre 23000, kaguru o aja Nkũbũ kwĩna miunda ya agriculture ñmingĩ mũno na rũũjĩ rwa kĩthĩnũ rũrĩa rwĩtikaga arĩa barabarene notĩ ngũgĩ rũkũruta. Twĩthagwa twĩna acre nkũrũki ya ngiri ñmwe narĩa bwa saruru; narĩa Tigania East twĩna munda jwa county na jũngĩ narĩa ndũngũrũ ñgoji West. (this Meru county has many shambas meant for the public and nothing is done on them. like the ward of Athwana with 23000 acres, Kaguru just here at Nkubu there are agricultural lands with the Kithino water pouring out on the road without achieving anything. We have more than 1000 there at Saruru; there at Tigania East we have county land and another at Ndunguru Igoji West). Kwogu batwĩ no tũthithie strategic grain reserve jietu aja Meru jia gũfeedaa antũ betũ tuge rĩrĩa gwatonya kĩangazi nontũ kinya rĩmwe ũkanenkera antũ mbeũ beta kũanda ja nandĩ bena mpara bakamĩruga. Twĩ county notũrete rũũjĩ piped tũkathithia intensive agriculture and grain reserve. Tũtĩbui gwetera national government –rĩonthe serikali saidia- tũgatũra kũrĩra... (so we can do strategic our grain reserve to feed our people like when famine strikes like now because even if you give people seeds to plant they will cook. As a county, we can bring piped water and do intensive agriculture and grain reserve. We should not always wait for the national government all the time crying ‘help government’ without end).

Tractor jia kũrĩma irĩ aa Mĩtũngũũ jia county itĩkũra ñkumi na kaimami o. Kwogu ikeja kuuma au igatonya miundene ya county twarĩma tũgĩkaga kilo cietu tũga create strategic grain reserve. Kwĩna mpara ñnyingĩ mũno ta part inyingĩ jia ñgembe North nũũkũimagine ñgembe North constituency ñtĩ karũjĩ inya kamwe ũgu kagitanĩrĩtie ku? Ta nandĩ antũ nũũbararĩte nkamĩra ñkũite na bamama cibitarĩ antũ nkũrũki ya igana nũũntũ bwa mpara, what do you expect ta rĩu kwĩthĩrĩtwe kwĩna kĩangazi for more than six months? In any case agriculture ni devolved (tractors meant for farming are lying idle at Mitunguu and there can’t miss around ten of them. so if they got into the county lands we can farm as we store our kilost to create strategic grain reserves. There is a lot of hunger like parts of Igembe North-can you imagine Igembe North constituency has no single water passing through it? Like recently people had eaten a dead camel and more than a hundred people were admitted to hospital. What do you expect like now that there has been drought for more than six months? In any case agriculture is devolved).

Presenter: imbi gĩntũ gĩkĩerũ kĩrĩa ũtanathithia kairĩ antũ ba Abogeta West bagaexpect kĩrĩ ũgwe (what new thing will you do that the people of Abogeta West expect from you?).

Kĩogora: thaa iji gankwenda kũbaassure tũkareta TVET college na ñu nĩyo the main focus yakwa ñrĩa ndĩ nayo within these five years. College ñu ñgatethia aana betũ bunka akĩ twathithia restructuring twona munda jwa kũng’ana arĩa tũkajwonera (this time I want to assure that we will bring TVET college and that is my main focus within these five years. That college will help our children as long as we do the restructuring when we find enough land wherever we find it).

Extract 10

Host: Presenter

Guest: An MP in Tharaka Nithi

Presenter: na nĩbu ũrũthĩte maendeleo ma rũũjĩ malamĩko ijai mara (and the way you have fixed issues of water why are maara people complaining?)

Presenter: *kûrîwe akuuga rîrîa ûkwaria gûtî kagita wîthagwa wîna agenda ya mûthambî kana mwîmbî* (somebody says when you talk, there is no time you have an agenda for Muthambi or Mwimbi).

HON: *gwee Jonah kuuga ntîna agenda ya Mwîmbî kana Mûthambî ti úûma, îndî Mwîmbî nîku sorted mûno. Wakinya Barabara ya Keria-magutuni, nî Mwîmbî ona rûjî rwa Mûringa Banana rwî Mwimbi. Gîa kinya mantû ma infrastructure ya kîthomo, î Mwimbi. Yakinya stima coverage, Mwîmbî jî almost 90%. Mûthambî naku, nîku nkwaragîria nkiugaga twîna project jîiri; kwîna rûjî rûgwîta 4k, twîna mwîthanga (iu jioonthe nî domestic). Mwîthanga nîtûtûmagîra nîuntû bwa kûrîma. Kwîna rûjî rwîtagwa Mûthambî-Gîtije, rwambîrîrue nî PC wetagwa Philomena Kooech, twang'ang'ana na ru, tweja county government, yang'ang'ana na ru, ndona rûtikûthira..twona mûjapan, atûretera mbeca twona project îtikûthira. Term thiru ndang'ang'ana twacua contractor gûkûrûkîra gî Tana water. Twaruta pipe jîirî jia nchi îkumi na inya kenda pipe îmwe î serve bande ya îgûrû ya Mûthambî gwitia na îu îngî î serve bande ya gaiti. Kîrîa gîtigeeere nî kûsambazîra antû. Nîyo program îrîa twîna yo, na tûgwîcîria rîrîa president akeja Tharaka Nithi, alaunch phase 2, nî ya kûrûtha the last mile (you Jonah saying I do not have an agenda for Mwimbi is not true although Mwimbi is the one that is most sorted. When you get to the road Keria-Magutuni it is Mwimbi; the murunga-banana water is in Mwimbi; education infrastructure is in Mwimbi; elaelectricricity installation, 90% is in Mwimbi. Then Muthambiis the one Iwas talking about where I said we have two projects; there is 4k watertwina mwithanga all of which are domestic. Mwithanga is usually used to farm. There is also Muthambi-Gitije water which was started by the then Provincial Commissioner, Philomena Koech. The county took it over and when I saw the process is not complete, I took it over, got a Japanese donor and still the project was not complete. Last term I struggled and I got a contractor through Tana water . we got two pipes eache 14 inchso that one serves the upper Muthambi zone and the other serves the lower Muthambi zone. What is remaining now is distributing to the people. That is the program we haveand I think when the president comes to Tharaka Nithi he will launch phase 2 then we do the last mile).*

Presenter: *Nîkû kaleke mbiûki foundation yumîte, kana nî tool ya siasa* (where did Kareke Mbiuki foundation come from or is it just politics?)

HON: *Twîuî twî family ya Kaleke, tûtwîre tûgîthethagia antu silently, tûtongoretue nî my mother, arî patron. Gûcûîra antû mawîra, kûthomithia jiana, no rîu rwîmbo rûrîa antû bakwenda kwîgua, nî ru winaga. Kethwa barenda gûkwîgua kamemeni nîbu ûkarûtha* (as the Kareke family, we help people silentl led by our mother who is the patron looking for jobs for people, educating children, but now the song people want to hear is the one you sing. If they want to hear you on radio that is what you do) .

Presenter: *Nûmenyekete mûno na kûnenkanîra barûa cia kwandikithia antu. Inaa uritaga barua cia kwandîkîthia antû* (you have really been known to issue letters of employment to people. Where do you get these letters from?).

HON: *îu nî siasa. Lakini ndîenda kuuga ûntû ûmwe, thirikarî nîya ndîkanaga. Mûrungu aûmba kuringa kîama ûkona kanya kamwe kana twîrî. Nîtwonaga twanya* (that is politics but Iwant to say one thing . God can perform a miracle and one gets one or two chances. We get chances) .

Extract 11

Meru Fm

Presenter: Presenter

Guest: An MP in Tharaka Nithi County

HON: I AM THE THIRD governor of tharaka Nithi county. *Ikia banki irĩa ikethirwa irĩ hakuĩ*

(I am the third governor of Tharaka Nithi County. Take it to the bank near you).

PRESENTER: *Imbii igutuma ugĩa na confidence atĩ ugatwika governor wa kathatũ wa tharaka Nithi county* (Why do you have the confidence that you can be the third governor of Tharaka Nithi County).

HON: *gankwĩre kwĩna maũntũ marĩa mbĩthĩrĩtwe nkĩrũthaga, maũntũ ma ugima bwa mwĩrĩ, maũntũ ma agriculture, ma rũũjĩ, ma ECDE, nĩndutĩte mawĩra maingĩ mũno ma social services. ugafix maũntũ ta mau, gũtĩbu mwananchi arega gũkeno* (let me tell you there are things I have been able to do; about health agriculture, water, ECDE; I have done many things in social services once you fix such things, there is no way citizens cannot be happy).

Extract 12

Meru Fm

Host: Presenter

Guest : An MP in Tharaka Nithi County

HOST: *Weũ rĩ, nĩkũ urutaga mbeca ino utũmagĩra gwaka, kũrũtha Barabara?* (where do you get the money you use to build, make roads?)

MP: *onarĩrĩa thirikarĩ ĩna mathĩna utũtagaga twa kũrũthaga untũ. Maita maingĩ kamaragia na president, nkathiĩ nkamwĩra thĩna ciakwa, na rĩmwe noka akauga mũntũ uyũ natethue, ukanenkerwa tũmillioni twĩgana untũ weũ. Tarĩrĩa president aukĩte acerete county nĩethagwa abangĩte maũntũ burĩa makathiĩ na agatũma mbeca. Kagita karĩa agaũka, nĩngacanaga nkaria nawe maũntũ ma mĩradi irĩa ĩbatiĩ kũrũthwa* (even when the government has problems, you cannot fail to do a few things. Many times I talk to the president and tell him my problems and sometimes he will just say ‘help this person’. Consequently one can get a few millions. When the president visits the county there are preparations that are made and money is usually sent ahead of his visit and sometimes you can spare something out of it and such a time I also make sure I have talked with him about the development projects that need to be done).

HOST: *Kwogu kũriũnga kwa president kwĩbata?* (so the president’s visit is important) *hon. partrick: ĩĩ, rĩrĩa ariũngĩte county, maũntũ nĩmathijaga na mbere, akariũnga maita mathatũ, county yathiĩ mbere mũno* (yes! When he visits a county progress happens. If he visit like three times a county can really make strides).

HOST: *Tambĩra atĩrĩ, kwĩ ntukũ antũ bagwĩtaga mwizi.* (tell me. There is a day people called you thief)

MP: *Antũ mau maragia marĩ ma kathwana. Riria president ejĩte akĩenda kũnenkanĩra mbeca cia gũtuma offisi, irĩa ciambĩrĩtue nĩ Ragwa, antũ maugĩre atĩkanenkere governor, atume wengwa. Onani ndĩkiuga president atume wengwa nĩũntũ kuma Ragwa agũtiga ambĩria offisi inu, ona rĩu nociakagwa. Menya niũ mbĩĩkĩtie rĩrĩa ukwandĩka mũntũ uceragia mũntũ urĩa ukũmenya akaruta wĩra wega. Kwogu maũntũ ma gwĩtwa mwizi, yarĩ siasa, nĩũntũ mũntũ nĩakũmenya maũntũ marĩa akũrũtha na tontu nĩagũkĩra kũmenyeka, no acũire wa kwigĩrĩra* (those people who were talking were from Kathwana. When the president had come, he wanted to give money to

complete the the offices that had been started by governor Ragwa and people said he should not give the governor but rather let him build himself. I would also have said the same because since Ragwa started those offices, they are still being built. I personally believe that when you seek someone to do a job for you you get someone you know will do a good job. So the thing that were making me to be called a thief was politics because somebody knows what he is doing and since he fears that what he is doing will be exposed, he has to look for a scapegoat).

HOST: *Ntukû ãrã president ejĩte augire ena wĩra mwingĩ wa naau ndĩ jia nja. Kwĩna antũ ba gũkũ Tharaka Nithi bathĩite naau nja ya kenya?* (the day the president was coming he had said he had a lot of job opportunities outside kenya. Are there people from Tharaka Nithi county going for those jobs?)

MP: *ĩ kwĩna bo, na tũkarũtha symposium, gũtrain antũ nĩkenda mamenya ũrã makaũmba kũthĩ, nĩũntũ mbere, aingĩ matabotaga kũmeet expenses jia kũthĩ, no riu makĩragĩrwa ndege, baingĩ no bende kuthĩ* (yes they are there and we will hold a symposium to train the people so that they know how they will go because first of all many were not able to go because they could not meet the expenses for the journey. But now because the transport is being paid many can afford to go).

Host: CALLER IN:

Caller 1: *kwĩ muntũ akuringa thimũ akĩũragia nteto jia stima jia kamũgaa* (someone is calling asking about the Kamugaa electricity).

MP: *Rũ rĩ, nĩtwĩkĩrĩte stima gũntũ kwingĩ mũno. Twamĩkua, kabariange, kanyongo primary, kathagara primary, kamutĩria, and many other places* (now, we have installed electricity in many places including Kabariange, Kathagara primary, Kamutiria and many other places).

HOST: *Maũntũ marĩa waugĩte ũkarũthĩra muthikĩria, nĩmegana ũrũthĩte?* (the things you said you will do for the people listening to you; how many have you done?)

MP: *Nĩmbakĩte irathi macukuru, nĩũntũ nĩnaugĩte ciana itige kũthomagĩra irathi iria itĩmbega, ndaka huduma center kathwana, antũ ma Tharaka matiga gwĩtia chuka town, ndaka office ya county commissioner kathwana, ndarũtha Barabara ya chuka town ndagani, chuka technical twamĩbanga, thaa ino ãna arutwa ngiri ithano, na 1,200 are from Tharaka, barabara ya kĩbugua-matĩ road, kũthũngĩrĩra public works kũthĩ Ndagani. Twa harmonize secondary school fees, na twauga arimũ batĩkongerere fees, nokana tũrũthĩte mũcemanio tũgetĩkanĩria twĩamwe* (I have classes in schools because I had said children should not be studying in classes that are not well built ; I built the office of county commissioner, I have constructed the Chuka- Ndagani road, we have organized the Chuka technical institute and now it has 5000 students with 1200 students from Tharaka; I have done the Kibugua-Mati road and the one that goes through the public works offices to Ndagani. We have also harmonized secondary school fees and have said that head teachers should not be increasing fees unless we all meet and agree).

Extract 13

Muuga Fm

Program: Ntungo Ya Nyoni

HOST: Presenter

Guest: An MP in Meru County

PRESENTER: *Wenda CDF ĩendelea?* (would you like CDF to continue ?)

MP: *CDF nĩ ĩbatĩ kwendelea, na ĩendeleee, kwendelea na kwendelea. Mbeca cia county, 'ihangĩte' town, lakini CDF, ciĩnamaa macinani, cia county ciuraĩra headquater. Watara mantũ aa maingĩ ma devolution, ĩu nĩyo devolution ya mbere, buru. Mũjumbe nĩwe wĩna mantũ jarĩa akũmenya antũ bawe nĩbakwenda* (it should go on and on and on. The money from the county hangs in town but CDF money goes right into the rural homes but the county one gets lost at the headquarters. When you count the many things that are devolved, this is the first devolution element. The MP is the one who has the knowledge of what the people need).

Appendix IV: Institutional Letter of Introduction



Knowledge is Wealth (*Sapientia divitia est*) Akili ni Mali

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REF: AD13/45821/20

12th June, 2025

**Director
National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation
Off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete
P O Box 30623, 00100
Nairobi.**

Dear Sir / Madam,

RE: JANE KATHOMI

The above-named person is a bona fide student of Chuka University pursuing PhD in Linguistics proposal titled: **A Critical Discourse Analysis of Development Talks in Kimeru FM Radio Stations in Kenya.**

Ms. Kathomi has defended at the Faculty level and is now expected to conduct research. Any assistance accorded will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Prof. Moses Muraya, Ph.D.

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Appendix V: Ethics Review Letter



CHUKA UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Telephones: 020-2310512/18

P. O. Box 109-60400, Chuka

Direct Line: 0772894438

Email: info@chuka.ac.ke,

Website: www.chuka.ac.ke

28th May, 2025

REF: CUIERC/ NACOSTI/765

TO: Jane Kathomi

RE: A critical Discourse Analysis of Development Talks in Kimeru FM Radio Stations in Kenya

This is to inform you that *Chuka University IERC* has reviewed and approved your above research proposal. Your application approval number is *NACOSTI/NBC/AC-0812*. The approval period is 28th May, 2025 – 28th May, 2026.

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

- i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used
- ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by *Chuka University IERC*.
- iii. Death and life threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to *Chuka University IERC* within 72 hours of notification
- iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *Chuka University IERC* within 72 hours
- v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
- vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
- vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to *Chuka University IERC*.



Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) <https://oris.nacosti.go.ke> and also obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely

Dr. Benjamin Kanga
SECRETARY



Appendix VI: National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) Permit

 <p style="text-align: center;">REPUBLIC OF KENYA</p> <p>Ref No: 469582</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RESEARCH LICENSE</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>This is to Certify that Ms. JANE KATHOMI KATHOMI of Chuka University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Tharaka-Nithi on the topic: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT TALKS IN KIMERU FM RADIO STATIONS IN KENYA for the period ending : 25/June/2026.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">License No: NACOSTI/P/25/4175489</p> <p style="text-align: center;">469582</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Applicant Identification Number</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Date of Issue: 25/June/2025</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Deputy Director NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Verification QR Code</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
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