

“We are the People”: Pronominal Selection and the Construction of Collective Identities in Kenyan Political Discourse

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between pronominal selection and the construction of collective identities in political discourse by Kenyan politicians based on Political speeches from two political campaigns namely, The Constitution of Kenya Referendum Campaigns of 2005 and the General Elections Campaigns 2007. These are analysed to show how Kenyan politicians both in the government and opposition strategically exploited pronominal selection to construct and delimit collective political, ethnic and class identities and to highlight how Political discourse is a privileged mechanism that lets political actors to structure a specific space where they can configure and strengthen their collective identities. Thus, it is argued that, with respect to the 2007 general elections, the intensity and the emotive nature of this process of construction of collective identities, contributed to the post-election violence witnessed in the country during the campaigns and soon after the election.

Keywords

Pronominal Selection, Collective Identities, Political Discourse

Language, Discourse & Society Vol. 5,2(10),pp.13-39 (2017)

See more at: http://www.language-and-society.org/journal/5-2/1_Orwenjo.pdf