

**A CRITICAL PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE DISCURSIVE
STRATEGIES IN SOCIOCULTURAL HEGEMONY IN MWALIMU
ANDREW'S STAFFROOM DIARY TEXTS**

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Science and Technology**

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dearest husband Kelvin Nalyanya, as well as my children Shirley, John, Kristelle and Pendo.

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ABSTRACT

The current study sought to uncover the use of discursive strategies in order to uncover language manipulations that provoke understanding of sociocultural hegemony within Mwalimu Andrew's columns. The use of pragmatics enables the interpretation of meanings and intentions that go beyond the literal level of language, revealing how speakers construct and negotiate social realities through communication. The *Staffroom Diary* by Mwalimu Andrew, a column in Kenya's Sunday Nation Newspaper, provides readers with insights into the experiences, observations and contemplation of a fictional teacher Persona. Its popularity as a light-hearted commentary has aided in the exposure of serious and diverse sociocultural issues through language. However, despite its prominence and social relevance, limited scholarly attention has been given to how Mwalimu Andrew strategically employs language to construct power relations, shape perceptions, and sustain or challenge sociocultural hierarchies. It was guided by the following objectives, to; describe the discursive strategies in mwalimu Andrew's *staffroom diary* texts, analyse their functionality of the discursive strategies as a means of linguistic stylistic communication of social reality interaction and examine how the discursive strategies represent sociocultural hegemony in Mwalimu Andrew's *Staffroom diary* texts. The study employed Critical Discourse Analysis theory (CDA) Fairclough (1996) and employed a descriptive research design. Systematic sampling was used to select 16 columns of the articles published in 2023, specific linguistic units were purposively sampled and then using textual analysis, they were extracted and thematically analysed. The findings revealed that Mwalimu Andrew utilizes discursive strategies, such as referential nomination, argumentation, predication, perspectivation and intensification to clarify social roles and power dynamics among characters in the school context. Further, the linguistic styles used within the discursive strategies function to legitimize authority, reinforce group identity, amplify achievements as well as reveal personal reflection and perspective. The findings further showed that these strategies aid in constructing and reinforcing sociocultural hegemony through construction of social roles and responsibilities, and the representation of authority and control. Speakers use discursive strategies to shape readers' and audience Perceptions of social roles. These strategies do more than entertain; they communicate and reinforce social realities, establishing group identities and celebrating leadership. Language thus serves as a tool of hegemony, embedding cultural norms and expectations within everyday interactions and framing dominant discourses as accepted truths. This study will enhance knowledge on how discursive strategies represents or challenges sociocultural hegemony in the society represented through texts.

TABLE OF CONTENT

PLAGIARISM STATEMENT	ii
DECLARATION	iii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
ABSTRACT	vi
TABLE OF CONTENT	vii
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURE	xi
ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYM	xii
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS	xiii
CHAPTER ONE	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background of the Study.....	1
1.3 Statement of the Problem	5
1.4 Purpose of the Study	5
1.5 Objectives of the Study	6
1.6 Research Questions	6
1.7 Significance of the Study	6
1.8 Justification of the Study.....	7
1.9 Scope and Delimitation of the Study	9
1.10 Limitations of the Study.....	11
1.11 Chapter Summary.....	12
CHAPTER TWO	13
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	13
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Literature Review	13
2.2.1 Pragmatics of Discursive strategies	13
2.2.2 Functionality of Discursive Strategies as a means of linguistic stylistic communication	18
2.2.3 Representation of sociocultural Hegemony through Discursive Strategies	32
2.3 Theoretical Framework	36
2.3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis	37
2.3.2 Power Relations and Ideology	38
2.3.3 Contextualization of Meaning	38

2.3.4 Language as Social Practice	39
2.4 Chapter Summary.....	39
CHAPTER THREE	40
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	40
3.1 Introduction.....	40
3.2 Research Design.....	40
3.3 Study Population	41
3.4 Sampling Procedure and Size	41
3.5 Instruments of Data Collection	42
3.5.1 The Extraction Tool	43
3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion Guide.....	44
3.5.3 Textual Analysis Tool.....	46
3.6 Data Collection Procedure	46
3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation.....	47
3.8 Ethical Consideration	47
3.9 Chapter Summary.....	49
CHAPTER FOUR.....	50
DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION	50
4.1 Introduction	50
4.2 Discursive Strategies	51
4.2.1 Referential Nomination.....	52
4.2.2 Argumentation.....	62
4.2.3 Predication.....	67
4.2.4 Perspectivation	70
4.2.5 Intensification.....	72
4.3 Functionality of Discursive Strategies and Communication of Social Reality Interaction.....	74
4.3.1 Legitimizing Authority	75
4.3.2 Reinforcing Group Identity	79
4.3.3 Amplifying Achievements	80
4.3.4 Personal Reflection and Perspective	82
4.4 Discursive Strategies and Sociocultural Hegemony in Mwalimu Andrew's <i>Staffroom diary</i> texts	85
4.4.1 Construction of Social Roles and Responsibilities	86
4.4.2 Representation of Authority and Control.....	89
4.5 Chapter Summary.....	98

CHAPTER FIVE.....	99
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.	99
5.1 Introduction	99
5.2 Summary of Findings	99
5.2.1 Discursive Strategies	99
5.2.2 Functionality of discursive Strategies	100
5.2.3 Representation of Sociocultural Hegemony.....	101
5.3 Conclusion	101
5.4 Recommendations	102
5.5 Suggestions for Further Research	103
REFERENCES.....	105
APPENDICES	110
Appendix I: The Extraction Tool	110
Appendix II: FGD CODING.....	114
Appendix III: FGD GUIDE	115
Appendix IV: Research Approval.....	117
Appendix IV: NACOSTI	118
Appendix V: Mwalimu Andrew Staffroom Diary Texts	119

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1 Formalist and Functional Approaches	29
Table 4.1 Discursive strategies	51

LIST OF FIGURE

Figure. 2.1: Interfaces of Meaning.....	19
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ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYM

ARG	:	Argumentation strategy
CDA	:	Critical discourse analysis theory
DPS	:	Directorate of Postgraduate Studies
DSs	:	Discursive Strategies
INT	:	Intensification
IPED	:	Image and Performance-enhancing drugs
NACOSTI	:	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NOM	:	Nominalization
PERF	:	Perspectivisation
PRED	:	Predication
SD	:	Staffroom Diaries

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Critical Discourse Analysis : Systematic examination of language use within Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary, to uncover and interpret implicit power dynamics, social hierarchies, and ideological influences embedded in the text.

Discursive strategies : The deliberate techniques employed by speakers or writers to shape language for specific communicative purposes.

Mwalimu Andrew Staffroom Diary: The term refers to a series of satirical newspaper columns written by Mwalimu Andrew and published in the *Sunday Nation* (Kenya).

Pragmatics : The analysis of communication beyond the literal meanings of words, focusing on how speakers employ strategies to achieve their intended communicative goals in Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary texts.

Sociocultural Hegemony: Pervasive ways in which dominant social and cultural ideologies, values, and power structures are expressed, reinforced, or contested within the written discourse of Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary.

Authority: The use of discursive strategies that position certain characters, voices, or institutions as credible, dominant, or controlling within the *Staffroom Diary* texts.

Marginalization: Linguistic patterns that downplay, stereotype, or diminish the roles, identities, or perspectives of certain characters, thereby reinforcing social hierarchies or inequalities in Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary.

Resistance: Instances where the discourse employs satire, irony, or counter-narratives to oppose or destabilize authoritative voices and sociocultural norms within Mwalimu Andrew's *Staffroom Diary* texts.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

The following section presents the background information of the study, statement of the problem, objectives and research questions. In addition, the significance, justification, scope and delimitation, as well as limitations of the study are discussed.

1.2 Background of the Study

In public media, where language is carefully crafted to inform, persuade, or critique, Wodak (2005) argues that pragmatics becomes indispensable in understanding not just *what* is said, but *how*, *why*, and *to what effect* it is said. Hussein (2020) underscores this by noting that pragmatics helps bridge the gap between literal word meanings and the deeper, context-dependent intentions behind those words—something especially crucial in media discourse where implications, insinuations, and ideological leanings often remain unstated but heavily implied.

Raisigl and Wodak (2009) and Raisigl (2018) point out the discursive strategies as referential nomination, predication, argumentation, perspectivation, and intensification. They are pragmatic tools that reflect the speaker's strategic use of language to accomplish specific goals. These methods serve as actions of meaning-making that can only be completely understood when analyzed within their pragmatic context. Wodak's (2005) framework illustrates how media speakers and writers employ these strategies not merely to depict reality, but to influence perception, delineate social boundaries, and reinforce ideologies through inclusion or exclusion, glorification or discreditation, and the amplification or attenuation of specific ideas. Pragmatics would be crucial in examining such moves because it provides the theory used to explain how these techniques influence the interpretation of the readers or the

listeners depending on contextual factors, common assumption, and cultural conventions.

Pragmatic elements such as implicature, assumption, and speech acts play a vital role in understanding the multidimensional nature of texts produced by the public media. Implicature was first defined and explained by Grice (1975) and then expanded by Sperber and Wilson (1986). It allows communicators to insinuate or imply rather than to actually express what they mean which then necessitates audiences to interpret the intended meaning based on their current knowledge and situational context. It is common in editorials, satire columns and political statements, where the writer will frequently rely upon the reader to determine his or her intentions. Similarly, the speech act theory by Searle (1969) demonstrates that words can be used as acts like making promises, charging, or emitting orders. Not only do these actions depend on the context, but the actions also carry ideological implications in media discourses. Pragmatics is a concept used to understand how language is employed in the media not only to inform, but also to act by way of affecting popular opinion, or challenging authority.

As scholars, including Githiora (2018) and Wandere (2021) have noted, pragmatics has an even more important role in Kenya due to the abundance of various different languages and complex social and political scenarios of the country. Pragmatic strategies such as satire, irony, and ambiguity are employed by media personalities like Mutua to challenge power institutions but at the same time, they strive to entertain and involve an audience. Pragmatic competence is crucial to this strategic use of language which Bess (2006) and Min (2001), among others, explain as stylistic and artistic use of discourse. Without an understanding of pragmatics, one might miss the

multiple layers of meaning embedded in such texts, particularly when euphemisms, puns, or metaphors are employed to navigate sensitive or controversial topics.

The "*Staffroom Diary*" section in the Daily Nation newspaper gives readers an insight into what Mwalimu Andrew, a fictional teacher, goes through each day. This column gives an inside look at the daily experiences, problems and successes of teachers in Kenyan schools. It mixes humor and commentary, looking at the wider world of education while sharing the ups and downs of teachers and their experiences. Many teachers, students, parents and policymakers find this column helpful because it allows them to relate to important issues (Khalayi, 2014). Through studying Mwalimu Andrew's approach to storytelling, researchers have explored how nomination, predication, perspectivisation, argumentation and intensification are used to communicate, inspire reflection and encourage discussion.

Pragmatics is important in this study because it helps us understand how these texts communicate using context, implication, cultural context and strategic language. It allows the researcher to go beyond textual analysis and delve into the *functional* aspects of language in public discourse—how language is used to shape thought, influence behaviour, and construct social reality. Pragmatics thus provides the conceptual foundation for understanding the deeper ideological functions of discursive strategies within Mwalimu Andrew's *Staffroom Diary* texts. Such a perspective opens the way for examining how discourse functions as a site for the negotiation of sociocultural hegemony.

Hegemony is a concept furthered by Antonio Gramsci that is known as sociocultural hegemony, which denotes the dominance of certain social groups and ideologies as a new cultural norm that is accepted by the consent rather than by coercion (Gramsci,

1971). It functions as an institution, traditions, and spoken language, which normalizes some modes of thinking and acting, which support status quos in the social hierarchy. Sociocultural hegemony manifests itself in communication, particularly in media and literary communication, through the linguistic choices and representations, as well as narratives, which uphold the dominant ways of perceiving the world to the exclusion of other viewpoints. Language therefore is a medium that power and ideology is disseminated, bargained and even opposed. Thinking in terms of sociocultural hegemony is thus a critical component in deconstructing the use of discourse to affirm, reinforce or challenge the social and cultural values inherent in a particular society.

Regardless of these valuable contributions, most research studies have not explored the integration of humour, satire and pedagogical discourse in the Kenyan newspaper columns to critique social and institutional challenges. The past studies like that conducted by Ogola (2004) on Whispers column by Wahome Mutahi emphasised the role of satire as a means of struggle against authoritarianism but they failed to look at practical and discursive processes that inform such humour. Besides, although research works such as Herbert (2009) and Tianli et al. (2022) have demonstrated the persuasive and ideological role of humour in European and Asian settings, there is a lack of empirical focus on how those same strategies are reflected in the Kenyan satirical stories produced in the context of education. It is against this backdrop that Mwalimu Andrew Staffroom Diary is an excellent place to probe. The humorous and reflective stance of the column describing the life experiences of teachers presents a distinct basis of discussing the application of language pragmatically to inform, entertain, and criticize an existing reality in a society.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Current research in discourse analysis has predominantly concentrated on political speeches, media discourse, and traditional literary genres, frequently overlooking hilarious and satirical narratives like *Staffroom Diary*. Although several scholars have investigated satire in African literature, few have rigorously analysed the pragmatic strategies of discursive strategies in serialized narratives across digital and print media. The interaction among linguistic manipulation, sociocultural hegemony in Mwalimu Andrew's works has not been thoroughly examined from a pragmatic viewpoint. Moreover, satire in *Staffroom Diary* does not operate in isolation; it reflects and responds to Kenya's broader sociopolitical and educational realities which shape both the production and interpretation of its humour.

This study aims to perform a pragmatic analysis of discursive strategies in Mwalimu Andrew's *Staffroom Diary*. This study sought to reveal the fundamental pragmatic of the discursive strategies that augment the social significance of the text by analysing the manipulation of language to construct meaning, shape reader interpretation, and critique established norms. Comprehending these linguistic tactics will enhance the field of discourse analysis and provide insights into the role of language as potent instruments for social commentary in modern Kenyan discourse.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to conduct a pragmatic analysis of discursive strategies in Mwalimu Andrew's *Staffroom Diary* Text, with a view to uncover how language manipulation, enhanced by linguistic styles, can provoke deeper understanding and contemplation of sociocultural hegemony.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The current study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. Describe the discursive strategies used in Mwalimu Andrew's *Staffroom diary* texts.
- ii. Analyze the functionality of discursive strategies as a means of linguistic stylistic communication of interactional social reality in Mwalimu Andrew *Staffroom Diary* texts.
- iii. Determine how the discursive strategies represent sociocultural hegemony in Mwalimu Andrew's *Staffroom diary* texts within CDA.

1.6 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions;

- i. Which discursive strategies are used in Mwalimu Andrew's *Staffroom diary* texts?
- ii. What is the functionality of discursive strategies as a means of linguistic stylistic communication of interactional social reality in Mwalimu Andrew *Staffroom Diary* texts?
- iii. How has sociocultural hegemony been represented through the use of discursive strategies in Mwalimu Andrew's *Staffroom diary* texts within the CDA?

1.7 Significance of the Study

First, the study contributes to the expanding body of knowledge in pragmatics and critical discourse analysis (CDA) by focusing on an underexplored text within East African literature, *Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary*. While CDA has been extensively applied to political speeches, institutional discourse, and media narratives (Fairclough, 1995; van Dijk, 1998), its application to humorous and satirical literary forms remains limited. This research brings to the fore the pragmatic mechanisms

through which humour and satire serve as tools of sociocultural critique, expanding the domains of discourse analysis.

Second, the study enhances our understanding of how discursive strategies function in serialized satirical narratives to represent and challenge sociocultural hegemony. In the examination of the linguistic strategies employed in *Staffroom Diary*, the study sheds light on how everyday language use in popular narratives can reveal deeper ideological constructs particularly within Kenyan educational and sociopolitical settings. This aligns with Wodak and Meyer's (2016) view that discourse is not merely communicative but a socially constitutive act.

Third, this research has Pedagogical value. Educators, linguists, media practitioners and literary scholars can benefit from insights into how language in literature functions pragmatically to negotiate power, identity, and ideology. It also benefits writers and social commentators seeking to understand how linguistic creativity can challenge hegemonic norms subtly yet effectively.

Lastly, the study provides an African-centred analysis of discourse in a localized context, contributing to the decolonization of knowledge in applied linguistics. The study thus, emphasizes that African narratives, particularly those rooted in satire and humour, are valid and rich sources for scholarly investigation (Achebe, 1975; Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997).

1.8 Justification of the Study

Even though there have been a lot of studies on related topics, like Fortmann's (1995) work on property rights disputes, Mayoyo et al.'s (2020) work on gender ideologies in TV ads, and Ogola's (2004) work on columns by writers like *Whispers* by Wahome

Mutahi, there hasn't been enough research on the discursive strategies used in Mwalimu Andrew's writings.

Prior research, like that of Kumar (2022), have focused on traditional stylistic elements, and do not look into how discursive strategies contribute to linguistic style and communication. While Khalayi's (2014) study explores Mwalimu Andrew's use of humour, particularly in Kiswahili language, to address socio-political issues, it does not explore how these strategies contribute to the representation of socio-cultural hegemony. Furthermore, studies like Hansson's (2015) focuses only on property dispute, but examine the discursive strategies within Mwalimu Andrew's columns.

The focus on pragmatics is driven by the need to uncover how meaning is constructed beyond the literal level of language. Pragmatics allows for an in-depth analysis of speaker intention, contextual meaning, implicature, presupposition, and inferencing (Yule, 1996). These aspects are particularly important in satirical texts, where the surface meaning often contrasts with the underlying message. In *Staffroom Diary*, levity and social criticism are frequently concealed under small working indicators such as irony, euphemism and sarcasm. They are best applied under a pragmatic framework as a way of explaining how language works in the process of brokering power, ideology and social values.

The absence of the study could result in lack of awareness regarding the representation of sociocultural hegemony in educational texts, hindering sociocultural analysis within educational discourse. Additionally, without the study, scholars would miss the opportunity to deepen their understanding of discourse analysis and linguistic stylistics within the specific context of educational communication.

The justification for this study also lies in the underrepresentation of pragmatic and discourse-analytic studies on satirical narratives in Kenyan literature, particularly in digital and serialized formats like *Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary*. While satire in African literature has received notable attention (Ogude, 1997), few scholars have interrogated the pragmatic dimensions of discursive strategies in contemporary, hybrid genres that blend humour, realism, and commentary. As Meyer and Wodak (2009) emphasize, CDA must evolve to include diverse genres and sociolinguistic landscapes.

Additionally, the study is justified by the necessity to explore how language functions ideologically in popular cultural texts. Given the widespread readership of *Staffroom Diary*, the text functions not only as entertainment but also as a medium of social education and critique. Analysing it through a pragmatic lens reveals how language both reflects and contests dominant ideologies, thus deepening our understanding of the role of satire in Kenyan sociopolitical discourse.

1.9 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study is limited in scope to a pragmatic analysis of the discursive strategies used in selected *Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary* texts, with particular attention to how these strategies construct, reinforce, or challenge sociocultural hegemony in Kenyan society. The choice for this scope is grounded in both the nature of the text under study and the theoretical goals of the research.

The focus on discursive approaches via a pragmatic approach will allow the study to explore the ways and means in which language is deliberately used to form identities, critique societal structures as well as to reflect larger problems in the society. Wodak (2001) argues that the discursive methods are vital in the understanding of how language expresses power and ideology through the mechanisms. As a result, when

discussing their practical dimensions, it is possible to have a more sophisticated understanding of the communication and dispute over hegemony in the sociocultural sense.

The writings, of which Mwalimu Andrew Staffroom Diary published weekly in the Sunday Nation newspaper in Kenya, are a singular and poorly researched genre that can be applied to discourse analysis. These articles are the narration of the stories of Kenyan instructors and citizens in a different form than in the academic literature or other official political speeches. They resort to humour, satire and social realism. The diary model, which is a school-based model, is a miniature version of the Kenyan society. It reveals such issues as corruption, bureaucracy, gender relations and institutional dysfunction. This makes it a great place to look at how every day, relatable conversation shows and fights against societal hegemony.

Moreover, the widespread readership and cultural significance of *Staffroom Diary* underscore its impact. It resonates with diverse Kenyan audiences and subtly shapes public discourse by blending entertainment with critical reflection. Despite its popularity, the series has not received adequate scholarly attention, particularly from a pragmatic and discursive analytical perspective. This study, therefore, fills an important gap by investigating the linguistic strategies that give the text its social and ideological potency.

Instead of focusing solely on textual description or stylistic features, this study also emphasizes the functionality of discursive strategies in terms of how they work to influence interpretation, shape meaning, and critique societal structures. This approach aligns with applied linguistics and critical discourse backgrounds that view language as action (Austin, 1962; Fairclough, 1995). In the examination of the various functions

of pragmatic devices, the study shows how *Mwalimu Andrew* not only tells stories but also constructs social realities and challenges hegemonic ideologies in subtle but powerful ways.

The study is confined to a representative sample of *Staffroom Diary* texts published between in 2023. Only texts that explicitly address themes relevant to sociocultural hegemony, such as education, authority, gender, and class, are included in the analysis. Literary elements such as characterization or plot development are not the primary focus since they are not directly tied to pragmatic discursive strategies. The study also excludes reader reception and media analysis, focusing instead on the textual level of language use.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is its restricted textual corpus, which is confined to a purposively selected sample of *Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary* columns published between in 2023. While the selected texts are thematically relevant and sufficient for qualitative analysis, the exclusion of other years or comparable satirical texts limits the generalizability of the findings. The study's conclusions, therefore, are context-specific and may not comprehensively reflect all the discursive strategies or pragmatic phenomena present across the entire body of *Staffroom Diary* work or in broader Kenyan satirical writing.

Secondly, the study relies heavily on qualitative interpretation, which, while suitable for critical discourse and pragmatic analysis, is inherently subjective. Interpretations of irony, presupposition, or other pragmatic devices are shaped by the researcher's understanding of context, culture, and sociocultural nuances. Although efforts were made to ensure analytical rigor through theoretical grounding and textual triangulation,

the absence of reader-response data or multiple coders introduces the risk of interpretive bias. This is a common challenge in critical qualitative research, especially when analysing humour, satire, and figurative language, which may be interpreted differently by diverse audiences.

There were limits to how much could be said about every possible facet of rhetorical strategy and hegemony. The main limits are due to a lack of time and resources. A deliberate and prioritized approach was taken to deal with these problems. The researcher meticulously chose essential elements of discursive techniques and humor that best correspond with the study's aims. Additionally, ongoing monitoring and assessment of the research process were performed, facilitating prospective modifications to the scope and technique to guarantee the study's robustness and validity within the established parameters.

Discursive methods may be expressed through nuanced linguistic changes, rendering their identification a complex and subjective endeavor. The variety of Mwalimu Andrew's writing style and the possibility of multiple tactics overlapping could also make it harder to put things into categories. To tackle this difficulty, a methodical and stringent approach to textual analysis, incorporating many researchers for cross-validation, was utilized. To make sure that the identified discursive tactics were consistent and reliable, there were regular conversations and peer assessments.

Lastly, there was the potential subjectivity in interpreting hegemonic elements, and another is addressing the possible biases inherent in the researcher's perspective. To overcome these challenges, the study incorporated a triangulation of research methods, combining qualitative content analysis with critical discourse analysis. Additionally, engaging with relevant theoretical frameworks on sociocultural hegemony and seeking

diverse perspectives through participant feedback or peer reviews enhanced the robustness and validity of the findings.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This Chapter has presented the background to the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study and research questions. In addition, the significance, justification, scope and delimitation, as well as limitations of the study are discussed.

The next chapter presents the Literature review and the theoretical framework for the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This Chapter has reviews literature on pragmatics of the discursive strategies, their functionality as a means of linguistic stylistic communication, and the strategies' representation in sociocultural hegemony. It also presents the theoretical framework which underpins the study. Literature has been reviewed thematically based on the study objectives. The reviewed themes include studies carried out on discursive strategies, their functionality as a means of linguistic stylistic communication and representation of the sociocultural hegemony.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Pragmatics of Discursive strategies

Pragmatics is an important branch of linguistics that studies how context affects meaning (Feruza, K. 2024). It includes the ways that speakers use language to reach their communication goals, as well as the literal meaning of words. The linguistic and rhetoric means that pragmatics employs to establish the conversation, transform the mind of people speaking to one another, and achieve some communicative outcomes are known as Discursive strategies (Blommaert, 2005). People adapt their way of speaking in varying sociocultural contexts, and one way this is done is through speech acts, implicatures, presuppositions, rhetorical devices, and politeness techniques. Discursive strategies in pragmatics have become an area of high scholarship with the aim to analyse the ways of how language users can make use of various procedures to reach specific communicative objectives. These manoeuvres have been studied in recent times and applied in a variety of contexts such as academic writing, musical compositions and literature writings as well. This understanding provides a conceptual

base for identifying how language users in media texts manipulate linguistic choices to achieve communicative and ideological goals.

Khafaga et al. (2023) also analysed the pragmatics of the persuasion in the reading *Animal Farm* by George Orwell, outlining five main strategies of persuasion directive speech acts, rhetorical inquiries, back-channel support, gap-bridging, and interruption. These strategies were identified as enabling three forms of persuasion namely pure, manipulative and coercive, which indeed highlights their usefulness in the interactions of character in the story. The study highlighted the formalisation of these strategies using language features of imperatives, interrogatives, lexicalization, and slogans, therefore, the significance of pragmatic analysis in narrative texts was emphasized. This study informs the current research by demonstrating how pragmatic strategies can be systematically identified and categorized to reveal persuasive and ideological meanings in literary discourse.

The study by Nawawi and Ting (2022) explored interactional meta-discourse markers in political science research articles as part of the academic writing research. Their study has proven that the articles of both high and low levels of tier very commonly used boosters and hedges, and engagement markers were the least used. There was a preponderance of the use of the boosters in the articles of popular journals which indicate that the articles were more focused on assurance. The less popular journals, however, tended to hedge, i.e. they were more reserved. This distinction demonstrates that pragmatic tactics are susceptible to the perceived prestige of the publication venue and that the authors do not necessarily communicate with the audience in the same way. This insight helps the present study recognize how contextual and audience-related factors influence pragmatic choices and discursive strategies in written communication

Close attention has also been paid to the analysis of the impoliteness tactics in literary conversation. A pragmatic study of George Bernard Shaw play, *Pygmalion*, was conducted by Abbas (2022) who used the character interaction in the context of the model of impoliteness, as proposed by Culpeper (2005). The study served to deepen the understanding of fictional characters with the help of evaluating the conversational patterns thereof using pragmatic approach and, in particular, focusing on the importance of impoliteness strategies in the construction of the characters and plot progression. This contributes to the current study by illustrating how pragmatic tools such as politeness and impoliteness can be applied to uncover interpersonal dynamics.

Carvalho (2005) does this on a large scale by carrying out a comparative analysis on three British national leading newspapers, namely *The Times*, *The Guardian* and *The Independent*. The main objective of the study is to examine the use of discursive means by the political players and the media in the context of climate change discourse. The article reviews how these powerful players use language to manipulate and redefine accounts of a complex topic, climate change. This framework guides the current study in examining how discursive strategies in Kenyan media texts similarly reflect and shape ideological and sociocultural positions.

According to the research conducted by Carvalho (2005), the relationships between the ideological viewpoints and the specific discursive approaches used in the discussions of specific issues are considered essential. The focus of this inquiry is climate change. The study demonstrates that the discursive methods utilized by political officials and the media function as effective instruments for promoting divergent ideological perspectives. Carvalho's (2005) study thoroughly analyzes the textual content of these publications, revealing how numerous discursive methods are

strategically integrated into the narratives, so altering public perceptions and impacting discourse dynamics.

This study transitions its emphasis from climate change discourse in British newspapers to comedic discourse in Kenya. This change brings up a new topic and setting, which could change the way people talk, their political views, and the effect of humor. The framework presented will enable the current study take a systematic approach to finding and understanding linguistic trends in the "Staffroom Diary" column by giving it a structure for analyzing discursive techniques.

Hansson (2015) study examines discursive practices adopted by officeholders in the circumstances of blame risk to achieve the goal of positive self-presentation and negative other representation. The study's findings significantly contest the dominant language frameworks on conflict discourse. Hansson's research posits that a more expansive perspective is necessary to comprehend the persistent theme of blame avoidance in public communication. The study advocates for the use of novel analytical instruments in discourse studies, which can illuminate the intricate dynamics of political and bureaucratic language usage. This research benefits the present study by emphasizing how discursive practices can serve self-presentation and power management functions.

By questioning established beliefs and broadening the analytical framework, researchers can enhance their comprehension of how language functions as a tool for individuals to manage guilt, formulate their narratives, and present their identities in the public sphere. Both studies concentrate on discursive tactics; yet, they diverge in their specific contexts, objectives, and focal points. Hansonn (2015) investigates political and bureaucratic language in a broader context, whereas the present study

focuses on Mwalimu Andrew's "Staffroom Diary" column and his linguistic approach to discussing issues in Kenya. In the same way that Hansson looked for ways to avoid blaming, this study wants to find out how speakers talk about hard subjects without directly addressing them.

Fortmann (1995) made an in-depth exploration of the intricate discursive practices in the struggle over the authority to land ownership in Zimbabwe. This study was aimed at shedding light on the strong role of language and communication in determining the dynamics in the ownership of property disputes in the area. He analyses the reactions of the people and the commercial farm owners who were the most prominent in the study. The study conducted by Fortmann was directed towards clarifying how communication was able to propagate some competing interests, justify claims, and influence the mind streams of the people by researching on the discussion that was created by these divergent entities. How the language is used by both villagers and commercial farm owners as means of the negotiations, persuasion and conflict to get the ownership rights is explained by the analysis of narratives, rhetoric, and language strategies implemented by both parties. The research by Fortmann studies issues of property rights in Zimbabwe, and this research studies humor as described through discursive practices. The works by Fortmann helps in the current research since it gives a guideline as to how discursive practices are used to facilitate certain ideas and shape up perceptions.

Mayoyo et al. (2020) offer a critical analysis of the strategies that have been used in the advertisement of the citizen television in Kenya to promote the ideology of gender. The study argued that linguistic resources employed in television commercials reflect the prevalent social system of values, attitudes and beliefs towards gender roles in the society. The results of the study showed that there was a very strong relationship

between the linguistic strategies in Kenyan television adverts and the dominant gender ideology. These ideologies that contribute largely to the manner in which individuals comprehend the meaning of such adverts, proved to be deeply entrenched in words, social behaviour and tactical actions. The present research is concerned with the question of discursive strategies in the column that addresses critical concerns in Kenyan schooling system by means of fiction, and the former one related to linguistic strategies in advertisement materials and their links to the gender norms in the society.

According to Wamalwa et al. (2021), lexico-pragmatic strategies in Lubukusu secular music texts were studied, and it was possible to note the use of euphemisms, code-switching, lexical borrowing, repetition, metaphorical extensions, and irony. The given strategies serve various communicative purposes: these include complementing the expressive qualities of music and expressing the cultural peculiarities of the Lubukusu community. The study highlights the necessity of understanding pragmatism in a variety of discourses, such as musical texts as well. Through the knowledge and the methods used in this review, the present study enhances its study on the use of discursive strategies and humor in the Kenyan context and thus enriching its understanding of the use of language in shaping stories and perspectives.

2.2.2 Functionality of Discursive Strategies as a means of linguistic stylistic communication

The discourse strategies are premeditated uses of language by the speaker and the writer to produce specific meanings, create identities and impressions upon an audience. These strategies play an important role in the style of linguistic communication that involves story-shaping, social reality building and expression of ideological positions. The various uses of discursive techniques have been studied in

various contexts to point to the significance of the techniques both in a literary and non-literary texts.

In literary discussions, authors employ discursive tactics to formulate and express intricate social identity. Al-Ramahi et al. (2020) examined Langston Hughes's poetry to discern his portrayal of whites and blackness. Their research demonstrated that Hughes used tactics including actor description, resource description, self-identity descriptions, and norm and value descriptions to emphasize positive self-representation and negative other-representation, thereby clarifying power dynamics between Whites and Blacks. The current study, unlike the one by Al-Ramahi et al. (2020) was grounded in the linguistic realms of the texts; the language resources that literary texts use to express diverse socio-cultural realities. The study is grounded in the accentuation of the speaker's (the text writer, for this study) meaning that stems from stylistic contextual meaning. The following figure shows the inter-faced shades of meaning and linguistic levels:

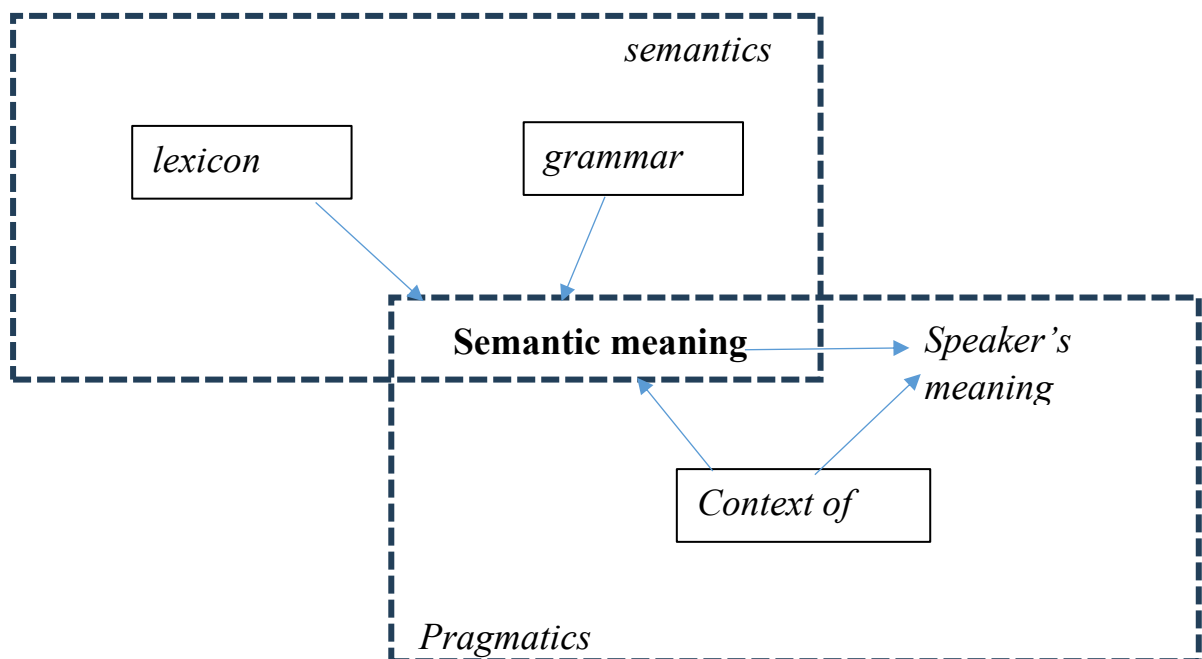


Figure. 2.1: Interfaces of Meaning

Source: Potner (2008:139)

The realization of interpretation of social texts, such as Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary, is dependent on the complimentary interfaces of meaning drawn from the realms of semantics and pragmatics. From figure 2.1 above, the instantiation of the texts is enhanced by the intersection between social contextual use and the creative use of deliberately selected linguistic resources - the stylistic use of discursive strategies in the current study.

Ufot (2022) analysed Joe Ushie's poetry, emphasizing the employment of coherent devices such as anaphora, cataphora, deixis, and dialogic exchanges. The study revealed that these tactics promote ongoing engagement between the poet and readers, effectively communicating theme issues and improving the coherence of the poetic discourse.

In non-literary contexts, discursive techniques are essential in media representations and political debate. Afzal (2019) did a study examining media representations of conflicts, specifically studying editorials from "The News International" during the Arab Spring. The study showed that editorial writers used common themes like protests, democracy, and terror to make the demonstrators' actions look good, which helped create a pro-Arab spring narrative.

Addae (2022) also did a critical discourse study of several of Kwame Nkrumah's speeches, looking at how he used rhetorical devices and language idioms to express his political views. The study highlighted the utilization of discursive frameworks in Nkrumah's speeches to influence public perception and construct political ideas. Discursive tactics are very important in advertising because they shape ideas about gender. Simiyu et al. (2020) analyzed Kenyan television advertising to elucidate the

ways in which language devices and discursive strategies shape gender roles. Their findings indicated that ads often propagate masculine ideals, hence perpetuating societal systems that favor the masculine gender.

Tianli et al. (2022) performed a systematic assessment of rhetorical tactics in hilarious discourse, demonstrating that strategies like irony, metaphor, satire, insults, and metonymy fulfil various tasks based on the speaker's communicative objectives. The research highlighted that the efficacy of these tactics differs across various comedic scenarios.

Language is an important part of impression management and Person's management Goffman (1959). This therefore, makes language users consciously or unconsciously vary their speech to achieve a particular outcome, Higgins & Rholes (1978). An utterer's linguistic style can be used to influence a listeners or readers appeal or reveal an unresolved societal issue through language.

Kumar's (2022) study critically examined the role of style and stylistics in linguistics. He noted that style, in linguistic terms, typically refers to the choice of grammatical structures and vocabulary. However, viewed historically, style carries diverse connotations. For instance, Augustan writers like Alexander Pope were known for a cultivated, elegant, and refined diction, contrasting sharply with the language employed by Romantics, who opted for a simpler, less ornate, and colloquial style. Stylistics, a branch of applied linguistics, specifically investigates the style an author uses in texts, particularly in literary works. It is often referred to as literary linguistics, delving into figures of speech, metaphors, rhetorical devices, and syntactical patterns that contribute to an expressive or literary style. While numerous styles have been utilized throughout literary history for decoration and to enhance thoughts, this study

diverged by focusing on the analysis of discursive strategies as a means of linguistic stylistic communication. Unlike previous works, which concentrated on traditional stylistic elements, this research explores how discursive strategies contribute to the linguistic style employed in communication.

Agu (2015) conducted a linguistic-stylistic analysis of newspaper reportage, focusing on a corruption story involving the un-spent three hundred million naira of the Federal Ministry of Health in 2007, which implicated the daughter of former President Obasanjo. The study selected reports from three daily newspapers—Daily Sun, Daily Trust, and Leadership—published between May 1 and May 31, 2008. Five reports underwent three levels of linguistic analysis: graphological, lexical, and syntactic, with emphasis on the semantic implications at each level. The results showed that some journalists stay objective and don't become involved in the tales, while others bring their own prejudices and feelings into the mix. The study continued by advising journalists to take into account the language competencies of their audience when selecting words and structures for their narratives. Although other evaluations may have addressed more general linguistic stylistic elements, this study offered an in-depth analysis of the many discursive tactics found in the Staffroom Diary. The study revealed patterns, rhetorical devices, and language selections, providing a thorough comprehension of how these tactics enhance the linguistic stylistic communication in Mwalimu Andrew's texts.

Dragan (2015) examined the difficulties present in modern political discourse, highlighting the necessity of making suitable and authentic decisions while steering clear of hubris and crude sarcasm. By analyzing metaphoric processes, symmetries, and semantic paradoxes through the lenses of semiotic and metaphor theory In "Perspective," Dragan explored the complexities of symbolic representations in the

production of messages and the negotiation of power struggles. By interpreting metaphorical mechanisms and cultural correlations inside the rhetoric archive, the study elucidates the dynamics of meanings and the employment of vivid metaphorical language. The report also talked about how politicians did not seem to care about reasonable and argumentative language, and it reasoned out that they have trouble adjusting to social and linguistic standards. This review was pertinent to the present study as it emphasized the importance of metaphoric language in communication and elucidates the intricacies of discourse in political contexts, offering valuable insights for comprehending the discursive strategies utilized in Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom diary texts.

Fiction sections in Kenyan newspapers, especially the well-known satirical column *Whispers*, have been popular and adaptable over the years. Kenyan newspapers have had these articles since the 1970s (Ogola, 2004). Wahome Mutahi, a talented writer, wrote *Whispers* in the 1980s and 1990s. It was quite popular. *Whispers* was an important platform at a period when the government carefully controlled how people could talk to each other. Ogola (2004) says that the column gave people a unique place to talk about and argue about social and political concerns that people often talked about in secret because the government was in charge. *Whispers* really let people talk about things that were usually kept quiet, giving them a good way to express themselves and talk about things.

Rowland Herbert's 2009 study examines the intricate relationship between humour quality and satire, with a special emphasis on its utilization in political, religious, and theological contexts. The study centres on the humorous writings of Matthias Claudius, a prominent German poet. In this examination, Herbert analyses the correlation between the calibre of humour inherent in satirical works and its extensive applicability across many fields. The results show that humour is a powerful way to talk about concerns of identity and belonging. Its capacity to depict humour as a means of communication further adds to its popularity and power.

Herbert (2009) emphasizes that the strategic use of humour in both democratic and authoritarian societies demonstrates its effectiveness in engaging large audiences through the art of persuasion. The study emphasizes that satire, through humour, serves as a facilitator, rendering complicated linguistic elements approachable, well-received, and efficiently perceived by many audiences. Herbert's study examines the correlation between the quality of humour and the application of satire in political, religious, and theological contexts from a literary standpoint. In contrast, the present

study analyzes the linguistic stylistic elements of discursive strategies, specifically the linguistic form of humour in the "Staffroom Diary" column, which addresses societal issues within the Kenyan context. Herbert's study elucidates how satire's persuasive features resonate with diverse readerships, so informing the current analysis of the "Staffroom Diary's" impact on engaging teachers, students, lawmakers, and the general public.

Hanson (2015) examines the discursive techniques related to blame avoidance in government and suggests a thorough analytical approach. Hanson notes that an improved heuristic is essential for understanding the prevalent macro-conversational discursive techniques utilized by officeholders when confronted with the potential for blame. He asserts that governmental policies and acts often result in popular condemnation, inciting debates and media scandals aimed at individual or collective officials. When they risk losing credibility and resources, officeholders tend to use blame-avoidance methods that affect how they run their offices, how they talk, and how they use language. Hanson primarily examines macro-conversational discursive techniques employed by officeholders in contexts of blame risk, highlighting the objective of favorable self-presentation. Conversely, the present study expands its focus by examining the interaction of pragmatics and effective communication within the pedagogical framework of Mwalimu Andrew's "Staffroom Diary" column.

Sengul (2019) demonstrates the utilization of critical discourse analysis (CDA) in the investigation of right-wing populist language within Australia's political context. The study asserts that critical discourse analysis is an essential instrument in political communication, especially given the increasing intricacy of modern media and communication dynamics. The article is a practical source of communication for scholars who want to apply critical discourse analysis in political environments

because it gives an empirical example. The empirical case, dedicated to the right-wing populist message, which was offered by Australian Senator Pauline Hanson in her first speech in 2016, is an excellent example of the topic. It provides a chronological explanation of each of the strategies employed in critical discourse analysis thus making the use of this methodology a case in point as a political communication research tool. This prior study provides methodological experience and a plan that can drive the analysis of the current study regarding the linguistic patterns and discursive strategies in the mentioned setting.

Kahl and Grodal (2016) conducted a multilevel discourse analysis to understand challenges faced by enterprises during technological transitions. Focusing on the emerging computer industry, they examined how linguistic cues, visual signals, and consumer perceptions shape interpretations of technological change. Their findings show that strategic use of discourse influences how customers perceive information and, consequently, market performance. While their study centers on technology and consumer perception, the current study extends these insights to *Staffroom Diary*, exploring how discursive and visual strategies communicate key social issues in Kenya.

Omanga (2021) points out the numerous roles of WhatsApp group in Nakuru County in Kenya and particularly how it was used in political discussions and community participation in issues affecting the County government. The study explains the dynamics of Nakuru Analysts (NA) WhatsApp group that serves as an online platform, which brings together residents of the city and the elected county leadership within one digital arena. The results show that the significance of NA as a digital public sphere stretches beyond the structure of the operation and the application of voice to shape the local political actions. Most notably, it depends on its capacity to mobilize individuals around grassroots politics, where online discussions seamlessly transition

into tangible offline collective actions. While Omanga's study looks into social media platforms; WhatsApp group, the current study delves into the literary techniques employed within Mwalimu Andrew's "Staffroom Diary" Sunday Nation columns, with a specific focus on discursive strategies in addressing societal concerns. However, Omanga's research provides valuable insights into how digital media spaces, can serve as platforms for convening political discussions, engaging citizens, and instigating collective actions.

The above reviews greatly inform the current study on the functionality of discursive strategies in diverse linguistic contexts, thereby aiding in achieving of the second objective of the study. These studies collectively emphasize the essential function of discursive tactics in linguistic stylistic communication. The strategic application of language in literature, journalism, politics, and advertising builds narratives, constructs social identities, and changes audience perceptions, highlighting the significant effect of linguistic choices on communication dynamics.

The reviewed studies collectively illustrate the dynamic role of discursive strategies across literary and non-literary contexts, revealing their capacity to communicate ideologies, shape Perceptions, and provoke reflection. Central to these investigations is the interconnectedness of pragmatics—the study of language in use and the contextual factors influencing meaning—with discursive strategies. Pragmatics informs how language users manipulate linguistic forms not merely for stylistic effect but to achieve communicative goals that resonate with societal, ideological, and institutional concerns.

Pragmatics emphasizes the relationship between language and its users within particular contexts, including the speaker's intentions, the hearer's interpretations, and

the social conditions under which communication occurs (Leech, 1983; Levinson, 1983). Discursive strategies, therefore, become the practical tools through which these pragmatic intentions are realized.

The following table 2.1 matrix shows the distinction between the structural and functional Perspectives of linguistics:

Table 2.1 Formalist and Functional Approaches

Structural Approach	Functional Approach
1. Focuses on structure of language (code) as a grammar.	Focuses on structure of speech (as acts, events) as ways of speaking.
2. Analyses language structure before any (optional) analysis of language use. Assumes that language use derives from language structure.	Analyses language use before analysis of language structure. Assumes that language structure and use are integrated; organization of language use reveals additional structural features.
3. Assumes that the most important function of language is referential, i.e. the function of language to describe the world through propositions.	Assumes that language has a range of functions, including referential, stylistic, and social functions.
4. Studies the elements and structures of language separately from the contexts of language; ignores the culture (ways of acting, thinking, and being) of those using the language.	Studies the elements and structures of language within their contexts of use; attends to the culture (ways of acting, thinking, and being) of those using the language.
5. Assumes that language structure is independent of social functions and uses. Any language can potentially serve any social, cultural, or stylistic purpose.	Assumes that languages, varieties and styles can be adapted to different situations, functions, and uses, and gain different social values for their users.
6. Assumes that language is a single code within a homogenous community: each speaker replicates a uniform structure.	Assumes that language comprises a repertoire of speech styles within a diverse community: each speaker adds to an organized matrix of diversity.
7. Assumes the uniformity of speakers, hearers, actions, events, and communities across world languages.	Seeks to investigate the diversity of speakers, hearers, actions, events, and communities within world languages.

Source: (Schiffrin, 2006:172)

The functional approach to language and linguistics, therefore, seeks to relate language codes and varieties to the nature of the speakers and their interactive needs in diverse contexts. The human creativity, as evident in Mwalimu Andrew's *Staffroom Diary*, is necessarily constrained by factors beyond the structure of the language itself.

As Goffman (1959) and Higgins and Rholes (1978) suggest that language users often tailor their speech to achieve specific effects—such as self-presentation, humour, criticism, or Persuasion—depending on the social situation. In *Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary*, language is used pragmatically not only to entertain but also to subtly challenge sociocultural hegemony through satire, irony, and other rhetorical strategies. This aligns with findings from Herbert (2009) and Dragan (2015), who assert that satire and metaphor are critical discursive forms that allow writers to navigate sensitive socio-political issues under the guise of humour or figurative expression. These are all methods that highlight the utilitarian nature of language as an agent of indirect communication and subversion. The researcher supports this point of view and identifies that *Staffroom Diary* applies humour not only as a source of joy, but also as a tool of social criticism that does not require readers to engage with a controversial topic with their own aggression.

The studies by Al-Ramahi et al. (2020) and Ufot (2022) reveal how discursive strategies such as the description of actors and deixis are used in literary works to negotiate identities and support particular ideological positions. These strategies are entirely rooted towards practical observations where the author or the character is placed when it comes to societal norms or the situation portrayed by Mwalimu Andrew in the Kenyan education setting. Observing that these strategies are not casual, the

researcher notes that they are strategic choices of language that are used in representing authority structures, power differences, and social norms in a way relatable to the lived contexts of readers.

Similarly, non-literary analyses such as those by Afzal (2019) and Addae (2022) demonstrate the thematic framing, metaphor, and rhetorical structure with which editorial and political rhetoric apply to the purpose of convincing readers to condone some particular set of opinions. Such communicative acts are basically pragmatic; they rely on shared information, implied meaning and contextual cues to convey greater significance, often with subtleness and obliquity. The researcher finds this particularly relevant to the case of Staffroom Diary, where latent critique is often embedded within the seemingly superficial school plotlines, thus leading the readers to develop critical thinking on universal issues in the society.

The current analysis of Staffroom Diary falls in the broad tradition of discourse analysis, that is, in the inquiry of the pragmatic choices incorporated into the discursive tactics that fit within the educational and social-political context. As an example, Simiyu et al. (2020) demonstrated the way gender ideologies are concealed in advertisements. This study examines the way in which the words that the columnist uses silently signify the elements of power, rule, and criticism of institutions. According to the researcher, such strategies are important when it comes to the creation of a story that resonates with the Kenyan viewers who are familiar with the problems of the education system and the governmental institutions.

Kumar (2022) and Agu (2015) also show that such stylistic devices, both in poetic or in news reportage are extremely intertwined with practical aspects like audience understanding, writerial attitude, and effectiveness of communication. The researcher

goes into further detail explaining that the humour, metaphor, satire, and other rhetorical devices actually being employed by Staffroom Diary also serve an aesthetic and practical value in that it questions power, makes the people think and enables readers to feel that they belong there.

According to the research conducted by Sengul (2019) and Hanson (2015), macro-discursive functions of avoidance of blame and ideological positioning need to be understood as some of the key areas in which pragmatics can explain not only the content of a message but also the reasoning behind the choice of exact linguistic forms. Such observations are especially pronounced in the case of Staffroom Diary where the author uses an imaginary academic setting to present real-life societal problems as a mark of continuity of the subversive nature of Whispers (Ogola, 2004). The researcher assumes that these discursive strategies at the macro-level are critical as they succeed in concealing criticism, as well as in making institutional forces accountable.

Pragmatic analysis is not just another perspective; it is the most significant means of understanding the discursive options of Staffroom Diary. It enables the researcher to interpret the hidden connotations, intention of the speaker and contextual cues contained in the text thereby exposing the use of language not only as a form of entertainment but as a tool by which the sociocultural environment in Kenya is interrogated (Ogola, 2004). The researcher arrives at the conclusion that the pragmatic-discursive analysis plays a critical role in unlocking the layers of meanings as well as communicative intentions that makes up the Mwalimu Andrew satirical commentary.

2.2.3 Representation of sociocultural Hegemony through Discursive Strategies

Sociocultural hegemony is based on the ideas advanced by Antonio Gramsci and involves the promulgation of values, beliefs and norms of one group as endorsed by

others, creating the discourse and Perceptions of the society. This dominance is usually reinforced in different ways through discourse strategies that may not be obvious, but are used to reinforce power structures in a culture.

Another significant discursive tool is the use of euphemism that is an ideological tool that can mask or soften intolerable realities thereby holding on to the status quo. The socio-political manipulation of euphemisms in various cultures is examined by Sharma and Albarakati (2019), who make the assumption that while some euphemisms are counter to this power, others reveal a hegemonic impulse in their use. They claim that in order to better understand the cultural role that euphemisms play, two new categories—hegemonic euphemisms and resistance euphemisms—will be added to the current classification. They have demonstrated that euphemism in language may reduce adverse or unwanted connotations thus making them ineffective in appealing to human conscience.

The role of narrative strategies in the establishment of the hegemonic outlooks and the process of social transformation is of the paramount value. Montesano Montessori (2014) depicts that narratives allow and facilitate hegemonic operations to emerge by coining new versions of social life, authorizing their existence, and fostering agreement. In this sense, successful hegemony constitutes a domination over social existence and, in general, is regarded as a given. The study combines a Gramscian view on hegemony into the discourse theory and applies methods of Critical Discourse Analysis to explore the hegemonic contest between the former Mexican President Gortari and Zapatista movement.

New studies have focused on the ways that mediators have to create cultural hegemony in the context of performative acts. As an example, they show how

mediators may shape the processes of integration by socializing the people to be adherents to the mainstream cultural norms, therefore, strengthening the power structures that existed. This is a covert form of control which is achieved by use of language, norms and symbols which change the perception and interpretation of individuals to their surroundings.

According to another encoding/decoding model of communication provided by Hall (2009), individuals are able to interpret the messages conveyed by the media depending on their respective social and cultural contexts. This paradigm proposes three audience positions, namely dominant-hegemonic, negotiated, and oppositional, in the reading of communications, emphasizing the intricate interrelation between the media producers and the consumers in reinforcing or subverting the hegemonic discourse.

According to the literature, the perpetuation of sociocultural hegemony occurs through a variety of discursive tactics amongst them being euphemisms, narratives, performative actions of intermediaries, encoding and decoding of messages of communication. These doctrines implicitly support more prevailing ideologies, which establish societal standards and the perception of an individual that reinserts the current power structures.

According to Mario D'Andreta (2018), the cultural hegemony is a concept that was developed by an Italian philosopher, Antonio Gramsci and it is the process through which an elite group is able to dominate the society through manipulating culture to appear as something that is benefiting to all people, when the truth is that it is a social and cultural construction serving the same elite group. It is not through force and

compulsion but through the collaboration of the people that the subjugation is achieved.

Razak Gyasi et al. (2018) considered how sociocultural hegemony and gendered identity interacted with the usage of traditional and complementary medicine (TCM) in the Ghanaian context. Their study revealed that, in the African sociocultural setting, men are in the majority of the decision-making in the family set-up. But this has started to become different when it comes to the use of TCM as attributes that influence TCM use differ significantly according to gender. The findings suggest that in the process of integrating and modernizing traditional medicine, there is a need to pay attention to gender differences. Although Razak Gyasi et al. (2019) focus on supplementary medicine in Ghana, the current research is different in that it studies the discursive practices concerning the sociocultural hegemony. The review establishes a base knowledge, and as such, the current research or study has a better insight into the intricacies of sociocultural hegemony.

Andreasson and Henning (2022) did a study about challenging hegemony through storytelling. When people talk about image and Performance-enhancing drugs (IPEDs), they usually see it from a male Perspective. They often view women using these drugs as a threat to the natural order of gender. This study looks at a special online forum just for women who use IPEDs. In this private space, women can question the usual ideas of hegemonic masculinity while also building and supporting each other's experiences, bodies, and knowledge as the norm. This highlights the need to go beyond the usual male-focused ideas and understand how the balance of using IPEDs is changing in society. It's crucial to focus on women's experiences and the risks they face. This not only affects this community but also contributes to a new kind of "sis-science" based on what women know and go through. Even though the study mainly

looks at women and masculinity, it gives us a good understanding of cultural power from this review. This information helps us see the sociocultural ideas in the study better.

The extensive review of literature provides a robust foundation for achieving its overarching objectives of the proposed study. Through the exploration of various studies, including those examining discursive strategies, their roles, and how they effectively employ the strategies, the proposed research gains a comprehensive understanding of the deep-rooted linguistic craftsmanship in Mwalimu Andrew's "Staffroom Diary" column.

This study distinguishes itself from previous research on hegemony by adopting a pragmatic analysis of discursive strategies specifically within the *Staffroom Diary* text by Mwalimu Andrew, thereby bridging the gap between linguistic form and sociocultural content. While previous research on hegemony has predominantly concentrated on political discourse (Fairclough, 1995), media narratives (van Dijk, 2006), or institutional language (Wodak, 2001), this study distinctly examines how linguistic manipulation—via humour, irony, code-switching, and narrative voice—functions as a nuanced yet potent mechanism for critiquing and sustaining hegemonic structures within the Kenyan socio-educational framework.

The research is interested in the fictional diary entries of Mwalimu Andrew, and it employs the pragmatic framework to investigate the speech acts, implicatures, and the contextual meaning that provide a subtle understanding of the enactment and resistance of power hierarchy and social hierarchies in everyday use of language (Levinson, 1983; Mey, 2001). Unlike works that make macro-level theory of hegemony, the analysis below is a micro-level exploration of the language-in-use

which explains how the stylistic choices and discursive positioning can cause the perpetuation or challenge of the dominant ideas in postcolonial Kenya.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The Critical discourse analysis theory (CDA) by (Fairclough 1995) guided this study. This theory is based on the language-in-use assumptions that view the language phenomenon as the instrument of the human social practice in the process of discovering various hierarchies of relations and forming the uneven sociocultural reality.

2.3.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis examines how language operates as more than a neutral mode of communication, but as a mechanism of creating, strengthening, or disrupting the relationships of power and as a force of shaping or confirming social norms in different instances of discourse. Moreover, language is not assumed to be something standalone, but a demonstration and a creator of social structures and ideologies.

CDA is an interdisciplinary placed in language study and social implications developed at the end of the 20th century. Although no single point can be identified as the birth of CDA, it is possible to pinpoint such sources of inspiration as the works of a number of scholars and movements in linguistics, sociology, and the study of communication. Originally, the theoretical foundations of the critical approach to language analysis can be traced back to Frankfurt School a group of German thinkers in 1930s-1950s. The works of some scholars such as Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, dealt with the interconnection of language and culture with power relations and ideology. According to Luke (1955), the works of Michel Foucault in 1970s-1980s especially his views on discourse and power greatly contributed to the

progress of CDA. His works on language construction of knowledge and construction of social rules were initial developments in the field of critical studies of speech.

Norman Fairclough (1996) is one of the main advocates of Critical Discourse Analysis. His major contributions particularly evident in his seminal book *Language and Power* have been of great importance to the development of the CDA framework. The exploration of Fairclough related to the use of language to articulate the access and struggle of power and the relationship between the linguistic choice and social, political, and cultural processes has led to the development of a large analytical apparatus (Savski, 2023).

CDA in the case of the current work allowed studying and comprehending the multiple layers of the discourse methods used in the column of Mwalimu Andrew Staffroom Diary. The theory consists of a series of tenets of which key to the current study are the following:

2.3.2 Power Relations and Ideology

According to this principle, language is a tool of creating and threatening power relations and cultural norms. Education is the subject of Staffroom Diary column, and this area will always be related to power patterns because education systems possess a high level of power over the ways in which people and cultures are formed. CDA provides you with the tools of examining how the language on the column influences the manner of demonstrating power in the Kenyan education system, as well as strengthening or weakening it. The language selected in the column can be used to establish who is in control, the outsider, the one left out of the story through discursive tactics.

2.3.3 Contextualization of Meaning

The concept behind this principle is the main idea that linguistic meaning is highly circumstantial in usage. This Perspective takes into account that communication does not merely establish itself on the specific words being spoken; it is also influenced by the contextualization of those words (how it is framed), the general societal and cultural environment and what the participants have shared in the past as knowledge. The decoding of the linguistic styles substantially depends on the socio-political environment, cultural norms, and personal thoughts of readers. The concern about form of expression as opposed to content that CDA has is consistent with the focus of the study on how the Staffroom Diary column communicates through discursive ways to convey crucial points.

2.3.4 Language as Social Practice

Language is not a neutral communication tool, but a social practice which reflects and reproduces norms, values, and ideologies in such a way that the way society is, is intricately reflected in language. CDA enables the study to identify linguistic practices as a social practice closely connected with ideology and give it the authority to unravel how the selected discursive tactics in the Staffroom Diary are used to shape collective perceptions that form the comprehension of the multifaceted nature of education in Kenya. This postulate is significant in comprehending Perceptions and in triggering discussions on pertinent issues in the Kenyan scenario.

This theory has hence helped the present research formulate how discourse strategies signify sociocultural hegemony used in the Staffroom Diary to expose how discursive strategies are tactically utilized to deliver important issues. It also provided a foundation to analyse how the discursive strategies chosen in the column help to develop the narratives, meaningful discussion and how the readers make sense of the

issues like imbalances, power relation, hierarchy and dominance problems. Using CDA to the linguistic components, the research elucidated how the linguistic styles enhance the discursive techniques and how it becomes a medium to make the readers reflect upon the essential topics in a balanced combination of humour and seriousness.

2.4 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined literature on pragmatics of the discursive strategies, functionality as a medium of linguistic stylistic communication, and representation of the strategies in the sociocultural hegemony. It also put forward the theoretical framework. The methodology of the research is provided in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section gives the research design used by the study. It also brings out the sampling methods as regards to target population and sample size. There is also a presentation of the data collection instruments and the data collection, analysis and presentation procedure as well. The research is also discussed, in terms of its ethical considerations, its validity and reliability.

3.2 Research Design

The current research utilised descriptive research design that belongs to the qualitative paradigm of research identified by (Kothari, 2019). The study also required a descriptive research design to determine lingual phenomena in discursive strategies framework of Mwalimu Andrew Staffroom Diary. This research design allowed to examine the language used in the text in a very profound way, thus providing a detailed understanding of how various discursive practices make up meaning, influence interpretation and lead the text toward its general communicative purposes. In the study, a descriptive method was utilized to reflect the complexity of linguistic forms, stylistic considerations, and rhetoric patterns, which define the discursive practices in The Staffroom Diary. This ensured that the scores are based on real language use and can be considered as more reliable and faithful to the language use patterns observed in the text.

In addition, descriptive research design helped to record and classify the linguistic peculiarities that identify *The Staffroom Diary* column. Discursive strategies refer to the use of language to create meaning, Persuasion, or involvement of readers; hence, a descriptive methodology helped identify patterns, themes and variations in discourse.

This approach is especially effective for analysing aspects such as lexical selections, syntactic configurations, pragmatic indicators, and rhetorical strategies utilized by the author. By concentrating on the content of the text instead of altering factors, the study delivered a lucid and impartial analysis of how language is employed to fulfil particular communication purposes.

3.3 Study Population

Since the study was confined to analyzing written texts, the articles are the primary data source and the population that the researcher aims to investigate. An average of 4 articles is posted each month bringing the study population to 48 articles in that year 2023. Words phrases and sentences served as a unit of analysis in the specific articles by Mwalimu Andrew within the *Staffroom Diary* column.

3.4 Sampling Procedure and Size

A subset of 16 articles was selected from the monthly average of 48 using stratified purposive sampling to ensure thematic and temporal diversity. In order to arrive at this figure, every first column each month and every last quarterly was considered. The selection was guided by recurring thematic orientations in *Staffroom Diary*, including issues of education and dominance. Analyzing all 48 texts would risk analytical saturation and potential redundancy, compromising depth for breadth. According to Guest, Namey, and Mitchell (2013), data saturation in qualitative discourse studies is often achieved with 12–20 texts, especially when thematic repetition becomes evident. Therefore, a manageable yet representative sample of 16 was sufficient to explore recurring discursive patterns, stylistic devices, and pragmatic cues. This focused analysis allowed for in-depth contextual interpretation, preserving analytical rigor while maintaining relevance across the broader corpus.

The study employed a multi-level linguistic analysis approach, using phrases, sentences, and complete texts as primary units of analysis. Individual words were considered only when tied to pragmatic markers (e.g., hedges, deixis, implicature cues). Phrases and sentences were the most critical levels, as they carried the discursive strategies and pragmatic meanings (such as irony, satire, and insinuation), while entire texts provided the macro-context necessary for interpreting sociocultural hegemony. This sequential approach made it possible to identify micro-level features of discourse as well as the macro-level socio-pragmatic interpretation as these frameworks are also included in critical discourse analysis and pragmatics (Fairclough, 2013; Levinson, 2000).

3.5 Instruments of Data Collection

In this study, the collection of primary data was done through a valid data extraction tool. It was extracted directly from the articles through Focused Group Discussion (FGDs). A text analysis guide which was explicitly designed to gather diverse pragmatic properties in the Staffroom Diary text, inclusive of speech acts, implicatures, code-switching, humour and irony. The latter is critical to the discovery of subtle semantics through which language can be used to express, codify, or critique hegemonic societal systems (Creswell, 2014). The analysis, for instance, examined speech acts to determine how they constructed power and authority, and implicatures to understand implied meanings and embedded ideological assumptions (Levinson, 1983). The concept of code switching was discussed as one of the strategies that Mwalimu Andrew resorts to move between the languages and cultural realities and, therefore, communicate with other social groups and negotiate power relations (Gumperz, 1982).

In order to assist in the extraction of these complex features data extraction tools were used, which consisted of a coding matrix or thematic analysis framework. The coding matrix also came in handy in the organisation and classification of different linguistic features that were revealed in the text making sure that the pattern of manipulation of language was well established and methodically analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Also, textual analysis gave an opportunity to dig deeper into the issues that came up in the text more than once, especially the ones related to sociocultural hegemony, e.g., the ostracizing of some social groups or the strengthening of the old power hierarchies (Mey, 2001). The methodological rigor of the study was achieved by using both, pragmatic analysis and the critical discourse analysis, which offered a coherent framework of comprehending how the linguistic choices are used to reflect and interrogate power structures in the Kenyan educational reality. The method of course not only makes the findings more valid, but helps the study be at par in terms of theoretical and empirical rigor.

3.5.1 The Extraction Tool

In the division of the linguistic units in the forms of the hierarchies of discourse in the Staffroom Diary fictional texts, the study applied the extraction tool. The extraction tool was used to sieve out the specific linguistic resources, in this case the textual features from the *Staffroom Diary* writings, which exhibit discursive instantiation of societal hegemonies. The extraction process ceased once the process reached the point of saturation, at which recurring features were noticeable, and no more new linguistic features could be discerned. The tool used is documented in Appendix 1.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion Guide

The study at hand included ten Focus Group Discussion (FGD) sessions that subjected the linguistic resources that had been extracted to confirmation by readers in real-life situations in the staffroom. FGDs are very useful in investigating shared experiences, attitudes and perceptions in real-time, and in the study of literature they can be used to measure how an individual reader interprets the text, as well as to identify group sense-making processes. The participants of such FGDs were teachers of English who are all graduates of diploma and above. They were selected among secondary school teachers in Kakamega South Sub-County. Ten groups that took part in discussions were chosen systematically out of the 31 secondary schools in the sub-county. Ab Aziz (2015) notes that a mini-group can consist of three participants, and this is the most comfortable group to use when eliciting detailed accounts, which is essential in the identification of linguistic units to be used in this study. Three respondents were selected in each category which formed a total of 30 FGD participants. Appendix II, is coded in the FGDs.

The teachers of English and Literature were considered the most probable readers of the *Staffroom Diary* texts in staffroom contexts. The participants were guided in rigorous exploration of sociocultural dimensions represented and stylistically packaged by the linguistic features utilized in the *Staffroom Diary* newspaper column. Each text was given to three participants who were requested to voluntarily read for two weeks prior to the group discussion session. The Personalized reading was aimed at giving the participants time to discern the linguistic patterns and structures, and how they shape the sociocultural nuances within the theoretical lenses of the CDA. It took 10 days with sessions taking a maximum of 3 hours. The points of engagement, for example, took the following guiding tracts of discussion:

From my reading of SDX, the linguistic strategy- nominalization is realized through the writer naming the characters as Y for the teacher... This way of naming reflects instances of power imbalances through referential authority

The FGD guide in Appendix (III) was a critical tool in providing qualitative data that covered the sociocultural hegemonies as packaged through the stylistic use linguistic resources. The group discussions complimented and tested the underlying deep meanings.

3.5.3 Textual Analysis Tool

The study considered Mwalimu Andrew's Diary writings as texts. The selected texts were subjected to textual analysis with the aim to exploring how the linguistic features and strategies that foreground power dynamics. Ultimately, the *Staffroom Diary* texts are a microcosm of the broader societal networks and human relationships. In this regard, language as social practice in both miniature and wider Perspectives is contextually and creatively used to represent a raft of realities in interactional relationships. Whereas content analysis is interested in quantitative data in the form of patterns and frequencies, textual analysis that this study adopted focused on the ties between the texts and their contexts in representing socio-hegemonic realities (Bhattacharjee, 2012)

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

The data collection involved collecting all available *Staffroom Diary* columns authored by Mwalimu Andrew within the designated time frame that is 2023 by the use of an extraction tool. A preliminary review was done to identify potential columns that are relevant to the study objectives and encompass a range of topics and discursive strategies. A representative sample of 16 columns were selected, from which data was extracted. The extracted linguistic features were subjected to focused group discussion for elicitation of further data that tested the interpretation of sociocultural hegemonies which was one of the research variables for this study.

3.7 Data Presentation and Analysis

The study employed thematic analysis to interpret the data obtained through text analysis and focused group discussion. The researcher began with reviewing the coded data for familiarity. Regular patterns and recurring themes within the coded data was highlighted to identify common discursive strategies, humorous elements, and language techniques used in Mwalimu Andrew's texts. The researcher then analyzed how discursive strategies were employed, the functionality of discursive strategies in realizing humour, and the compounding of social realities through discursive strategies. The discursive strategies used were contextualized to understand how these elements relate to the broader discourse on educational issues. The findings of the study were thematically grouped to create a comprehensive picture of *Mwalimu Andrew's* communication style. Based on the analysis, conclusions were drawn and discussion done to show how the findings align with the study objectives.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

This study adhered to established ethical standards in academic research, particularly those applicable to qualitative textual analysis. As the primary data comprised publicly available columns published in *Kenya's Sunday Nation* newspaper, issues of privacy and confidentiality were minimal. However, ethical responsibility was exercised in the representation of the author's work by ensuring proper attribution, accurate quotation, and the avoidance of misrepresentation. The texts were analysed within their intended satirical and social commentary context, and no content was taken out of context or distorted to suit the researcher's interpretations.

Secondly, the researcher ensured intellectual integrity and academic honesty by rigorously citing all secondary sources used in the development of the theoretical framework, literature review, and analytical procedures. Existing frameworks from

scholars in pragmatics and critical discourse analysis (e.g., Fairclough, Wodak, Levinson) were credited accordingly, following APA (7th edition) citation guidelines. All references to prior work, whether theoretical or empirical, were documented to avoid plagiarism and to maintain the transparency and verifiability of the research process.

Cacciattolo (2015) notes that research planning should be very important to pay specific attention to ethical considerations. In this study, the participants were assured that they did not have a compulsion to take part in the study and that they could decline to answer the questions or even refuse to deliver the questionnaire (Judkis-Cohn *et al.*, 2014). There was no influence on respondents, whether in form of incentives, benefits or any form of coercion in an attempt to make them respond to questions. In addition, the respondents were not supposed to reveal their identities in one way or another through Personal names or names of institutions or places of work.

This will be with the objective of maintaining the information provided, confidential and also securing the identities of respondents (Dodo *et al.*, 2014). The respondents were made anonymous throughout the process as a means of escaping legal pitfalls that would have an influence on the outcome of the research. The respondents were able to answer the questions in the questionnaire honestly because of assurance of secrecy. In line with advice by Keough and Tanabe (2011) which states that a researcher must get consent from relevant authorities before moving to the field for data collection, permits were sought and supplied by National Commission for Science and Technology (NACOSTI), the Office of the Directorate of Post -Graduate Studies at MMUST.

The recommendation by American Psychological Association (APA, 2010) was taken into account, thus the researcher acknowledged all referenced documents. Additionally, the researcher refrained from the utilization of false data as well as presentation of false research methodology and/ or results. Consequently, all interested stakeholders had access to results of this study when they needed them. The study was also subjected to an anti-plagiarism test for originality.

3.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research design and highlighted the sampling techniques of the target population and sample size. The chapter also submits the data collection instruments, the analysis and presentation procedures, and finally discusses the ethical consideration, its validity and reliability. The next chapter will present data analysis presentation and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents, analyses, and discusses the findings of the study based on the selected *Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary* texts. The chapter examines how pragmatic elements and discursive strategies are employed in the texts to represent, construct, or contest sociocultural hegemony in Kenyan society. The data is coded and aligned to the instruments of data collection. The analysis is organized thematically and guided by the research objectives, which focus on identifying discursive strategies, analysing their communicative functions and exploring their role in representing dominant social ideologies.

The data is analysed through the lens of pragmatics and CDA, drawing on theoretical constructs such as speech acts, implicature, presupposition, and Wodak's discursive strategies model. Each section of the analysis illustrates how specific linguistic features and communicative choices in the texts contribute to broader social meanings. Selected excerpts from the corpus are presented to support the interpretations, and each excerpt is followed by a detailed analytical commentary.

FGDs were also done to investigate the interpretation of the satire and other pragmatic nuances in the chosen texts by different readers, besides textual analysis. The respondents were English teachers working at secondary schools with the majority having more than ten years' experience in the linguistic and pedagogical sector. Their perspectives did serve as a rich source of interpretive insight that could be triangulated to get a pragmatic and discursive implication of the texts. The thematic coding of the

answers of the FGDs was combined with the textual analysis of the researcher to enhance the validity and depth of interpretation.

The discussion is integrated with the analysis, linking the findings to existing literature and theoretical perspectives. This integrated approach helps to demonstrate how the language in *Staffroom Diary* not only entertains but also critiques, negotiates, and sometimes reinforces societal norms and power relations.

4.2 Discursive Strategies

The first objective sought to describe the discursive strategies used by Mwalimu Andrew in his column, the *Staffroom Diary*. The data for this objective was obtained through a close, purposive reading and pragmatic analysis of selected *Staffroom Diary* texts, focusing on recurring linguistic patterns and communicative techniques used to express, critique, or satirize social realities. In the FGDs the participants who were in the form of language teachers and linguists, read and discussed the same chosen articles in order to prove the validity of the textual interpretations by the researcher as well as to extend them. Their observations were coded in terms and triangulated with the pragmatic account of the researcher in order to provide consistency, depth and interpretive reliability in the determination of discursive strategies. The table below aided in the description of the discursive strategies.

Table 4.1 Discursive strategies

strategy	Objective	devices
Referential/nomination	Construction of in-groups and out-groups.	Membership categorisation.
Predication	Labelling social actors more positively or negatively.	stereotypical, evaluative attributions of negative or positive traits implicit and explicit predicates

Argumentation	Justification of positive and negative attributes.	Used to justify inclusion or exclusion.
Perspectivisation	Expressing involvement. Positioning speaker's point of view.	Reporting, description, narration or quotation of events and utterances.
intensification	Modifying the epistemic status of a proposition	Intensifying the illocutionary utterance.

Source: Wodak and Meyer (2001)

The findings are presented thematically, with each identified discursive strategy illustrated by selected textual excerpts, followed by a critical interpretation that explains how the strategy functions pragmatically within the sociocultural context of the narrative.

In this view, discursive strategies were discussed by FGD 1, 2 and 3 as presented below;

4.2.1 Referential Nomination

The data revealed many cases when the author uses referential nomination in his columns. This is a process through which people or objects are referred to in discourse and the ways by which they are defined by readers. Shashkova (2019) suggests that this strategy entails the specification of subject identity and subject role in the social world, to impact social perception and behavior. It can consist of defining a Person as a 'teacher', 'student' or 'administrator', which means that certain things are expected from/to them and certain given privileges or power. Trivial as the novel Staffroom Diary maybe, its value lies in the fact that referential nomination by Mwalimu Andrew pinpoint not only the select ›characters‹ in the educational arena but social roles in general as well with all the implications attached, such as power relations and the like.

And by the way of naming the individuals, he builds up the stories which show the power relation and the cultural discourses, thus, encouraging readers to decode the text. Some of the instances evident in his columns include:

NOM. 1

Members of the public, enemies of development.

SD-1; ‘Six reasons why I will not release our KCPE results!’ Mwalimu Andrew uses the following terms. By selecting these specific terms, a teacher in FGD 1 argued that Mwalimu Andrew shapes how different groups are viewed. He said ‘Nouns and noun phrases give names to objects and in this case, referring to some individuals as "enemies of development" creates a negative image, implying that they hinder progress.’

NOM. 2

Acting acting HM

This phrase draws attention to bureaucratic absurdities and highlights his own role while subtly criticizing the hierarchies within the institution. McCabe (2025) purports that employees can be caught up in a logical paradox where a system prioritizes procedure over purpose. In this case, the education system prioritizes hierarchy and delegation of duties. This choice of language influences readers' perceptions and encourages them to reflect on the social dynamics at play.

According to Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), as articulated by Norman Fairclough (1995) and further developed by Van Dijk (2006), the use of evaluative and ideologically laden language, such as “enemies of development,” demonstrates how

discourse is strategically utilized to reproduce, contest, or validate power structures. CDA posits that language is not impartial; it is a social activity infused with ideological functions and capable of perpetuating sociocultural hierarchies.

NOM. 3

Branton, 'Kuya,' and 'Mrs. Atika

The use of specific names as above, provides clear identification of individuals within the school context. By referring to teachers and students by their names instead of generic terms, he personalizes the narrative and makes the characters more relatable to the readers. Besides highlighting Personal relationships, this approach also highlights the distinct roles and responsibilities of each individual within the school hierarchy. For instance, naming a teacher or student creates a sense of familiarity and connection, allowing readers to understand their unique contributions to the school environment. Furthermore, this strategy teachers argued, suggests a clear division between authority figures and subordinates, emphasizing the power dynamics present in the educational setting.

Within the framework of Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary, this phrase characterizes specific stakeholders (e.g., parents, school authorities, or education officers) as obstructive or retrogressive. This categorization not only undermines their perspectives but also positions the speaker — Mwalimu Andrew — as the embodiment of progress and rationality. This discursive technique corresponds with Fairclough's (2013) concept of ideological positioning, wherein language is employed to align

readers with specific viewpoints while alienating or disparaging others.

The reviewed literature demonstrates that pragmatic linguistic choices, such as labelling and evaluative adjectives, serve as potent instruments in the formation of "us vs. them" dichotomies (Wodak & Meyer, 2015). This method is frequently employed in socio-political and institutional discourse to bolster prevailing narratives or counteract dissenting ones. In the Kenyan context, these sentiments resonate with genuine difficulties in educational governance, frequently mirroring overarching concerns of power, responsibility, and community involvement – subjects thoroughly examined in regional studies.

Consequently, through Critical Discourse Analysis, the phrase “enemies of development” transcends mere rhetoric; it serves as a discursive strategy that bolsters the teacher’s authority while implicitly criticizing individuals viewed as impediments to advancement. This illustrates how linguistic manipulation, enhanced by humour or sarcasm, can incite profound reflection on hegemonic processes within educational and societal frameworks.

In SD-4 titled ‘*Kuya and I have reconciled, over to you Ruto and Raila*’, the author refers to ‘Kuya’ in various contexts, highlighting his characteristics, such as being lazy and unreachable. A teacher gave a reminder that proper nouns are more specific, thus nomination positions *Kuya* as a figure of disdain or irresponsibility, contributing to the power dynamics in the staffroom. By labelling him this way, the author reinforces the socio-cultural expectation of accountability among educators. According to Van-Dijk (1998), "The way we refer to people and groups is a key means of constructing and negotiating power relationships in discourse." This means that the choices made in

referential nomination can reinforce existing hierarchies or challenge them by altering how individuals are perceived. Thus, the strategic use of names not only reflects social structures but also actively participates in the ongoing negotiation of power within discourse.

Notably, in SD-5 '*Is Apostle Elkana really a columnist?*' there are these examples;

NOM. 4

Pastors, '*man of God*,' and '*cult*

In the above example, Mwalimu Andrew refers to religious figures and groups. This choice of language is significant as it frames how readers perceive these individuals and their communities. For instance, referring to someone as a pastor or man of God implies a sense of respect and authority, suggesting genuine faith and leadership. In contrast, labelling a group as a "cult" carries negative connotations, implying manipulation or exploitation. This use of referential nomination creates a dichotomy between authentic religious practice and potentially harmful beliefs. By choosing these terms, Mwalimu Andrew highlights the complexities of religious identity and authority, prompting readers to consider the power dynamics at play within these groups.

NOM. 5

Fiolina as '*Fiolina*' or '*her*;

The author refers to Fiolina as 'her' While describing Yunia as 'my elder sister' and referring to Fiolina's family members as 'her brother,' 'sister,' and 'father.' This choice of naming creates a Personal connection with Fiolina, making her feel more relatable and significant in the narrative. In contrast, the use of general terms for her family

members depersonalizes them, suggesting a degree of separation. This strategy implies that Fiolina occupies a more intimate and central role, while her family is portrayed as external and potentially adversarial. This contrast reinforces Andrew's sense of self and agency within the family dynamic, emphasizing his Perspective and experience while subtly positioning Fiolina as a focal point in the discussion.

The author's reference selections in the Staffroom Diary—particularly concerning Fiolina and her family—expose intentional discourse techniques. The repeated use of the name 'Fiolina' and the pronoun 'her' fosters closeness and significance, establishing her as a pivotal and emotionally impactful presence in the narrator's life. This personalized reference emphasizes her presence, consistent with work indicating that naming methods can create intimacy or separation in conversation (Reisigl & Wodak, 2009).

The characterization of her family members by generic relational terms like 'brother,' 'sister,' or 'father' indicates discursive detachment. By omitting the names of these persons, the narrator implicitly characterizes them as external and maybe adversarial figures within the tale. According to respondents in FGD 2, This corresponds with CDA conclusions that lexical selections indicate social stance, frequently reinforcing in-group versus out-group dynamics (van Leeuwen, 2008).

The disparity in referential language enhances Andrew's subjectivity and narrative authority. Designating Yunia as 'my elder sister' underscores his familial identity and ethical stance, while portraying Fiolina's family as her kin, thereby establishing a contradiction that favours his viewpoint. CDA scholars contend that these narrative frameworks frequently function ideologically to validate the speaker's perspective and to normalize their social experiences (Fairclough, 1995; Machin & Mayr, 2012).

Consequently, these nomenclature strategies are not solely aesthetic; they are

linguistically encoded manifestations of authority and identity that enable the author to assert his agency, influence reader perception, and subtly interact with sociocultural hegemonies, especially concerning gender, marriage, and kinship roles within Kenyan society.

NOM. 6

Non-pedagogical people and 'acting deputy.

In SD-7 '*Mid-term break started early thanks to Fiolina*', there is the use of the above phrases to categorize individuals based on their roles within the education sector or their position in the school hierarchy. The term "non-pedagogical people" implies a separation between educators and those who do not directly engage in teaching, suggesting that educators possess unique knowledge and expertise. Meanwhile, the title "acting deputy" indicates a temporary leadership role, highlighting the authority and responsibility associated with that position. Together, these terms create distinctions among individuals, positioning teachers as more knowledgeable or authoritative compared to others. This choice of language reflects a sociocultural hierarchy within the school environment, revealing how Mwalimu Andrew's discourse shapes Perceptions of power and expertise among different roles in education.

The terms "non-pedagogical people" and "acting deputy" in SD-7 exemplify the purposeful use of language to support social roles and power dynamics, a fundamental principle of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as defined by Fairclough (1995, 2013). CDA asserts that discourse is inherently biased, as it is intertwined with and indicative of social structures, ideologies, and power dynamics. Mwalimu Andrew's categorization of language constructs delineates and fortifies the professional identity

and epistemic authority of teachers in relation to other school stakeholders.

The phrase “non-pedagogical individuals” was particularly identified by a respondent that it linguistically marginalizes those not involved in direct instruction by positioning them as outsiders to fundamental educational processes. This was agreed on by the rest of FGD 2 members. This corresponds with Van Dijk’s (2008) concept of the ideological square, wherein discourse encompasses and favourably represents “us” (the in-group) while omitting or minimizing “them” (the out-group). In this framework, educators constitute the in-group, possessing expertise and moral authority, whilst non-teaching personnel are discreetly relegated to a peripheral status.

The designation "acting deputy" underscores a provisional and potentially precarious authority, emphasizing hierarchies even within the educational field. This illustrates institutional power dynamics and corroborates the Critical Discourse Analysis perspective that titles and roles in discourse serve as instruments for legitimization and contestation of power (Wodak & Meyer, 2016). The phrase may suggest a challenge to the validity of that authority, particularly when contrasted with the narrator’s comments or scepticism—a manifestation of discursive resistance commonly observed in satirical or critical literature.

This language use reflects broader hegemonic systems inside educational institutions, where authority is both official and discursively produced. The literature on teacher identity and speech (e.g., Gee, 2011) indicates that these discursive methods influence public perceptions of competence, leadership, and expertise, frequently mirroring society norms and reinforcing existing power dynamics.

Consequently, the employment of such terminology is not solely descriptive but ideologically charged, functioning to normalize hierarchical distinctions within the

educational environment. Mwalimu Andrew employs strategic word choices to engage in discursive hegemony and discreetly favouring his educational expertise, while challenging the legitimacy of others' authority. This corresponds with CDA's fundamental assertion that discourse influences and is influenced by institutional, social, and cultural power dynamics.

NOM. 7

...the Person TSC was trusting to be a deputy HM', 'mere messenger

Equally, Kuya is referred as 'the Person TSC was trusting to be a deputy HM' and contrasts it with terms like 'mere messenger' in reference to himself. The strategy here serves to construct Kuya as unworthy or immature for the role, framing him as unsuitable for authority. The nomination reinforces a hierarchy, suggesting that while Kuya is being considered for promotion, his Perceived shortcomings disqualify him in Andrew's eyes. The reference to "TSC" and "deputy HM" invokes institutional authority and hierarchy, underscoring the power Andrew wields as gatekeeper of Kuya's promotion. The finding agrees with the idea by Koski *et al.*, (2015) which indicates that nomination reinforces hierarchy by assigning specific labels and categories to individuals or groups, which affects how they are Perceived and valued within a social context. Conversely, terms that diminish the status of others, like "non-pedagogical people," highlight a lack of knowledge or connection to the core activities of the educational setting. This linguistic distinction not only reflects existing social structures but also perpetuates them, influencing interactions and reinforcing power dynamics within the discourse.

NOM. 8

Kuya, 'the senior-most teacher after you.

Elsewhere, a formal tone is noted where the Sub-county TSC Director repeatedly refers to Kuya formally as 'Kuya' and 'the senior-most teacher after you.' This reference positions Kuya as a deserving authority figure, challenging the narrator's (Mwalimu Andrew's) reluctance to recognize Kuya's role. The nomination emphasizes institutional hierarchy and the director's endorsement of Kuya's position, reflecting the expected respect for formal titles and roles.

NOM. 9

Apostle Elkana, The Revered Principal Spiritual Superintendent of THOAG (The Holiest of All Ghosts) Tabernacle Assembly.

The elaborate title that sets Apostle Elkana apart as a figure of authority in religion, emphasizing the cultural importance of spiritual figures in the community, in the column 'Did turning down Apostle Elkana's prayers jinx us? He is referred to as "Apostle Elkana, The Revered Principal Spiritual Superintendent of THOAG (The Holiest of All Ghosts) Tabernacle Assembly." The phrasing adds a touch of satire, subtly questioning the grandiosity and Perceived necessity of such roles in everyday school life.

The situation of Apostle Elkana, the Esteemed Principal Spiritual Superintendent of THOAG (The Holiest of All Ghosts) Tabernacle Assembly, exemplifies the function of titles and nomenclature as discursive techniques. This title's excessive formality and verbosity demonstrate how language may establish authority, bolster religious validity, and simultaneously provoke critical reflection through mockery. The article "Did turning down Apostle Elkana's prayers jinx us?" illustrates how such rhetoric

invokes cultural veneration while simultaneously ironizing the function of spiritual figures within institutional and educational contexts.

The CDA theory asserts that language is inherently biased; it both reflects and influences power relations (Fairclough, 1995). The article's title and description, albeit amusing, possess ideological significance—interrogating the potential commodification or exaggeration of spirituality in educational contexts. This corresponds with van Dijk's (2008) concept of the “ideological square,” wherein the emphasis and de-emphasis in discourse serve to portray specific actors as powerful, central, or virtuous. The practical and rhetorical selections in this narrative—via lexical hyperbole, honorific accumulation, and sarcastic reference—reveal underlying conflicts regarding religious authority, communal standards, and cultural dominance.

The literature endorses this strategy by urging researchers to investigate how stylistic aspects (honorifics, idioms, satire) influence the formation and negotiation of sociocultural meaning. Scholars such as Gee (2011) and Blommaert (2005) contend that the micro-level characteristics of text (including phrasing, language, and tone) are essential for uncovering macro-level ideologies, especially in commonplace narratives like those presented in *Staffroom Diary*.

4.2.2 Argumentation

Argumentation as a discursive strategy, involves constructing logical reasoning to persuade or inform an audience about a particular viewpoint (Alnasser, 2023). Zotzmann and O'Regan (2016) emphasize that in conversations, argumentation helps establish credibility and engage listeners by providing evidence or reasoning to support claims. In Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), argumentation is recognized as a key element that reveals underlying power relations and ideological positions within

discourse. This strategy shapes how individuals present their perspectives and influence the beliefs of others. In Mwalimu Andrew's columns, argumentation is evident in various instances where he articulates his views on educational issues, using logical reasoning and examples to persuade readers. A few instances include;

ARG-1

As a leader, you should be happy when your people grow, not sad.

That is true Madam, but it should be the right people growing, not just anyone... the right people

In the above excerpt from SD-10, Mwalimu Andrew uses argumentation as a discursive strategy to indirectly critique Kuya's appointment by stating that '*the right people*' should grow within the educational system. This phrase implies that Kuya is not qualified for promotion, questioning the rationale behind his elevation to a higher position. The implied meaning of this statement subtly challenges the logic of promotions based solely on seniority, suggesting that qualifications and merit should play a crucial role in such decisions. By doing so, the narrator resists the existing hierarchical norms and advocates for a merit-based structure, revealing Personal biases and preferences that reflect a desire for more equitable practices in the educational environment.

He uses this strategy to justify his decision to withhold Kuya's promotion letter until he demonstrates professional maturity. He states;

ARG-2

...My plan was to give the letter to Kuya at an appropriate time. Appropriate time in this case meant a time when he showed professional maturity to receive the letter...

FGD 2 respondents submitted that the above multiclausal sentence shows that Andrew believes it is essential for Kuya to be ready for the responsibility that comes with the promotion. A respondent insisted that Andrew constructs his delay as a logical and principled action rather than a mere administrative choice. By framing his decision in this way, he positions himself as a responsible authority figure who prioritizes professional development. The group agreed and concluded that the assertion in the sentence highlights how Andrew's argumentation reinforces his role as an evaluator of merit, marginalizing Kuya and underscoring a hierarchical dynamic within the educational setting. Through this strategy, Andrew not only legitimizes his actions but also asserts his authority, shaping the narrative around professionalism and readiness in the workplace. As observed by Cap (2013), legitimization can be achieved through various linguistic techniques, such as employing authoritative references, appealing to social norms, or presenting logical reasoning. This finding further agrees with Van (2008) who argues that the use of specific discourse structures allows speakers or writers to position their claims within accepted frameworks, making them more persuasive and socially acceptable. Similarly, Wodak and Meyer (2009) highlight that legitimization involves the strategic use of language to align Personal beliefs with broader societal values, effectively bridging the gap between individual opinions and collective norms.

Further, he uses argumentation to justify his decision to remove Alex from a leadership role. He assigns negative traits to Alex, such as 'lateness,' 'absenteeism,' and

‘backbiting,’ which collectively paint him as irresponsible and disloyal. Mwalimu Andrew underscores this point by stating in the same article SD-08

ARG-3

...I can assure you that another HM would have fired him within a week...

These descriptions serve to support Andrew’s decision, presenting Alex as unfit for a leadership position and making Andrew’s choice appear both reasonable and necessary. Through this, Andrew reinforces his authority and portrays himself as a responsible figure within the school hierarchy, thereby supporting a structure where the head teacher’s decisions are unquestioned. In addition, he uses the same strategy to justify his strict control over household spending, in the article ‘*Mid-term break started early, thanks to Fiolina*’. He references ‘economic difficulties’ and claims that he alone understands the ‘pinch,’ positioning himself as the only one equipped to manage financial matters responsibly. This argument appeals to a sense of economic responsibility, presenting Mwalimu as the rational, practical decision-maker who must impose order to protect the household’s stability. By framing himself in this way, Mwalimu reinforces a paternalistic role, suggesting that his authority over finances is both necessary and justified. This discourse not only portrays Mwalimu as the dominant figure in managing resources but also reflects a broader social expectation that the head, whether in an institution or family setup, assumes leadership and control.

In SD-06, Mwalimu Andrew uses argumentation to justify his rejection of certain negotiators, reinforcing his authority in the process. For example, he logically dismisses Kuya’s suitability in ‘*Why I cancelled bipartisan talks on Fiolina’s return.*’

ARG-4

...Anyone serious about any talks would not put Kuya in a negotiations team...

This reasoning supports Andrew's decision by questioning Kuya's credibility, subtly implying that only qualified and serious individuals should be involved in the discussions. Through this argument, Andrew demonstrates his control over who participates, asserting his agency and reinforcing his resistance to influences he considers unfit. This strategic use of argumentation allows him to maintain power in the negotiation process, positioning him as a discerning and authoritative figure within the reconciliation discourse.

Using argumentative strategy, Kuya argues that Elkana's church is a cult because it lacks substantial contributions to the school. Sella adds that characteristics like selling anointing oil and multiple titles also signify cultism.

ARG-5

... this so-called church is a cult that does nothing to this school...How can a pastor call himself Revered Principal Superintendent, and I don't know what?" wondered Kuya. "Isn't that clearly a cult?..."

These arguments, found in SD-5, suggest that genuine religious groups should offer tangible benefits to society, while those that focus on profit or self-importance raise suspicions. By framing cultism through these characteristics, the text encourages readers to adopt a critical view of religious groups that lack community support or rely on elaborate titles, reinforcing socially accepted distinctions between authentic and questionable religious practices.

Finally, Mwalimu Andrew employs argumentation to justify his stance on exam result disclosures. He uses statements like "Results are private," "KNEC is the only body mandated to announce results," and "exam Performance is not my KPI," to logically argue against releasing the results himself. By framing his argument within the rules set by the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC), he reinforces the authority of institutional processes over Personal discretion. This reasoning not only supports his refusal but also emphasizes the importance of professional boundaries in education, suggesting that certain responsibilities lie solely within institutional frameworks rather than individual actions.

4.2.3 Predication

According to Reisgl and Wodak (2015), predication qualifies social objects, phenomena, and actors. It is also a discursive technique applied to attribute qualities that create an image of characters to the readers. It serves to strengthen or question stereotypes and tends to shape the attitude of the readers on the objects of description. According to Wodak (2001) as one of the major players in discourse analysis, predication is often applied to justify power relations and social hierarchies through naming groups in ways that either makes them dominant or disadvantaged. With this approach, discourse may either uphold the norms of a society or destabilize them depending on the elements that it foregrounds. An example of a social predication that qualifies social order is as follows:

PRED.1

young but simple Anglican Church pastor

revered Apostle Elkana with expensive anointing oil.

Mwalimu Andrew describes a *'young but simple Anglican Church pastor'* in contrast to the *'revered Apostle Elkana with expensive anointing oil.'* In this case, FGD 3 argued that the adjectives used bring out a contrast between the humility of the Anglican pastor and the affluence-based vision of Apostle Elkana. This opposition, they said defies social norms of religious societies implying that humility is not always prevalent and that emphasis is given more to prosperity and reputation. In giving these figures certain characteristic features, Mwalimu Andrew makes readers wonder whether some religious hierarchies are being honest, and he uses these descriptions to give a thought on how religious roles are changing. This is also depicted in PRE 2 below:

PRED-2

Professional maturity 'violent'

Predication in Mwalimu Andrew's columns is evident when Kuya is portrayed with negative traits, such as lacking "professional maturity" and being "violent," with hints at an unfit temper for leadership. This negative framing paints Kuya as both professionally and morally inferior, creating a contrast where Andrew appears more suited for leadership and deserving of respect. By associating Kuya with incompetence and aggression, Andrew uses predication to discredit Kuya's qualifications and strengthen his own position and authority. This strategic choice reinforces Andrew's narrative and supports the hierarchy he aims to maintain.

The strategy is clearly used to characterize individuals in ways that reveal underlying stereotypes and social dynamics. For instance, Fiolina is described as being "at a lower intellectual level" and struggling to understand economic terms like "bear run."

This is illustrated in *'Mid-term break started early, thanks to Fiolina'* text when Mwalimu Andrew recounts a conversation:

PRED-3

...And I will not borrow carelessly during this bear run... She asked me what a bear run was. I had forgotten that I was dealing with someone at a lower intellectual level...

This characterization in the extract above implies that women in domestic roles are often viewed as less informed about financial or economic matters. By portraying Fiolina in this way, the discourse reinforces a stereotype that positions men as the knowledgeable providers, while women are depicted as lacking expertise. This representation sustains a sociocultural power dynamic, suggesting that women's contributions in areas like finance are undervalued and that their roles are confined to the domestic sphere. In another instance Fiolina's family is described through their economic conditions

PRED-4

they have been taking kunde daily and breakfast is a foreign word.

These descriptions suggest a life of hardship and poverty, highlighting a stark social contrast between them and Andrew, who is portrayed as relatively better-off.

Besides, Fiolina's father mentions Andrew as 'my son', 'kijana' (young man), but the former is closer, more respectful than the latter. Such a shift in address reflects a trend towards reconciliation and respect in which, in this way, Andrew claims his position with respect to them. Van (2011) on discourse and power observes that structures predicated typically set the stage to reinforce or question social norms related to authority and status. In the light of this Perspective, Mwalimu Andrew's exploitation of predication is analyzed through focusing on how Andrew's family is described as economically unequal while amplifying his status within the family.

Religious leaders exploit their followers as shown in PRE 5 below:

PRED-5

stupid

cult leader

This is the way Sella, in SD-5 'Is Apostle Elkana really a cultist?' describes followers while Alex calls Apostle Elkana a 'cult leader'. The implication of these characterizations is that followers are naive, willing to sell their possessions, while leaders are portrayed as the manipulative and untrustworthy. Both followers and religious leaders are attributed negative qualities in the language used, however this critique the morals of their practices, and in turn the authenticity of their actions. This predication makes readers ask questions about motivations of some religious actions and the truth behind leaders in faith positions. Discourse can predicate attributes to individuals or entities finally reinforcing stereotypes or biases. Through repeated discursive linking of some 'groups' with particular 'attributes', discourse subtly molds society's interpretation and valuation of these 'groups.' According to Bogdan (2009), predication is not neutral; it actively constructs social reality thus constructing readers' or listeners' belief and attitude to the subject of predication.

4.2.4 Perspectivation

This strategy involves presenting a particular viewpoint or stance, allowing the speaker or writer to convey subjective attitudes, opinions, or biases within the text. According to Wodak (2001), Perspectivation enables the author to subtly guide the audience's interpretation by emphasizing certain details while downplaying or omitting others. This approach allows discourse to reflect Personal or cultural Perspectives, often

highlighting specific interpretations of events, people, or ideas. The data indicated several instances where Mwalimu Andrew employs this strategy, using it purposefully to shape readers' understanding in a manner that aligns with his Perspective.

In SD-12, *Six reasons why I will not release our KCPE results!* Mwalimu Andrew employs perspectivation to frame information from his Personal viewpoint, shaping how readers interpret events and responsibilities.

PERF-1

“I did not understand the hurry for releasing the results,”

Mwalimu Andrew presents himself as a careful, deliberate leader who values thoroughness over speed. This perspective positions him as someone focused on quality rather than immediate outcomes. He further clarifies his role by mentioning that academic results are not part of his Key performance Indicators (KPI), subtly distancing himself from direct responsibility for KCPE outcomes. This approach allows him to communicate his priorities while also suggesting that any issues with exam results fall outside his control, reinforcing his image as a competent but measured leader within the school hierarchy.

4.2.5 Intensification

Intensification as a discursive strategy involves amplifying certain aspects of language to heighten emotional impact or importance, emphasizing particular ideas or viewpoints. Within Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), intensification reveals how speakers or writers highlight specific issues to shape listeners' or readers' Perceptions and reactions. This strategy often uses adjectives, adverbs, or strong statements, allowing a speaker to make an issue appear more urgent, important, or undeniable.

Donohue and Hamilton (2022) observe that intensification is common in Persuasive contexts, as it can influence the audience by creating a sense of immediacy or severity. In conversations, intensification is identifiable when a speaker uses words like ‘always,’ ‘never,’ or ‘extremely’ to stress their position, framing certain actions or beliefs as especially significant or problematic. Intensification helps to build a narrative that directs attention to particular elements, often supporting underlying ideological or emotional appeals. See the extract INTEN 1 that is evidence of attention seeking devices:

INTEN-1

What a man!

As seen in SD-1: *A tribute to my long-time neighbour, Dr Dawood*, the exclamation ‘*What a man!*’ conveys strong admiration and respect for Dawood, highlighting his exceptional character. This intensification not only draws attention to Dawood’s positive traits but also encourages readers to see him as a role model. By amplifying Dawood’s qualities, Mwalimu Andrew reinforces the significance of his character within the narrative, making his role more memorable and influential for the audience. This strategy effectively enhances the emotional tone, deepening the reader’s engagement with the story.

It is further noted that Mwalimu Andrew’s Staff Diary frequently uses intensification to emphasize his commitment to educational success and highlight important achievements as seen in 2, 3,4 below:

INTEN-2

Nothing can be further from the truth

INTEN-3

this is a huge milestone

INTEN-4

I promise you that this 2023 is the year when we will do it again; much better'

The above phrases demonstrate Andrew's use of strong language to convey confidence. By describing progress as a 'huge milestone,' he elevates the significance of achievements, suggesting that positive developments are taking place despite any criticism. This intensity not only reinforces his dedication but also aims to inspire support from his audience, promoting a positive image of both the school and its leadership. In another instance, Mwalimu Andrew uses intensification to emphasize his commitment and determination toward improving *Mwisho wa Lami Primary School*. For instance,

INTEN-5

I can't believe anyone would want me out and look out for a truly transformed Mwisho wa Lami Primary

The phrases amplify his resolve and confidence as a leader. These expressions highlight his strong dedication to the school's progress, portraying him as an agent of significant change. Within the CDA, intensification is significant because it reveals underlying ideologies and power dynamics in communication. For instance, when Mwalimu Andrew uses intensified phrases in his columns, he not only conveys his personal commitment but also encourages readers to share his vision for change. This linguistic choice helps shape the narrative around leadership and transformation, highlighting the role of language in constructing social realities and reinforcing the authority of the speaker. Through this strategy, intensification becomes a tool for

Persuasion and mobilization, reflecting the broader implications of discourse in shaping attitudes and beliefs within a community.

4.3 Functionality of Discursive Strategies and Communication of Social Reality Interaction

The second objective of this study sought to examine the functionality of the discursive strategies identified in *Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary* texts, specifically in relation to how they facilitate the communication of social reality and interaction within Kenyan society. This involved analysing how language choices and pragmatic techniques are used not merely for stylistic or rhetorical effect, but as tools for constructing meaning, negotiating power, and engaging with social issues such as education, politics, and class dynamics.

Data for this objective, as discussed by FGD 4, 5 and 6 was extracted through detailed textual analysis of selected excerpts that featured distinct pragmatic devices linked to representations of everyday institutional and interpersonal interactions. The analysis focused on how these strategies shape reader Perception and reflect or challenge lived realities.

The findings are presented thematically, with each theme illustrating a particular communicative function of the discursive strategies. Each section includes relevant textual examples followed by a critical explanation of how the strategy operates pragmatically to reflect or shape the social interactions portrayed in the narrative. The functions are discussed as legitimizing authority, reinforcing group identity and amplifying achievements and personal reflection and perspective.

4.3.1 Legitimizing Authority

Legitimizing authority is a key function of discursive strategy, especially in the context of CDA. By using specific linguistic techniques, individuals can assert their authority and control over situations. For example, through argumentation, speakers can provide reasons or justifications that validate their position, making it difficult for others to challenge them. This can be seen in educational settings, where school leaders use formal language to highlight their roles and responsibilities. Fairhurst (2010) notes that irony and metaphors can reinforce authority by framing critics as obstacles to progress, thus positioning the speaker as a legitimate figure. Within the framework of CDA, such legitimization aligns with the tenet of power relations, which emphasizes that discourse is a site where power is exercised, negotiated, and sometimes resisted. Through language, speakers construct authority and sustain institutional hierarchies, often naturalizing dominance as common sense or moral order. In *Staffroom Dairy*, Mwalimu Andrew largely employs linguistic elements to exact weight and legitimize authority.

In *SD-I*, respondents in FGD 4 observed that the narrator employs argumentation to assert control over decisions regarding exam results. He bolsters his authority by making formal comparisons to institutional entities like the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC), which elevates his role from that of an ordinary teacher to a quasi-bureaucratic figure. This strategy aligns with Al-Ramahi et al. (2020), who found that positive self-representation and actor description are crucial in shaping perceptions of authority. The narrator's ironic labelling of critics as "enemies of development" simultaneously mocks dissenters and reinforces his leadership position.

Similarly, in *SD-4*, the narrator's proactive stance during teachers' absence reflects what Ufot (2022) terms "discursive coherence devices"—linguistic tactics that sustain engagement and reinforce hierarchical structure. The narrator uses satire to criticize Kuya's inaction, portraying him as unreliable. His ironic remark about Kuya "protecting his property during a protest" exposes cowardice, contrasting sharply with the narrator's image of bravery and responsibility. This aligns with Dragan's (2015) argument that metaphoric irony in discourse often functions to expose moral or institutional weakness while preserving the speaker's moral high ground.

During the reconciliation talks, Andrew uses argumentation to legitimize authority. This is evidenced in the *SD-6* when he positions himself as an important community figure;

...As you know, ours is the most respected and most stable marriage in Mwisho wa Lami and its environs...

His use of self-praise, as noted by FGD respondents, conceals marital tension while asserting symbolic authority. This echoes Fairhurst's (2010) argument that irony and metaphor reinforce leadership legitimacy by framing critics as obstructive forces. The narrator's mock-formal tone mirrors what Herbert (2009) identifies as humour's persuasive quality—using comic exaggeration to communicate serious social truths.

Further, in the seventh column, Andrew's metaphorical use of economic terminology such as "bear run" to discuss household budgeting illustrates his authority in domestic matters. As Kumar (2022) notes, stylistic linguistic choices enhance the author's ability to communicate complex ideas accessibly. The narrator's ironic statement that "someone in Form Two is not a kid" not only underscores his paternal authority but

also displays humour as a pragmatic strategy to maintain relational control, consistent with Herbert's (2009) findings on humour's role in sustaining authority through indirect persuasion.

The functionality of legitimizing authority is evident through the narrator's use of argumentation in SD-8. By asserting that he has "been running the school for long," the narrator emphasizes his experience and control within the school hierarchy, positioning himself as a legitimate authority. This statement suggests that his knowledge and leadership precede recent changes, reinforcing his status. Additionally, the narrator employs irony when he discusses the director's insistence on appointing Kuya, which subtly critiques the bureaucratic procedures of the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). His remark, "I had no such plans," conveys a sense of defiance towards the TSC's pressures, adding a layer of humour. This blend of irony and casual dismissal not only showcases the narrator's authority but also creates a distance from the institutional expectations, ultimately reinforcing his role as the decision-maker within the school.

In SD-11, the narrator legitimizes his authority by highlighting budget constraints and government regulations, particularly when he states,

...there is no vote head for prayers or anointing oil...

Respondents in FGD 4 and 5 had a similar argument (though in different forums) that the formal reasoning reinforces his responsibility as headmaster while introducing irony regarding the Apostle's insistence on blessings. By contrasting the desire for spiritual support with the practical limitations of school funding, the narrator demonstrates the challenges of his role. Furthermore, his refusal to engage with the

Apostle, despite family pressure, serves as a metaphor for leadership. It illustrates how he must balance community expectations with the requirements of the educational system, emphasizing his commitment to maintaining authority in a complex situation.

The narrator's strategies for legitimizing authority reveal the intricate dynamics between leadership, community expectations, and institutional constraints in the educational setting. This reflects the broader themes explored in CDA, which examines how language is used to exert power, construct identities, and maintain social hierarchies. Fairclough (1992) and Van (1998) argue that discourse is not merely a reflection of social realities but actively shapes them. In this case, the narrator's use of formal reasoning and irony underscores his authority while also highlighting the tensions between community demands and institutional responsibilities. This aligns with findings from studies like those of Lemke (1998), who discusses how educators must often navigate competing demands from various stakeholders, thereby shaping their identities and authority in complex ways.

4.3.2 Reinforcing Group Identity

The function of reinforcing group identity in discourse centres on uniting individuals under a shared sense of belonging and purpose. By delineating clear boundaries between insiders and outsiders, discourse serves to solidify group cohesion and loyalty. This strategy emphasizes common values, interests, and objectives that bind members together, strengthening their collective identity. Scholars in CDA acknowledge that this function plays a vital role in maintaining group unity, as it positions individuals within a community of shared beliefs and goals, which can enhance group influence and internal solidarity.

In reinforcing group identity, the narrator uses referential nomination to define social groups, effectively marking distinctions between insiders and outsiders. Respondents in FGD 6 agreed that labels like '*Apostle Elkana*' and '*acting acting HM*' are not merely titles; they establish a social hierarchy within the school while highlighting key roles and relationships. The repetitive phrasing of '*acting acting HM*' introduces a satirical tone, lightly mocking bureaucratic formalities and emphasizing the narrator's authority. This satire adds a humorous layer, which enhances the narrative's appeal and subtly critiques the rigidity of administrative titles. Ultimately, this strategic naming strengthens the speaker's identity as a central figure in the school community, while underscoring the nuanced dynamics of authority and group membership.

In addition, Andrew uses referential nomination to clearly mark social boundaries, establishing a distinct in-group versus out-group dynamic. Phrases like "enemies of development" label outsiders, contrasting them with the narrator's in-group of dedicated educators. This use of specific labels strengthens group cohesion by associating the narrator and his allies with positive, progressive qualities, while setting opponents apart. The term "acting acting HM" adds a humorous touch, using satire to subtly critique bureaucratic excesses while emphasizing the narrator's unique role. This humour not only reinforces his authority but also aligns him with his colleagues, building solidarity among those who recognize and share his challenges. This is also evident in the fourth story where establishing group identity in the school context is achieved through referential nomination, where specific titles like "head boy" define social hierarchies and establish clear roles within the group. This strengthens group identity, creating a sense of community and order among those in authority. Additionally, metaphor serves as a powerful tool, framing the contrasting ideologies of the narrator and Kuya as a figurative battleground, which highlights their differing

approaches to school governance. Comparing these differences to “Athenian” and “Spartan” educational philosophies emphasizes an ideological divide, reinforcing the distinction between leadership styles and shaping how group identity is Perceived and valued within the school. Bahammam (2018) argues that CDA show that referential nomination and metaphor are instrumental in establishing group dynamics and affirming social hierarchies. Similar findings by Mayr (2008) suggest that these discursive elements build collective identity by clarifying roles, aligning members with shared beliefs, and distinguishing opposing views, all of which strengthen cohesion within institutional settings.

4.3.3 Amplifying Achievements

Amplifying achievement highlight successes and reinforces the narrator's leadership. Through language that elevates specific accomplishments, such as reaching academic milestones or improving school standards, this strategy magnifies positive outcomes and establishes a sense of pride and credibility. This approach often uses intensified language to draw attention to achievements, making them appear remarkable or historic, thus strengthening the narrator’s reputation.

In order to amplify achievements, respondents in FGD 5 denoted that intensification helps elevate the significance of events and figures central to the group’s values (Atatfa & Al-Mamoory, 2017). Through the narrator’s use of hyperbolic phrases, such as ‘*earth-shaking event*’ and ‘*momentous,*’ he underscores his enthusiasm and portrays Fiolina’s return as a pivotal moment that dramatically shifts the household’s atmosphere. This amplified language not only marks her presence as transformative but also suggests her essential role within the household structure. Through celebratory descriptions of the feast she prepares, the narrator emphasizes her contributions, presenting her as a key figure who revitalizes both household morale and the economic

situation. The metaphor of '*transforming the fiscal situation*' further positions her as integral to the family's wellbeing, reinforcing her valued status within the group.

Further, it is used to amplify the impact of reconciliation efforts, portraying the outcome as highly significant. His language emphasizes a sense of communal relief and gratitude, underscoring his role in creating a positive environment. Phrases like "most successful week" and metaphors such as "truce" and "unlocking pending things" make the negotiation process appear transformative for the community. Through this strategic exaggeration, the speaker not only boosts his own image as a mediator but also strengthens a shared identity among community members, uniting them under the impression of collective achievement and harmony.

Through predication, Andrew attributes distinct, negative traits to Kuya, such as laziness and self-interest. These descriptions intensify the tension between them by highlighting Kuya's Perceived inadequacies, which heightens the emotional impact of their rivalry. Through humour, like referencing Kuya's fear of '*hot porridge*,' the narrator adds a light-hearted but cutting critique that reinforces Kuya's characterization as timid and uncommitted. This portrayal strengthens the narrator's position by evoking audience sympathy and subtly justifying his frustrations with Kuya's lack of dedication, making the conflict more relatable and engaging.

In addition, intensification is evident in phrases like '*for the first time ever*' and '*this is a huge milestone*,' which elevate the narrator's accomplishments. Exaggeration is often used here, as he amplifies his success in creating '*100% transition to secondary school*,' subtly elevating his impact. This use of exaggeration and celebratory language reflects a humorous self-promotion, enhancing his leadership image while subtly poking fun at his own inflated sense of importance.

By focusing on moments like Clement's timely arrival just before the first paper in the SD-8, the speaker builds suspense and emphasizes the significance of the achievement, turning routine events into notable accomplishments. Exaggerated expressions, such as describing the end of exams as a "huge relief," create a celebratory tone that conveys both Personal pride and a sense of collective success. This language also employs metaphor, subtly framing the exams as obstacles that have been overcome, which enhances the narrator's image as a resilient leader guiding the community through challenges.

4.3.4 Personal Reflection and Perspective

Personal Reflection involves the narrator sharing their own thoughts and feelings to provide insight into their experiences. This strategy allows the narrator to express emotions, highlight Personal challenges, and convey their viewpoint on events. Through Personal anecdotes, the narrator makes the narrative relatable and engaging for the audience. This approach also helps to establish a connection between the narrator and the listeners, making the experiences more vivid and impactful.

Perspectivation serves to draw the audience into the narrator's Personal experiences, particularly through stories that reveal Alex's shortcomings in SD-6, '*Why I cancelled bipartisan talks on Fiolina's return*'. The expression of surprise at Alex's lack of knowledge about students indicates a shift to Personal reflection, allowing the narrator to convey his disbelief and disappointment. This strategy fosters a sense of intimacy, making the audience feel more connected to the narrator's viewpoint. By using the metaphor of knowing "more students than Alex," the narrator emphasizes the expectations of competence and familiarity in leadership roles. This contrast between the narrator's active engagement and Alex's detachment further highlights the

importance of strong leadership in educational settings, reinforcing the audience's understanding of the challenges faced in effective school management.

In SD-5, the expression of surprise at Alex's lack of knowledge about students indicates a shift to Personal reflection, allowing the narrator to convey his disbelief and disappointment. This strategy fosters a sense of intimacy, making the audience feel more connected to the narrator's viewpoint. By using the metaphor of knowing '*more students than Alex*,' the narrator emphasizes the expectations of competence and familiarity in leadership roles. This contrast between the narrator's active engagement and Alex's detachment further highlights the importance of strong leadership in educational settings, reinforcing the audience's understanding of the challenges faced in effective school management.

Through social interactions, language shapes and reflects the relationships, identities, and power dynamics within a community. To achieve this, speakers and writers construct and convey their social realities, influencing how audiences perceive individuals and situations. Bahammam (2018) agrees with this by arguing that discursive strategies such as referential nomination through metaphor help create shared understandings and highlight social hierarchies. This interaction is crucial in educational contexts, where communication can define roles and expectations among staff, students, and the broader community. Van Dijk (1993) highlights how discourse can reflect and reproduce social inequalities, especially in institutional settings like schools. Similarly, Gee (2014) discusses how language is not just a tool for communication but also a means of identity construction. In educational discourse, teachers and administrators often use specific strategies to establish their authority and reinforce group identities among staff and students.

In the *Staffroom Diary* column, Mwalimu Andrew effectively utilizes discursive strategies to interact with social realities within his educational environment. Through Personal anecdotes and reflections, he engages readers and invites them to consider the issues surrounding teaching life of teachers. By highlighting shared experiences among teachers, he fosters a sense of community and belonging. Mwalimu Andrew's use of humour and irony also serves to critique systemic issues, allowing him to navigate the challenges of his role while connecting with his audience. This approach not only reinforces his identity as a teacher but also highlights the shared struggles and achievements of his colleagues, ultimately shaping the social reality of the staffroom.

The functionality of discursive strategies lies in their ability to convey meaning, establish perspectives, and influence how audiences interpret social realities. Studies argue that these strategies are not merely stylistic choices but intentional moves to position the author's or speaker's stance, guide audience interpretation, and foster social interaction. Van (2011) highlights that discursive strategies can reveal underlying ideologies and power relations, as they subtly signal social status, values, or authority. Similarly, Wodak (2009) suggests that discursive strategies often serve to normalize certain viewpoints or challenge prevailing ideologies, thus shaping how social issues are perceived. Within the framework of CDA, this functionality is grounded in the tenet of power relations, which holds that language both reflects and reproduces social hierarchies. Through discourse, individuals negotiate dominance, resistance, and legitimacy, making language a central site for the exercise and contestation of power. Hence, in CDA, discursive strategies are viewed as crucial mechanisms linking linguistic choice to broader social and ideological structures, allowing authors to communicate complex social dynamics in a relatable and contextually meaningful manner.

4.4 Discursive Strategies and Sociocultural Hegemony in Mwalimu Andrew's *Staffroom diary* texts

The third objective of this study aimed to examine how discursive strategies used in *Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary* texts represent, reinforce, or challenge sociocultural hegemony in Kenyan society. This objective is entrenched in the understanding that language is not neutral; it reflects and reproduces power relations, cultural values, and dominant ideologies. According to Fairclough (1992), language should be viewed as a form of social practice, implying that every linguistic act both shapes and is shaped by the social structures and relations within which it occurs. From this perspective, discourse becomes a powerful means through which social meanings, hierarchies, and identities are constructed, negotiated, and contested.

The analysis was thus based on the analysis of how certain linguistic decisions in the text reproduce implicit structures of power, reproduce social inequalities or subvert dominant norms by means of satire and pragmatic manipulation. Data concerning this objective were obtained with the help of the CDA of some chosen diary entries. Special consideration was made to features of language that indexed authority, marginalization, resistance, or cultural expectation. They were contextualised with the wider socio-political context in which the texts were created and read and have their interpretation grounded in the perception of Fairclough that discourse is both a reflection and a creating factor of social reality.

The findings, discussed by FGD 7, 8,9 and 10, are presented in thematic sections, each focusing on a specific aspect of sociocultural hegemony. Textual excerpts are provided to illustrate how discursive strategies are used to subtly critique or reinforce these

hegemonic structures, and each excerpt is accompanied by a critical discussion of its pragmatic and ideological implications within the Kenyan context as discussed below:

4.4.1 Construction of Social Roles and Responsibilities

In the SD-2, a member from FGD, noted that Mwalimu Andrew reflects on the cultural expectation of generosity by comparing himself to Dr. Dawood, a respected figure known for his charitable giving.

Daktari had a big heart and was a generous figure...

By stating that Dr. Dawood dedicates all his writing proceeds to charity while he, though less affluent, also strives to give, Mwalimu Andrew constructs an identity aligned with the ideal of generosity. This contrast not only highlights his own efforts to fulfil the same social expectation but also subtly acknowledges socio-economic differences that influence one's capacity to give. Through this comparison, he reinforces the cultural norm that views generosity as a valued trait, suggesting that even those with limited resources are encouraged to contribute to their community. This portrayal of social roles and identity underscores how Personal values and cultural ideals intertwine, shaping both individual identity and broader societal expectations.

In the third *Staffroom Diary* column, it was noted that Mwalimu Andrew uses language to construct social roles and identities among his colleagues, presenting a clear example of sociocultural hegemony through the stereotyping and labelling of roles. By categorizing his colleagues using nouns such as "complainers," "lazybones," and "malingerers," Andrew establishes a hierarchy within the school staff that reflects broader hegemonic ideals about productivity, diligence, and authority. In SD-3

“...Every office, indeed every staffroom, has a mix of workers, complainers, lazybones and malingerers. Mwisho wa Lami Primary School is unlucky because except for me, the rest are malingerers...”

In labelling himself as the only exception to these roles, the persona portrays what Wodak (2001) called positive self and negative other representation. This reinforces a dominant narrative that positions him as the hardworking, competent leader, inherently superior to his “less capable” colleagues. This construction of social identity is a key feature in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), where discourse is seen as a tool for shaping social hierarchies and reinforcing power dynamics. Through this discourse, Andrew not only reinforces his own authority but also mirrors societal expectations that prioritize efficiency and diligence over what he portrays as the complacency of others. This language enforces a hegemonic ideology, aligning with CDA's view that language reflects and sustains existing social structures and hierarchies by positioning certain identities as more valuable or competent than others.

Additionally, the portrayal of social roles and cultural expectations reveals how religious leaders hold a significant level of power and influence, which shapes the community's responses to both criticism and support of religious practices. Religious leaders, such as Apostle Elkana, are given a level of respect and authority that reinforces their power in the community. The multiclausal statement from Lena in SD-5, reflects a deep-rooted cultural norm that positions religious figures as beyond reproach;

Only Lena came to my aid. “Let us not judge a man of God, the bible tells us to follow what men of God say, not what they do. We should stop accusing Apostle Elkana unheard.

This expectation, as members in FGD 7 agreed, reveals how religious authority is both upheld and unquestioned, even in the face of controversial behaviour. Such responses emphasize community divisions, as characters align themselves based on their attitudes toward these cultural norms, with some showing loyalty to religious figures while others express scepticism. Cultural expectations and social roles often reinforce authority and power structures, particularly within religious or traditional settings (Woodhead, 2012). Authors like van Dijk and Fairclough emphasize that discourse not only reflects but also maintains societal norms by positioning certain figures such as religious leaders, above critique. Such leaders are often portrayed as embodying moral or spiritual authority, which can discourage questioning and uphold a power imbalance. This Perspective aligns with Bourdieu's (1977) view on symbolic power, where language and cultural practices shape how authority is Perceived and sustained within a community. Similarly, Wodak (2009) suggests that discourse around religious and cultural roles can subtly discourage dissent, positioning obedience as a cultural expectation. By highlighting these roles, CDA underscores how discourse contributes to the ongoing reinforcement of social hierarchies and divisions.

The Director's reprimand in **SD-10**,

Why don't you want others to grow?

This sentence in form of a question, was agreed upon by FGD 7 that it reflects an institutional expectation whereby leaders should support colleagues' upward mobility, embodying a dominant value within the educational system. The rebuke, as was noted by the teachers in the FGD, highlights the institution's priority on collective growth, reinforcing the idea that authority figures hold the power to dictate professional norms and expectations. Andrew's resistance to Kuya's advancement, however, introduces a

power struggle that challenges this hierarchical norm. Through this interaction, the text reveals both the weight of institutional authority and the personal tensions that arise when individuals contest these enforced values. This scenario encapsulates how institutional power is used to enforce social roles, reminding members of their duty to support institutional progress while subtly discouraging dissent.

4.4.2 Representation of Authority and Control

Authority is reinforced in texts through hierarchical language, directives, and implicit norms that position certain individuals as decision-makers while limiting others' autonomy. Through discursive strategies, texts can naturalize power structures, making authority appear justified and expected in social interactions. Nyako (2013) discusses how linguistic cues like commands or formal titles reinforce the dominance of authoritative figures. In this way, discourse not only reflects but actively shapes Perceptions of authority, embedding control within everyday language to reinforce social hierarchies. In SD-11

It's true that as the deputy you are in charge but for today, since you came late, the manager of exams is Alex.

In the above excerpt, Mwalimu Andrew uses the utterance to establish authority, he sends Kuya away despite the fact that he is the deputy HM. Respondents in FGD 8, mentioned that Andrew justifies his through argumentation.

Mwalimu Andrew highlights authority and control within his work environment by referencing specific colleagues; Kuya, Lena, Alex, and Madam Ruth, as figures who limit his freedom. This reveals how certain individuals in the workplace use their positions to exert influence, creating a strict, controlled atmosphere where light-hearted interactions could be misinterpreted as weakness. By emphasizing his inability

to relax or joke, Mwalimu Andrew underscores the pressure to conform to social expectations dictated by these authority figures. This portrayal of authority illustrates the power dynamics at play, where hierarchical roles determine acceptable behaviour, reinforcing the sociocultural hegemony of control within institutional settings.

In the representation of authority and control, discursive strategies can reveal how hierarchy and accountability sustain sociocultural hegemony. In this instance, Andrew uses questioning to challenge the authority of his colleagues, particularly Kuya, by implying their negligence in fulfilling responsibilities towards students.

Surely, we cannot be quick to punish students for our own mistakes,” followed by the probing question, *“Has any action been taken on that teacher who missed the class...?”*

The members of FGD8 pointed out that the above statements subtly shift the blame onto the teachers, suggesting that their shortcomings contribute to student behavior issues. Through this critique, Andrew positions himself as a more competent and responsible leader, creating a hierarchy that elevates his own judgment over that of others.

Additionally, family relationships often become mechanisms through which sociocultural hegemony is sustained, hence directing individual actions. In SD-6,

After more pressure from my brother Pius...

According to a respondent in FGD 9 Andrew feels pressured by his brother, Pius, who is influenced by Fiolina. The members agreed that by using this sentence Mwalimu Andrew shows how family dynamics impose expectations and obligations. Although indirect, this familial influence reflects social control; Andrew is compelled to act not

solely by personal choice but by the expectations of family members who hold authority in his personal life. This pressure to "*form a bipartisan team*" exemplifies how family becomes an institution of authority, guiding behavior in a way that aligns with culturally ingrained values of harmony and reconciliation.

In addition, male authority is exerted at the family level through discursive strategies that reinforce traditional power dynamics. In the statement

It's me, the wearer of the shoes that knows where they pinch. And I will not borrow carelessly during this bear run,

The above multiclausal sentence according to FGD 10, found in SD-6, the narrator asserts his control over household financial decisions, using the phrase "*wearing the shoes*" to signal Personal experience and responsibility. This choice of language justifies his dominant role, suggesting that only he, fully understands the family's financial constraints. By positioning himself as the sole decision-maker, the speaker upholds traditional gender roles where men are seen as the final authority on economic matters. This assertion of control not only reinforces the norm of male leadership in family affairs but also reflects broader sociocultural hegemony that legitimizes male authority within the household. Through language, the narrator conveys an unchallenged responsibility over financial decisions, embedding traditional values into everyday discourse and sustaining the cultural expectation of male-dominated domestic authority.

In addition, discursive strategies in the *Staffroom Diary* reveal how sociocultural hegemony is maintained through power dynamics and subtle acts of resistance. The tension between Andrew and Kuya exemplifies a struggle for control within an

institutional hierarchy, where Andrew, holding authority, uses his power to delay Kuya's promotion. Andrew reinforces his dominance, when he withholds information and dictating the timing of Kuya's advancement, mirroring a hegemonic structure where those in authority maintain their position by controlling access to critical resources. He says, "*I will give you the letter at an appropriate time... Just relax and be of good behaviour,*" This emphasizes a manipulative form of control that highlights the hierarchical nature of institutional relationships. This interaction illustrates how authority figures, through discursive strategies, can exercise power in ways that both assert control and discourage challenges, maintaining the established social order.

Arguably, language is a key tool for maintaining dominant ideologies and social structures. Howarth (2010) argues that authority through discursive strategies plays a crucial role in constructing sociocultural hegemony by shaping Perceptions of power and control within social institutions. Van (1998) points out that discourse is not only a means of communication but also a way to establish and legitimize power dynamics. When authority figures, like Andrew in the Staffroom Diary, utilize language to assert control and maintain their positions, they contribute to the broader sociocultural context where certain values and norms are accepted as the status quo. This representation not only influences individual behaviour but also shapes collective understanding of authority and compliance within the community.

As seen through discourse, CDA points out that leaders who have power can enforce and legitimize a particular ideology in a way that portrays them as natural or universal. It is precise, and often part of the institutional language of routine, and affects how individuals see authority, identity, and their roles in society. The analysis addresses discursive strategies such as authority representation and indicates how

individuals cope with power relations and react to institutional norms and expectations. In the end however, CDA concludes that language is a tool and a place of struggle in which social structures are fought over and built.

In the FGDs, participants (teachers of English in secondary schools) were presented with excerpts from *Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary* to discuss their reactions and interpretations. The following findings emerged:

In the staffroom, they speak of 'teaching to the test' as if the learners' futures are at stake, but no one ever mentions how society has set these tests as the ultimate measure of success. We only teach, we don't question.

The focus group discussions (FGDs) revealed key insights into how language in *Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary* subtly critiques the prevailing educational system. One participant observed that the phrase *teaching to the test* serves as a critique of an education system that values standardized assessments over holistic student development. As noted by Fairclough (2003), language is not merely a tool for communication but a means through which power dynamics are both reinforced and challenged. In this context, the phrase functions pragmatically to question not only the educational practices but also the societal structures that dictate what constitutes "success." This resonates with earlier studies by van Dijk (2008), who argues that discursive practices often reflect and perpetuate dominant ideologies, including those related to success, failure, and social mobility.

The participants in the FGDs also pointed out how the language used in the diary text creates a dichotomy between the educator's role and societal expectations, highlighting the disconnection between the teachers' lived experiences and the idealized, test-driven

framework they are expected to follow. This resonates with Bourdieu's (1996) concept of *symbolic power*, where individuals or groups are coerced into accepting norms that are positioned as legitimate by the dominant social order. In this case, teachers are expected to "teach to the test," despite recognizing the inherent limitations and inequalities of such an approach. This perspective reflects an ongoing tension noted in previous research on educational discourse, where the institutionalized nature of assessment often overshadows the broader educational goals of fostering critical thinking and creativity (Apple, 2004).

The discussion also shifted to hegemonic practices within education. One participant pointed out, *"We are conditioned to accept these norms without realizing that they stem from a broader cultural and economic system that dictates who succeeds and who fails."* This remark connects to Gramsci's (1971) theory of hegemony, where societal norms and values are constructed and maintained through discourse, making them appear natural or inevitable. In this case, the language used by the teachers in the staffroom reflects an uncritical acceptance of these norms, despite their awareness of the inequalities they perpetuate. This commentary underscores how educational systems, through their language and practices, normalize cultural and economic inequalities, dictating who succeeds and who fails based on standardized metrics rather than individual potential.

The pragmatic analysis of these discursive strategies reveals how educators, even when critical of the system, often inadvertently perpetuate the very structures they critique. This phenomenon speaks to the power of language in shaping social realities. The critiques voiced by the teachers illustrate the tension between Personal agency and the larger societal forces at play, reflecting the complexities of educational practices in a

context shaped by sociocultural and economic hegemony. Thus, the study not only illuminates the role of language in reinforcing educational norms but also provides a lens through which we can understand the broader societal forces that govern and define educational success.

We laugh at the students who fail because, to us, it's a reflection of their inability to keep up. But never do we discuss how the system is designed to leave some behind.

The discussion within the focus groups, particularly regarding the act of laughing at students, strongly echoes the findings of past research into power dynamics within educational environments. Studies by Lave and Wenger (1991) and Foucault (1977) emphasize how language acts as a subtle tool for reinforcing power structures in both the classroom and beyond. In these studies, the use of humour, sarcasm, and irony in educational settings is often viewed as a means for educators to assert authority and maintain control, while simultaneously masking or mitigating their own frustrations with the system. The focus group participants' reflections on how laughter serves as a social signal and reinforces power dynamics between teachers and students aligns with these scholars' work, illustrating that humour can function as both a coping mechanism and a subtle reinforcement of social hierarchies.

In the case of Mwalimu Andrew's *Staffroom Diary Texts*, this use of humour transcends its surface-level function as a comedic tool. The participants in the focus group acknowledged that it obscures a deeper critique of the educational system. This observation is supported by Bourdieu's (1977) concept of *cultural capital*, where teachers and students alike are positioned within an educational system that dictates the norms of success and failure. The critique embedded in the diary is only partially revealed, particularly in how the “system” is mentioned in passing—an elusive

acknowledgment of the broader structural issues that contribute to educational inequality. The failure of students is thus not framed as a systemic issue but rather as a result of individual inadequacies, which reinforces the idea that students' success or failure is their own responsibility. This notion is pervasive in educational discourse, as highlighted by Gee (2014), who argues that failure is often framed as an individual shortcoming rather than a structural consequence of inequitable resource allocation and societal expectations.

In line with past research by Althusser (1971) and Gramsci (1971), the focus group also discussed how the discourse in the staffroom subtly normalizes sociocultural hegemony, where the societal system remains unchallenged. The excerpt from Mwalimu Andrew's text reveals the extent to which failure is conceptualized in the education system—an individual problem rather than a collective one. In this context, the staffroom humour and casual remarks about student failure serve to reinforce hegemonic ideas about education. As one participant noted, "The failure is never attributed to a larger systemic issue but to the student's individual shortcomings," highlighting the ideological control exerted through language. This observation mirrors Gramsci's theory of hegemony, in which dominant cultural values and social norms are perpetuated through everyday discourse, ensuring the continued dominance of certain societal structures.

From the Perspective of sociocultural hegemony, this study reveals how *Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary Texts* function as a medium through which the hidden structures of power are not only revealed but also, paradoxically, reinforced. The language choices used by Mwalimu Andrew, as observed through focus group discussions, illustrate how teachers—often viewed as critics of the system—may

inadvertently become agents of the very norms and practices they critique. In this sense, the diary serves as a powerful tool for understanding how language perpetuates societal structures. Teachers may express frustration with the system, but their discourses also implicitly support it, suggesting that the cycle of power is maintained not just by those in authority, but also by the language used by those within the educational system.

In conducting this research, we have come to appreciate the intricate ways in which language functions not only as a medium for expressing frustration but also as a mechanism for perpetuating dominant ideologies. The focus group discussions provided valuable insights into how teachers, through their casual and often humorous exchanges, both critique and reinforce the educational system they inhabit. In analysing the diary texts, I observed that humour and irony act as protective shields, allowing teachers to voice their discontent while simultaneously conforming to the very structures they lament. This duality is central to understanding how power dynamics within educational settings are not only shaped by official policies and practices but are also perpetuated through the everyday discursive strategies used by teachers themselves.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented an in-depth data analysis and discussion of the finding in the description of discursive strategies, their functionality in communication of social reality and how the discursive strategies have been used to represent sociocultural hegemony in Mwalimu Andrews *Staffroom Diary* texts. According to Holmes (2000), these linguistic styles serve to communicate deeper meanings that may not be immediately obvious, often reflecting the frustrations of individuals within larger institutional frameworks. Mwalimu Andrew's use of these strategies highlights the

tension between the educators' understanding of the flaws within the system and their complicity in perpetuating it through their language. This tension is reflective of what Lave and Wenger (1991) describe as the "communities of practice" within educational settings, where members both shape and are shaped by the discourse and practices of the institution.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section carries a brief summary of the conclusions that have been presented and discussed in the preceding chapter, and concludes with the findings. It draws pertinent conclusions, which cover every purpose of the study to make sure that all research questions are discussed. Furthermore, the section provides appropriate recommendations based on the findings and will attempt to offer more feasible solutions to the problems discussed.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Discursive Strategies

The first objective was to identify and describe the discursive strategies Mwalimu Andrew uses in the staff room diary. This study reveals that in his Staffroom Diary column, Mwalimu Andrew uses referential nomination, perspectivization, argumentation, predication and intensification, to mould the reader's perceptions of characters and their roles in the educational setting. Through referential nomination, Andrew can make explicit who is who (individuals and groups), with things like 'acting HM' or 'enemies of development,' names that give a sense of social roles, power relations, and of characters as important or not to an understanding of the other's hierarchy in the school's scheme. Through naming some figures Andrew not only personalizes the narrative, but also strengthens the authority structures positioning himself as a voice of reason to bureaucratic absurdities. His decisions regarding promotion, leadership roles are supported by argumentation in which he questions characters' competencies: Kuya for instance is considered unsuitable for promotion

until he demonstrates maturity. By adding an argumentative approach to this, Andrew's authority is again bolstered and his actions are legitimized while also showing him as a man of authority not only in professional, but in Personal contexts as well. Perspectivation helps Mwalimu Andrew to present his Personal view to the readers to shape their readings of events by focusing on his priorities and not taking responsibility for some of the things. In contrast, intensification intensifies emotional impact and enhances achievement with strong language to spur support and cement his position on school progress. These strategies all work collectively towards building his narrative as a conscientious, hardworking leader.

5.2.2 Functionality of discursive Strategies

The second objective of the study sought to examine the functionality of discursive strategies as a means of linguistic stylistic communication of social reality interaction. The findings revealed that discursive strategies shape the way in which social realities have been communicated by shaping Perceptions and fostering interaction. These are more than matters of poetic license, however; they create authority, emphasize group identity, celebrate success, and provide reflection, essential qualities of discourse. For example, in legitimizing authority linguistic tools such as argumentation and irony are used so that leaders can control and validate their role in social setting as in the case of Andrew's role in the school settings. It also assists in reinforcing group identity through labelling and metaphors which entrench the inside and the outside of the group. Personal reflection is relatable, as narrators present a Personal reflection to relate to the audiences, and to draw out leadership challenges. With the help of these functions the study identified the hidden ideologies, to define social interactions and then to express the complicated social relations.

5.2.3 Representation of Sociocultural Hegemony

The third and the final goal explored the representation of sociocultural hegemony. Hegemony is observed in the way ruling groups influence the structure of societal norms, putting their opinions as truths. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) reveals that language supports hierarchies and expectations as demonstrated by such figures as Mwalimu Andrew who by assigning labels to his colleagues and demanding his position, creates a hierarchy that reflects the broader societal beliefs on productivity and hard work. This hegemonic power is also seen in religious and family setups, where leaders, regarded as morally superior, do not allow disagreement. Discourse helps reinforce these patterns of power in education and work and language works to normalize the power of authority and inhibit acts of challenge. The analysis shows that language is a mirror and moulder of society as it embeds cultural values in the everyday interaction and shaping the Perceptions of collective authority, identity, and roles in society.

5.3 Conclusion

Conclusively, the data indicate that Mwalimu Andrew employs the discursive tactics well to influence the Perceptions of the readers as regards social roles and authority in the school setting. His naming, argumentation, and intensification all provide the construction of the story that makes him appear as voice of reason with strong focus on authority and legitimization of his position. The strategies also impart more than amuse: they convey and reinforce social facts as they create group identities, exalt leadership, and put a negative spin on dissent in a way that is barely noticed by recipients. Language is therefore a force of hegemony, in that it incorporates cultural standards or expectations into our day-to-day conversation and presents mainstream views as the natural way of things. This strengthens the social structures and values,

such that language does not only reflect but also upholds social-hierarchies and cultural beliefs in both the school and the society at large. This implies that language use in media discourse, such as the *Staffroom Diary*, not only mirrors social hierarchies but also perpetuates them, underscoring the need for critical awareness of how linguistic choices sustain existing power relations in society. These findings agree with earlier studies which established that discourse often functions as a tool for maintaining power and legitimizing dominant ideologies through everyday communication. However, satire as used in the *Staffroom Diary* presents a complex dimension, since it may both reinforce and subvert hegemonic norms depending on how readers interpret the text.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations are given based on the study findings:

1. The study revealed that *Mwalimu Andrew* employs a variety of discursive strategies such as referential nomination, argumentation, perspectivation, and intensification to shape Perceptions of authority and social hierarchy in the school setting. In view of this finding, we recommend that curriculum developers and educators in teacher training institutions should integrate discourse analysis, especially of local texts like *Staffroom Diary*, into language and literature courses. Such inclusion will equip trained teachers with critical linguistic awareness, enabling them to recognize and manage how language constructs power, identity, and leadership dynamics in educational contexts.
2. Discursive strategies serve functional purposes in the communication of social realities. They legitimize authority, reinforce group identity, and allow for critical reflection on institutional life. We therefore recommend that public institutions, particularly in the education sector, should consider using creative literary and

linguistic texts like *Staffroom Diary* as reflective tools in professional development programs, encouraging educators to explore institutional issues through satire and narrative discourse.

3. For objective three, the analysis demonstrated that *Staffroom Diary* reflects and sustains sociocultural hegemony through language, naturalizing social hierarchies and embedding dominant cultural norms in everyday discourse. Based on this finding, we recommend that linguists, media practitioners, and literary scholars should promote critical literacy in public discourse by encouraging audiences to question how language in satirical or humorous texts contributes to sustaining or challenging dominant ideologies.

4. The study further highlighted that humorous and satirical texts like *Staffroom Diary* remain underexplored in critical discourse analysis, despite their potential to expose and critique societal power structures. It is therefore recommended that universities and research institutions fund and support further studies that examine local humorous and satirical narratives through interdisciplinary lenses combining pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and cultural studies. This would not only expand scholarship on African social critique but also validate the educational and communicative value of such texts within curriculum development and research training programs.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

Given the limitations and scope of this study, several avenues for further research are suggested:

1. Future studies could expand the corpus to include *Staffroom Diary* texts from earlier or more recent years to examine shifts in discursive strategies and socio-political themes over time.

2. A comparative analysis of *Mwalimu Andrew's* texts and other Kenyan or African satirical writers (e.g., Ted Malanda, Wahome Mutahi) could offer broader insights into how satire functions in shaping public opinion and contesting hegemony across different platforms.
3. Further research could adopt a reader-response approach, investigating how various audiences interpret and respond to the pragmatic cues and ideological messages in *Staffroom Diary*, this would add an empirical dimension to the textual analysis.
4. Scholars could examine the use of visual and multimodal discursive strategies in *Staffroom Diary's* digital adaptations (if any), analysing how illustrations, layout, or digital language features enhance or alter the meaning-making process.
5. Lastly, investigate how digital communication platforms affect the discursive strategies used by educators and their implications for authority and social interaction in schools.
6. Examine instances of resistance or dissent against the hegemonic narratives presented in school diaries or similar texts, focusing on the voices of marginalized groups.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: The Extraction Tool

The Selected Staffroom Diary Texts	The Linguistic Units & their pragmatic discursive functions
SD-1: Sis reasons Why I Will not Release our KCPE Results!	<i>Branton, Kuya, Mrs Atika</i> NP1 <i>Enemies of development</i> NP2 <i>Members of the public</i> NP3 <i>Acting acting HM</i> NP 4 <i>That would be anarchy!</i> S1 <i>Nothing can be further from the truth</i> S2
SD-2: A Tribute to my Long-time 'neighbour', Dr Dawood.	<i>What a man!</i> S3 <i>'Daktari had a big heart and was a generous figure'</i> S4

<p>SD-3: Why I'm Holding Three Acting Roles.</p>	<p><i>the teachers accused the head boy of not supervising,</i> S5</p> <p><i>"...Every office, indeed every staffroom, has a mix of workers, complainers, lazybones and malingerers. Mwisho wa Lami Primary School is unlucky because except for me, the rest are malingerers..."</i>Multiple clause sentence 1</p>
<p>SD-4: Kuya and I Have Reconciled. Over to you Ruto and Raila</p>	<p><i>Kuya is lazy.</i> S6</p> <p><i>truce"</i> NP 5</p> <p><i>fear of 'hot porridge."</i> ADJ P 1</p>
<p>SD-5: Is Apostle Elkana a Cultist?</p>	<p><i>Pastors</i> NP 6 <i>astors</i> NP 6</p> <p><i>"Only Lena came to my aid. "Let us not judge a man of God, the bible tells us to follow what men of God say, not what they do. We should stop accusing Apostle Elkana unheard."</i> Multiple clause sentence 2</p> <p><i>This so called church is a cult</i> S7</p> <p><i>Stupid Adjectival phrase 2</i></p> <p><i>Cult leader</i> NP 7</p> <p><i>Apostle Elkana, The Revered Principal Spiritual Superintendent of THOAG (The Holiest of All Ghosts) Tabernacle Assembly."</i> ADJ C 1</p>

<p>SD-6: Why I cancelled Bipartisan Talks on Filina's Return</p>	<p><i>...As you know, ours is the most respected and most stable marriage in Mwisho wa Lami and its environs... Multiple clause sentence 3</i></p> <p><i>"more students than Alex," S8</i></p> <p><i>They have been taking kunde, breakfast is a foreign word. Multiple clause sentence 4</i></p> <p><i>Anyone serious about talks would not put Kuya... S9</i></p> <p><i>Fiolina, 'her' NP 8</i></p> <p><i>I had no such plans. S10</i></p>
<p>SD-7: Mid-term Break started early, thanks to Fiolina.</p>	<p><i>Non-pedagogical people NP 9</i></p> <p><i>Acting deputy NP 10</i></p> <p><i>'bear run, NP 11</i></p> <p><i>'someone in Form Two is not a kid. S 11</i></p>
<p>SD-8: Inside the dossier that got Alex fired</p>	<p><i>I can assure you another HM would have fired him in a week S 12</i></p> <p><i>"Surely, we cannot be quick to punish students for our own mistakes," S 13</i></p> <p><i>"Has any action been taken on that teacher who missed the class...?" S14</i></p>

	<i>a huge relief</i> NP 12
SD-9: How I will block Kuya,s naming as deputy HM	<p><i>...My plan was to give the letter to Kuya at an appropriate time. Multiple clause sentence 5</i></p> <p><i>I will give you the letter at an appropriate time... Just relax and be of good behaviour," Multiple clause sentence 6</i></p>
SD-10: Drama as Kuya is made Deputy HM	<p><i>Kuya', 'the senior-most teacher after you. NP 13</i></p> <p><i>the Person TSC was trusting to be a deputy HM', 'mere messenger S 15</i></p> <p><i>'Why don't you want others to grow?' S 17</i></p>
SD-11: Did turning down Apostle Elkana's prayers jinx us?	<p><i>there is no vote head for prayers or anointing oil...</i></p> <p><i>My son NP 14</i></p> <p><i>It's true that as the deputy you are in charge but for today, since you came late, the manager of exams is Alex. Multiple clause sentence 7</i></p>
SD-12: Six reasons why I will not release our KCPE results.	<p><i>I did not understand the hurry for releasing the results, S18</i></p> <p><i>I promise you that this 2023 is the year when we will do it again; much better Multiple clause sentence 8</i></p> <p><i>for the first time ever and this is a huge milestone, S19</i></p>

Appendix II: FGD CODING

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION	OBJECTIVES
FGD 1 FGD 2 FGD 3	Objective 1 Describe the discursive strategies used in Mwalimu Andrew's staffroom diary.
FGD 4 FGD 5 FGD 6	Objective 2 Analyze the functionality of the discursive strategies as a means of linguistic stylistic communication of interactional social reality in Mwalimu Andrew's texts.
FGD 7 FGD 8 FGD 9 FGD 10	Objective 3 Determine how the discursive strategies represent sociocultural hegemony in Andrew's staffroom diary texts.

Appendix III: FGD GUIDE

Objective	Key Questions guiding the analysis	Discursive Strategies to Examine	Data Collection Approach
Pragmatics of the discursive strategies used in Mwalimu Andrew's Staffroom Diary texts.	<p>-What kinds of language or expressions does Mwalimu Andrew often use to make his stories interesting or meaningful?</p> <p>-Can you give examples of how the writer presents his opinions or arguments in a way that convinces or entertains readers?</p>	<p>-Referential nomination, Predication, Argumentation, Perspectivation Intensification/ Mitigation</p>	<p>-Identify instances of each strategy in sampled texts.</p> <p>- Note context, linguistic markers, and patterns of use.</p> <p>- Categorize examples under respective strategies for deeper analysis.</p>
Analyse the functionality of discursive strategies as a means of linguistic stylistic communication of social reality	<p>-In what ways do the words, tone, or expressions used in the column make the stories humorous or relatable to readers?</p> <p>-From your reading, do you think the column supports or questions common social ideas—like authority, gender roles, or power in schools? Can you explain with examples?</p>	<p>Referential nomination, Predication, Argumentation, Perspectivation Intensification/ Mitigation</p>	<p>Document stylistic and rhetorical elements within the texts.</p> <p>- Examine the social themes being communicated.</p> <p>- Identify recurring linguistic techniques tied to discursive strategies</p>

interaction			
How discursive strategies represent socio-cultural hegemony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do referential and predicational strategies depict power relations? - What social cultural norms and ideologies are reinforced or subverted? - How does the text construct or challenge authority figures and institutions? - What implicit/explicit hegemonic discourses emerge from argumentation, Intensification and Perspectivization? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referential nomination, Predication, - Argumentation, - Perspectivisation Intensification/ Mitigation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Extract narratives reflecting socio-cultural hierarchies. - Identify instances where dominant ideologies are maintained or contested. - Assess tone, language, and framing in the representation of societal roles.

Appendix IV: Research Approval



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1st August, 2024

Adamba Lucy Lumosi
LAL/G/01-70061/2022
P.O. Box 190-50100
KAKAMEGA

Dear Ms. Lumosi

RE: APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

I am pleased to inform you that the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies has considered and approved your Masters proposal entitled: *“A Pragmatic Analysis of Discursive Strategies in the Representation of Socio-cultural Hegemony in Mwalimu Andrew’s Staffroom Diary Texts”*

1. Dr. Atichi Reginald Alati - MMUST
2. Dr. Lucy Mandila - MMUST

You are required to submit through your supervisor(s) progress reports every three months to the Director of Postgraduate Studies. Such reports should be copied to the following: Chairman, School of Arts and Social Sciences Graduate Studies Committee and Chairman, Department of Language and Literature. Kindly adhere to research ethics consideration in conducting research.

It is the policy and regulations of the University that you observe a deadline of two years from the date of registration to complete your master’s thesis. Do not hesitate to consult this office in case of any problem encountered in the course of your work.

We wish you the best in your research and hope the study will make original contribution to knowledge.

Yours sincerely,



Prof. Stephen O. Odebero, PhD, FIEEP
DIRECTOR, DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Six reasons why I will not release our KCPE results!

As many of you are already aware, in avoiding certain enemies of development who are intent on making my life hell on earth, many of whom reside in Mwisho wa Lami, I have, since mid-December, been hibernating in Kakamega, spending quality and quantity time with my lovely family. And I will be here until schools open, later on this month.

Even as I stay here trying to rest and keep myself off school matters, I was surprised when two weeks ago my phone could not stop ringing, on the day KCPE results were released. I also received tens of WhatsApp messages. What surprised me was that the callers were not even students, nor were they parents of students who had sat for the exams. They were not even grandparents. Not even aunts. They were just members of the public, strangers and people from neighbouring villages.

I told them off, by ignoring them. I was under no obligation to share with them any examination results. There were also those who went to school expecting to find a list of the performance pinned on the school notice board. I had instructed Alex, who is the acting acting HM not to post the results. And no, acting acting is not a typo. You know I am acting HM, so when Alex is standing in for me, does he not become the acting acting HM?

Because of my firm stand, some people started saying that we were afraid to share because we had failed the exams. Nothing can be farther from the truth. We did not fail. But before I make a comment on how we performed, I want to take this opportunity to give six reasoned reasons why we declined to share the examination results with the public. Here we go.

Results are Private. Any results, whether medical or academic, are private results that are only handed over to the patient or student. Every student had a unique number - called an Index number - and it is unethical to start splashing their results for every other person to view. That is why we are only giving the exam results to the students who sat for the examinations. Or their parents.

Examination Body. For those who are new in Damascus, sorry Kenya, I wish to remind everyone that we have a fully-funded national examination body. It is called the Kenya National Examinations Council - KNEC. It administers national examinations and is the only body mandated - and paid - to announce and give out examination results. Not teachers, not heads.

I would compare KNEC to IEBC, the Independent Elections and Boundaries Commission. They are the only one mandated to announce winners of political contests. I will therefore not try to compete with KNEC by releasing parallel examination results. Imagine if every candidate in the general elections announced their results. There would be anarchy! That is why I am leaving the role of announcing publicly our performance to the statutory body that is mandated - and paid - to do

I say this because some enemies of development have been spreading fake news

MWALIMU ANDREW

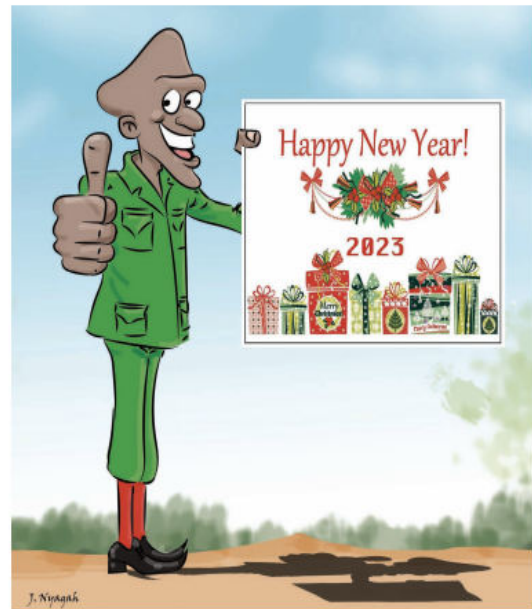
this - KNEC!

Teachers are not candidates. I need to once again make it clear to everyone that I am only a teacher, so are my colleagues at Mwisho wa Lami. We were not candidates and did not sit for KCPE. We just guided and prepared the students for the exams. I say this because some enemies of development have been spreading fake news, that we teachers performed poorly and should be transferred. I have never heard such nonsense!

My best comparison to this situation is the recently completed World Cup. Since Argentina won the World Cup, everyone has been praising Messi for leading the team to glory. They say he and the players were brilliant. No one remembers the teacher, sorry the coach of the Argentine team. It is the same case here, KCPE results, whether good or bad, belong to the students, and they take any glory or shame. I did not sit for the exams, I had no index number, and I will neither take any glory nor will I be shamed.

Exam performance is not my KPI. As you know, the Teachers' Suffering Centre, commonly known as the TSC, our employer, implemented a robust performance management regime for us teachers and heads. We have crisp clear Key Performance Indicators against which we are measured. Guess what? A school's KCPE performance is not of those things against which we are measured. Not at all! So, those saying that we should be fired are misplaced in their thinking and malicious. In any case, where have they seen the results to say that we failed? Or rather, that students failed?

Public Portal. Although we will not be releasing the results to just anyone, I would



like to remind the general public that the results of every candidate are fully available on a public portal. Like the recent General Elections, where all results were published on a public portal and you could just open a website to see how your candidate performed, the same applies to KCPE. All the results are available on a public portal and all you need to do is send the student's index number followed by KCPE to the SMS Code 20076, and you will instantly get the results.

No one has stopped you from checking the results of all our students and then proceeding to do your own analysis and extrapolation, depending on your statistical prowess. Please, however, note that even if you did that, those would still be merely provisional results. The final results can only be released by KNEC, not you!

Education is more than just exams. At Mwisho wa Lami Primary school, we take care of the learners' all-round needs. From mental to physical, from spiritual to social,

from psychological to behavioural. KCPE performance is just a small part of the mental capacity of the learners. It does not define who they are. Not at all. We consider much more than KCPE.

Because of these six solid reasons, there are those who are spreading fake news and unfounded rumours that our school did not perform well. Nothing can be further from the truth. Without going into details of how we performed, I wish to let everyone know that for the first time ever, our school will be having 100% transition to secondary school. This is a huge milestone that is attributable to my steadfast leadership of this school, leadership that this school had been lacking for long.

As I wish everyone a Happy 2023, I promise you that this 2023 is the year when we will do it again; much better. And for the avoidance of doubt, it will not be about KCPE, but in all the aspects of every learner's sphere.

mwalimuandrew@gmail.com

LifeStyle Staffroom Diary

A tribute to my long-time 'neighbour', Dr Dawood

Spare some time and think about this great man, the legacy he has left

Today, I interrupt normal programming to celebrate a great man. An honest man, a truthful man, a sharp man, a disciplined man. A man who had 'four wives' (Surgery, Rotary, Writing and Marie) and never hid any from the others. I am talking about Yusuf Kodwawala Dawood, better known as Yusuf K Dawood, he of the *Surgeon's Diary* fame.

Like many of us, I grew up reading the *Sunday Nation* like my life depended on it. Only that I did not read it on Sundays. I read it much later — when I got hold of it. My father, Mzee Caleb, knew my love for *Sunday Nation* and did everything to get it for me, even if it came a few weeks later, or just a piece of it. By now you know that I loved and still do love reading Flash Gordon, Popeye and Phantom. I would then read Wahome Mutahi's Whispers, the funniest writer Kenya has ever had.

I loved Appep, his mother, and Thatcher, his Fiolina. I also liked Ras Whispeno Junior, his Branton. And I haven't even mentioned Father Camissasius, who played a spiritual role in his life the same way Apostle Elkana, the Spiritual Superintendent of The Holiest of All Ghosts (THO-AG) Tabernacle Assembly is playing in my life.

Once I was done with the cartoons, and laughed through the third rate life of the son of the soil, it was time to read some amazing human stories. Stories about the strength of the human body and of fragility of the human flesh. Stories about the grit of the human spirit and of weakness of the human soul. At times I would cry, other times I would celebrate, but every time I would be inspired. Inspired how this man used the scalpel and the pen to bring to us stories that touched us, stimulating different emotions.

Yusuf K Dawood started writing for the *Sunday Nation* just about the time I was born, and has literally written during my entire lifetime, which is no mean feat. Later on in life, I would read practically all his novels and got intrigued by the amazing medical stories he told. I was even inspired to be a doctor. But when I joined secondary school, biology and I were a case of hate at first sight!

Later on in life, Yusuf would be my next-door neighbour although we never met. Yet every other Sunday, we would be side by side: he on Page 11, and I on page 12. We were so near each other yet so far. So similar yet so different.

He was living in the leafy suburbs of Nairobi while I was scavenging life in the shrubby suburbs of Mwisho wa



...inspired how this man used the scalpel and the pen to bring to us stories that touched us

MWALIMU ANDREW

Lami. He was walking with his scalpel in air-conditioned, state-of-the-art theatres while I was eating chalk in old, dusty classrooms of Mwisho wa Lami Primary School. In his free time, he played golf and did a lot of Rotary, touching many lives.

In my free time, although I do not play anything, I, too, touch many lives: I generously touch many lives at Hitler's. He had a great wife in Marie: dutiful, helpful, always by his side, and advisor and comforter. Compare that with Fiolina, the laugh of my life: absent, combative and unhelpful.

In short, Yusuf K had four wives, and I also have several wives already. And the number keeps growing. But it is not just marrying many wives that I learnt from him. Like me, you can learn very many things from him, and I want to share just a few that I find important.

Talent – Yusuf Dawood was not a journalist, not even a born writer, yet he had one of the longest-running columns — 41 years. Once he learnt that he could write, he did all he could to perfect his writing and identified that medical stories were an area he could specialise in and he exploited it. He challenged every one of us to think about our professions and talents, and to do all we can to per-

fect our talents. Although I am a pedagogue, I try to emulate him by writing about what happens in the education sector in Kenya and beyond. Today I ask you, what is your talent? How are you perfecting it?

Charity – Through *Daktari*, I got to know lots about Rotary and was intrigued by it. I learnt about many Rotary terminologies like District Governor, the Four Way Test – which I live by – Major Donor, among others. *Daktari* had a big heart and was a generous giver. Indeed, all the proceeds of his writings were dedicated to charity. While I will never reach his very high levels of giving, I also try to be like him and I give. A lot. At Hitler's, I rarely say not to the less fortunate.

I live with my brother-in-law Tola's children. I also live with and educate Branton, who is not my son and I even went against my family by insisting that Maskwembe takes my sister Caro for free! Such is the big heart I picked from *Daktari*!

Discipline – Writing a weekly column consistently is not a joke. Think of it like writing 52 compositions every year, for 41 years! Even though I enjoy writing, there are those weeks when I feel like I need a break. Or when there is nothing to write about. The amount of discipline one requires to write a good piece every week for that long calls for celebrations. *Daktari* was a busy man, was always travelling, was many times called for emergencies, yet, every week, without fail, he delivered a piece. What a man!

Time management – I do not know about the life of surgeons and hospital administrators but I guess it is busier than that of teachers. I think that is why they are paid more. With multiple novels and a weekly column, *Daktari* was a full-time writer. Yet he gave time and attention to his family. My brother, Pius, is a Rotarian

and I know how involving it is, having attended some Rotary meetings with him when in Nairobi. *Daktari* was not just a Rotarian but a senior one.

You must be a great time manager to be able to successfully do all that, and do all well. I do not know about it well, but I am challenged by *Daktari* to manage my time better so that I can do a lot of things. And do them well.

It is never too serious – One of the things that stood out for me in *Daktari*'s pieces was his humour. From the operating table to the examination room, he would say a funny word here and a joke there, which not only opened up discussion but also lifted the patients' spirits. I don't know what you do in life, but I am sure a little humour will go a long way. But this depends on your colleagues. When you are unlucky to have people like Kuya, Lena, Alex and Madam Ruth as your colleagues, there is no time for jokes, otherwise they will take advantage of you. Luckily, many of you do not have such evil colleagues. So, why are you not laughing at work? No, do not take life too seriously!

For those asking, I do not have the funeral arrangements, I do not know where daily meetings are being held, nor do I know when the 'ortege' will leave the mortuary. I don't know who is receiving funeral contributions but nothing stops you from sending me – his neighbour – your contributions. I promise I will deliver to the family what will remain after a visit to Hitler's!

What I know for sure is that you can spare some time and think about this great man, the legacy he left, the life he lived and what practical lessons you can learn from him; and what you can apply in your life.

Go well, my great neighbour. Till we meet!

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If you have been following events at our school, then you will know the unreasonable pack of teachers that I have here. Every office, indeed every staffroom, has a mix of workers, complainers, lazy-bones and malingerers. Mwisho wa Lami Primary School is unlucky because except for me, the rest are malingerers.

Being layabouts is one thing but blaming it on others is another thing altogether. If you remember, just a few weeks ago, when I complained about the school being dirty, instead of taking responsibility, they heaped blame on the head boy, Branton, a boy who I stay with due to my good heart and as part of my corporate social responsibility.

At the time, the teachers accused the head boy of not supervising other students well. Lena, her bad hair in tow, even blamed Branton for the school's not-so-good KCPE performance for last year. This is despite the fact that the boy did not sit for exams last year. Neither was he the head boy then.

Anyway, the teachers are at it again. They want Branton out. But I know that Branton is just a smokescreen. It is me they are after. I can't believe anyone would want me out yet I have, within a very short time, stabilised this school both economically and academically, after Bensouda left the school in a dilapidated state. In shambles.

It all started the other week. If you remember, I had travelled to Kakamega to handle the small matter of Fiolina's unfair, irregular and uncalled for sacking. When I came back last Tuesday, I was surprised to find Branton at home on a school day.

"Why are you not in school?" I asked him angrily. Branton was the head boy and by not going to school, he was not being the role model that he always is.

"I was chased and asked to go back accompanied by both my parents," he said.

He refused to tell me the reason he had been sent home, only saying it was Kuya who had sent him home. He pleaded his innocence without saying what the matter was. I had not planned to go to school that afternoon but I decided to go.

Branton was the head boy and he needed to be treated differently. Whenever a senior student like Branton committed a mistake, a staff meeting needed to be held to discuss how to handle the case. Senior people in society must be handled with decorum and respect.

"Can I know what mistake the head boy made to warrant being sent home?" I asked as I stepped in the deputy's office, where Mrs Atika was seated. "Did you approve of it?"

"Mr HM, I neither participated in suspending the boy nor did I sanction it. But once I heard what he had done, I agreed that suspending the boy was the right decision," she said.

"What crime did he commit? Did he steal anything or did he kill anyone?" I asked. "He neither stole nor did he kill

Why I'm holding three acting roles

The teaches forced me to relieve Branton of his head boy position, but I didn't go down without a fight



someone," said Mrs Atika. "But he almost killed someone!"

I asked for more information. Mrs Atika tried calling Kuya to come and explain what had happened but Kuya was not in school. It was 3 pm.

"You mean the school closes this early?" I asked. "Does Kuya have permission from you to be away?"

I even showed her that Kuya had a lesson at that particular time.

"I will check on that, HM. But let us please handle the matter at hand." She called Sella to explain what had happened.

"We all were seated here when we heard a commotion in Class Eight. And even before we could say 'melee', one of the students came here wailing loudly and bleeding profusely," Sella narrated.

She went on to say that there had been a fight amongst the students and one student was severely injured. After administering first aid, the injured student explained that a stone had been thrown at him, narrowly missing his left eye.

"Forensic investigations revealed that the stone had been thrown by Branton. That boy could have lost his sight or, worse still, died," added Mrs Atika.

"We referred the case to Kuya, the class teacher and the master on duty at the

time, who immediately suspended Branton for two weeks," said Sella. "It is a decision we all agreed to."

"What time did it happen? Was there no teacher in class when it happened?" I asked. It turned out to be that it was during a maths lesson, and Kuya was supposed to be in Class Eight when the incident happened. I asked Mrs Atika why Kuya had not been in class.

"So, we miss class anyhow but are quick to suspend students for playing?" I wondered.

I ordered Branton to be in school the next day and called for a staff meeting the same day at 9am.

Kuya opposed the unconditional return of Branton to school.

"What precedent are we setting? What example are we showing to other students if a heinous crime like this one goes unpunished?" He asked.

"Surely, we cannot be quick to punish students for our own mistakes," I said, reminding Kuya that there would have been no fight if he had been in class.

"It was wrong for someone to injure another, but would this have happened if there had been a teacher in class?" I asked, even as teachers pushed back and said I was only looking at one side of the coin.

"I can't believe that someone almost

lost his sight and we are focusing on a lesson that was missed," said Alex, revealing on whose side he was on the matter.

"Let us not be one-sided. Has any action been taken on that teacher who missed the class and caused this and continues missing classes? Was he suspended also?" I asked.

I managed to convince the teachers and we allowed Branton to be readmitted to school. The teachers, however, demanded that he be relieved of his head boy position.

I put the matter to a vote. Only one teacher voted for Branton to be retained. I suspect Madam Ruth.

I caved in, but not without a fight. I also relieved Mrs Atika of her responsibilities as acting deputy and refused to have anyone else appointed to replace Branton. I was ready to serve as both acting HM and acting deputy and at the same time step in to support all the perfects in the absence of a head boy. I will show the malingerers I have in the name of teachers how this job is done. Look out for a truly transformed Mwisho wa Lami Primary with me as acting HM, acting deputy HM and acting head boy!

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LifeStyle | Staffroom Diary

Already, I have reinstated Kuya as acting deputy while Branton is back, unopposed, as head boy

Like I always do, I went to school very early last Monday. I found no teacher in school and, as you would expect, no order. Students were just loitering aimlessly doing nothing. Since we never agreed on the next head boy after the staffroom conspired to fire Branton, Catherine's son, there was no one to lead the students in the absence of teachers.

I immediately took control and put things in order. I was fuming as I entered the staffroom later on, after single-handedly presiding over the school parade, and asked who was the teacher on duty! I was not surprised to hear that it was Kuya.

He was unreachable when I called him and did not respond to any of my text messages even though they were delivered. Every teacher I asked to stand in for him refused.

"Why should I stand in for someone who will never stand in for me?" Asked Lena. Anita pretended not to hear what I said while Sella, the mother of Kuya's son, said she was busy! It was only later that Kuya called back.

"Don't you know it is Maandamano Monday, Dre?" He asked me.

"So, are you out there in the streets protesting?" I asked, reminding him that it was a normal working day. "No, I stayed here for my safety since I wasn't sure it would be safe to go out," he said. "Being one of the prominent people here, I feared I may be targeted."

I told him Mwisho wa Lami was safe and ordered him to come to school immediately. He said he feared for his life and property.

"Just watch TV and see what is happening. I must stay and protect my property," he said.

He was talking about a quarter an acre of land that he bought two years ago and on which he planted eucalyptus trees. Although he always brags about it, the owner has wanted to sell it to me, saying Kuya only paid a third of the sale price.

"If we are not careful, we will slide into anarchy," said Alex the next morning as we reviewed the events of the previous day.

"Unless peace prevails, even education will be affected," I added, before wondering, "Why can't President Ruto and Raila just sit and talk?"

"Talk over what?" Jumped in Sella. All the government needs to do is lower food prices."

"And who raised the food prices in the first place?" Asked Alex, charging at Sella menacingly! I had to stand in between them to avoid anything bad



Kuya and I have reconciled. Over to you, Ruto and Raila

from happening. "Let us not bring politics here, guys," I said. "This is not politics, it is an economic matter," said Sella.

"I agree that Ruto and Raila should talk," said Kuya. "But they should talk about how to have credible elections."

"Elections were credible and even the Supreme Court cleared them. What is he to talk about?" Alex cut him off.

"Funny that some people are asking Ruto and Raila to talk when they cannot agree on anything in this school," said Anita.

"I tell you!" Added Lena. "It will be easier for Ruto and Raila to sit and agree than for Dre and Kuya to even share a drink."

She was right. Kuya and I do not agree on anything. Whether it is by design or otherwise, we just find ourselves on the opposite side of practically everything. I am hardworking while he is lazy. I am an early riser while he would rather never wake up at all. I subscribe to the Athenian philosophy of education while he leans on Spartan concepts (which he does not even understand); I am pro-women while he is pro-no one, I believe in family while he believes in nothing (otherwise he would have married Sella...) and the list goes on and on.

I am God-fearing while Kuya only fears hot porridge. I dress sharply while he wears anything he finds when he wakes up. The only thing we seem to agree on is that Hitler's is a place every

man must visit every day. Oh, and we both love loan apps. We keep on downloading them, borrowing money and deleting the apps.

As a result of our differences, we always seem to take different positions over all school matters, causing conflict in school. From the appointment of prefects to the duty roster; from time of arrival to the need for having remedial lessons; from him insisting we host junior secondary school this year while I would rather that we wait till next year when we will be ready.

"These your differences will sink this school," said Anita. "Imagine if you did not disagree on remedial lessons for Class Eight last year. We would have posted great results."

"Can we talk about possible things?" asked Alex. "Forget about impossibilities like Kuya and Dre agreeing on anything. I can tell you even Kuya may stop swallowing saliva if he hears that that is what Dre does!"

That stung both of us. I wondered if indeed we can't agree. I remembered the many attempts to reconcile us that had failed. I called Apostle Elkana, the last man who tried to reconcile us— unsuccessfully.

Inspired, Kuya also called Hitler. The two men came to school later that evening and sat the two of us together. I will not tell you what was agreed but I can report to you that a truce was brokered and we agreed to work together

for the betterment of Mwisho wa Lami Primary School.

Other teachers were shocked to see us working together from Wednesday, agreeing on everything.

"Yeruyeu! If Kuya and Dre can agree, nothing stops Ruto and Raila from sitting down and agreeing," said Madam Ruth. "You took that from my mouth," added Mrs Atika.

I couldn't agree with them more! Thanks for the peace. I can say that the past one week has been the most successful in Mwisho wa Lami Primary with a lot of pending things unlocked. And we are reaping personal benefits from this truce as well.

Already I have reinstated Kuya as acting deputy while Branton is back, unopposed, as head boy. No one will question who I have chosen to supply some unnamed things in school while I agreed not to report to TSC the small CK case that Kuya has. The future of Mwisho wa Lami is bright!

Dear Mr President and former Prime Minister Raila, if Kuya and I can bury our differences, why can't you? I can assure you that even from a personal perspective, the benefits are many. You don't have to tell us how you will benefit. Neither do you need to share power. Just sit and talk. If you have no mediators, Hitler and Apostle Elkana are on standby to mediate! Call them!

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LifeStyle | Staffroom Diary

When disturbing news from Shakahola, where tens of Christians went to seek God in church, but met their death there, reached Mwisho wa Lami, we were, of course, all shocked. I first heard of the news in school two weeks ago, as we had tea.

"Did anyone watch TV yesterday?" started Alex, who ever since he bought a TV set, lets everyone know by talking about when he had watched. "What kind of man of God is this? Fifty dead and counting!"

"It is unbelievable what I watched," added Mrs. Atika, saying that pastors across the country were taking advantage of desperate people.

"I do not blame the pastors, but the people who fast when the one telling them to fast is eating healthy," said Sella. "Plus I hear that they sell everything they have, how stupid is that?"

Without full details, as I had not watched TV nor received the news, I did not participate fully in the discussions, until after I checked online and read a few things about it.

"But why are people talking about Mackenzie and Ezekiel alone, when there are many such churches doing the same, or worse things?" wondered Sella. Everyone challenged her to mention any.

We all know the prophet who always has big rallies in the big cities, and who always insists on women wearing long dresses," said Sella. "What is his name? He is a professor I think."

I signaled her to stop speaking when I heard where she was headed, as Lena is a member of the specific church Sella was speaking about. Lena, her unkempt hair in tow, who had been quiet, but jumped. "Please keep my church out of your stories. Have you heard anyone dead in our church? Have you heard of it?" She went on. "What we see in our church are miracles and healing, if you have not been to our church or crusade, if you have not seen the miracles, please keep quiet and never talk about our church. Ever!" She stood up and left.

"But why are we going far when we have cults even here in Mwisho wa Lami, some who are allowed in this school," said Sella. Mrs. Atika asked Sella to stop going around the bush and tell us who she was talking about.

"Given what happened, let me keep quiet," said Sella. "I do not want more teachers to walk away."

I ended any discussion about church, Christianity, religion, cult, and related topics in the staffroom. "I would like us to remain one united staffroom, and not to be divided by our religion." No one discussed religion for over a week.

Last Wednesday, Apostle Elkana, the Reverend Principal Superintendent of THO-AG (The Holiest of All Ghosts) Tabernacle Assembly asked to see me. He arrived in the evening, and after long prayers, he settled for tea that was served by Honda. We



Is Apostle Elkana really a cultist?

I am planning to invite Apostle Elkana next Friday to talk to my students about cults

MWALIMU ANDREW

had small talk as we had tea. I mentioned the issue of Shakahola.

"Thank you for bringing this up Andrew," he said. "This is why I came to see you. There are so many cults coming up in the country and spoiling for us who are doing genuine God's work." He said that he wanted to visit the school on Friday so that he can talk about the topic.

I asked him exactly how he wanted to talk about

"I need to help the students and even teachers identify a cult and how to avoid them," he said. I thought it was a good idea and decided to take the matter to the staffroom the next morning, after which I would revert to him.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Sella when I brought the issue to the staffroom on Friday. "How can you invite a cult leader to talk about cults?"

"Dre, you want to pretend that you do not know Apostle Elkana's church is a cult?" asked Alex.

"No way, I told him off. I reminded him that Apostle Elkana's church was a sponsor of the school.

"What has Elkana's church done for this school to call them a sponsor?" asked Kuya. "If you check churches who sponsor schools, they donate land and have constructed classrooms and other buildings in the schools." He went on: "If Elkana is sponsoring you Dre, you tell us, but as far as we are concerned, this so-called church is a cult that does nothing to this school."

"Unless you do not come to school, you would have seen the impact of Elkana's positive contribution to this school, especially his prayers."

"What prayers?" asked Alex.

"Apostle Elkana has always prayed for or candidates before KCPE!" I said. "Where have you been?"

"No wonder we have been performing badly in KCPE, we would have done better without his so-called prayers," said Sella.

"We could have been worse were it not for his prayers," I said.

"But Dre how can you invite a church

that is clearly a cult to talk about people about cults?" said Alex. "There are so many signs of cultism in Elkana's church." I asked him to mention some of them.

"Surely Dre," said Sella. "Any church whose leader has multiple titles is a cult, any church that sells anointing oil or water is a cult, any church that only preaches about giving with nothing to show for the money collected is a cult!"

"Any church where both the man and wife hold positions in the church a cult is," added Madam Ruth.

"How can a pastor call himself Reverend Principal Superintendent, and I don't know what?" wondered Kuya. "Isn't that clearly a cult?"

"How do you call your church ghost unless you are clearly a cult," added Sella.

Only Lena came to my aid. "Let us not judge a man of God, the bible tells us to follow what men of God say, not what they do. We should stop accusing Apostle Elkana unheard."

Although I did not have Apostle Elkana come to school last Friday, I am planning to invite him next Friday. I do not see anyone in Mwisho wa Lami who can talk about cults more competently than him. Does anyone know any other better person? Let me know.

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LifeStyle | Staffroom Diary

When I reported last week that there had not started any bipartisan talks between Fiolina and I to facilitate her coming back home, I was not aware that behind the scenes, there were several parties involved in talks to reconcile us. As you know, ours is the most respected and most stable marriage in Mwisho wa Lami and its environs. That is why everyone was concerned.

It soon emerged that my elder sister Yunia had reached out to Perepetua, Fiolina's sister and started informal talks on bringing Fiolina and I back together. Sources intimate to the source told me that it is Fiolina who initiated the talks.

I know this because life at her parents' is not easy. Although she was complaining that I was buying omena instead of beef, at her parents', they have been taking *kunde* daily ever since she arrived. And although she wanted fruits and cereals for breakfast, in her home, breakfast is a foreign word, you wake up and start your business.

But another source closer to the real source claimed that this was the personal initiative of Perepetua, Fiolina's sister. Perepetua often visits us, and she always goes back with gifts. With Fiolina away at source of gifts dried up. They are neighbours with Yunia, and I think she reached out. That's how Yunia visited us last weekend, after spending the whole day at my father's place (discussing me).

"It is not good for a man to stay without their wife," she stated. I wanted to remind her of her annual separation with her husband, but I remembered that I am a God-fearing person who does not see the speck in others' eyes.

"Look at this house and the children," she went on. "This house is yearning for the return of its owner." I thanked her for her concerns and promised to sleep over the matter, then pretended to doze off. When she realised that she was talking to herself, she left, after saying we would pick up the matter the next day.

"Did you sleep over the matter?" was the first thing she asked me the next morning. I told her I needed more time. It would become clear that Yunia was involved in shuttle diplomacy. From my place, she went to my father's then to Perepetua's. On the day she slept at my place, she was on the phone throughout the night. My sister never has airtime, and I don't think Safaricom is so interested in reconciling us that they sent her lots of airtime. Your guess is as good as mine as to the source of airtime. And for once, she did not ask me for fare!

After a very long time, my father visited my house last week, a rarity, and I needed no calculator to know why he wanted to see me, and this soon. He went straight to the point. I was expecting him to just say it would be good for Fiolina to be back, but it seemed he did not just want us to talk, he already had initiated talks. For he received a call from a seemingly familiar person. I could hear him say: "I am here with him... at his home... he is fine, children look good..."

It is not good for a man to stay without their wife!!



Why I cancelled bipartisan talks on Fiolina's return

I received Fiolina's list of negotiators the same day I constituted a list of mine.



MWALIMU ANDREW

He then handed me the phone. It was Fiolina's father.

"Hello my son," he started. The last time he had referred to me as *kijana*. "I am so happy to hear your voice," he said and asked about the children.

"My son, don't worry about what I said last week. *Palipo na wazee hapaharibiki jambo*." He went on to say that our two families can easily agree if I formed a me-

diation team to find a Fiolina Return to Home Formula. I said I would think about it and dismissed my father with Sh200. He went straight to Hitler's.

The next day at school, as we were taking tea, Madam Ruth received a call. There was nothing unusual about it until I heard: "Do you want to speak to him?" she handed me the phone, even before I could say yes.

"Hello?" I started. It was Fiolina. It was the first time we were speaking in about a month. It was a good feeling.

"How are you?" she asked. I said I was fine. "How is Sos?" she posed, referring to Baby Sospeter. I said fine, and "fine" to everything else she asked. I did not want to speak to her, but also did not want to let her go. "It is nice to hear from you," she said. "About this matter, please let your father and my father agree on the way forward."

"Why and what should they talk about? They were not there when you left," I posed.

"I know, but we need help," she said.

"Maybe it's you who needs help to return, not me. I did not leave," I retorted. When I noticed other teachers were listening, I

hung up.

Madam Ruth would later come to my office to say that Fiolina's absence from home had affected my work at school. "You may not notice it, but you have become impatient, which is making you less effective. You need good support from home."

After more pressure from my brother Pius – which I am sure was from Fiolina, (they are very close), I agreed to form a bipartisan team for my side. It consisted of Nyayo, Sapphire, my cousin Kizito and Rumona, my brother Ford's wife. They were under clear instructions that the irreducible minimum was for Fiolina to return unconditionally.

The same day, we received the list of Fiolina's negotiators. It had her brother Tolda, sister Perepetua, her cousin Andronikas and Kuya, my colleague at school. I immediately rejected Kuya. Anyone serious about any talks would not put Kuya in a negotiation team. Never! There will be no talks with Kuya. Not

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LifeStyle | Staffroom Diary

Mid-term break started early, thanks to Fiolina

After several busy weeks at work and home that were also marked by loneliness due to Fiolina's absence, I looked forward to the one-week mid-term rest. As you would already know, mid-term, or half term as some non-pedagogical people call it, was to start on Tuesday morning, even for Mwisho wa Lami Primary School.

As we left school on Friday the other week, everyone knew that Monday would be a full working day after which, we would break for mid-term. I already had plans of giving multiple home-work and instructions to teachers and students, until a momentous, earth-shaking event happened on Sunday: Fiolina returned!

You will remember that a few weeks ago, Fiolina claimed that I was a mean and cruel man, just because I tried to ensure that as a family, we lived within our means and not borrow - domestically or externally - for recurrent expenditure.

If your memory serves you right, then you will recall when, as head of the family, I had attempted to control the usage of house consumables by setting the time a kilogramme of sugar or a gorogoro of flour and edible oil must last. Everyone had thought I was joking. But only I know how our coffers were empty and was going to set austerity measures.

So, when I made noise the time the edible oil lasted a week less, Electina wished it away, casually saying that she would be careful going forward.

"Can we be careful effective immediately?" I shouted at the poor girl. Fiolina calmed me down, saying that Electina was a kid.

"Someone in Form Two is not a kid," said adding that she would be careful



Needless to say, although we went to bed fairly early, we slept late, very late!



MWALIMU ANDREW

to be a wife.

A week later, I complained when sugar and flour got finished the same day, five days earlier than the set date. Fiolina confronted me: "Which man is so interested in kitchen affairs?" she said, adding that the kitchen was

her responsibility, not mine.

"Is it your responsibility to buy?" I asked her. She had no answer. I told her that this economy called for every man to be interested in the affairs of the kitchen. "It's me, the wearer of the shoes that knows where they pinch. And I will not borrow carelessly during this bear run..." She asked me what a bear run was. I had forgotten that I was dealing with someone at a lower intellectual level.

"Bear runs are lean times," I said, but this was still complicated to Fiolina. "They are times of economic difficulties." I went on: "During a bull run, when there will be plenty, you will not see me in the kitchen, except to deliver more supplies."

That is the day I banned cooking chapatis and mandazi. I also took additional measures; every morning, I started signing on top of the sugar and flour and would check if the da-

natures were intact on the flour every evening and on sugar the next morning. I quarrelled the first time I found the signature interfered with. The girls were not around, meaning the culprit was Fiolina.

Fiolina did not apologise or feel remorse despite her actions negatively impacting my supplementary budget. I was angry. The second time it happened, I was livid, and we clashed with Fiolina. I do not remember well what happened, all I remember is her shouting: "Aiyayaya! You have slapped me Dre? You have slapped me?" She then packed her things and left.

While away, although I missed her, and wanted her back, I must say that financially we were able to manage the macro and microeconomic environment and bring inflation in our house to manageable levels. That said, I was so happy to hear Fiolina would return on Sunday. It was all sweet

ed to see her arrive. And all rushed to help her disembark from the boda-boda with a big luggage. She was carrying a banana, flour, two chickens, green maize and ground nuts. She also had something more valuable than gold - sugar. With these, she had transformed the fiscal situation and physical environment of our kitchen.

After greeting everyone, together with the girls, they started preparing a feast for supper. Fiolina overdid herself. There was chicken, chapati, ugali and rice. After, we marinated this with African mixed tea, and top dressed it with expertly prepared ground nuts.

Needless to say, although we went to bed fairly early, for obvious reasons, we slept late, very late. And woke up late last Monday morning, very late. Around 9.00 a.m. obviously, what I mean is that we left bed at 9.00 am, having woken up much earlier! Everyone had left for school.

I had seven missed calls from Alex, who I had appointed as acting deputy after Kuya attempted to interfere with my marriage. "You know we planned for a staff meeting at 9.00a.m. but since you are not here, can I move it to the afternoon?" Alex asked when I called back.

I asked what the agenda for the meeting was. "Just the usual: reviewing last week and planning the next," he said.

I asked him what there was to plan, when the mid-term was nigh. "Not much, but we can discuss how to release the students, I hope you are coming to officially release them," he said.

I told him that this was not end-term and that there were no academic reports to be given, just like a long weekend; I needed not be there. I asked if all the other teachers were in school, and he told me only three of them were present. "Si minapenda kazi..." I muttered to myself.

"You are free to close school for mid-term as early as you want, I won't come," I told him.

"What about the assignment you were to give to all of us?" he asked.

"It is mid-term Alex, it is time to rest," I hung up and we went back to bed.

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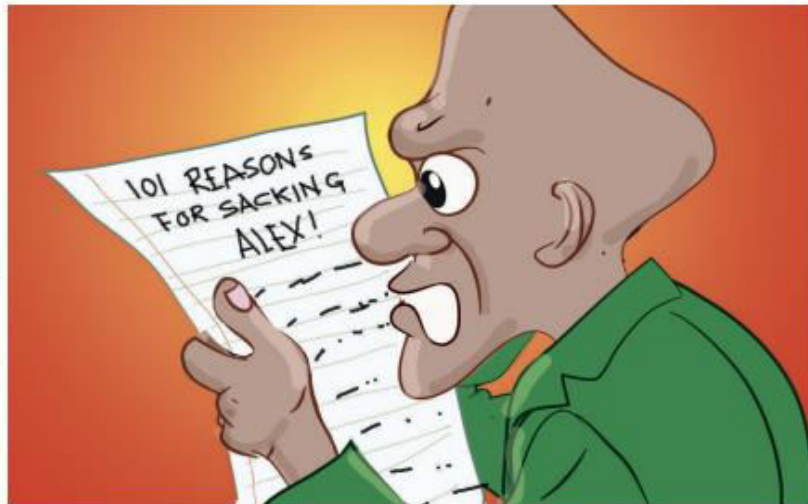
When I last week, announced my decision to relieve Alex of his duties as acting deputy HM, a lot of people made a lot of noise, and I was accused of very many things. In fact, were it not for the fact that we have such a tough Interior Security Minister who has made it difficult for those who are opposed to the government of the day for the sake of it, there would have been Maandamano in support of Alex staged.

What surprised me was the pretense of the people who appeared shocked at my decision to fire Alex, the people who were mourning louder than the bereaved. Were the reasons why Alex was let go not clear to everyone? Yes, I am not the type of boss who talks badly about their juniors, but I have over time, been speaking here a few things I see wrong with Alex. And because of the national fury at my decision, I will today for the first and last time, tell the whole world why Alex had to go.

Many people think that the main reason why I fired him was his decision to take Maandamano leave, together with other teachers, without express permission from me, or even just merely informing me. I must say that was the last straw that broke the camel's back. There had been many incidents earlier that called for his firing but I did not fire him. For the avoidance of doubt, I will list below some of the ills that Alex committed. I can assure you that another HM would have fired him within a week.

Knowing less than I did – It is clear that everyone employed must know more about their jobs than their boss. For a deputy HM, on matters discipline, academics and school administration, they must have all the facts and figures on their fingertips. This is because the deputy interacts with everyone, everyday: the HM, other teachers, students, workers, parents name them – everyday. So, to my shock I was surprised that I seemed to know by name more students than Alex. It just did not make sense that although he was the lead when we appointed prefects, I can tell you the name of each prefect – while he can't. What kind of deputy does not have the name of all the prefects?

Lateness – Although Alex arrived at school earlier than me on the week when I let him go, it was basically him trying to show me that he was still doing a good job. He was closing the stable when the horse had already bolted. I may not have been sharing with everyone, but there were many times when Alex arrived in school after me.



Inside the dossier that got Alex fired

To you Sella, just know that should you start misbehaving, the exit door is always open for you.

MWALIMU ANDREW

Which made me wonder, who was he with instead of me, his boss?

Back biting – a few weeks ago, it came to my knowledge that Alex was going around bragging to people that he was the one running the school. It is common across the world for deputies to refer to their bosses as clueless. As Deputy HM, I too had a clueless boss, but I never told anyone. What Alex forgot was that he was not really a deputy but a temporary acting deputy HM – and not even doing the job well.

I set him up with a friend of mine who recorded him, and I was shocked by what he said. Alex had told my friend how he was running the school, even saying how I was rarely in school. I do not know when it will get into the heads of teachers that 70% of a Headmaster's work is out

of the school. Anyway, I ignored that and thought those were words from a man who had taken a drink or two.

Relationship with other teachers – One of ingredients for a successful leader, particularly any deputy in any school anywhere, is how one relates with other members of the staffroom, the people they work with most. You see, with all his goodness, Alex has failed to maintain good relations with fellow teachers, he slave-drives them. Many of them even come to me for simple things like seeking permission to go home earlier. I wonder if he has ever asked himself why.

Absenteeism – You may only know the incident where he took Maandamano leave as the time when Alex was absent, but that is because I am not the kind of boss that talks ill of his juniors. But because he asked for it, I can now tell the whole world that Alex is usually at his home in Eldoret every weekend. That means that he either leaves early Friday afternoons or Friday morning. As an acting deputy, he knew how to engage me fully on WhatsApp and as such, he would know of my programme every Friday. And if he knew I would not be in school, he would leave Friday Morning. And many times, he never returned on Sunday but Mondays, meaning that he arrived late in the day. Had I been a bad boss, I would have been telling you every week.

Relationships with schoolgirls –

By now you know that Alex is a young teacher who is handsome – of course not as handsome as yours truly. Naturally, one expects that girls will be interested in him, but one also hopes that he will have the strength to turn down such overtures like I do. There have been talks about him being interested in female students but there was no evidence of this.

If you remember, I first met Alex at Mosoriot TTC where Fiolina studied. When I visited Fiolina, Alex would be lurking everywhere. I was worried when he later joined our school, but thanks to God, I managed to outsmart him.

The only clear evidence that Alex could have had an inappropriate affair with a student is that his current girlfriend is a former student of Mwisho wa Lami primary school. There is nothing wrong with any teacher having a girlfriend or even a wife who is a former student. But only a fool would believe that the relationship started after the girl left the school.

So, to all those who have been wondering why I relieved Alex of his duties, above are the clear reasons. I had tolerated him enough. And to you Sella, so far so good. Just know that should you start misbehaving, the door is always open for you. The exit door that is.

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How I will block Kuya's naming as deputy HM!

When the subcounty TSC Director gave me Kuya's promotion letter, it was clearly written on Private and Confidential: which meant that it was not to be shared with anyone and that even Kuya himself was not aware of its existence, until he receives it. Secondly, nowhere on the envelope was it marked Urgent. I was, therefore, under no obligation to issue it out immediately.

My plan was to give the letter to Kuya at an appropriate time. Appropriate time in this case meant a time when he showed professional maturity to receive the letter. As his HM, every day I see what kind of person he is, and know him better than the clueless people in Nairobi who promoted him without consulting me.

So, it came to me as a shock when on Wednesday, Kuya came to my office, and without even greetings, demanded that I give him his letter.

"I do not understand why you are sitting on my letter," he started.

"What letter? And who told you I have your letter?" I asked him.

"I am not a fool Dre, I know you have a letter for me from TSC. Everyone who made it in the deputy interviews to the stage I did has either received a promotion or regret letter," he said.

I told him I did not have one.

"Dre, I know you were given my letter, just give it to me, whether it is a promotion or a regret, it is my business to deal with. You were just a mere messenger, your only job is to give it to me."

Saying that I was a mere messenger really hurt me! How can one refer to me, a trusted TSC agent, a mere messenger?

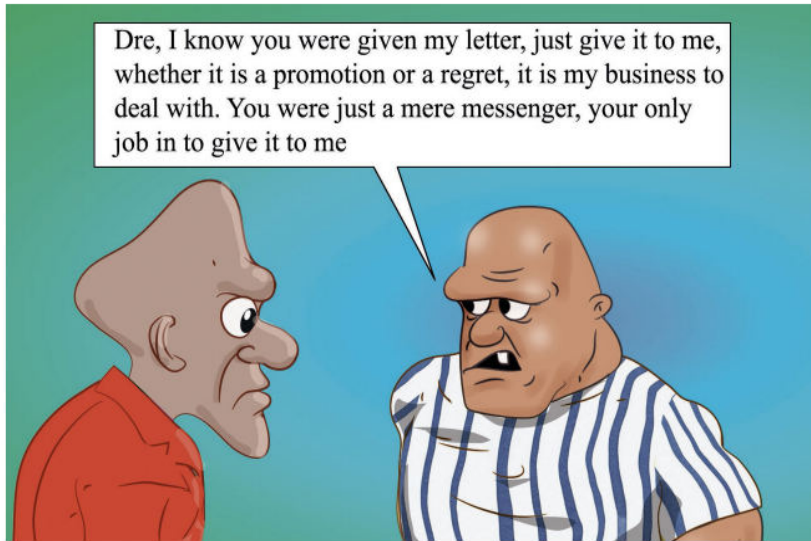
"Please get out of my office before I do something that we will both regret!" I said.

Kuya did not move an inch. "What can you do?" he asked, arms akimbo.

I retreated and sat down, picked my phone and called Nzomo to my office. Kuya and Nzomo have this on and off relationship. They were currently off and not on talking terms, and as soon as Nzomo arrived, Kuya left.

We did not talk much with Nzomo, I merely asked her how she was doing, and how her vacation was. We had a staff meeting the next day, and I asked her to help Sella, the acting deputy HM, in planning for the meeting.

In the meeting, Kuya did not contribute anything, even when asked for an opinion. See, this was the person TSC was trusting to be a deputy HM. How



You have three options Kuya: Cool down, seek transfer, or fight me!



MWALIMU ANDREW

can you be a deputy when you can't make substantial contributions to an important meeting like that?

He, however, said that he had an AOB issue.

"It is important to respect communication with teachers that comes from TSC," he said. "I do not understand why anyone would sit on a letter that is not theirs."

"Any letter from TSC is marked private and confidential," I said. "I do not understand why anyone would want to discuss confidential matters in the open."

"I have not asked to discuss any letter here," he said. "All I am asking is to be given

my letter. I do not know which other teacher has their letter hidden in your office."

I told him to relax and take things slowly. "A letter meant for you will surely get to you," I said. "Why would anyone intercept your letter? For what benefit?" I wondered.

He started shouting: "That is exactly what I do not understand. Why would I sit on my letter? Is this the kind of HM you will be? Surely?"

I was exasperated to hear this.

"Keep quiet Kuya!" I said then stood up. "You have three options Kuya: Keep quiet and follow my instructions, transfer to another school if you are unhappy here, or fight me mundu khumundu." I went on: "I will not sit here and entertain this nonsense from anyone in the staffroom."

I went back to the office after the meeting. At around 5 pm, after everyone had left the school, Kuya came to see me.

"I am sorry for the disturbance I caused earlier," he started. "Really sorry?" I told him he was forgiven.

"All I was asking you is to give me my letter that you picked from the TSC offices, I was told you have the letter, I am not sure what is causing the delay?"

I told him that that is how he should have approached me.

"That said, I will give you the letter at an appropriate time," I said. "Just relax and be of good behaviour."

"So, you have the letter?" he asked. "The letter had no condition to it, it is my letter whether I am well behaved or not. Give it to me."

"I said you have three options Kuya: Cool down, seek transfer, or fight me," I retorted. "It is my time to go home."

As I made to move, he blocked the door, held me and squeezed me around my neck with one hand. Kuya being muscular, his one hand on my neck felt like a huge pliers was holding me.

"Are you giving me my letter or not?" He asked. I could not even breathe or speak.

When I had an opportunity, I shouted loudly "Help me! Help me! I am dying!"

Luckily, Nyayo, who was passing by, rushed to school to find out what was happening. Kuya claimed that nothing had happened and left immediately. With the support of Nyayo, I went to the police, and reported the attempted murder case, then to the health centre.

I will use the case to show TSC why they should not trust a violent man with such high office as deputy HM!

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LifeStyle | Staffroom Diary

Last week, I arrived at school on Monday ready to make a difference in the lives of the sons and daughters of the men and women of Mwisho wa Lami and its environs.

As usual, Sella, the acting Deputy could not start the Monday staffroom meeting until I arrived.

After the staff meeting, I received a call from an unknown number. The speaker on the other side introduced herself as the Sub-county TSC Director: "You do not have my number?" she asked me.

I told her that the number I had was different from the one she had used.

"Sorry this is my other number. Anyway, I was calling to check on how you and your Deputy are settling in," she said.

"Thanks Madam Director, we are going on well," I started. "You know I had been running the school for long, even before Bensouda retired, so settling is not a challenge."

She asked if the teachers had accepted me, and I told her they were incredibly happy with me.

"I have heard about you, but you have not mentioned Kuya, how has he settled?" she asked.

"Kuya's story is a long one," I started. "Mr. Andrew, I am not asking about Kuya's story, I am asking whether you gave him his letter and how is settling into his work."

"Madam Director, that is why I am stating that it is a long story that cannot be discussed on the phone."

"Mr. Andrew!" she shouted, changing her tone. "It is a simple question: Did you give Kuya his letter?"

"Why have you not given the letter?" she asked when I told her I had not.

"It is complicated Madam."

"What do you mean it is complicated and I gave you the letter, your job was simply to give him, wasn't it?" she asked.

"Yes, it was but there are things..."

"Don't tell me about things. Listen to me. You have until Wednesday to have given Kuya his letter," she ordered then hang up.

I had no such plans. The people at TSC do not know who Kuya is, they just talk. I ignored her and continued running the day as normal.

The next day, as we were having ten o'clock tea, a car arrived at school. I did not need a calculator to know that it was the Sub-County TSC Director. She refused tea when we offered it. She clearly was not in a good mood. "Let's meet in your office."

"Call Kuya!" she ordered when I



Drama as Kuya is made Deputy HM!

I found Kuya moving his things to the deputy HM office. He had ordered Sella out.

MWALIMU ANDREW

tried to close the door behind us. I called Kuya.

"Have you signed your appointment letter?" she asked Kuya when he arrived. Kuya said he had not.

"What is the challenge, Andrew?" she asked. I told her it was a long story and asked if we could discuss Kuya's case between the two of us.

"What do you mean discuss? Are you the appointing authority? Are you TSC? Did we discuss your promotion?"

She went on: "Give me the letter now!" she ordered. I told her that the letter was not there. "It is at home,"

I said. She ordered me to go bring it. "And why are official documents in your home?" she wondered.

I went home, took some time there, and went back, thinking I would find her gone. She was still in there.

"Where is the letter?" she asked when I returned. I told her that I had not found it, and after about twenty minutes, I found it in the office. She grabbed it from me.

"Sign here Kuya," she told him. Kuya quickly signed and took his copy.

"Congratulations Kuya on your appointment, go do your work well," she said while greeting him.

"What was so difficult with that?" she asked. "We still made you Acting HM and later confirmed you as HM against the advice of Bensouda. Why don't you want others to grow?" she asked. She did not even let me say anything.

"As a leader, you should be happy when your people grow, not sad."

"That is true Madam, but it should be the right people growing, not just anyone."

"Kuya is not just anyone!" she stopped me. "He is the seni-or-most teacher after you. Anyway, my duty is done, I must leave and hope that I

will never have to return here to do your work." With that she left. When I returned to the office, I found Kuya moving his things to the deputy HM office. He had ordered Sella out.

He soon left school and came back with a large carton. The carton had a sizable number of personal effects: including his photos, extra shoes, two jackets, an umbrella, a cup, a glass, and plates, all of which he nicely arranged in the office.

He then wrote a long message to the staffroom WhatsApp group. "Happy to announce that I have finally been appointed as Deputy HM of this school, despite resistance from people I will not mention. I will, next Monday, announce my strategy to take this school to the next level. For now, I urge you to continue your work as normal. Cheers!"

Only Nzomo responded: "Finally! Congratulations on your long-awaited promotion Kuya. Well deserved!"

Tomorrow is the big day for us. I also wait to hear Kuya's plans. It will not be the first time Mwisho wa Lami will be hearing such. Nor will it be the last!

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With the just ended 2023 KCPE being the last KCPE, it was always going to be special. And the fact that this was the first national examinations with me as a full HM was significant. If you remember well, we had denied Apostle Elkana, The Reverend Principal Spiritual Superintendent of THOAG (The Holiest of All Ghosts) Tabernacle Assembly, an opportunity to bless students with his expensive anointing oil, instead using a young but simple Anglican Church pastor to pray. Apostle Elkana did not give up, he kept calling me over last weekend, but I did not answer. On Saturday evening, my father came to see me. My father doesn't see me unless there is something special. After beating around the bush for sometime, he came to the main points. He had been sent by Apostle Elkana.

"My son, the good apostle is the reason why you are somebody today; you cannot just abandon him like that," he said. He went only to remind me that the Apostle is a prophet and if he tells one that he is seeing something ahead, one needs to listen.

I told him that I had not stopped Apostle Elkana from praying; we just had no money to pay him, or to buy his anointing oil. "We did not ask parents to collect any money," I said.

"I understand that, son," my dad said. "But you are not just an ordinary person. You are a headmaster of a school, with a budget. You can find a way."

I told him that there is no vote head for prayers or anointing oil, as the government gave funds to school but for a specific reason.

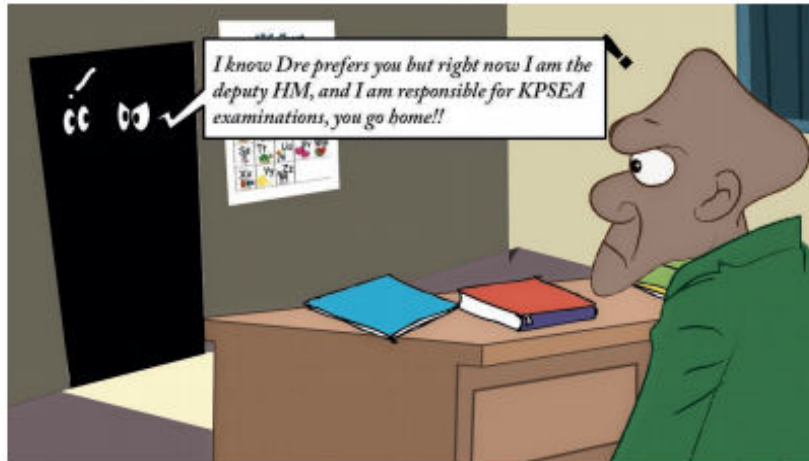
"I know that, my son, but the Apostle is ready to get you a receipt for whatever vote head you want," the cork luded. "There will be no trouble."

I stood my ground. On Sunday morning, the apostle called me to say that he was now ready to pray and bless the students with anointing oil on Monday for free. "I bought the oil for them, and God had talked to me and told me that the oil must be used for what it was meant for. God will pay me in heaven," he said.

I consulted Kuya, who advised against that saying that we would confuse the students. I did not get back to Apostle Elkana, nor did I pick his calls.

On Tuesday morning, as the centre manager, I went early to go pick the exams. There were two exams, KCPE and KPSEA (Kenya Primary School Education Assessment) for grade 6 learners. On our way back, a boda-boda rammed into us. I wasn't a serious thing, as the police car only had some minor scratches. But the boda-boda rider, seeing he had hit a police car, took off. A crowd milled around, but we left shortly after.

News of the accident spread fast, and as we drove to school, I considered calling Apostle for the prayers. Indeed, I had an SMS from two teachers asking



Did turning down Apostle Elkana's prayers jinx us?

I rushed there and found Kuya and Alex quarrelling. From the look of things, blows had been exchanged

MWALIMU ANDREW

met that we call Apostle Elkana to avoid more problems.

Meanwhile in school there was another problem. One of the candidates, Rasto's grandson had not arrived, just half an hour before the examinations began.

I called Alex, one of our teachers, who came to school, and I told him to do whatever was needed to bring Clement to school. Clement's mother was married two villages away and Alex suspected that the boy, afraid of KCPE, could have gone to visit the mother. He was right, for he met the mother bringing the boy back. They arrived just 5

minutes before the first paper began.

Other than that, the exam went on well. That evening Apostle Elkana sent me an SMS saying that were it not for his prayers, the boda-boda rider would have killed me. "There is still time to bless the school," he added. I did not respond.

On Wednesday, I picked the papers with no incident.

On arriving at school, however, the deputy HM, Kuya, had not arrived. And he was unreachable. This was a challenge since as per the rules, he was the manager of the KPSEA examinations, and I needed to hand over the exams to him.

I consulted and was told that I could delegate. I immediately called Alex who came, and we briefed him about exam procedures then handed him the papers to continue with other invigilators.

I was engrossed in KCPE and was called at 10am to go sort an issue with KPSEA. I rushed there and found Kuya and Alex quarrelling. From the look of things, blows had been exchanged.

"I know Dre prefers you, but right now I am the deputy HM and I am responsible for KPSEA examinations. Go home!" Kuya was telling Alex as I arrived.

Kuya was not amused that Alex had been called in to stand in for him. And Alex had refused to hand over back to him.

I had to intervene. "It is true that as the deputy, you are in charge but for today, since you came late, the manager of exams is Alex."

Kuya differed with me. "Yes, I came late but I am here. Why is he still in charge?"

I told him that according to the rules the person who unsealed the papers must be the one to complete the process.

Disappointed, Kuya left, and we finished the day with Alex, smoothly.

The evening, Apostle Elkana sent me a message telling me to expect more trouble on the last day, unless we allowed him to pray for us.

On Thursday, the last day of the exams, one of the candidates did not turn up, and we proceeded with the exams without her. We would later learn that she had eloped with a boda-boda rider, and they had left for Nairobi that morning.

The end of KCPE was a big relief from me. Although nothing serious had happened, I am wondering if things could have been different had we allowed Apostle Elkana to pray!

As you are already aware, this long holiday season, I am keen and deliberate about spending quality and quantity time with Holina, the lucky laugh of my enviable life. Having not had such an opportunity since we got married, it took meticulous planning, in the name of dispatching the kids to different places, to enable us to remain just the two of us.

Even before the last child, Electina, left, this year's KCPE results were released. First, I did not understand what the hurry for releasing the results was. I wondered if anyone was chasing the Minister for Education to release the examinations. As we waited to pick the results from the education office the next day, like everyone else, we started checking the results for a few students I considered good, via SMS.

The results were not coming back at first, despite charges being deducted. When the responses started coming, the marks were much lower than what we expected, and students had marks in Sign Language, a subject they never sat for.

"Have you seen the results?" Nzomo was the first one to call me complaining, saying that she had checked, and no student had Kiswahili marks.

"The way I worked so hard and was expecting every student to be over 70 percent." She is the one who made me aware that everyone had scored 39 percent in Kenya Sign language.

Clearly, someone was against our school. Soon, parents, neighbours, and other non-concerned people started calling me to ask me to publicly share the results of the school. Even though I asked Kuya to download the exams from the KNEC portal, I did not post them on the school notice board for all to see. Some people started saying that we were afraid to share because we had failed the exams. Nothing can be further from the truth. We did not fail. I want to take this opportunity to give eight reasoned reasons why I declined to share the examination results with the public. Here we go.

Exam Discrepancies: As explained earlier, there were glaring errors with the results we had received. How can every student score 39 percent in a subject they did not sit for? And why not 75 percent as other schools that had similar type of errors?

Results are Private: According to the Data Privacy and Protection Act 2019, it is critical to keep people's personal information private. Any results, whether medical or academic, are private results and are only handed over to the patient or student. It is unethical to start splashing their results for every other person to view.

Public Portal: Although we will not be releasing the results to just anyone, I would like to remind the public that the results of every candidate are fully available on a public portal.



Six reasons why I will not release our KCPE results!

Like the General Elections where all results were published on a public portal and you could just open a website to see how your candidate performed, the same applies to KCPE. All the results are available on a public portal and all you need to do is send the students' Index number followed by KCPE to the SMS Code 40054 and you will instantly get the results.

Examinations Body: The Kenya National Examinations Council - KNEC is the only body mandated – and paid – to announce and give out examination results. Not teachers, not heads (therefore will not usurp KNEC's solemn responsibility to start announcing results. That is why I am leaving the role of announcing publicly our performance to the statutory body that is mandated – and paid – to do this – KNEC!

The school was not a Candidate. I need to, once again, make it clear to everyone that at Mwisho wa Lami Primary school did not at any time sit for exams. Nor did teachers. Individual students did. I say this because some enemies of development have been spreading fake news that Mwisho wa Lami Primary School, or rather, we teachers performed poorly, and action should be taken against us.

That is utter nonsense. The results belong to individual students, and

there will be no collective responsibility in this matter. I did not sit for the exams, I had no index number, and I will neither take any glory nor will I be ashamed of results that are not mine.

Exam Performance is not my KPE: Following Kuya's appointment as Deputy HOI, to avoid unnecessary conflict, we divided duties amongst ourselves. I would manage strategic matters while Kuya ran with school operational matters. My strategic duties include mid-range and long-range planning, as well as relations with government bodies, while Kuya's operational duties involved school discipline, and academics, where KCPE performance fell. As such, if anyone has any issues with our KCPE performance, then Kuya is answerable, not me.

Public Portal: Although we will not be releasing the results to just anyone, I would like to remind the public that the results of every candidate are fully available on a public portal. Like the recent General Elections where all results were published on a public portal and you could just open a website to see how your candidate performed, the same applies to KCPE. All the results are available on a public portal and all you need to do is send the students' Index number followed

by KCPE to the SMS Code 20076 and you will instantly get the results.

No one has stopped you from checking the results of all our students and then proceeding to do your own analysis and extrapolation, depending on your statistical prowess. Please, however, note that even if you did that, those would still be merely provisional results. The results can only be released by KNEC, not you!

Education is more than just exams: At Mwisho wa Lami Primary school, we take care of learners' all-round needs. From mental to physical, from spiritual to social, from psychological to behavioural. KCPE performance is just a small part of the mental capacity of the learners. It does not define who they are. Not at all.

Because of these eight solid reasons, we will not publicly share the results of our students' performance, even after the errors are corrected. What is important is that for the second time in a row, our school will be having 100 percent transition to Secondary School. This is a huge milestone that is attributable to my steadfast leadership of this school. Luckily, that was the last KCPE, as this will be the last time people will be asking to see KCPE results!

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From shortage of teachers to lack of infrastructure, challenges facing the roll-out are countless

As a leading pedagogist with a great contextual and conceptual appreciation of education from both a Spartan and Athenian perspective, I have, for long, had my reservations over the efficacy and applicability of the CBC – Competency Based Curriculum. If you ask me, the only competent thing in CBC is how incompetently it is being implemented.

When the government announced that Junior Secondary School (JSS) would be domiciled in primary schools, I – unlike other headmasters who were only keen on lining their pockets – was not eager to have JSS at Mwisho wa Lami Primary School for I knew we were not ready.

For the first time, I thanked God for Bensouda leaving this school in a dilapidated state, in shambles. Because of Bensouda's unrivalled mismanagement, many parents had transferred their children to other schools. They are now returning, but slowly.

So when Machogu declared that only schools with extra classrooms and who had over 45 pupils in Grade six would host JSS, I was happy not to have it in Mwisho wa Lami. Though CBC has some good things, I was happy not to be associated with the reckless, casual and kienyeji way it was being implemented.

With Mwisho wa Lami being unqualified to host JSS, I asked the parents of last year's Grade six pupils to look for other schools with JSS. Kizito, a FHM in a neighbouring school, happily took many Kizito could not understand why I couldn't do everything to get over 45 students and host JSS.

"Why do you want to miss out on Sh15,000 per student from capitation?" He asked me. "How else will you grow rich?" I told him that I had started preparing Mwisho wa Lami Primary to host JSS next year in a meticulous, methodical and seamless manner. As part of my plans for this, I visited Kizito's school to see how he was doing regarding JSS. Having referred most of my former Grade six pupils to Kizito's school, I was interested to see how they were doing.

"This thing is a mess, Dre," he said when I reached out to him. "Come and see it for yourself."

When the county education mandarin confirmed that Kizito's school, Daraja Mbili Primary, had two extra classrooms and could raise over 45 students for Grade seven, they approved it for JSS. I was very happy at the time. Sh15,000 per student was something

Why do you want to miss out on Sh 15,000 per student from capitation? How else will you grow rich?



Only God knows what is happening in junior secondary schools

to look forward to," said Kizito when I visited the school last week. He told me that the government asked him to appoint one teacher from the primary section to join JSS with the promise that they would send more teachers.

"They only sent one fellow who was previously at St Theresa's Girls School," he said. "This guy had been in a high school, eating life with a big spoon, in a staffroom that had TV, new sofa sets, good lunch served every day and tea flowing throughout the day only to land in a school that has experienced drought longer than north-eastern Kenya has."

He went on: "But if the staffroom was tough, it was even tougher for him in the classroom. We have two streams, yet we only have two teachers, meaning that each teacher is in class from morning to evening every day."

"Does it mean that the two teachers are competent and can teach all the 15 subjects?" I asked.

"The fellow who came from St Theresa's is only trained to teach English and literature. Now imagine he is expected to teach all the 15 JSS subjects. At least the teacher from the primary section went to Mosoriot TTC like me and can teach almost every subject," he replied.

"Only God knows what happens," Kizito said when I asked him what the future holds. "Somehow the classes go on."

I then asked about the content. "We cannot talk about the content without talking about infrastructure

and resources. Yes, we had two extra rooms that we now use as classrooms. But have you seen a laboratory in this school?" He asked.

When I prodded further on how they teach lessons that need a laboratory, he quipped: "Only God knows what happens." On resources, the government promised to send us books. Only two books per subject, for only four subjects, arrived last week," he said.

I wondered where the two teachers are getting the content they use to teach.

"Only God knows from where they download the materials on their phones – if their phones are able to download and have batteries," he replied.

"So what if their phones have no space or the battery runs out?" I asked.

"Only God knows," he said resignedly. "What we have agreed with my two teachers is that when that happens, they shouldn't leave the class. They should just sit there even if they are just telling the students stories. We are responsible teachers and can't leave the students alone."

Belinda, one of the JSS teachers, passed by and Kizito called her. She couldn't stay for she was headed to class. I asked her how they were able to teach 15 subjects when they were not specialised in all of them.

"Although I studied all subjects in Mosoriot, over time I have specialised in Kiswahili and CRE while my colleague only trained in English and literature.

We exchange classes and try to teach the other subjects but most of the time we teach the subjects we are good at. It is better than nothing," she said.

I talked her about maths and the sciences. "We try, but only God knows if we are doing the right thing," she replied. She was in a hurry so I asked her one last question: what if one of them was absent from school?

"I wonder what will happen next week when my colleague will be away. He has also been talking about resigning, saying he cannot handle this. Only God knows what will happen if he resigns," she said as she left, looking frustrated but determined to go carry on.

"Let the fool resign," Kizito told me. "He has been telling everyone that he is the principal of the secondary section while I am the headmaster of the primary section. That he is my boss!"

Later that evening, when Kizito asked that we go to Hitler's, I wondered why he could not take me to Cosmos instead. "Sh15,000 per pupil for over 80 students is not small money. You can't eat it alone, Kizito," I said.

He laughed loudly and said: "We haven't seen anything, Dre. Let us wait, maybe if something remains after they have bought cars for the President, Deputy President and the Prime Cabinet Secretary they will send something small for junior secondary schools. As far as now, only God knows how we are surviving!"

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Asia Scene |
allaudin qureshi

Ramadhan and the night of destiny

The Muslim faithful have commenced observing the ninth month of Islamic calendar. It marks the revelation of the Holy Quran to Prophet Mohamed and offers heavenly blessings and an opportunity not just to fast from dawn to dusk but also to indulge in activities that nourish one spiritually, mentally and physically. Further, to serve mankind in general and the less fortunate members of the society in particular. For the faithful, the time is not just a heavenly blessing but a unique gift to humanity wrapped up as Ramadhan.

One of the most special aspects of this global annual observance is that it includes LAILA TUL QADR – the revered night of power. It is also referred to as the Night of Destiny or the Night of Decree. It is one of the odd nights of the last 10 days of the month of Ramadhan. The faithful believe that this particular night bears the most significant moments of the month and consider it to be better and more auspicious than a thousand nights. It is during this night that Gabriel and other Angels descend to earth from heaven with the will of Almighty to shower His choicest blessings of peace and unity of mankind.

This was also the night when Allah Subhana chose to reveal the Holy Quran to his beloved Prophet Mohamed. It is accepted that Laila Tul Qader is the night in which the master creator decides the destiny, sustenance, birth, death, good and evil of the affairs of His creations. With these multitude blessings and the fact that verses of Holy Quran were revealed to the Prophet, the faithful prepare to offer extra prayers as thanksgiving. They keep awake, recite the Holy Quran and spend the whole night in prayers. May Allah Subhana grant us strength to reap the fruits of His choicest blessings during the month of Ramadhan. Our sins be forgiven and evils surrounding us perish and we wake up to witness

love, peace, brotherhood and progress as the sighting of the crescent moon announces Eid Ul Fitr celebrations.



Ever since Maskwembe, my sister Caro's illegal husband, swindled Caro from us a few months ago, I declared him enemy number one. As such, I have not been on talking terms with him and my old but immature sister.

For those who need a history lesson, early this year, Maskwembe and Caro did that thing they do every year: they differed, and Caro ran back home. We decided to teach Maskwembe a lesson by demanding high ransom before releasing Caro back.

We invited Maskwembe to visit us and lined up tough wazees to negotiate a lucrative Carso return to Maskwembe Formula. Maskwembe did not even come, feigning sickness. He took us in circles and before we knew it, we had released Caro back to him - for free.

No, it wasn't for free, it was at our cost. For I provided her with money for fare and more upkeep for a few days - for Maskwembe was apparently in bad shape.

But on the day she travelled back, sources closer to the source intimated to me that Maskwembe and Tocla, Fiolina's sister, were seen drinking and celebrating at North Korea, a popular joint two villages away.

That is when I cut links with Maskwembe and Caro. Until a few weeks ago. As you know, Fiolina also did a Caro. Without any reason, she went back to her people. I initially knew that she would come back but she hasn't. Her family were demanding high ransom. I told them to get lost.

As you already know, a bipartisan negotiation team was formed to hammer out a Fiolina Return to Dre Formula, but their first session ended in disarray after the team went on an eating and drinking spree at Kasuku Bar and Rest, expecting me to pay. Maskwembe was in the negotiations team, playing as a box to box right back.

A few days after the collapse of the talks, Caro incessantly called me. I ignored her. The other week, I received a call from a new number.

"Why are you ignoring me?" the caller started. It was Caro. "Your Omukhwe, (brother-in-law) Maskwembe, wants to meet you." I said no, but she said Maskwembe had noticed weaknesses in Fiolina and her family that I could exploit.

I agreed to meet him in North Korea the next day. I left school early. To disguise myself, I did not wear my usual Kaunda Suit. We sat separately from everyone else and were there talking until very late when Nyayo came to carry me home.

Maskwembe advised me on a few things that could compel Fiolina to return at no cost. I would



Maskwembe to the rescue: Fiolina returns today

While I really wanted her back, I remembered Maskwembe's wise words...I hung up.

MWALIMU ANDREW

have shared some of the tricks, but we signed an NDA (Non-Disclosure Agreement) with him. I started implementing what he told me that day. Fiolina started calling me the next day and every day, but I ignored her calls, just like Maskwembe had advised. Until last Wednesday

day when she called using a different number.

"How have you been?" she said before adding: "I have missed you..." I did not respond. I only said OK, and yes to everything else she said, clearly showing indifference. She later sent me an SMS saying that she had not seen me for long. I did not reply.

The next day she called asking to speak to baby Sospeter and promised him that she would be coming back. When Sospeter asked when, she told him to inquire from me. I pretended not to hear the question. At last, she said she would come back on Sunday - today.

When she called the next day, she asked to speak to the girls, and gave them many instructions of things she wanted done before Sunday.

"Kivani haujanimiss?" she then asked me. I did not respond, only

saying she knew the answer to that question. While I really wanted her back, when I remembered Maskwembe's wise words, I told her that I had a lot to do and hung up as she was still speaking.

"What is it you are doing at 10 pm that you can't speak to me?" she texted me. I told her that it was none of her business what I did or with whom.

The next day, she called to speak to Sospeter and said: "Ambia daddy onitumia fare makuja Sunday".

Of course, I want Fiolina back, but I will not show any emotions nor any excitement. Should she come back, thanks to Maskwembe's guidance, I doubt she will ever make such a mistake of going to her parents again!

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Asia Scene |
allaudin qureshi

Tribe 44 development conference was a success

To rekindle the precious memory and spirit of the great sons of the Kenya Indian community and to pay tribute to the living legends of what is Tribe 44 these days, a unique conference was held in Nairobi recently. The diaspora conference titled Kenyan-Indian Contribution to the Development of Kenya was proudly hosted by the High Commission of India and United Asian Network at the Movenpick Hotel's Hall of Africa. Distinguished invitees led by Foreign Affairs Permanent Secretary Korir Singoei shared glimpses of the life, times and accomplishments of the great Kenyan Indians who selflessly spent their time and financial resources to move shoulder to shoulder with all other Kenyans to ward off and fight against evils of bad times.

The Kenyan-Indian community has been and continues to be an integral part of this country's history. The conference applauded this fact as the Indian High Commissioner Namgya Khampa honoured our industrialist, Dr Mamu Chandaria, with a recognition for his outstanding contribution to the development of the nation. The Indian High Commission and United Asian Network deserve congratulations for organising and hosting such a timely outstanding and rarely witnessed conference to honour our vibrant Tribe 44. At the conclusion the invitees were treated to a tasty, mouthwatering splendor of oriental lunch.

After being enlightened and having paid tribute to the great Shujas of Kenya Indians, let us enjoy our world of entertainment. Last evening it was an occasion to celebrate 25 years of the golden moments of dance from Sanjay Leela Bansali movies. The dance fete entitled Yatra - a journey graced the stage at Oshwal Centre Auditorium and was presented by Sparsh together with Kamini's School of Dancing. Sanjay Leela Bansali is one of the most celebrated film makers of Bollywood and his most successful movies in the last quarter of a century have featured unforgettable dance sequences.

Whilst Kamini girls were entertaining at Oshwal Centre, it was Phir Wohi Sham Mastani - once again a lively evening - at the nearby Jalaram Auditorium. The musical extravaganza from the Asian Foundation gave Keryan song thirsty fans an opportunity to listen to and enjoy their favourites in the voices of our own singers and entertainers of repute - Mehul and Sailesh Savani, Nitin Varsani, Swarali Waze and Raja Jarnail Singh. Invitees not only enjoyed the romantic song fare but also had a sumptuous dinner after the show.

LifeStyle Staffroom Diary

A few weeks after being confirmed to be a senior headmaster for Mwisho wa Lami Primary school, I decided to drink from the cup of my brother Pius's wisdom, a man who has lots of experience in people management, strategy planning and execution. As he was visiting last weekend, we met at Kasuku Bar and Restaurant.

"Congratulations my brother on the belated promotion," he started, once our first order of beers arrived. "Thank you," I said. "It should have happened long ago, but we thank God it happened."

He shared with me his experience at the workplace, and how he got promoted every three years. I took the opportunity to seek his advice on how to be successful at the work place.

"The most important advice I can give you is that you need to be the same but different. Your juniors should see you as human, one they can speak to, but also, a higher person, someone different from them."

He gave me many examples of how he would drink with his juniors until late but if they got to work late the next day he would punish them — like he was never with them.

That was real good wisdom and I decided to implement it in my management. Just like every other staffroom in Kenya, a common discussion in the last few weeks has been Manchester United.

At tea break last Monday there was a heated debate on Man U in the staffroom.

"Manchester is now giving me pressure," started Sapphire, a Manchester United supporter who had come to school for the first time this term. "That is why it is called Man Useless!" Kuya said laughing.

Come Wednesday, and there were more discussions about Man U's match that night. "It is when people think we will lose that we win," said Sapphire confidently.

"These are dreams," said Kuya added that if Man U won, he would give his entire salary to us. "How can a team that cannot beat Brighton, a team that is less than three years, beat Bayern?" he wondered.

"Football doesn't work like that," I joined in. "You can be beaten by a small team, only to go to be a big team," I said. My contribution made everyone talk openly.

"That I trust, but that can never happen to Manchester United," said Sella, adding that Manchester would be beaten by more than three goals.

The conversation went on and the staffroom split down the middle, and before I knew it teachers decided to bet. It was suggested that if Manchester United wins, the opposers will each give Sh 2,000 and if they



Why I banned football talk in the staffroom

I even ordered Sella to return the money given by Lena and Mrs. Atika for the bet

MWALIMU ANDREW

lose the fans will each give Sh 2,000. I say it was suggested because I did not agree with the decision.

That evening, Kuya sent to the staffroom WhatsApp a picture of a cock on top of a hen. The cock had

a Bayern logo next to it, while the hen had a Manchester United logo next to it. "Leo ni leo," he said. The WhatsApp group became busy with everyone typing something, including Mrs. Atika and Lena.

"Iko!" Kuya wrote within a few minutes of the match beginning.

"Hehe! Another one!" Sella wrote a few minutes later. When Kuya wrote "Mambo ni matatu!" half an hour later, I switched off my phone and went to sleep.

There were more than 100 unread chats on the staffroom WhatsApp group when I woke up the next day. I read none of them. I arrived at school at around 10.30 a.m., and found teachers very loud in the staffroom.

"Bring your 2,000," said Sella, smiling broadly when I arrived. Mrs. Atika, and Lena had given and it was Sa-

phire and I who had not given. It was time for me to be different.

"Why are we not in class?" I asked everyone. "Is it not class time?" Mrs. Atika accepted that it was class time and left. I ordered everyone else to go to class.

At lunch time, the Manchester United Opposers tried to re-start football discussions, but I stopped them in their tracks, saying that I would not entertain soccer discussion, and even ordered Sella to return Mrs. Atika and Lena the money they had given.

"As head of this school, I have, with immediate effect banned any discussion that may cause differences in the staffroom. I banned politics last year and I am now banning football. Period!"

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Asia Scene | **allaudin qureshi**

Gauhar: First Indian singer to record music

It was an interesting read the other day about an Indian singer and dancer who was one of the first performers to record music released by Gramophone Company of India.

India's first ever musical 78 rpm record captured the voice of Gauhar Jaan singing a khayal in Raga Jogi in the year 1902. Gauhar who was born as Angelina Yeoward in 1873 in Azamgarh was of Armenian descent. Her mother Victoria an Indian by birth was a trained dancer and musician. She converted to Islam and adopted the names Malka Jaan for herself and Gauhar Jaan for Angelina. Young Gauhar was indoctrinated in the art of pure and light classical Hindustani music in Kolkata by the patriarchs of the Patiala Gharana-house of music - Kale Khan, Ustad Vazir Khan and Ustad Ali Baksh. Gauhar wrote and composed ghazals under the pen name Humdum and was in addition a proficient Rabindra Sangeet performer.

Gauhar Jaan's maiden performance was at the Royal Courts of Dabanga Raj in 1887 as a court musician. After her concert at Victoria Public Hall Madras, she was invited to perform in Delhi Darbar at the coronation of King George V. Her poetical accomplishments have been published in a Tamil music book. She popularized light Hindustani music with renditions of thumri, dadra, bhajan and tarana in her unique style. Her most famous songs are Thumris.

In her life time Gauhar recorded more than six hundred compositions in 10 languages including Arabic, English and French. She always rounded off her performance by announcing "MY NAME IS GAUHAR JAAN".

In her final days Gauhar was appointed a palace musician by Krishna Raja Wodeyar IV of Mysore and her musical soul took a flight to her heavenly abode from Mysore in 1930. Saregama India formerly HMV is planning to re-release her timeless recordings.



A Christmas to Forget

Everything had gone as planned, this year was supposed to be my best Christmas ever. Every ingredient had been put in place to make it a memorable Christmas. Children had been sent away, we had spent more time with Fiolina, the laugh of my life, bonding, discovering each other, and making memories.

School matters had been delegated to Kuya, meaning there were no interruptions. Unbeknownst to Fiolina, I had already talked to the owner of Roddy's, a 10-star hotel on your way to Luanda, with a plan to surprise Fiolina with a two-day stay there from December 24 evening to December 26. I have already paid the deposit for this, and it is not a little money.

When I visited the hotel, they told me how they would make our room amazing; there would be flowers on the bed, and they were going to give us what they called compulsory red wine. We would have been served breakfast in bed, with everything we needed at our beck and call. Although we did not know how to swim—I can only swim in raging rivers—a swimming pool had been made available for us 200 meters away, and we could use it anytime we wanted. I did not doubt that Fiolina was going to love the entire experience and love me even more. And we would live happily thereafter.

But it would seem as though Satan had other ideas.

Just three days to Christmas, the devil had invaded Fiolina, and others not before this court. The devil made her invite her mother without telling me. Fiolina had said that the plan was to help her mum rest, and that was the reason she invited her when the children were away. In other words, as I was planning a memorable Christmas without Fiolina's knowledge, she was planning a memorable Christmas for her mother, without putting me in the know.

By now you already know that a day after her mother-in-law arrived, trouble started after I walked into the kitchen in my underwear only to bump into her mother. Being the man I am, I overcame that mishap and continued like nothing had happened. No sooner had I recovered than Fiolina subjected me to more shame, sending me for mundane things before her mother. Yes, I am a modern man who has no qualms about doing house chores, but this was stretching my patience.

Every bladder has its limit, and I snapped. To avoid further drama, I left our home on the evening of December 23 and went to sleep in my old house at my parents' home. I returned on Saturday morning, on the eve of Christmas, with one plan: to ensure that my mother-in-law leaves. And that she would leave before 2 pm because I had made special arrangements with Roddy himself to come pick up Fiolina and me at 2 pm and take us to Roddy's for two days of merrymaking.

Fiolina and her mom had not woken up when I arrived. I knocked and knocked, and Fiolina only opened the door half an hour later.

"So where did you sleep?" was the first question she asked. "You think I am a fool?" she said when I told her that I had slept in my parents' home. "Madharau gani hii unanionyesha with my mum around? Si ungeenda kwa hao wanawake wako kama mother hayuko."



Although we did not know how to swim—I can only swim in raging rivers—a swimming pool had been made available for us 200 meters away, and we could use it anytime we wanted



MWALIMU ANDREW

Haujui vile my mother amenidharau."

She then did not speak to me. Both she and her mother did not answer even when I greeted her. They were both singing loud Christian songs as they prepared whatever they were preparing in the kitchen. I sat in the bedroom.

"Enda ukule breakfast hata kama najua Nimo alishakupikia," she told me at around 9am. "Ama ulilala kwa Ru-mona?" A part of me did not want to join them for breakfast, but the aroma of freshly roasted groundnuts and fried eggs was too strong to resist, so I joined them for breakfast. They chatted as though I was not at the table, as though I did not exist at all; with her mother updating her on many matters happening in their village.

During this time, the owner of Roddy's kept calling me incessantly, but I did not pick up. He sent me a text asking me to tell Fiolina to be ready by 1 pm as he had a busy day. I did not respond, but I was sure that by 1 pm, I would have convinced Fiolina's mum to leave so that Fiolina and I could go for our Xmas treat. Or was it retreat?

"Wacha nipack nirudi kwangu," the mother said after breakfast. "Akufukuzae hakwambii toka."

"Mummy nani amekufukuzaa?" I asked

her. "I have not sent you away, and you are very welcome." Deep down I was happy she wanted to go.

"Kama unawachamsichana wangu boma kama hiko si hiyo ni kutafukuzaa," she said.

"Nilitoka kidogo na sio kwa ubaya," I said. "Msichana wako ni ngumu lakini tunaishi kwa neema ya Mungu." I was still trying to convince her when someone knocked on the door. It was my father. Fiolina and her mum welcomed him so well. "Mimi niliamua kuku- lia Christmas huku," Fiolina's mum told my father, with my father promising to invite her. Fiolina served my father breakfast. As he took breakfast and talked to my mother-in-law, I tried to speak to Fiolina—in the kitchen.

"Enda uonge na wale umelala nao," she dismissed me. I joined my father and mother-in-law in the sitting room. They were jovially speaking, with the mum in high spirits, and Fiolina, also in high spirits whenever she occasionally joined. As soon as my father left, the gloomy environment returned, with my mother-in-law saying she would go pack. "Nitaenda na wewe, hapa mimi sibaki," said Fiolina. "Hi familia ni nzuri, umeona mzee ni mzuri, shida tu ni kijana na dada yake Caro. Kama si hao mimi sina shida." They were ready by around 12.30, and Fiolina tried to call a bodaboda, but all were busy ferrying Nairobian who had arrived and were splashing the village with money.

"Pea huyu lunch usikufe ukasema ulimnyima chakula," Fiolina's mum told her in a polite order. Fiolina went to the kitchen and quickly made ugali and eggs, which we partook in. No sooner had we done than a vehicle entered the compound. It was a pickup belonging to Roddy's. "Is everyone ready?" the driver Roddy had asked, clearly in a hurry. He added that he had another errand to handle. "We are ready," Fiolina said, and she got out with two bags, one hers and the other her mother's. My mother-in-law asked if they could pray first. I tried talking with the driver but he said he had no time to chat as he had been sent quickly. "Kama wako tayari twende, nangojewa."

Fiolina's mum started praying. In the prayer, she thanked me for organising transport for them, at a time when getting transport was difficult. Caro, Mwisho wa Lami's minister for Misinformation, Miscommunication, and Broadcasting Lies, arrived as Fiolina's mum was praying. Things were happening so fast. I was helpless seeing Fiolina and her mother enter the pickup. "Sisi tumeenda, mubaki na huyo ndugu yako," Fiolina told my sister Caro as the pickup zoomed off.

Caro left as soon as they left as if the story needed to get off her chest as soon as possible—or she would faint. I tried calling Fiolina, but she did not pick up, nor did the owner of Roddy, who responded that he was busy. Later, at about 5 pm, he sent me text saying that though he was busy, he was informed that my guests had arrived. "We are giving them the best service. Please send the balance," he wrote.

In the meantime, Caro was doing what she does best—telling everyone she met that I had been abandoned despite cooking and washing utensils for Fiolina. Thanks to Caro, I couldn't leave the home that evening, and not even on Christmas day. I couldn't go to Hitler's, nor could I go to my parents' place. I couldn't even walk in the village because of shame.

On Christmas Day, I spent the whole day in the house brooding, thinking of what could have been. Roddy's owner kept calling me, but I ignored him. At 2 pm, Fiolina sent me a text to thank me for the treat.

"Mum is so happy with the Xmas treatment we are receiving at Roddy's. Please respond to Roddy; he says you haven't been responding. See you tomorrow. Xoxo."

I had no option but to send money after Roddy threatened to kick out my mother-in-law in the deep of the night. That would have been scandalous.

Roddy's pickup arrived back at 4 pm on Boxing Day. Only Fiolina was in as they had dropped my mother-in-law at her place. The driver demanded an additional Sh700 for fuel, stating that dropping my mother-in-law had not